

Planning road improvements that retain character

from the Town by Wendy Smith

There’s been a lot of public talk recently about Farragut roads: whether our roads should be improved and how they should be improved. It’s an emotional topic because roads contribute to the character of our neighborhoods.

Farragut was founded on the desire to have control over development standards. We didn’t want our subdivisions to flood and we didn’t want to be surrounded by big box stores and billboards. Because of this desire for higher standards, the Town has adopted standards for roads. When roads are improved, certain elements must be included to enhance safety and provide for different modes of transportation (walking and bicycling).

Road projects are long and expensive, so planning for them begins years before the construction crew shows up. It starts with a simple map. Farragut’s Major Road Plan, which can be found at townoffarragut.org/maps, shows major and minor arterials and major and minor collectors – classifications based on the kind of traffic served by each road.

Arterials take traffic to other areas. Kingston Pike and

Campbell Station Road are arterials; drivers use them to get to another part of Knox County or to the interstate. Collectors also could be called connectors. They connect residential areas to arterials. When these roads are improved, they are improved to standards based on their classification.

Community Development director Mark Shipley knows that Farragut will continue to grow as large parcels of property pass to the next generation and heirs opt to sell to developers. When that happens, developers are required to improve the road that fronts the new subdivision to the minimum standards for its classification. For example, major collectors require 12-foot lanes with curb and gutter and pedestrian facilities on both sides of the road. That’s a lot of hardscape, Mark said.

Instead, he’d like Farragut to have specific standards for each road on the Major Road Plan. For example, a road that’s improved with 10-foot lanes, open drainage and a shared use path on one side would allow some areas to retain a more rural character.

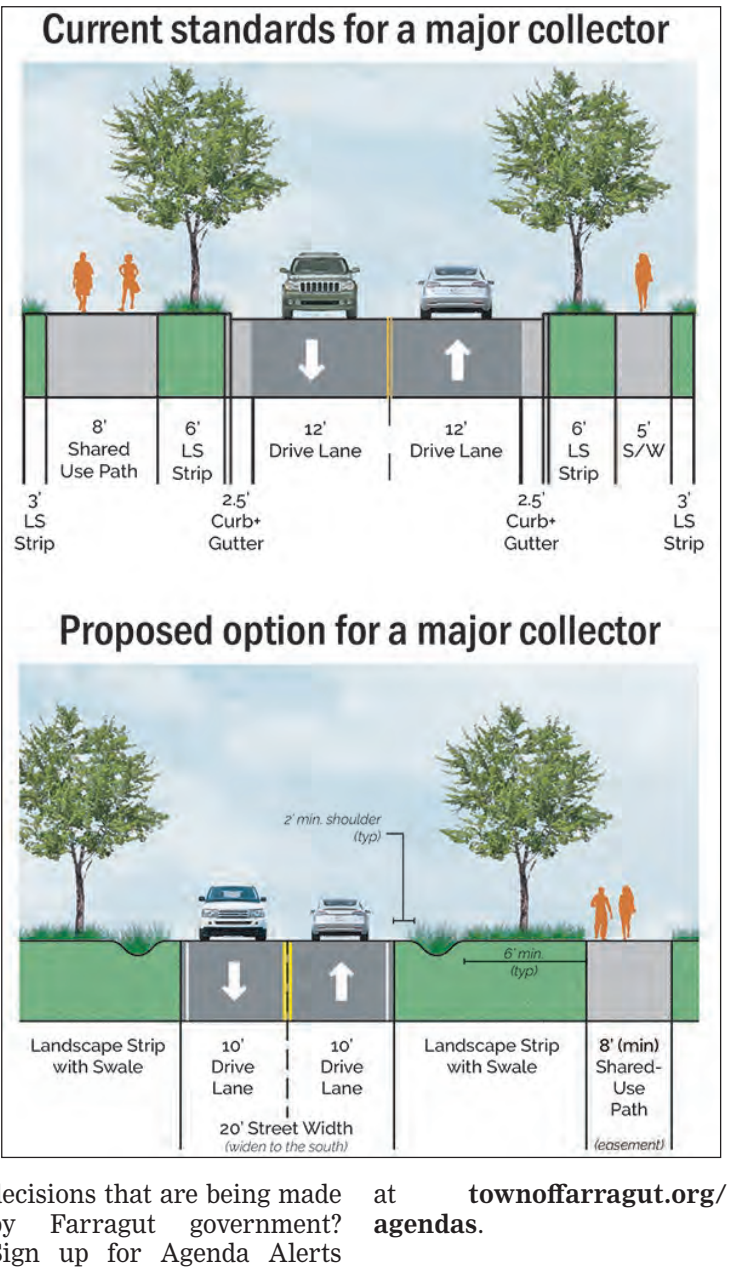
For that to be an option, new standards for each road on the road plan would need to be adopted by the Town.

“To me, this is a huge benefit to property owners because otherwise, when a parcel develops, the road will be improved to current Town standards,” he said. “If we approve these alternative standards, it would lessen the amount of hardscape and allow us to add trees, capturing that rural character.”

Looking ahead to future development is part of the job of a planner. One task of the Farragut Community Development Department is considering where future development is likely to occur, both within Town boundaries and outside of Farragut. Planning for roads that can safely handle future traffic does not signal the beginning of a project; it’s thoughtful preparation for the coming years.

“The reality is that Farragut is a growing community and someday these streets are likely to be improved,” Mark said. “Good planning will allow those roads to retain the character that residents value.”

Want to stay informed about



White removed from censure

TAMMY CHEEK
tcheek@farragutpress.com

The Farragut Board of Mayor and Aldermen voted 3-0 Thursday, Aug. 14, to censure Alderman Alex Cain for violating the Tennessee Sunshine Law after he admitted to discussing a vote in private with another alderman.

Mayor Ron Williams, Vice Mayor Scott Meyer and Alderman Drew Burnette supported the resolution of censure. Cain abstained while Alderman David White, who was originally included in the measure, was absent due to illness.

Town attorney Tom Hale recommended removing White from the resolution, saying the alderman was too ill to attend and could not respond for himself. The Board unanimously agreed to censure only Cain.

The resolution stated Cain acknowledged having a private conversation with White about Resolution PC-25-05 before a public vote, a violation of the state’s Open Meetings Act. It cited Cain’s July 23 letter to the farragutpress and his public admission during a July 24 meeting as evidence.

“The Board of Mayor and Aldermen finds it necessary, appropriate and in the best interests of the Town and its citizens to issue this Resolution of Censure to affirm its commitment to transparency, uphold the rule of law and discourage future violations of the Tennessee Open Meetings Act,” the resolution read.

Cain said after the vote he was “disappointed” in himself and the way the issue unfolded.

“I did not intend to violate the law and do something behind the residents’ back,” he said.

Meyer said he believed Cain acted without intent but supported the resolution.

“Notwithstanding, with intent and transparency, a violation did occur,” Meyer said. “Because the resolution is not punitive, I can support the principle behind it.”

Hale emphasized that a violation of the Sunshine Law does not require intent, citing a Tennessee Supreme Court ruling that inadvertent actions can still constitute violations. He added the censure carried no punishment beyond a formal statement of disapproval.

Williams said the action should serve as a reminder for all Town committees and boards.

Cain, who was elected in 2024, said he learned from the experience.

“I know I made a mistake. There was no intent to make that mistake. There was never an intent to violate the Sunshine Act,” he said.

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• **Fun with Farragut’s Fleet returns to Mayor Bob Leonard Park from 9 to 11 a.m., Saturday, Aug. 23.** This free event is a way for children to get up close and personal with big equipment used by the Town and local law enforcement and construction organizations. Don’t miss this Farragut favorite.

This year’s event features

the Farragut Public Works Department, Rural Metro, Smyrna Ready Mix, Knox County Sheriff’s Office, First Utility District and more.

For more information, contact Recreation and Event manager Rachel Malone at 865-218-3376 or rmalone@townoffarragut.org.

• **Beach Party on the Plaza will take place from 6 to 8**

p.m., Saturday, Aug. 23, in Mayor Ralph McGill Plaza. This free event will feature live music from 103.5 WIMZ Garage Band, local food trucks and beach-themed games for all ages. Hawaiian shirts are highly encouraged.

For more information, contact Tourism manager Hallie Reid at hreid@townoffarragut.org.

Towncalendar

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For more information, please contact Tony Christen at (865) 218-8872 or by email at production@farragutpress.com.

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Photo courtesy of
Joey Ruffalo/Photo Submitted
Above: Addy holding Houdini

Right: Spot 4 Dogs K9 Training’s Jason Decort and Mareesa Pike came to Dog Daze IX with dogs, Jack (not pictured) and Pickle last weekend at Village Green shopping center.



Photo courtesy of James Jamesenos

Charlotte Blake and Fiesta

Dog Daze

From page 1A

adoptions of their shelter dogs completed, too,” Krempasky

said.
“If we had to change anything, we might look to a cooler time of year,” he added.

Traffic

From page 1A

ney Lane and Sonja Drive,” he said. “The signal would be connected to our ATMS and will be timed to coordinate

with our existing signal infrastructure.
“Cannon & Cannon anticipates submitting final construction plans to the Town by Jan. 31, 2026,” Schindler added, noting the design cost is \$50,735.

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This Fall Mixer will showcase the beautiful boats of Current Watersports as a backdrop. We will provide updates on the upcoming promotional opportunities and activities from SHOP FARRAGUT and VISIT FARRAGUT. Complimentary food sampling and beverages will be provided.
This Biz Mixer is FREE to all representatives of our Farragut Business Community! ALSO - Bring a door prize and get your business recognized!

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Women in Business series: Part 1 of 3

Highlighting Farragut women in prominent business positions

MICHELLE HOLLENHEAD
Correspondent

Women primarily lead our homes and families and, increasingly, lead our businesses and board rooms. According to Small Business Trends (smallbiztrends.com), 42 percent of all businesses in the United States are women-owned, and more than 1,800 women-owned businesses are created every day. Farragut and its surrounding communities certainly reflect that statistic, having a number of women who are in prominent positions across a variety of business models and organizations. Over the next three weeks,

farragutpress is highlighting a handful of these women as well as sharing advice for prospective entrepreneurs. This week's focus is on two specific organizations and their leaders who are helping area businesses from the ground up. Closest to home is Farragut West Knox Chamber of Commerce president/CEO Julie Blaylock, who has humbly served that organization since 2011, the last eight in her current role. "It is an incredible privilege to serve and lead our Chamber," she said. "Every leader is different regardless of gender, but it has been shown that when you have more women

in leadership positions, the organization enjoys more collaboration within due to a teams approach; stronger community relationships due to increased outgoingness and social capacity; a more optimistic and transformational outlook; and oftentimes more profitability because of these tendencies," citing www.apa.org/topics/women-girls/female-leaders-make-work-better as further proof.



Blaylock

Blaylock followed in the footsteps of three other notable women leading FWKCC since its inception more than three decades ago and believes a woman's perspective and insight has directly led to the Chamber's flourishing membership, which numbers more than 750. "One thing that I think women leaders tend to do well is communicate a bit more deeply and intuitively," she said. "They ask more questions — sometimes delving a bit more into the personal sphere, but with purpose — and they demonstrate more empathy. "That willingness to find out someone's whole story can tell you a lot about how you need to

approach the problem they've brought to you or whether there are other more complex issues beyond the one on the surface." Blaylock said she has been "fortunate to have been able to build relationships through our Chamber community, well before I took on this current role. I was lucky to have good support from existing business members and partners who believed in my capability and my intention to do the best job I could. Having said that, I've had the same experiences over many years that I think we have all had, of walking into rooms and not feeling seen or

See WOMEN on Page 5A



Tammy Cheek

Dogtopia of Farragut marketing manager Katelyn Emerson and franchise co-owner Jeremiah Webb stand before the soon-to-be Dogtopia of Farragut at 12925 Kingston Pike near Dunkin Donuts.

Dogtopia
Coming soon to Farragut

TAMMY CHEEK
tcheek@farragutpress.com

Dogs no longer have to be left at home or caged in a kennel when their owners are at work during the day. They can be active, playing with their dog friends in a playroom or outside in an open-play concept. Jeremiah and Amanda Webb, franchise owners, are bringing Dogtopia of Farragut to Town — a dog day care center currently under construction at 12925 Kingston Pike in west Farragut. This is their second site, with the original location in Bearden Village. "Right now we are on schedule to complete construction in late October," Jeremiah said. "We hope to open in the early part of November." In Farragut, he said Dogtopia will be able to accommo-

date about 160 dogs. "That depends on the size of the dogs and how the rooms are configured, that sort of thing," Jeremiah said. "Our hope is to have about 40 crates per playroom (of which there are four) to accommodate 40 dogs. "Every dog that comes in will have to pass a meet-and-greet," he said. "It's just an evaluation process for the dogs," said Katelyn Emerson, marketing manager. "We'll get them used to being around different people who are not their parents. "We'll test them with other dogs — high-energy dogs, low-energy dogs, male, female — just to make sure they are comfortable with any other dog they would be with in the playroom," she said. "We can have them in the evaluation room to see how they react be-

See DOGTOPIA on Page 5A

businessbriefs

- **Home Builders Association of Greater Knoxville presents a free construction job fair**, Friday, Aug. 22, for employers and job seekers registering at <https://jobstobuild.com/page/Knoxville-HE-082025A> KBAGK includes the following counties in its jurisdiction: Knox, Anderson, Blount, Campbell, Claiborne, Cocke, Fentress, Grainger, Hamblen, Jefferson, Loudon, Monroe, Morgan, Roane, Scott, Sevier and Union. Also, there will be a HBAGK Professional Women in Building luncheon Thursday, Sept. 11, at Holston Hills Country Club, featuring Andi Dirkschneider Bliss, 2025 NAHB PWB second vice chair and president of Brookline Homes. Tickets to that event are

- \$35 per person.
- **Mountain Commerce Bank Inc. recently announced changes to its senior leadership group:** Kevin W. Horne, the bank's current chief credit officer and chief banking officer, has been appointed president; David Bright, chief financial officer and chief administrative officer, intends to depart from the company and the bank effective Aug. 15; Wesley Lemon, current controller, will serve as the company's and the bank's interim chief financial officer; Marie Patterson was named chief administrative officer of the bank; Regenia Ellis, who has served as secretary for the company and bank since 2009, announced her retirement effective Aug. 1;

- and Christie Wininger, who was hired earlier in the year, will be replacing Ellis.
- **The Salvation Army of Knoxville recently received \$5,000 from Food Lion Feeds Charitable Foundation** to help nourish neighbors experiencing hunger. The "Nourishing Our Neighbors" grant supports community feeding partners as they tackle food insecurity and promote healthier lifestyles through nutritional education initiatives. "We are incredibly grateful for the support from the Food Lion Feeds Charitable Foundation," said Major Cameron Henderson, area commander for The Salvation Army of Knoxville.

BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT

Christmas Lights
Knoxville
brightens up the
Davis Family YMCA

Christmas Lights Knoxville has proudly served thousands of happy customers in the Knoxville area for over 10 years. In addition to seasonal Christmas lighting, they now offer permanent lighting solutions that bring year-round attention to buildings — perfect for holidays like Christmas, Halloween, Easter, the 4th of July, Game Days, and more. "We were incredibly happy to work with the YMCA to help brighten up their building all year long," said Todd Rives of Christmas Lights Knoxville. The Davis Family YMCA now shines with vibrant, customizable lighting that can change colors for any occasion — all controlled easily through a smartphone app.



"The Davis Family YMCA is glowing beautifully thanks to Knoxville Christmas Lights! Their customer service is outstanding, and the lights are so easy to control—changing colors for any season right from an app," said Erin Stidham, Senior Program Director at the Davis Family YMCA. Visit the Davis Family YMCA at 12133 S. Northshore Drive. Learn more about Christmas Lights Knoxville at christmaslightsknoxville.com or call 865-770-3555.

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Women

From page 4A

heard. For me, it was always a personal challenge to find my voice and use it and to believe myself that I had something worth contributing to a conversation.

“I think a lot of female entrepreneurs or business leaders probably experience those same self-doubts and challenges. Self-confidence and the overcoming of ‘imposter syndrome’ seems to be an ongoing point of personal development for a lot of women in business, which is why it’s so important to learn how to build and leverage a strong network of business professionals that you can go to for advice and mentoring.

“We believe in education and

leadership development within our Chamber, and we see more women stepping up to fill those volunteer roles successfully. Right now, we have around 13 committee groups working on different initiatives or events, and 75 percent of those have women in leadership roles or are liaised by a female board director.”

While FWKCC offers more than 100 program/event opportunities annually, including, weekly networkings and ground-up support, Downtown’s Knoxville Entrepreneur Center has a number of assistance opportunities as well.

The organization (www.knoxec.com) helps “founders of any stage start and grow their business through educational programming, network-

ing, mentorship, connections, and community building,” KEC COO Courtney Hendricks said. “We have opportunities for all types of businesses and offer specific sets of programming and resources for different types of founders.

“KEC is the center of gravity without being the center of attention,” she added. “Our relationships with other organizations within the entrepreneurial ecosystem helps us get founders where they can find the most value.



Hendricks

Whether they need assistance with their business foundation, artist resources, introduction into a community in their niche, information about local opportunities, a business accelerator to prepare for a capital campaign, classes on just about any topic, and a free mentor network — our offerings are low cost or no cost and accessible for all.

“In addition to what is offered through the main KEC channels, we have The Maker City supporting creative business, 100Knoxville supporting black-owned businesses and Women in Entrepreneurship (WiE) supporting women in business; all under the KEC umbrella of initiatives.

“WiE” also hosts regular monthly meet-ups, for women

in any stage of business, to meet, support and network with each other the second Tuesday of every month, from 9 to 10:30 a.m., at KEC offices, 17 Market Square, Suite 101.

WiE also is an active Facebook Group community, Hendricks said, with more than 3.6 thousand members.

Like Blaylock, Hendricks, who’s many responsibilities include supporting internal operations, along with designing event experiences, believes communication is the key to any successes.

“I like to say that every aspect of what I do centers around creating a great experience,” she said. “Clear communication and relationships are at the heart of all things.”

Dogtopia

From page 4A

fore we take them into a playroom.”

In addition to playrooms, the facility also has a “spa” for baths and nail clippings.

All the while, the dogs are supervised by canine coaches.

The Webbs decided to open their second site in Farragut

because they know the market.

“Farragut demographics are just great from a business perspective,” Jeremiah said. “We previously owned Primrose School in Farragut for about 10 years... We started with that when our two boys were in the infant room, went all the way through the program and graduated.”

After their graduation, the

Webbs decided to get out of the childcare business and venture into something new, exploring new ideas and finding Dogtopia.

“We sold (Primrose School) in ’22, I believe, then we opened Dogtopia (in Bearden) just a few months later that same year,” Jeremiah said. “We came across the dog day care concept and realized how

similar it was to child care and thought it would be an easy transition into that business.

“We really liked (Dogtopia’s) brand and how they positioned their concept,” he said. “We always planned on doing Farragut ... We thought dog care could benefit the community.”

“We also have a lot of pet parents who actually drive

from Farragut to Bearden and bring their dog to day care,” Emerson said. “They wanted us to be in this area.”

“They’ve asked for us,” Jeremiah said.

Hours will be from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m., Monday through Friday, with a hiatus for lunch between 12:30 and 1:45 p.m. For more information, visit www.dogtopia.com/farragut.

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Addisyn Wagner on synthesizer

“Start Spreading the News”

Hardin Valley’s Spirit of the Valley Marching Band gets in step during band camp

Hardin Valley’s Spirit of the Valley Marching Band has been learning to get in step with its 2025-26 show, “Start Spreading the News,” during its band camp, taking place at the school Monday through Friday between July 14 through July 18, as well as July 21 through July 25 and Monday through Wednesday, July 28-July 30. The camp culminated with a free community performance 7 p.m., Tuesday, July 29, in the HVA stadium.



Visual instructor Jack Watt

Photos by Tammy Cheek



Freshman Silas Enbom on marimba



Freshman Ellie Prince on marimba



10th grader Scarlett Newberry



Brass instructor Nathan Brom



Senior Elaina Summey



Freshman David Fuentes will be playing trumpet



Sophomore Ray Connatser will be playing snare drum



Junior Leah Jinks will be playing trumpet



Senior Yakub Kocak on xylophone



Sophomore Ashton Zach on marimba



Ninth-grader Jamie Rollins on rack

Preview
From page 1B

Suffice it to say, there is likely to be a consistent fluidity to where Alves positions his hitters this year.

Going into the season, four outside hitters – freshman Megan Frana, sophomore Hope Blackliston and juniors Taylor Thompson and Reese Goodson – are vying for playing time.

Frana and Blackliston are likely to start, but Thompson and Goodson should see the court as well. The latter two also could play as right-side hitters, Alves said.

“I’m looking for consistency and aggression, who can kill the ball,” Alves said of his outside hitters.

Junior Katharine Cabniss and freshman Olivia Cope are likely to start for Alves as middle hitters. Junior Ella Young should see time in the middle as well.

“They’re battling,” Alves said of the group. “They are starting to become very good defensively, still working on being aggressive and getting kills.”

Junior Madelyn Kupferer will man one of Alves’s positions as a right-side hitter. Goodson, Thompson and Cope all could see playing time on the right.

“You can see it’s very fluid right now,” Alves said. “Goodson and Cope are the two tallest, so it depends on how offensive or defensive I wanna be.”

Jones
From page 1B

championship meet in 2024.

“We are a great mix of young and upcoming athletes balanced out with some veteran leadership,” Jones said. “The group is ready to improve on last year and begin to make some noise in our division. We returned four of the seven who competed at state, and we’re also gaining back Ella Gruzalski, who was injured all last fall.”

Freshmen Bailey Ann Smith, Emmy Graber, Elina Thompson and Ava Brinley

Opener
From page 1B

and amassed 25 passing yards.

The Admirals play defending Class 5A state champion Sevier County at Carson-Newman University in Jefferson City. Kickoff is slated for 7 p.m.

Powell 14, Hardin Valley Academy 7: HVA senior quarterback Dylan Umansky had a 14-yard scoring strike to Witt Joseph for the Hawks’ points Friday night. The touchdown came on Hardin Valley’s second offensive possession.

Coach Tyler Wynn said that his main concern was keeping his squad healthy,

“Everybody’s healthy and that’s a good thing,” Wynn said. “And then, some of our younger guys got to compete against some really good people.”

The Hawks host Karns Friday at 7 p.m.

Knoxville Catholic and Christian Academy of Knoxville were in action at the 5 Star Preps Jamboree at Car-

Along with Ekeler, Alves has two other seniors on his squad: Addison Owen, who will play on the outside, and Teagan Williams, who will substitute in for Kupferer on the right.

Alves was asked what part of the team’s play he was most confident about. “Serving and passing,” he said. “Good ball control, that’s what we’re striving for. If we have good ball control we can build on the offense.”

FHS’s team last year had multiple players who could kill the ball at the net. Alves is concerned this year’s squad won’t be able to match that offensive firepower.

“We need to be more ‘terminal,’” he said. “We need to get a lot more kills instead of just getting the ball over to the other side.”

Alves knows matching last year’s success will be a challenge but likes his girls’ readiness for it.

“Great attitude, very coachable, very eager to continue to build the program and the legacy we have here,” he said. “They know they have some big shoes to fill. I’m excited for the season.”

Ekeler knows much is riding on her leadership as well as her play but welcomes the challenge.

“I don’t feel any pressure,” she said, “I’m just excited to get out there and start playing. I’m excited to see what this team is capable of.”

are expected to contribute immediately. Jones also is excited about the addition of seniors Christie and Courtney George, standout track runners making the move to cross country.

“Christie is coming off an eighth-place finish in the 800 at state last spring and has carried that momentum into a very strong summer of training,” Jones said. “And with senior Ella Gruzalski back, this group has a chance to be very strong.”

The Admirals and Lady Admirals will open their season Saturday, Aug. 30, at the Victor Ashe Fall Classic in Knoxville.

son-Newman.

The Irish defeated Clinton, 21-14 as University of Tennessee commit Tyreek King made the most of his big chance against the Dragons. King caught a 70-yard touchdown pass.

“I told him that he was going to get one touch, and he needed to make the most of it,” Irish coach Philip Shadowens said.

Quarterback Mack Bartholomew also had a touchdown run for Catholic in the two-quarter contest.

The two JV teams took center stage in the second frame of the game.

Catholic plays at Riverdale Friday night with kickoff scheduled for 8 p.m. EDT.

CAK 14, Campbell County 0: Quarterback Seaton Moffett was 13-for-15 through the air and he lofted a 45-yard touchdown pass to Gabe Linkous for the Warriors, who host Concord Christian School Friday night.

Farragut girls soccer beat Central 6-0



Photo courtesy of Carlos Reveiz, crfoto.com

FHS player, Ava Upshaw, 22, fights for ball against Central, 4

Heck of a ride
From page 1B

sets, FHS dug a deep hole, this time 16-8. The teams then traded points to the end, and the Lady Lions led two sets to one. The third-set score was 25-18.

Lady Admirals’ senior setter Belle Ekeler was asked whether she was worried with her team down by a set.

“To be honest, I knew we were

just making a lot of unforced errors. I knew if we cleaned up our hitting or serving or passing, we’d be fine. It was a little bit of pressure but nothing we haven’t seen before.”

In the fifth set, the score was tied at six. FHS then won five of the next six points to lead 11-7. The Lady Lions cut it to 11-9, but Farragut then put it away with four straight.

“They are very greedy,”

Alves said, referring to his kids’ desire to win. “They don’t quit; they don’t give up. I love that about them. I told them, “I’m so proud of you for riding it out and defending our house.”

“I think it says a lot about our team and our chemistry that we kept going at it,” Ekeler said. “We’re a really young team so we have a lot of kinks to work out.”

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First Baptist Concord helps bring Christmas to children around the world

TAMMY CHEEK
tcheek@farragutpress.com

Children around the world are having a brighter Christmas because of the generosity of Operation Christmas Child, a Samaritan's Purse project. First Baptist Concord is one such group that is making and collecting shoeboxes filled with gifts for those children. "They are involved very heavily," said Sandy MacRae, Knoxville Area Church Relations coordinator and a member of First Baptist Concord

for the past 10 years. "In fact, we are a drop-off center for people bringing their shoeboxes during National Collection Week, Nov. 17-14. "The Knox Area's goal for this year is 40,001," she said. "This year, Operation Christmas Child hopes to collect enough shoebox gifts to reach another 12.6 million children with a gift box and the opportunity to hear the Good News for perhaps the very first time. "Along with their gift box, the children receive a Bible

story booklet titled, 'The Greatest Gift,' in their language," McRae said. "We print these booklets in over 70 different languages. "Anyone — individuals, church groups, business groups, school groups, whatever — can bring their filled shoeboxes to our church," she said. "There is a designated area that the church has for this. They can bring them Monday through Monday." To fill the boxes, they are "anything your child would like," McRae said. "The chil-

dren's ages range into three groups: 2-4, 5-9 and 10 to 14. "You decide if you want to fill for a boy or girl and then what age bracket," she said. "Your basic items are what we like to call a 'wow' item. It's always the first thing they are going to see in their shoebox when they take that lid off ... something that's going to excite them. "For example, I love to put in dolls or stuffed animals or a flat soccer ball with a pump attached to it," McRae said.

See FBC on Page 5B



Wyatt Wood

CAK home-schooler selected for elite STEM academy

Wyatt Wood, a Christian Academy of Knoxville home-school student, was one of 19 students who attended Appalachian STEM Academy – Bridge Program from July 5 through July 18. Bridge, sponsored by Appalachian Regional Commission, is a two-week summer program hosted by Oak Ridge Associated Universities that allowed Wood and other participants to interact and work with scientists from the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, and other science, technology, engineering and math experts, according to an ORAU press release. "Through a meticulous application process, the Appalachian Regional Commission handpicks students from across the 13-state Appalachian region who demonstrate a keen interest in science, technology, engineering and math," stated Jennifer Tyrell, associate manager at ORAU. "Our mission is to ignite a spark for STEM in these participants by providing them with unparalleled access to mentorship from distinguished scientists. "We aim to fuel their passion for these critical fields, laying down the foundational stones for future careers in STEM," she said. "The Appalachian STEM Academy – Bridge Program is an opportunity for students who participated in the academy as middle schoolers to build upon the knowledge and

See STEM on Page 5B



Calling aspiring writers

Farragut Parks & Rec seeks short story entries for new competition

TAMMY CHEEK
tcheek@farragutpress.com

Aspiring writers have an opportunity to demonstrate their talents in a short story. In planning programs for its upcoming quarter, Farragut Parks and Recreation team is hosting a short story competition. "Want to show off your writing skills, demonstrate how creative you are, or tell others what's important to you?" asked Kalei Fisher, Town lead recreation and event attendant. "If so, you should submit a short story to the (Farragut) Community Center. All ages are encouraged to participate." Winning pieces will be dis-

played at the Farragut Community Center. "All entries are due by Sunday, Nov.30, and I hope for them to be fully judged by Friday, Dec. 5," she said. Entrants are asked to submit their entry via recreation desk. If unable to visit the community center, e-mail the entry to parksandrecinfo@townoffarragut.org or drop-off a paper copy to the Community Center. **The rules are as follows:** • All entries must be submitted to the Parks and Recreation Staff online or in person by the end of day on Nov. 30. • All writing must be created by the author and must not be plagiarized or use arti-

cial intelligence. • One short story entry per person. • All entries must be in English and must be legible if handwritten. • 1,000 words max. • Stories will be judged by age group: 8 and under, 9-14, and 15 and up (including adults). • There will be one winner per age group. • The story may be fiction or nonfiction. • Excessive violence or sex and the use of profane, vulgar, racist or offensive words or images, as solely determined by

the judges, will result in the story being rejected. • "We cannot consider poetry, plays, screenplays, partial manuscripts, children's picture books or grade school books, memoirs, fan-fiction, scholarship essays or work that is already published," Fisher said. Any alterations to these rules may be made by the Farragut Parks and Rec staff at any time without notice. For more information, call Fisher, 865-218-3376 or visit farragutparksandrec.org.

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YMCA provides 91,914 meals to 1,074 children

RACHEL TOTTEN
Correspondent

With 1 in 5 children living in food insecure households, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, summer can be a difficult time for families already struggling to put meals on the table. Fortunately, the YMCA of East Tennessee sought to address this shocking statistic by providing healthy meals to some of our region's most underserved areas.

As part of the organization's newly launched Summer Food Program, YMCA staff members and volunteers packed and delivered more than 9,000 meals each week for children across East Tennessee this summer, ensuring consistent breakfasts and lunches for every child participating in the initiative. Since May 31, the program provided 91,914 meals for 1,074 children.

"We know that food insecurity is a real struggle for many families, and that struggle intensifies in the summer," explained Tonya Creed, the program's director. "Kids that depend on school breakfast and lunch no longer have those options, and parents are then scrambling to feed three

meals and snacks to kids all summer long."

In rural communities such as Luttrell, Washburn and Rutledge, resources are especially limited, as it could take up to an hour just to reach a true grocery store. That's why the Y stepped in to help fill these gaps, Creed said.

"We were packaging 14 meals each week — seven breakfasts and seven lunches, along with 14 cartons of milk per child," she noted. "We then trucked these packages to our rural distribution sites at Luttrell Elementary, Rutledge Elementary and Washburn school. There was a designated pickup time each week at each location. Families would drive through the pickup line once a week and grab their bags of food, and then we'd see them again the next week!"

Creed said each day included an array of proteins, whole grains, fruits and vegetables. A weekly menu was offered to help families understand how to use different food items in exciting ways and which days to eat certain meals.

"It was important to us to offer healthy options, but at the same time we knew it had to be foods that kids were excited to eat," she said.

Tortillas, pepperonis and cheese sticks, for example, could be used to make easy pizza roll ups. Kid-friendly staples such as whole grain cereal, low sugar jello, peanut butter and jelly sandwiches and muffins also were available, along with cherry tomatoes, apples, oranges, blueberries and mini cucumbers.

"Sometimes living far from a full grocery store, you're depending on convenience stores and markets for most of your grocery shopping, so you may not have as many options for fresh produce," Creed said. "Having shelf-stable meals that didn't need refrigeration was a huge benefit."

The whole point, she added, was to provide the basics needed to ensure children across our region are nourished, healthy and happy. As a result, anyone with children under the age of 18 was eligible to participate in the program.

"Our mission at the Y is 'to put Christian principles into practice through programs that build a healthy spirit, mind and body for all,'" Creed said. "This was not based on income or need, as we wanted to help take away that stigma or that barrier for families."

Richard Devin, who vol-



Photo Submitted

YMCA staff and volunteers pass out meals to those in need during the YMCA Summer Food Program.

unteered to help serve these families, said the response was overwhelming.

"Families were incredibly joyful and grateful," he said. "Many returned week after week, and we enjoyed connecting with them. Some even brought their pets along, which added a friendly, community feeling."

The experience also opened Devin's eyes to the reality of living in rural East Tennessee.

"I realized how many barriers to food access often go unseen, such as a caregiver's health or unreliable transportation," he said. "The experience highlighted how challenging it can be for families to secure something as basic as consistent, nutritious meals."

Sue Frazier, a member of the Davis Family YMCA who also volunteered with the program, agreed.

"The experience just reinforced things I have read and people I had talked to about how important it is to make sure our 'neighbors' have basic necessities like food," she said. "While many of our churches and community organizations offer some of this assistance, it is much more difficult in rural areas to find these resources ... This is a role that the public schools help with during the school year with free and reduced price breakfast and lunches, as it's hard to concentrate and be productive if you are hungry or don't have the

See YMCA on Page 5B

communitybriefs

• **Dine Out for Education** returns Tuesday, Aug. 26. When you visit participating restaurants across the county, a portion of your meal's cost will go to the Partners in Education Foundation, helping fund programs that give back to our schools. For a list of participating restaurants, visit knox-schoolspie.org/dineout/

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Photo courtesy of Samaritan's Purse

Children from Antigua receive gift boxes from Operation Christmas Child.

FBC

From page 3B

Then, the space left can be filled with school supplies, smaller toys; hygiene products, such as a toothbrush or a comb; hair barrettes for the girls and other small items one can stick in spaces in the boxes.

"And, before you know it, your box is full," she said.

"(The school supplies) are very important because in so many of our countries, if the children cannot afford to buy their own school supplies, they can't go to school," McRae said.

"The boxes can go anywhere," she said. "Since 1993, we've delivered over 232 million shoeboxes to children in more than 170 countries and territories, many who have never heard the word of God."

"By giving them a shoebox,

we consider it a tangible way for them to see God's love in action," McRae said. "They're notes given to them that say 'Jesus loves you.'"

A schedule of operating hours for drop-off centers will be posted on samaritanspurse.org/lcc website closer to the deadline.

Locations and more information are available at samaritanspurse.org/occ

Along with FBC, people can drop off their filled shoeboxes at Operation Christmas Child's central drop-off center in the Expo Center, 5441 Clinton Highway in Knoxville; Faith Lutheran Church on Middlebrook Pike; Central Baptist Bearden on Kingston Pike and Bucket Heights near the East Town area.

To learn more about packing the shoebox, visit samaritanspurse.org.

YMCA

From page 4B

basic living necessities."

After a successful first year, the Summer Food Program, which was partially funded through a grant from No Kid Hungry, will continue serving the community next summer.

"We were overwhelmed with both the response from participants and the impact on these families," Creed said. "We will be continuing this next summer and we hope to expand into additional rural communities in East Tennessee."

Both Devin and Frazier plan to volunteer once again.

"This year's success was due to the dedication of the coordinators, staff and volunteers. My role was small compared to theirs, and I hope to at least double my hours next summer," Devin said. "The experience was exactly what I was looking for, and I feel fortunate to have been a part of it."

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STEM

From page 3B

skills they gained," the ORAU press release stated. "Wood worked with a master teacher, assistant teacher and other experts to conduct guided group science, math and computer science technology research projects."

"In addition to research, many other activities are incorporated into the program to promote teamwork, expose students to college opportunities and promote pride in the cultural richness and historical importance of the Appalachian region," it further stated. "This program is fully funded and complimentary to participants, and it is open to middle school students, high school students and high school teachers."

"The Appalachian STEM Academy at Oak Ridge culminates with group presentations by students and teachers about their projects and research findings," the ORAU press release added.



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FARRAGUT VISUAL RESOURCES REVIEW BOARD AGENDA

Farragut Town Hall | Board Room
Tuesday, August 26, 2025 at 6:00 PM

- I) Call to Order
- II) Approval of Minutes
- A) Approval of July 22, 2025 Minutes.
- III) Staff Report
- A) Wall Signs Approved.
- IV) Business Items
- A) Review of an individual tenant panel sign for Kitchen Tune-Up, located at 11113 Kingston Pike.
- B) Review of a primary ground sign for Bruster's Real Ice Cream, located at 11692 Parkside Drive.
- C) Review of a landscape plan for Horizon Plaza, Phase II, located at 11011 Kingston Pike.
- D) Review of a landscape plan for 7 Brew Coffee, located at 11495 Parkside Drive.
- E) Review of a landscape plan for Kingston Pike Village - Phase II located at 13140 Kingston Pike.
- F) Adopt-a-Stream Clean Up and Invasive Plant Removal - Discuss Interest and Possible Dates.
- V) Citizen Forum

It is the policy of the Town of Farragut not to discriminate on the basis of race, color, natural origin, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, religion, disability or veteran status pursuant to Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Public Law 93-112 and 101-336 in its hiring, employment practices and programs. To request accommodations due to disabilities, please call 865-966-7057 in advance of the meeting

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