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## School board maintains 2024 legislative priorities

### Emerald Academy renewed, Rysewyk evaluation approved

By Ken Leinart

Support of private school vouchers will not be part of Knox County Board of Education's 2025 legislative priorities to be forwarded to the Tennessee Legislature. First District's the Rev.

John Butler made the motion to accept the board's legislative priorities without an addition calling for support of school vouchers.

The 2025 legislative priorities are the same as

2024's. The board's vice chairman and District 7 representative Steve Triplett had requested the addition of voicing the board's support for vouchers. The motion to accept the 2025 priorities without the addition passed 5-3 with one pass.

Voting in favor of the 2025 legislative priorities

without adding support of school vouchers were Butler, Anne Templeton (2nd District), Patricia Fontenot-Ridley (3rd District), Katherine Bike (4th District), and Lauren Morgan (5th District). Voting no were Triplett, Betsy Henderson (board chair from District 6), and Travis Wright (8th District). District 9

representative Kristi Kristy passed.

Before casting her vote, Morgan said she was for public schools and for private schools and believes parents should have a choice for the best school option for their children.

"However," she continued. "I don't believe it is in the board's realm of duties

to make vouchers a legislative priority as we don't have control over what the legislature does.

"I think it's our job, here on this board, to make Knox County schools the best they can possibly be and be the place where our students and our families want

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## Think Spring!

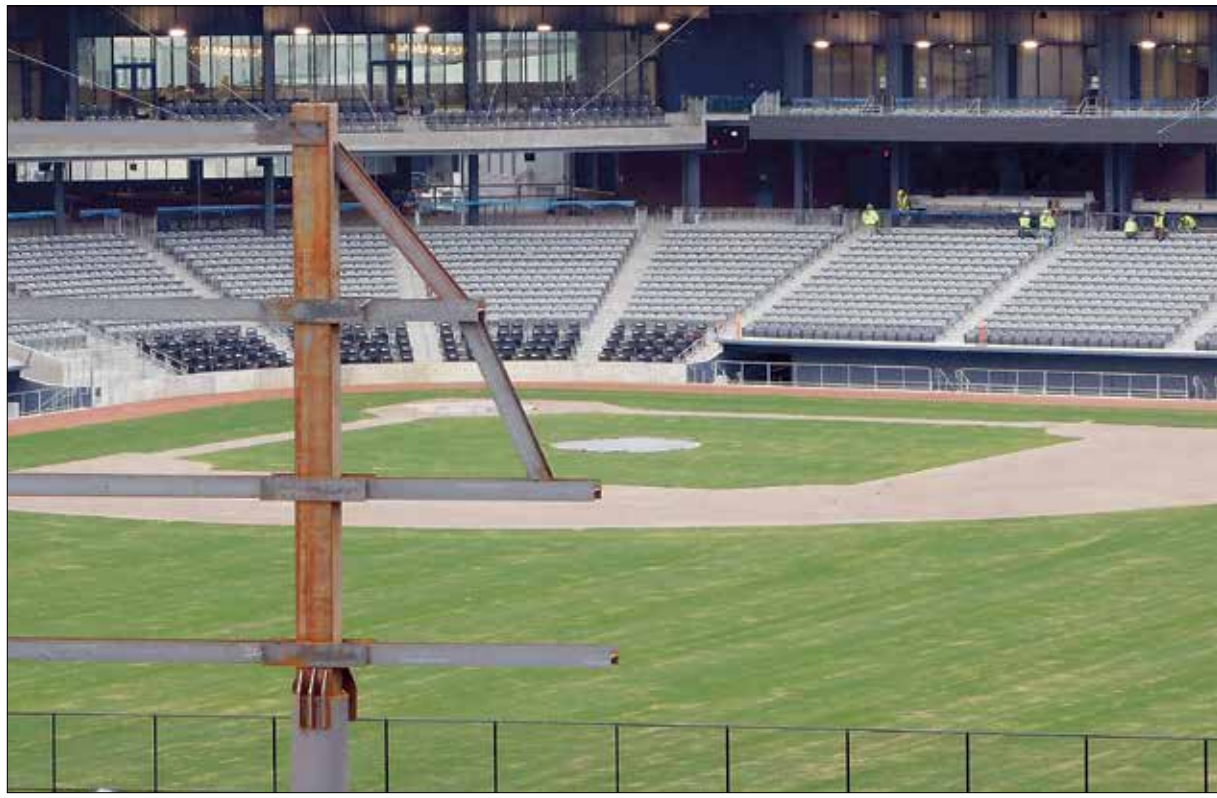


PHOTO BY STEVE WILLIAMS

With temperatures dropping and snow on the way last week, workers continue to build Covenant Health Park, a multi-use stadium on the east edge of downtown Knoxville. The Smokies' Double A professional baseball team will begin its season on the road, with the inaugural home opener scheduled for Tuesday, April 15 against the Chattanooga Lookouts.

## Police surveillance funding gets mixed vote and disruption

By Mike Steely  
Senior Writer  
steelym@knoxfocus.com

The Knoxville City Council meeting Tuesday went smoothly until a resolution changing the police department's surveillance and records system funding, for \$27.5 million, saw several speakers against the proposal and some council objections as well.

After more than an hour of discussion and disagreement, the council voted 7-2 to allocate the funds over eleven years. Several citizens spoke against the funding with Councilwoman Amelia Parker leading the opposition. Her motion to allow more than three speakers in opposition failed in a 4-5 vote and Councilwoman Seema Singh's motion to separate the funding vote into two parts also failed. She called the new system an "intrusion" and added, "I'm alarmed."

Parker's opposition was vocal and occasionally combative with Mayor Indy Kincannon. At several points during the meeting shouts and interruptions came from the audience and

three protesters, including community activist Constance Every, were removed from the meeting.

Police Chief Paul Noel responded to questions about the funding, saying the new money would enhance apprehending criminals, would not be used to observe the public before a crime, and would add to the existing camera and records system. He said it could not capture home camera footage but could, with permission from owners, capture business camera images. Footage without usable evidence would be deleted. The expanded system would also include body and cruiser cameras. He added that the enhanced system will "allow more transparency" in the department.

Councilwoman Lauren Rider said the vote will bundle all the police systems and give an "entire suite of services."

Kincannon said the updated system will "enhance the safety of our city" and allow the police to respond more quickly to emergencies.

Cont. on page 4

## Sunday's 'Books, Birthday Cake, Dreaming Big' to celebrate Dolly Parton

Activities include a dance party and parade, live music, Dolly trivia and screening of '9 to 5'

On Sunday, January 19, Knox County Public Library will host a celebration at the Tennessee Theatre in honor of Dolly Parton's birthday and 20 years of Imagination Library in Knox County. The free event, Books, Birthday Cake, and Dreaming Big

presented by Verizon, will take place between 1:00 and 6:00 with craft activities, cupcakes, and live music in the lobby. Ladybug Girl and Corduroy will be on hand for photos. Kids of all ages are encouraged to dress as a character from one of their favorite Imagination Library books. There will be a parade, a dance party, a video story time by Dolly, music by the Holston Middle School Show Choir, Dolly-themed trivia and a screening

of Dolly's iconic movie, "9 to 5."

### Schedule of events:

1:00: Lobby opens | Send Dolly a birthday wish, take a photo with Corduroy or Ladybug Girl, enjoy crafts, cupcakes and more!

1:30: Happy Birthday, Dolly | Kids and families, join the story book parade and have a Dolly dance party! Watch a big screen storytime, then sing "Happy Birthday."

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## Third class of junior commissioners named

By Mike Steely  
Senior Writer  
steelym@knoxfocus.com

When the Knox County Commission meets on January 27, it may be joined by eleven new junior commissioners. The third year of the "junior" program begins this Thursday at 4 p.m. when the junior and senior high school students begin an orientation session in the small assembly room of the City-County Building.

At-large Commissioner Larsen Jay created the junior commission so students could learn about the functions of their local government. The students walk along with the selected commissioners of their district, attend meetings, go to public events, visit the various county departments, and learn hands-on about Knox County for about three months.

A full-time student was selected by each district commissioner from a pool of public, private or home-school applicants.

At the end of their training, the junior members hold a mock commission meeting.

This year's junior commissioners include: Jakhi Powell, Career Magnet Academy; Audrey Zanders, West High School; Zoie James, Karns High School; Keyan Patel, West High School; Shylyn Whitcomb, Farragut High School; Pierce Broussard, Catholic High School; Olivia Price, Halls High School; Jackson Kingsford, Gibbs High School; Charity Davis, South-Doyle High School; Olivia Graves, Powell High School; and Matthew Greenwood, Hardin Valley Academy.

## Knox County Sheriff's Deputy Tucker Blakely Remembered



Knox County Sheriff Tom Spangler spoke at the dedication of the Officer Tucker Blakely Memorial Bridge last week. Friends, family, supporters and Knox County officials attended the service and placed a memorial sign at the intersection of Emory Road and Brickyard Road in Powell. Deputy Blakely, a Powell High School graduate, was killed while responding to a domestic call in October 2023. In a statement after the dedication, Knox County Mayor Glenn Jacobs said, "It was bittersweet to dedicate the bridge over Beaver Creek near Powell High School in memory of fallen Knox County Sheriff's Officer Tucker Blakely. Tucker was killed in the line of duty in October 2023. We hope that this memorial will keep him alive in the minds of our citizens for years to come." Photo courtesy of Mike Donila.

# Israel Against The World – With U.S. Aid

From a distance



By John J. Duncan Jr. [duncanj@knoxfocus.com](mailto:duncanj@knoxfocus.com)

I once represented a man charged with first-degree murder. At the preliminary hearing, the courtroom was filled with the family and friends of the victim.

When my client was led out of the holding cell, the officer who brought him out leaned over and whispered to me: "Boy, it's you against the world – you against the world."

Today it's Israel against the world, aided and abetted by the U.S. due to mega millions in campaign contributions.

On Nov. 20, the U.S. cast the only "No" vote in the U.N. Security Council against a call for an immediate ceasefire in Gaza. The rest of the world has never been so united as it is now against what Israel is doing to the Palestinian people.

Some American Christians are afraid to criticize Israel because it says in the Bible that those who bless Israel will be blessed.

But it also says in both the Old Testament and the New Testament that God wants us to "seek peace and pursue it." And one of the strongest of the Ten Commandments is "Thou shalt not kill."

My own Christian beliefs lead me to believe that God will punish those who have killed – and are still killing – thousands of little children in Gaza.

Matthew 18 says Jesus called a little child to him and said, " ... whoever

humbles himself as this little child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. Whoever receives one little child like this in my name receives me."

Israel killed another 28 people in Gaza on New Year's Day, and Defense Minister Israel Katz announced on Jan. 2 that he was going to increase the number of bombing raids. Then 65 more were killed on Jan. 4.

It really saddens me, and at times angers me, to know that all this killing is being done with American-supplied bombs

Longtime University of Chicago professor John Mearsheimer has been one of the most respected foreign policy experts in this country.

He has also been one of the leading critics of the horribly cruel way that Israel has bombed, killed and starved to death many

thousands of women and children in Gaza over the last 15 months.

On December 31, Mearsheimer wrote on Substack about the 179-page report Human Rights Watch issued a few days earlier detailing Israel's genocide in Gaza.

Also in December, Amnesty International published a 296-page report about Israel's genocide in Gaza.

A few days before the Amnesty report, the International Criminal Court issued arrest warrants for Prime Minister Netanyahu and his defense minister for what the court, after a lengthy investigation, said were "crimes against humanity and war crimes."

These very recent actions followed a finding early last year by the International Court of Justice that Israel was committing genocide in Gaza.

Mearsheimer wrote that he wonders what people "who have supported Israel's genocide or remained silent tell themselves to justify their behavior and sleep at night. History will not treat them kindly."

Genocide is defined as "violence that targets individuals because of their membership in a group and aims at the destruction of a people."

The United Nations Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, adopted in 1948, established genocide as an international crime. The U.S. was one of the signers to this agreement.

This was done primarily in response to what had happened to the Jews in Europe during World War II. In fact, because of what happened then, you would think that the Jewish people would be the strongest opponents to

genocide anyplace.

I think everyone realizes that the United States would be the first to act and would lead the campaign against this genocide if it was being done by any other country than Israel.

Another world-renowned foreign policy expert, Jeffrey Sachs, has also been one of Israel's strongest critics during this war. (Actually, it is more of a slaughter than a war since it is so one-sided.)

Sachs, a longtime professor at Columbia and a Jew himself, said Netanyahu is "one of the most violent and dangerous people in the world." He also said, "Netanyahu is leading Israel into the greatest insecurity of its modern history – complete diplomatic isolation."

## County commission asked to approve sheriff's new hiring policy

By Mike Steely Senior Writer [steelym@knoxfocus.com](mailto:steelym@knoxfocus.com)

The Knox County Commission meets for its informal agenda session later this month followed by the regular full session on January 27. The members will probably agree with a merit system hiring policy change. Knox County Sheriff Tom Spangler wants to open up the hiring of correctional officers to people discharged from the military for other than "Honorable" reasons.

Spangler told the merit board there are several types of discharges, including medical, that will qualify applicants and help fill out the enforcement ranks.

The commission may also look at the policies and procedures for the creation of Infrastructure Development Districts and approve

a contract for Victim Advocate Services. The register of deeds' office is asking the commission to support requesting the Tennessee General Assembly to permit the county to set "predictable recording fees" at the register's office.

The Mulls Singing Convention may be honored on a resolution by Commissioner Kim Frazier and the Fire and Technical Rescue Committee is scheduled to give its quarterly report. A Legal Aid on Eviction Prevention presentation is being sponsored by Commissioners Courtney Durrett and Damon Rawls.

A five-year contract with Pavement Technology, Inc., for asphalt rejuvenator services may be approved. The commission is also being asked to approve an agreement with the state

for maintaining the greenway facilities along Norris Freeway.

Whaley Construction LLC may get a \$1.7 million contract for intersection improvements at North Campbell Station and Fretz Roads.

Coward Mill Phase II may get some additional funds, \$6,750, for design work.

A contract may also be approved with Global Communications and Professional Services, Inc. for traffic control services. Two intersections, Tipton Station Road at Martin Mill Pike and Maryville Pike at Tipton Station Road, may receive approval for road improvements in a contract with D.R. Horton, Inc.,

Road improvements at Kingston Pike and Ebenezer Road are also on the agenda.

## The Donald the First?

One of my dear friends has bought into the Trump dictator mantra. Methinks she probably watches too much MSNBC because the dictator mantra defies all logic. First, if Trump is a dictator then all of his nominees would sail through the newly constituted Senate because in all dictatorships the legislature just rubberstamps the wishes of the dictator. Yet the odious Matt Gaetz failed to get the Republican support he needed for confirmation, saw the light and withdrew. Does anyone really think that Susan Collins and Lisa Murkowski will willy-nilly bend to Trump's orders?



By Dr. Harold A. Black [blackh@knoxfocus.com](mailto:blackh@knoxfocus.com) [haroldblackphd.com](http://haroldblackphd.com)

The tax cuts from the first Trump administration are set to expire. What will the Republicans do? What will be interesting is to see if both the House and Senate tax committees renew the cuts and incorporate the promises Trump made on the campaign trail to exempt taxes on tips, on overtime and on Social Security payments. If enacted, this would mean that the immediate impact will be an increase in the deficit. The budget hawks in both chambers would likely resist the

increase. What would Trump do? Again all the cajoling will not likely move the House budget committee chair who has insisted that a change in the tax policy should not add to the deficit.

Next, we have Trump's tariffs. I have wondered what is the extent of the president's authority to levy tariffs. I have the feeling that the president's authority will be tested in the courts. The US Chamber of Commerce and several of its branches on the Mexican and Canadian borders have expressed opposition to the tariffs. Will they sue saying the president has exceeded his authority? If so, the case will likely be decided by the Supreme Court. Even though my socialist friend says that Trump's appointees on the Supreme Court will not rule against him, I am certain that she is wrong. This Supreme Court has expressed skepticism over the president's authority and acting without the approval of Congress. My friend had scoffed at the checks and balances in our government and said that the Supreme Court would rubberstamp any Trump action even if unconstitutional. Obviously, she has not paid much attention to Trump's nominees, all of whom show streaks of independent thinking. Saying that this Supreme Court is a rubberstamp shows intellectual laziness.

What about the so-called Inflation Reduction Act? That boondoggle was passed without a single Republican vote. Trump has pledged to cancel the law which he calls the Green New Scam. Since

the Republicans will now control both the House and the Senate one would think that the Republicans would quickly void the act. But as a famous TV personality says "Not so fast my friend." The act is a gravy train and billions of dollars are flowing into Republican districts and states. Two examples are the \$6 billion "loan" granted to Rivian to build a plant in Georgia and the \$7 billion for Hyundai to make electric vehicles in the state. I am certain that Brian Kemp welcomes the grant and would oppose not receiving it. Not surprisingly the Republican congressmen whose districts are where the plants are located do not want the loans rescinded. What about other grants, subsidies, tax credits and loans that would go to other republicans? Eighteen Republicans have sent a letter to Mike Johnson asking him not to repeal the act. One Georgia congressman said that the entire act should not be repealed, only parts of it. He probably means the parts that go to Democrat districts and states. Given the makeup of the House, if those 18 would vote against the repeal of the IRA, it would remain law because you can be certain that no Democrat will vote to repeal.

Thus, in the end, the left is just fearmongering. It knows that a presidential dictator is not possible in this country. But the left seems to have only one playbook and this one says to yell dictator at every opportunity. However, expect Trump to be like all the presidents before him and test the limits of his authority by erasing most of the actions of the dictator that preceded him, one Joseph Robinette Biden.



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On Thursday, January 23, 2025, the **Knox County Retired Teachers will hold the association luncheon** at Rothchild Catering and Conference Center located at 8807 Kingston Pike. Also new this year, it is necessary for attendees to RSVP for every luncheon. Please respond by January 19 to (423) 231-0682. The January KCRTA program is "It's Herb Time In Tennessee" and the start time is 11:15 a.m.



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# Publisher's Positions



By Steve Hunley, Publisher  
publisher@knoxfocus.com

on the speakerphone and proceeded to let Self and Norman have it from press accounts. Republicans need to learn the lesson of how to stick together through thick or thin.

While the issue of spending should be a critical concern for every American citizen, congressmen can vote as they believe their constituents would wish them to on spending bills and remain solid members of their party. People have differences, represent different states with differing issues, but electing the presiding officer of the House of Representatives is one issue where every Republican should be behind the nominee of the party.

Republican speakers of the U.S. House of Representatives seem to become the victims of their own party, not the Democrats. The Democrats enjoy a united caucus that sticks together come hell or high water. Of course, Democrats tolerate little or no dissent from the party line. For instance, Democrats opposed to abortion, once a large number of their caucus, are as rare as dodo birds because they lost primaries and were thinned out of existence. To oppose Democratic orthodoxy in

any respect is to risk political extinction. While there aren't many Democrats outside the urban areas populating the halls of Congress, they all back Hakeem Jeffries, a New York City Democrat as liberal as they come. It is hard to imagine any Democrat not representing an urban area backing Hakeem Jeffries for speaker of the House, especially those who happen to represent a more rural or agricultural district, those too are rare but they do exist. There are some like Jared Golden who represents a largely rural district in Maine. A former Marine who fashions himself as a centrist who has fashioned himself as a "Blue Dog" Democrat, yet he votes for Hakeem Jeffries for speaker. Golden's vote puts Democrats like Adam Schiff into the chairs of powerful House committees. Hakeem Jeffries and Adam Schiff have little or nothing in common with most of the people in Maine's Second District. Their caucus doesn't ever have a speck of a splinter while the Republicans in the House run around like a hundred ferret cats let out of a bag at once.

Chip Roy, who seems to accomplish little aside from being on TV every day of the

week, wanted to hold out so that he could apparently get Mike Johnson's support to chair the powerful House Rules Committee, which would still be a terrible idea in a galaxy full of terrible ideas. Chip Roy is the My Little Pony of congressional show horses and would probably die from the exertion if he had to pull a plow in the House to get something across the finish line.

I will readily admit there is a faction inside the Republican Party who confuse talking with getting things done. A caucus doesn't function if people are only part of it some of the time, or when it suits them. Republicans who don't want to be part of the caucus need to run as something else.

The Republicans need to follow the example of the Democrats and once a majority of the members have selected their nominee to be the speaker, that is who every Republican votes for on the floor. Creating a spectacle to get media attention might serve some agenda for the congressman in question, but it doesn't give the public much confidence they can govern.

The American people gave both houses of

Congress to the Republicans and reelected Donald Trump as president of the United States. They want CHANGE. It's time to get moving and get some things done. Individualists can propose and fight for their own ideas and beliefs inside their party, but they need to support their party and its nominees, otherwise they need to run under a different label.

## Biden Devalues Medal Of Freedom

Feckless, an adjective that means "lacking initiative or strength of character; irresponsible." Now to use the word, Joe Biden remains feckless to the end of his time in the White House. Bestowing the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the highest award any American citizen can receive, to George Soros is a slap in the face to every victim of crime in this country. One can debate Biden's giving Hillary Clinton the same honor, but the next thing he's likely to hand her is a pardon and as the original election denier she deserves neither. There are few Americans left who believe Joe Biden is a well-meaning old man.

## It Matters Who You Vote For

God help the people of California. Unfortunately, Los Angeles, the heart of the People's Republic of California is burning to the ground. At this writing, the mayor of Los Angeles is in Africa while the worst fire in Los Angeles' history rages on. Los Angeles firefighters are finding there is no water in the hydrants. President elect Trump has pointed out Governor Gavin Newsome, that knight of the Blue State and would-be-president, refused to sign the water restoration declaration, which would have provided Southern California with millions of gallons of water from melting snow and rain from the northern part of the states. That would have helped farmers, grown food for hungry folks, provided an income for others, and helped stave off the apocalyptic cataclysm of fire currently ravaging Los Angeles.

Trump noted Newsome had some idea of saving a worthless fish called a smelt by giving it less water. Now southern California has much less water. Good thinking, Gavin.

## Congressional Republicans Need To Stick Together

The recent balloting for speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives should serve as a lesson for Republicans. Congressmen Thomas Massie, Keith Self of Texas and Ralph Norman of South Carolina were holdouts imperiling Mike Johnson's reelection as speaker. Massie is a libertarian and has some weird agenda of his own and might as well be a party of one. Self and Norman indicated they were sending a message to Speaker Johnson. Wisely, Congresswoman Nancy Mace pulled out her cell phone and dialed President-elect Donald Trump who was

# School board maintains 2024 legislative priorities

Continued from page 1

to get an education, to choose to go to school and believe we need to continue to be focusing on that."

The board also approved Emerald Academy's renewal application for 10 years.

The motion passed 5-1 with three passes. Voting for renewal were Henderson, Triplett, Morgan, Kristy and Wright. Fontenot-Ridley voted no. Butler, Templeton, and Bike passed.

The board also approved the evaluation of Superintendent Jon Rysewyk.

The evaluation ranked Rysewyk as having performed "above expectations."

With approval of the evaluation, the board's John Butler made a motion for the Knox County Board of Education to begin working in February on the superintendents' next contract, almost a year before his current contract expires.

Butler said even with the high marks coming from the evaluation the board and Rysewyk have many things to achieve.

"I know we still have work to do, we have not achieved all of

our goals," Butler said.

"But I believe the comments from the assessments are saying we're headed in the right direction."

Butler also noted the Knox County Schools system is, "In the middle of creating a new strategic plan," and he did not want that hampered down the road.

Kristi Kristy seconded the motion, noting there were numerous school districts searching for a superintendent and it would not be too soon to begin getting a new contract with Rysewyk in the works.

The board also approved a revised school calendar for the 2025-2026 school year.

The biggest revisions are the start date and final day of school.

The first day back to school for teachers will be July 31. The first day (half-day) for students will be Aug. 7. Winter break will last 10 days rather than nine - Dec. 22 through Jan. 2. The last half day for students is May 21, 2026, and the last day for teachers is May. 22.

## Emerald Academy renewed for 10 more years

Knoxville parents will continue to have an outstanding, tuition-free education option for their children following the renewal of Emerald Academy's charter for 10 more years.

The Knox County Board of Education authorized the renewal at its Jan. 9 meeting following a thorough, yearlong evaluation process. This process culminated in the unanimous recommendation of Knox County Schools' Charter Review Committee that the charter for Emerald Academy - described as a "model charter school" and "a cornerstone of the Knoxville community" - be renewed for another 10-year term.

"We are thrilled with the outcome of the vote," said Emerald Charter Schools' President Steve Diggs. "Since opening Emerald Academy in 2015, we have been committed to providing young people - especially those from our city neighborhoods - with an opportunity to alter their academic trajectory. On behalf of Emerald Academy's faculty and staff, I want to express my gratitude to Knox County Schools and the board for their support. We look forward to the next 10 years and staying faithful to our mission: to prepare urban scholars for the college of their choice and community leadership."

Emerald Academy is a coed public school for kindergarten through eighth grade students that provides a college preparatory education. Emerald Academy was honored as the Tennessee Charter School of the Year in 2021 and was again a finalist



Emerald Academy scholars use Google Chromebooks as part of their classroom learning.

for this award in 2023. The demand for Emerald Academy's supportive, family-like atmosphere is high. Every year, the number of applications to enroll in Emerald Academy has exceeded the number of seats available, and the school has operated with a waitlist of future scholars for every grade level. In parent surveys, the majority of parents consistently rate their level of satisfaction with Emerald Academy as 4 or 5 out of 5.

Enrollment for the 2025-2026 school year is open now. For more information or to apply, visit emeraldacademy.org or call (865) 249-7223.



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# A brief history of the Pryor Brown Garage

By Mike Steely  
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Almost anyone who walks around downtown Knoxville knows where the Pryor Brown Garage is located. It's hard to miss the huge abandoned brick building at Market and Church Street. Many times I've been told, "Let's meet at the Pryor Brown Garage."

The four-story structure was built in the 1920s, one of the first and oldest auto parking garages in our nation. Before Pryor Brown built the large facility, he operated a horse delivery stable there. With the expectation that automobiles would take over most transportation, Brown's new building doubled with space for retail businesses. By the 1930s, Brown's Garage doubled as a taxi company and car rental



PHOTO FROM THE MCCLUNG MUSEUM

**Did you know that once you could rent a car at the Pryor Brown Garage? The four-story building, being demolished now, also had retail businesses and, of course, auto parking.**

location.

The abandoned old garage took up an entire block downtown and several streets round the building

will be closed during demolition, which was scheduled to begin last week.

What will replace the historic old garage? The one

thing that cannot be located in the footprint of the 18,000-square foot building, oddly enough, is a parking lot.

## Sunday event to celebrate Dolly Parton

**Continued from page 1**

2:30: Celebrate 20 Years | Enjoy a medley of favorite Dolly Parton songs by the Holston Middle School Show Choir and hear from participants about the impact of 20 years of Imagination Library in our community.

3:00: Dolly-themed Trivia and a screening of "9 to 5" | Play Dolly Parton, Jane Fonda, and Lily Tomlin deal with a horrible boss in 9 to 5.

Dolly Parton's Imagination Library of Knox County was launched on January 15, 2005, with 1,500 children enrolled. Today, the program, which is administered by the Library, mails out free books every month to 19,000 children under the age of five. Since the Knox County program began, they have mailed out 4.1 million books to 100,000 children.

Having access to books is a critical first step in learning to read. Research shows that 90% of a child's brain is developed in the first few years of life. Reading aloud to children helps forge synopsis, builds vocabulary, and prepares a child to learn to read when they enter school. Time spent reading together also nurtures the parent-child bond.

"We're excited to celebrate 20 years of the Imagination Library and Dolly's birthday. This is more than just a feel-good program," commented Knox County Mayor Glenn Jacobs. "Early literacy can make the difference in whether a child succeeds in school, and having books in hand is the beginning of that journey."

The event is free and open to the public through generous support from Verizon, the Lantry Family Foundation,

and the Tennessee Theatre.

"At Verizon, we believe in the power of community and the importance of supporting initiatives that create lasting impacts. The Dolly Parton Imagination Library embodies the values we hold dear, fostering literacy and empowering young minds," said Leigh Anne Lanier, Atlantic South Market President. "By sponsoring this event, we're not only helping to put books into the hands of children but also strengthening the bonds within our local communities. Together, we can inspire the next generation and make a meaningful difference in the lives of families in the communities we serve."

More information about Books, Birthday Cake and Dreaming Big can be found at [www.knoxcountylibrary.org/dolly-parton-imagination-library](http://www.knoxcountylibrary.org/dolly-parton-imagination-library)

## Police surveillance funding gets mixed vote and disruption

**Cont. from page 1**

Councilman Tommy Smith called opposition to the funding at the meeting "sadly impressive" and cited "lots of misinformation" prior to the meeting. Parker said passing the resolution puts "lipstick on a pig."

The bundled proposal, in a contract with Axon Enterprise Inc., includes updating the department's Real Time Information Center and providing body and in-car cameras, new 10-shot Tasers, drones and other items for legitimate use. Chief Noel said access to cameras at businesses would be voluntary and not for anytime access.

In other action the city council voted to up the contract with Rogers Group Inc. for the Resurfacing Phase II Project to over \$3.7 million, approved \$526,050 for the curb cuts program, upped the Augusta Quarry Amenities Phase II Project to \$3.6 million, and accepted a federal grant of \$500,000 for the Lonsdale Neighborhood Revitalization Project.

Six community-based groups were allotted \$60,000 to support youth and young adult programs. Council also agreed to increase the Gay Street Bridge Repair program's contract by \$30,000 to hire a construction adviser for the 100-year-old bridge. Kincaannon said the hiring will

speed up repairs.

Infrastructure improvements, including a splash pad, were approved for Volunteer Landing with the acceptance of a \$500,000 federal grant.

Historic Preservation funds of \$75,000 were approved for RSJ Investments LLC for a historic property at 310 13th Street.

A request from Knoxville Habitat for Humanity was approved for rezoning 4325 Pinehurst Drive from an Office Zoning to an R-4, general residential neighborhood. The non-profit and the neighborhood met and agreed on 12 homes that will be sold to needy buyers.

The zoning at 100 East Inskip Drive was changed from neighborhood commercial to general commercial to permit an HVAC company to use the property with a promise of no outside work or storage at the once blighted property.

Other zoning changes included 7057 Pine Grove Road to C-H-2 highway commercial, 901 Kermit Drive to C-H-2 highway commercial and 6521 Vance Road to RN-2, single family residential neighborhood.

The council also created a task force to study the city charter process and appoint members to that group.

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**The Doctor is in**  
a weekly column by  
**Dr. Jim Ferguson**

## Mockery

Silence in the face of evil is itself evil:  
Not to speak is to speak.  
Not to act is to act.  
Dietrich Bonhoeffer

I began this essay on Epiphany, January 6, the traditional date the Magi visited the Christ child in Bethlehem. Of course, we don't know the actual date or details about the birth that would change the world. Many envision the manger scene as the composite creche first envisioned and promoted by Saint Francis of Assisi in the 13th century. However, it is quite probable that the Shepherds and Wisemen visited Jesus at different times and in different locations.

For me, the details of Epiphany are less important than Emmanuel, translated, God with us. But on a secular level, what happened in Washington on January 6, 2025, was important to our country and the world. Donald Trump was certified as the next president by Congress as mandated in The Constitution. Thankfully, the certification

process went smoothly. I've never been much for New Year's resolutions, even when needed. But after the last decade of disasters, I'm resolving to do better and America must do so as well or go onto the ash heap of history.

I am a follower of Jesus Christ, who admonished Christians to forgive others; if necessary, even "seventy-seven times" (Matthew 18:22). Perhaps Jesus was using hyperbole to emphasize his point. Admittedly, I'm struggling with whether forgiveness is possible without contrition.

Scripture tells us that the Lord will not only forgive but even forget the sins of a penitent soul (Isaiah 43:25). But is forgiveness possible for someone who is not sorry for their actions or continues to act unjustly? I admit I don't understand how an omniscient God can forget anything, but there are a lot of things I don't understand. Sometimes we just accept (Proverbs 3:5). We are imperfect beings who make mistakes and even commit sinful acts. So, we are challenged to

forgive miscreants, at least those who show remorse and seek forgiveness.

However, what do you do with someone who continues to knowingly and repeatedly break the law, and harm others or your family? Perhaps if I didn't have to deal with such a person again, I might be able to abstractly forgive and forget about them. Scripture also teaches that "vengeance is the Lord's" (Deuteronomy 32:35). I can accept that, but I also believe in consequences, and would not hesitate to put a child rapist in a prison cell with Bubba on Rikers Island.

Instead of hypotheticals, what do we do with the likes of Joe Biden, who mocks the families of Americans whose loved ones were murdered by heinous criminals? How can we forgive Biden who, without remorse, repeatedly lied to Americans and pardoned his son who raised millions of dollars for Biden by trading access to then Vice President Biden? How can we forgive Biden who makes a mockery of the Presidential Citizens Medal by awarding it to Liz Cheney of the corrupt J6 committee, or Hillary Clinton, who paid for the Russian collusion hoax? And how can George Soros, who funded the likes of lawfare progressives like Alvin Bragg who releases criminals to prey upon citizens, be similarly rewarded?

And how can I forgive the legacy media and Democrats who turned a

blind eye to Biden's dementia and corruption? Even tougher, how can I forgive fellow citizens who supported the Biden/Harris Administration with their money and votes causing such harm to Americans?

Jesus once said, "To whom much is given, much is expected" (Luke 12:48). I have been blessed and much is expected of me. Yet, I am just a citizen, whereas the media were given 2nd Amendment protection and responsibility. They violated that trust by ignoring Biden's dementia and lying to the American people for years. Similarly, the Democrat leadership (Pelosi, Schumer, Biden's Cabinet) lied to Americans about Biden's non compos mentis (unsound mind) and caused generational harm to the country. These miscreants traded their sacred honor for power, prestige and money. God may forgive their souls, but I cannot forget their wickedness.

Perhaps my pathway to forgiving fellow citizens is by concluding they were duped by the media and Democrat politicians. It is undeniable that propaganda works, and never has a man been more maligned and vilified than President Trump. Americans were subjected to a constant barrage of lies and were shamed into accepting Democrat and media propaganda about President Trump. Irrational hatred and the Trump Derangement Syndrome (TDS) became a reality for many.

Therefore, I cannot sit in

judgment nor demand an apology. Awareness of the Democrat ploy that accuses others of what they are already doing is sufficient. It was Biden who was lying and selling access to the vice presidency. It was Biden who became a shell of a man. It was not President Trump who was dishonest or imbalanced.

As the failed Biden presidency ends, there is a striking contrast between the bitter and angry Joe Biden and Donald Trump, who is already considered POTUS by the world. Actually, Biden's unelected handlers (Ron Klain, Anita Dunn, John Podesta, etc.) have been the acting POTUS for years. They were fine that Biden was on vacation 40% of the days he was in office and held only three meetings with his Cabinet over the last four years. They all knew he was incompetent to be president and, along with the media, hid the truth.

As wars rage around the world and Los Angeles burns as a result of the incompetent Democrat mayor and governor, I wonder what happened to the drones over New Jersey? Does anyone believe the Secret Service is prepared to protect President Trump at the inauguration against a drone attack?

The government has a history of incompetence and lying to us. We still haven't had explanations for the 26 FBI "assets" and agents at the J6 riots of 2020. Why has there been no explanation for the pipe bomb

outside the DNC on J6 and why was Vice President-elect Kamala Harris at the Democrat headquarters instead of the Capitol? Why did the FBI and Secret Service decide to do a communication system change on that fateful day which they said resulted in a loss of all cellular communication data? And why did the FBI just "find" a new video of the pipe bomber?

Nonetheless, I am encouraged by President Trump whose actions have already challenged China's influence at the critical Panama Canal. How long do you think Panama or Denmark's Greenland would stay sovereign without the United States? Perhaps the Gulf of Mexico should be the Gulf of America.

Trump has already produced results in Mexico as migrant caravans are disbanding and Mexico will be doing more with the cartels ... or else. Conservative leaders are rising in Italy, Austria, Germany and Argentina. The liberal Labor government in England may collapse for ignoring "rape gangs" in that country after Elon Musk raised awareness on X. And liberal Justin Trudeau has resigned as prime minister in Canada over border issues with the US.

In this new year, it is my prayer that we are on the cusp of a cataclysmic shift from the lunacy of liberalism to the common sense of conservatism.

You may email Dr. Ferguson at [fergusonj@knoxfocus.com](mailto:fergusonj@knoxfocus.com)

## Revisiting some of our favorite state parks

### A Day Away



By Mike Steely

Over the years, my wife and I have visited almost all of the Tennessee State Parks. Often we're camping there or dropping by while moving from one park to another. We often stop and take photos of ourselves

at the park entrances and the campsites upon arrival. After setting up camp, we drive to nearby attractions, natural areas or the nearby towns.

One of our favorites is **T.O. Fuller State Park** which overlooks Memphis. The park is a rural site in the midst of the city and is a welcome break from travel. Located just off I-240 there at 1500 West Mitchell Road, the facility is just a few miles from the casinos in Tunica, Alabama, and has a surprising find.

While digging for a swimming pool on adjacent land

in 1938, the site of an ancient Native American village was unearthed. Today that site, just beyond the campground, is called the "Chucalissa Indian Village" and features an archeological site and a modern museum. It's a striking place to walk around.

**Paris Landing State Park** in northwest Tennessee is another favorite place to visit because of its camping, the historic nature of the old river port, and its proximity to Buchanan, the county seat of Henry County.

**Continue on page 2**



PHOTO BY THOMAS R MACHNITZKI VIA WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

You would never expect to find a pre-historic village in the heart of Memphis but it is part of the the C.H. Nash Museum at Chucalissa by the T.O. Fuller State Park there. That park and others across our state are favorite places to visit or stay while exploring the Volunteer State.

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# TENNESSEE SCHOLARS' BOWL 2025

## New Season Begins Airing Monday, Jan. 13

Tennessee Scholars' Bowl, an exciting academic tournament featuring students from forty-six high schools in East Tennessee and Southeast Kentucky, begins airing its forty-first season on Monday, January 13, 2025, on East Tennessee PBS. New episodes will air weekdays at 5:30 p.m. ET through April 13, 2025.

The host and head-writer of Tennessee Scholars' Bowl is Frank Murphy, who returns for his ninth season on the show. Murphy is an experienced broadcaster, podcaster and improviser in the Knoxville area.

Public, private, parochial and home schools compete in Tennessee Scholars' Bowl. Tennessee counties represented in the 2025 tournament are Anderson, Blount, Carter, Claiborne, Cocke, Greene, Hamblen, Jefferson, Knox, Loudon, McMinn, Monroe, Roane, Scott, Sevier, Sullivan, Unicoi and Washington. Several schools sent multiple teams to the tournament. Teams of four students

answer questions in Literature, Language, Science, Art, Math, Geography, Music, Sports, History, Religion, Current Events, and other subjects. Each game is a single elimination match. Winning teams advance to rounds of thirty-two, sixteen, eight, and four before the final two teams compete for the Frank Miller Memorial Trophy and a \$1,000 cash stipend in the championship game.

After the first-round games are completed, the "Threshold of 32" begins airing on February 20, 2025. The "Smart 16" begins airing on March 14, 2025. The "Educated 8" begins airing on March 26, 2025. The "Philosophical 4" begins airing on April 1, 2025. The championship game will air on April 3, 2025.

Recent Tennessee Scholars' Bowl champions include Hardin Valley Academy in 2024, J. Frank White Academy in 2023, Maryville High School in 2022, Hardin Valley Academy in 2021, Cedar Springs Homeschool in 2020 and 2019, Webb School of Knoxville in 2018, and Farragut High School in 2017.

# Catching up with Traveling Robert

By Mike Steely  
Senior Writer  
steelym@knoxfocus.com

Robert Morales is better known as "Traveling Robert" and travels the United States and elsewhere producing videos on YouTube and Facebook. His adventures began in 2014 in a small Winnebago Micro Mini 17-foot travel trailer and in 2020, Winnebago loaned him a new 17-foot unit so he could travel as a brand ambassador.

Traveling Robert's posts include road footage, hikes, dining in or out of the trailer, visiting tourism destinations, state and federal parks, and other places of interest. The shows follow his daily ventures by way of his camera, cell phone, cameras in his truck, and on his trailer with images of campgrounds and roadside overnight stays. All the while Morales provides commentary, voice over and background music. Sometimes his wife, Ileana, travels with him.

His Tennessee visits have resulted in shows about Chattanooga, the Natchez Trace, Nashville and the Pigeon Forge and Gatlinburg area.

The Traveling Robert shows have become an imaginary vacation for viewers. The Focus caught up with him and asked several questions.

**How did you get involved with the show and what did you do before?**

Videography has always been a hobby of mine, and even though I went to college for TV production I never actually worked in the field. I did have a job at several TV networks but in the traffic and commercial operations side of the business. YouTube became an outlet for my

creative side, first as a hobby until eventually, people started to watch, and further down the road I was able to make a living doing it.

**Do you cycle back to your Florida home between your travels? Tell us about your family.**

I like to think of myself as a part-time traveler. We'll spend 2-3 months on the road, and then a similar amount of time at home base in Miami, Florida, where I spent most of my time editing the videos of the previous few months. Home base is also where my 90-year-old mom and stepson live, so it is good to come back to home base once in a while, even though the road beckons.

**How do your sponsors help fund your show and your travels?**

They are important but not the main source of income. I make money in several ways. The main one is through YouTube, by their ad sense advertisement, YouTube premium, and channel memberships. Individual advertisers provide an extra source of income, as well as merchandise sales, music streaming, etc.

**In your many travels, you have visited East Tennessee now and then. Can you share some highlights?**

The Smoky Mountains and Appalachia in general are always a highlight. It is one of my favorite areas of the country. Also, since I am a musician, Nashville has a special place in my heart. Tennessee is a very diverse state, and to be honest I have barely scratched the surface. I should add it to the top of my 2025 travel list.

**Are you planning to come back through**

**the region this year?**

You read my mind. The short answer is "yes." There's still a lot to be explored in the Volunteer State.

**You were injured while on an adventure. Tell us about it.**

I'm no stranger to illness on the road. When you travel as much as I do it is bound to happen. You will have the occasional health hiccup here and there, but nothing had impacted our travels as much as the bad fall I experienced while hiking in Arizona. I slipped, fell and sprained my ankle, cracked my fibula, and my wife Ileana had to get a crash course on driving cross country because it happened to be my driving leg. Luckily I didn't need surgery and two years later I'm 90% recovered.

**Do you have a TV or online show other than Traveling Robert?**

For a short while, I was able to publish some of my shows on Amazon Prime, but they stopped allowing independent creators to publish there, so I decided to concentrate on YouTube and other social media instead. I don't believe my content has even been on broadcast television.

**What's your favorite place in the U.S. to visit so far?**

I love the mountains and the desert, so anywhere out there in Utah, Arizona and California, but if I have to pick only one, I'd say the Grand Canyon never gets old.

**If someone wanted to contact you what's the easiest way to reach you?**

I am @travelingrobert in all the social networks. Also through my website, travelingrobert.com.

## Revisiting some of our favorite state parks

**Cont. from page 1**

Buchanan has an Amish community and the downtown replica of the Eiffel Tower, standing 70 feet high inside the little city park. Located just off Highway 641 and just a few miles south of Murray, Kentucky, the Paris Landing park has camping, a lodge, and cabins for rent. We stopped at the old town site near the park and took photos of an abandoned river bridge there.

The **Natchez Trace** is a 444-mile ancient path stretching south from the Nashville area to deep into Mississippi. One of our memorable places along the route is the Meriwether Lewis site at Grinder's Stand. While not a "state" park, the place has a campground and is on the "original" trace. Inside the park is the broken monument of Lewis, who was traveling to Washington, D. C., for a meeting with President Thomas Jefferson when shots were heard inside the Grinder homestead there and Lewis was discovered dead.

The Grinder Stand is replicated in the park as well as the monument that marks the grave of the famous "Lewis and Clark" personality. His death remains a mystery yet today.

Don't be confused by the "Natchez Trace State Park" located along I-40 west of Nashville. It's a neat park but not the site of the actual trace. There are several places along the real Trace where you can pull off and take a brief walk to see the remains of the ancient wagon and horse trail.

**Fort Loudoun State Park** near Vonore, south of Maryville and just off Highway 411, is a replica of the 1756 fort built by the English in the midst of the Cherokee villages there. Various events including re-enactments take place there and it's convenient to Knoxville. The park has 1,200 acres, walking trails, picnic tables, and usually lots of parking spaces. The museum recalls the history of the old fort including artifacts and a cannon recovered long after the fort was abandoned and destroyed

by the local tribe.

Just across the lake is a later fort, Tellico Block House, with the original fort site marked and a well that served the fort. Just south and across the road from Fort Loudoun is the Sequoyah Birthplace Museum, a place with lots of exhibits about the inventor of the Cherokee Alphabet. The museum hosts various events and has a gift shop. A day away to the two old fort sites and the Sequoyah Museum is well worth a visit. While none of the parks have camping, there are several commercial camping grounds nearby.

**Cedars of Lebanon State Park** is conveniently located just south of Lebanon and I-40 east of Nashville. There are three campgrounds there with full hookups, a gift shop and visitor center, and a pool

The park has cabins and a lodge, lots of nearby restaurants, and unique bluffs and rock shelters just off the campgrounds. Located just off Highway 231, the park is convenient to the

Nashville area. Lots of times we'd camp there, unhook the camper, and venture off into the state capitol or nearby towns.

**Norris Dam State Park** seems to be our favorite local state park because it is so close and has so much to offer. There are two camping areas there, some rustic cabin rentals, hiking trails, a museum and other exhibits, and miles of hiking trails along the lake and at the river below the dam. A walk across the first TVA dam on the U.S. Highway 441 bridge is interesting. There are visitor centers, lots of parking, and activities.

While in that area you may want to visit the town of Norris, built as the dam was being constructed, or the Museum of Appalachia on Andersonville Highway just east of Clinton.

These are just a few of the state parks or other interesting parks we've visited. Getting out for a weekend or a day with the family can be fun and educational.

### TENNESSEE SCHOLARS' BOWL FIRST ROUND BROADCAST DATES ON EAST TENNESSEE PBS

Mon 1/13/2025 - L&N STEM vs West Ridge  
Tues 1/14/2025 - Cedar Springs vs Karns  
Wed 1/15/2025 - Grace Christian vs Hardin Valley  
Thurs 1/16/2025 - Science Hill vs Sullivan East  
Fri 1/17/2025 - Roane County vs Sweetwater  
Mon 1/20/2025 - Gibbs vs Knox Central  
Tues 1/21/2025 - Greeneville vs Morristown East  
Wed 1/22/2025 - Gatlinburg-Pittman vs Happy Valley  
Thurs 1/23/2025 - L&N STEM vs Loudon  
Fri 1/24/2025 - Sequoyah vs Webb  
Mon 1/27/2025 - Corbin, Kentucky vs J Frank White  
Tues 1/28/2025 - Happy Valley vs Seymour  
Wed 1/29/2025 - Rockwood vs Unicoi County  
Thurs 1/30/2025 - Jefferson County vs Seymour  
Fri 1/31/2025 - Oneida vs West Ridge  
Mon 2/3/2025 - Greeneville vs Jefferson County  
Tues 2/4/2025 - Daniel Boone vs Providence  
Wed 2/5/2025 - Christian Academy Knox vs Hardin Valley  
Thurs 2/6/2025 - Maryville vs Pigeon Forge  
Fri 2/7/2025 - Providence vs South Greene  
Mon 2/10/2025 - Career Magnet vs Webb  
Tues 2/11/2025 - Anderson County vs Temple Academy  
Wed 2/12/2025 - Cocke County vs Halls  
Thurs 2/13/2025 - Alcoa vs Morristown West  
Fri 2/14/2025 - Harriman vs Knoxville Catholic  
Mon 2/17/2025 - Dobyms-Bennett vs Midway  
Tues 2/18/2025 - Cedar Springs vs Scott County  
Wed 2/19/2025 - Dobyms-Bennett vs Sevier County  
Thurs 2/20/2025 - Farragut vs Rockwood

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# A Missionary In Politics

# Walter Judd of Minnesota

Pages from the Past



By Ray Hill

rayhill865@gmail.com

Walter Judd lived a remarkable life, long in years and purpose. Judd was by profession a doctor and a good one. Judd was also a man of deep and abiding faith who worked as a medical missionary amongst the Chinese. Walter Judd was also one of the most visible anti-Communists in the United States. Judd, while in China, had only barely escaped being murdered by the Communists. "I had my belly full of them," Judd recalled decades later with a bitter smile. While working at the Chinese-Mongolian border, Judd was captured by the invading Japanese Army and held as a prisoner of war for five months. Eventually, he returned home to the United States where, with a missionary's zeal, he spoke out on what was happening in the Far East. "You have a choice between your silks and your sons," Judd candidly told thousands of astonished American mothers. As a public speaker, Walter Judd was a wonder, speaking at 240 words per minute in a high-pitched voice that usually kept his audiences spellbound.

By all accounts, Walter Judd was a remarkable man. Judd had worked his way through the University of Nebraska by washing and drying dishes while earning a Phi Beta Kappa key. When Dr. Judd sailed to China he first nearly died from malaria before being captured by the Japanese and Chinese Communists. When he returned to the United States in 1938, Judd made some 14,000 speeches in two years urging a change in U. S. foreign policy. Judd urged the United States not to send war supplies to Japan. As a doctor, Judd told congressmen, "I spent my time taking American scrap out of Chinese men women and children." Judd also once wrote he was "increasingly convinced that the Chinese Communists are Communists first and Chinese second."

Friends and neighbors led a campaign to elect Judd to Congress in 1942, raising the necessary money for a campaign and providing a steady flow of workers. Judd beat incumbent Oscar F. Youngdahl easily and swamped Farmer-Labor and Democrat candidates in the general election by a wide margin. Judd labeled himself a "progressive conservative."

When Walter Judd won his first term in the House of Representatives, he outlined the three things he believed a good congressman should do, listing them as work for good legislation, tending to the needs and concerns of the constituency that elected him, and lastly to get reelected. Judd

told his wife, Miriam, that when the other two began to interfere with the first, it was time for him to leave Congress.

Like many Midwestern states, Minnesota had been a hotbed of isolationism, which was reflected in much of its delegation in Congress. Henrik Shipstead, Minnesota's senior U. S. senator, resembled nothing more than an old Viking and was one of the strongest noninterventionists in the Senate. If anything, his colleague Ernest Lundeen, a Farmer-Laborite, was even more rabidly against internationalism and American intervention. Lundeen was killed in a 1941 airplane crash and replaced by Republican Joseph Ball, a newspaper reporter and internationalist.

Walter Judd also rejected isolationism and supported foreign aid, saying, "It offers the way to get the most security for the least cost." Dr. Judd also urged Americans to welcome those refugees who escaped from totalitarian regimes. When Anastas Mikoyan, an old Bolshevik from the time of Lenin, was touring the United States, the congressman refused an invitation to dine with the Soviets. When asked why, Congressman Judd tartly replied, "For the same reason we would not attend a social function honoring Hitler, Himmler, Nero or Genghis Khan."

While in Bulgaria along with Senator Carl Hatch of New Mexico, a Democrat, and Congressman John Davis Lodge of Connecticut, a Republican, the congressional trio realized some gestures carry quite a lot of meaning. The delegation was all too well aware of the irony that decisions at the end of the Second World War had freed many millions of people from the brutality of the Nazi regime, only to relegate them to a different form of totalitarian government as satellites of the Soviet empire. The congressmen bought a funeral wreath and as they headed toward the airport, made a detour, stopping at the cemetery where the remains of Nikola Petroff lay. Petroff had been executed eight days earlier for his opposition to the Communist government. The three laid the wreath on Petroff's grave and honored the memory of a man who died for the desire for freedom.

When the House formed an odd coalition of Republicans, Southern Democrats and New York congressman Vito Marcantonio, who hued the Communist line in Congress, to defeat a \$60 million foreign aid package to Korea in 1950 by a single vote, Walter Judd was horrified. "If, on top of the blow



AP WIREPHOTO FROM THE AUTHOR'S PERSONAL COLLECTION

Congressman Walter Judd addressing the 1960 Republican National Convention.

the Administration has just dealt to the last hope of the Chinese, we here today walk out on the Koreans, what do you think it will do to the hearts and hopes and confidence in us of the other 800 million human beings in Asia? On their decisions depends more of our own future than we realize," Judd cried.

Congressman Judd was frequently one of the most effective debaters in Congress, especially when it came time to argue the merits of appropriation bills allocating foreign aid. Judd was oftentimes the congressman who tangled verbally on the House floor with Otto Passman, a Louisiana Democrat who was a renowned junketeer, but also one who understood where every dollar of foreign aid was spent. After traveling anywhere, congressmen could expect a lengthy report from Passman. The Louisiana lawmaker routinely attempted to pare down the expense of foreign aid, sometimes slicing away the meat and muscle down to the bone. When President Dwight Eisenhower's 1960 budget proposed spending \$3.9 billion on foreign aid, Otto Passman, wearing a white linen suit, got to his feet to bellow, "First, we cannot spend ourselves rich. Second, we cannot make ourselves secure by giving ourselves away. Third, we cannot buy friends. We were once told that foreign aid would stop Communism. Now we are told it is our duty to buy our way of life for countries all over the world. But we cannot in fact improve their living standards by as much as one percent even if we should give away everything we own."

"The question is what is to happen in our nation's interest. Sometimes we act as if we were not at war - - - and in the most perilous situation in which the US has ever been - - - partly because it does not look like war," Judd replied. "Therefore we do not go all out to do the things necessary to win."

The House, with a huge

Democrat majority, agreed with Passman and lopped off more than \$800 million of proposed foreign aid funding.

In 1958, following a special election in Minnesota inside a heavily Republican district, Judd became alarmed when a young Democrat came within 664 votes of winning. Judd placed the blame directly on Eisenhower's controversial secretary of agriculture, Ezra Taft Benson. Judd, along with Nebraska congressman Arthur L. Miller, personally went to see Secretary Benson, who was surprised when the two congressmen told him he must resign for the good of the Republican Party. Should he remain in office, Benson was told, it would cost Republicans 20-25 members of their caucus to be defeated in the fall elections. Judd and Miller blamed the near loss in the Minnesota special election on Benson's decision to lower dairy price supports, which had naturally been hugely unpopular with dairy farmers. Benson, politically tone-deaf, told the congressman he was staying in office and would "continue to pursue a course which I believe is best for our farmers." Judd had to admire Benson's determination to do what he thought was right.

In 1960, Vice President Richard Nixon was the presumptive GOP nominee for president. A man who paid attention to every little detail of party conventions, Nixon personally selected Walter Judd to give the keynote speech of the convention which he expected to nominate him.

Judd's congressional district had been seriously altered by redistricting in 1962. The congressman

was also becoming increasingly disgruntled with his job. Judd's view as a congressman was much like that of a physician; he knew what treatment and course was best. Walter Judd was becoming steadily buried beneath what he clearly saw as a mountain of trivia by his constituents, who brought their requests for everything from ". . . more Public Health Service grants for the University of Minnesota to Coke machines for the Minneapolis post office." The demands on his time were such that Judd found it impossible to properly study all the pending legislation before him. "You don't want a man to operate on you who just skims his medical books," Judd opined. Perhaps more importantly, Walter Judd was all too aware the political coloration of his district had changed following redistricting. Previously, the congressman had enjoyed a safe seat with his district being centered in the conservative areas of south Minneapolis. After redistricting, Judd's district took in several heavily Democratic wards, changing the political complexion completely. "I don't know that you can get elected in the present situation unless you are willing to work day and night for it. I am not," Judd said bluntly.

After twenty years, Judd said he was retiring. Politics encourages skepticism and the cynical wondered if Congressman Judd wasn't attempting to stir up support to draft him as a candidate once again. "I feel there are things I can do more usefully in the remaining years of my life," the 63-year-old congressman said. "I'm not a devious person. If I wanted to

run again, I'd run."

That same year, 1962, Walter Judd was named as one of the five most admired and influential men in Congress. In the end, Walter Judd did run again. Minnesota's Farmer-Labor and Democratic parties had merged to form the Democratic Farmer Labor (DFL) Party. Judd's opponent was Donald Fraser, a 38-year-old state senator. Fraser was all for the Kennedy Administration and was critical of the "obstructionist coalition of Dixiecrats and Republicans who oppose important social programs." "Or do they want to elect a liberal Democratic majority responsive to the needs of our decade?" Don Fraser asked voters.

Much of the conversation during the campaign involved President Kennedy's handling of the Cuba crisis. Judd's criticism of Kennedy was pointed, and the congressman lamented the president was "a weaker person than we realized." Fraser, naturally, defended the president, although he was taken aback when Kennedy blockaded the island.

Institutions, political and otherwise, can be and have been toppled. Donald Fraser did not find it easy to topple the political institution that was Dr. Walter Judd. Congressman Judd handily won the old confines of his old district, but lost the areas added to his district. Fraser eked out a narrow victory, winning by just over 6,000 votes.

Not having wished to run again, Dr. Walter Judd had made a game campaign in a district that had been altered to easily elect a Democrat and quite nearly closed the gap. Judd left the House of Representatives as one of its most respected members. Judd once again was one of the featured speakers at the 1964 GOP National Convention which nominated Arizona U.S. Senator Barry Goldwater for the presidency.

In 1981, Dr. Walter Judd was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom by President Ronald Reagan. Judd lived to see the fall of the Soviet Union, which he considered a validation of the views he held throughout his long life. Following his defeat, Judd lived in the Washington, D.C., area.

Dr. Walter Judd died of cancer at age 95 on February 13, 1994. In death, the remains of Dr. Walter Judd were laid to rest in the state of his birth, Nebraska, rather than Minnesota whose people had given him a powerful voice in America's national politics for decades.

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FROM THE MOUNTAINS BY JADON GIBSON

# Wagner cheated Tennessee out of a death sentence

By Jadon Gibson

Kinnie Wagner was a notorious bad man with an uncanny talent in shooting firearms which led to an early career as a circuit trick shooter. Unfortunately, the misuse of his talent led to a lifetime on the wrong side of the law.

Wagner was born at Speer's Ferry in Scott County, Virginia, in 1903. His circuit work entitled him to see a lot of the country before being arrested for minor theft in Green County, Mississippi. He received widespread attention when he shot and killed a deputy sheriff who attempted to recapture him following a jailbreak. Although a reward was posted, no one heard from Wagner for over a year.

On April 13, 1925, law officers in Kingsport, Tennessee, were notified that Kinnie was boat riding in a nearby river. They were aware he was wanted for murder in Mississippi and of his marksmanship prowess.

"Get a casket ready for Kinnie," one of five lawmen said while leaving the Kingsport office to answer the call.

The officers fired a volley of shots while Wagner was near the water's edge. None found their mark and the fugitive was able to get ashore to hide behind a tree.

Kinnie's first shot mortally wounded G. M. Frazier. He then shot Joe Groseclose and John Smith who were approaching from another direction. Smith died immediately. Wagner

then fled through the trees to escape but encountered Hubert Webb, another lawman whom he also shot and killed.

The other members of the arrest party fled. Wagner later remarked, "I could have killed them all but I won't shoot a man in the back."

The following day Wagner was taken prisoner near Moccasin Gap and was jailed in Blountville. He admitted to the killings during the 5-day trial that commenced one week later on April 21, 1925. The trial drew many people to Sullivan County.

The jury found Kinnie Wagner guilty and the death penalty was pronounced. Wagner was granted a new trial but escaped with five other lesser criminals and felons on July 11, just before it was to begin. A reward of \$2,500 dead or alive was widely advertised.

A Bristol Herald Courier article dated July 16, 1925, said that Kinnie was reportedly seen in Hemlock, North Carolina; Kingsport, Church Hill, Ford's Store, Fordtown and Johnstone City in Tennessee; and Gate City, Norton, Tannersville, Bluefield and near Bristol in Virginia.

They went on to say that the townsfolk felt slighted because Kinnie had been reportedly sighted in so many other places but not in Bristol. Wagner was miles away.

More than a year passed before a man giving his name as Harry Logan walked into the sheriff's office in Texarkana,

Arkansas, in August 1926 and turned himself in. He said he had killed two men nearby.

They soon discovered that Harry Logan was none other than Kinnie Wagner who was wanted for murder in both Mississippi and Tennessee.

Four states asked for Wagner but he was turned over to Mississippi because he was already sentenced there. He received an additional life sentence.

While being transported to the Mississippi State Prison at Parchman, Wagner attempted to escape but was knocked unconscious by a guard.

Wagner shot it out with prison guards in December of 1927 before aborting another escape attempt when it appeared hopeless.

He then became a model prisoner and eventually a prison trustee. While helping a posse search for an escapee on October 27, 1940, Wagner overpowered a guard and forced him to drive to the Memphis highway at gunpoint.

Wagner remained free for two and a half years despite widespread notification of his escape.

Early on the morning of April 15, 1943, FBI agents, state troopers and local police operating on information waited for Kinnie Wagner along a mountain road six miles west of Gate City, Virginia, in his native Scott County.

As the vehicle in which Wagner was riding neared, the authorities fired a barrage of tracer bullets. Kinnie saw the proverbial

handwriting on the wall and surrendered.

A new statute had recently enabled FBI agents to participate in the apprehension of Wagner. Agents from Richmond and Knoxville participated in the capture.

Wagner was wearing two .38 revolvers and his gun belt held 50 shells. There were 1,600 rounds of ammunition in the car in addition to a sawed-off shotgun, four pistols, a .22 caliber rifle and a .35-40 rifle.

Although the death penalty awaited Kinnie Wagner in Tennessee it could not

be imposed while he remained under a life sentence in Mississippi.

Mississippi immediately asked for Wagner's return. Shackled hand and foot, Wagner was taken to Lynchburg for a hearing and then returned to the prison at Parchman. With his history of murders and escape no one expected to hear from Wagner again.

Wrong.

On March 15, 1948, Kinnie Wagner again escaped and eluded the law for seven years.

He died from a heart attack in the Mississippi State Penitentiary on

March 5, 1958, and was returned to Weber City in Scott County, Virginia, for burial.

Thousands of curious citizens, reminiscent of his 1925 trial in Blountville, lined the highways. They came to bid goodbye to Kinnie Wagner who received his final sentence where there would be no escape.

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Jadon Gibson is a widely read Appalachian writer from Harrogate, Tennessee. His stories are both historic and nostalgic in nature.



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## MIDDLE SCHOOL BASKETBALL

# Tedford leads Bearden to comeback win over Golden Bears in showdown of champions

By Ken Lay

The Knox County Middle School Basketball Conference ended in thrilling fashion Thursday night.

The league's two champions concluded the regular season in a showdown between two heavyweights as Vine, the winner of the KCMSBC's Class AA crown, tangled with Bearden, who wrapped up the Class AAA championship before Christmas.

And this game lived up to the

hype as the Bruins came back from an 11-point deficit to edge the Golden Bears, 37-32, before a packed and boisterous house at Bearden Middle School.

It wasn't a conference game but for Bearden, it was a big contest and a huge win. The Bruins (17-1) found their way back into the win column after falling to league rival Farragut on the road on Monday, Jan. 6.

"I don't want to say that our guys were overlooking Farragut

but we didn't play our best basketball, and Farragut is playing as well as anybody right now," Bearden coach Ben Zorio said. "I give Farragut a lot of credit because they haven't lost a league game since November when they lost to us and West Valley.

"But we had some guys that have been looking forward to this game for a long time."

The Golden Bears (16-1) seized the upper hand in this one early,

opening an 8-3 lead in the first quarter as Bearden endured some early shooting woes. The Bruins, however, would respond in the second stanza of this defensive struggle and claw their way back into the contest and pull to within 12-11 by halftime.

Vine regained control of things in the third frame. The Golden Bears came out blazing to start the second half. They went on a 10-point run and extended their advantage to 22-11 when Jahmir

Kimbrough buried a three-pointer with 4 minutes, 21 seconds remaining in the quarter.

Vine entered the final six minutes of the contest with a 28-20 lead, before the Bruins (17-1) came storming back.

Bearden's Paxton Tedford went to work on the offensive end and the Bruins tightened up their defense over the final six minutes of the regular season. In his last home game as a Bruin, Tedford

**Continue on page 6**

## HIGH SCHOOL WRESTLING

# New coach has Farragut winning and growing

By Steve Williams

A brand new coach took over the boys' wrestling program at Farragut High this season and the results have been surprisingly good.

Sixty-year-old Charlie Rohn and his family moved to Knoxville from Maryland last July and his son, Dylan, had been on two state winning teams the past two years.

"We came here and they didn't have a coach," recalled Rohn. "And he (his son) wasn't going to be able to wrestle and he's a senior.

"So, they were looking for people and finally my wife says, 'Well, you should probably volunteer.' I said well it's been a long time since I wrestled. So anyway, I applied for the position and then they hired me. I told them I would stay at least a minimum of two to three years to add some continuity and to help out."

Asked to describe his career as a wrestling coach last week, Rohn said: "This is the start of it. The last time I wrestled was 43 years ago (in high school)."

The start began with a lot of recruiting in the Farragut cafeteria. A senior on the team, Michael Stafford-Hedge, and the new coach's son, Dylan, helped.

"I would go to the school everyday probably for at



PHOTOS BY STEVE WILLIAMS

**Farragut boys' wrestling has taken on a new look this season. Leading the way for the Admirals are (left to right) Jonathan Laney, Michael Stafford-Hedge, Dylan Rohn and Head Coach Charlie Rohn.**

least a month straight and go to all three lunch periods to recruit kids," Coach Rohn recalled.

He built Farragut's roster up to 35 members. Other than four upperclassmen (three seniors and a junior), the other 31 are sophomores and freshmen "and brand new wrestlers," said Rohn.

"They (Farragut) have had a wrestling program, but not many kids on it."

The results on the mat have also been good after a little bit of a rocky start.

The Admirals entered last Thursday night's meet at Clinton with wins in 10 dual matches so far this season. The top individual won-loss records on the team were held by Rohn (33-1), Stafford-Hedge (23-3) and Jonathan Laney (21-11).

Rohn wrestles in the 144-pound weight class, Stafford-Hedge at 165 and Laney, a junior, at 138.

"We ended up only having two matches, as Knoxville Catholic didn't want to stay out too late (due to

weather)," Coach Rohn said. "We won both matches, 42-36 over Clinton and 60-21 over Scott, who beat us in our first match of the season 42-38."

Rohn pinned his opponent from Scott and had a forfeit from Clinton and Stafford-Hedge pinned both of his opponents. Zac Posey also had his first varsity pin.

"It was a good test for us against Scott," said Coach Rohn. "I didn't know they were going to be here until three or four hours before the match. We got an opportunity to redeem ourselves. We made some rookie mistakes in the first meeting. When you're new, there's a lot of growth opportunity.

"I have about five kids who have had wrestling

experience."

The Admirals as a team now have won 12 dual matches and lost seven.

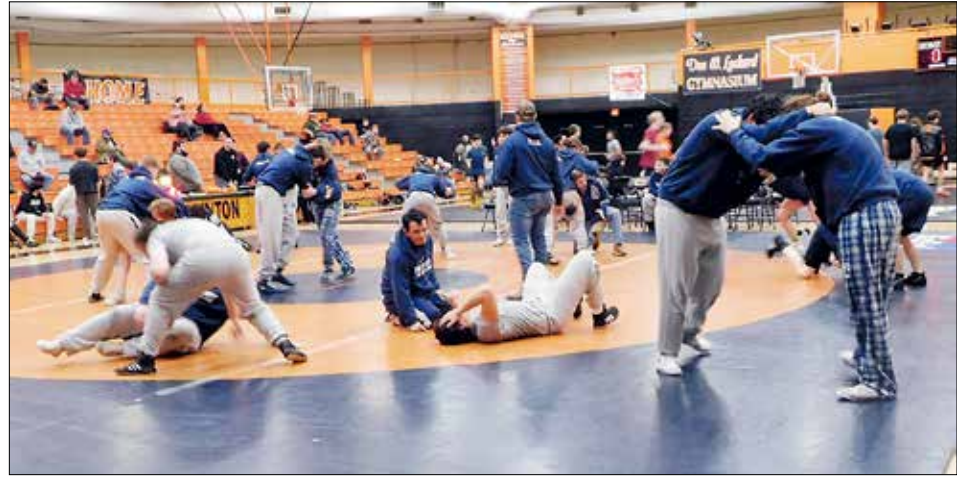
Coach Rohn took his team to a tournament in Cleveland, a hotbed of high school wrestling and currently ranked No. 1 in the state, earlier this season. "They put us in a tough pool there and we won one and lost a few," he said.

The new coach said he couldn't take credit for the team's top wrestlers. "Those kids were already wrestling. Other than my son, I helped them some, but he (Dylan) had some other good training.

"The key to the success of the team is all the kids are willing to work hard."

A surprising development about a month into

**Continue on page 6**

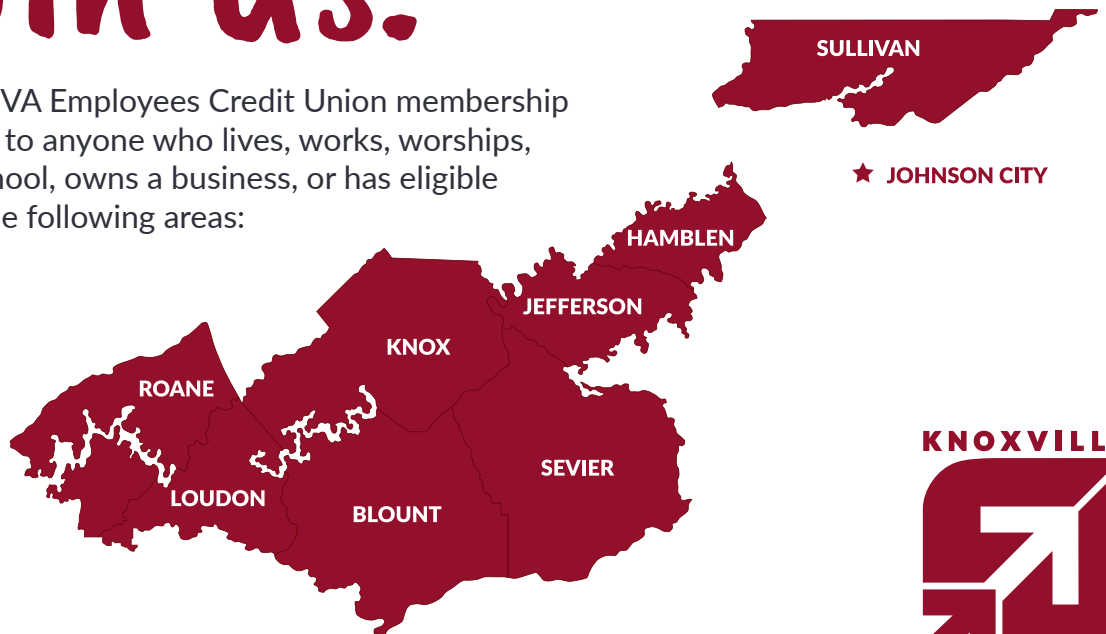


**A large number of Farragut wrestlers warm up for their opening match against host Clinton Thursday night. In-school recruiting led to the Admirals having 35 wrestlers this season, with 31 being sophomores and freshmen.**



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## HIGH SCHOOL BASKETBALL

# Martin's big fourth quarter seals Rebels' victory over Austin-East

By Ken Lay

For much of his team's game against Austin-East Wednesday night, West High School forward Devyn Martin was sitting on the bench plagued by foul trouble, keeping him relatively quiet.

Martin was whistled for a fourth foul early in the third quarter, sending him back to the Rebels' sideline.

While he sat, West High and the Roadrunners were embroiled in a tightly contested game. When Martin returned in the final frame, he made a rapid and huge impact, scoring 10 of his 15 points in the Rebels' 77-59 victory over the Roadrunners in Marble City. His offensive production keyed a late 21-8 run over the final eight minutes of the contest.

"In the fourth quarter, Devyn was huge," West coach Tommy Eggleston said. "It was important for us to learn to play without him because he's going to get into foul trouble again."

In Martin's absence, guard Jailon Hill shouldered the bulk of the offensive load for the Rebels, who improved to 12-3 on the season. Hill finished with a game-high 30 points and was one of four West players to post double figures in the scoring column. Kevin Jack and Robert Shuler finished with 11 points each.

It was the Rebels' second victory over Austin-East this season. West defeated the Roadrunners (5-11), 71-50, on Friday, Dec. 13, in the Battle of the 'Ville at Fulton High School, but Eggleston said that Austin-East has improved since the first meeting between the two teams.

"That was a different Austin-East team than the one we saw at Fulton," Eggleston said. "They weren't scared of us and they took the game to us. They gave us all we wanted and more."

(Austin-East coach) Darnard (Bertram) has really done a good job over there. They've really improved, and I think we got them tired."

The game was close throughout. West led 16-13 at the end of the first quarter. The Rebels extended their advantage to 37-30 by halftime, and had a 56-51 lead heading into the final frame.



PHOTOS BY ROB TAYLOR.

**Devyn Martin of West High battles Juwaan Troutman in the Rebels' 77-59 win Wednesday. Martin scored 10 points in the fourth quarter to help West seal its victory over the Roadrunners.**

The Roadrunners trimmed their deficit to 54-51 when D'Andre Hundley converted a three-point play with 24.9 seconds remaining in the third stanza.

Demarcus Johnson led Austin-East with 16 points. Lorrione Winton had 12 for the Roadrunners, who were scheduled to host Fulton Saturday.

**Lady Roadrunners run past West:** Tymirrianna Brown scored 26 points and Daleyah Brown added 12 to lead Austin-East over the Lady Rebels 71-27 Wednesday night at West High.

The Lady Roadrunners darted out to a 29-4 lead in the first quarter and never looked back.

Austin-East held the Lady Rebels to just three field goals over the first 16 minutes of the contest. West made its first shot from the floor when Layina Holbert scored with 7 minutes, 26 seconds remaining in the second stanza. Holbert scored five points for the Lady Rebels.



**Above:** Austin East's Em-mashae Williams dribbles past West High's Caroline Wanamaker (25) and Josie Smith (30) in the Lady Roadrunners' 71-27 win over the Lady Rebels on Wednesday at West High.

**Left:** A-E cheerleader Jamia Cooper leads cheers for the Roadrunners at their basketball game at West High Wednesday night.



PHOTO BY BROOKLYN ANDERSON

**Powell freshman Dalvin Farmer looks to make a play against Campbell County in a District 3-4A game at PHS last week. The visiting Cougars held on for a 55-51 win.**

## Powell can't catch Cougars in 55-51 loss

By Steve Williams

Powell High's boys basketball team has had several one step forward and two steps back this season.

But the talent is there for some big nights and there's still a long way to go before tournament time.

One of Powell's biggest wins of the year was a 39-37 victory over Carter in the semifinals of the Faris McDonald's Christmas Shootout. Powell had lost to Carter 73-49 in early December on its home court. The up-and-down Panthers also bowed to Heritage in the finals of that holiday tournament.

In their last outing, the Panthers (7-10 overall, 2-1 in District 3-4A) fought back from a nine-point deficit midway through the final period to get within three, but Campbell County held on in the final minute for a 55-51 road win at Jeff Hunter Gymnasium.

The Cougars used a balanced attack to improve to 10-6 and 2-1 in the district. Gavin Cox scored 13 points, Luke Browning and Will Croley 10 each and Keegan Nelson eight.

Nathan Russell, a 6-4 senior power forward, led Powell with 15 points. Neyland Dugger, a 6-3 senior shooting guard, contributed 13 points, including six in the final three minutes.

Noah Lakin sparked the Panthers' late surge by taking a charge.

A defensive rebound by freshman Dalvin Farmer

also was big for Powell with 1:42 on the clock. Dugger scored inside after a rebound by Russell to pull the Panthers within 52-49 and the Cougars called a timeout with exactly one minute remaining.

Croley raced to score on a fast break layup, but Dugger matched it with a long jumper.

The Panthers stole the ball as Campbell County was bringing it up the court, but Lakin missed a shot.

With 17 seconds to go, Cox missed his first foul shot, but made the second to give the Cougars a four-point lead.

### POWELL GIRLS FALL:

A senior-dominated Campbell County team (14-2 overall and 3-0 in District 3-4A) defeated Powell 34-24.

The Lady Panthers (11-7, 2-1) trailed by only one point (11-10) after the first eight minutes, but Campbell County outscored Powell 13-2 in the second period.

Saylor Hutcheson and Lacey Pemberton led the Lady Cougars with 14 and 12 points, respectively. Powell got seven points from Claire Campbell and six from Izy Wiles – two of its sophomores.

### SCHEDULE CHANGE:

With Powell's Friday night games against Oak Ridge being postponed due to the weather, those games have been rescheduled for Thursday at PHS.

Weather permitting; Powell is scheduled to play at Central Tuesday night.

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# Orange and White checkerboards on Florida Field

There are good bowl games, and there are bad ones. Hang around long enough, and you'll see more than your share of each. Bowl games are hyped to the heavens, but you never know what you're going to get until you get there. Sometimes not even then.



By Tom Mattingly

There is often a surprise or two, an event or series of events that stick in the memory banks. Every now and then, it's two games in one, each team dominating for a half. Last man standing wins.

One of the most intriguing Tennessee bowl games took place on Dec. 30, 1994, on Florida Field at Ben Hill Griffin Stadium in Gainesville. The game didn't involve Tennessee versus Florida.

The 50th Gator Bowl contest matched Tennessee and Virginia Tech, Phillip Fulmer versus Frank Beamer. The game was played in Gainesville because of renovations to the real Gator Bowl in Jacksonville.

It had been quite a comeback for the Vols in 1994. Tennessee finished with an 8-4 record, winning seven of its last eight games after a 1-3 start. The Vols had lost quarterbacks Jerry Colquitt in the opener at UCLA and Todd Helton in the Mississippi State game, leaving leadership of the Vol offense to rookies Peyton Manning of New Orleans and Brannon Stewart of Stephenville, Texas. The Vols had concluded the regular season on a roll with decisive wins, 52-0 against Kentucky and 65-0 at Vanderbilt.

Virginia Tech started 7-1, but had lost three of its last four games, including a regular season-ending 42-23 home loss to Virginia.

A crowd estimated at 67,000 showed up for the first meeting



Peyton Manning had a memorable game to close out his freshman season.

between the two schools since 1937, only the eighth overall. Those fans who might have been worried about Tennessee not being ready to play had to have been impressed with the Vols' wire-to-wire effort.

Tennessee bolted to a 35-10 halftime lead, behind the running of Morrystown's James "Little Man" Stewart, a senior who scored twice and tossed a 19-yard touchdown pass to Kendrick Jones for good measure.

Manning threw a 36-yard touchdown pass to fellow freshman Marcus Nash, and tailback Jay Graham added another touchdown. The Vols were on cruise control from that point on. The Vols scored 35 points in just 11:46 possession time.

Stewart added a third touchdown in the fourth quarter. All-American placekicker John Becksvoort booted a 19-yard field goal and added all six extra points.

Tyrone Hines had an interception that led to the Vols' first score, while Shawn Summers had a long punt return to set up the fourth period score. The final was 45-23.

Stewart carried 22 times for 85 yards.

There was a family connection involved. Archie Manning, Peyton's father, had led a 34-17 Ole Miss win over Tech in the 1968 Liberty Bowl, finishing with 141 passing yards and two touchdown passes. In 1994, Peyton would complete 12 of 19 passes

for 189 yards.

Joey Kent caught six passes for 116 yards, including a diving, all-out effort for 42 yards, a play before Nash's TD catch.

"We're clicking on a lot of cylinders right now," Fulmer said afterwards. "We had a great game plan on both sides of the ball."

There were a couple of other aspects of the game that caught everybody's attention.

On their arrival at the stadium, fans were treated to the sight of Tennessee's trademark orange and white checkerboards in the north end zone.

The effect was surreal, something out of the old "Twilight Zone" television series. There were all kinds of Florida orange and blue around the stadium, but

there was also Tennessee orange down on the field.

If that weren't enough, as the designated "home team," Tennessee also used Florida's dressing room.

As for the checkerboards in the end zone, former USC quarterback Pat Haden noted on the WTBS broadcast that Steve Spurrier, known to many Vol fans as the "Evil Genius," had some thoughts about the trademark Vol squares being seen on the Florida greensward.

"I was talking to the groundskeeper before this game," Haden said.

Haden mentioned the unnamed groundskeeper quoting Spurrier as follows: "I don't mind it being in here for one game, but we have recruits coming in Jan. 13, and I want those checkerboards out of there."

The game catapulted the Vols to an amazing four-year run from 1995 through 1998, 45-5 over that time frame. Stewart saw it coming.

"They're going to come back and start the season like we ended it," Stewart said.

He knew whereof he spoke. The Vols were 11-1 in 1995 and won the Citrus Bowl with a 20-14 win over Ohio State.

It was 10-2 in 1996, with a 48-28 Citrus Bowl win over Northwestern. It was 11-2, with the SEC title, in 1997.

In 1998, there was another SEC title, a 13-0 record, and the national title coming to Knoxville after a 23-16 win over Florida State in Tempe.

Bowl games often foretell the seasons to come. The 1994 Gator Bowl gave a provocative glimpse of the Tennessee success story that would follow over the next four years. It was a vintage time for Vol fans, with Big Orange swagger readily apparent all across Big Orange Country.

# College Basketball is Here

By Mark Nagi

Now that football is done (that game in Columbus still hurts) it is time to jump into the college basketball pool with both feet.

And guess what? Tennessee is as good as it gets in the sport.

The Lady Vols are back to relevance after winning their first 13 games this season. First-year head coach Kim Caldwell has done a terrific job after replacing the fired Kellie Harper. Tennessee is back in the national rankings with an entertaining style of play. They might not be ready to make a serious run

at the program's first trip to the Final Four since 2008, but at least they are back in the national conversation.

As for the Vols, you couldn't have asked for a better start. Tennessee won their first 14 games this season. Head coach Rick Barnes has rebuilt a team that lost Dalton Knecht, Josiah-Jordan James, Santiago Vescovi and Jonas Aidoo, each key player from a group that went to the Elite 8 in 2024.

North Florida transfer Chaz Lanier is one of the best players in the country, just as Northern Colorado transfer Knecht was a

year ago. Newcomers Igor Milicic and Felix Okpara have started every game. The NIL era has caused some coaches, like Miami's Jim Larranaga, to simply retire rather than learn to adjust to the reality of the moment. Instead, Barnes has embraced the changes and flourished with them over the last few years.

Tennessee was the last undefeated team standing nationally before a blowout loss at rival Florida. That defeat also knocked the Vols out of the number 1 national ranking which they held for a few weeks. Road games within conference

play are no picnic, and the SEC is absolutely loaded this season.

Football might be down a bit in the SEC. Evidence? Alabama didn't make the playoffs. Tennessee and Georgia lost their games in the playoff. Texas is the only team in the conference to advance past the quarterfinals, and the Longhorns are more of a Big 12 escapee than an SEC team. Heck, I barely want to recognize Arkansas and South Carolina, and they've been in the league for over 32 years.

But in men's basketball? Good gracious this

league is loaded. Auburn, Kentucky, Alabama, and Texas A&M have each spent time in the top 10 and a bunch of others are in the top 25. It wouldn't be a surprise to see at least 10 or more SEC teams get into the field of 68.

And that's why Tennessee's loss at Florida shouldn't bother Vols fans very much. Hey, it happens in this sport. Even 1989-1990 UNLV had an off night. It's a long season, but this Tennessee team is going to have more good nights than bad ones.

The Food City Center is consistently packed.

It might not be Neyland Stadium's level of intimidation for opponents, but it's become a very tough place to play. A pretty good Arkansas team, led by head coach John Calipari, got torched by the Vols at the venue formerly known as Thompson-Boling Arena.

It's good to have college basketball take center stage. Will Tennessee make deep runs in March for both the men's and women's teams? If the last few weeks are any indication, they might be up to the task.

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MIDDLE SCHOOL BASKETBALL

# Lady Bruins win final home game of the season

By Ken Lay

In his first campaign as Bearden Middle School's girls basketball coach, Eric Gray has seen the Lady Bruins endure their share of struggles. But he was elated Thursday night as Bearden closed out the regular season with a 31-12 victory over Vine on an evening when the team honored its eighth graders. Bearden (5-12) won three of its league games and notched a league road win over Gresham in Fountain City in December. "When we won that game

at Gresham, I thought we'd turned the corner," Gray said. "But then we slipped back into our old habits. "This is a good way to end the regular season." The Lady Bruins are scheduled to open postseason tournament play today (Jan. 13) at Powell and Gray is hoping that his team can use Thursday's victory over the Lady Bears as momentum for the tournament. But he knows things won't be easy. "We play at Powell on Monday and if we win there, we're going to have a tough road," Gray said. "If we beat

them, we'll have to play West Valley." Tipoff for today's game between the Lady Bruins and the Lady Panthers is slated for 5 p.m., weather permitting. Bearden closed out the regular season with a dominant performance against Vine on its home floor. The Lady Bruins never trailed in the contest. They opened a 12-2 lead in the first quarter and extended that advantage to 17-6 by halftime, holding the Lady Bears to just three field goals over the first 12 minutes of the contest.

The Lady Bruins boasted a balanced scoring attack. Bri'Naijah Tate led the way with nine points (all before halftime). Amilah Robinson scored seven points (all after halftime). Holly Hodge and Mikelle Rancher scored six points each. Nicole Smith-Harris had two and Hensley Crook finished with one. Raniyah Pannell and Tren'Azia Vinson scored four points apiece for the Lady Bears, while Shyara Hoffman and Karissma Oderson added two points each.

# Tedford leads Bearden to comeback

Cont. from page 1

Vine's only other fourth-quarter point was a free throw by Keyvon Booker with 3:32 to go. It gave the Golden Bears a 29-25 lead. Stinson led all scorers with 15 points. Zorio was pleased with his squad's effort in the fourth quarter. "This was a big win! It was big for us because of the way we came back against a very talented basketball team, and because of the heart and guts that we showed," he said. "Vine was undefeated. "Even when we had that tough stretch in the third quarter, we kept fighting." Isaac Kannah and Dontae' Campbell scored nine points each for the Bruins, who closed out league play earlier in the week with a 42-37 loss to the Admirals at the Bobby J. Henry Gymnasium.

enjoyed a huge fourth quarter as he scored nine of his team-high 11 points in the frame. He converted two three-pointers, including a long-range jumper with 2:21 remaining in the game. "He had a big fourth quarter. He made some big shots," Zorio said of Tedford. Bearden, which struggled from the free throw line, making just 1 of 6 foul shots before halftime, converted 10 of 12 free throws in the second half, including 7 of 8 over the final six minutes. Meanwhile, Vine saw its offense sputter in the fourth quarter. The Golden Bears, who scored just four points in the frame, scored the final bucket of the game on a three-pointer by Kavion Stinson as time expired.

# Region bowling tournaments set for this week

By Steve Williams

The Region 1 bowling tournament will try again to get underway this Wednesday at the Holiday Lanes in Johnson City. The tourney was postponed last Wednesday. Girls' semifinal action is scheduled to start at 9 a.m. with Carter bowling against Dobyms-Bennett and Gibbs going against Cherokee, with the two winning teams playing at 2 p.m. in the championship match that

advances the winner to the TSSAA state tournament. The boys' semis at 11:30 a.m. pits Carter against Chucky-Doak and Dobyms-Bennett versus South-Doyle, with the boys' region title match also at 2. In other tournament action scheduled this week, the Region 2's girls and boys Final Four is slated for Tuesday at Crest Lanes in Maryville. Karns' boys are the only Knox County representative in that tourney,

which starts at 9 a.m. In the girls' semifinals, Maryville will roll against Walker Bradley and Oak Ridge faces Bradley Central. In the boys' semis, the pairings have William Blount playing McMinn County and Cleveland taking on Karns. The Unified bowling region tournament also will be held at Crest Lanes on Thursday.

**INDIVIDUAL STATE** qualifiers this season are: District 2 girls: Malyiah Smith (Gibbs) and Kali Gentry (Carter). District 2 boys: Alex Owens (Gibbs) and Isaiah Jones (Sevier County). District 3 boys: Brennan Glover (Powell). District 3 girls: Olivia Hailey (Bearden).

# New coach

Cont. from page 1

the season included the addition of Dalton Pearl to the coaching staff. He had gone to a high school in Maryland that Coach Rohn knew about and graduated five years ago. He came to Knoxville for a UT-K grad program to get his doctorate and an internship at Y-12 and just finished five years of college wrestling. "I didn't know who was more excited, him or me,"

said Rohn. It's almost like someone's looking out for the new Farragut coach. "We're very blessed," he said. Rohn also has two other wrestling assistants, football assistant coach Ryan Jacobs and Jason Stinnett, who is primarily over the girls' program and also assists with the boys' program.

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