



Holiday transition

(Above) Juna Belle Steele enjoyed a visit with Santa and Mrs. Claus (Eric and Sharon Schmitt-Matzen) Wednesday, Nov. 16, in Admiral Nutrition at West End Center. The business hosted the couple throughout the day. **(Below right)** Lisa Porter and her granddaughter, Palmer Montgomery, 4, enjoyed Christmas lights in Founders Park at Campbell Station after Santa flipped the switch during annual Countdown to Light the Park Monday evening, Nov. 21. (See related photos in West Side Faces, page 8B). **(Below left)** Michelle Hoaglan, left, joined Beth Speed, and Beth’s son, Matthew, 7, prior to annual Fleet Feet Hot To Trot 10k, 5k and Fun Run Thanksgiving morning, Nov. 24, on Parkside Drive in Turkey Creek.



Top photo submitted/ Above, right photos by Alan Sloan



Making history worldwide again through NEDC

STAFF REPORTS

editor@farragutpress.com

Two babies in the Pacific Northwest — whose births were facilitated by the National Embryo Donation Center in Farragut — have made history with their arrivals.

Siblings Lydia Ann and Timothy Ronald, children of Philip and Rachel Ridgeway, each spent nearly 30 years as embryos frozen in liquid nitrogen prior to being thawed earlier this year, according to an NEDC press release.

“When they were born Oct. 31, 2022, they set the new known record for the longest-frozen embryos to ever result in a successful live birth, according to research staff at the University of Tennessee Preston Medical Library,” the release stated.

The embryos originally were frozen on April 22, 1992. Laboratory supervisor and senior embryologist Sarah Atkinson, of NEDC’s Partner Medical Clinic Southeastern Fertility (also located in Farragut), thawed the embryos Feb. 28. Southeastern Fertility medical director Dr. John David Gordon transferred them to Rachel’s uterus on March 2.

The Ridgeways’ births of twins frozen for essentially three decades (29 years, 10 months) breaks the previous record set by another NEDC couple, Tina and Ben Gibson, of more than 27 years.

“Thirty years ago, the living Christ gave these children life, and He has been sustaining that life ever since,” the Ridgeways stated in the release. “This is His story, and we are so thankful to Him that, in His providence, He is allowing us to be a part of it.”

“I have been working in the field of infertility for over 25 years,



Photo submitted

Rachel and Philip Ridgeway with their babies, Lydia Ann and Timothy Ronald — believed to be the oldest successfully donated frozen embryos resulting in live birth in the world — thanks to Farragut’s National Embryo Donation Center.

See EMBRYO HISTORY on Page 3A

Help needed to save Christmas for family of nine

MICHELLE HOLLENHEAD

mhollenhead@farragutpress.com

Within hours of a devastating house fire Saturday morning, Nov. 26, the Farragut community rallied around Danny and Kelly Kissiah and their seven children — Britany, Mason, Jonathan, Ayden, Allyson, Sarah and Hannah — collecting clothing, gift cards and providing shelter for the family.

At first, authorities were alerted a child had been trapped, but by the time firefighters arrived the child had managed to escape.

“All were safe and accounted for

when crews arrived,” stated a report from Rural Metro.

However, their home, located in the 11000 block of Woody Drive, was heavily damaged. They also lost three beloved cats in the fire.

“We lost everything,” said Britany Baggs, Kelly’s oldest daughter and recent college graduate who was living with her family at the time of the fire.

According to a report from Rural Metro, firefighters responded at 9:20 a.m. and discovered flames showing through a window in the front right

See HELP NEEDED on Page 4A



Rural Metro firefighters extinguished a blaze to a home in the 11000 block of Woody Drive Saturday, Nov. 26. However, it sustained extensive smoke and water damage, displacing nine family members who are now being helped by the community.

Photo courtesy of Rural Metro

doubling down on keeping Golden Turkey — FMS hoops sweep Hardin Valley



- It was a Golden late afternoon and evening for Farragut Middle School hoops teams versus rival Hardin Valley in FMS’s Bobby Henry Gymnasium Monday, Nov. 28.

At stake for both schools’ girls and boys teams was possession of the Golden Turkey trophy, which the Lady Ads and Admirals retained.

Farragut’s girls (8-1) pulled out a 34-25 win against HVMS (8-3) led by Reagan Sheridan’s 16 points and 12 from Trinity Curry. The FMS boys (8-1) held Hardin Valley (5-5) without a point for more than eight minutes to start the game in a 45-20 win led by led by Ethan Farhat’s 19 points. Brayln Gibbs had 13.

‘Dawg-gone’ National Champs

- The best-case scenario, on a national scale, has come to pass for an ultra-successful local high school fall sports program voted No. 1 in the United States.

See page 4B, which features a full page honoring this local national champion led by head coach Ryan Radcliffe, right.



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FBI/IRS raid finds tragic end for Wyndham Hall resident



Michelle Hollenhead

According to published reports, Federal Bureau of Investigation agents, as part of an Internal Revenue Service investigation, were serving a warrant at a home along Wyndham Hall Lane Tuesday, Nov. 22, where they found a woman with a self-inflicted gunshot wound. Evidence technicians with the FBI, Knox County Major Crimes Unit and others were dispatched to the scene. The unidentified woman later died from her injuries, reports stated. The investigation is being led by the IRS, according to the FBI, which also noted the incident is subject to an internal review by local and federal authorities — and no additional information would be immediately available.

towncalendar

• An annual presentation by a retired Farragut Middle School history teacher, which covers the events leading up to World War II, is set for early next week. Frank Galbraith will discuss the end of World War I, the roaring '20s, organized crime, the Great Depression, Adolph Hitler coming to power and the attack on Pearl Harbor during "A Day of Infamy," which begins at 7 p.m., Monday, Dec. 5, in Farragut Town Hall. Veterans are invited to enjoy light refreshments and

See TOWN CALENDAR on Page 4A

KCSOreports

- At 6:19 a.m., Sunday, Nov. 27, a Knox County Sheriff's Office unit responded to Clarion Inn and Suites along Campbell Station Road on report of a vehicle burglary. Victim/property owner said her vehicle (Black Honda Odyssey) "had been broken into during the night and things were missing," the report stated. "The manager on the scene has video of the break-in, and the suspect broke the back window with a rock at 2:30 a.m., stealing multiple items from the vehicle." Value of loss was listed at \$3,330.
- At 1:21 p.m., Saturday, Nov. 26, a complainant called KCSO Teleserve Unit to report a theft from a Deanwood Lane residence. Complainant advised an unknown suspect opened her envelope and took her passport without permission. Value of loss was listed at \$100.
- At 10:28 a.m., Nov. 26, a complainant called KCSO Teleserve Unit to report a theft from a Crystal Brook Lane residence. Complainant advised an unknown suspect took a checkbook from her mail without permission. She advised the empty package was left behind. Value of loss was listed at \$25.
- At 1:18 a.m., Thursday, Nov. 24, a complainant called KCSO Teleserve Unit to report vehicular vandalism near the Kingston Pike-Brooklawn Street intersection. He said an unknown suspect threw a traffic cone out of the rear window of a BMW. Complainant advised he was unable to determine anything identifiable about the suspects, but said he believes three people were in the vehicle. Value of damage was listed at \$1,000.

Vandals do damage in 2 parks

STAFF REPORTS
editor@farragutpress.com

Vandals apparently damaged both McFee Park and Anchor Park late Tuesday, Nov. 22, and early Wednesday, Nov. 23, by driving in the grass and "doing donuts." Tire tracks also were discovered on the McFee Park basketball court. Farragut Parks and Recreation director Sue Stuhl said the damage was "minor" and no dollar assessment had yet been made as of Friday, Nov. 25. "We are looking at camera footage and will get license plate numbers and pursue it," she added.



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Specs for Town Center townhomes; Virtue View Farm sidewalk battle at FMPC

TAMMY CHEEK
tcheek@farragutpress.com

With the site plan, or preliminary plat, approved for townhomes in Farragut Town Center at Biddle Farms, developer Budd Cullom can move to the next step.

Farragut Municipal Planning Commission unanimously approved, during its meeting Thursday, Nov. 17, the plan to build 47 units — more than seven units per acre — in a portion previously designated as “future development.”

“The buildings will be mostly brick with a mixture of two- and three-story units with some terraces,” Community

Development director Mark Shipley said. **Pedestrian facilities**

On another matter, after lengthy discussion, developer Steve Williams asked for a postponement of action regarding his concept plan for Virtue View Farm subdivision, at which he is allocating 13 estate lots on two tracts near the intersection of Virtue and Evans roads.

The lots range in size from 1.2 acres to almost 12 acres. Among the variance requests, the bones of contention were a request to have a private 20-foot-wide road and variance for the Town’s requirement for pedestrian facilities — sidewalks or walking paths.

“Private streets are not permitted

and haven’t been permitted for a number of years in either the subdivision regulations or zoning ordinance, which requires public street frontage for new lots,” Shipley said.

Concerning the pedestrian facilities, “we would not be able to support not having any kind of provisions for pedestrian facilities,” he said.

“All we’re talking about here is not whether or not we can require this walkway; the question is ‘do we have to pay for it?’” Town attorney Tom Hale said. “The Town has the authority to put a sidewalk through this area.

“The issue here is do we have the power under Nollan and Dolan (U.S.

Supreme Court case) to require it be dedicated as part of the planning process, and that is not an easy assessment to make. ... I’m in the process of studying right now,” he added.

Commissioners dug in their heels for a sidewalk. Mayor Ron Williams, an FMPC member, said there is a school planned in that area, and children will need a sidewalk to get to school.

Steve Williams still did not think a sidewalk was necessary, but the mayor asked, “So, are you going to sell lots to people who don’t have kids?”

“We have to think of the future, 20 years from now, and what the area would look like,” Shipley said.

Embryo history

From page 1A

and yet these embryos were frozen while I was still in my training as an ob/gyn resident at Stanford,” Gordon said. “It just boggles the imagination.

“The decision of Rachel and Philip to adopt these embryos should reassure patients who wonder if anyone would be willing to adopt the embryos that they created five, 10, 20 years ago. That answer is a resounding yes,” he added.

“We’re so grateful to our donor families for their gift of these precious snowflakes,” Atkinson said. “People donate for various reasons, but the end result is giving the gift of hope, love and a chance at carrying a baby. These two frozen superstars were created nearly 30 years ago, just waiting on

ice (liquid nitrogen, actually) for their family to come find them.”

“The NEDC has been fortunate to facilitate and break numerous world records in our field,” said Dr. Jeffrey Keenan, NEDC president and medical director. “We hope this news will encourage others to experience the blessings of embryo adoption for themselves.”

The faith-based NEDC is the world’s leading embryo adoption program, with more births facilitated (more than 1,250) through embryo adoption than any other organization or clinic, the NEDC press release stated. Its mission is to protect the lives and dignity of frozen embryos by promoting, facilitating and educating about embryo donation/embryo adoption. Its website is www.embryodonation.org.

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Help needed

From page 1A

corner of the home. “Fire damage was contained to the room of origin, but the home sustained heavy smoke and heat damage.”

The cause of the fire is being investigated, according to Rural Metro.

Social media posts began almost immediately, seeking assistance, clothing and shelter options.

While the American Red Cross is assisting the family, the voucher they were given for lodging could not be confirmed without identification, which the Kissiahs had lost in the fire.

Instead, members of the community volunteered shelter, and hundreds more immediately provided clothing, gift cards, money and personal hygiene items listed on a specially created Facebook page, Farragut Fire Help, which is constantly being updated with needs met and needs remaining.

“I have been blown away by the immediate and abundant response from Farragut families today when the needs were shared,” shared Kristi Casey, who has helped coordinate a community response to assist the family. “They have shown true Admiral spirit, and I couldn’t be prouder to call this Town my home. Thank you to each and every person who jumped in with help.”

While many clothing items were donated during the weekend, there remain specific needs for Danny (size 30/30 jeans/pants, medium shirts) and Kelly (size 3 jeans, medium shirts).

The Kissiah’s youngest, Ma-

son, turned 7 years old the day of the house fire — a birthday he shares with big sister, Brit-tany — and firefighters personally went to Kroger to get him a cake, Kelly shared.

Gift cards for the family, and various foods and items at grocery stores, fast food establishments, restaurants — including pizza places — Walmart, Dollar Tree, Dollar General, CVS and Walgreens also are suggested.

Specifically, there is a need for donated laundry detergent to enable the family to clean what they can salvage from their home.

Baggs, who currently is staying with friends, said she would appreciate any donations of gift cards to help her replace her wardrobe and other items she lost.

Additional needs include bath towels and toiletries, and Christmas gifts for the children.

The family also is looking for a long-term rental house at a very low monthly cost.

First Baptist Concord has stepped up to offer assistance. Contact Victor Lee, pastor of Care and Benevolence, for donations or long-term rental suggestions.

Drop off for clothing donations is at Farragut Primary School, while additional donations are being accepted at the farragutpress office, 11863 Kingston Pike, during regular business hours, which run from 9 to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday.

Both FPS and FIS officials have offered needed school supplies for the children.

A family friend also has started a gofundme page for the family at, <https://gofund.me/def6dc7c>.

Town Calendar

From page 2A

Farragut Museum tours starting at 6 p.m.

All veterans, especially WWII veterans, are encouraged to participate. The presentation is free and no registration is required. For more information about “A Day of Infamy,” contact Historic Resources coordinator Julia Barham at 865-218-3377 or visit museum@townoffarragut.org.

• **A new Farragut Museum exhibition, “Timeless Toys,” features items from the museum’s collection**, including antique toys, games and dolls. Museum hours are from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m., Monday through Friday. The Museum will be closed Thursday through Tuesday, Dec. 22-27. Additional hours and large group tours are available on request.

• **A variety of health and medical booths will be available from which to obtain advice and other information, as Third Annual Farragut Health & Wellness Expo**, presented by Turkey Creek Medical Center–Tennova, is set from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., Saturday Jan. 14, in Farragut Community Center, 239 Jamestowne Blvd.

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presstalk

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• **I’m calling to give thanks and to celebrate the \$3.725 million that Tennessee received from the American Rescue Plan (Act)**, as reported by the farragutpress (page 2A story in our Wednesday, Nov. 16, issue). The paper also reports that Farragut received almost \$2 million of those dollars. Thank you to all of Tennessee’s members of Congress who voted for this support and legislation — and for helping Tennessee on the road to recovery.

• **At the last Farragut (Municipal) Planning Commission (meeting, Thursday, Nov. 17), Commissioners need to be more friendly to business wanting to come into Farragut.** The Hy-Vee people from Des Moines, Iowa, they probably feel like Farragut’s not really friendly to business.

Glen Abbey would have a new traffic signal at Jamestowne Boulevard; they can come out of Jamestowne Boulevard at the traffic signal with Hy-Vee’s proposal. Whereas now, they have to risk it coming out of Glen Abbey turning left onto Kingston Pike.

The back property in the proposal from Hy-Vee is lower density per acre than Park Place or Glen Abbey. They are only asking for 2.5 density per acre.

The last thing is, Farragut better realize if you don’t encourage business, with its sales tax, coming into Farragut, you’re going to have to borrow money or have a (Town) homeowners property tax to support some of these budget items you have coming up for Farragut — unless you are more friendly to business. Farragut needs money.

• **In response to the two callers from Presstalk from Nov. 23 about how wonderful Hy-Vee would be on the (property along Kingston Pike, to the south, about one-fourth of a mile west of Northshore Drive)**, if they had checked the facts a little closer, the majority of the residential property on (that) property is zoned currently Rural, R-1, which is less than two units per acre.

What Hy-Vee wants to do is (more than) double the commercial portion of this property and reduce the residential portion of this property by approximately half.

Also, they want to change the residential zoning from the Rural, R-1, to R-3, which is three to six units. And there’s also other changes for commercial and retail. How does this benefit, or not harm, the residents of Park Place, Glen Abbey, Derby Chase, Shiloh, Belleaire, Village Green and Farragut Crossing? Kingston Pike is not equipped to handle this additional load.

(Editor’s note: In reference to the Presstalks above concerning Hy-Vee, the company’s original intentions for their proposed building site changed after feedback following the Nov. 17 FMPC meeting. Although the company’s stated intentions for the proposed site, according to either or both callers above, may end up being a reality, a spokesperson for Hy-Vee contacted farragutpress through an e-mail Friday, Nov. 18, stating the company decided “... with the feedback we received from the community, (we) voluntarily withdrew our application to allow us to go back to the drawing board for the location near Kingston Pike and Campbell Station Road. Our

plan is to come forward with a revised proposal. ...” This was the key portion of that statement, which ran as part of a page 1A FMPC/Hy-Vee story in our Wednesday, Nov. 23, issue).

• **I have heard that if Farragut does not accept the Hy-Vee large merchandise store with the high sales tax revenue**, Loudon County will get it. Do we want to lose Hy-Vee to Loudon County — Loudon County will be after them if Farragut rejects Hy-Vee? Homeowners better think about that: either accept Hy-Vee, a big sales-tax generator, (inaudible) or (face) a property tax on homeowners.

• **The Hy-Vee (proposed store) is a privacy and safety concern, not to mention noise and gas-fume pollution.** I find it interesting that the one person who called in and said, “We have talked to numerous people about the Hy-Vee merchandise store proposal for Farragut, and most people are favorable.”

Then how come, on social media, a majority of people are against Hy-Vee building there? At a (Farragut Municipal Planning Commission) meeting, only three people spoke up in favor of Hy-Vee — and they live nowhere near (the proposed store) property. Everyone else opposes it.

• **The majority of Farragut residents do not want Hy-Vee.** It appears that Hy-Vee representatives do not understand that. If you continued to watch the (Farragut Municipal Planning Commission) meetings, it was clear the Commission was firm on their commitment that this property (on which Hy-Vee wants to build a store) not be rezoned.

What isn’t clear is why Hy-Vee cares to play bait-and-switch with their blueprint in hopes the Commission will be worn down and give up, or agree to something they simply don’t believe in. Those in favor of this development continue to use the threat of, “If this doesn’t happen something even less desirable will happen.” The current Land Use Plan and zoning is forward thinking; it makes Farragut something special. Hy-Vee should seek another parcel of land zoned to fit their needs.

• **The traffic on McFee Road has been greatly increased due to large, established subdivisions** and two newly created subdivisions in the future, namely The Grove and The Meadows — and a proposed school site. It is a constant challenge to turn from McFee Road onto Old Stage Road, especially during rush and school hours. A traffic light there seems extremely necessary and highly recommended. Is this option being considered by the Farragut (Municipal Planning Commission)?

We respectfully ask our readers to follow these Presstalk rules when submitting their opinions:

- *No names used, including public figures;*
- *Please keep calls to a 90-second maximum (call 865-671-8255 24 hours a day, seven days a week);*
- *Please keep e-mailed Presstalks to 250 words maximum (editor@farragutpress.com);*
- *Libelous and malicious comments will not be published; profanity will be edited out;*
- *Comments will remain anonymous.*
- *Business names may or may not be used depending on the issue.*





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Editorial Department	
Alan Sloan, Editor 865-218-8880 editor@farragutpress.com	Laura Sayers, Account Executive 865-218-8879 lsayers@farragutpress.com
Tammy Cheek, Writer 865-218-8873 tcheek@farragutpress.com	Linda Tirban, Classified Display, Service Directory 865-218-8881 linda@farragutpress.com
Michelle Hollenhead, Writer 865-218-8890 mhollenhead@farragutpress.com	
Production Department	Receptionist
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Cindy Wilfert, Designer..... 865-218-8872	Circulation
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Editor email: editor@farragutpress.com **Website:** www.farragutpress.com

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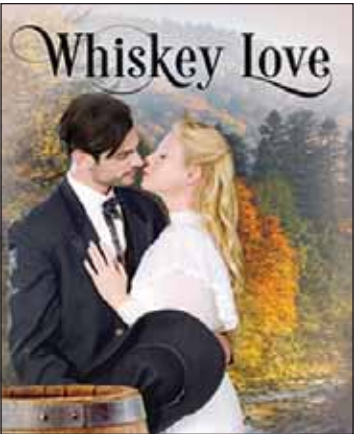


Tammy Cheek

Kerry McDuffie, left, owner of Superior Carpet & Rug Cleaning, welcomed Bert Burgett with Bank of England — among many others — to a Farragut West Knox Chamber of Commerce networking, hosted by Superior, 114 Sherlake Drive, Thursday, Nov. 10.



Former West Knox County resident Joy Smith holds her debut novel, “Whiskey Love,” which she will be selling and signing from noon to 2 p.m., Saturday, Dec. 3, in Linda’s Hallmark in Village Green shopping center.



Photos submitted

businessbriefs

• Jason Holliman recently was named new chief executive officer of East Tennessee-based Citizens National Bank.

He replaces David Verble, who recently announced his retirement.

A certified public accountant, Holliman graduated from Tennessee Tech University in 2002 with majors in accounting and finance.



Holliman

Holliman, who will retain his title as president as well, has been with Citizens National Bank (CNB) for eight years and said customers can expect the same excellent service the bank has provided East Tennessee since its founding in 1973.

He plans to continue to differentiate the bank by being intensely local.

Holliman joined Citizens National Bank in 2014 as chief financial officer and senior vice president and was responsible for the finance and purchasing departments. He was promoted to bank president in 2018.

In addition to being a CPA and member of both Tennessee Society of Certified Public Accountants and the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants,

Holliman is a certified valuation analyst and a member of National Association of Certified Valuators and Analysts.

The bank’s branches, call center and board of directors are all local to Knox, Sevier, Jefferson, McMinn and Hamblen counties.

• University of Tennessee, Knoxville, recently took first place in the inaugural Southeastern Conference Machining Competition, which was held at UT’s new Manufacturing and Design Enterprise in Hardin Valley Friday, Nov. 18.

The competition challenged student-led teams of undergraduate and graduate students studying advanced materials and manufacturing to use computer numerically controlled machines to create a quadrant of the SEC logo.

It was made possible by the U.S. Department of Defense Industrial Base Analysis and Sustainment program. Project MFG ran the competition with support from America’s Cutting Edge, IACMI-The Composites Institute, UT-Oak Ridge Innovation Institute, Gene Haas Foundation and MSC Industrial Supply Co. In addition, 20 professional organizations staffed tables with representatives to speak to visiting students about future manufacturing-related careers.

Teams from Texas A&M University, Auburn University and Mississippi State University also competed.

‘Whiskey Love’ debut

Local author to sign books at Linda’s Hallmark

MICHELLE HOLLENHEAD
mhollenhead@farragutpress.com

A former area educator and Bearden High School graduate has had a long-held dream come true, which she will share with the Farragut and West Knox County community Saturday, Dec. 3.

Joy Smith will be selling and signing her debut novel, “Whiskey Love,” (published by The Wild Rose Press), from noon to 2 p.m. in Linda’s Hallmark, Village Green shopping center.

Written under her pen name, Joy Allyson, the book is based in part on the life of a Tennessee woman, Louise Nelson, who inherited a whiskey distillery from her late husband. Smith’s fictional retelling has a younger heroine, Chloe Tanner, whose grandfather left her the distillery.

“It is set in the fictional town of Oak Hollow ... and (Chloe) has to fight to keep it from others who wish to take it over,” Smith said, noting she

See ‘WHISKEY LOVE’ on Page 6A

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The Designery celebrates grand opening with FWKCC, cuts ribbon

The Designery held its grand opening and ribbon cutting, sponsored by Farragut West Knox Chamber of Commerce, at its showroom, 10420 Kingston Pike, Friday, Nov. 18. Attending, front row from left, were co-franchisor Casey Ridley; designer Rachel Ann Horn; Mayra Ocasio, fiancée of franchise owner Andrew Dukes (with scissors); his mother, Lee Dukes; sister, Katherine Edgar with her daughters, Holly, left, and Flora Edgar; Andrew’s father, John Dukes; and co-franchisor Dustin Ridley.



Tammy Cheek

‘Whiskey Love’

From page 5A

conducted numerous interviews with descendants of the real-life inspiration for her novel.

While this is Smith’s first published book, writing has long been her passion.

“I’ve always wanted to write, but really only had the time after I retired,” she said.

Her career as an educator took her from Knoxville — her last teaching assignment was at her high school alma mater — to Nashville, when she went to work for the Tennessee Department of Education in 2010.

Smith decided after retiring in 2015, she would write in the vein of what she enjoyed reading: historical romance.

“I wrote stories set in London and Paris, but they were rejected,” she said.

Then a friend advocated a more local and familiar placement.

“She suggested I write a book with whiskey making as the plot,” Smith recalled. “And I was able to set it in the 1890s, which is my favorite era.

“Our Scottish ancestors settled all over Tennessee, where they were able to take advantage of the natural filtration process that occurs over limestone, which took out the iron,” she added.

Smith visited seven distilleries to do research on the specifics of whiskey making.

Additionally, “Andy and Charlie Nelson, descendants of Louise Nelson, were also very helpful to me and shared a lot of information.”

Smith is working on a sequel, which will be set in the Prohibition era.

She and her BHS high school sweetheart, Hal Smith, currently live in Nolensville, where they are in close proximity to daughters, Farragut High School graduates Wren Smith Anderson and Ashley Smith Hinesley, their husbands and six grandchildren.

In addition to being able to purchase the book this Saturday at Linda’s Hallmark, “Whiskey Love” is available through Amazon and at Barnes & Noble bookstores.

For more information, visit Smith’s website, www.joyallyson.com or follow her on Facebook at www.facebook.com/joyallysonauthor.



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High Fives 2nd in nation

GORDON CASSITY

Special to farragutpress

In 2013, Dana Forsyth, a teaching pro at Cedar Bluff Racquet Club, noticed she had several 8-year-olds in her clinics with excellent tennis acumen and ability. This was the start of the High Fives in USTA Junior Team Tennis.

Forsyth coached the team for several years, winning five of seven state titles — and once placing third in Sectional play.

Three of those 8-year-olds, having been crowned as TSSAA tennis state champions in high school, finished as national runner-up among the six-member High Fives during 18 Years and Under National Team Tennis Championships in Orlando Oct. 6-9.

“It was unbelievable; the kids fought hard,” said High Fives coach Derek Stultz, a teaching pro at CBRC who took over when JTT started back in ’21 after shutting down in ’20 due to COVID.

It consisted of Riley Cassity (Division I-AAA state champion with Farragut in 2022 now a junior), Allie Faulkner (two-time Division II-A singles state champion now a sophomore at Christian Academy of Knoxville), Eleni Liakonis (Division II-AA doubles champ now a junior at Knoxville Catholic), Theo Liakonis (Eleni’s twin brother, also a junior at KCHS), John Macon (senior at William Blount) and Ben Snyder (junior at KCHS).

This fall, the High Fives won the state JTT tournament once again, only to lose again in the Sectional Finals to a team from Mississippi. However, luck was with the team in 2022: they were awarded a wildcard to advance from Sectionals to Orlando.

The team started strong, winning the first three rounds of matches versus teams from Connecticut, Puerto Rico and a strong team from Arizona. Making the finals would be very difficult, as Mississippi again was waiting on the High Fives.

This was a chance to redeem the Sectional loss — a win means a chance to play in the National Finals — or lose and go home.

Theo and Eleni played singles, while Ben, John, Allie and Riley played doubles. At the end of the singles and doubles matches, the High Fives had a five-game lead. This meant eight games in the mixed doubles match would secure a victory for High Fives. Eight games was exactly the number of games won by Theo and



Riley Cassity



Allie Faulkner



Eleni Liakonis

Eleni, allowing the High Fives to edge Mississippi 46-45.

This razor-thin win sent the Farragut-area team off to the Finals to face a team from Northern California.

Allie and Riley came back in singles from being down 1-5 to reel off 10 games in a row, winning the match going away.

After boys action, the High Fives had a one-game lead, meaning the national championship would come down to the winners of the mixed doubles match, as Ben and Allie took to the court.

After two hours, which included two timeouts for leg cramps, the teams split sets — with the California team fending off three national championship points — Northern California came away with an 11-9 tiebreaker edge to become national champions.

“You can’t get any closer than that without winning it,” Stultz said. But the High Fives were a quite worthy U.S. runner-up.

Mr. Football Finalists: Keeney, Robinson

Courtneys are top coaches among 12 FHS All-Region 2-6A season honorees

STAFF REPORTS

editor@farragutpress.com

A lot of good things happened, post-season honors-wise, at the state and region level for Farragut High School and Webb School of Knoxville, football players.

Mr. Football Finalists

Two Farragut-area football standouts are now among the final three to become a Tennessee Titans Mr. Football awardee for 2022.

Reese Keeney, FHS senior kicker/punter, is in the final three for Mr. Football Kicker.

Charlie Robinson, Webb School of Knoxville senior quarterback/defensive back, is in a three-way battle with a pair from Lipscomb Academy — Kaleb



Keeney

Beasley and Maureice “Junior” Sherrill — for Division II-AA Mr. Football honors.

The 10 Tennessee Titans Mr. Football winners — in nine classifications plus top overall kicker — will be announced and recognized Wednesday, Dec. 7, at Nissan Stadium in Nashville.



Robinson

Region honorees, 2-6A

Five Ads, three players and two coaches, earned special superlatives on the All-Region 2-6A team: Offensive Player of the Year, senior quarterback Luke Johnson; Special Teams Player of the Year, senior receiver and punt returner Ashton Auker; Keeney as Kicker/Punter of the Year; head coach Eddie Courtney, Coach of the

See HONOREES on Page 3B

A change-up in swims still leaves ‘navigating’ Aqua Ads well ahead

ALAN SLOAN

editor@farragutpress.com

KNOXVILLE — It was an “exciting collaboration” of “no-pressure swimming” for the Farragut High School’s swim and dive team while competing against Knoxville West.

“I was really excited to collaborate with West’s coach Joe Peeden on the thought process for this meet. The theme of our meet was ‘swim fast, but not your usual fast,’” FHS head coach Jessica Abrahamson said about both schools agreeing to enter many of their swimmers in events in which they don’t normally compete.

Such unfamiliarity didn’t negatively affect the Aqua Admirals on the scoreboard, as FHS easily defeated the Runnin’ Rebels 251-58 in UT’s Allan Jones Intercollegiate Aquatic Center Sunday, Nov. 20.



Photo submitted

Jessica Abrahamson, left, Farragut High School swim & dive team head coach, with FHS swimmer Sophie Lu.

“Our team captains played an essential role in supporting our underclassmen to navigate new and unfamiliar races,” Abrahamson said.

For example, “We had new leaders emerge like Steven Xiao, Adam Webster and Alex Moran in the 100-free,” the coach added. “That was

an extraordinary set of performances from these young men. Adam’s time-drop of over 6 seconds was directly related to his commitment to technique changes and focus on turns this past week.

“Stuart Greene joined the ranks of our talented breaststroke squad and went a personal best in the 100-(yard) breaststroke, which was our second biggest time drop of the meet (6 seconds).”

Other personal best times were achieved by Olivia Tolbert, Claire Shields, Keira Shaffer, Sophia Kovaleskaya, Liam Saffles, Bailey Jeffrey, Stephan Havrylyak and Shriya Khule.

“People like Leo Karnitz and Katelyn Kramer really gave a lift of competitive spirit to the team,” Abrahamson said.

Kramer and Ali Pye “dug deep mid 100-fly to ensure a win for the FHS girls team,” she added.

“I am really hyped ... and I just know my teammates are going to push me to where I need to be,”

-Leo Karnitz

FHS Aqua Admirals swimmer

“Katelyn, reflecting back on it, laughed and said, ‘I hit the turn and wasn’t expecting how fast the other team was swimming. I really had to up my effort on the second 50. I didn’t want to let my team down.’”

Before his 500-freestyle, “Leo Karnitz said, ‘I am really hyped up about swimming fast, and I just know my teammates are going to push me to where I need to be. It’s going to be a good one, just watch,’” according to Abrahamson.

Karnitz performed a personal best time and took second to FHS senior Camden Gerchar.

The Aqua Ads’ next competition is in the Ray Bussard Invitational Saturday Dec. 17, followed by a dual meet versus Maryville Sunday, Dec. 18.

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Runner-up T'Giving tourney finish for Lady Ads; FHS boys 3rd

ALAN SLOAN
editor@farragutpress.com

Three big momentum swings ended up benefiting Gatlinburg-Pittman, using a 15-6 edge in the fourth quarter to defeat host Farragut and claim the annual Farragut Thanksgiving Tournament championship.

Despite the 50-44 Lady Highlanders win, during the title game in FHS's Lynn E. Sexton Gymnasium Saturday night, Nov. 26, Lady Ads skipper Jason Mayfield said this game would serve as a valuable learning experience for his young team.

"These are tough games that we need," said Mayfield, whose team lost for the first time this season (5-1) after routing West and edging Fulton in double overtime in the first two tourney games. "We came out in the second half executing things really well."

Maelyn McNealy led Farragut in scoring against GPHS with 17, followed by her sister, K.J. McNealy, and Annalise Bishop each scoring nine.

"There's a ton of freshmen, and we're learning how to play as a team," Bishop said.

The Highlanders broke open a close game late in the second

quarter, building a 26-19 lead. But Farragut responded with an 18-4 run for a 37-30 lead midway into the third quarter when K.J. McNealy fed Bishop with a fastbreak lay-up.

However, though the Lady Ads held a 38-35 advantage after three quarters, the home team did not convert a field goal in the game's final eight minutes.

G-Pittman broke a 43-43 tie, on a backdoor lay-up, with 2:07 left in regulation.

After an FHS free throw, a drive to the hoop and pass for a lay-up gave the Lady Highlanders a 47-44 lead. Farragut couldn't convert on a handful of three-point basket attempts, and GPHS closed it out at the free throw line.

Carly Vining scored three points, followed by three other Lady Ads with two points each: Mya Johnston, Lilly Mullins and Hannah Enderson.

Farragut 51 Fulton 47 (2OT)

The Lady Ads escaped the clutches of Fulton with a 51-47 double overtime win in a tourney semifinal Friday, Nov. 25.

Bishop's 15 points led the winners, followed by Maelyn McNealy scoring 12, Annie Priest eight and Johnston seven. Lucy Beck was among other Lady Ads with two points.

ALAN SLOAN
editor@farragutpress.com

Thanks to "snap and clear," plus a pinpoint inbounds lob pass near the end, Dallas Carbaugh overcame a controversial block call one night earlier — that may have cost Farragut a victory versus Carter — and made one of two clutch game-winning plays at the end.

"My dad (Chet Carbaugh) has always taught me, 'snap and clear,' snap it out of your mind and clear for the next play," said the 6-foot-6 senior post, who scored a game-high 22 points, the final two a lay-up off a nice inbounds lob pass from side-front court to under the basket by Berkley Naro, giving the Ads a 72-71 lead versus Karns with just 15 seconds remaining.

The 73-71 win allowed FHS to grab third place during the annual Farragut Thanksgiving tourney in Lynn E. Sexton Gym Saturday, Nov. 26.

Parker Lane, freshman guard, added 18 points for the Ads (4-2). Aiden Vanacker had 13, while Dominic Vanacker and Tyson Jackson each scored seven and Luke Johnson five.

This time, a key charge or block call went Farragut's way, as Tyson Jackson drew a charge on Beavers point guard J.J. Faulkner with 8.2 seconds left. A Naro free throw made it 73-71 before Faulkner missed two free throws, which would have tied the game, with 0.4 seconds to play.

Against the Hornets the night before in the tourney semifinal, Carbaugh fouled out (13 points) with the Ads up two and a little more than one minute left in regulation — called for a blocking foul. Carter rallied to force overtime and win 69-66. Dominic Vanacker's 22 points led FHS in this game, while Lane scored 19.

However, "We showed up at big moments tonight, which will help us later in the season," Carbaugh added about the win versus Karns.

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Farragut High School girls lacrosse 2022-23



Photo courtesy of Carlos Reveiz/crfoto.com

Member of the 2022-23 Farragut High School girls lacrosse team, front row from left, are Jillian Sachs, Berlynn Elliott, Maggie Raines, Amelia Evans, Caroline Boggs, Abigail Vaughn, Lindsey Hawkey (captain), Ella Robinson, Lucy Dase, Zoe Butler, Maddy Andrews, Katherine Evans, Greer Butler and Jewel Pasaol. Back row, from left, are Angela Ramiscal, Kirra Benchabbat, Sirilla Cretton-Gilbert, Maddie Flood, Mackenna Hill (captain), Seneca Hill, Alli Duenckel, Ella Morton, Molly DeFranco, Annie Marsh, Bridget Hedinger, Caris Landis, Jane Davanzo, Emily Shouse and Amadea Evans.

Honorees

From page 1B

Year; and offensive coordinator Geoff Courtney, Offensive Assistant of the Year.

Other First Team 2-6A Ads

were receiver Landis Davila, running back Elijah Gibbs, offensive lineman Nathan Harville, defensive back John Duncan, linebackers Jack Alley and Jay Smiley, and defensive lineman Brice Fontenot.

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2022 Bearden Girls Soccer Season

- Named 2022 national champions of girls high school soccer, as voted by United Soccer Coaches in its final United States rankings;
- Earned back-to-back TSSAA Division I-Class AAA state championships;
- Finished with an unblemished at 24-0-0 record while carrying a 48-match unbeaten streak spanning two seasons;
- Its 24 wins this season are the most among the nation's top 10-ranked teams in the final USC poll;
- Allowed just three goals the entire season while scoring 137;
- Peyton Huber, senior All-state goalkeeper, set a state record for most shutouts recorded in a high school career (53);
- Brinley Murphy, a two-time All-American senior forward who's the program's all-time leading goal scorer (110), recently was named one of two Heisman High School Scholarship winners (\$1,000 from the state of Tennessee).
- Murphy, a University of South Carolina signee, also is a two-time Gatorade Tennessee Player of the Year and Player of the Year state-wide as voted by Tennessee high school coaches.

Congratulations to the Lady Bulldogs
on a great 2022 season!

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‘Bright’ kickoff to local Christmas donation effort

(Above) Emma Bowen gives a side eye to Rocco the Reindeer, who visited the Pinnacle at Turkey Creek “All is Bright” holiday celebration kick-off Friday, Nov. 18. (Right) Cousins Kady Crow, 8, and Hendrix Zambrana, 3, enjoyed the festivities, which included a visit from Santa Claus.

Photos by Michelle Hollenhead



AJ to lead Dec. 4 parade

MICHELLE HOLLENHEAD
mhollenhead@farragutpress.com

A special youth has been selected as grand marshal of inaugural Farragut Christmas Parade.

Farragut Middle School sixth-grader AJ Cucksey — who has bravely faced a number of medical issues yet played on the seventh-grade middle school football team that recently won the Knox County championship — will lead the parade when it kicks off at 4 p.m., Sunday, Dec. 4.

“When we were talking about a family-friendly parade, his name just popped into my mind,” said Mandy Kincaid, Farragut Primary School kindergarten teacher who co-chairs the Christmas parade committee with Mary Nussbaum.

“AJ and my daughter, Emme, have been together since kindergarten, and I had his sister, Gia, in my class.”

“They are such a wonderful family,” she added of AJ’s parents, John and Shannon, Gia and brother, Vadin.

“And he is a remarkable kid.”

AJ has been battling a form of childhood cancer, Pilocytic astrocytoma, since being diagnosed.



AJ Cucksey

In memory of her g’parents, Lynch has Send Seniors Christmas Love in high gear

MICHELLE HOLLENHEAD
mhollenhead@farragutpress.com

In honor and in memory of her own grandparents, Doyle and Irene Arwood, Ashley Lynch of Farragut has made it her mission to make sure senior citizens feel loved all year long.

The Christmas-focused event, Send Seniors Christmas Love, is in full swing again this year, and has a need for 2,000 sets of gifts, which will be distributed in nursing homes throughout East Tennessee in the weeks leading up to the holiday.

The SSCL project, inspired by Lynch’s charity Send Senior Citizens Love, officially kicked off with the Pinnacle at Turkey Creek’s All is Bright holiday celebration Friday, Nov. 18, and will run through Tuesday, Dec. 20.

Tiny trees, adorned with gift tag “ornaments,” are located near the 60-foot lighted Christmas tree in the Pinnacle at

Turkey Creek shopping center and also are scattered throughout the development, which is a long-time partner for the event.

Each tag is simply listed as “male” or “female,” and has suggested gifts for nursing home residents, including such practical items as warm slipper socks, blankets, stationary, hats and gloves.

Those wishing to participate can visit the shopping center, pick out a tag, purchase the items listed, then return them unwrapped to the Pinnacle at Turkey Creek management office, 11251 Parkside Drive, where volunteer “elves” will wrap and distribute the gifts.

Last year, 1,300 seniors were gifted with

Christmas presents thanks to Lynch and several core volunteers, including Pinnacle at Turkey Creek manager Darryl Whitehead and Knox County Sheriff’s Office Sgt. Brad Hall and his wife, Pam Hall, who deliver gifts dressed as Santa and Mrs. Claus.

“Last year, a resident was so excited she got a visit from Santa,” Lynch said. “It just brought me to tears to see how happy she was.”

Lynch said she personally calls nursing homes in Knox, Blount and Sevier counties — along with locations in Greenville, Rogersville, Johnson City and Lenoir City — to get an accurate headcount for the needs.

On Dec. 20, Lynch said the charity again will partner with Mercedes Benz of Knoxville to load up sprinter vans for deliveries.

For more information, visit www.sscl.com.



Lynch

New Mission of Hope exec. director seeks Town help for Christmas Drive

TAMMY CHEEK
editor@farragutpress.com

As Farragut resident David Heatherly moves through the transition phase as new Mission of Hope executive director, MOH carries on its Cyber Barrel Christmas Drive, which started Nov. 1

and will continue to Monday, Dec. 5.

“We’re in the middle of doing our 27th Christmas Drive, where we collect new toys, new clothing, non-perishable food and hygiene items,” said Emmette Thompson, retiring MOH executive director. “You go online and it tells you how you can purchase something.”

“We have already selected toys and clothing items on our online registry, and the registries on Amazon, Target and Walmart,” MOH operations assistant Becky Mills said. “You go to the (MOH) website or scan a QR code (and) it will take you directly to the page that will link to our registry.”

“The items that are purchased off the registry are shipped directly to our warehouse,” Mills added.

Additionally, she said there are blue barrels available at Barnes & Noble, Fisher Tire, Food City and Home Fed-

See CHRISTMAS DRIVE on Page 6B

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• **Knox County will cut the ribbon on its 24th Annual Holiday Festival of Lights at The Cove at Concord Park (11808 S. Northshore Drive)** at a family-friendly event starting at 6 p.m., Thursday, Dec. 1, with Knox County Mayor Glenn Jacobs greeting guests and passing out candy “Kanes.”

Festival will run nightly from 6 to 9 p.m. through Saturday, Dec. 31, excluding Christmas Eve and Christmas Day. It is free and open to the public, though visitors are encouraged to bring non-perishable food items to donate to The Love Kitchen, which provides meals, clothing, and emergency food packages for the homebound, homeless and unemployed.

Santa Claus will visit on Fridays and Saturdays, and drop in on select dates throughout the festival to collect letters to Santa, tell North Pole tales and lead Christmas crafts. This year also will feature train rides each Monday during the festival.

During the Festival, The Cove’s three-quarter-mile greenway trail is illuminated by a sparkling light display coordinated to music. Knox County Parks and Recreation Department staff does all the decorating, which includes placing displays and thousands of lights. An onsite vendor — found inside the River Sports Outfitters facility — will have hot drinks and light refreshments available for purchase most nights. The Cove has several fire pits available for guests to warm up or roast s’mores. Pets on leashes are welcome.

• **Members of Tennessee Valley Machine Knitters Club will meet beginning at 11:30 a.m., Tuesday, Dec. 6,** in Alcoa First United Methodist Church for its holiday luncheon. For more information, contact Marie Hickson, secretary, at 865-457-0960.

• **MEDIC Regional Blood Center is recognizing “the Blood Industry’s Season of Giving with Blood Centers of America,”** which is under way and runs through Thursday, Dec. 15, while also hosting MEDIC’s 12 Days of Christmas, which is under way and runs through Friday, Dec. 9. Both promotional drives are at all MEDIC locations, including its 11000 Kingston Pike location in Farragut.

For Season of Giving, there are three steps to enter: donate blood with a participating blood center through Dec. 15, 2022; post a public photo of yourself on Instagram, Facebook or Twitter with the hashtag #Santasblooddonors; and complete an entry form located at medicblood.org/. Limit one entry per person. For 12 Days of Christmas, donors automatically are entered.

• **Veterans Legal Advice Clinic will be held in person at the Knox County Public Defender’s Office, 1101 Liberty St.** in Knoxville, from noon to 2 p.m., Wednesday, Dec. 14. Veterans unable to attend in person can use the telephone clinic option. Pre-registration is required for telephone clinic. Veterans are asked to call Legal Aid of East Tennessee at 865-637-0484 to pre-register. This is a general advice clinic with a wide variety of legal issues, including family law, landlord/tenant, bankruptcy, criminal defense, consumer protection, contract disputes, child support and personal injury, among other issues.

• **Marble Springs State Historic Site, 1220 West Governor John Sevier Highway, Knoxville, will host an afternoon by the fireplace with some wintertime storytelling** from noon until 6 p.m., Saturday, Dec. 17. Hot cider, hot cocoa and other refreshments can be enjoyed by a warm fire. “We will also be making popcorn and cranberry garland to take home,” a MSSHS press release stated. For more information, call 865-573-5508.

Christmas drive

From page 5B

eral. “It’s been a blessed opportunity for me,” Thompson said of his 23 years as MOH executive director. “The Mission of Hope that focuses on rural Appalachian communities that are kind of off the beaten path, and we work through schools and what we call Mountain Ministry Centers.

“Most of the areas we go to are pretty rural, not always near an interstate highway,

but we’ve been blessed to find a way to work through schools and Mountain Ministries to help them help their people,” he added. “We operate like a tree through two roots and five branches,” providing resource distribution, a back-



Heatherly



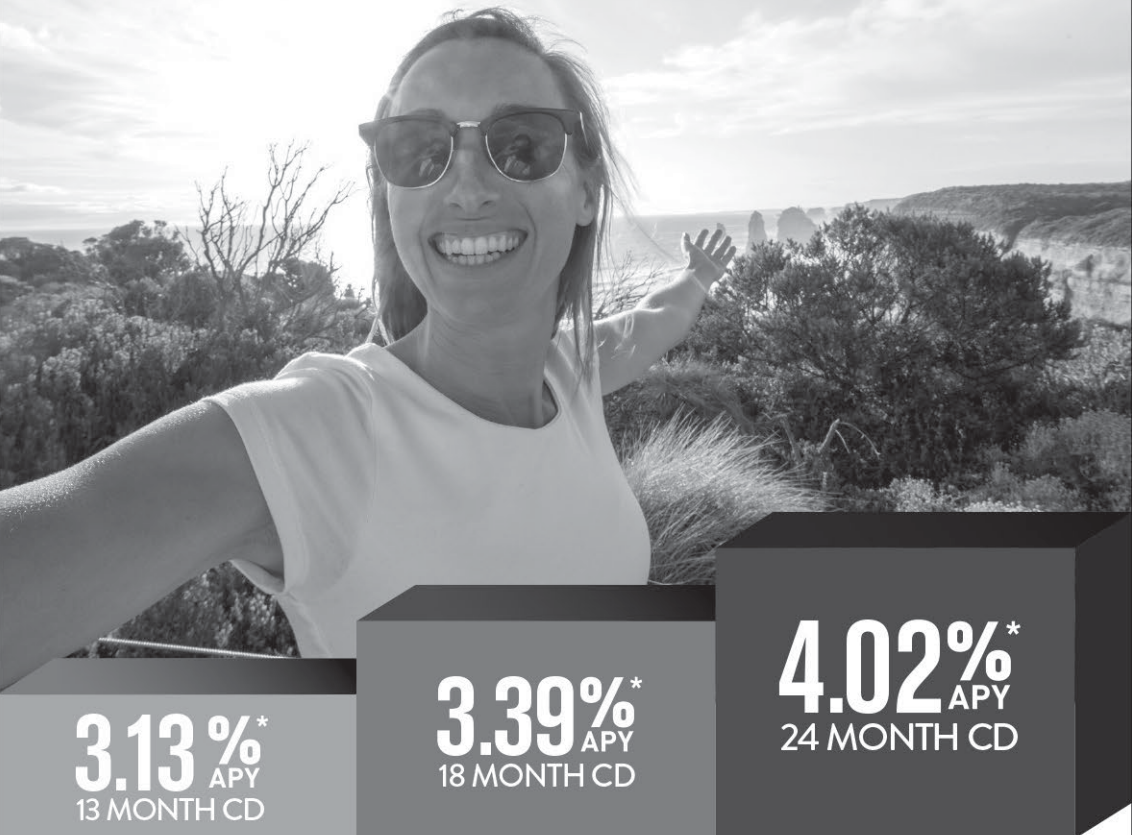
Thompson

to-school program, evangelism and outreach services, a mentoring program, Christmas program and college scholarships.

Learn more MOH about volunteer and donating opportunities at missionof-hope.org.

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AJ-Parade

From page 5B

nosed at age 4, which causes non-malignant brain tumors.

The tumors are inoperable, and his condition is lifelong — and even now, his family is waiting to see if he will need more chemotherapy.

However, AJ's family has rallied around him and encour-

aged him, as they have coined the motto #Cucksey Strong, which he has been determined to embody, even helping raise funds for East Tennessee Children's Hospital and bringing awareness to his condition — always with a smile.

"He is very excited and honored to be chosen," John said.

Parade details

The parade has 30 partici-

pants who will begin at Farragut intermediate School, then march to the FHS campus. They include: Concord Christian School Marching Band; Farragut youth cheerleaders; AJ's Seventh-Grade championship team; FC Alliance soccer; FHS Flagship 3140 Robotics Team; FHS Marching Admirals band; FMS baseball team, boys basketball team, cheer-

leaders, Lady Admirals soccer team and swim and dive team; Girl Scout Troop No. 250; Tri-Star Twirl; St. John Neumann Catholic School cheerleaders; and Two Rivers Church.

Santa and Mrs. Claus will provide a strong finish as the final parade participants.

A Christmas Village, in the FHS parking lot, begins at 2:30 p.m., with vendor booths and

food trucks lasting until 6 p.m.

Designated charity Compassion Closet will collect stocking stuffers at its booth.

Parking

Parking for parade and vendor participants is in the FHS junior lot. Parking for viewers and shoppers is in West End shopping center lot or across Kingston Pike from the high school in the Aldi/Kroger lots.

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Hundreds of Farragut and area families made what has become an annual late November visit to Founders Park at Campbell Station, as Town of Farragut’s Countdown to Light the Park featured more than 70,000 lights being turned on by Santa Claus Monday evening, Nov. 21. Providing entertainment in the minutes leading up to the lighting ceremony included Akima Club Singers, Concord Brass, Angela Floyd Students and an FHS Choral group. The lights will be on from 6 to 10 p.m. nightly through Tuesday, Jan. 2, with the exceptions of Christmas Eve, Saturday, Dec. 24, and Christmas Day, Sunday, Dec. 25.

Photos by Michelle Hollenhead and Alan Sloan except where indicated

Top: Akima Club Singers were among the performers at “Countdown to Light the Park.” (Photo Submitted)



Ezra Klicka, 7, left, and siblings, Bristol, 7, and Carson, 2, pose with the Grinch.



Heather Sipf with her children, Reece, 7, left, and Cayden, 11



Farragut High School singers sang a selection of Christmas music.



Brent Gagley carries his son, Knox, 4, alongside his wife, Katie Gagley.



Princesses Morgan Cowell, left, and Lynzee Brown with Penelope Cornelius, 4



Town Parks and Recreation director Sue Stuhl was a picturesque “Mrs. Claus.”



Richard and Sarah Hubbard with their children, from left, Michael, 15; Lily, 14; Matthew, 11; Joshua, 8; and Rose, 4



Farragut Vice Mayor Louise Povlin, left, expresses excitement as “Santa Claus” flipped the switch, turning on Town Christmas lights for the season. Also pictured is Town Mayor Ron Williams, who helped facilitate.

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Christmas Gifting Tips

Beat the holiday hustle with these shopping strategies

It’s beginning to look a lot like the holiday shopping season. The four- to five-week period between Thanksgiving and Christmas is one of the most frenzied times of year, especially for shoppers.

According to recent research from Needle, an advocate-powered e-commerce company, shoppers report feeling more stress from holiday shopping than they do from family obligations and holiday travel. Eighty-four percent of consumer respondents in Needle’s survey stated that gift-giving caused them stress. Finding the right gifts for everyone can be particularly challenging.

While it may not be possible to remove all of the stressors surrounding holiday shopping, these tips may help make the job more manageable.

- **Outline everyone on your list.** Santa has it right by making a list and checking it twice. Only by writing a list will you be able to ensure you do not forget anyone. Include teachers, coworkers and service people in addition to family and friends on the list.
- **Track deals and coupons.** Sticking to a budget is easier when you utilize tools that help you save even more. Social media, retailer websites and third-party apps also can be great places to find bargains.
- **Protect personal information.** The Federal Trade Commission says to protect yourself financially by shopping only on secure websites with an “https” address. Stick with retailers that tell you what they do with your data and how they keep it secure. Consider creating a separate email address and/or account password for shopping retailers to reduce identity theft and other fraud.



- **Shop early.** Bank of America says one of the easiest ways to overspend is waiting until the last minute to shop and then having to settle for what’s available, regardless of prices. Spread out purchases and begin holiday shopping before prices increase.
- **Be wary of fake coupons.** The internet has made shopping and researching easier but also more complicated at the same time. A deal that seems too good to be true may be just that. Counterfeit coupons are phishing scams that can end up compromising personal information when you click on them.



Kids on your list?

- **Speak to Mom and Dad first.** When buying for a grandchild, niece or nephew, shoppers should first ask Mom or Dad for suggestions. Parents will know which types of toys their children like, and they’ll also know the child’s level of maturity. Some kids may not be mature enough to play with otherwise age-appropriate toys, while others may be mature beyond their years and enjoy more complex toys than their age would suggest. Parents will know what makes a good toy and what doesn’t.
- **Learn what to look for on labels.** Toy labels are great sources of information, but shoppers must know what to look for. The American Academy of Pediatrics notes that toy labels include information about age-appropriateness (i.e., “Ages 3 & Up”) as well as directions regarding how to use the toy. If the instructions seem a bit complex for the child the item will be for, look for something else. Children’s toy labels also include additional information that consumers may not be familiar with. For example, toys labeled “ASTM F963” meet the latest safety standards from the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission. An “ASTM D4236” label indicates the materials associated with the art toy have been reviewed and deemed safe

by a toxicologist. More information about toy label requirements can be found at cpsc.gov. The AAP advises that electric toys should only be given to kids if they include the UL label. That means the toy has been certified by the global safety certification company UL, LLC.

- **Avoid certain features.** The AAP notes that toys that are loud, shoot objects into the air or contain small pieces pose a threat to children. Especially loud toys can damage children’s hearing, while projectiles can increase the risk of eye injuries or choking. Toys with small pieces also pose a choking risk to young children who may try to put the pieces into their mouths.
- **Err on the side of caution.** Consumers who are uncertain about the safety of a given toy, even after reading its label, should err on the side of caution and only give toys they’re confident won’t pose a safety risk. Even toys that may seem safe could be dangerous to kids who might otherwise seem old enough. For example, the AAP advises against giving kids under 12 hobby kits and chemistry sets because such kits may contain dangerous chemicals that even pre-adolescents are not old enough to handle safely.



Traveling with gifts in tow

- When traveling for the holidays, suitcases and other baggage tends to be filled with gifts, decorations and other items like food. Packing for travel can become a little more complicated during this time of year. But these suggestions can help ensure holiday items make it there and back relatively easily.
- **Wrap them there** One way to preserve the integrity of holiday gifts and ensure they look attractive rather than crushed or ripped is to wrap items when you arrive. Build extra time into holiday travel so that you arrive a day or two early. Seek out a quiet spot and get your wrapping done.
 - **Ship there or back** Depending on your mode of travel, there may be limited cargo space in the trunk or back of the SUV. Also, if you’re taking a long road trip that involves rest stops or even staying over at a hotel, gifts left in a vehicle may attract the attention of thieves. Many airlines charge fees for extra baggage, which can quickly add up with bulky holiday gifts. Instead, ship gifts to their destination. Pick a shipping rate that fits your budget.
 - **Make a “small gift” pact** Speak with family members and agree to a set gift size (and/or dollar value). A theme, such as limiting gifts to gift cards, perfume/cologne or food, can make this more manageable. Try to avoid delicate items which can break during transit. Small gifts are easily stashed in luggage or boxes to bring home, saving everyone a little stress.
 - **Remove packaging and wrapping** While they may not look as pristine as carefully wrapped boxes, wrap soft clothing items right in wrapping paper or tissue paper to save on space so gifts will take up less space. On the return trip home, break down clothing boxes and remove toys from their cardboard and plastic packaging to make them easier to transport.

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