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THIS WEEK

Something for everyone at Neighborhood Conference

By Mike Steely
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More than 80 information booths, 32 workshops, door prizes, and all for free — sounds like a large event, doesn't it?

It certainly is and it's promoted as "The neighborhood event of the year." The annual Neighborhood Conference is Saturday, March 7 at the Knoxville Convention Center and will have more than 60 different neighborhood groups from Knoxville and Knox County attending.

Deadline for registration is tomorrow, March 3, if you'd like to receive a boxed lunch during the event, which starts at 7:30 a.m. and runs until 3:30. A free breakfast and will also be available. If you don't register you can simply come to the event at no charge.

Both mayors, Knoxville's Madeline Rogero and Knox County's Tim Burchett, will address the first session and Rogero will present the "Neighbor of the Year" award to one of 14 nominees.

The nominees include: Ben Ream of South Knoxville, Beth Booker of Old North Knoxville, George Conner of Adell Ree park, Heather Burchfield Ream of South Knoxville, Kirk Anderson of Timbercrest, Linda Denton of North Hills, Monte Stanley of Old Sevier, Nancy Wallace of West View, Rita Schwartz of Love Towers and Old North Knoxville, Ronnie Thompson of Montgomery Village, Sandra Robinson of Wesley Neighbors and West Hills, Sylvia Cook of Eastport, Lee Williams and Five Points, Tanisha Fitzgerald Baker of Pleasant Knoll, and Tonja Warren of Montgomery Village.

The award is named for the late Diana Conn of the Old Sevier Community and given to a person who has devoted time and talent in service to their neighborhood.

"Ties that Bind Youth and Neighborhoods" is a part of the conference that will focus on youth and youth issues, with a talent showcase and a panel of youth leaders

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Winter Storm Continues

By Mike Steely
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Snow and ice continued to be a hazard in Knox County last week as one snow followed another and the schools remained closed. So did a lot of government functions and meetings.

When county schools are closed so are most Knox County Offices. The E-911 called meeting to deal with a sunshine law violation on a new radio system was postponed again until March 13th. The county commission did manage to meet last Monday but had to roll the

"work session" meeting which had been cancelled because of weather into their regular meeting.

Snow plows and salt trucks ran repeatedly and Knoxville Mayor Madeline Rogero announced that city offices would be closed because of the weather. Several neighborhood association meetings were cancelled or postponed.

To cope with out-of-school children the city announced Wednesday that its recreation centers were open and free for play and exercise.

Many businesses, including the malls, were closed or open at later hours. During the brief breaks from the weather local residents took their chances and got out to stock up on food basics and heaters.

Despite a weather forecast calling for 60 degree weather in the future residents awoke Wednesday morning to 16 degree temperatures with 2 to 3 inches of snow forecast for Thursday night. Most people in Knox County had their power restored but surrounding

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PHOTO BY MIKE STEELY.

Old Glory is frozen at this Knoxville house during last week's ice and snow storm.

Thirteen high school seniors named 2015 Emerald Youth Fellows



Sharena Domingo, 20, a member of the founding class of EY Fellows in 2012 and now a junior in food and agricultural business at the University of Tennessee at Knoxville, spoke to the new EY Fellows at a banquet in their honor Jan. 31.

Thirteen Knoxville high school seniors have been named to the fourth annual class of Emerald Youth Fellows, a selective program that helps city teens successfully transition from high school to young adulthood.

The 2015 EY Fellows were chosen through an arduous application and screening process for leadership potential and commitment to community. A life coach will be paired with each EY Fellow to mentor and provide college and career counseling until the young adult is about 25 years old.

The 2015 EY Fellows are: Dijon Andrews, Adam Diggs, Elicia Faulkner, Jasmine Jackson, Neshia Jackson, Jerrion Joy, Jaron Mack, Qkirajah Robinson, Zachary Sain, Simone

Smith, Ashley Toepfer, Ayanna Troutman and Jasmine Wilson.

Members of the selection committee included local professionals Chrisi Bollinger, Nancy Gregg, Debbie Hill and Cole Piper.

There are now 47 EY Fellows since the inaugural class in 2012. Many are students in colleges and universities across Tennessee, said Cedric Jackson, director of the program.

"Our goal is to work with these students through their post-secondary education—whether it is college or technical training—and help them move into their professional lives. I hope they will realize their own potential and begin to insert themselves into leadership roles that benefit themselves and

their immediate and extended community," he said.

Jackson said EY Fellows has been effective in helping many young adults stay in college and continue to reach their goals. The 2015 Fellows have already taken a career assessment to help them choose a major. Subsequent training will focus on financial planning skills, academic preparation and community leadership. As part of an emphasis on community leadership, the students will spend several days this summer in Chicago at the Lawndale Christian Community Church. It has supported a longtime mission including health clinics, after school programs, and a housing initiative in a desperately poor area.

Audit Committee meets today

By Mike Steely
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The Knox County Audit Committee meets this morning at 9 a.m. in the Main Assembly Room of the City-County Building and will hear an update on several matters including the county's hotline system. Chris Caldwell, the Finance Director, will also report on the budget's actual expenditures so far.

The committee will hear from the external auditors on a report of material weaknesses and significant deficiencies plus reports from Criminal Court Clerk Mike Hammond and the court's financial director, Amy Deering.

Pugh, Inc., the external auditors, will be represented by Larry Elmore who will discuss planning for 2015 audits and the committee will hear of a request for proposal from Mike Reeves.

Internal Auditor Andrea Addis will report on her audit findings, update the committee on hiring new staff and discuss other issues.

Kingswood School needs help

By Mike Steely
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Just north of Knoxville and beyond Rutledge is the site of a historic spa that became, in 1943, the site of a special school to house and educate abused and neglected children. Kingswood School continues to struggle to provide the much needed service and needs your help.

"They are at the brink of closing their doors," says Deniese Hodge of the East Tennessee Referral Group, an organizations of businesses that promote local concerns.

The historic residential Christian school is

seeking donations. The effort is also being helped with special sales events by different businesses including The Picky Chick's Shop Early event at the Knoxville Expo Center on Wednesday, March 4 from 6 p.m. until 8 p.m. where any \$5 donation goes directly to the school.

"We usually raise about \$ 1,000. I know that's just a drop in the bucket but I'm hoping the awareness can create what will be most helpful," said Angela Stout Evans, Program Director for Kingswood School.

"We are also having a Bean and Bailey Comedy show at Kingswood Chapel on March

13," she said, adding that a local tractor pull in May will also help raise funds.

Kingswood School has no federal or state funding. The school is a non-profit organization with a board of directors that serves without payment. Only 8% of the school's annual budget is spent on fund raising and administration. It is wholly dependent on financial support from people and organizations that provide basic care for children.

The school is a charter agency of the Hamblen County and Grainger County United Way

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