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# Bus routes face possible cuts

**Tammy Cheek**
*tcheek@farragutpress.com*

Knox County School Board is considering consolidating, and maybe, cutting school bus routes to save money.

The Board discussed preliminary proposals and listened to community feedback during a workshop Monday, Nov. 2.

According to School Board minutes, its members made it clear, however, that no decisions were made on Nov. 2, and Knox County Schools Su-

**See CUTS on Page 4A**



**Submitted**

Farragut business owner Robert Dyer, far right, smiled alongside his friends and colleagues, known as the "Dirt Boys," atop a Hum-vee during their military service.

# Dyer exemplifies service, sacrifice

**Jake Nichols**
*jnichols@farragutpress.com*

Throughout his lifetime, Robert Dyer has lived the service and sacrifice he grew up seeing. A son and nephew of Korean and Vietnam war veterans, Dyer learned to appreciate the impact one can have as a member of the U.S. military.

"My dad and uncle Joe were in the military," the Farragut business owner reflected. "My dad was in the Army in Korea, and my uncle was in the Army in Vietnam. I wanted to be in the military because of them."

At 18 years old, Dyer enlisted in the Army and served at Fort Bragg as a combat engineer. Six years later, he transferred to the Air Force.

"I went all over the world," Dyer said. "I started out in Prime BEEF, which is a combat engineer battalion in the Air Force, and ended up in the air refueling squadron as the flight records guy in Kansas, South Dakota then Germany and England."

For reference, Prime BEEF stands for Prime Base Engineer Emergency Force.

"In the Air Force, they have Prime BEEF and Red Horse," Dyer explained. "During the Gulf War, we built the burrs to protect the F-16s from the sand. It was 12, 14 hours a day, and we didn't get a day off except the Fourth of July."

Within those grueling days, Dyer suffered an ankle injury during Desert Storm. That injury, combined with a back complication, led Dyer to a medical retirement in 1999. He left the service with multiple honors,

**See DYER on Page 4A**

*Exclusive to farragutpress*

# Geoff Courtney addresses FHS hazing, resignation

**Jake Nichols**
*jnichols@farragutpress.com*

On Friday, Oct. 30, an alleged hazing incident took place among 10 members of the Farragut High School football team.

The Knox County Sheriff's Office investigated the following week, and former Farragut football coach Geoff Courtney resigned from his position Tuesday, Nov. 2.

In an exclusive statement to the farragutpress, Courtney addressed his resignation, his thoughts on the program and the situation that occurred.

"First and foremost, I want to express my sincere gratitude to the Farragut community for its continued support of Farragut Football," Courtney wrote in an email to the farragutpress. "It has been an honor and privilege to serve as head football coach for the past three seasons, following 14 years as an assistant. Throughout those years, I have taken tremendous pride in the players, coaches, and families who have contributed to the proud tradition of Farragut Football.

> "The safety and well-being of our student-athletes must always be our highest priority. Fighting, intimidation, or physical harm toward another student is unacceptable ..."
>
> ~ **Geoff Courtney,** Former Farragut head football coach

"I also believe it is important to address the unfortunate incident that occurred before our game against Cleveland on Friday, Oct. 30, and provide clarity regarding the circumstances. At approximately 3:30 p.m., players were arriving at the fieldhouse following the school day to begin pregame preparations. During this transition, an incident involving multiple students occurred, resulting in minor physical injuries to one player.

"At that time, assistant coaches were transitioning from classrooms or arriving from off-campus employment while I was assisting with preparations for our pregame meal scheduled for 3:45 p.m. Our established practice allowed players access to the locker room following the school day as coaches and players arrived for team activities.

"Unfortunately, supervision during this peri-

**See COURTNEY on Page 2A**



**Jake Nichols**

Former Farragut head football coach Geoff Courtney addressed a hazing issue that took place Friday, Oct. 30, according to his statement. The incident has since been investigated by the Knox County Sheriff's Office's Schools Unit.

## Ten FHS students cited in hazing incident

**Jake Nichols**
*jnichols@farragutpress.com*

Last week, Knox County Sheriff's Office clarified that the "numerous" students cited in the Farragut football hazing incident were actually 10 students, not eight, including one senior and nine freshmen.

Moreover, KCSO spokesperson Justin Pratt said the students were cited for the incident — not arrested, contrary to at least one report — and two of the players involved had harassment charges for bullying levied against them, too.

**See TEN on Page 2A**

# Voters set new legislative lineup

**Tammy Cheek**
*tcheek@farragutpress.com*

East Tennessee voters spoke out with their votes Tuesday, Nov. 3, in 203 precincts across Knox County and the state.

In the state races, Republican nominees Sen. Dr. Richard Briggs of District 7 and House Rep. Jason Zachary kept their seats while the Republican District 5 state senate seat went to Jimmy Matlock.

"I'm humbled and grateful that people trusted me to represent them in this role," Matlock said of the win.



**Briggs**



**Matlock**



**Zachary**

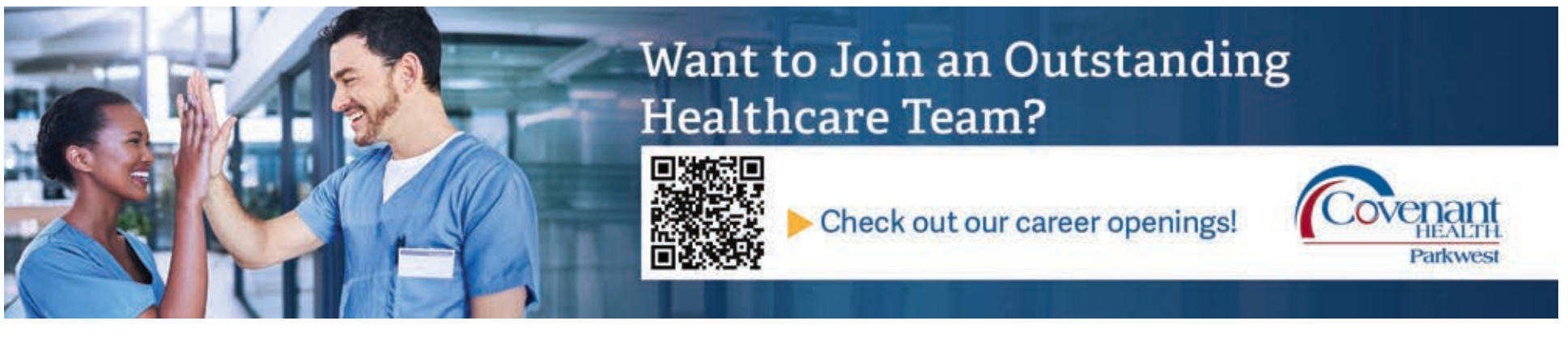
"[The Election Day] was a fun evening, and now we've got to get to work.

"While I've done this before in the House, this is a senate seat so I'll have a chance to go back and serve the folks that I care greatly about," he said.

Once he's sworn in, Matlock said he will focus on infrastructure needed to meet the growth in East Tennessee.

"I'm going to try, in my particular case to work on how to help with

**See VOTERS on Page 2A**

# Board to review Comprehensive Land Use Plan in Nov. 12 workshop

**Tammy Cheek**
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Planning on the Comprehensive Land Use plan continues as Farragut Board of Aldermen hold a workshop, Thursday, Nov. 12, starting at 5 p.m., in Farragut Town Hall, 11408 Municipal Center Drive.

The workshop will include discussion and overview of the CLUP, as well as an update on the progress.

"Adoption of the general plan by the [Farragut Municipal] Planning Commission is required by TCA 13-4-201," Town administrator David Smoak stated in a report to the Board. "The Town of Farragut has utilized the Comprehensive Land Use Plan as its general plan and to help guide future growth and development of the Town.

"The last major update to the CLUP was in 2012, and the current update will help guide land use changes, including zoning amendment requests, that come before the Planning Commission and Board of Mayor and Aldermen," he stated.

Smoak added staff will provide a history of land use planning and the current process, which has been underway since June 2026, and excerpts from a February 2020 training session on the CLUP with the Planning Commission.

## Ten
**From page 1A**

While the Farragut football program is in search of a new coach, former coach Geoff Courtney issued a statement on the incident and its aftermath. You can read that statement in the corresponding story.

## Courtney
**From page 1A**

od was insufficient to prevent the incident. As head football coach, I recognize and accept responsibility for the overall operations and supervision of our program. Although no previous incidents of this nature had occurred to suggest such an altercation might happen, that does not diminish the seriousness of the situation or my responsibility as the program's leader.

"The safety and well-being of our student-athletes must always be our highest priority. Fighting, intimidation or physical harm toward another student is unacceptable and has never been tolerated at Farragut High School or within our program.

"The incident was not reported to our coaching staff when it occurred. I first learned of the allegations through an email received during our game that evening. Following the game, I communicated with school administrators who had also been made aware of the report. I appreciate their prompt action in referring the matter to Knox County Schools and the Knox County Sheriff's Office. I also responded to the student's guardian, expressing my concern, offering support and assuring the family that the matter would be investigated when school resumed Monday, Nov. 2.

"I commend our administration, law enforcement and the students who cooperated with the investigation, which concluded Tuesday, Nov. 3.

"Most importantly, I want to express my sincere concern and support for the student who was injured. No student should ever feel threatened or unsafe at school or while participating in extracurricular activities. I would also encourage our community to extend compassion and grace to the young men involved. Most are just 14 or 15 years old, many without previous disciplinary concerns. While their actions must have consequences, I hope they will learn from their mistakes, accept responsibility and grow into better young men. Accountability and personal growth are important lessons we strive to teach through athletics.

"Following the investigation, I submitted my resignation as head football coach. I also received my first written reprimand from Knox County Schools regarding the lack of supervision. I understand and accept the responsibilities of my position and intend to submit a formal rebuttal providing additional context surrounding the circumstances and established procedures.

"I want to clarify that my decision to resign was not the result of this incident or the reprimand. For several weeks, I had been reflecting on the future of Farragut Football and what would be best for the program and my family. We established ambitious goals, and while our results on the field did not meet our expectations, I am proud of the foundation we have built. Our players have demonstrated commitment, perseverance and a willingness to grow. I believe those qualities will serve them, and the program well moving forward.

"Leadership requires accountability, reflection and a willingness to learn from difficult experiences. I will carry those lessons with me as I spend more time with my family and explore future opportunities. As an alumnus, former player and former coach, my hope is that our community, administration, coaches and players unite behind a shared vision to return Farragut Football to its place among Tennessee's premier programs.

With the exception of four years in college, I have spent the past 38 years of my life as a Farragut Admiral. This school and community helped shape who I am, and I will forever be grateful for the relationships, memories and opportunities."

## Voters
**From page 1A**

that," he said. "We've got a lot of road projects that we need to get finished."

Matlock also plans to address education issues and "how best the state can help the family. It is a family-first emphasis and how the state role needs to be sustained."

Matlock defeated Democratic candidate David Miller with 41,483 or 61.16% of the votes compared to Miller's 26,347. However, Miller received the most votes in Knox County, 10,699 votes compared to Matlock's 10,447.

As the returning senator of District 7, Briggs said the state legislature needs to "refocus on the basic kitchen table issues of affordability, inflation, education and healthcare.

"Hard-working families are struggling and the divisive culture wars need to be set aside and everyday problems addressed," he said.

Briggs defeated Democratic opponent Bryan Langan with 33,498 or 52.72% of the votes compared to Langan's 30,044 or 47.28%.

"I was not surprised that state and national elections showed gains by the Democrats," Briggs said. Still, he said he was shocked by "the magnitude of the Democratic wins across the country."

In the District 14 House of Representatives race, Jason Zachary was re-elected, defeating Lindsay Young Honaker with 17,097 votes to Honaker's 13,543 for 55.7% of the total votes.

Zachary could not be reached for comment.

In the gubernatorial race, Republican candidate Marsha Blackburn defeated Democratic nominee Jerri Green with 957,136 of the votes to Green's 902,953 votes, making Blackburn the first woman to be elected governor in the state. She could not be reached for comment.

Still, Green captured a majority of Knox County's votes, 76,116 votes to Blackburn's 66,600 with 11,298 for Independent candidate David Hatley, who received 195,564 total votes.

In other races,

■ Republican incumbent Bill Hagerty received 1,138,436 total votes for the U.S. Senate seat, defeating Democratic candidate Marquita Bradshaw, who received 886,974 votes, giving him another term. In Knox County, the margin was slimmer, 50.24% to 48.35%.

■ Tim Burchett returns to represent East Tennessee in U.S. District 2 House of Representatives. He received 144,892 votes compared to Michaela Barnett's 103,311. In Knox County, Burchett garnered 78,125 votes to Barnett's 76,885. He could not be reached for comment.

■ Sam McKenzie won 100% of Knox County's votes in the House of Representatives District 15 seat with 10,925 total votes to earn re-election.

■ In District 16, Republican Michele Carringer defeated Democratic opponent Eliza Boles with 12,947 votes to Boles' 8,800.

Regarding the Constitutional amendments 1, 2 and 3, the vote for "Yes" garnered 95,276 votes for 61.81%; 97,426 votes for 63.59% and 112,615 votes for 73.47%, respectively.

And in the votes for the City Charter Amendment, 24,312 people voted yes to outnumber the no's, totalling 23,708 votes.





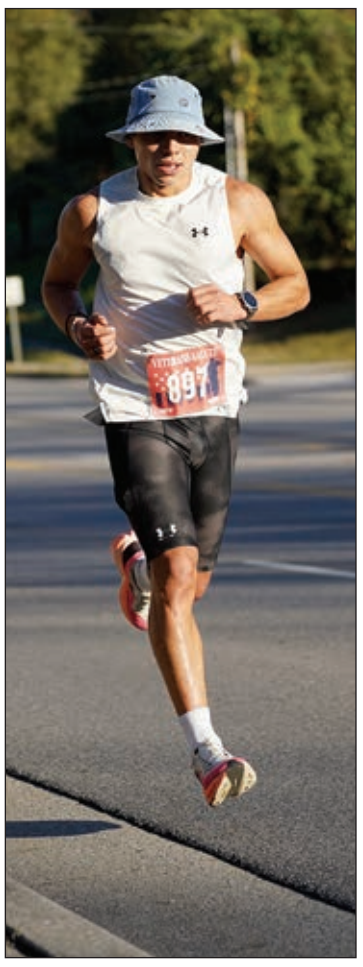







# Veterans Salute 5K, 10K and Fun Run













Jake Nichols

**Clockwise from top left:** Karen Rookard, left, and Grace Richards showed their appreciation for the stars and stripes with their matching outfits. Jesus Arias took first in the 10K Open as part of the Veterans Salute races in Farragut. Colton Sharp showed his patriotic pride, carrying an American flag throughout the 10K Open event. Carson Mubarak, left, and her father Jeff Goedert, a proud veteran, spent some quality time together during the races on Saturday, Nov. 7. Nicholas Pacitti hustled toward the finish line. *See more Veterans Salute race photos on page 5C.*

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Robert Dyer spent plenty of time in and around jets during his time in the U.S. Air Force.



Submitted

Robert Dyer, second from left, built burrs to help protect planes like the one behind him during his time in the Gulf War.

## Dyer

From page 1A

including achievement medals, accommodation medals, a United Nations medal from his service in Tuzla and good conduct medals. That same year, he married his wife, Kendra Barnard-Dyer. Together, the couple opened Bahia Tans in Farragut and became part of the principal ownership group of the Knoxville Ice Bears. And even though his military service has ended, Dyer has found other ways to contribute. He was named the 2024 Wanda Amos Service Award winner for the Southern Professional Hockey League (SPHL), having volunteered for the American Red Cross in multiple natural disasters across the country. In that work and his daily occupations, Dyer puts his military background to use.

"It teaches you to be respectful, grown up, disciplined," he said. "(Kendra) runs the business here, and I come in and relieve her and just clean beds. With the hockey team, it made me more open and friendly, treating people with respect."

The same can be said of Dyer's military colleagues, two of whom flew in from Missouri and Ohio to surprise him three years ago. And last Thursday, Nov. 5, one of those same men walked into Knoxville Civic Coliseum to surprise Dyer again for the Ice Bears' 2026 Veterans Night.

"One of them came in Thursday night to surprise me, too, for Veteran's Night at the hockey game, so we got to spend some time together," Dyer said. "It was such a surprise and I almost cried when they came in three years ago. I hadn't seen them in 30-something years."

For Dyer, each interaction reminds him of the experiences he shared with so many men and women who make that same sacrifice. But he also remembers the work he witnessed from his family members.

"To see veterans at the game, we had World War II vets, Korean vets, Vietnam vets. They were the reason I went," Dyer said. "And now it's Afghanistan and Iraq. Especially the ones who are combat injured, that touches me more than anything. They have given their pride, their dignity and their livelihood to serve their country overseas. To me, Veteran's Day is a representation of people who served their country, who died and fought for it. To see other veterans and talk to them, it makes you smile."



Dyer

## Cuts

From page 1A

perintendent Dr. Jon Rysewyk said a formal vote on school bus changes would not be expected until 2027.

District leaders presented preliminary proposals in October to cut more than 75 school bus routes to save about $2.7 million a year in order to close a $4 million budget gap.

**The proposals include:**

■ Reducing routes by having exisiting buses serving double runs to multiple schools.

■ Changing school start and end times, in which half of the elementary schools would start at 7:30 a.m. instead of 7:45 a.m. and the other half would start at 8:30 a.m. Eleven middle and high schools would start at 9:30 a.m. while others would start at 4:30 p.m.

■ Making broader cuts, such as closing four elementary schools: Gap Creek, Maynard, Corryton and South Knoxville; central office cuts and cutting technology spending.

During the workshop, a number of parents and other residents expressed their concerns about the proposals, particularly about altered schedules and school closures in regard to childcare, work hours and student sleep schedules.













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Rendering courtesy of Maddox Companies

An architect's rendering shows the layout for phase one of Prosperity Crossing, a sports-oriented entertainment development underway off Watt Road. The first phase includes seven sports fields that can accommodate soccer, football, rugby and lacrosse. The development also includes water sports, pickleball and other sports opportunities.

# Big plans rising on Watt Road

**Tammy Cheek**
*tcheek@farragutpress.com*

After four and a half years of moving dirt, Prosperity Crossing is progressing along as a family-friendly, sports-oriented entertainment development off Watt Road.

During that time, the developers took a mountain and moved 4.8 million cubic yards of earth to create pads for a sports park, 288 apartments, retail, restaurants, hotels, entertainment, a water sports area, medical center, sports training facilities and more.

Phase one of the sports park includes seven full-size, rectangular, fully turf multi-use fields, which can be used for soccer, lacrosse, football, rugby fields for men, women and youth, said Dalton Maddox, vice president of Maddox Companies.

"Youth can play a cross field on them, so it would actually be the equivalent of 14 youth fields," he said. "All of them one level, all with bathrooms, all lit, concessions and all with individual seating," he added. "So it really should be the highest tournament-style fields anywhere in the region here."

Additionally, Dalton said the company has an additional piece of property on which they could put up to 15 more fields down the line. "We're putting the [seven fields] first to see how the market responds to them," he said.

The development is the second largest land development in East Tennessee, only behind Turkey Creek,

**See PLANS on Page 6A**




Photo courtesy of Maddox Companies

Along with sports entertainment facilities, the development also includes apartments in Prosperity Crossing, which already are built and operating.



Photo submitted

Deborah Mays, aesthetician/owner of It's Only Skin Deep, opened her new business in Saah Salon Suites.

# A natural approach to better skin

**Tammy Cheek**
*tcheek@farragutpress.com*

Deborah Mays is creating a skincare journey for her clients in her business, It's Only Skin Deep, in Saah Salon Suites Farragut, 102 S. Campbell Station Road.

A licensed aesthetician, Mayes opened last month, offering customized corrective skincare facial treatments and sugaring hair removal.

"I'm happy to be here, get started, welcome clients," she said.

Mays said the skincare treatments are tailored to the individual and his or her skincare needs, "what they're looking to correct or address, such as hydration, pigmentation, rosacea.

"I use a clinical skincare line that is natural with botanicals, different delivery methods that take the ingredients deeper into the skin, addressing those skincare concerns and creating a skincare journey for the client," she said.

Still, "I'm more of a natural aesthetician, so I like to take care of the natural side of skin," Mays said. "That's why I do the sugaring and with the corrective skincare, I work more with natural skincare lines, even though it's clinical, because a lot of times we have inflammation that we're addressing in the skin barrier: redness, irritation."

She explained sugaring is a gentler form of hair removal than other traditional methods.

"It doesn't cause irritation or ingrown hairs,"

**See SKIN on Page 6A**



## Plans

From page 5A

according to Maddox Companies owner/developer Steven "Steve" Maddox.

About 85 percent of the project is in Knox County with a section also in Loudon County.

"It's the largest earth-moving project in the state," Steve said. "We've been moving that dirt now for four and a half years."

In addition to the grading work, he said 80% of the utilities are installed.

"The last thing we've got to put in is the electric and gas," he added about the 260-acre mixed-use development. Then, there will be paving, streetlights, sidewalks, landscaping and the entrance signs before the buildings.

People also can expect to find plenty of parking to accommodate the crowds.

"There should be a really high number of parking for this complex," Dalton said.

Also, Steve said the high-end apartments are in and operating by the Ardmore company.

Another benefit of the development is the new interchange planned for the Watt Road area.

While earth moving started a little more than four years ago, Steve said, "I started assembling the property back in 2006.

"I started out with 100 acres" in 2016, he said. "When it got up to the 260 acres, we knew that we needed a theme for a development of this size. The theme ended up being sports entertainment, which is where a lot of the retail and commercial marketing is going these days.

"And Knox County prepared a study that showed Knoxville needed these types of sports venues," he added.

Looking for something unique to develop, the Maddoxes wanted more for the project.

"A big driver for this entire development is an entertainment community, family style," Dalton said. "This is not just another retail development like Turkey Creek or not to compete with Turkey Creek — they have great retail shops and things like that — this is meant to be more experiential, more entertainment driven.

"We're prioritizing what we call sports entertainment groups," he said. "We're currently working with a water sports group, a pickleball group … a basketball, volleyball group … think Topgolf-style uses but with different sports."

As part of the project, Steve said his company bought out the Cupid's Outlet converted to Trump Superstore.

"Now, we're taking over that property and totally remodel ing that building and making this one of our offices," he said. "We're doing everything we can to clean up this area and make it user friendly and family friendly."

Additionally, Maddox said the development will be golf cart friendly so people can get around.

## Skin

From page 5A

Mays said. "So for people who struggle with those types of irritation, sugaring is a much better option."

Also, "it exfoliates, removing the dead skin cells," she added. "And it only has three ingredients — sugar, lemon and water. You could eat it. It's that natural.

"And, it's an ancient Egyptian hair removal method, so it's been around for a long time."

Mays has been an aesthetician for more than 15 years, when she got her aesthetics license. Since then, she has been working toward building her business.

Before coming to Tennessee in September with her family, she was living in South Carolina and subsequently Florida.

Originally, she was in merchandise management, but when her husband died in 2009, she decided to pursue a career as an aesthetician.

"I would receive facials on occasion, and I enjoyed them and what they offered," Mays said, adding she also wanted to help clients with their skin.

"But, it's really trusting in somebody, creating a loyalty with somebody and helping them achieve the skincare goals they are looking for," she said. "That's how I came up with It's Only Skin Deep" [as a name] for my business."

It's Only Skin Deep is open from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday and Friday; from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m., Tuesday and Thursday; from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., Saturday; and closed Wednesday and Sunday.

For more information or to book an appointment, visit online at itsonlyskindeep.org or call 727-243-6681.

**For more business visit www.farragutpress.com**

BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT

# Trick-or-Treat *at NHC Farragut*

NHC Farragut was filled with Halloween excitement as little ghosts, goblins, superheroes, and princesses joined us for trick-or-treating! Our residents loved admiring the creative costumes, handing out treats, and sharing smiles with all of our young visitors. Caris Hospice joined in on the fun by offering temporary tattoos and passing out even more candy! It was a spooktacular afternoon filled with sweet treats, laughter, and Halloween fun for all ages!






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# Lions roar to first-ever playoff win



Jake Nichols

Concord Christian sophomore receiver Dasani Moulden (1) hauled in two touchdown grabs.

**Jake Nichols**
*jnichols@farragutpress.com*

Amidst the bright lights of an unfamiliar setting, Concord Christian settled into a familiar routine: starting fast.

Fueled by five first-quarter touchdowns and two early turnovers, the Lions roared past Fayette Academy 49-21 in the Division II-A playoffs to capture their first postseason win Friday, Nov. 6, at Farragut's Eddie Courtney Stadium.

"We took care of business in the first half," head coach Steve Matthews said. "That felt really good because you never know what to expect with these playoff games. Proud of the way the guys came out and performed. Dylan (Brown) had a really good night; Dasani (Moulden) was electric, and defensively, did enough in the first half. Got a little sloppy in the second half but happy with the way the guys came out."

Wide receiver Dasani Moulden, a Mr. Football semifinalist, and tailback Maurice Smith punched in two touchdowns apiece in the first half, leading an offense featuring seven touchdowns from five different players in the first two quarters.

Brown's night ended with a 14-for-16 clip for 332 yards, five touchdowns and a pick. Moulden reeled in six catches for 189 yards and two touchdowns, and Smith added four rushes for 114 yards, two scores and two receptions for 28 yards.

By game's end, Matthews addressed his players to celebrate a win that would be eye-popping for any program — let alone one that played its first TSSAA schedule just last season.

"Last year, we felt like we had a good squad but a young one with a lot of young mistakes," Matthews said. "So we made the schedule a little harder this year, and I think that prepared us for the back end of our schedule."

So did the Lions' 2025 campaign, which ended in a first-round loss to Jackson Christian that left players motivated for this season.

"It feels great," Moulden said. "First playoff win in school history, and being a young team, it feels good to accomplish that so early. We took a bad loss last year in the first round, so we wanted to come out with a fast start and stomp on their neck early. We were hungry."

That approach became clear from the jump last week, as QB Dylan Brown hit Moulden for an 80-yard touchdown on the first play from scrimmage.

A fumble recovery by Oakley Helton gave the ball back to the Lions, and another Brown-Moulden connection set up Smith's first touchdown run from 15 yards out.

See LIONS on Page 2B



Jake Nichols

Hardin Valley's Adriel Roland is the Hawks' lone returner who made the trip to state last year.

# Rolling out the mats

## *Wrestlers ramp up for new campaign*

**Jake Nichols**
*jnichols@farragutpress.com*

Fall sports are winding down, which means it's time to roll out the mats for wrestling season.

There are plenty of top performers and notable changes across the farragutpress coverage area, so let's take a look.

At Farragut High School, the Admirals begin their third season under Charlie Rohn. Last season, he led the Ads to their first region semifinals appearance in more than 25 years.

"Practice has been much better because we have a lot of kids in their third year instead of being brand-new, so we are looking more like a wrestling

See ROLLING on Page 2B

# Two advance, two fall

**Jake Nichols**
*jnichols@farragutpress.com*

With the unpredictability of the postseason, any given Friday can mark the end of a team's season or the start of a playoff run to remember.

That appeared the case for multiple teams across west Knoxville as scores rolled in Friday, Nov. 6.

Christian Academy of Knoxville and Concord Christian both came out on top, as CAK beat Pope John Paul II 37-7 with CCS taking down Fayette Academy 49-21. Isaac Kannah did it all for the Warriors Friday, taking 15 carries for 105 rushing yards and two touchdowns with one pass for 29 yards and a score along with 24 kick return yards for 168 all-purpose yards. Seaton Moffett went 9-for-12 through the air for 111 yards and two scores, and Baker Sterchi, Masyn Apalategui and Sawyer Anderson hauled in one touchdown catch apiece.

Concord Christan saw similar effort from Dasani Moulden, Dylan Brown and Maurice Smith, though more details can be found in the corresponding story about the Lions' historic win.

With their best record since 2020, the Warriors (10-1) will welcome Evangelical Christian Friday, Nov. 13, in the Division II-AA state quarterfinals while CCS will take on Friendship Christian in the next round for Division II-A.

For Webb School of Knoxville, the first year under George Quarles saw the Spartans' first postseason berth since they went 5-5 in 2024. But Webb proved unable to move past Battle Ground Academy in a 49-14 loss in the Division II-AA first round. QB Garrett King went 7-for-19 through the air for 80 yards, an interception and a touchdown to Antwan Hill, who scored one of the Spartans' three touchdowns. Gibby Tomberlin found the end zone on a catch from King while Matthew Rogers tossed a passing touchdown as well.

Hardin Valley Academy experienced a similarly tough result, losing 27-24 against Science Hill in the first round of the 6A playoffs.

HVA fumbled the opening kickoff, and Science Hill cashed in with a field goal before the Hawks found the end

See TWO on Page 2B

# Warriors, Irish claim state XC titles

**Jake Nichols**
*jnichols@farragutpress.com*

Even in November, the sweltering Southern heat can rear its ugly head.

That was clear Thursday, Nov. 5, as several area runners battled through tough conditions at the TSSAA cross country state championships at Shelby Farms Park in Memphis.

The Christian Academy of Knoxville girls team finished first overall in the Division II-A girls race with 23 points, bringing home their first state title since 2012. And the Knoxville Catholic boys won the Division II-AA state title with 56 points, claiming the program's fourth state title and second in the last three years.

See XC on Page 2B




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## Rolling
From page 1B

team," Rohn said. "We're looking for less beginner mistakes and more experienced wrestlers."

New assistant coach Timothy Blake, a Farragut resident, joins a staff that also includes longtime assistant coach Dalton Pearl.

The Ads return one state qualifier in Isaac Koga, who made the final weekend of the season in the 175-pound bracket.

"We have a lot of kids that I hope will make state this year," Rohn said, detailing wrestlers such as Isaac Maine, Cooper Gentry, Zach Gonzalez, Luke Brown, Jaucetin Wiberley, Declan Crecy and Luke Evans, as well as a 6-foot-5 freshman in 285-pound newcomer Breck Ellison.

"He is going to be really good," Rohn said. "He's a gentle giant, and we can teach him how to use his technique."

At Hardin Valley, the Hawks produced three qualifiers last year — Mikael Arce (285), William Wimer (157) and Adriel Roland (106), who is their sole returner.

HVA is under new leadership in Stephen Wilkinson, who noted where his team stands at the moment.

"We have one returning state qualifier in Adriel Roland, and we're looking for him to go," Wilkinson said. "Zae Arce, he lost last year in the blood round and we have a transfer in from Texas that's looking good. Our lower weights, we have a number of guys that were really close last year that I think will step up. We did lose some guys in the higher weights, so that's a bit of a question mark right now, to be honest."

Bearden also has a new coach in John Gipson, who takes over for Daniel Harvey.

Meanwhile, Webb will look to head coach Blake Herrin to lead the Spartans. On the mat, Webb will look to replicate performances like that of Jack Quigley, a third-place finisher in the 144-pound class, who has moved on to wrestle for Bellarmine.

In the 215-pound class, Connor Garmer returns as a junior this year while Christopher Kurzak is in the same class as a 150-pounder, per FloWrestling.org. Richard Melton enters as a senior this season for Webb, rounding out last season's state qualifiers.

Under head coach Mason Keel, Concord Christian returns Matthew Franklin, who placed sixth in the Division II 190-pound division at state last year with a 3-2 record. In the process, he became Concord's first state medalist in program history.

CAK is coming off a year that produced three state finalists, including Jack Evers in the 106-pound class. He will be a crucial piece returning this year, as the Warriors will be looking to fill holes left by guys such as Tucker Darga and Kyler Cook, who placed fourth in the state in the 165-pound class.

At Catholic, second-year coach Stephen Jackson will look to a new crop of performers with just one returner out of five state qualifiers in the 2025-26 campaign. Connor Bishop, a sophomore, will look to make his return to the final weekend of the season after doing so as a freshman a few months ago.

## Lions
From page 1B

He scored again five plays later for a 21-0 advantage, but the teams traded possessions on turnovers shortly thereafter. Two plays into Concord's next possession, Andrew Lumsdaine sprinted for a 28-0 lead, and a Dereon Bonner interception paved the way for Moulden's second score to put the Lions up 35-0.

He would have scored again on a long punt return if not for a holding call, but Todd Lundy and Amare McKenzie answered with scores of their own for a 49-0 advantage before Fayette put up three late touchdowns.

McKenzie totaled four receptions for 47 yards and a score, while Lundy caught one pass for a 16-yard touchdown to go with Lumsdaine's 52-yard romp to the end zone.

Allistair Middlebrook finished off the offensive stats for CCS, rushing for 107 yards on eight carries.

This week, the Lions will look to continue their momentum as they welcome Friendship Christian to Farragut for the Division II-A quarterfinals.

But if Matthews' postgame message of "three more!" was any indication, CCS has its eyes set on plenty more history this season.

"We want that state championship," Moulden said plainly. "We know how good we are, and we've been working for it in the weight room. We need those three more games."

## Two
From page 1B

zone on a 22-yard run from Cruize Furman.

The Hilltoppers answered with 10 straight points before a Logan Holbrook field goal whittled the deficit to 13-10, but Science Hill extended its lead 20-10. That's when the Hawks rallied, taking a 24-20 lead on two touchdown scampers from Matz.

"It was a bitter way for it to end, but I told the kids I was proud of them, and we set out to accomplish some goals and were able to knock some of those off the chart. We're disappointed but not displeased. We have got a very resilient group and that's a core value we established this thing on.

"I'm proud of the way they fought through things. Our kids stayed the course and had an opportunity to win and we just weren't ready," he continued. "That's on me. I think you've got to celebrate the success of achieving what we did, but now, that creates a new standard of where we want to be moving forward."

# Youth XC teams see notable ends

**Jake Nichols**
*jnichols@farragutpress.com*



Submitted

The Farragut Intermediate girls cross country JV team brought home first place at the state meet to wrap up their season. Back row (L to R): Rama Nimbalkar, Riley Powell and Tina Liu. Middle Row: Annie Brahlek, Anna Jessie, Mabry Skinner, Vivienne Fuller, Mae Miller, Rosemary Gouge and Meredith Young Front Row: Cecilia Gouge, Dawson Jones, Brighton Walker and Lauren Kunc.

The Farragut Intermediate and Middle School cross country teams took part in their final races for the 2026 season on Saturday, Oct. 24.

Each program performed well to end the season at the state meet.

For FIS, the JV girls team won with 11 of the top 30 medals going to Farragut runners, including Dawson Jones taking third overall. Varsity girls took third place in the state, and Aubrey Martin medaled for FIS with an All-State performance of 23rd place with a time of 6:26.70.

On the FMS front, the boys varsity came up just short of a state title, finishing second to Houston while competing against teams from all three classes — single-A, double-A and triple-A. The girls varsity finished 19th, hampered by some injuries and key absences, with the girls JV coming in third with three medals and a fifth-place finish by Turner Sherrod. The boys JV put forth an equally inspiring performance with a first-place result from Nolan Allen, who led a group that "showed that most of these runners could be on almost any varsity team in the state," head coach Kevin McDonnell said.

Going back to the boys varsity race, McDonnell said the group "set their sights on winning the state title and trained every practice with this on their mind.

"Going into the race, we set the bar higher than we've ever done before and every runner exceeded their target. However, the Houston team from Memphis had a slightly better day. Overall, I'm very proud of how the boys all handled defeat. Instead of being upset, they all said at the banquet that they feel their progress they made both physically and mentally outweighed any trophy."

For McDonnell, those lessons for all his eighth-graders proved their growth in the race of life, too.

"I was so proud of them because they mentioned in their speeches how they were disappointed but so proud and excited for how well they did," he said. "They didn't let second place deter them and mentioned they did everything they could — all the hard work. We coached them to be better and stronger kids, and they talked a lot about that. We won the game of life on that, and they learned some really great lessons."

The FIS team took several lessons from this season, too, as multiple junior varsity runners got to experience the feeling of leading the pack.

"That was a pretty awesome opportunity for some of our kids who provide some depth, and they dominated the race," head coach Jeff Martin said. "It was cool to see a good-sized pack of Farragut runners in the front."

He added that almost every runner in the varsity race delivered a personal-best time, finishing off the year with a bang.

While McDonnell wrapped up his seventh year with FMS, this did mark the final season for Martin leading the Farragut Intermediate squad.

## XC
From page 1B

For CAK, Sophie Lee (18:40.08) finished first overall, followed by Emery Adams (18:46.14) in second, Haylee Gasparic (18:52.04) in third and Lydia Rouse (19:30.59) in fifth to total four Warriors in the top 10.

The Catholic boys saw three top-10 finishes with Cade Duncanson (15:42.82) in seventh place, Evan Van De Griff (15:49.30) in eighth and Reid Bannister (15:55.10) in 10th. Behind them, Nathan Jurbergs (16:05.47) finished 12th with Riley Horton (16:20.24) in 19th.

On the boys side, CAK finished third as a team with Ayden Burke (16:20.60) leading the team in sixth place.

In the Division II large girls race, Knoxville Catholic finished second with 79 points.

On the Division I side, the Hardin Valley girls finished fourth overall with 161 points, as Ana Berkheimer (18:51.47) led the Hawks in 10th place. The aforementioned heat affected former HVA frontrunner Allie Vesser, who was neck-and-neck with eventual winner Hadleih Mitchey from Maryville before Vesser passed out due to the heat.

"It was a tough break for her, really a blow to her season," HVA coach John Witsell said. "And Mitche hasn't been able to hang with Allie before so it was a really disappointing situation.

"She is going to be one of our all-time greats," he added of Vesser, who is committed to Tennessee Tech. "She holds several school records, including the 5K record, and we hope to have a good rest of the year with her in the national-caliber races."

Stephen Bell led the Hawks in 31st in the boys race, as HVA finished sixth as a team. The Farragut boys finished 16th with a 17th-place finish from the girls, as Chase Temples (15:58.34) led all Admirals with an 11th-place finish to cement an All-State ranking.

"The goal going in was to get Chase into All-State, and he ran a really good race," FHS coach Garrett Jones said. "He was only 10 seconds from fifth, did what he needed to do. Shelby Farms is definitely a tough course, but the boys battled hard with the heat. I'm really happy with how we battled, and some things didn't go our way. But that's the way it unfolds and you can't complain too much with how we ran."

Farragut's Addison Haynes (19:47.13) led the Lady Ads in 33rd, and Zoi LeCours (20:12.74) finished 49th.

"Two girls were in the top 50," Jones said, "but with the weather, I'm proud of how they battled."

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Photo submitted

Area families chose gifts for the holidays as part of last year's First Farragut United Methodist Church Community Christmas Day.

# Giving families a bright Christmas

**Tammy Cheek**
*tcheek@farragutpress.com*

First Farragut United Methodist Church is opening its doors to present its 19th annual Community Christmas Day from 1 to 3 p.m., Sunday, Dec. 6, at the church, 12733 Kingston Pike.

At this event, church members will welcome families into the church, providing food, clothing, crafts, Santa and holiday gifts.

"We will provide a sack of groceries for them," said Mimi Moran, media spokesperson.

She explained the church partners with Second Harvest, which provides the food, and FFUMC has a gift room in which the parents can go through and select gifts for their children.

"We will have clothing they can pick up if they need," Moran said. "We will have arts and crafts for the kids to play."

And, it will feature photos with Santa.

"Our families come from Knox, Loudon, Roane and surrounding counties," Moran said. "There are some agencies that we have partnered with. A lot of our families

See BRIGHT on Page 4B

# CCS celebrates milestone

**Tammy Cheek**
*tcheek@farragutpress.com*

For 30 years, Concord Christian School has provided a Christian-based education for children in grades kindergarten through the 12th grade.

This year, they celebrate that milestone with ongoing events and new branding.

Concord Christian School is a ministry of First Baptist Concord in Farragut.

"What sets CCS apart is its incomparable Christ-centered culture and commitment to advancing 'Kingdom Education' with excellence," CCS' website stated. "It is an honor to help raise up the next generation of leaders who will impact the world in meaningful ways for Christ."

"Thirty years ago a group of visionary church leaders at First Baptist Concord set out to establish a school to educate and equip students with a biblical worldview," First Baptist Concord senior pastor, the Rev. John Mark Harrison, said. "We are so thankful to continue this vision into the future by inspiring students to follow Jesus, believing that Christ will continue to direct our steps."

"Concord Christian School's commitment to a Christ-centered culture and advancing 'Kingdom Education' helps students to not simply prepare for college or careers, but to develop character, recognize their God-given abilities and approach the world through a biblical lens," Superintendent of Schools Donald E. Snider said.



Courtesy of Lorna Keeton

Garrett and McKenna Sparks are two of Concord Christian School's high school students.

The most recent celebratory event, Boots, Bows & BBQ, and the school's Concord Annual Golf Tournament, featuring Josh Mancuso, helped raise money for CCS and benefit the school's Lion Fund, according to Lorna Keeton, director of marketing and alumni affairs with CCS.

"Guests at Boots and Bows described the event as 'Entertaining and enjoyable,'" Keeton said. "Our golf tournament was sold out this year.

"Golfers enjoyed a beautiful fall day on the course with breakfast and lunch provided and a custom swag bag made possible by individual and corporate sponsors," she said.

"Since 1969, First Baptist Concord has faithfully served the community through Concord Christian Preschool," Keeton said. "Established to support and encourage parents, CCP has provided a firm and positive foundation for thousands of young children."

However, "recognizing the growing need for Christian education beyond the preschool years, FBC formed a feasibility committee in 1995 to explore the establishment of a primary school," she said. "Af-

See CCS on Page 4B

# Side By Side collaboration

A moment of appreciation between Knoxville Symphony Orchestra music director and conductor Aram Demirjian and Farragut High School director of orchestras and Fine Arts Department chair Rodney Brown at the end of their recent Side By Side collaboration.

Kathy Hartman



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# The Sew 'N Sews

Photo submitted

The Sew 'N Sews, a group of 14 women attending Farragut Church of Christ, 136 Smith Road, made 50 baby bibs and burp cloths then donated them to the Isaiah 117 House in Knoxville last month. The group was created four years ago to make handmade projects to serve the church and community "and bring glory to God," according to its members. Past projects included Christmas stockings and draw-string bags, quilted wall hangings, stuffed bears and monsters, chair covers for a classroom, pillows for breast cancer patients and more.

## Bright

From page 3B

come from deep west Knoxville, and Loudon County is probably the biggest pull, but we expect 200 to 250 families.

"Last year, we had about 700 people who came through the church," she said. "We open up our parking lot at noon for people to come in and get in line."

Currently, the church is in the process of collecting donations, gathering clothing and organizing.

"On Sunday, we convert the. Sanctuary room into a store, if you will," Moran said. She does ask that families register to attend.

"The goal of all of this event is still working our mission for the church that we are serving in the community to show the love of Jesus," she said. "Work has been a very strong focus in the last couple of years.

"We have a relatively new minister, Drew McCallie, who has been amazing," she said. He came up from Chattanooga, but he has truly been restorative of First Farragut, and we're growing."

Also, "our children's ministry is growing," Moran said. "And our focus is now getting out into the community and helping those that can't help themselves."

## CCS

From page 3B

ter much prayer and planning, Concord Christian School was founded."

In 1996, CCS provided kindergarten through third grades, according to Keeton. The following year, it added the fourth grade, in 1998, it provided a fifth grade.

Then in 1999, a middle school was established with the first sixth-grade class, she said.

The school expanded in 1999 as it established its high school with its first ninth-grade class, following that milestone with its first graduating class in May 2013.

# Olde Concord fall festival



Tammy Cheek

The Olde Concord community's fall festival drew a crowd at its second annual event, which took place in Old Concord off Concord Road Saturday, Oct. 24.

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### FARRAGUT BOARD OF MAYOR & ALDERMEN WORKSHOP MEETING
### Thursday, November 12, 2026 at 5:00 PM

I. Roll Call
II. Business Items
A. Discussion of Comprehensive Land Use Plan Update
III. Adjournment

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### FARRAGUT MUSEUM COMMITTEE MEETING
### Tuesday, November 24, 2026 at 1:00 PM

1) Call to Order
2) Approval of Minutes
3) Business Items
A) Report on Volunteers
B) Report from Historic Resources Coordinator
4) Discussion Items
A) Open Discussion
B) Comments from the Public
5) Adjournment

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### ARTS & BEAUTIFICATION COMMITTEE MEETING
### Monday, November 16, 2026 at 11:30 AM

1) Call to Order
2) Approval of Minutes
Approval of October 19, 2026 minutes
A) Approval of October 19, 2026 minutes
3) Business Items
4) Discussion Items
A) Celebrate the Season - Update
- Signups
B) Holiday Tree Village
• update
• decorating day
C) Town Hall decorating
D) Art & Photography Show
E) Farragut in Bloom
5) Adjournment

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### STORMWATER ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING
### Thursday, November 12, 2026 at 3:45 PM

I) Call to Order
II) Approval of Minutes
A) Approve minutes from October 8, 2026 meeting
III) Business Items
A) Chairman's Welcome
1) Vice-Mayor Greg Wiberley
2) Youth Representative Siri Fukami
B) Strategic Dialogue
1) Committee Priorities for New Term
2) Condition Assessment of Stormwater Pipes
- Julie Childers
IV) Stormwater Coordinator Report
V) Other Discussion
A) 2027 Committee Meeting Schedule/Start Time
VI) Confirm date of next meeting:
VII) Adjournment

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### FARRAGUT BOARD OF MAYOR & ALDERMEN MEETING
### THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 12, 2026 AT 6:00 PM

I. Roll Call, Silent Prayer, Pledge of Allegiance
II. Approval of Agenda
III. Approval of Minutes
A. October 22, 2026 Workshop Minutes
B. October 22, 2026 Meeting Minutes
IV. Mayor's Report
A. Farragut West Knox Chamber of Commerce Update
B. Discussion of Recognition of Mayor Eddy Ford (Mayor Cain)
C. Discussion of Town Attorney RFQ Process (Mayor Cain)
D. Discussion of Contract with TSW for 70-Acre McFee Road Property Master Plan (Vice Mayor Wiberley)
E. Discussion of Contract with TSW for Comprehensive Land Use Plan Update (Alderman Segrest)
V. Citizens Forum
VI. Ordinances & Resolutions
A. Ordinances
1. First Reading
a. Approval of Ordinance 26-21, on first reading, amending the Fiscal Year 2026-2027 General Fund and Capital Investment Program Fund Budget Passed by Ordinance 26-10
VII. Business Items
A. Approval of the Farragut Christmas Parade Event on December 6, 2026
B.Approval of Purchase and Installation of Battery Backups for Traffic Signals at Priority Intersections.
C. Approval of Professional Services Agreement with LDA for completion of the Municipal Center Drive and Jamestowne Boulevard Extension Study.
D. Approval of Professional Services Agreement with NovoaGlobal, Inc for Traffic Safety Camera Enforcement Program
E. Appointment of Steering Committee for the Comprehensive Land Use Plan Update
F. Discussion of Settlement Proposal regarding ongoing litigation
VIII. Town Administrator's Report
IX. Town Attorney's Report
A. Executive Session
X.Adjournment

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# Obituary

**In Loving Memory of Col. John T. Edwards "Tommy"**

Tommy Edwards left this life in Knoxville, TN for His eternal home on October 31, 2026, at age 83. A devoted son, brother, husband, father, and granddaddy, he lived a life committed to God, family, and country. Born November 10, 1942, to Charles and Aileen Edwards, he grew up in Sharon, TN, attended Sharon Baptist Church, worked at his family's Sharon Theatre, and played football, basketball, and baseball. A lifelong Vol fan, he earned his B.S. and J.D. at the University of Tennessee, where he met his beloved wife, Marilyn, whose West TN roots he treasured. Their 59-year marriage encompassed the joys and sacrifices of 30 years of military service. An officer in the U.S. Army Judge Advocate General's (JAG) Corps, he formed lasting friendships in Texas, Vietnam, Georgia, Hawaii, Kansas, Virginia, and Germany. He concluded his career in Washington, D.C., as an Appellate Judge and later Senior Judge for the U.S. Army Court of Criminal Appeals.



Family remained Tommy's deepest devotion. He was a steady, supportive father to Michael, Melissa, and Ryan and loved the many Edwards' family dogs. Wherever military life took them, he encouraged his family to embrace the culture, treasure each experience, and serve their communities. A Vietnam War veteran, he received the Legion of Merit, Bronze Star, Meritorious Service, and Army Commendation Medals. He neither discussed nor displayed his honors, taking pride instead in his children, daughter-in-law, grandchildren, and their community contributions.

In 2004, Tommy and Marilyn retired to Knoxville, TN, to be closer to family. Over 22 years at Bearden United Methodist Church, they served faithfully. Tommy lovingly cared for family as a son, son-in-law, nephew, and cherished his new ranks as father-in-law and granddaddy. His greatest privilege was supporting the lives of his 3 cherished grandchildren, Sydney, Mark, and Jonathan.

Tommy is survived by his mother, Aileen; his wife, Marilyn; his children, Michael (Gina), Melissa, and Ryan; and his grandchildren, Sydney Edwards, Mark Edwards, and Jonathan Cate. He was preceded in death by his father, Charles M. Edwards, Jr.; his brother, Jim Edwards; and his aunts, Edith Masden and Maurine Eaton, to whom he gave unwavering and gracious care.

Tommy will be remembered for his authenticity, generosity, and an unmistakable sense of humor. His simple but remarkable life reflected faith, service, advocacy, justice, humility, and dignity. Though private, he was the life of the party, with a laugh that could light up a room. His presence and wit will be sorely missed. Those who knew him can imagine him looking at his watch and saying, "This is way too long."

A celebration of Tommy's life will be held on Sun., Nov. 22, at 4 p.m. at Bearden United Methodist Church with a reception to follow. A graveside service with military honors will be held on Mon., Nov. 23, at 2 p.m. at East TN State Veterans Cemetery Chapel. Memorial contributions may be made to a charity of the donor's choice in Tommy's honor and to the glory of God. Online condolences may be expressed at www.rosefuneraltn.com or www.vlm.cem.va.gov/JOHNTHOMASEDWARDS/adf293

# Press Planner

• Town of Farragut Education Relations Committee is holding a winter coat drive called Coats Abroad. From now through Friday, Nov. 13, collection bins are available at the Farragut schools, Town Hall and the Community Center. Drop off winter coats and give the gift of warmth this season.

• The Salvation Army Knoxville Area Command has registered 2,838 children and seniors for its annual Angel Tree and Silver Bells programs. Organizations can adopt a small or large number of Angels. Individuals and families are also encouraged to participate in online Angel adoption. Sign up to adopt Angels and Silver Bells by visiting the Knoxville Salvation Army's website at: https://southernusa.salvationarmy.org/Knoxville/angel-tree

• Join the UT Arboretum Society as Lisa Thomison, director and co-founder of the Owl Ridge Raptor Center, introduces the audience to some of their feathered "ambassadors" on Saturday, Nov. 21, 10 a.m. to 12 p.m., at the UT Arboretum Auditorium, 901 S. Illinois Ave, Oak Ridge. Several live raptors will accompany her while she introduces the work of this federal- and state-licensed raptor rehabilitation center. Register at: http://www.utarboretumsociety.org/programs/. This is a free program, but a donation box will be available. All donations will be given to Owl Ridge Raptor Center to support their work.

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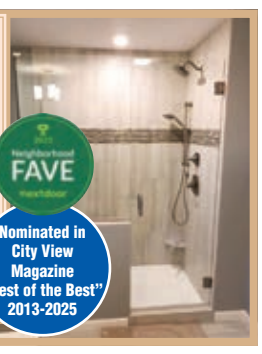
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# Camino pilgrimage

From incredible scenery to life-changing friendships and lessons, Carlos Reveiz and his wife, Nancy, took plenty from their journey along the Camino de Santiago. The pilgrimage is made by thousands of people each year, and the Reveizes' 2026 journey marked their first time to travel the full distance.

Photos courtesy of Carlos Reveiz / crfoto.com























# ‘It was a great experience’

## Mitchell recounts his years of service

**Tammy Cheek**
*tcheek@farragutpress.com*

Villages of Farragut resident Brad Mitchell looked back on his time in the military in reflection of Veterans Day.

“I think it taught me a lot of discipline … and I have to make decisions and move on,” he said. “It was a great experience and I wouldn’t change it.”

Mitchell served in the U.S. Army from August 1965 through July 1970, followed by a year of Army Reserves.

“I was drafted,” he recalled. “I was living in Westport, Connecticut, with my family. I just turned 21.

“I had moved there with my family after a year of college,” Mitchell said. “I decided to take a break. Then my number ended up being called.”

He was sent to Fort Dix in New Jersey for about 10 weeks of basic training. Then in November 1965, he was sent to U.S. Intelligence School in Fort Holabird in Maryland.

“I spent from November 1965 to July 1967 in the Army Intelligence School,” Mitchell said. “Then, I had to make a decision on whether I was going to re-enlist, make a career out of the Army or get out in six or eight months.”

Also, he had gotten married in September 1966 to Shirley, with whom he is still married.

“So, they offered me an assignment with the military advisory command in Bangkok, Thailand,” Mitchell said.

“I remember the trip over very well because I was a specialist fifth class at the time,” he said. “I had just made rank, so I could take my wife on a company tour. That was kind of cool.

“At the Travis Air Force Base outside of Sacramento, we got on the plane,” Mitchell said. “They normally put the enlisted people back in the coach section; but since my wife was with me, they put us in first class [on] a brand new Douglas DC-8 wing flight — one of the early four-engine jets.

“We had to land on Wake Island to refuel, and it was in the middle of a monsoon rainstorm,” he recalled and laughed. “I could see through the clouds this little speck down there, and I thought, ‘We’re going to land on that?’ Sure enough, we did.”

They then flew to Clark Air Base in the Philippines and then to Bangkok.

“It took a better part of 36 hours flying time,” Mitchell said. “And it was during my birthday, Aug. 1.”

They spent two years in Thailand, where he was with the classified control center, handling classified messages in and out of Vietnam and other places.

“We had an exercise in Thailand,” Mitchell recalled. “I participated in that military exercise with Australians, which was kind of cool.”

After two years, Mitchell returned to the United States and was assigned to the Defense Intelligence Agency in Washington for his final year.

“I had decided, while we were in Bangkok, that I was going to get out after my service time was up and use the GI Bill to go back to college, so that’s what I did,” he said.

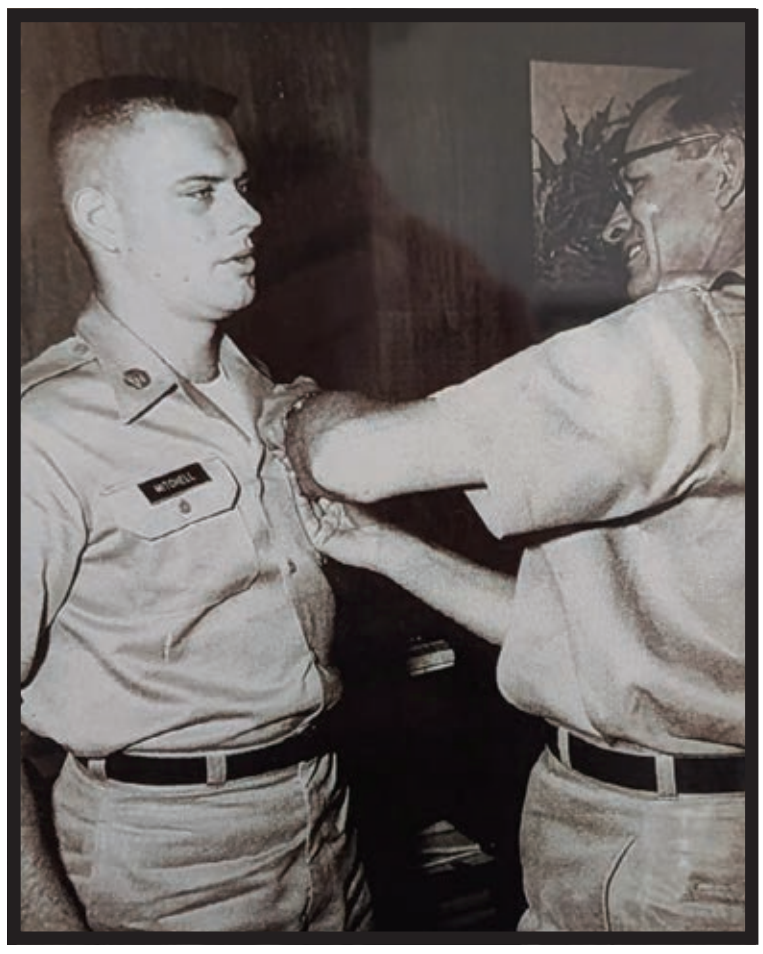
Mitchell enrolled in Geneva College in Beaver Falls, Pennsylvania, where he earned a Bachelor of Science degree in business administration then went to work for Union Carbide in Cartersville, Georgia.

He worked for Union Carbide for 31 years.

“My final assignment was a joint venture with Kuwait Oil Company,” Mitchell said. “We were living in Kuwait for three years. While we were there, Union Carbide got bought out by Dow Chemical … so I retired.”

They moved to Lenoir City in 2000 then moved in the Villages Dec. 18, 2019, “the day after they opened the place,” he recalled.






Above photo by Tammy Cheek / Left photo submitted

**Above:** Brad Mitchell, Villages of Farragut resident, looks back on his life as a teaching experience. He shows a photo of a general presenting him with a commendation medal.

**Left:** Brad Mitchell, who served from 1965 to 1971, is shown in this photograph receiving a commendation medal from Gen. Hal McCown in 1965.





# Cooper passing lessons to the next generation

**Jake Nichols**
*jnichols@farragutpress.com*





**Top and left photos submitted / Above photo by Jake Nichols**
Craig Cooper has worked as an NJROTC instructor at Farragut High School since 2022.

For Craig Cooper, any Farragut home football game brings a moment of pride and reflection.

When members of his Naval Junior Reserves Officers Training Corps (NJROTC) unit march to the star logo at midfield, turn toward the crowd and present arms for the playing of the National Anthem, Cooper thinks back to the time it took for each step to be memorized.

"It's not me; it's the kids," he said. "They're the ones that put in the effort. I just give them the guidance to get there. And once they do, they are on their own. I'll tweak here and there, but when it comes down to it, they do all the work."

From seniors to eighth-graders, the ceremony and its intricacies are taught by students — exactly the way Cooper envisioned when he took over the program in 2022.

That leadership is just one of the core principles he brings as Farragut's NJROTC instructor after more than two decades in the military.

A Wartburg native, Cooper joined the U.S. Marine Corps in 1993. In locations across the globe, he excelled as a motor transport operator, mechanic and instructor.

After 21 years of service, Cooper retired in 2014 with his desired role of gunnery sergeant.

"Basically being a Marine, just doing what they trained me to do," he noted, adding that he traveled across the world on multiple occasions.

"In the time I was there, I traveled to numerous places," Cooper reflected. "Been in and out of combat situations numerous times, traveled around the world at least once or twice. When something comes up on TV, my kids and my wife will ask me if I've been there, and usually the answer is yes."

Of his favorite memories, Cooper shared one in particular.

"Probably the best time I ever had was with MARSOC, the Marines' Special Operations Command," he said. "I got to do a lot more than just my job. I was out with the teams doing things in Afghanistan, seeing another side of things. And the camaraderie among other Marines is the biggest thing. It doesn't matter who you're with or where you are; you always make friends with brothers and sisters and that never goes away."

Those relationships — especially ones developed with people who died in the line of duty — come to mind for Cooper every Veteran's Day.

"There's guys that didn't come home, guys I don't see any more because of PTSD and other issues," he said. "Those are the people I think about, and the old people that brought the traditions and core values to when I joined. Now I'm the guy carrying them to the ones who will join next."

Some of those people are Farragut graduates who have been taught by Cooper in his time at FHS.

But whether those interactions have come at Farragut or in Cooper's previous role as a security officer at Powell High School, the impact on his own life has been paramount.

"I absolutely love it," he said. "There's no better place to be after being retired to influence and help and guide some of these kids that need it. It's an absolute blast."

So while those pregame ceremonies are nice, Cooper said his greatest joy comes from seeing what students accomplish after they walk across the stage at graduation.

"My success as an ROTC instructor comes from the kids' success when they graduate," he said. "There's a lot of them in college, in military and in the work force — and if they are happy, I'm happy. That's the best feeling in the world, knowing that kid made it where they wanted to go."

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# U.S. Army brought Owensbys together

**Tammy Cheek**
*tcheek@farragutpress.com*

The U.S. Army brought Robbie and Brenda Owensby together, and they have been together for 53 years.

"It's been wonderful," Brenda said. "We're both honored to have served our country. We've been real happy."

The two met in December 1972 in Fort Benning, Georgia. Robbie was a staff sergeant and non-commissioned officer in charge of the Welcome Center, where new people reported, and she was a second lieutenant, just coming out of 18 weeks of Women's Army Corps officer basic training.

"Fort Benning was my first assignment," she recalled, adding she was a financial home management officer there but later became an Army emergency relief officer.

Technically, Brenda outranked Robbie, although she, then 22, was 12 years younger.

"I was very naïve," she recalled. "I thought he was handsome. He always commanded a room … I didn't understand why but I would have butterflies when he walked in."

"When she walked in, I decided she was going to be with me," Robbie recalled.

"We met in December and our first date was in April," Brenda, 76, said. "One reason we don't have a lot of pictures together [is] because I wasn't convinced that it was OK to date him because I was an officer and he was an NCO.

"But, eventually he bought an officer's guide and read the whole thing to show me that no where did it say we couldn't date," she said. "After that first date, we only dated each other.

"We got married the following October," Brenda said.

While always professional while in uniform, the Army later transferred Robbie away from Brenda.

For Robbie, who turned 88 on Veterans Day, the military life started when he enlisted in the Marine Corps, serving from 1956 to 1960, all the while a military police officer in Norfolk, Virginia.

He left the Marine Corps because there were no opportunities for promotions; but once out, he decided to enlist in the Army in 1961. He retired in 1977.

"There were two reasons [for joining the Army]," Robbie said. "One, I hated civilian life and, two, there were people being killed in Vietnam. I was able to go."

He served in Vietnam for four years. On one occasion in 1971, he injured his spine when his team's Jeep ran into an irrigation ditch.

"I think we all went out of the jeep," he said.

He did not have pain at that time but later, while he was stationed in Germany, he was running and passed out during the run. After visits to the doctors, they discovered he had separated two vertebrae.

He had never asked for a purple heart but later he received a Bronze Star for valor.

While fighting at the Mekong Delta, "quite a few people got shot up," he recalled. "For some reason, I got a Bronze Star."

"You wouldn't leave the injured people there," Brenda said. "He just kept shooting and firing and providing cover."

Brenda served in the Army from 1971 to 1995, starting out as a Women's Army Corps lieutenant.

"I always wanted to join the Army," she said. "My father was in the Army for 30 years. I wanted to go to West Point Academy but West Point was not open to women and ROTC was not open to women.

"So, my dad found a program that the Army had for women," Brenda said. "It was good because my dad really wanted me to go in as an officer.

"I was in the first class at the University of Tennessee to commission women," she said.

"Back then, they had the Women's Army Corps," Brenda said. "I was an honor graduate."



Above photo by Tammy Cheek / Below photo submitted




**Above:** Robbie and Brenda Owensby, who met and married in the U.S. Army in the 1973, have been together for 53 years.

**Right:** Second Lt. Brenda Owensby gives the oath of office to Staff Sgt. Robbie Owensby when he re-enlisted in the U.S. Army in 1974.

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# Baio sought challenge in Marine Corps

**Tammy Cheek**
*tcheek@farragutpress.com*

Kick & Fit owner/instructor Paulie Baio always had challenges in mind so he enlisted in the U.S. Marines.

"I joined the Marine Corps straight out of high school, 18 years old," he said. "I graduated high school May 25, 2000, and left [for the Marines] July 5.

"Out of all the branches, I wanted a challenge," Baio recalled. "I wanted to go and be the toughest, [to get] the hardest training, and I wanted to be the best."

The Sanford, Florida, native, went into the military because "there was nothing else for me.

"I had already gotten into physical fitness before I joined the military," Baio said. "I was already a personal trainer and decided I wanted to do military, and Marine Corps was the only reasonable option for me."

And, the Marines Corps was everything he hoped and more.

"I loved every day of it," Baio said. "Very rewarding. Very challenging."

As a young marine, he started out as a diesel mechanic, got promoted fairly quickly and was a sergeant within three years. Then, he was nominated by leadership staff to be a drill instructor, for which he served on Paris Island for four years.

"I would like to think that I showed great leadership skills," Baio said. "I would handle all the responsibilities that were expected of me and more, great physical fitness, all around all of the things they were looking for a marine drill instructor."

At that time, he held the titles of drill instructor, senior drill instructor, martial arts instructor and chief drill instructor. He served 15 years in the Marines then medically retired due to an injury he sustained in his spine.

"Just something in my back gave out," Baio said. "A disc had completely collapsed, so I had to have emergency surgery on my spine. After that, the recovery never got me back to the level that I should be at for deployment. It forced me to have to retire early."

When he got out, the veteran found odds-and-ends jobs, which included personal training, but "none of that really satisfied me."

Baio came to Knoxville in 2019, doing personal training and kick boxing coaching until he decided to open his own business.

In January 2023, he left from working for someone else to open Kick & Fit Club in July 2023. He returned to his roots from the Marine Corps, where he taught hand-to-hand combat, close-combat instruction and Marine Corps martial arts program.

"I earned all the way up to the level of second-degree black belt in the military," Baio said. "I wanted to continue that when I got out.

"I brought a bunch of the techniques and the things I learned from those different fighting styles and just introduced it as cardio kick boxing," he said.

"What inspired me to start Kick & Fit Club was my passion for fitness, my desire to help others and my belief that physical fitness can truly change lives," Baio said. "I didn't want to just open another gym; I wanted to create a place where people could become better versions of themselves.

"A place where people of all ages, backgrounds and fitness levels could walk through the doors and immediately feel welcomed," he said. "Somewhere they wouldn't feel judged, intimidated or pressured to compete with anyone other than the person they were yesterday."

Along with his military experience, Baio also brings with him years involved in competitive bodybuilding, coaching and personal training.

"I learned firsthand that fitness is about so much more than physical strength," Baio said. "It's about discipline, confidence, mental toughness and believing in yourself even when things get difficult."






**Photos submitted**

**Above:** Paulie Baio enlisted in the U.S. Marine Corps straight out of high school graduation on May 25, 2000.

**Left:** After Paulie Baio retired from the U.S. Marine Corps, he founded Kick & Fit gym in Turkey Creek in Knoxville. There, he brings his military training to his clients.



# THANK YOU TO OUR VETERANS









# Veterans Salute Race

From patriotic outfits to American flags and peppy dogs, there was plenty to see as Farragut runners turned out for the Veterans Salute 5K, 10K and Fun Run Saturday, Nov. 7, at the Farragut Community Center on Jamestowne Blvd.



This red Mazda convertible, driven by Henry Marambio, paced the runners on Saturday morning.




Ali Martin and her dog, Rocky, remained focused as they completed the race.




Christy Jones and her children showed off their Veterans Day shirts before the races Saturday morning.




Jason Tucker, left, Rachel Morgan and Khari Fletcher-Moore showed their support for friends who took part in the race.




Runners stood with their hands over their hearts during the National Anthem on Saturday.




Army veteran Paul Szustakowski took second in the 10K open as part of the Veterans Salute races.




Matt Warren, top right, and his children Andy Warren (left), Madison Warren and Benjamin Warren cheered on their wife and mom, Amanda Warren, during Saturday's festivities.




Michele Brackett was decked out in red and blue to show her patriotic pride.




Runners got off to a fast start in the first race Saturday morning, and Colton Sharp (left, orange shirt) brought a patriotic gusto with the American flag he carried throughout the event.




Sophia Thomason cracked a smile as she crossed the finish line.

**Photos by Jake Nichols**



# We salute those who have served our country.

## HONORING VETERANS OF THE VILLAGES

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Abram A. | Vernon G. | Larry P. |
| John B. | Harold H. | James P. |
| Bob C. | Eric H. | Bob R. |
| Chip D. | Paul H. | Edward S. |
| Jack D. | Carl M. | Dale St. J. |
| Bill G. | Weldon M. | Bob W. |
| | Brad M. | |






## Missing Man Table

**SMALL TABLE SET FOR ONE** - symbolizing the fact that some are missing from our ranks.

**WHITE TABLECLOTH** - symbolizes the purity of their intentions to respond to their country's call to arms.

**BLACK NAPKIN** - represents the sorrow of captivity.

**A SINGLE RED ROSE IN A VASE** - signifies the blood shed to ensure America's freedom.

**THE YELLOW RIBBON AROUND THE VASE** - represents a demand for proper accounting of those that are not among us today.

**A LEMON SLICE ON THE PLATE** - to show a captive soldier's bitter fate

**GRAINS OF SALT ON THE PLATE** - reminds us of the countless fallen tears of families as they wait.

**AN INVERTED GLASS** - because they cannot toast with us.

**AN EMPTY CHAIR** - because they are not here.

**A WHITE CANDLE** - for the hope that all our missing will return someday.

THE VILLAGES OF FARRAGUT

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