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THE JOHNSON CITY

# NEWS & NEIGHBOR

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## Saving History

**Trio works to add Ashe Street Courthouse to National Register**

BY DAVE ONGIE, NEWS EDITOR

For over a century, the building most folks know as the Ashe Street Courthouse has been a lot of things to a lot of people. And if the three people who spearheaded the building's nomination to the National Register of Historic Places have anything to say about it, the building will be given the chance to continue to evolve and serve citizens in our region for generations to come.

"We know there is a future for this building," said Anne Mason, executive director of the Heritage Alliance. "It is coming, and this is just a step in the process of securing that future."

The step Mason was speaking of came last Wednesday when the Tennessee State Review Board approved the nomination submitted by Mason, Hal Hunter and Megan Tewell under the umbrella of the Heritage Alliance. With that hurdle cleared, there is just one more remaining as the nomination moves on to the Department of the Interior for final consideration.

It is unusual for such a small group to take on the rigorous application process to get a building approved on the National Register, but the trio championing the Ashe Street Courthouse was perfectly suited to tackle the challenge. Hunter's knowledge of architecture, Tewell's training as a historian and Mason's deft diplomacy when dealing with a variety of governmental organizations and citizen groups proved to be a winning combination.

"It really was lucky all of our research interests and abilities complemented each other so well," Tewell said. The morning after the state review board's decision, Mason, Hunter and Tewell huddled under an overhang atop the front steps of the Ashe Street Courthouse to avoid a steady rain as they talked to the *News & Neighbor* about the history of the building and the potential impact a spot on the National Register of Historic Places might have on its future.

### Humble beginnings

The Ashe Street Courthouse began its life as the Johnson City Postal Savings Bank and Post Office back in 1911. The Postal Savings Bank was a new program instituted by President William Howard Taft designed to encourage people to save money. The public had a great



The Tennessee State Review Board approved a nomination submitted by members of the Heritage Alliance last week for the Ashe Street Courthouse to be added to the National Register of Historic Places. The nomination will now move to the Department of the Interior for final approval.

deal of trust in the postal service in those days, and Tewell said Taft aimed to capitalize on that trust to encourage people to save their money.

"They trusted the postal savings bank more than they did actual banks," Tewell said. "He tried to leverage the post office as the familiar neighborhood entity to get people to actually put money from their folders, jars and mattresses into circulation."

The postal savings bank in Johnson City was part of the rollout, making it the first facility of its kind in the state of Tennessee and



From left, Anne Mason, Megan Tewell and Hal Hunter shouldered the rigorous responsibility of researching and documenting the history of Ashe Street building. PHOTO BY DAVE ONGIE

SEE HISTORY, 7

## Hazel Creek Epilogue: Bear incident injects shot of adrenaline into fishing trip

BY HAROLD ROSS

I just got back from my annual six-day backcountry camping and fishing trip, and boy it got a little exciting this year! It all started Friday night as my fishing buddies and I were settling in around the campfire discussing the day's adventures. Our campsite is right on the creek bank at the confluence of Sugarfork Creek and Hazel Creek in the backcountry of the Smokies. We have made this same trip for the last 34 years. During those years we have seen and encountered all sorts of wildlife.

It was a little after 11:30 p.m. We were all tired, and with bellies full, the conversation faded as we heard an odd noise in the distance. It was a vehicle coming up the primitive road/trail that winds up the mountain following the creek. It proceeded to stop at our campsite. Two guys got out stating they

were park rangers and needed to share some important information.

In pitch-black darkness with headlamps to light our way over, we all gathered at the vehicle. One of the rangers told us there was a bear incident at a campsite three miles up the trail from our campsite and were on their way to investigate. He also said we needed to be prepared to pack up and leave the next morning. He and his partner would be back in a couple of hours to let us know.

This news gave our conversation new adrenaline, and we were wondering what had happened at a campsite only three miles upstream from our location. We stayed up for another hour but decided to go to bed and figure out the rest of the story in the morning.

Now to a lot of you are probably thinking, "We need to get the heck out

SEE HAZEL CREEK, 9



A recent fishing trip in a remote portion of the Smokey Mountains took a dramatic turn for Harold Ross (left), Bryan Averett, Dave Anderson, Jim Thigpen and Jon Henry thanks to a bear incident at a nearby campsite.

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# Coalition for Kids offering daytime virtual learning support

In addition to Coalition For Kids normal services providing after-school care to over 350 children each school day from 3-7 p.m., the nonprofit organization is now offering daytime programming during the 2020-21 school year to further support Johnson City Schools and

children and families in grades 7-9. Full-time in-person learning started for Johnson City Schools students in kindergarten through sixth grade on Aug. 31. However, students in seventh through ninth grade are on a 50 percent physical attendance schedule

with children rotating days in-person and at home learning virtually. Coalition For Kids has implemented plans to support these students during the day with virtual learning when they are not scheduled to be at school on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday. If not for Coalition for Kids, these students may otherwise be home alone. C4K will continue to assist children with virtual learning, communicate with their teachers, assist each individual with their homework assignments, tutoring, mentoring, and provide meals & snacks. The C4K \$10,000 Reverse Raffle fundraiser, presented by Citi, will be held on Oct. 1. The raffle is raising funds to cover the cost of providing additional programming, which has been offered since the beginning of August – at no cost to the families and children. Raffle tickets are \$100 each and can be purchased online at [www.coalitionforkids.org/raffle/](http://www.coalitionforkids.org/raffle/) or by contacting Lisa Pawley, Director of Development, at 423.434.2031 ext. 835. For more information on C4K, visit [www.coalitionforkids.org](http://www.coalitionforkids.org). If you would like additional information about programming availability, space is limited, please contact Sierra Dickson, Interim Director of Programming, at 423-434-2031 ext. 820.



Coalition For Kids is offering daytime virtual learning assistance for Johnson City Schools students in grades 7-9.



Citi will be presenting a \$10,000 reverse raffle on Oct. 1 to help raise funds so C4K can continue offering daytime programming.

# Niswonger Children’s Hospital CEO Carter tapped for prestigious post

Lisa Carter, chief executive officer of Niswonger Children’s Hospital and Ballard Health’s vice president of pediatric services, has been voted chairman of the board for the Children’s Hospital Alliance of Tennessee (CHAT). CHAT is a collective of organizations such as Niswonger Children’s Hospital, East Tennessee Children’s Hospital and Monroe Carrell Jr. Children’s Hospital at Vanderbilt that enables their leaderships and experts to collaborate and advocate for children’s health issues. This is the first time a team member from Niswonger Children’s Hospital has been voted into the chairman role. “Lisa has dedicated so much of her life to improving children’s lives in the Appalachian Highlands, and in her new leadership role with CHAT, she’ll be able to channel that passion on an even larger scale – making the children of Tennessee and beyond healthier, happier and stronger,” said Ballard Health Chairman and CEO Alan Levine. “This is an incredible honor, and we’re all immensely proud and excited Lisa’s peers have recognized her immense abilities and elected her to



this new position. “The talent, compassion and insight that have driven Lisa to reach new heights at Niswonger Children’s Hospital for the last five years will surely propel CHAT to similarly advance children’s healthcare across the state. This is a very, very good thing for our children, our families and our communities.” Since taking the reins at Niswonger Children’s Hospital in 2015, Carter has implemented new programs that address pressing children’s healthcare issues such as neonatal abstinence syndrome (NAS), trauma informed care and community and social determinants of health. She has also helped spearhead initiatives that extend telemedicine

options into rural parts of Niswonger Children’s Hospital’s 29-county service area, enabling remote and disadvantaged communities to have access to specialized pediatric care. “I will always be an advocate for children and their families, as well as for the physicians and team members who care for them,” Carter said. “The healthcare environment is ever-changing and constantly evolving. We strive to keep our medical care and hospital services abreast with these changes, while also supporting and growing the services we provide to our communities, outside of hospital walls and doctor’s offices, that enhance children’s health and well-being. “I very much look forward to leading CHAT through the changes and challenges of the coming year, and I’m extremely excited for this opportunity to continue serving our youngest community members, both inside and outside of CHAT’s member hospitals.” Carter’s passion for children’s health began after a high-risk pregnancy, when she delivered a premature baby boy who required around-the-clock care in a neonatal

intensive care unit (NICU) and several follow-up appointments with pediatric subspecialists after he was discharged. From there, she joined the children’s hospital team in 2001, eventually becoming vice president and chief nursing officer of Niswonger Children’s Hospital and Johnson City Medical Center, during which time the

hospital’s Family Birth Center achieved the 99th percentile in patient satisfaction, and its Level I trauma center earned successful state re-designation with commendations. Carter will continue fully serving her role with Ballard Health during her appointment as chairman of the board for CHAT.

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# Science Hill announces four National Merit Semifinalists

Four Science Hill seniors have been named semifinalists for the 66th annual National Merit Scholarship Program, a program that is designed to identify and honor the top high school students in the United States. The four Science Hill seniors include Luke E. Barnes (son of Beth and Curt Barnes), Marisa L. Gibbons (daughter of Lisa and Josh Gibbons), Sarah R. Luna (daughter of Kim and James Luna), and Pujan D. Shah (son of Darshan and Rupal Shah). Over 1.5 million juniors in almost 21,000 high schools entered the 2021 National Merit Scholarship Program by taking the 2019 Preliminary SAT/ National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test. “We are very proud of these four Hilltopper National Merit Semifinalists for earning the opportunity to advance in the 2021 National Merit Scholarship competition,” Science Hill Principal Todd Barnett said. “These students have

demonstrated exceptional academic ability and dedication to reaching their fullest potential at Science Hill. Their accomplishments reflect the expectations and ability of the Science Hill faculty and our community to prepare our students to compete with the nation’s best and brightest students.” A semifinalist must have an outstanding academic record throughout high school, be endorsed and recommended by a high school official, and write an essay. From the approximately 16,000 semifinalists, about 15,000 are expected to advance to the Finalist level, and in February they will be notified of this designation. The nationwide pool of semifinalists represents less than one percent of U.S. high school seniors. These academically talented high school seniors have the opportunity to continue in the competition for some 7,600 National Merit Scholarships worth more than \$30 million that will be offered next spring.

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# Jonesborough welcomes Tracy, celebrates USDA partnership

BY DAVE ONGIE, NEWS EDITOR

Jonesbrough leaders gathered inside the town’s visitor’s center last Tuesday afternoon to tend to a relationship that has been fruitful for a very long time. The occasion was a reception for Jim Tracy, the State Director of Rural Development for the USDA. Tracy was instrumental in securing the funding necessary to build the new Jonesborough K-8 school. He also helped with the funding for the Jackson Theatre, the purchase of the International Storytelling Center building, the restoration of the McKinney Center at Booker T. Washington School, the construction of the Jonesborough Senior Center and the renovation of the Chuckey Depot. Jonesborough Mayor Chuck Vest credited Tracy for opening the door and creating opportunities and praised folks in Jonesborough for making the most of those opportunities time and again. “We’ve really taken Jonesborough to another level thanks to Rural Development and people like Jim Tracy,” Vest said. “The good thing is all those projects have been successful, and because of that, anytime Jonesborough calls, Rural Development takes our call. They’re always willing to help.” While Tracy has been at the helm during a particularly transformative period for the town of Jonesborough, the town’s relationship with the Rural Development program goes back a long time. In fact, former mayor Kelly Wolfe pointed out the visitor’s center that hosted last Tuesday’s event was built in 1978 with the help of Rural Development financing, as was the town hall building next door. In a state where local governments thrive on sales tax revenue, Wolfe said Jonesborough has had to be

creative in order to fund capital projects that improve the quality of life for its residents. A lack of major sales-tax-generating properties leaves Jonesborough continually struggling to produce enough cash flow to complete large capital projects. “Rural development over the years, out of necessity, has been a primary lender for the town of Jonesborough,” Wolfe said. “Its mission is to serve rural communities in ways they otherwise couldn’t be served for major community improvement projects. The main feature of Rural Development that is attractive to rural communities is they stretch their loan terms over long periods of time, up to 38 years.” That was the case with funding secured by the town of Jonesborough to build a new K-8 school. The \$32.75 million project will be paid off over 38 years, at which point Washington County will take ownership of the facility. Tracy characterized the unique funding mechanism that allowed Jonesborough to serve as a third-party borrower for the Washington County School System as a good solution for taxpayers. “The good thing about it is it’s actually saving taxpayers money in the long run going through us,” Tracy said. “We did this one, and we’ve done, I think, three more this year with school systems in Tennessee. It’s a good thing for the community.” Thinking outside the box has become a way of life for everyone since the COVID-19 pandemic reared its ugly head earlier this year, sending all levels of the government back to the drawing board during a crucial stretch in the budgeting process leading up to a new fiscal year. The pandemic has created plenty of economic headwinds, but there are also opportunities emerging, particularly in the realm of learning and working remotely. Tracy said the focus of the USDA’s Rural Development is currently looking for ways to accelerate the proliferation of high-speed Internet service in rural areas. “Broadband is one of the big things we’re doing now statewide, trying to get broadband to all these rural areas, not only for schools but also for businesses,” Tracy said. “That is real, real important.” In many respects, the town of Jonesborough is ahead of the curve on that front. Thanks to BrightRidge, Jonesborough’s historic Main Street gained access



From left, Jonesborough Mayor Chuck Vest; former Jonesborough Mayor Kelly Wolfe; Jim Tracy, State Director of Rural Development for the USDA; and Marisol Perez of the USDA at a reception in Jonesborough last Tuesday afternoon. PHOTO BY DAVE ONGIE

to 10 Gigabit Internet service in May of last year, the fastest service currently available in the marketplace. BrightRidge is also looking to expand high-speed Internet service throughout Washington County, and those efforts were boosted recently when the utility received \$2.47 in Emergency Broadband Grant funding from the Tennessee Department of Economic and Community Development. Tracy said the trend of people opting to leave larger metropolitan areas in order to live and telework in less populated locales is already happening, and the new reality presented by COVID-19 is accelerating the process. As the USDA’s Rural Development program scrambles to provide rural areas with the bandwidth necessary to adapt to the new world, Vest said Jonesborough is looking to capitalize on the assets that are already in place thanks to BrightRidge. “Having high-speed Internet with BrightRidge is a plus for us,” he said. “It’s going to help us continue to recruit people who want to work from home or people who want to set up offices in our downtown area and possibly live and work in our downtown area.” In addition to high-speed Internet, Tracy also listed workforce development as an ongoing focus for the Rural Development program. He mentioned a project designed to provide grant money to help middle school students start identifying potential career options and create a pathway to high-paying jobs in the trades. “If they’re not going the college route, maybe they can go the TCAT route and learn a vocation,” Tracy said. “We’re able to grant money to the TCAT and grant money to the schools to help them in that regard. That’s a big thing that can change the quality of life in these communities.”




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# Despite pandemic, Milligan enrollment hits new record



Milligan University President Dr. Bill Greer (left) welcomes students back to campus. Milligan has set a new enrollment record despite the COVID-19 pandemic.

While COVID-19 made it difficult for many colleges and universities to meet enrollment goals this year, Milligan University welcomed a record-breaking 1,347 students to campus this fall. “Our record enrollment is certainly a number to celebrate,” said Milligan President Dr. Bill Greer. “Throughout the past several months, we prepared for the real possibility of a decrease in enrollment, a decrease that most experts in higher education expected to occur. Thanks to the hard work of every single person at Milligan, we managed to keep enrollment and finances stable.”

This year’s student enrollment surpassed Milligan’s previous record set last fall by 12 students. Last year’s record of 1,335 students marked the first time in the university’s 150-year history where student enrollment surpassed 1,300. “We are especially thankful for the people behind our record number—our students who are preparing for lives of service and our faculty and staff who have worked especially hard over the past few months

to help students achieve their goals in a safe environment,” said Greer.

This record number is bolstered by strong student retention rates, with 93 percent overall student retention and 81 percent freshman-to-sophomore retention.

The university provides several programs to ensure students succeed academically, including faculty and peer mentoring programs, free tutoring, and the Office of Student Success. These programs, coupled with a low student-to-faculty ratio, foster a community of support and meet the individual needs of students.

Milligan also welcomed an incoming class that is one of the strongest academically, attaining an average GPA of 3.76 and an ACT average of 24. Milligan’s students now represent more than 35 states and 33 countries.

Graduate students comprise 30 percent of total enrollment, and Milligan offers 10 master’s degrees and three doctoral programs.

To learn more about Milligan, visit [www.milligan.edu](http://www.milligan.edu).

# Chambers named chief medical officer at Niswonger Children’s Hospital

Patricia Chambers, MD, an established physician leader with significant expertise in children’s care, has been named chief medical officer of Niswonger Children’s Hospital.

In her new role, Dr. Chambers will be responsible for oversight and governance of all medical services at Niswonger Children’s Hospital, including its outpatient and rehabilitation services, pediatric trauma center and associated pediatric emergency room, neonatal intensive care unit (NICU) and inpatient services. In addition,



Patricia Chambers, MD

she will be an integral part of Ballard Health’s pediatric service line, working to build a system of care

for children throughout the 29-county service area of Niswonger Children’s Hospital.

“My goal in this job is to continue elevating the level of care provided to the children in our community,” said Dr. Chambers, who earned her medical degree from Temple University School of Medicine in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, after completing her bachelor’s degree in chemistry at Milligan College. “I’m eager to lead the ongoing efforts to enhance the quality of care, patient safety and process

development at Niswonger Children’s Hospital. I have a lot of passion for patient experience and am excited to focus on the ultimate goal – better outcomes and brighter futures for the children of the Appalachian Highlands.”

Prior to joining Niswonger Children’s Hospital, Dr. Chambers served as the associate medical director of Cincinnati Children’s Hospital Medical Center’s Division of Emergency Medicine for its Liberty Campus.

“We are delighted a physician of Dr. Cham-

bers’ caliber and with her experience will be joining our team,” said Lisa Carter, chief executive officer of Niswonger Children’s Hospital and Ballard Health’s vice president of pediatric services. “She has demonstrated a strong commitment to excellence in care, as well as a keenness and true desire to improve lives by bolstering medical services.

“I’m very excited to work with her as we take the next steps to grow our services, refine our care and ultimately enhance children’s health in our region.”

More information about Niswonger Children’s Hospital and its leadership is available at [www.ballad-health.org/children](http://www.ballad-health.org/children).

# United Way of East TN Highlands President, CEO to take new role

President and CEO of United Way of East TN Highlands, Kristan Spear, will be changing roles for the remainder of the 2020 Annual United Way Campaign.

Spear has accepted a new position as first vice-president and Tri-Cities market manager for New Peoples Bank and started on Sept. 21. Spear will finish out the year with United Way in a volunteer position as the



Kristan Spear

2020 Campaign Chair.

“I feel like I have accomplished great things over the past two and a half years as the President & CEO of United Way. However, that involved a significant time investment on my part and ultimately a sacrifice to my family. Therefore, I have decided to return to the banking industry as it offers me a much better work-life balance. I will continue to support United Way but will be doing so in a different capacity going forward,” Spear said.

Leslie Salling, the current Director of Resource Development, will serve as interim director until a new executive director is hired.

“During Kristan’s time as President and CEO of our United Way, she has created programs and made changes that moved the needle as we focus on breaking the cycle of poverty in our region. Her leadership and guidance to reimagine and recreate the way that United Way operates will make lasting change for the betterment of our community. The decisions that have been made will continue long into the future as we focus on improving the health, education and financial stability of our community,” said Donna Depew, United Way of East TN Highlands Board Chair.

# Science Hill Advanced Placement program sets new school record

Science Hill students continue to raise the bar as the school’s Advanced Placement program continues to blossom. According to data provided by the College Board, 136 students earned an AP Scholar Award with a student average of 3.55 out of 5 on their AP exams. Student participation is up from 116 AP scholars last year and 90 during

the 2018-2019 school year. The AP Scholars Program recognizes high school students who have demonstrated outstanding college-level achievement through their performance on AP exams.

“We are proud of these students for challenging themselves and earning this great honor,” Science Hill assistant principal Carmen Bryant said. “Science Hill

has worked hard to add to our course offerings so that we can challenge our students and prepare them for whatever their goals may be after they graduate from Science Hill.”

Science Hill had their first AP Capstone Diploma students as 14 graduated with the Science Hill Class of 2020. Four students earned the AP Seminar and Research Certificate.

For 2019-2020, 557 AP students accounted for 1,136 exams. Of those students, 361 scored a 3 or higher on their exams which accounted for 64.8 percent of the students who took AP classes. Science Hill now offers 26 Advanced Placement classes. For more information about Science Hill High School and its course offerings, please

visit [www.jcschools.org/sciencehill](http://www.jcschools.org/sciencehill).

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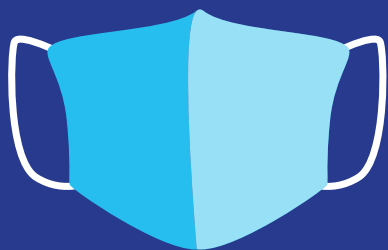
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**Travis Staton**  
President,  
United Way of  
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When we work together, we can make lives better.

That’s always been the mission of the United Way of Southwest Virginia – to fight for every person in our communities. And since March, that’s meant we’re fighting with everything we have to control and limit COVID-19.

That’s why I – along with everyone else on our team, our friends and our families – Mask Up. Because we have to do our part to fight for the health, safety and futures of everyone in our region.

When we fight, we fight together. And together, we’ll beat COVID-19.

Please join me, and Mask Up!





# Local DAR group hosts Constitution Week event



The local chapter of Daughters of the American Revolution hosted a Constitution Week bell ringing on Sunday. From left, Nancy Stanton Regent, Babs Manning, Linda Blanton, Sandra Kyte, Kay Millsaps, Nancy Russell and Sarah Peppel, guest.



Kay Millsaps presented a wreath to commemorate the centennial of the passage of the 19th Amendment.

Members of the Ann Robertson Chapter Daughters of the American Revolution hosted their seventh-annual bell ringing in honor of Constitution week in Jonesborough. As usual, the event took place at the historic Oak Hill School, and this year, history related to the passage of the 19th Amendment was included in the program.

Linda Good with the Johnson City Women's Suffrage Centennial Celebration was honored for her work commemorating local history. Along with DAR, Kings Mountain Sons of the American Revolution, the Town of Jonesborough, Fort Watauga Society Children of the American Revolution and the Overmountain Victory Trail Association also took part in the event as did several other members of the community.

The event celebrated the 233rd anniversary of the United States Constitution, which was greeted in Jonesborough by the ringing of bells.

# Mary Duke Cooks! *Sassy Southern*



**Mary Duke McCartt**  
Food Editor

Online at [marydukecooks.com](http://marydukecooks.com)

This salad comes together in about 15 minutes. It is a family seasonal favorite using apple cider. I love the mixture of crunchy, sweet, and savory from the toasted pecans, lettuce, cranberries, and feta.

## Apple, Cranberry, Feta and Toasted Pecan Salad with Apple Cider Vinaigrette

- 5 ounces baby spring mix
- Apple Cider Vinaigrette (recipe below)
- 1 gala apple, thinly sliced
- 1/2 cup dried cranberries
- 1/2 cup crumbled feta cheese
- 1/3 cup pecan pieces, toasted

Toast pecan pieces in a 350°F oven for 3 to 5 minutes. Pour into a bowl to cool. Make



vinaigrette. Dress salad mix with vinaigrette then divide between 4 salad plates. Place remaining ingredients on top. Enjoy!

*Apple Cider Vinaigrette*

- 1/2 cup apple cider
- 1 tablespoon canola oil
- 1 teaspoon Dijon mustard
- 1 tablespoon apple cider vinegar

- 1/4 teaspoon iodized salt
- 1/4 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

Boil apple cider in a small saucepan and reduce to 1/4 cup (about 5 minutes). Mix with remaining ingredients in a mason jar. Shake to combine.





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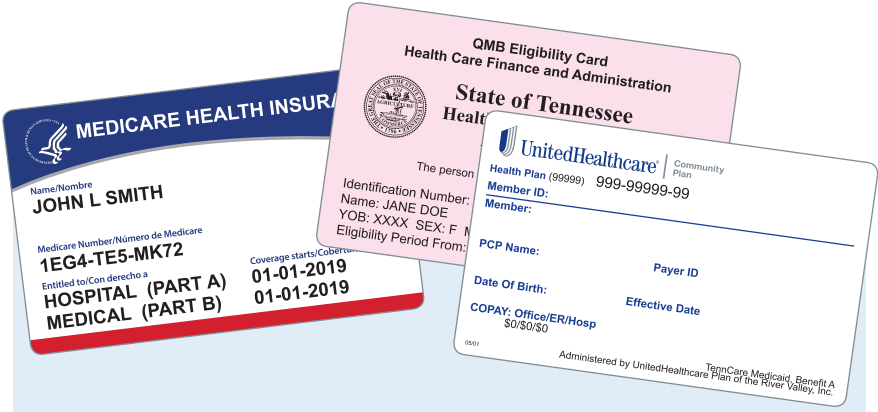


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# History from page 1

among the first in the nation. Tewell said the postal savings bank gave working-class folks, immigrants, married women and children as young as 10 years old the opportunity to make small deposits at a trusted location.

As Hunter prepared to write the nomination, he said the building’s groundbreaking role in the United States Postal Banking System, which peaked in the 1940s before being phased out in 1967, was a factor that helped set the building apart.

“It really gave us a punch, kind of put it into a perspective a little more than just another post office building,” Hunter said.

### Form follows function

In addition to housing such a novel endeavor, the Ashe Street Courthouse is also unique because of the Beaux-Arts style architecture. For this reason, Mason noted the nomination was submitted in two different categories – government and architecture.

From 1852 until 1939, most federal buildings were constructed in this style under the oversight of the Office of the Supervising Architect in the Department of Treasury, and the design of the building set it apart from every other structure in Johnson City. During its life as a post office and bank, the Ashe Street Courthouse held its original rectangular form, adorned with intricate stonework, with just a single one-story addition to the back in 1929.

By the late 1930s, however, one of the main draws of the postal savings bank had been diminished with the passage of the 1933 Banking Act. Prior to the formation of the FDIC, postal savings banks had the advantage of being backed by the full faith and credit of the United States Government, but that piece of mind didn’t extend to private banks. Once private banks were put on even footing with postal savings banks, they became less popular with working-class folks.

In 1939, Washington County acquired the building and began transitioning it for use as a courthouse, which opened in 1940. As the county’s needs evolved, so did the building, much to Hunter’s chagrin as he painstakingly researched and recorded every renovation made to the building over the decades.

“That was the biggest challenge of writing the document was that they wanted every single bit of that documented, room by room,” he said. “It was very, very technical the way it was

written.”  
Luckily for Hunter, Scott Lusk was able to produce a wealth of drawings chronicling changes made inside the building during the 1950s and 60s, and Jay McCusker came through with drawings detailing the changes made to the building when it was converted into the Washington County 911 office in 1987.

Hunter spent many hours at his dining room table, which was covered in blueprints, chronicling how Washington County met its ever-changing needs over several decades by adding to and renovating the interior of the building.

“What Hal did so great was trace each development with a new phase of the building’s life,” Tewell said. “It started as the postal savings bank and then moved into the Works Progress, a New Deal initiative to help local people, and then it served other civic purposes for the court. So he correlated the changes in architecture with the different civic purposes it served. He did a great job with that.”

### A Tale of Two Futures

While Tewell researched the origin of the building and Hunter chronicled its complex architectural history, Mason rotated between the assortment of government committees and citizen groups with an interest in seeing the Ashe Street Courthouse restored and returned to use. Washington County still owns the building, but the Johnson City Development Authority and the South Side Neighborhood Association both have an interest in seeing it restored and repurposed with a total redesign of the West Walnut Street Corridor looming on the horizon.

“She really took on the diplomatic portion of this in terms of coordinating with all these different entities,” Tewell said of Mason. “She was front and center to help coordinate, which I think is a key part of this because this never would have happened if all of these different stakeholders hadn’t come all together. Anne has really helped facilitate that.”

Back on Jan. 2 of this year, the conference room inside City Hall was awash with optimism as Johnson City Commissioners met with local legislators to brief them on their wants and needs before the legislative delegation left for Nashville to draft bills and allocate funds.

At that meeting, Johnson City Mayor Jenny Brock spent a good bit of time discussing the need for a new roof on the



A view of the Chancery Courtroom installed when Washington County converted the building into a courthouse in 1940. PHOTOS COURTESY OF GORDON EDWARDS

Ashe Street Courthouse and made a push for the funds based on the potential uses for the building in the years ahead. But since then, COVID-19 has changed the fiscal landscape on every level of government, creating a tough climate for everyone looking to fund capital projects.

To borrow from Charles Dickens, it really is the best of times and the worst of times for those looking to restore the Ashe Street Courthouse. It’s the best of time because there are more stakeholders invested in the future of the building, but it’s also the worst of times because funding is tight.

Amidst the sound of falling raindrops last Thursday morning, the prospect of landing a spot on the National Register provided a glimmer of hope. While Mason cautioned that a spot on the list does not ensure the building won’t eventually be torn down or drastically altered, it does open the door to more funding sources that could facilitate a bright future for a building with such a rich history.

“That grant money, which can total thousands or millions of dollars of

accessible funds, is a game-changer in terms of preservation,” Tewell said. “That was one of our motivations aside from the distinction, opening up alternate revenue sources.”



The staircase in the entryway remains unchanged from the original construction in 1910.

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## Young Scholarship to benefit Langston Centre students

A new scholarship at East Tennessee State University will support students who are active participants at the Langston Centre in Johnson City.

The center is a multicultural facility focused on arts, education and community leadership. The scholarship is named in memory of Michael Young, a member of the Langston High School Class of 1965 who was the last student to graduate from the school. From 1893-

A new scholarship at ETSU named after the late Michael Young will benefit students at the Langston Centre.

Boone Lake Fluctuations

In order to prepare for Boone Lake level fluctuations, TVA requests that residents begin removal of low-lying items, including docks and other debris, by October 31, 2020. TVA is marking docks and low lying property with requests to secure, repair, remove or relocate. For additional information, please visit the Boone Dam website, <https://www.tva.com/Newsroom/Boone-Dam-Project>. For dock-related questions, call the TVA Public Land Information Center at 800-882-5263.

1965, Langston was Johnson City’s school for African American students. Young passed away April 4, 2020.

This new scholarship is being established between the Langston Education and Arts Development (LEAD) organization and ETSU. Adam Dickson, supervisor of the Langston Centre, says Young chaired LEAD’s board and was instrumental in advocating for his alma mater and ushering the community-driven effort to create the Langston Centre.

Young served in the U.S. Air Force from 1965-69 and earned a bachelor’s degree in history from ETSU. He retired from CSX Railroad in 2014.

“The Michael Young Scholarship recognizes a really good man who loved his high school,” Dickson said. “This initiative furthers Langston’s motto to ‘Enter to Learn, Depart to Serve’ and will open the door for more young people to learn, grow and ultimately become trailblazers and agents of change.”

For more information about the scholarship, or to make a donation to the Michael Young Scholarship Fund, contact Dessi Foster in ETSU University Advancement at 423.439.5125 or [fosterdk@etsu.edu](mailto:fosterdk@etsu.edu).



# Early childhood phases affect adult behavior

As a young impressionable child I was easily influenced by my immediate surroundings and environment. I was not influenced by television as we didn't have one back in those days. If one family in the neighborhood had a TV they always had plenty of visitors to watch a snowy black and white screen. Radio was our only mass communication along with weekly trips to the movies, comic books and family stories around the dinner table.

And then there were my sister and a bunch of girls in the neighborhood. As I've written before I was all the time trying to run away to keep them from dressing me up like a girl. It was difficult holding on to my male station in life.

My sister and her friend, Katie Taggart who had a younger sister, Anna Ruth, decided they were going to have a neighborhood wedding with Anna Ruth and me as the lucky couple. As five-year-olds we didn't even know what the word, marry, meant. Katie and my sister proceeded to dress us up and preform the ceremony. Anna Ruth and I were more interested in the freshly baked cookies waiting nearby.

Soon after that episode I decided to pursue my heroes like Roy Rogers, Tonto, Flash Gordon, Superman and others. You could listen to their radio shows every Saturday morning.

My first phase has followed me all through life, the cowboy phase. Dad put a toy gun in my hand at about four and took me to see numerous cowboy movies. Mom dressed me up like a miniature Roy Rogers. I rode around the yard on an old broomstick shooting at imaginary villains or our pet dog.

I still have a closet full of cowboy boots and even a few of my old gun and holster sets and still love to watch an occasional black and white cowboy movie.

After the cowboy phase I decided I would rather be an Indian when mom told me we had a little Cherokee blood in our way back family from my grandmother's North Carolina heritage.

Tonto was my first Indian hero. I asked mom if I could use her old lipstick to use as war paint decoration. It was great but a bugger to get off. Tonto helped out the Lone Ranger numerous times and I liked the way he talked. It didn't take as many words to communicate. He talked in the first person. "Kemosabe, Tonto like sleep under stars. Tonto put ear to ground, listen for horses."

One evening at dinner I was still in my Tonto outfit with a headdress full of feathers. Mom had cooked a batch of green peas which I hated.

I said, "Tonto no like green peas!"

Mom said, "Tonto's mother go get switch."

I ate the green peas. As anyone knows over the age of 55 what a switch is and what it can do.

Soon, as my summers wore on running from my sister



editor@jcnewsandneighbor.com

by **Bill Derby**

Publisher



Cowboy phase with cute neighbor, Anna Ruth Taggart.

and her friends, I developed more knowledge and maturity in social interaction. What that means is, I learned how to trick my sister and friends, hide and disappear. They soon grew bored of chasing me. They started looking for older boys and I was more or less left alone.

Dad was all the time taking pictures of the family. It was still exciting to actually capture a family moment on drugstore developed film in black and white. Color film was still too expensive.

In those days school started after Labor Day and when that day neared I switched from wearing my Indian shorts, no shirt or shoes into a more civilized pair of blue jeans, shirt and shoes with socks.

Each year mom always took us to the Buster Brown store to get a pair of school shoes. My very favorite pair was a two-toned brown lace up design. They made me feel more sophisticated like only a new pair of shoes can make you feel.

And about that time a smart toy manufacturer came out with wax lips, wax teeth and my favorite, a wax mustache. And somebody told me good athletes were all a little pigeon-toed. Thus I went through my wax mustache and pigeon-toed era walking in my new shoes toed-in, tripping and slurping on wax lips.

Walking pigeon toed and wearing slimy wax lips and mustache disappeared the first day of school. Oh the memories.



Indian phase with my sister Marcia, right, and Katie Taggart.



Wax lips and pigeon-toed phase.

## Obituaries

- James Daryl Booth, Sr, 73, Johnson City, 9/10/20
  - Ruby Ann Williams, 74, Johnson City, 9/13/20
  - Baxter Hamer Shipley, 82, Johnson City, 9/15/20
- Brenda Gail Foss, 70, Johnson City, 9/16/20
  - James D. Booth, Jr., 37, Johnson City, 9/16/20
  - Roff Evelyn Whittle Justice, 86, Johnson City, 9/18/20

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Hazel Creek from page 1

of Dodge!” Well hold on – we have seen many bears over the last 34 years. Only one time did we have an aggressive bear incident in our campsite. This was back in 1995.

This particular bear had lost all his fear of humans. Over a three-day period, he prowled our campsite over 30 times. Most of the time he would just circle with his nose high in the air catching drifts of hushpuppies frying in the iron skillet. Other times he became more aggressive and false charged a couple of our members.

We had a pile of rocks strategically placed at the front of each tent and on each side of our kitchen area to pelt the aggravating bear every time he would get too close for comfort. He would then hightail it out of camp, and with one jump, almost clear a 20-foot-wide creek next to camp.

The only thing that saved us from the continuous harassment of this persistent bear was the naive new campers who moved into the site next to ours. Boy, were they in for a surprise. We laughed all night the next night listening to the unlucky camper fending off this big black hairy intruder. Generally speaking, bears in the wild will avoid you like the plague unless you get between a mother and cubs and they feel threatened.

Back to the story – Saturday morning came, and we still had not heard any news. Half of our group had already left to go fishing for the day. Then around 9:30, three park vehicles arrived with over 10 rangers in them with supplies and heavy-duty weapons headed to the incident scene.

We asked this large group what was going on at the scene. All they would say was that someone had an encounter with a bear and that bear had been exterminated. We would not have to leave our campsite early as previously thought.



Luckily the sizzling bacon at the campground didn’t draw any unwanted attention from nearby bears. PHOTO BY HAROLD ROSS

As of today, here is what we heard took place. A single camper hiked down from Clingmans Dome Trail. He set up camp at campsite 82 (Calhoun campsite). At some point, he passed away.

A day or so later, a black bear wandered into the campsite, found a dead body and, as bears do, began scavenging the man’s carcass.

On Friday, Sept. 11, two more hikers from the Clingmans Dome Trail rolled into campsite 82 from a long day of hiking. They set their backpacks down, surveyed the beautiful campsite and happened to notice the bear. It was on the far side of the creek, and it was eating on something.

Upon closer investigation, the two saw the bear feeding on human remains. Within seconds, they had their packs back on and were hightailing it out of the area back up stream. The hikers hiked over 10 miles back up the ridge to get a cell signal, and that is what started the chain of events with the park service. There are no further details at this point, but it sure made for an interesting trip this year.

In closing, we did not have to leave camp on Saturday, and we enjoyed another day of fishing and relaxation with crazy memories from camping in the backcountry of the Smokies. The Tradition Continues...

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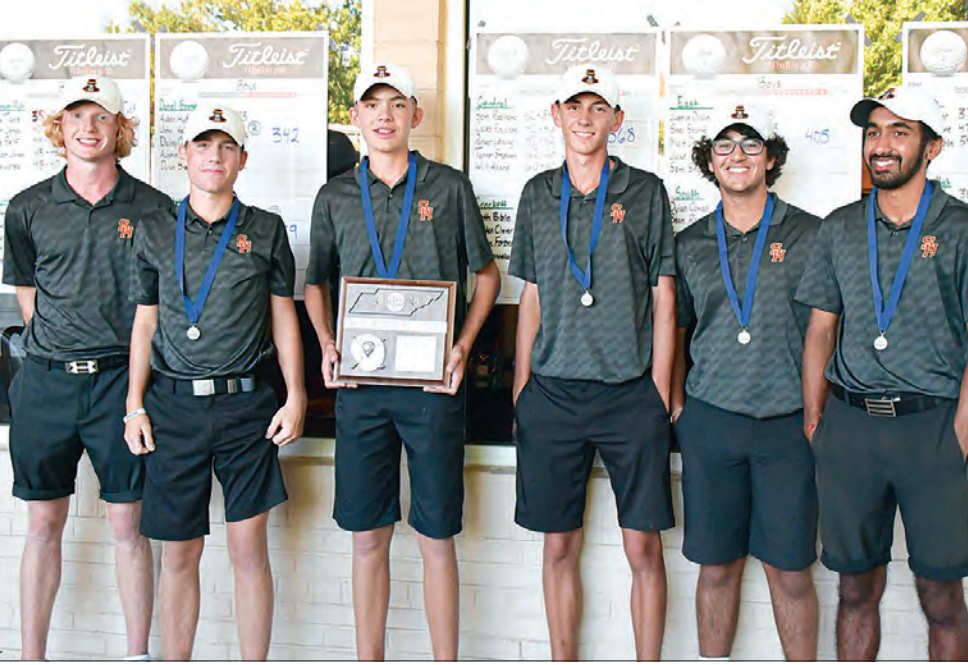
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# Science Hill boys finish runner-up at district tournament



John Cheek blasts a shot out of a greenside bunker during Monday's district golf tournament, which was held at the Club at Ridgefields in Kingsport.



The Science Hill boys finished in second place behind Dobyns-Bennett, which posted a team score of 307 in difficult conditions. The Hilltoppers finished 11 strokes back at 318.



A Lady Hilltopper watches her approach shot head toward the green.  
PHOTOS BY DAWN LAMBERT, DAWN LAMBERT PHOTOGRAPHY



Science Hill's Rachel Smith lines up a putt during the district tournament.

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## ETSU golf team competing in a pair of fall events

The ETSU men's golf team announced plans last Thursday to compete in a pair of fall events. A few days later, the Bucs were in Chattanooga competing in the Scenic City Collegiate, which started on Monday. ETSU will close out the fall season in Carrollton, Texas from Oct. 18-20, competing in the 2020 Maridoe Invitational hosted by North Texas.

Since the 2020 Spring season was cut short due to COVID-19, the Scenic City Collegiate marked the first time since March 10 that the Bucs have taken the course in competitive play.

"I am extremely thankful that the University has given us this opportunity to play this fall," stated second-year head coach Jake Amos. "With so many conferences and universities deciding not to play golf this fall, I think it shows the commitment ETSU has to finding a way for its student-athletes to compete. With our season getting cut short due to the pandemic last spring and a lot of summer amateur events getting cancelled, our guys are eager to play and compete. We start out at the Honors Course next week, which is one of the best courses in the state of Tennessee and will be a really good test for the guys. Then we head out to Dallas in October to play the Maridoe Invitational where we will find one of the best fields of the year. The golf course will be tough and so will the competition but we couldn't be more excited to tackle both."

"From the start of this pandemic, we have worked with medical professionals to ensure safety surrounding our student-athletes," stated ETSU Athletic Director Scott Carter. "Based on recent conversations with those medical professionals, we have collectively made a decision to allow some of our low-risk sports – such as golf and tennis – to compete this fall. We feel that careful return to competition is a step in the right direction for all of our other sports in the future."

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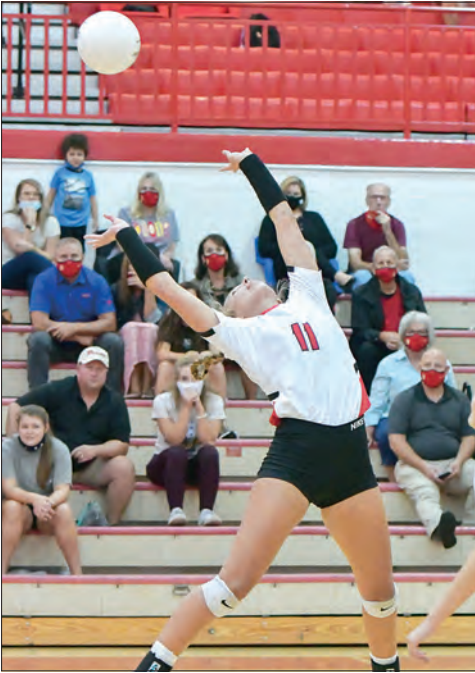
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# Boone clinches first conference volleyball title in 25 years



Boone's Riley Brandon (5) goes high for the ball.



Boone's McKenna Dietz sets the ball up for a teammate.



The Daniel Boone Lady Trailblazers celebrate a four-set win over visiting Dobyns-Bennett that clinched at least a share of the school's first conference volleyball title since 1995. PHOTO BY DAWN LAMBERT, DAWN LAMBERT PHOTOGRAPHY





Boone's Rylee Wines (4) and Dannah Persinger (10) go up to block the ball.



Riley Brandon and Dannah Persinger form a wall at the net for Boone.



Boone's Riley Brinn sends the ball back over to Dobyns-Bennett.




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## Science Hill wins Mountain Empire Classic



Science Hill's volleyball team rolled to victory last weekend, winning six straight matches without losing a single set en route to the tournament crown.

## Hutchins dominates at Fender's Farm



Science Hill's Jenna Hutchins put a country mile between herself and the competition last Saturday. Hutchins won the girls' race at the Fender's Farm Cross Country Carnival by over two minutes with a time of 16:36.9, a new course record. PHOTO COURTESY OF DAVID SHEETS

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