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Shamrock Ball, 20th, is March 1

TAMMY CHEEK
tcheek@farragutpress.com

Fathers and daughters are setting their sights on attending 20th Annual Shamrock Ball, a father-daughter dance, set for Saturday, March 1, in Farragut Community Center, 239 Jamestowne Blvd.

“The Shamrock Ball is a very well-attended event that’s a tradition for many families in Farragut,” Town Recreation and Event manager Rachel Malone said. “Participants will enjoy music, light refreshments, a craft and commemorative photo.”

Hosted by Town of Farragut’s Parks & Recreation Department, there are two sessions for the event: from 3 to 5 p.m. and from 6 to 8 p.m.

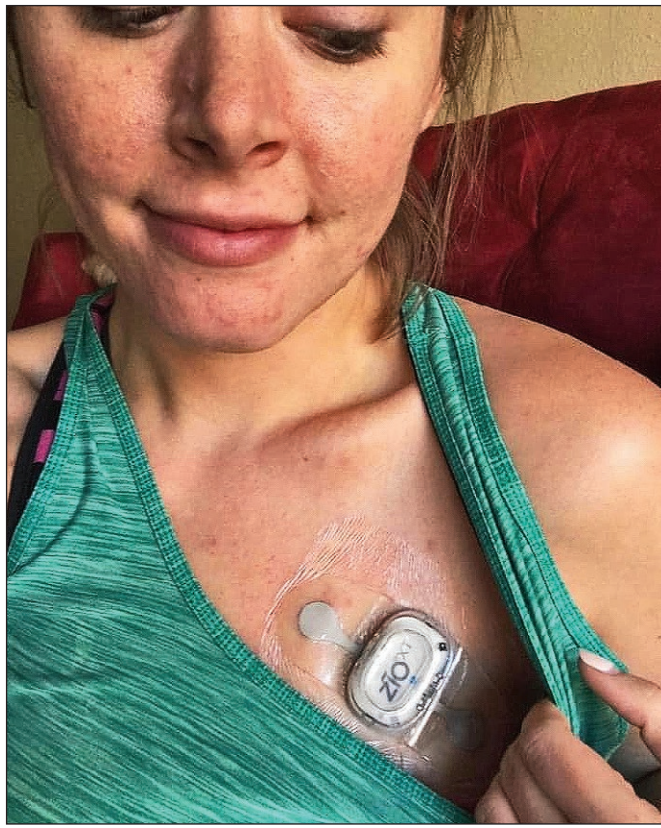
“The time change was made to accommodate the community’s preference since in previous years the 6 to 8 time-slot has sold out and the 7 to 9 (slot) wasn’t as well-attended,” Malone said. “We’re seeing an equal distribution in ticket sales with the new times.”

Meanwhile, “Tickets are selling fast,” he pointed out.

Ticket sales and sponsorships will benefit the Greater West Knox Kiwanis Club and their chosen causes: Black Mountain Home for Children and Kiwanis Fresh Air Camp.

Tickets are \$30 per couple and \$5 for each extra attendee. To buy tickets, visit online at townoffarragut.org/register through Friday, Feb. 21.

“All family members are welcome to attend,” the release stated. “The photos (from the Town) are free and will be available for download within a week after the dance.”



Photos submitted

Shannon Smith, director of marketing communications for Knoxville American Heart Association, is smiling and happy (left) about having a healthy heart. She wore a heart monitor (right) as prescribed by her doctor, which led to Smith’s diagnosis when she was 23 in 2016. (See related Heart Health section, pages 1D-8D, inside this issue)

Matters of the heart: Smith’s boyfriend advice a life saver

If in doubt about your ‘ticker,’ find a cardiologist

TAMMY CHEEK
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Shannon Smith understands the importance of getting the word out about women’s heart health for a few critical reasons.

Most importantly, she has lived it, being a survivor of a heart condition. In fact, taking the advice of her boyfriend-turned-husband probably saved her life.

Further knowing the importance of getting the word out as Knoxville American Heart Association marketing communications director, Smith was diagnosed with supraventricular tachycardia in 2016 at the age of 23.

But her history started as a teenager. “It took a while,” Smith said about her diagnosis. “The normal rate for a heart to beat is 60 to 100 beats per minute. Tachycardia is when the

heart beats too fast, at a rate of more than 100 bpm, when at rest with seemingly no cause.

“The first time it happened to me I was 17, sitting in a high school history class watching a documentary when my pulse shot up out of nowhere,” she added. “I remember looking around to see if anyone else was doing the same thing, but it was just me.

“The children’s hospital where I grew up in Florida gave me a heart monitor to keep in my backpack to track episodes but never came to a conclusion. Going to college, my friends knew sometimes my heart rate would shoot up and it was just a part of my life.”

Upon entering the workforce after college, “The episodes became more frequent, with my heart rate shooting up to over 200 beats for no

See HEART MATTERS on Page 2A

Senior at FHS 1 of TN 2 for Youth Senate



Sophie Lu
UNITED STATES SENATE
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STAFF REPORTS
editor@farragutpress.com

Farragut High School senior Sophie Lu recently was selected as one of the state’s two student representatives for the highly competitive U.S. Senate Youth Program.

According to a Knox County Schools press release, as part of the 63rd Annual Washington Week Saturday, March 1, through Saturday, March 8, Lu will travel to the nation’s capital to engage with top government officials, including senators, cabinet members and President Donald Trump.

“This is a once-in-a-lifetime experience, and I’m ready to take it all in,” Lu stated in the release. “I love D.C. I love government and I can’t wait to see where this journey takes me.”

“This elite program provides an immersive experience for outstanding high school students with aspirations in public service,” the release stated.

See YOUTH SENATE on Page 4A

Lauver, Bowles, Townley headline '25 Songwriters Showcase

TAMMY CHEEK
tcheek@farragutpress.com

Mark your calendar for the 2025 Songwriters Showcase, presented by Visit Farragut, in partnership with Topgolf and taking place from 6 to 8:30 p.m., Monday, Feb. 24, in Topgolf’s event space at 11400 Outlet Drive.

“Join us as we celebrate Tennessee Songwriters Week with an unforgettable evening featuring three talented local songwriters from the greater Knoxville area,” Town Tourism manager Hallie Riddle said.

The event features concerts by hosts David Haley Lauver, Karen Bowles and Mitch Townley.

“Discover the stories that inspire

their music and connect with the heart behind the songs,” Riddle said.

Tickets are free, but guests need to register in advance at Eventbrite.com to receive priority seating. “Guests may also register at the door, but seating is limited, Town Historic Resources coordinator Kristi Vining said.

“A small token of appreciation will be given to a set number of participants, and Kapture Knoxville, a local photo booth company, will be on site to offer the perfect memento,” she added.

All three artists — Lauver, Bowles and Townley — are a part of Knoxville Songwriters Association.

Lauver is a Farragut resident who serves as education and public relations director of Knoxville Songwriters

Association, according to Vining.

“Songs he has co-written include the Grammy-nominated ‘Appalachian Blue,’ recorded by Kristy Cox, and Ali Shumate’s ‘Jezebel,’ which reached No. 1 on the Bluegrass charts,” she said.

Bowles lives in West Knox County and is a board member of Knoxville Songwriters Association.

“She writes gospel, country, blues, bluegrass and children’s songs,” Vining said. “Karen was a co-writer of ‘Appalachian Blue,’ a bluegrass hit for Kristy Cox that earned a Grammy nomination.”

Townley is an “award-winning singer/songwriter from Knoxville who writes in the country, Christian country, folk and Inspirational genres,”

Vining said. “He has more than 70 independent artist cuts, a song featured in a documentary about the Vietnam Memorial and a song in the network TV show ‘Nashville.’

“Townley was co-writer for ‘This Side of Sunday,’ and it spent eight weeks as the No. 1 song on the Christian Country Countdown,” she added.

“We are also thrilled to host at Topgolf Knoxville, an important tourism asset, community gathering spot, event space and vibrant restaurant in the Farragut community,” Riddle said.

For more information, follow Visit Farragut on Facebook and Instagram or e-mail visitfarragut@townoffarragut.org.

Biz Mixer set for Tuesday, Feb. 25

• All Town of Farragut businesses are invited to Shop Farragut/Farragut Business Alliance’s Biz Mixer from 4 to 6 p.m., Tuesday, Feb. 25, in Farragut Community Center’s Assembly Room.

The event, free of charge, will include special speakers, on top of featuring lots of time for business leaders to mingle casually in a “get to know you”

‘Thanks’ extended to Oestreich

and/or “catch up on the latest” format.

• In praise of Ron Oestreich, Town Parks & Recreation director, for his assistance in helping SF/FBA prepare for its 5th Annual Health & Wellness Expo Sunday afternoon, Feb. 2, in the Community Center, “Ron just volunteered, and he was with us for over an hour helping us set everything up,” said Candace

Viox, SF/FBA chair, during that body’s latest meeting Wednesday, Feb. 12, in the Community Center.

“So we (also Steve Krempasky, Alliance executive director) both sent him a thank you (note). So if you guys see him out and about, please tell him ‘thank you,’ because we wouldn’t have been able to start on time without his help.”



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Heart matters

From page 1A

visible reason,” Smith said.

“Sometimes it would last for 30 seconds, other times it would wake me up and last for 30 minutes,” she added. “That’s like doing a high-intensity workout but your body is sitting still.

“I went to the cardiologist where I then lived in Texas and they taped a heart monitor to me that I wore 24/7 for a little over a week. This time they were quick to realize what was happening – SVT.”

In detail, “They explained the electrical path my heart was taking was not the straight loop through all four chambers it should be and was essentially short circuiting,” Smith said. “This was likely something I was born with, and it’s common for symptoms to start in teen years as mine did.

“Before I was diagnosed, I was young and didn’t really think it was a big deal,” she added. “It was my then-boyfriend, now-husband who told me having rapid heart beats like this was not normal.

“And they started to become so frequent that it was messing with my day and messing with my head. It was frustrating when an episode would start and I couldn’t figure out how to calm my heart down.

Getting an accurate diagnosis “made me feel like I wasn’t overreacting for noticing these changes in my body, that it wasn’t silly for me to be the youngest person in the cardiologist waiting room by a good 45 years,” Smith said.

“When I got my diagnosis, the cardiologist told me I had three options to treat this,” she added. “One was to take medicine that was known to make people lethargic; and another was to do nothing and have a much higher risk of having a stroke in 20 years.”

The third “was to do a procedure called a cardiac ablation,” Smith said. “This is what I opted for, and it’s when a doctor inserts thin, flexible tubes, called catheters, through the veins or arteries, usually in the groin. Sensors on the tip of the catheter use heat or cold energy to create tiny scars in the heart to block irregular electrical signals and restore a typical heart-beat.

“It worked.

It was an outpatient surgery, and I was home the same day,”

-Shannon Smith,
on the success of her cardiac ablation

“It worked,” she added. “It was an outpatient surgery, and I was home the same day, just not allowed to lift more than a few pounds for the following week.

“When the doctor told me he recommended an ablation, I learned my mom had actually had the same surgery about 15 years earlier to treat her own heart issue — atrial flutter.” A few years after her surgery, “my maternal grandmother had a stroke, which left her unable to speak and eventually led to her death,” Smith said. “And then I learned her mother also died of a stroke.

“It’s then that I realized because of research funded by groups like the AHA, my mom and I were spared from the same demise her mother and grandmother died from,” she added. “I am recently married to the same boy who encouraged me to visit the cardiologist in Texas almost eight years ago. It’s largely because of him that I no longer deal with SVT.”

The surgery eventually changed Smith’s mindset about sharing her story.

“When I first had to have my ablation, I didn’t tell anyone that didn’t need to know because I didn’t want the pity that came with the words ‘I have to have a heart procedure,’” she recalled.

Later, however, “I have always shared my heart story on National Wear Red Day — the first Friday in February, when people are encouraged to wear red to advocate for women’s heart health,” Smith said.

“And every year, another woman will comment to say she has the same symptoms and had no idea this is something she could get fixed,” she added. “That’s when I real-

ized the importance of talking about these kinds of things.”

With a background in journalism, she was looking to switch career fields when she saw the Knoxville AHA was looking to hire a marketing and communications director.

“I thought, ‘how perfect,’” Smith said. “Not only do I have a strong communications background, but I have directly benefitted from the work of the AHA.

“I knew I’d be able to genuinely support the work we do while still using the skills I’d honed as a reporter,” she added. “And now here we are today.”

“The AHA has actually helped me understand my own heart condition better and I learned how many ways I can be proactive to make sure my heart stays healthy for as long as it can. The biggest way the AHA impacts people that they may not even realize is through research.”

Reflecting back, “Cardiac ablation was not a procedure my grandmother or great-grandmother could have received, but the research and technology that’s evolved because of funding from the AHA gave my mom and I a stronger lease on life with a much, much lower possibility of stroke than the women who came before us,” Smith said.

“Many people who do develop cardiac issues later in life are able to manage them and continue life thanks to the AHA.”

KCSO reports

• **At 10:38 a.m., Wednesday, Feb. 5, a Knox County Sheriff’s Office detective responded to 11133 Kingston Pike (PureMagic Carwash) on a burglary call.** “Complainant advised that when he returned to work, he noticed some tools were missing from the business,” the report stated. “He reviewed the business’s security cameras and found footage on Feb. 4 at approximately (8:30 p.m. of) two suspects, one male and one female, walking onto the property parking lot.

“The female suspect began going through the contents of the vacuum collection compartments,” the report further stated. “The male suspect entered the business through a rear door and stole (various) items. The suspects also spread out the vacuum contents at the rear of the business. There did not appear to be any damage. ...” Total value of loss was listed at \$1,378.57.

• **At 4:36 p.m., Feb. 5, officers were dispatched to a Sonja Drive residence in response to a possible auto theft.** Upon arrival, officers met with complainant/victim.

He reported his blue 2023 Toyota GR86 “was stolen from his garage. He last saw the vehicle the night before and left for work at (6 a.m.) on Feb. 5,” the report stated. “Upon returning home at approximately (4 p.m.), he discovered the vehicle was missing.”

Officers observed the garage door appeared to have been pried open. “Further investigation revealed that the suspect had likely entered the home and taken the vehicle’s keys, as (victim) reported them missing,” the report stated. “Additionally, he (said) an airsoft rifle and a knife were also stolen from the residence.”

Victim informed officers that his vehicle was equipped with a GPS tracker, which showed the car’s current location in Chattanooga. Officers advised him that a report would be filed and that he would be contacted by a detective.

Hours later, officers received a call from an Alcoa Police Department detective, “a family friend of (the victim saying) Red Bank Police Department had tracked the stolen vehicle to 113 Goodson Ave in Chattanooga,” the report stated. No suspects were located, no arrests were made. The vehicle was recovered.

• **At 5:50 p.m., Feb. 5, officers responded to a North Campbell Station Road address, Casey’s, on reports of a disturbance.** Officers observed a female at the counter inside of the Casey’s who “appeared heavily intoxicated (and) unable to pay \$3 for numerous items at the counter while she was holding hundreds of us currency dollars,” the report stated. “... Arrestee reache(d) inside of her bra and pull(ed) out a small baggie with approximately 1.3 grams of a green leafy-like substance consistent with marijuana. ... The arrestee was taken into custody.”



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Letter to the editor

Mayor refutes 'censorship' take

I want to address what was defined by a member of the community as social media censorship (Letter to the Editor, Feb. 12). My comment during our annual Board of Mayor and Aldermen retreat actually reflected the opposite view — I believe that inaccuracies on social media should be addressed with factual information, not censorship. I don't believe in any form of censorship, even when my views are portrayed negatively.

My top concern in 2024 and my highest priority in 2025 is addressing Farragut traffic. Kudos to our staff for listening to the concerns of residents and implementing the Advanced Traffic Management System (ATMS). This centrally-controlled system manages all of Farragut's 26 traffic signals.

We can already see improvements at the Campbell Station Road/Kingston Pike intersection, and more are to come.

Additional traffic priorities for the year include adding adaptive technology to the ATMS, prioritizing infrastructure projects to mitigate traffic in the Town Center area and looking at ways to reroute traffic and increase connectivity throughout town.

As always, you can find accurate information about Farragut at townoffarragut.org, including contact info for board members and staff. We're happy to talk about your concerns.

~ Farragut Mayor Ron Williams

presstalk

865-671-TALK (8255) or editor@farragutpress.com

• Thank you to all of our state legislators who voted against the Universal Voucher Bill. The Letter to the Editor published in the Jan. 29 farragutpress is misleading and an error in writing that a benefit of school vouchers, presented as school choice, will help children with unique needs, citing a child with dyslexia, as well as helping low-income families.

While the private schools are subject to federal disability protections, they are not required to provide things like individual education programs, which help accommodate specialized learning needs, nor do they have to admit any student with disabilities.

Public schools are required to accept everyone. As for helping low-income families, the vast majority of beneficiaries are families that can already afford to put their children in private schools. The Voucher Bill siphons funds intended for public education to underwrite these costs. Half of the 20,000 vouchers can go to anyone no matter what their income level. In reality, considering all the expenses to go with those of private education, many students from lower income families will not be able to afford a year's worth of education in private schools.

In addition, by providing a floor for public schools, Tennessee taxpayers are paying not only the \$7,000 for the voucher, but an additional \$7,000 to the public schools where the student no longer attends.

The fiscal warning bells have been rung and they are simply being ignored. Those of us that are against the Voucher Bill are not, as the writer states, bending to the pressure of self-preservationists, protecting institutions rather than serving our children.

We are not confused about our values. For all the genuine concerns about the quality of education in the United States, providing the giveaway to the most advantaged among us is not school choice — it is preferential placement.

• It looks like the Biddle Farm development is not really progressing. There are so many vacant buildings there. The apartments are not finished — they were supposed to be finished months ago. My questions is: what is going on with Biddle Farm? Does the developer have financial problems? What's the deal? The whole thing looks strange; kind of abandoned, almost.

Youth Senate

From page 1A

Lu will receive a \$10,000 college scholarship, funded by The Hearst Foundations. For the senior, this achievement is "a culmination of years of dedication to civic engagement and leadership," she stated.

"I first heard about the program as a freshman when a senior at my school was selected," Lu further stated. "Ever since then, I had my eye on the opportunity. I'm beyond excited to represent Tennessee."

The Senate Youth program "is among the most prestigious youth government programs in the country, with only two students selected from each

state," the press release stated.

To qualify, the release stated students must hold high-level elected or appointed leadership positions in their schools or communities and undergo a rigorous selection process, which includes multiple rounds of applications, essays and interviews testing the students' knowledge of U.S. government and policy.

"The application process was so intense," Lu stated. But "one of the essays focused on an issue I'm passionate about: civic engagement education for high school students. I proposed a five-pronged solution incorporating government support and personal experiences in both STEM and policy."

"Her selection reflects her commitment to public service and leadership, qualities she hopes to cultivate further during her time in Washington, D.C.," the release stated.

"I'm looking forward to being in historic spaces, like the White House and Capitol Hill, but I'm also thrilled to meet the other student delegates from across the country," Lu stated. "We've already started connecting online, and I can't wait to learn from their diverse perspectives."

With plans to study STEM and policy in college before pursuing law school, the senior stated she seeks the opportunity as a stepping stone toward her career.

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Alan Sloan

Doughnut lovers didn't mind waiting in a long line at Parlor Doughnuts, 106 Biddle Farms Blvd., during its grand opening in Farragut Town Center Saturday morning, Feb. 15.

Customer line stays long during Parlor Doughnuts grand opening

TAMMY CHEEK

tcheek@farragutpress.com

A long line of customers reaching more than 100 feet, both inside and outside, kept building Saturday morning, Feb. 15 — all wanting to experience the goodies offered by Parlor Doughnuts, 106 Biddle Farms Blvd., during its grand opening in Farragut Town Center.

"We feel great," said Saad Ahmed, franchise owner of the Farragut store. "We had a great, warm welcome from the community."

"We had lines out the door all day Saturday,

and there were people willing to wait in the rain with umbrellas, and it was cold," he added. "They still stuck it through, so I think (the shop) is going to be a great addition, especially being across from Farragut High School."

"We'll will have a new little hangout for the kids; we have a big dining room, lounge seating and couch seating and communal table seating. Students can come here, probably, before school and after school and study, wait on their parents, hang out."

See PARLOR DOUGHNUTS on Page 6A

businessbriefs

• Maria Sexton recently was appointed University of Tennessee Medical Center's new senior vice president and CEO.

"A highly accomplished leader with extensive expertise in information technology, information security, risk, compliance and IT audit, Sexton is well-positioned to drive innovation and enhance the medical center's IT capabilities," A UTM press release stated.



Sexton

She has held senior IT leadership roles at several notable organizations, including University Medical Center of Southern Nevada, MGM Resorts International, Kellogg Company and Walgreens. Most recently, she served as CIO at UMC, where she oversaw the delivery of technology services and support to a 541-bed academic medical center and the state's only Level 1 Trauma Center, managed all aspects of the Information Security Program and provided strategic guidance on the organization's technology capabilities.

• Morning Pointe Senior Living is "super-excited" to have several new certified medication aides pass through its second CMA course, the first in the Knoxville, TN, region," Morning Pointe press release stated.

The new CMAs include Jordan Dessaint, Morning Point of Knoxville Assisted Living; Latoya Gallaher and Jessica Doyle, The Lantern at Morning Pointe Alzheimer's Center of Excellence, Knoxville; Celeste Davis (Morning Pointe of Hardin Valley Assisted Living and Memory Care; Remi Day, Morning Pointe of Powell Assisted Living; and Gabby Vandergriff, The Lantern at Morning Pointe Alzheimer's Center of Excellence, Powell.

• Knoxville native, Dr. Kyle Boden, a sports medicine specialist, recently has returned home after his residency in Kentucky to treat athletes at Knoxville Orthopaedic Clinic in Maryville. For more information, visit kocortho.com



Boden

• Dr. Glen Balch recently was appointed director of University of Tennessee Medical Center Cancer Institute. He succeeds Dr. John Bell, who retired on Dec. 31, 2024, after 36 years of service.



Balch

Ash Chiropractic-Wellness opens in Renaissance suites

TAMMY CHEEK

tcheek@farragutpress.com

Dr. Joel Ash of Farragut recently has opened Ash Chiropractic & Wellness at 12752 Kingston Pike, in Renaissance | Farragut, Suite 103, to target the root cause of a patient's symptoms, so they can "live a better, more enjoyable life."

"It's going really well," Ash added about his business opening. "It's really rewarding work."

He offers such chiropractic services as adjustments and soft-tissue work.

"I can do deep tissue massages, stretching — I stretch the patient — and I also do cupping," Ash said. "Cupping helps bring blood flow to the area (of the body)."

"Like if you had a really tough workout and your legs are super sore, I would put cups there (on the legs), and it helps speed up the healing process," he added "Sometimes, you do it with heat."

Ash also helps patients with diet and exercise.

Owner background

A Concord Christian School

2016 graduate, he attended Pellissippi State Community College then University of Tennessee, from where he graduated in 2020.

Ash was studying finance at UT, but during his junior year he was in an auto accident.

"I had just taken my last finals and was heading home for Christmas and got rear-ended," he recalled. "So, I went to the chiropractor and had a great experience and wanted to help other people."

Ash had just finished his finance studies his senior year, when he went to job fairs and realized, "Man, I can't see myself doing any of this."

So, he changed his career path. Still having a good connection with chiropractor from his junior year, he found career support from that chiropractor.

"I jumped right in and went to (Texas Chiropractic College in Pasadena, Texas)," Ash said. He graduated from that school in September 2024.

"I opened up shop as soon as I got my license," he added.

Finding a location in which to open was easy for Ash.

"My mom is a State Farm

agent in the (Renaissance) Plaza," he said. "I knew how cool this (location) is, and it's great timing ... it just worked out perfectly."

"I love the area, too," Ash added. "I grew up here in Farragut."

He is a member of Tennessee Chiropractic Association.

Hours, appointments

Ash's office is open from 8 a.m. to noon and from 1 to 5 p.m., Monday and Thursday; from 8 a.m. to noon and from 1 to 7 p.m., Tuesday; from 8 a.m. to noon, Wednesday; and from 9 a.m. to noon and from 1 to 5 p.m., Friday, or by appointment after hours.

To book an appointment, call 865-671-1000 or visit ashchiropracknox.com



Tammy Cheek

Dr. Joel Ash targets the root of pain at his practice, Ash Chiropractic & Wellness, in Renaissance | Farragut.



Topgolf tournament to support YMCA

Golfers of all skill levels gathered at Topgolf on February 13th to support the YMCA of East Tennessee in raising funds for their Annual Campaign. Players took over the upper deck, enjoying lunch, exploring exhibition booths, and competing for prizes, including a first-place team award.

This event was the first of four tournaments scheduled for 2025, with the remaining competitions set to take place at local private and public courses, including Gettysvieve, Avalon, and Egwani. If you would like to learn more about available sponsorships and/or playing in an upcoming tournament, please visit ymca-knoxville.org/events or contact Jared Daugherty at jdaugherty@ymca-knoxville.org

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Parlor Doughnuts

From page 5A

The not-so-traditional doughnuts will draw high school students, adults and children, according to the owner.

"It's not a traditional cake doughnut," Ahmed said. "It's like a light, airy, flaky doughnut. It's got a lot of layers to it."

"We have 23 total flavors, from basic, like chocolate and vanilla glaze with sprinkles, all the way to, like, our filled doughnuts, like raspberry filled or apple filled," he added.

ed. "We also have some funky ones, like cheesecake on them with pecans and nuts, caramel and chocolate drizzle."

For example, "We've got a raspberry pistachio," Ahmed said. "No one ever thought of putting pistachios on doughnuts but it works."

How about French toast, honey glazed or caramel bliss? There are even dog doughnuts.

To go with the doughnuts, the shop also has coffee variety: drip, iced latte, iced chai latte, iced Mayan mocha, cold brew, iced matcha and more.

Also featured are hot choco-

late, acai bowls, avocado toast, breakfast sandwiches and tacos and sausage biscuits.

Locating a store in Farragut's Biddle Farms "was always the plan," Ahmed said. "We wanted to do one in the downtown (Knoxville) area and open one in the Farragut area."

"We pretty much signed the lease (on the Farragut store) around the same time as the downtown (Knoxville) shop," he added. "It's just that the development took a little longer in Farragut, but that was the plan — just because they have

such scalability (and) sharing employees, inventory and things like that."

In going into the doughnut business, Ahmed said he also is in the pizza business.

"Pizza is people's dinner; it's their lunch, and it's open until midnight," he said. "Doughnuts and coffee is more like a treat for people."

"I feel like people are willing to spend more money when they're treating themselves," Ahmed added. "And, there's always a demand for things like doughnuts, cookies and things like that."

He also likes the hours of operation — from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. seven days a week.

Customers can order through third parties, such as Grubhub, DoorDash and Uber Eats. The Parlor's website, parlordoughnuts.com, caters for special events, such as weddings, birthdays, baby showers and baby gender parties.

"We can do custom doughnuts for baby showers and baby reveals," Ahmed said. "We can do a pink filling or a blue filling."

For more information, call 865-392-8392.



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SENIOR NIGHT

Celebrating school sports achievements of local young athletes

FARRAGUTPRESS WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 19, 2025 • 1B

Final regular season home basketball games, where Senior Night activities took place at Farragut High School, Hardin Valley Academy and Bearden High School, came Friday night, Feb. 7 (HVA), and Thursday night, Feb. 13 (FHS and BHS).

In addition to recognizing its basketball Lady Admirals and FHS boys from the Class of 2025,

Farragut also did the same with its dance team and cheerleading seniors, plus its Sparkle Team senior.

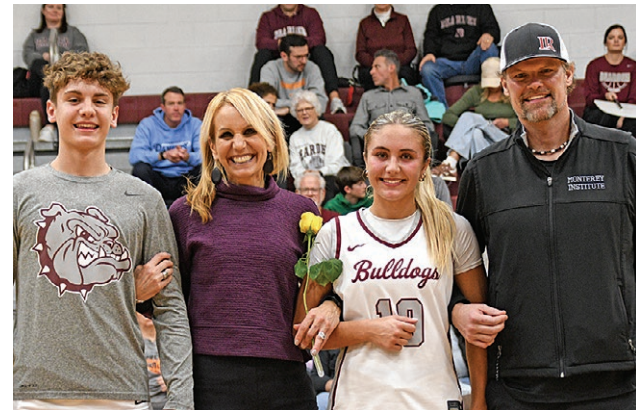
Lady Hawks and HVA boys varsity basketball seniors joined Hardin Valley cheerleader and dance team seniors in the spotlight.

While recognizing its Lady Bulldogs and BHS boys basketballers from the Class of 2025, Bearden also spotlighted two senior Bulldog bowlers.

(Each FHS basketball seniors photo includes either girls head coach Jason Mayfield or boys head coach JP Burris)

Farragut photos by Alan Sloan | HVA photos courtesy of Jeremy Wiggs Photography | Bearden photos courtesy of Tammy Kregel

GIRLS BASKETBALL



BHS's Kendall Anne Murphy and family



BHS's Aisha Patel and family



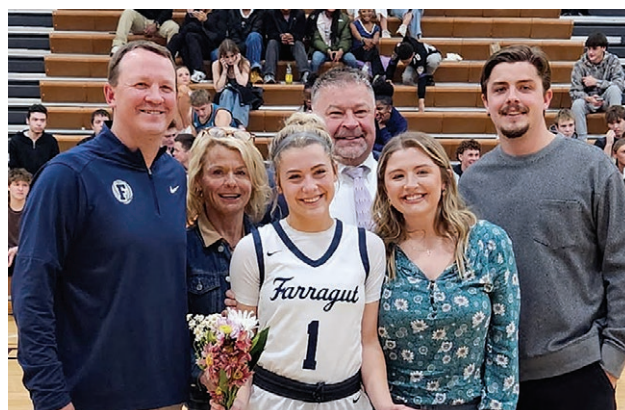
BHS's Caitlin McVeigh and family



FHS's Kyra Wray with family and coach



FHS's Annie Priest with family and coach



FHS's Jaci Neubert with family and coach



HVA's Kaitlyn Friedrich and family



HVA's Ava Claire Wrather and family



HVA's Bella Buccola and family



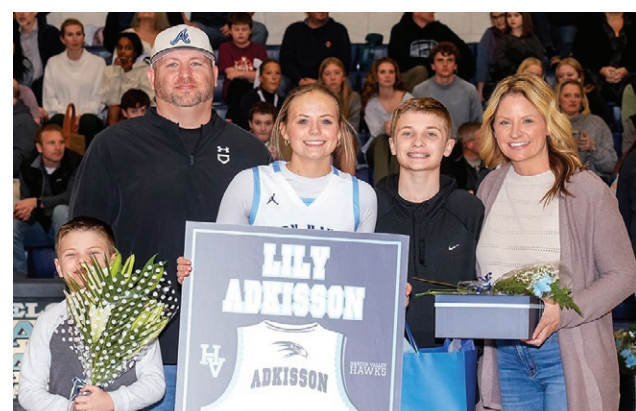
HVA's Kyndra West and family



HVA's Kamiyah Love and family



HVA's Kamryn Butcher and family



HVA's Lily Adkisson and family



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BOYS BASKETBALL



BHS's Anderson Doettl and family



BHS's Andrew Baker and family



BHS's Dom Mahoney and family



BHS's Drew Parrott, right, and family



BHS's JaMichael Blair, right, and family



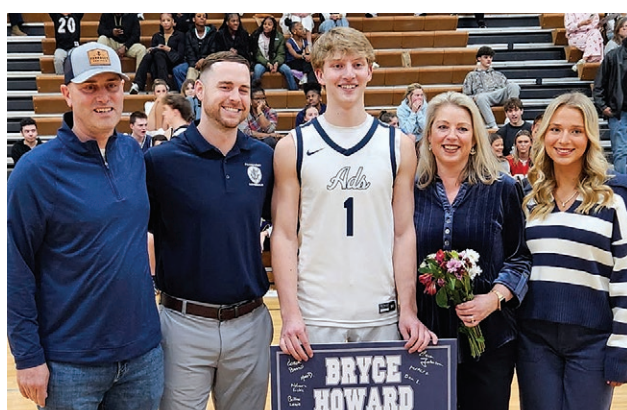
BHS's Justice Watson and family



BHS's King Hubbard and family



FHS's Brody Appling with family and coach



FHS's Bryce Howard with family and coach



FHS's Carson MacTavish with family and coach



FHS's Dom VanAcker with family and coach



FHS's Ethan Kern with family and coach



FHS's Kent Carbaugh with family and coach



FHS's Luke Finnegan with family and coach



HVA's Barron Scheetz and family



HVA's Ben Brophy and family



HVA's Bryson Frey and family



HVA's Isaac Ratliff and family

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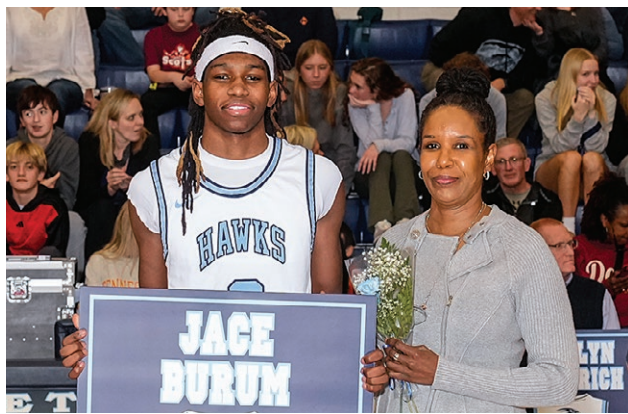
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BOYS BASKETBALL



HVA's Jace Burum and family



HVA's Will Fellers and family

SPARKLE SQUAD



FHS's Owen Davis and family

CHEERLEADING



FHS's Bradyn Johnson and family



FHS's Carsyn Arden and family



FHS's Harper King and family



FHS's Loryn Good and family



HVA's Ava Diggs and family



HVA's Emma Johnson and family



HVA's Audrey Schuster and family



HVA's Lydia Widner and family



HVA's Alli Lozano and family

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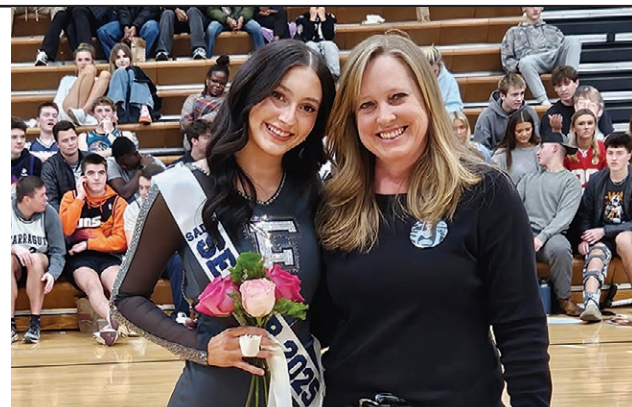
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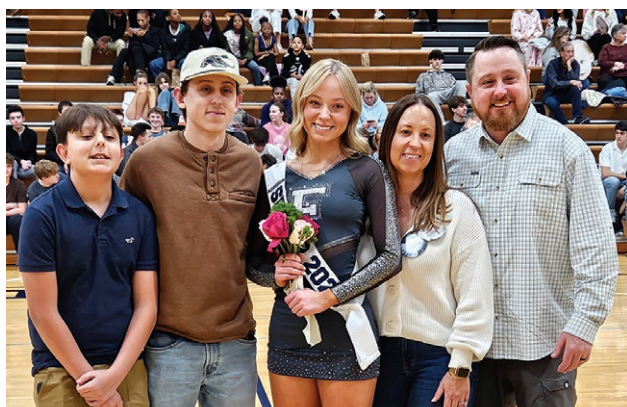
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DANCE TEAM



FHS's Sadie LaFrance and family



FHS's Addison Fink and family



FHS's Carson Kraemer and family



FHS's Makenna McDonald and family



FHS's Mary Elizabeth Noble and family



HVA's Maylan Sams and family



HVA's Kaitlyn Keim and family

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BHS's Kirsten Ezell and family



BHS's Olivia Hailey and family

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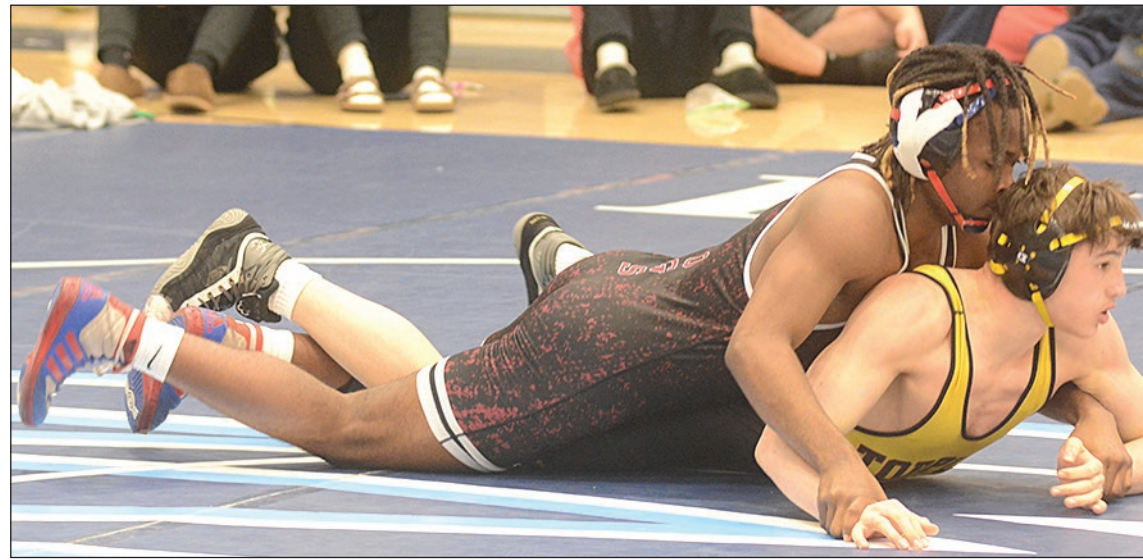
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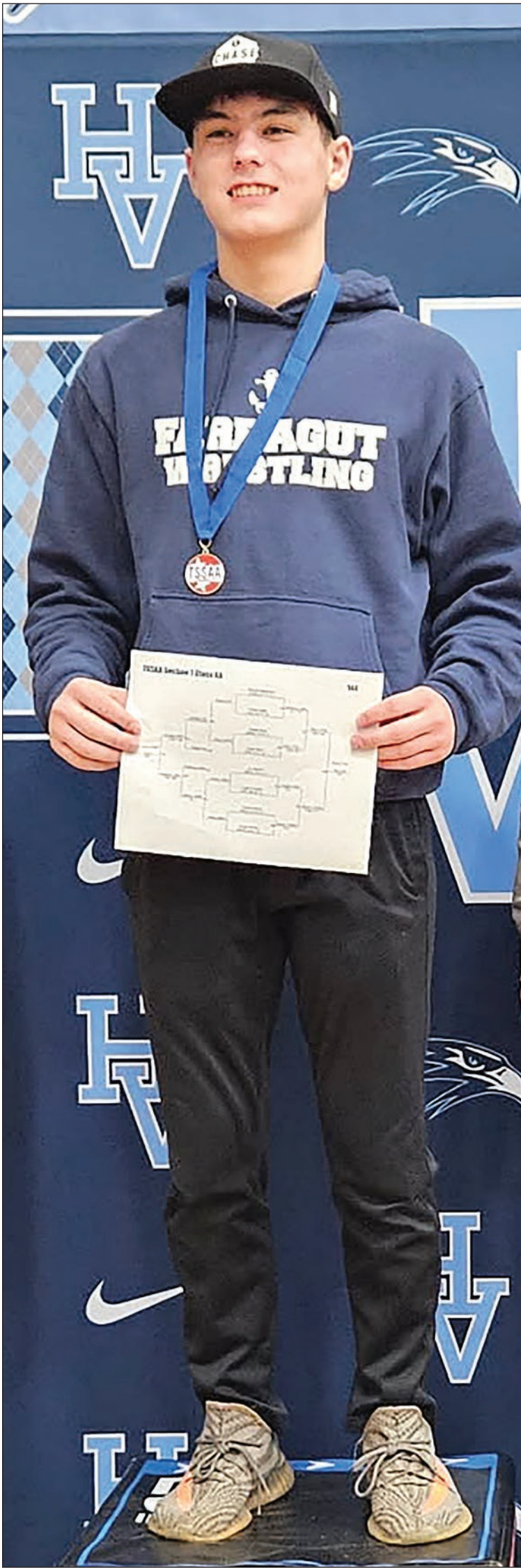
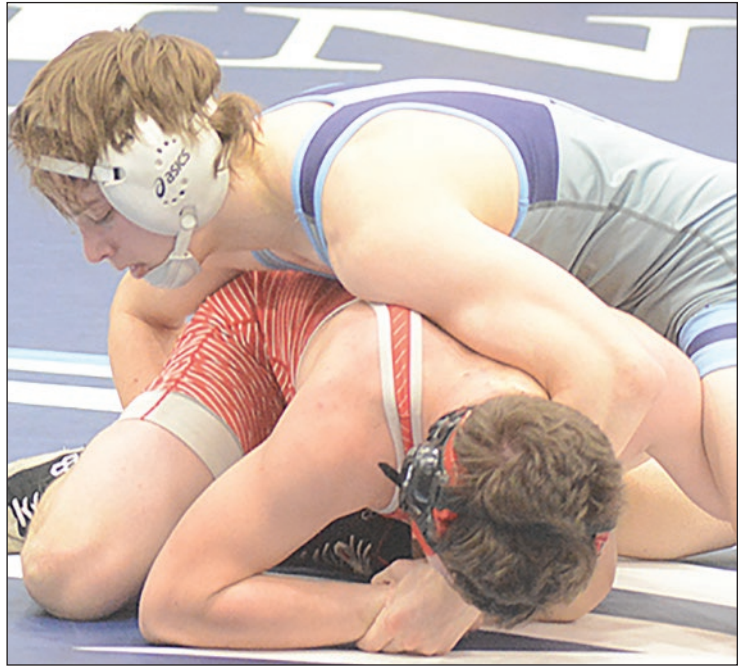
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Rohn rage revenge, Connatser, Leavell: No. 1 trio



(Far right) Dylan Rohn, FHS senior wrestler in the 144-pound class, improved his 2024-25 record to 51-2 after avenging a Region II-AA title match loss to Jordan Sexton of Halls, beating the Red Devils senior 6-4 to win the Section 1-AA title at HVA Saturday, Feb. 15, and head to state this weekend. **(Above)** Deameion Leavell of Bearden and Science Hill's Arthur Silva earned Best Match honors, with the BHS junior winning the Section 1 165 title 7-5. **(Right)** Named Best Lightweight Wrestler, HVA senior Brock Connatser (blue) dominated David Cook of Halls, winning by technical fall, 19-4, in the Section 1 finals at 132.



Wrestling photos by Alan Sloan

Three Farragut wrestlers earn state berths, while Laws adds to HVA total bound for Franklin

ALAN SLOAN
 editor@farragutpress.com

HARDIN VALLEY — It was “Rohn rage revenge” for Farragut High School’s senior star wrestler in the 144-pound class, as Dylan Rohn avenged a Region II-AA loss — just one week prior — to Halls’ Jordan Sexton (24-6), beating the Red Devils senior 6-4 to capture the Section 1-AA crown and earn a state berth Saturday afternoon at Hardin Valley Academy.

Improving his stellar season record to 51-2 heading to the Division I-AA State Wrestling Tournament this weekend in Franklin, Rohn compared the two matches versus Sexton.

“Last time I made sloppy mistakes,” the FHS senior said. “This time I fixed those; in order to fix that I changed up some stuff there.”

The bottom line: “I was kinda mad I lost to him,” Rohn added.

As for the opinion of his head coach — who’s also his father — Admirals skipper Charlie Rohn said, “I think he wrestled a little bit more aggressively” in Sectionals.

“I’m really proud of him,” coach Rohn added about Dylan. “We moved here his senior year with only about two months notice — it was pretty hard on him. ... He had to leave all of his friends and start new.”

Moreover, as a first-year head coach having to scramble to get student-athletes to come out for wrestling, he needed help. “It was really stressful — I made Dylan help me run all of the practices,” Charlie said. “I put a lot of pressure on him.”

Lots of help also has come from FHS assistant coach Dalton Pearl, having known the Rohns from his wrestling days in Maryland.

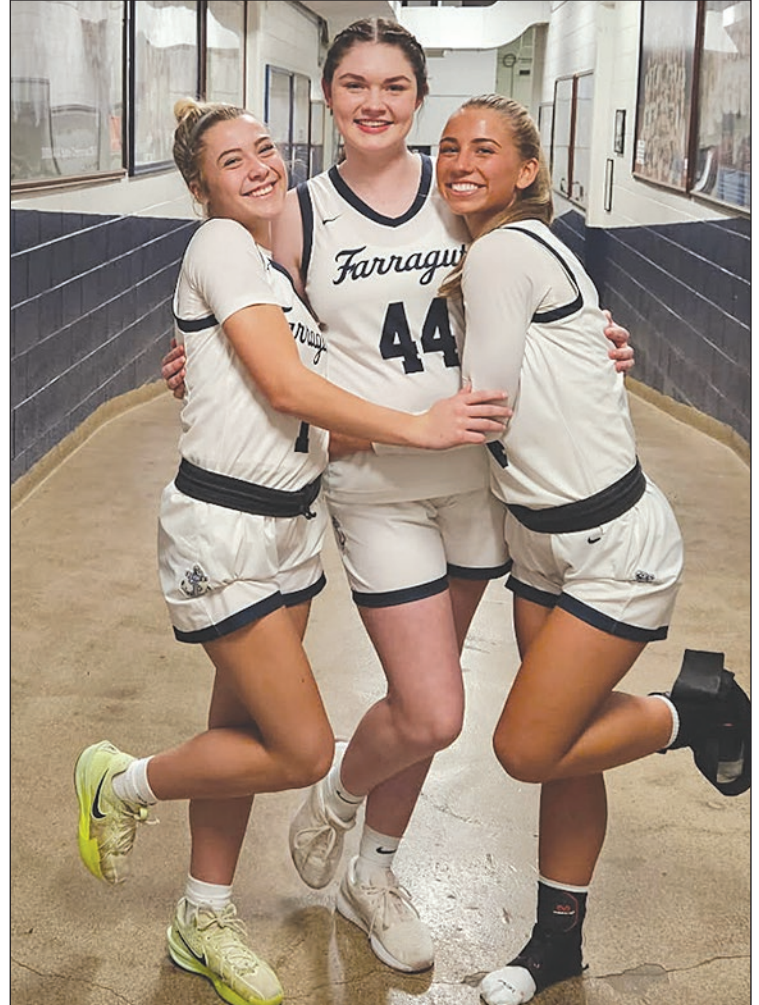
Dylan will be joined at state by Ads teammates Phillip Stafford-Hedge (42-5), a senior taking third-place at 165, and junior Jonathon Laney (38-16), fourth at 138. “We’ve got lots of good kids, lots of blessings,” coach Rohn said.

Two other Farragut area wrestlers also captured Section 1 crowns.

Named Section 1 Best Lightweight Wrestler, after earning the same distinction in Region II-AA the week prior in Maryville, HVA senior Brock Connatser (53-2) easily won the 132-pound title, beating David Cook of Halls with a technical fall, 19-4.

Hawks senior Jacob Laws (45-6) will join Connatser at state, having finished third at 132.

In what was named Section 1-AA’s Best Match, Bearden junior Deameion Leavell (23-1) outdualed Arthur Silva of Johnson City Science Hill (39-7) in a close one, 7-5, to capture the 165-pound class title.



Maryville likely 4-4A tourney semifinal opponent for Lady Ads

BILL HOWARD
 Correspondent

KINGSTON — As final regular-season weeks go, Farragut High School’s girls’ basketball team couldn’t have asked for much more.

The Lady Admirals went three-for-three, closing it out with a 58-41 road win over Kingston that wasn’t as close as the score indicated — leading by as many as 29 points.

Farragut goes into District 4-4A Tournament play this week as the No. 2 seed, and will begin at 7:30 p.m., Thursday, Feb. 20,

against the winner of No. 3 seed Maryville and No. 6 seed Knoxville West, all at Hardin Valley Academy.

If the Lady Ads win, they would advance to the championship game — if seeding form holds it would be versus top seed Bearden, which would begin at 7:30 p.m., Monday, Feb. 24, at HVA.



Mayfield

Final regular season play
 Three days earlier on Tuesday, Feb. 11, FHS finished District 4-4A play with a 43-28 home victory over Hardin Valley Academy. On Thursday, Feb. 13, the Lady Admirals easily beat Fulton on Senior Night.

Then at Kingston, “Thought we played really well defensively,” FHS head coach Jason Mayfield said of the game against the Lady Yellow Jackets. “We were able to get a bunch of players in; I took the top six or seven out by the fourth (quarter).”

Mayfield probably could have subbed even earlier. Farragut started strong on both ends of the floor and had a commanding 16-point lead after one, 25-9. By halftime, the lead was 20, 38-18.

By the end of the third, the game was long over as FHS’s lead had swelled to 29, 53-24. Mayfield then substituted widely as Farragut cruised to the end.

“They’re not a bad basketball team; it was good for us,” Mayfield said of Kingston and the season-ending win. “We

See LADY ADS on Page 2C

TMSAA state champs: West Valley Middle's Lady Wolves



File photo from Knox County Tournament

Blazing into the TMSAA Basketball State Tournament last weekend with lop-sided victories, Josh Ballard's West Valley Middle School Lady Wolves did more of the same to capture a middle school state championship Saturday night, Feb. 15, at Rockvale High School in Murfreesboro. Handling Mt. Juliet 40-27 in the state semifinals Friday, Feb. 14, WVMS wrapped up the crown Saturday after defeating Woodland 41-30. Team members are Kinzley Marriott, Livia Walker, Reese Underwood, Alannah Ross, Janiya Turner, Brinley Beck, Reese Davis, Emery Cooper, Carsen Nesbit, Lucy Hudson, Jaide Patel and Aubrey McGaha. Assistant coaches are Cory Hudson and Charles Wilson.

Hodge joins II-AA Green, II-A Braden: Miss Hoops TN Finalists

The farragutpress coverage area has three girls basketball stars who have been named a Tennessee Secondary School Athletic Association Miss Basketball Finalists, it was announced last week.

In Division I-4A, Miss Basketball Finalist is **Natalya Hodge**, Bearden High School junior point guard (pictured below), who had just been named Division I-District 4-4A Most Valuable Player.

In Division II-AA, Miss Basketball Finalist is **Meeyah Green**, Webb School of Knoxville junior post.

In Division II-A, Miss Basketball Finalists is **Maddie Braden**, Christian Academy of Knoxville sophomore wing.



Alan Sloan

Lady Admirals, FHS boys signees joined those from Bearden, CAK, Webb School

Farragut High School celebrated four senior student-athlete National Letter of Intent signings (above) during a ceremony on National Signing Day Wednesday morning, Feb. 5, in FHS's Vickie B. Wells Auditorium. Seated from left are Kaitlyn Redwine, tennis, Maryville College; Landon Collins, football, Middle Tennessee State University; Robbie Jacobs, football, Tennessee Tech; and Caris Landis, rowing, Jacksonville University (Florida). **Bearden High School** saw 14 student-athletes sign National Letters of Intent Feb. 5 in the BHS Auditorium: Evan Cope, baseball, Cleveland State Community College; Isaiah Whited, baseball, University of Alabama-Huntsville; Olivia Hailey, bowling, Cumberland University; Millie Lovett, cross country and track, Georgia Southern University; Ethan Couvertiere, football, Dartmouth University; Isaiah Harvey, football, Wilmington College; William Pendergrass, football, Furman University; Reid Rowland, football, Emory & Henry College; Boston Yeager, football, Southern Virginia University; Bryce Harmon, golf, UT-Martin; Noah Price, soccer, Tennessee Wesleyan University; Cole Stopka, soccer, Carson-Newman University; Chloe Brown volleyball, Pellissippi State Community College, and Makiyah Greenlee, volleyball, Johnson University. Feb. 5 signees from **Webb School of Knoxville** were Lennox Langham, beach volleyball, Florida State University; Jeneva Mitchell, softball, Miami University-Ohio, and Ella Morton, cheerleading, Carson-Newman University. National Letter of Intent signees that day from **Christian Academy of Knoxville** were Lincoln Rich, football, Maryville College; Amelia Wedemeyer, track & field, Lee University; and Graham Lloyd, cross country, Roane State Community College.

Lady Ads

From page 1C

shot it Ok, though we were only five of 21 from three-point range).

"We were trying to play a little faster, and ended up turning it over a few too many times in the second half," he added.

Sophomore post Trinity Curry led all scorers with 16.

Senior point guard Jaci Neubert added 15 points.

Mayfield reflects

Mayfield said he is proud of his team's regular season, but felt a few wins got away.

"It was good," he said. "It's a tough schedule. I feel like we should have been 26-4. No better way to test yourself than to schedule hard."

The Lady Admirals begin the District Tournament with

a bye, which automatically advances them to the Region 2-4A Tournament.

"Looking forward to the postseason," Mayfield said.

Seniors honored

Three FHA seniors were honored on Senior Night between varsity games Feb. 13: starting guard Jaci Neubert, starting point guard Annie Priest and back-up post Kyra Wray. (See photo, page 1B)

Wins vs. HVA, Fulton may have left Ads off at Kingston

BILL HOWARD
Correspondent

KINGSTON — Going into its final regular-season game Friday night at Kingston High School, Farragut boys basketball team had already had a successful — and emotional — week.

On Tuesday, Feb. 11, the Admirals picked up an important District 4-4A home win verses rival Hardin Valley Academy, 52-40.

On Senior Night two nights later, FHS had an emotional 69-61 win over Fulton in its final regular-season home game — Senior Night — at Lynn E. Sexton Gymnasium on Donald Dodgen Court.

But against the Yellow Jackets Friday, Feb. 14, the momentum ran out. Poor shooting and numerous turnovers led to a big halftime deficit the Admirals couldn't overcome, losing 72-47. This Kingston team, 23-3, actually lost to Farragut 70-57 during a holiday tourney in late December.

"We had two very emotional games between Tuesday against Hardin Valley and Senior Night Thursday," FHS head coach JP Burris said. "We played well both those games and exerted a lot of energy in both. I don't know that we were locked in and ready to go, and that's on me."

FHS committed 22 turnovers and connected from long range only once in more than 20 tries versus Kingston.

The Ads, No. 4 seed, face No. 5 Hardin Valley at HVA (tournament host) tonight (7:30 p.m.), Wednesday, Feb. 19, in the District 4-4A tourney opener. The winner gets top seed Bearden at 6 p.m., Friday, Feb. 21.

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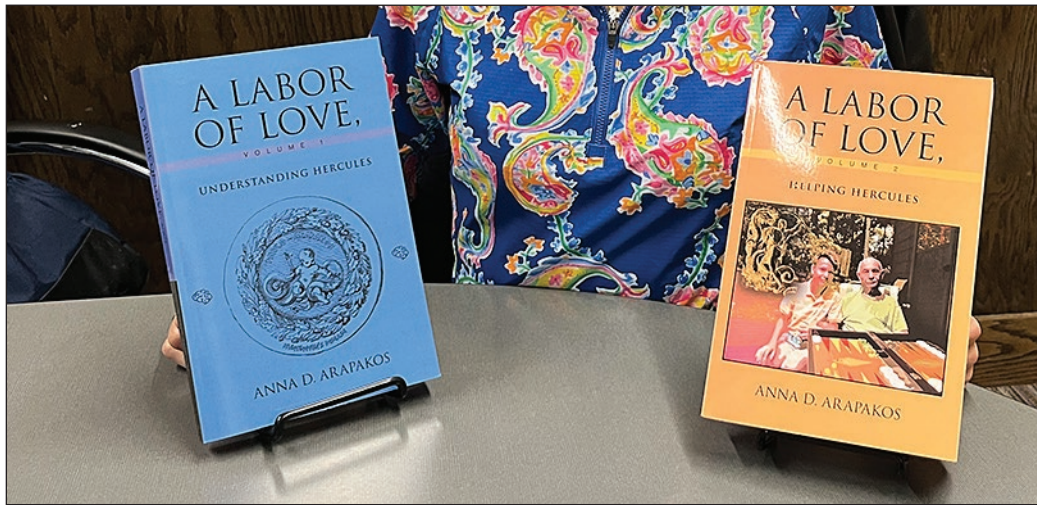
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Retired teacher/active author shares



(Above) Retired teacher Anna Arapakos recently was asked to address Dr. Cedelle Niles's advanced creative writing class at Farragut High School about her most recent books, with a cover close-up of the "Labor of Love" books (right).

Photos by Michelle Hollenhead



'Admiring' TN Tech Showcase is Tunstall, FHS 2021

STAFF REPORTS

editor@farragutpress.com

COOKEVILLE — Farragut native Wyatt Tunstall will be organizing Tennessee Tech University's annual Spring Showcase event, which takes place on two Saturdays, Feb. 22 and March 1, at the college, welcoming newly admitted students to campus for an opportunity to explore their future home.

Tunstall, a junior chemical engineering major at TTU, said he is eager to share his experiences and help new students feel at ease on Tech's campus.

"Attending Spring Showcase can give you a real sense of what life at Tech will be like," said Tunstall, a Farragut High School Class of 2021 graduate. "It's not just about seeing the campus, it is about experiencing the community and opportunities in person."

"It is considered an honor and a leadership role for students to be selected to be involved with hosting the event," stated Jonathan Frank, news and public relations director in a press release. "We're happy to have Wyatt as part of this group!"

The Spring Showcase runs from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. on both Saturdays, with main sessions taking place in the Roaden University Center.

According to a TTU press release "admitted students spend the morning with the major of their choice,

See TUNSTALL on Page 5C



Wyatt Tunstall

'Herculean' father, his Huntington's disease battle inspired Arapakos' 'Labor of Love' books; at FHS

MICHELLE HOLLENHEAD

Special to farragutpress

Retired Farragut High School teacher Anna Arapakos wants her father to be remembered — not so much for how and why he died, but for how he lived and valiantly fought against the disease that ultimately took his life.

Arapakos has written a two-volume set, "A Labor of Love," recently published and now available on Amazon, which compares her "larger-than-life" father, a native of Greece, to Hercules, "the most beloved and famous of all Greek mythical heroes," she said.

"My father was a passionate man, and he had such a profound impact on me," Arapakos said. "So, in Volume 1, my dad is Hercules. Then, chapter by chapter, I weave in symptoms of Huntington's disease, which, ultimately, adversely impacts all muscles, not to mention parts of the brain."

Arapakos researched a great deal about the disease, which is genetic, although it seems to have not afflicted her father's family previously.

"What I want you, the reader, to do in Vol. 1 is to fall in love with my father — who he was to his core," she added, noting it describes his "early years in Greece, his values, his personality. It is not a blow-by-blow biography, but the reason I tell my dad's story is so you can know my dad — who he was before the disease."

Arapakos said the first book ends "about the time the disease has started to kick in," which in his case was later in

life — typical for Huntington's patients, which usually manifests itself in middle age.

"In the legend, Hercules was tricked and ended up murdering his wife and children," she said. "My dad did not, of course, but I feel that my dad was tricked and given faulty genes, and he didn't know it."

"It is a Greek tragedy in that he was never robbed of his core personality, but everything else was taken away from him," Arapakos added.

The second volume covers not only her father's later years but also details how Arapakos devoted herself to her father's caretaking in ways a fellow FHS teacher described as "Herculean."

"The second book is about me doing the 12 labors for my father when he became unable to care for himself, and it was arduous," she said.

Arapakos said all proceeds from the sales of "A Labor of Love" will go directly to the Huntington's Disease Society of America.

A Labor of Love, Vols. 1 and 2 are Arapakos' most recent books; she also wrote about her coming to the Christian faith in "Connecting the Dots" and wrote "Living Stones," which detailed 52 "love letters" to those dearest ones in her life. She hopes to inspire the reader to do the same.

Although retired, she is still a substitute teacher at FHS and Hardin Valley Academy, and she was recently asked to address students as a guest author for Dr. Cedelle Niles's advanced creative writing class.

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• **St. Elizabeth's Episcopal Church, 110 Sugarwood Drive in Farragut, announced its February Gift of the Month**, which goes to Vine Middle Magnet School, and monthly Drive-By Drop-Off day and time. "Each month we collect items for a different, local nonprofit organization," a SEEC press release stated. "We look forward to offering our neighbors in the community an opportunity to help.

"Vine Middle is an inner-city, low-income school with a diverse population. ...," the release further stated. "The attendance and test scores are problematic, so we are encouraged to help in a variety of ways since education is the best way to alleviate poverty." The Drive By-Drop Off is from 1 to 2 p.m., Sunday, Feb. 23, in the church's parking lot.

"We are collecting: leggings and joggers for ages 11-15; deodorant and body wash; and pod laundry detergent," the release stated.

For more information, visit <https://stelizchurch.org/>

• **Farragut High School's Education Foundation has a new fundraiser organizers plan to become an annual event.**

The non-profit is hosting an inaugural Gala and Silent Auction from 6 to 10 p.m., Saturday, Feb. 22, in Fox Den Country Club.

Tickets are \$100 each, with a goal of raising \$45,000 to specifically fund new learning centers located in the school's portable buildings.

"Many of the desks we are looking to replace are original to the school building," FHSEF president Toni Scott said. "They are vital to the learning environment and are much needed."

The evening will include dinner, dancing and the opportunity to bid on silent auction items from more than 30 area vendors, including Aubrey's, Patricia Nash Handbags, Val's Boutique, Winston Eye Group, Dollywood, Brickhouse Collectibles, West Bicycles, Hurricane Bikes, Buff City Soaps, Ricky's Pet Depot, Snooty Patoote, Sparrow Wine Bar, Jessica Elam Aesthetics and the Boyd Harvey House.

There also will be opportunities to purchase individual desks outright at the Gala for \$250 each, using an on-site QR code.

Scott, who was elected president of the Education Foundation last July, said she believes the event is a needed one.

"A lot of area organizations supporting our schools host annual Galas, and we thought it would be a good idea for our group to host one, as well," she said, noting similar fundraising efforts have been put forth by the academically supporting non-profits at Hardin Valley Academy and Bearden High School, among others.

The organization's Gala committee, consisting of FHSEF members Ashley Alexander, Ashely Swor, Wendy Stiles and Scott, has been working on the tandem events for several months. As of mid-February, \$12,500 has been raised toward the effort.

Local businesses as volunteer sponsoris include: American Boat Center, Seigler Building & Development, farragutpress, WFIV-West 105.3 FM, Anchor 934 Apartments, Epic Orthodontics, Phil Cobble, Smart Roof Solutions, Mansour Hasan State Farm Insurance and Matt Craft/Realty Executives.

For more information, visit <https://www.facebook.com/FHSEducationFoundation> or e-mail fhsefnd@gmail.com.

• **Farragut High School's World Cultures Night 2025**, a night to celebrate all the cultures of the world, runs from 6 to 8:30 p.m., Thursday, Feb. 20, in FHS Commons. All families from all Farragut schools are welcome free of charge.

• **American Red Cross urges donors to give blood or platelets in February** to help build up the blood supply after thousands of donations went uncollected last month due to weather and environmental emergencies.

People of all blood types – especially those with type O negative blood – are encouraged to make and keep their donation appointments so hospitals can continue to ensure critical care for patients this winter. Flu and other seasonal illnesses are spreading, which also could force more people to cancel scheduled donation appointments, compounding the impact to collecting lifesaving blood products.

To book a time to give blood or platelets, use the Red Cross Blood Donor App, visit RedCrossBlood.org or call 1-800-RED CROSS (1-800-733-2767). As a thank-you, all who come to give through Friday, Feb. 28, will get a \$15 e-gift card to a merchant of your choice. See RedCrossBlood.org/Flurry for details.

• **Knoxville Bar Association, in partnership with Legal Aid of East Tennessee, will host a Debt Relief Legal Advice Clinic** for pre-screened individuals beginning at 8:45 a.m., Saturday, March 8, in the Public Defender's Community Law Office (1101 Liberty St. in Knoxville).

Qualified individuals must live in Knox, Blount, Loudon or Sevier County and be income based. Attorneys will volunteer to conduct initial meetings with the clients to discuss situa-

See **PLANNER** on Page 5C

Lots of McKee/Farragut flavor in 'ALICE'



GO! 'Revolutionary Ballet' Feb. 22-23 in Bijou

STAFF REPORTS

editor@farragutpress.com

GO! Contemporary Dance Works will present "ALICE: A Revolutionary Ballet" on Saturday and Sunday, Feb. 22-23, in Bijou Theatre. Micah McKee, Farragut resident (*photo above*), will be performing the role of Alice.

"A Knoxville fan-favorite, ALICE: A Revolutionary Ballet is hailed as one of GO! Contem-

porary Dance Works' most beloved works, narrating the world of Wonderland with eye-popping visuals, gravity-defying aerials and stunning set design," a Go! press release stated.

"Farragut resident Lisa Hall McKee's spectacular production reimagines this classic story in a whimsical style set to famous scores

See 'ALICE' on Page 6C

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Faculty Honors, President's List, Dean's List honorees, Farragut students, told for fall semester

Fall semester Faculty Honors (minimum 4.0 grade-point average), President's List (3.80 minimum GPA) and Dean's List (minimum 3.50 GPA) have been announced for a number of Farragut students at area, regional and national universities and colleges.

Faculty Honors, President's List

At Georgia Institute of Technology (Georgia Tech), Faculty Honors were earned by Anusha Anil and Susannah Gordon, while Lainey Baakko was named to the Presidents List.

At the University of Alabama, Tuscaloosa, the following students were named to the President's List: Hannah Arnold, Halye Barlow, Graham Baakko, Blakely Beron, Sophie Dotson, Emily Ogle, Tessa Schlomer, Selene Tan and Kendall Thompson.

At Mississippi State University, Ann Rogers, Cade O'Leary and Micah Brooks earned President's List honors.

Roane State Community College announced President's List honors went to Broden Barlow, David Lounsberry, Jacob Orr and Delaney Shrader.

Dean's List

Abigail Howard was named to the University of Kentucky College of Arts and Sciences Dean's List.

Kaleb Bedard was named to the Dean's List at Maryville College.

Landis Davila was named to the Dean's List at Mississippi State.

At the University of Alabama, seven were named to the Dean's List: Mason Benedetti, Sam Sompayrac, Caleb Wanca, Ethan James, Alexa Peck, Maleigh Rudder and Will Tucker.

Kathrine Klenske earned Dean's List honors at Kennesaw State University.

Lincoln Memorial University announced the Dean's List honors for Alyssa Thomas, Catherine Shu and Brynn Baxter.

University of Tampa Dean's List honorees are Adam Cieslik, Kathleen Cook and Malena Maier.

Broden Barlow and Delaney Shrader earned Dean's List honors at Roane State.



Photo submitted

Silver Lamp to Tennova T-Creek pair

Tennova Healthcare recently announced four clinicians from Turkey Creek Medical Center and North Knoxville Medical Center have been recognized with Silver Lamp Awards by Trinity Health Foundation of East Tennessee. This prestigious award recognizes healthcare professionals who demonstrate exceptional leadership, innovation and dedication through their commitment to continuing education. Alongside the NKMC honorees are Turkey Creek Medical Center awardees, from left, Jonathon Littersky, OT, and Jeanne Miller, PT. "... Their expertise, hard work, and dedication to improving the lives of our patients and community members embody the values of Tennova Healthcare and inspire us all," said Tony Benton, East Market CEO of Tennova Healthcare. The Silver Lamp Awards, presented annually by THFET, supports continuing education to maintain excellence in healthcare.

Tunstall

From page 3C

meet other incoming students and get their questions answered by future professors and current students.

"I get to share my experience and show students how they can make the most of their time here," Tunstall said of his role at the event.

He emphasized the importance of coming to Spring Showcase to help new students visualize their life at Tech.

A sample itinerary for the event includes college introductions, breakout sessions, lunch and a "Living Wings Up"

session hosted by the Division of Student Affairs.

"Seeing the labs, meeting actual professors and talking with current students can really help you feel confident in your decision to come to Tech," Tunstall said. "Spring Showcase is the perfect opportunity to see how you fit in and what you can achieve."

Admitted students can register for either Spring Showcase by visiting www.tntech.edu/springshowcase.

Students also can still apply for fall 2025 admission to Tennessee Tech at tntech.edu/apply.

Planner

From page 4C

tions/options. Pre-screening by LAET. Sign up by calling LAET at 865-637-0484. Registration cut-off Friday, Feb. 28.

Metro Drug Coalition 8th Annual East Tennessee Opioid Conference is from 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Thursday, Feb. 20, in The Venue at Lenoir City, 7690 Creekwood Park Blvd.

This full-day summit gathers experts to discuss topics

such as: innovations in pain treatment; peer navigation; integrated care; adverse experiences, dissociation and substance misuse; co-occurring conditions in substance disorders; identification and intervention strategies for substance use in adolescents; and anti-science in the narcotic epidemic.

Agenda for the event follows this release. More information can be found at www.metro-drug.org

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Snowflake Ball '25 collects \$103k+ led by Cox, McCulloch, Booth, Wheeler



Tammy Cheek

The 2025 Snowflake Ball Queen Courtney Cox, far left, and King Dr. Colin Booth, second from left, were crowned at this year's Snowflake Ball, which took place in Rothchild Catering & Conference Center in West Knoxville Saturday, Feb. 8. This year's Princess was Rebekah McCulloch, while the Prince's crown went to Tim Wheeler. (See more photos in West Side Faces, 8C)

TAMMY CHEEK

tcheek@farragutpress.com

Hundreds donned black ties and evening gowns to support the countywide Senior Companion Program as a new king, queen, prince and princess were crowned during 2025 Snowflake Ball.

The event, which took place in Rothchild Catering & Conference Center, 8807 Kingston Pike, Saturday, Feb. 8, benefitted the senior program, which is part of AmeriCorps and locally administered by Knoxville-Knox County Community Action Committee's Office on Aging.

The nominees raised \$103,701.35, as Courtney Cox won the queen's crown, collecting \$39,629.38, while Rebekah McCulloch was crowned princess after raising \$31,255. The king's crown went to Dr. Colin Booth, who raised \$18,585, while Tim Wheeler was crowned prince by collecting \$4,515.

Other king and prince candidates were Brian Hornbeck and Ryan Ritter, while Kindle Petteway and Hannah Hood also competed for the queen and princess crowns.

Cox, an attorney with Franklin & Kyle Elder Law, graduated from Bearden High School in 2007 and from University of Tennessee honors college in 2011 with a degree in anthropology. She was a field archeologist until she finished law school in 2021.

Booth is a doctor with Tennessee Orthopaedic Alliance, while McCulloch is a registered nurse.

Wheeler is a licensed funeral director and embalmer with Mynatt Funeral Home.

'ALICE'

From page 4C

by George Bizet, Leo Delibes and others," the release stated. "ALICE will pull its audience down the rabbit hole to meet instantly recognizable characters, like the nervous white rabbit, a spinning Mad Hatter and a terrifying Queen of Hearts.

includes a cast of over 70 talented dancers with work from six choreographers, featuring professionals and a lead guest artist from New York City," the release further stated.

"At the heart of the ballet is McKee's captivating choreography, which has been lauded by Knoxville reviewer Alan Sims, The Urban Guy: "These productions are challenging and innovative from beginning

to end. The colors, the movement, the costumes, the story, and of course, the dancing are compelling, but it is the choreography that leaves me bewildered every time."

This ballet "integrates vibrant costuming, elaborate scenery and animated pro-

jection to bring the colorful wonderland to life on the Bijou Theatre stage," the release stated.

This will be GO!'s 21st season of performances with showtimes beginning at 2 and 7:30 p.m., Feb. 22, and starting at 2 p.m., Feb. 23. Tickets are

on sale and may be purchased at gocontemporarydance.com via Ticketmaster.

Prices range is from \$25 to \$35 in advance to \$40 at the door. GO! is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization. Visit gocontemporarydance.com for more information.

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FARRAGUT VISUAL RESOURCES REVIEW BOARD AGENDA

Farragut Community Center Large Classroom
 Tuesday, February 25, 2025 | 6:00 p.m.

1. Approval of minutes for the January 28, 2025, meeting.
2. Staff report - wall signs approved in the past month.
3. Review of a primary permanent ground sign for Y-12 Credit Union, located at 13128 Kingston Pike.
4. Review of an individual tenant panel sign for The Flying Biscuit Cafe, located at 11683 Parkside Drive.
5. Review of an individual tenant panel sign for Dollar Tree, located at 12500 Kingston Pike.
6. Review of an individual tenant panel sign for T-Mobile, located at 11655 Parkside Drive.
7. Review of a landscape plan for Express Oil Change & Tire Engineers, Located at 11157 Kingston Pike.
8. Review of a revised landscape plan for Phase II (commercial area) of the Town Center at Bidle Farms Development, Located off Kingston Pike and Brooklawn Street.
9. Discussion - signs on public rights-of-way and enforcement practices.

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Annual Snowflake Ball

Four Knox County supporters of the Senior Companion Program, overseen by Knoxville-Knox County Community Action Committee's Office on Aging, recently were crowned as royalty for their fundraising efforts for the program at the annual Snowflake Ball, which took place in Rothchild Catering & Conference Center, 8807 Kingston Pike, Saturday, Feb. 8.

The event, which raised funds for Senior Companion Program, featured dinner, music, dancing, a silent auction and the crowning of king, queen, prince and princess.

Dr. Colin Booth, Brian Hornbeck, Ryan Ritter and Tim Wheeler vied

for the prince and king crowns while Courtney Cox, Rebekah McCulloch, Kindle Petteway and Hannah Hood competed for the princess and queen crowns.

All together, the nominees raised \$103,701.35, as Cox won the queen's crown, collecting \$39,629.38, and the princess crown went to McCulloch, who raised \$31,255. The king's crown went to Booth, who raised \$18,585, and the prince's crown went to Wheeler, who raised \$4,515.

(See related story and photo in Community, page 6C)

Photos by Tammy Cheek



Female candidates, from left, Courtney Cox, Hannah Hood, Rebekah McCulloch and Kindle Petteway



Male candidates, from left, Brian Hornbeck, Ryan Ritter, Dr. Colin Booth and Tim Wheeler



Joe Book and 2023 Princess Whitney Kent



Mark and Flower Enix at silent auction



Steve and Jyoti Brummerstedt



Seated, from left, Cameron Allen, Austin Allen, Erika Allen, Audrey Allen, Alice Allen, Christopher Randolph and, standing, Erika R. Allen and Alphonso Allen



Monty Lewis and Marty McNelly



Kim Olen announces winners



Phyllis and Alan Wright

HeartHealth



Growing up Ivy

Meet this energetic 5-year-old who wins hearts of newcomers in her orbit

Ivy Edwards is a typically energetic 5-year-old, playing enthusiastically with her almost 3-year-old brother, Henry, reading out loud from her massive book collection, dancing with or without accompanying music and delighting in eliciting laughter from those around her — even newcomers to her orbit.

What is not typical is how much she has overcome in her short life to become the exuberant, feisty cog central to her loving, close-knit family.

“When Ivy was born, we had not done any genetic testing, or even gender testing — we wanted to be surprised,” said her mother, Amanda Edwards, who shares Ivy, Henry and 4-month old Violet with husband, Bryce Edwards. “But within just a few hours, we found out she was a Down syndrome baby and, additionally, had heart issues.”

Doctors with East Tennessee Children’s Hospital performed an array of tests, one of which revealed an atrioventricular septal defect, or holes, in two separate chambers of Ivy’s heart.

“We met Dr. (Sumeet) Sharma the day after she was born,” Amanda said of the pediatric cardiologist, “and he immediately put our minds at ease by drawing her heart defect on a white board and telling us what was wrong.”

“It was the first time since she had been born that we really felt encouraged about what might be ahead of us, and he was truly a patient advocate for Ivy from the very beginning.”

Sharma, director of Pediatric Cardiology at ETCH, kept a very close watch on Ivy, and within three months believed surgery should be performed sooner rather than later.

“We thought it might be a few years before she needed it, but the defects were significant, in that they were impacting her breathing,” Amanda said. “Dr. Sharma thought it should be done pretty quickly, and had her tests sent to Vanderbilt for a second opinion,” where Ivy’s corrective surgery ultimately was

See IVY on Page 5D



Photos submitted

Top: Amanda Edwards encourages daughter, Ivy, to show and share her current age of 5, as of Jan. 18. Left: Ivy before surgery. Above: Ivy at 4 months.

Keep the Beat going — how to improve heart health

Contributed by Covenant Health

You may not think about your heart very often, but day in and day out your heart health matters.

The American Heart Association said cardiovascular disease caused more than 900,000 deaths in the United States in 2021. Heart disease and stroke claimed more lives than all forms of cancer and chronic lower respiratory disease combined.

As the saying goes, prevention is the best medicine. Knowing about potential heart problems can help you make changes needed for better health. Regular checkups can help pinpoint small problems before they become dangerous or even deadly.

“It’s never too early to start taking care of your heart,” said Sara Negrotto, MD, a Covenant Health interventional cardiologist. “Healthy habits, like staying active, eating well, quitting smoking and managing stress can reduce your risk of heart disease significantly.”

Here are steps to improve your heart health and heart disease risk factors:

Eat a heart-healthy diet

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention say people who eat a heart-healthy diet live longer and healthier lives, while poor nutrition is linked to an increased risk of heart disease, type 2 diabetes, obesity and certain cancers. If you already have a chronic disease, healthy eating can help manage your condition and prevent complications.

To add heart-healthy foods to your diet:

- Eat more fruits, vegetables, whole grains and legumes
- Read labels and look for options with fewer added ingredients
- Choose lean meats and seafood
- Choose low-fat or fat-free dairy options

See BEAT on Page 6D

The business side of medical treatment

Cardiovascular disease increase means we are less healthy, putting greater strain on paying, providing

Adding to the strain of providing affordable and available healthcare in the United States, Americans are becoming more unhealthy as a country, University of Tennessee Medical Center president Dr. Keith Gray told Rotary Club of Farragut members during their meeting in Fox Den Country Club Wednesday, Feb. 5.

How it’s getting worse

“The leading cause of morbidity and mortality in this

country is cardiovascular disease,” he said, noting that does not include just the heart.

“The heart and all the vessels are connected,” Gray said. “That leads to stroke, that leads to high blood pressure, that leads to kidney damage and primary heart damage.”

“We’re seeing more and more of that because our eating habits are not as good as they were,” he added. “We’re more in a hurry than we’ve ever been. We sit more than

we’ve ever sat in the history of the world.”

In fact, “sitting is the new cigarette,” Gray said. “We don’t smoke as much as we used to, but sitting and that sedentary lifestyle don’t work. If you move, you control your weight.”

“All that to say, we’re getting less and less healthy,” he added. “We’re seeing more obesity: 35 percent of our population is obese. All those go together — hypertension,

stroke, heart disease, diabetes all run together.”

Worse still, “those become risk factors for cancer as well,” said Gray, a surgical oncologist who has been with UTMC for more than 15 years and formerly was chief medical officer.

Cost challenges, wasted \$

He also talked about the challenges hospitals are facing in providing healthcare and

See BUSINESS SIDE on Page 5D



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Dr. Sumeet Sharma, director of Pediatric Cardiology at East Tennessee Children's Hospital

Most 'holes in the heart' treatable with children

Watch baby/tot eating habits

The potential for serious heart problems with infants, toddlers and young children should be on the radar screen of every parent with young ones in their care.

Based upon "a natural history study" from a few years ago, "the incidence of congenital heart disease is 8 per 1,000 life births," said Dr. Sumeet Sharma, director of Pediatric Cardiology at East Tennessee Children's Hospital. "And it ranges from something significant to be treated immediately after birth to those that we just follow to see how they progress."

Holes in the heart

Among the most common heart problem with infants and younger children are "holes in the heart," Sharma said about defects involving the wall or vessels of the heart. "There are ASD (atrial septal defect),

VSD (ventricular septal defect) and PDA (patent ductus arteriosus)."

Though perhaps sounding like a life and death matter, such "holes in the heart" have varying degrees of seriousness — and the vast majority are treatable.

"There are some holes in the heart that we just follow, some that require surgery and some that require medications for management," Sharma said. "So it all varies on the severity of the exact lesion."

As for making a full recovery if discovered and treated in a reasonable amount of time, "most of these kids do very well," Sharma said. "... Yeah, most of them are absolutely fine. Granted, they may need some medication, they may need surgery. But most kids, after their surgery, if the hole is closed, they make a pretty

darn near normal recovery."

In fact, "patients that have had heart surgery as infants and children are playing basketball at our local high schools and have gone on to successful careers with medicine and beyond," he added.

Possible symptoms

As for what symptoms to be aware of that might indicate a heart issue, "It all depends upon the age of the child," Sharma said. "Little babies will have difficulty eating with formula and take a long time to eat.

"A baby's version of exercise is eating, so if they're struggling eating and they're not gaining weight, that's the bad sign," he added.

Other signs include "obviously turning blue, unusual flushness or irritability, which you can't account for, things like that," Sharma said. "Lethargy, decreasing exercise tolerance."

He or she "used to be the fastest kid in the class, now you're the slowest kid in the class," he added. "You just can't keep up. So exercise and tolerance or decreased endurance and stamina."

Dental health and young hearts

"If you have a heart defect that requires surgery and you have poor dental health, there

is an increased risk of an infection in that population," Sharma said.

Although pointing out "dental health has been shown to be associated with endocarditis or an infection of the heart muscle" in the overall population, he added, "for the general child who has an otherwise healthy heart, poor dental hygiene is not as serious as as an adult.

"But once again, if you have good dental hygiene as a child, that will carry on into adulthood."

Trends, advanced treatment

"Most of the heart defects that they encounter in pediatrics is (infants and children) are born with the heart defects, as opposed to adults, where they develop over the course of several decades," Sharma said. "The ones that you are not born with are infection of the heart muscle that can cause heart failure or something called kawaski disease, inflammation."

Overall with infants and children concerning heart problems, "With the new surgeries that we're doing, with the advancements in technology and procedures, a lot of our kids that used to die during infancy are living into adulthood," Sharma said, also pointing to "advances in

medicine that has helped these children from a cardiac standpoint."

Preventative steps

While family history also has to be considered when evaluating an infant/child's heart health, "I think it never hurts to start early" in terms of proper nutrition, exercise and regular check-ups, Sharma said. "The later you start, the harder it's going to be. We all know it's hard to change as an adult, but it's easier to change someone as a child. When you're set in your ways, it's harder to change.

"But you also have to be able to live a little — you're allowed to have candy, but not for breakfast, lunch and dinner," he said. "But have it be the exception, or a treat, as opposed to the norm."

Final thoughts

"I think your adult heart disease is a function of your family history and lifestyle choices," Sharma said. "If you make the concerted effort to eat healthy as a child ... I think you'll just help your heart health in the long term."

The ETCH official concluded with a simple piece of advice for young parents: "The earlier you start investing in your health, the more dividend is going to pay off in the future."

~ Alan Sloan

The facts about intermittent fasting

Contributed by Covenant Health

With many people looking at weight-loss options for either appearance or health reasons, one approach that has gained popularity in recent years is intermittent fasting. However, a recent study suggests intermittent fasting could negatively affect cardiovascular risks. What are the facts?

Intermittent fasting?

Intermittent fasting alternates cycles of eating and going without food. Studies have suggested that IF may have cardioprotective functions and may reduce the incidence of diabetes, among other benefits. Some studies say intermittent fasting may lower levels of low-density lipoprotein (LDL) cholesterol, often known as the "bad" cholesterol.

Intermittent fasting also may improve the body's response to a hormone called insulin. Insulin helps control

blood sugar levels. Higher LDL cholesterol and higher blood sugar levels in diabetes are risk factors for heart disease.

Some studies demonstrate greater weight loss and fat loss with intermittent fasting than with regular calorie cutting, while another review of studies found weight and blood sugar improvements were small. Research results on intermittent fasting are mixed, and longer studies have not confirmed the benefits.

Types of intermittent fasting

Time-restricted eating

For this type of fasting, calories are consumed within a specific time period that usually matches our circadian rhythms. Examples could be eating between the hours of 7 a.m. and 7 p.m. (a 12-hour window) or between 8 a.m. and 4 p.m. (an 8-hour window). "After-hours" consumption is typically limited to liquids, such as water, black coffee or unsweetened tea.

Alternate-day fasting

The most common type of alternate-day fasting includes days of eating normally alternating with days of only consuming about 500



calories or so, she said.

5:2 Fasting

A variation of alternate day fasting is 5:2 fasting. With this approach, you eat normally five days a week. Calories are restricted to 500-600 per day the other two days of the week. The two days should have at least one non-fasting day between them.

What are the benefits?

According to the National Library of Medicine, intermittent fasting has demonstrated the potential for weight loss, improved sleep and energy and decreased appetite. Another report relates improvements in asthma, seasonal allergies, heart arrhythmias, menopausal hot flashes and

more. The 5:2 fasting approach in particular seemed effective at reducing insulin levels and improving insulin sensitivity.

Obesity is a major medical problem around the world. IF may reduce body fat and inflammation and improve glucose metabolism. For non-obese people, it also may lower C-reactive protein (a marker for inflammation) and help the hormone leptin control hunger and appetite.

"Our culture has a very high burden of cardiometabolic disease, including type 2 diabetes, hyperlipidemia, obesity and insulin resistance," said Briana Costello, MD, FSCAI, an interventional cardiologist with Covenant Health's Knox-

ville Heart Group.

"If done correctly, intermittent fasting can provide people with structure so that there are fewer 'excess' calories consumed," she added. "People who struggle with overconsumption of calories or portions may benefit from intermittent fasting for this reason. A recent article in 'Nature Medicine' illustrates these effects on our metabolism."

What are the drawbacks?

Sources suggest that IF can have negative side effects. These may include:

- Dehydration, bad breath
- Dizziness/light-headedness or weakness

See FASTING on Page 7D



Dr. Briana Costello



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Go Red for Women

A necessary heart focus

From Tennova Healthcare, TCMC

While a nationwide campaign launched by American Heart Association helps women fight heart disease — Go Red for Women — the challenges continue.

“Coronary artery disease has become the most common form of heart-related problems,” said Dr. Lekshmi Seemanthini, an interventional cardiologist for Tennova Healthcare at Turkey Creek Medical Center.

“It is the leading killer of both men and women in the United States”, she added.

In this country, Seemanthini said there is a very high prevalence of risk factors, especially in Southeast Tennessee. They include smoking, obesity, diabetes and high cholesterol.

“And the constellation (combination) of these risk factors we call metabolic syndrome, which correlates with increased heart disease, especially coronary artery disease,” she said. “When we say heart disease, about 7 million Americans have congestive heart failure right now.”

According to recent AHA heart disease statistics, there are “about 630,000 new cardiovascular patients for 2025 alone,” said Seemanthini, who has been with Tennova for a year-and-a-half. “So, the incidence of heart disease is increasing at an alarming rate.

“The prevalence of women, age 20-plus, is now close to 45 percent,” the cardiologist added. “Even the prevalence of smoking is close to about 35 percent or so in women, as compared to a national average of about 20 (percent).”

Go Red for Women

To combat the reality of those statistics, AHA uses its Go Red for Women campaign, a signature initiative that started in 2004, said Seemanthini, who is chairing this year’s campaign.

Within a year of its launch, she said about 70 GRFW luncheons were held nationwide, raising about \$7 million that first year.

“Twenty years later, which is now, we have over 150 signature Go Red for Women events held annually and raise over \$700 million over the past 20 years,” Seemanthini said.

Also, Go Red for Women went global in 2006 with its first international license.

“So now it’s licensed in over 50 countries supporting over 55 sister societies,” Seemanthini said.

“Why do we need a separate program for women?” she asked, then replied, “Because consequently, most of the research in cardiology has happened with 80 percent men as the subjects.

“So, most of the data that we have found — or conclusions we have derived — are extrapolated to men,” Seemanthini added. “We see, consequently, women are under-diagnosed and under-treated. This is most acutely so in rural America.

“Women with coronary artery disease, especially elderly women, (have) atypical symptoms when they have a heart attack. Half of women don’t experience chest pain while having a heart attack, so it is important for first responders or caregivers to recognize and treat the heart problems in a timely manner.”

The GRFW initiative “provides various resources and tools to the community at large focused on women empowerment programs endeavoring medical and educational tool kits to women in need,” Seemanthini said.

“There have been several funded American Heart Association research projects in East Tennessee, which totals \$7.92 million,” she added. “AHA has launched several initiatives, including SNAC (Supporting Nutrition Awareness in Communities) and giving hands-on CPR training at several locations, such as Knoxville Area Urban League.

“We’ve done CPR training in a lot of places,” said Shannon Smith, marketing Communications director for Knoxville AHA. “All kinds of community groups do (the trainings).”

“So the Go Red campaign specifically aims to reach out to various groups of women from all walks of life to increase heart health awareness,” Seemanthini said. “We have several women entrepreneurs, business leaders, health providers and various other community leaders who are involved and contribute to our various initiatives.”

Heart health tips

“For women, we obviously want them to increase their adult healthy lifestyle habits, like quit smoking, which is obviously one of the major (habits),” the cardiologist said. “Diabetic patients, we want their hemoglobin A1-C goal of about 5.7.”

Regarding hypertension, she said the goal should be a systolic blood pressure of less than 140 and a diastolic blood pressure number of less than 90.

Diabetic patients also need to be aware of their blood pressure. Seemanthini said they should keep their blood pressure at less than 130 (systolic).

See GO RED on Page 7D



Did You Know?

Submitted American Heart Association

THE SIGNS OF CARDIAC ARREST:


- The person collapses suddenly and passes out.
- The person doesn’t move, speak, blink or react, even if you tap them hard on the shoulders or ask loudly if they’re OK.
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30	95-162 bpm	190 bpm
40	90-153 bpm	180 bpm
50	85-140 bpm	170 bpm
60	80-136 bpm	160 bpm



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Ivy

From page 1D

performed in April of 2020.

While many infants “recover within seven to 10 days,” Amanda said, “Ivy had some complications from the anesthesia, and we ended up being there with her for about a month.”

Additionally, she required supplemental oxygen 24 hours a day for about six months, then only at night for six months more.

“I was really glad she was our only child at that time because, really, I could pack her up, along with her oxygen, and we were good to go wherever we needed to,” her mother added, noting Ivy’s only lingering heart issue today is a leaky valve that might need to be addressed sometime in the future.

Amanda was comfortable in other ways, too, as a trained pulmonary nurse, so she had in her arsenal extensive knowledge and use of necessary tools — although she at first became alarmed at the pulse oximeter readouts.

“Dr. Sharma told us to turn

off the machine or it would freak me out,” she recalled. “So he told me to rely only on subjective data, rather than that readout, and it really helped.”

She acknowledges today that overall concerns understandably lingered.

“Back in the 1950s, the life expectancy of Down syndrome children averaged about 10 years,” she said. “Today, it’s 50 to 60 years plus. There are also many programs in place for Down children, from occupational therapy to speech, for example, and there is so much more known about it.”

Ivy has taken advantage of many of those therapies, including learning sign language early on, which has since been supplanted by an ever-burgeoning vocabulary. She also is interacting more with children her age at Northshore Elementary School’s integrated preschool program.

“I have just seen her blossom ever since she started there,” Amanda said.

The family attends Fellowship Church in West Knoxville, which has a “Buddy Program” that pairs church members

with special needs children.

“Miss Dawn is Ivy’s buddy,” Amanda said. “Volunteers who are part of that program really are gifts from the Lord.

“It just helps show us how we are all God’s children — He created all of us exactly the way He wants us to be.”

Seeing how Ivy has flourished, whether it’s at home, at church, at ETCH as a Patient Ambassador or taking part in the Down syndrome Awareness Group’s annual October Walk-A-Thon, Amanda sees God’s consistent hand throughout Ivy’s young life.

“Looking back now, I wish I hadn’t worried so much,” she said. “Ivy is happy, growing, learning and loving, and she is so loved in return.

“Ivy is the greatest blessing we didn’t realize we needed.”

~ Michelle Hollenhead

Photo submitted

The Edwards family pictured at the 2024 fantasy of trees, from left, Bryce, Ivy, Henry and Amanda, holding baby, Violet.



Business Side

From page 1D

people are facing in receiving healthcare.

“In this country, we spend more on healthcare per person in this room than anybody in the world — almost twice as much,” but “we come in last in most things in the industrialized world,” Gray said. “We spend twice as much money, but our outcomes are near the bottom.

“It could be infant mortality; it could be heart disease; it could be cancer ... other than administrative burden, we don’t lead in anything.”

Gray explained, in referring to administrative burdens, he is talking about the red tape between healthcare providers and insurance companies.

“We spend a lot of money

on red tape and bureaucracy that adds no direct value to the patient or the provider,” he said. “We don’t share data well or have transparency of the data.”

Regarding how to provide healthcare, “we’ve got to figure this thing out pretty quick because you guys know, probably as well as I do, the cost of healthcare continues to escalate, especially the costs related to prescription drugs,” Gray said. “We spend very, very little on preventing folks from ever having to come to (a hospital). Three percent of that spending, which is about \$14,000 per person in this room, is spent on prevention.”

Care shortages

Among other challenges are shortages of doctors and nurses.

“We’ve got a crisis as it re-

lates to the number of nurses to do the work,” Gray said. “That’s well over a million.

“I looked at this when I was chief of staff in 2012,” he added, pointing out that in 2022 he was told UTMC would see a peak in the number of nurses needed, and “it’s going to be a million. Then COVID happened ... they’re not expecting that to peak until 2030.”

Moreover, “we don’t have enough physicians,” Gray said. “If you live in Farragut, you probably wouldn’t say that, but overall, we don’t have enough physicians. We’re about 2,700 physicians short in this area.”

He explained, “It’s hard to recruit and harder to retain, getting people to come to Knoxville and especially rural counties.

“Most people who come out of med school come out with

\$400,000 worth of debt,” Gray said. “Dental school is more than that. And, sometimes they choose their specialty to help pay those loans back.

“It’s hard to set up a practice in Scott County,” he added.

Coming together

However, “this is not about UT Medical Center versus Covenant versus Tennova versus Blount Memorial ...,” Gray said. “The reality is it takes a village; it takes all of us to be able to provide healthcare for this community.

“If one of us went away, it would be a significant lift to get all the people seen that needs to be seen,” he added. “It takes everybody working together, and fortunately, we are in an area where the working relationships between health systems are probably unparalleled.”

Gray said he has spent time in Nashville; Winston-Salem, North Carolina and Houston.

In those other locations, “nobody worked together like we do here,” he said.

However, “We’re not doing well when it comes to health outcomes,” Gray said. “It really doesn’t matter what you measure: heart disease, smoking ... we’re at the epicenter of the opioid misuse and abuse epidemic.”

Factors affecting how someone has access to quality healthcare are: income, culture, education, insurance and housing.

“This is not disparaging of the patients and population we take care of,” Gray said. “It just really sets up the conversation for the challenges that we face as healthcare providers.”

~ Tammy Cheek



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Come for your heart. Stay for your health.

Join the February Healthy Heart Challenge!

February is American Heart Month, and there’s no better time to take steps toward a healthier heart! At the YMCA of East Tennessee, we’re inviting you to join our Healthy Heart Challenge and make heart health a priority.

Sign Up – Register for the challenge and receive a long-sleeve t-shirt to wear with pride.

Complete Heart-Healthy Activities – We’ll provide you with a list of 12 heart-healthy activities. Choose 5 of the 12 activities and work toward completing them throughout February.



ymcaknoxville.org



Beat

From page 1D

- Increase your fiber intake
- Cut back on:
 - Saturated fat and trans fat
 - Sodium (salt)
 - Added sugars

Exercise

The heart is a muscle. As any other muscle in the body, the heart gets stronger with exercise, which helps it pump blood effectively throughout your body. Exercise also can help with weight loss.

The American Heart Association recommends at least 150 minutes of moderate-to-intense activity weekly, but even small increases in movement are beneficial:

- Choose parking spaces that are farther from your destination.
- Use stairs instead of the elevator.
- Take frequent short walks during the day. Give technology a break and walk to visit your co-workers or neighbors in person.
- No time for a longer workout? Add “mini-sessions” of movement. Multiple 10-minute breaks for walking, resistance training, dancing or using an exercise bike count toward your activity total.

Find activities you love and make them a regular part of your life. Challenge yourself to gradually progress to higher levels of cardiovascular activities to strengthen your heart.

Manage stress

Chronic stress can cause inflammation that contributes to plaque buildup in the arteries. It also can raise blood pressure and cause the heart to beat faster or irregularly. Stress also can trigger unhealthy behaviors such as overeating or drinking too much alcohol.

“Chronic stress can take a serious toll on your heart,” Ne-

grotto said. “Managing stress through exercise, mindfulness, meditation or relaxation techniques can be natural ways to make a big difference in overall heart health.”

Monitor your blood pressure and cholesterol

If you have high blood pressure and high cholesterol, you have a greater risk of developing life-threatening heart conditions. High blood pressure and high cholesterol generally show no symptoms, so it’s important to monitor your levels regularly.

Blood pressure is the amount of pressure on artery walls as the heart pumps blood. Systolic pressure measures the pressure when your heart beats and is the first number listed. Diastolic pressure measures the pressure when your heart rests between beats.

A healthy blood pressure for most adults is less than 120/80.

Blood cholesterol is a waxy, fat-like substance made by your liver. It is essential for good health. Dietary cholesterol is what we add to our bodies with certain foods. Cholesterol is usually measured by considering three factors:

- LDL or low-density lipoprotein (known as “bad” cholesterol), which can lead to build-up along artery walls
- HDL or high-density lipoprotein, known as “good” cholesterol because high levels can lower your risk of heart disease and stroke
- Triglycerides, a type of fat in your blood that your body uses for energy

Your total cholesterol combines LDL, HDL and triglyceride numbers. A healthy total cholesterol level is less than 200 milligrams per deciliter in adults.

Avoid tobacco use

Smoking is a major risk factor for cardiovascular disease. Blood vessels that are swollen and inflamed from chemicals in cigarette smoke can cause

problems in blood flow. These chemicals also thicken the blood, creating clots inside veins and arteries that can lead to a heart attack. Smoking also increases the risk of stroke and peripheral artery disease. Nonsmokers who are exposed to secondhand smoke also have an increased risk of heart disease.

When a smoker quits, heart health can improve almost immediately. In a year, the risk of heart attack drops dramatically. Even a smoker who has had a heart attack can cut the risk of having another by quitting smoking.

Avoid alcohol use

Drinking too much alcohol can cause higher blood pressure, increasing your risk of heart disease. It also increases levels of triglycerides in the blood. Current recommendations for those who use alcohol are:

- For women – one drink or fewer per day
- For men – two drinks or fewer per day

Get Adequate Sleep

About a third of Americans surveyed say they don’t get enough sleep. People who regularly sleep less than seven hours a night are more likely to say they’ve struggled with heart disease, asthma and depression. Lack of sleep can be linked to an increased risk of stroke.

Sleep quality matters. A condition such as sleep apnea can have an impact on how much oxygen your body takes in during sleep. Obesity and heart failure are among the causes of sleep apnea, and lack of sleep can contribute to obesity and heart failure — so it’s a vicious cycle.

Are you at risk for heart disease?

Your risk of heart disease depends on some factors you can control and some you can’t. Be especially vigilant if you are over age 65 or there’s

a history of heart disease in your family. Heart disease risk factors include:

- High blood pressure
- Unhealthy blood cholesterol
- Diabetes
- Obesity
- Lifestyle factors, such as smoking, stress, eating unhealthy foods and insufficient exercise

“High blood pressure, high cholesterol and diabetes are some of the biggest risk factors for heart disease. Managing these conditions is crucial to preventing heart failure or heart attacks,” Negrotto said. “In addition, the lifestyle choices we make today impact our health tomorrow. Simple changes like maintaining a healthy weight or quitting smoking can lower the risk of heart disease.”

About Heart Disease

If you have heart disease, you may have one or a combination of heart conditions such as:

- Coronary artery disease – a buildup of plaque in the heart’s arteries that can slow blood flow and possibly lead to a heart attack or stroke.
- Heart arrhythmia – irregular heartbeat occurs when the heart’s electrical impulses are too fast, too slow or erratic.
- Structural heart disease – structural problems with heart valves or the heart muscles affecting the heart’s ability to pump blood to other parts of the body.
- Heart failure – occurs when the heart can’t deliver enough blood and oxygen to the body’s organs. Left untreated, heart failure can be aggressive and fatal.
- Heart attack (myocardial infarction) – happens when a blockage in the coronary arteries restricts blood flow to the heart. A heart attack

is an emergency that requires fast medical treatment.

When to see a doctor

If you have chest pain, shortness of breath, sudden swelling of the arms or legs or unusual fatigue when you’re exerting yourself, see a health-care professional as soon as possible. You may be referred to a heart specialist for testing and diagnosis.

“The earlier we detect heart conditions, the more effective we can be at managing them,” Negrotto said. “Regular checkups and awareness of your health help in diagnosing conditions early, and earlier recognition leads to better outcomes and saving lives.”

A heart attack is an emergency!

If you are experiencing symptoms of a heart attack, don’t wait — call 911 immediately if you have these symptoms:

- Chest pain or discomfort
- Lightheadedness, nausea or vomiting
- Jaw, neck or back pain
- Discomfort or pain in your arm or shoulder
- Shortness of breath

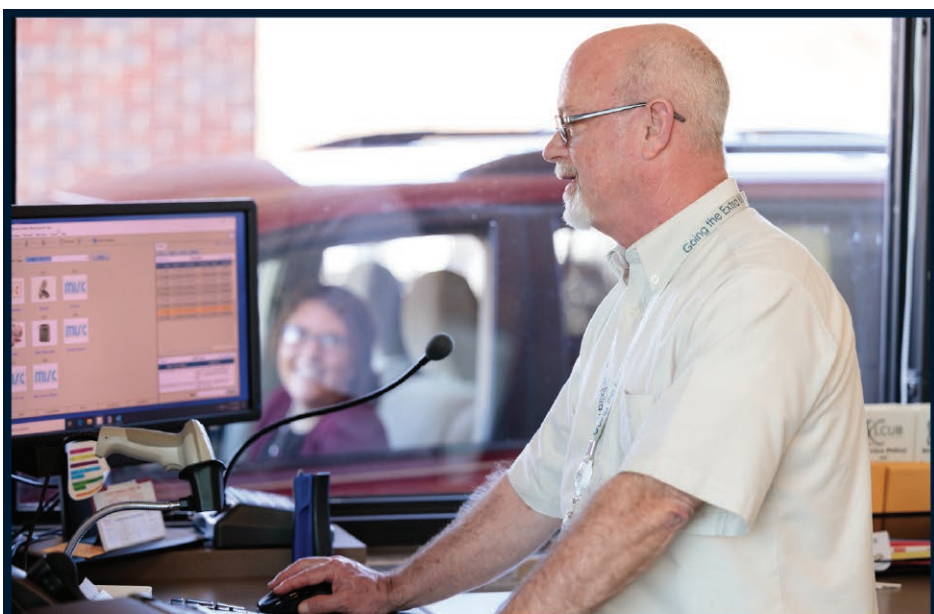
“The saying, ‘time is muscle’ holds true for early intervention if a heart attack occurs,” Negrotto said. “Getting treatment quickly can minimize heart damage and improve recovery outcomes.”

Be Proactive About Your Heart Health

Make heart health a family affair. “Heart health isn’t just an individual effort — family support is crucial,” Negrotto said. “Encouraging loved ones to make heart-healthy choices together can help everyone make sustainable changes to live longer, healthier lives.”

About Covenant Health

Learn more about Covenant Health at CovenantHealth.com.



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Fasting

From page 2D

- Digestive issues or nausea
- Headache
- Insomnia and fatigue
- Irritability/mood changes
- Low blood sugar (hypoglycemia)
- Malnutrition, if fasting is done improperly with not enough emphasis on nutrition

Another drawback of intermittent fasting is that “when people hit the ‘time to eat’ they find themselves overeating or choosing unhealthy foods that are quick fixes for their hunger,” Costello said.

Is intermittent fasting really bad for heart health?

A preliminary study released by the American Heart Association in 2024 suggested that time-restricted eating actually may be linked to a higher risk of death from heart disease. The AHA report looked at 20,000 adult participants in a multi-year study. Results showed a 91 percent higher risk of death from cardiovascular disease among those who restricted eating to a window

of eight or fewer hours compared to those who ate within a 12-to-16-hour window. The increased risk of death also was seen in persons living with heart disease or cancer.

It’s important to note, however, that although the study indicated an association, it does not mean that time-restricted eating caused cardiovascular death. More long-term research and peer-reviewed studies are needed to see how intermittent fasting affects heart health.

Is Intermittent fasting right for you?

Intermittent fasting is not recommended for everyone. You should check with your medical provider before beginning IF. Persons who generally should not use intermittent fasting include:

- Children/adolescents
- Individuals taking certain medications (consult your medical provider)
- Individuals with diabetes, kidney disease or heart-related issues (consult your medical provider)
- Individuals with a

history of eating disorders

- Those with low blood pressure
- Women who are pregnant or breastfeeding

“Patients on insulin therapy should certainly consult with their endocrinologist when considering intermittent fasting and should be sure to check blood sugar more frequently. Insulin therapy may need adjustment when fasting, especially with significant weight loss,” Costello said. “Pregnant women should exercise caution with fasting, especially if they are starting pregnancy underweight.”

Short-term studies suggest there is greater weight loss with intermittent fasting than with regular calorie cutting. Some people do find intermittent fasting to be easier than continuous calorie restriction. However, IF has about the same adherence rate as traditional dieting.

Finding your best strategy for heart health

Regardless of the method you choose for losing weight or improving your heart health, Costello encourages work-

ing with your medical provider and using approaches to healthy eating and exercise that have proven to be effective.

“The first thing I try to do with patients who need to make dietary changes is to figure out what the real problem is,” she said. “Is it snacking after dinner? Food choices while at work? Is the diet too high in carbohydrates? Once we identify the issues, then I try to work with patients on how to fix the problems.”

Costello adds she is “a huge proponent of the diet that has proven time and time again to decrease cardiovascular events: the Mediterranean diet.”

“Beyond that, I emphasize avoiding drinking empty calories – such a waste – and trying

to avoid processed or packaged food as much as possible,” she said. “I do not believe in ‘cutting out’ anything a patient loves, because then they want it more. Life is a balance – if you love cookies, that’s fine. But limit it to one cookie every other day to keep you satisfied.

“I am also a big fan of doing 30 minutes of any exercise you want every day,” Costello added. “Exercise not only helps prevent heart attacks and strokes, but dementia as well.”

Covenant Health has additional information about improving heart health, along with information about risk factors, types of heart disease and when to see a doctor. To find a Covenant Health physician for your needs, visit [CovenantHealth.com/find-a-doctor/](https://www.covenanthealth.com/find-a-doctor/).

Go Red

From page 4D

About cholesterol, she said the low-density lipoprotein (LDL or “bad” cholesterol) goal should be less than 100 for individuals without heart disease and less than 70 for women with diagnosed coronary artery disease.

“For HDL, which is high-density lipoprotein that is also called the good cholesterol, the goal is more than 60, which when you achieve more than 60, it’s called a negative risk factor for coronary artery disease,” Seemanthini said, recommending a diet rich in omega fatty acids, which raise the HDL cholesterol.

Sources for omega fatty acids include cod liver oil, fish oil, flax seed, small fishes

and salmon.

“Of course, the most important thing is exercise,” Seemanthini said. “I would say a negative risk factor is to exercise regularly. American Heart Association recommends about 30 minutes of aerobic exercise five times a week, totaling about 150 minutes a week minimum.”

Heart valve replacement

The cardiologist also observed valvular heart disease is increasingly seen in older women, requiring a heart valve replacement. “There are various options of treatment, including valve replacement,” Seemanthini said.

When the replacement is necessary, she said there is a choice between an artificial, metallic valve or bioprosthetic

or tissue (animal) one — most commonly a cow or pig.

Which choice is used “depends on a person’s age, comorbidities (meaning other diseases he or she may have, such as risks in bleeding),” Seemanthini said. “If they have risks of bleeding, you don’t want to subject them to long-term anti-coagulation.”

For instance, she said, “If you put in a metallic heart valve, then you have to be continuously on blood thinners for life.

“And, if your risk of bleeding is high, that’s not a good thing,” she added. “So then, those patients will go for a tissue or animal valve.”

~ Tammy Cheek



Submitted American Heart Association

UNDERSTANDING BLOOD PRESSURE READINGS

BLOOD PRESSURE CATEGORY	SYSTOLIC mm Hg (upper number)	and/or	DIASTOLIC mm Hg (lower number)
NORMAL	LESS THAN 120	and	LESS THAN 80
ELEVATED BLOOD PRESSURE	120 - 129	and	LESS THAN 80
HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE (HYPERTENSION) STAGE 1	130 - 139	or	80 - 89
HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE (HYPERTENSION) STAGE 2	140 OR HIGHER	or	90 OR HIGHER
HYPERTENSIVE CRISIS (consult your doctor immediately)	HIGHER THAN 180	and/or	HIGHER THAN 120

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