Yoonie Yang was in Spanish class at her South Florida high school when she heard the students at the table next to hers whispering about a live shooter at another school.

At the time, Yang didn’t realize the incident was taking place about an hour away at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida. She also didn’t know the scale of the horrific tragedy.

After the bell signaled the end of the class and Yang filtered into the hallway with her fellow students, a friend of hers turned a corner and, upon seeing her, ran to her arms and began to cry.

“His friends were at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School and they weren’t answering his texts,” Yang recalls.

As Yang learned the horrific details of the Feb. 14, 2018, shooting – that a gunman had opened fire with a semi-automatic rifle, killing 17 people and injuring 17 others – a numbness settled over her.

Later, as she talked with another friend on the bus, her numbness turned to fear.

“That night, I couldn’t sleep as I thought about what had happened and how it would impact my community and country,” says Yang, now a senior at Signal Mountain High School.

Honor student leads fight for sensible gun laws

By David Laprad

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Signal Mountain High School senior Yoonie Yang during a 2019 vigil in Chattanooga to remember the victims of the El Paso and Dayton, Ohio, mass shootings.
Tennessee high school mock trial teams take top honors in international mock trial competition

Tennessee high school mock trial teams have historically competed strongly in national and international competitions, and 2020 has been no exception.

Unfortunately, the Tennessee Bar Association’s State High School Mock Trial Competition, scheduled for March, was canceled due to the COVID-19 outbreak. District champions crowned before the cancellation included Montgomery Bell Academy in Nashville and CSTHEA (Chattanooga/Southeast Tennessee Home Education Association) from the Scenic City.

Although the stage was set for a showdown between these two perennial powerhouse teams, that trial was not to be. However, both lineups did compete this month in the Empire Mock Trial World Championship.

Typically held in New York City, the annual competition used a virtual format – a first for both MBA and CSTHEA. Once again, circumstances kept MBA and CSTHEA from a head-to-head faceoff, as the teams were placed in different divisions in the 40-team field. However, both lineups excelled in the competition, which centered on a criminal case involving two counts of burglary.

The Chattanooga team placed 10th – just one point short on one judge’s ballot from having the opportunity to meet MBA. The MBA team prevailed in its division and ultimately placed second, falling just short of taking the top spot in the final round.

Competing for CSTHEA were Paul Atherton, Blaiklyn Owens, Colyn Jones, Dylan Barnes, Ella Dewitt, Ethan Ramey, Gabriella Rowell and Zac Clark.

“Having two Tennessee teams place in the top 10 in the world championship of high school mock trial was amazing,” says Chancellor Jeff Atherton, coach of CSTHEA. “When adding the extra challenge of having to try their cases in virtual courtrooms over the internet, rather than in-person, their accomplishments are even more impressive.”

Atherton says he hopes a showdown between these teams will take place this year at the TBA’s state competition, which the chancellor says will likely be held virtually.

Source: Chancellor Jeff Atherton

Photograph provided Chattanooga mock trial team CSTHEA placed 10th in an international competition this month. Pictured, back row from left: Zac Clark, Dillon Barnes, Paul Atherton, Colyn Jones and Ethan Ramey; Middle row: Gabriella Rowell, assistant coach Theresa Jones, Ella Dewitt and Blaiklyn Owens. Chancellor Jeff Atherton, coach, is seated.
Southern Adventist University students receive scholarships

Three students at Southern Adventist University were awarded the 2020-21 Rita Vital Endowed Scholarship for Faith and Service Learning last week. Chosen for demonstrating a desire to serve others while in college, this year’s honorees are biology majors Kevin Singh and Nicole Pustea and music major Angelyn Edwards.

“In add[1] God can use any talents, even if not in the most typical fashion.” Vital says. “I’m proud of these young people, and I would like for them to experience the same happiness I have felt while spreading love to others.”

“Service fills a void in your life,” Greg Vital adds. “Education is not only about furthering your own achievements but also bettering the lives of others. Recipients are chosen based on their history of service along with their potential to impact the lives of others. I expect these recipients will continue to give back in many ways.”

“I encourage others to not be afraid to serve,” Edwards says. “Service connects me to God and to others. I have seen how God can use any talent, even if not in the most typical fashion.”

Source: Southern Adventist University

Tennessee Supreme Court issues new order related to court operations during COVID-19

In response to the increased number of COVID-19 cases in the state, the Tennessee Supreme Court has issued an order designed to protect all of the participants in the judicial system and the public at large while keeping the courts open and accessible to carry out essential constitutional functions and time-sensitive proceedings. This is the court’s sixth order related to the pandemic since it declared a state of emergency for the judicial branch March 13.

The order suspends jury trials through Jan. 31 unless the chief justice grants an exemption. Jury trials were previously suspended from March 13-July 3. In addition, the order directs judicial districts to revisit and strictly adhere to their previously approved reopening plans, reiterates that the court’s July 9 order mandating face coverings for all persons who enter the courthouse for court-related business is still in full effect, encourages video conferencing whenever possible, reminds judges and attorneys that they have an ethical obligation to comply with court orders and the reopening plans drafted by the judicial districts, and prohibits anyone with COVID-19 from participating in an in-person proceeding.

In addition, the order directs judges to schedule and conduct in-person hearings in a manner that minimizes wait times in courthouse hallways, many of which have limited space for social distancing.

Provisions of the court’s May 26 and July 9 orders remain in effect.

Source: Tennessee Supreme Court
Flip script for 2021

Yes, work 2020 stinks but we still can be thankful

This week, we will celebrate Thanksgiving. Normally, it’s an opportunity to gather together with loved ones, eat too much good food and watch a little football.

It’s typically an opportunity to express gratitude for our good fortune. This year, it’s a little different. The pandemic and 2020 have created a challenging environment that leaves some wondering what we are thankful for, and others realizing just how lucky we are.

Whatever side you fall on this year, I encourage you to allow Thanksgiving to inspire your job search. Just because we are going through a difficult time does not mean there are not opportunities to be had.

Find yours, and help those around you who are struggling to find theirs.

Be Grateful: Focus on the positive things about your current job. Perhaps you like your boss, your team, or that you’re able to work remotely. Even in negative situations, there are usually a few things to be thankful for. Move your attention to those items.

Reconnect: Thanksgiving is the kickoff to the holiday season. Take the opportunity to reconnect with friends, coworkers, and loved ones you haven’t seen in a while – by phone, email or video. Not only is it good for your soul, it’s good for your network. When you’re looking for a job, it’s critical that you keep your network up to date.

Reflect: Holidays are a great time to think back about the past year, and to make plans for the future. What went well? What would you do differently? Write these things down, along with goals for next year. When would you like to find a new job? What are the attributes you’d prefer in your next job?

Help Others: Networking is a big part of a successful job. When we’re in the middle of our own search, we forget about those around us. Take the time to help those in your life who are also looking. In return, they will help you.

Relax: Looking for a job can be a long, stressful process. Don’t forget to take a little time for yourself. It will help you to keep moving forward in your search when you return to work.

Give Thanks: Take the time to thank those in your life who help you every day. Whether it’s a friend, co-worker or supervisor, take the time to wish them a happy Thanksgiving – and thank them for the impact they make on your life.

You might even consider giving thanks in the form of a written recommendation on LinkedIn.

Stay Positive: The holiday season can be a tough one if you’re looking for a job. It is a time of increased financial responsibilities and decreased opportunities. But, staying positive will help to draw good people to you. It will help to lay the foundation for your job search, so they will think of you when they’re hiring. Have a wonderful Thanksgiving!

Angela Copeland, a career expert and founder of Copeland Coaching, can be reached at copelandcoaching.com.

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All present and future members of the Chattanooga Police Department have been “permanently and perpetually” enjoined from striking or engaging in work stoppages, directly or indirectly, in the course of their employment. Chancellor Roy Brock Jr., signed a consent decree Monday ordering the injunction. City Attorney Eugene Collins and Arvin Reingold, attorney for Police Local Union 644, also signed the decree.

The Rev. Carl Calvin Murray of Columbus, Ohio, has accepted a call to the pastor of Northside Presbyterian Church. He succeeds Dr. Harry Mercer, who retired this past June after 23 years as pastor of the church. Rev. Murray is a native of Maryville and graduated cum laude from Maryville College. He is also a graduate of Princeton Theological Seminary and did postgraduate work at Austin Theological Seminary in Texas and the Institute of Religion, Texas Medical Center, Houston.

Collections of $1,268,209.33 in property taxes during November enabled the city to increase the total so far to 15.38% of the revenue budget from property taxes this year, City Treasurer Earl Reingold, attorney for Police Local Union 644, also signed the decree.

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The mercury soared to 71 degrees Tuesday afternoon, setting a record for the date, Dec. 1. The previous high for the first day of December was 69 degrees in 1941.

North Hamilton County Ambulance Service, located on Highway 27 between Soddy and Daisy, has been formed by the owners of National Ambulance Service to serve the north section of Hamilton County. Bill Landers and Ed Williamson operate the new service.

Zeb B. Bender, 76, 318 Oriole Drive, brother of Mayor A.L. Bender, died Monday in a Chattanooga hospital. He was associated with his father, the late George A. Bender, building contractor, for many years. The Hoff family took the property in 1967 after Mr. Bender’s retirement, and continued to run the business with the city’s department of public utilities, grounds and buildings.

The County Council approved Wednesday a motion to replace the Hamilton County jail with a new structure, possibly in the next two years. County Judge Frost was authorized to seek any federal planning or project funds which could be used by the county for the project.
Steedley joins Chamber as VP

The Chattanooga Area Chamber of Commerce recently welcomed Lorne Steedley as vice president of diversity and inclusive growth.

Steedley served as a board member for the Four Corners Development Corporation, which developed the Langham Court project in Boston’s South End community, and as a project manager for Boston’s Department of Neighborhood Development.

Steedley also worked with the Council on Foundations as member relations director, managing philanthropic relationships in the Southeast.

Additionally, he served as program officer with the Annie E. Casey Foundation in Baltimore, examining and reporting on the effects of gentrification, regionalism and sprawl on vulnerable families in both high growth and no-growth communities.

Steedley also led Motus Consulting USA, a management consultancy that provides management, operations and training services to groups engaged in transformation, including nonprofit organizations, corporations and government entities.

Steedley is a former research fellow in the Department of Urban Studies and Planning at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and a former International Fellow of the Emerging Leaders Program in the Graduate School of Business at the University of Cape Town, Cape Town, South Africa.

He received a Bachelor of Arts from the University of South Carolina, a Master of Science in Sociology from Boston College.

Hamilton Schools hires communications officer

Cody Patterson is the new communications officer of Hamilton County Schools. Patterson will begin working with the district Dec. 4.

Patterson most recently worked as a communications consultant in Kentucky and Indiana. Before working as a consultant, Patterson worked in various communications roles within the Kentucky state government, including the Tourism, Arts and Heritage Cabinet, Kentucky Venues and the lieutenant governor’s office.

Patterson and his wife, Adrienne, have two young sons, Leo and Eli.

Thomas joins CHI Memorial

Hannah Thomas has joined CHI Memorial Convenient Care – Atrium. Thomas earned a degree in nursing from Tennessee Wesleyan University in Athens. She then completed a master’s in nursing from Tennessee State University. The American Nurses Credentialing Center has certified Thomas as an advanced registered nurse practitioner and a family nurse practitioner.

CHI Memorial names physician adviser

CHI Memorial recently named Lee Jackson physician adviser and medical director of care management. Jackson will serve as a consultant and resource for attending physicians regarding hospitalization appropriateness, inpatient or observation status, resource utilization, regulatory requirements and length of stay management.

As a physician adviser, Jackson will serve as liaison to coding, documentation specialists, medical records and third-party payers when necessary.

To accomplish these endeavors, Jackson will no longer see patients in the clinic or perform surgery.

A graduate of the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor with a fellowship in renal transplantation and renovascular surgery from the Cleveland Clinic Foundation, Jackson has been a practicing physician for 32 years. He has played an active role in shaping policies and practices to advance patient care at CHI Memorial through his work as medical director for surgical services.

Harvey graduates forensic academy

Lieutenant Chris Harvey of the Hamilton County Sheriff’s Office has graduated from the National Forensics Academy. Harvey serves in the Criminal Investigations Division.

Co-funded by the Bureau of Justice Assistance, the NFA is a 10-week training program designed to meet the needs of law enforcement agencies in evidence identification, collection and preservation. The NFA is offered in residence, utilizing a curriculum developed by forensic practitioners from across the U.S.

The goal of the National Forensics Academy is to prepare crime scene investigators to recognize key elements and improve the process of evidence recovery and submission.

The training Harvey received is Tennessee POST Certified and includes 400 hours of coursework. Graduates receive a diploma of completion and a Bloodstain Pattern Analysis 40-hour class completion certificate.

The curriculum also includes 170 hours of in-class work, 230 hours of field practicum and a practical final.

The National Forensics Academy is part of the UT Law Enforcement Innovation Center’s Institute for Public Service.

Best Law Firms recognizes Autumn Witt Boyd for IP work

The Law Office of Autumn Witt Boyd is ranked in the 2021 U.S. News–Best Lawyers Best Law Firms list in two practice areas.

Firms included in the 2021 Best Law Firms list are recognized for professional excellence, with clients and peers providing impressive ratings.

The 2021 edition of Best Law Firms includes rankings in 75 national practice areas and 127 metropolitan-based practice areas. Ranked firms, presented in tiers, are listed on either a national or metropolitan scale, or on both.

Receiving a tier designation suggests a firm has earned a high level of respect among other leading lawyers and clients in the same communities and practice areas, says a news release from Boyd.

The Boyd firm received the following rankings:

Regional Tier 2

Chattanooga: Trademark Law

Regional Tier 3

Chattanooga: Litigation - Intellectual Property

The Boyd firm specializes in copyright, trademark, labor and employment and data privacy issues.

Source: The Law Office of Autumn Witt Boyd

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Managing your retirement plan under a new employer

Your employer-sponsored retirement plan is a valuable asset. But sometimes things happen that can affect the status of your plan. So, for example, if you work for a hospital that changes ownership, and you have been participating in a 403(b), 457(b) or 401(k) retirement plan, what should you do with it now? Here are some considerations:

1. Leave your plan with your old employer. If your account balance is above a certain level, you might be able to leave your plan with your old employer’s plan administrator. You won’t be able to contribute any more money to the plan, but if you like the investment options you’ve chosen, keeping the money in your old plan might be a viable choice.

2. Roll your account into a traditional IRA. One possible advantage to moving your 403(b), 457(b) or 401(k) into a traditional IRA is you’ll open up a world of new investment options, because you can fund your IRA with virtually any type of vehicle, including stocks, bonds, mutual funds, certificates of deposit (CDs) and exchange-traded funds. And if you already have a traditional IRA, you can combine the new funds with the old ones, making it easier to track your holdings. As is the case with leaving your money in your old employer’s plan or transferring it to a new plan, you’ll continue to benefit from tax-deferred growth.

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Center for Spine & Pain Medicine offers new treatment

The Center for Spine & Pain Medicine is now offering the Vertiflex Interspinous Spacers for treating pain related to lumbar spinal stenosis.

LSS is wear and tear on the lumbar spine that causes narrowing around and compression of the nerves. The minimally invasive Vertiflex procedure involves placing a small implant that creates space in the spine so the compressed nerves have more room, thereby alleviating the pain.

“Pain resulting from spinal stenosis is a common issue we see and treat regularly at our facilities, often simply due to degenerative issues that come with aging,” says Dr. Sadiq Sohani, medical director at the center.

The FDA-approved Vertiflex Interspinous Spacer is made of titanium and is designed for an optimal fit based on each individual’s unique anatomy. The procedure is only used after exhausting traditional or non-invasive methods of pain relief, according to a news release from CSPM.

Source: Center for Spine & Pain Medicine

Warrior Freedom connects combat veterans to trained service dogs

Warrior Freedom is expanding its efforts to connect veterans to trained service dogs rescued from area animal shelters.

“The American soldier has sacrificed every part of his or her life to serve our country,” says Adam Keith, executive director and co-founder of Warrior Freedom. “It’s now our duty and privilege to help them reconnect to society through a new canine life partner.”

Since its inception six years ago as Operation Freedom Dogs, Warrior Freedom has graduated 10 veterans and rescued six dogs from local animal shelters, including the Humane Educational Society and the Pet Placement Center.

Four additional veterans are currently participating in the program. Dave Childress, who served in the Marine Corps for eight years and did two tours in Iraq and Afghanistan, was one of the program’s first participants and graduates in 2017.

“My desire and ability to serve didn’t end when I left the Marines. I still want to serve and be a benefit to society,” Childress says. “Warrior Freedom has helped me do that. It offers an avenue to overcome barriers and to start being a part of society again.”

Warrior Freedom’s training program is designed to train the veteran to train the dog. With guidance from a certified professional dog trainer and Warrior Freedom staff, veterans train as a group and individually once a week.

Warrior Freedom is constructing a new facility on its Flintstone, Georgia, property that will create additional space for training, kennels, offices and overnight accommodations for participating veterans who live outside the area.

The organization is currently raising funds to complete the construction, which will allow it to serve more veterans.

“Each year, more veterans need our help reconnecting to the society they fought tirelessly to protect,” says Keith. “Every dollar we raise supports our mission and allows us to minister to those who need a helping hand.”

Information: warriorfreedom.org

Source: Warrior Freedom
As Yang navigated the aftermath of the Parkland shooting, she engaged in conversations with her friends, classmates and teachers about the incident and its ramifications. When the dialogue shifted to the lack of legislation intended to mitigate gun violence, she decided to take action.

“I’ve always had a desire to create sociopolitical change, but seeing how the shooting impacted the greater South Florida region, as well as the unification of young people around the country, pushed me toward mobilizing my community and working to make legislative change,” Yang says.

Eager to make an impact, Yang helped to organize a school walkout to protest what she and her friends perceived as inaction on the part of their state legislators. After contacting the police to ensure the safety of the event and notifying the media, they led about 85% of their school’s students out of their classrooms and to the local townhall.

Yang says the walkout was a strong first step toward creating awareness of the need for common-sense gun laws. It also was her last step in Florida, as her family moved to Signal Mountain at the end of that school year.

Despite her passion for effecting change, Yang arrived in Tennessee with no intention of engaging in further activism. But as she talked with her peers at Signal Mountain High School and says she saw a gulf between her personal experience with the Parkland shooting and the way her new friends spoke about gun violence.

“Many generations have grown up in a country that has normalized gun violence, whether it’s mass shootings, school shootings or homicides,” Yang says. “The phenomenon of school shootings is a very prevalent narrative for our country.”

After Yang reached out to Chattanooga Students Leading Change and expressed her interest in gun violence prevention, another organization known as Moms Demand Action asked her if she would be willing to help launch the first Students Demand Action chapter in Tennessee.

Students Demand Action is a national movement of high school and college-aged volunteers who work within their schools and communities to educate their peers and demand common-sense solutions to gun violence.

The organization is part of Everytown for Gun Safety, a gun violence prevention organization with nearly 6 million supporters and more than 375,000 donors, the group states.

Yang accepted the challenge from Moms Demand Action and worked with Chattanooga Students Leading Change to create the first Students Demand Action chapter in Tennessee.

Yang says the primary thrust is not to dismantle the Second Amendment, which courts have ruled gives American citizens the right to own guns, but to advocate for laws related to the purchase and possession of firearms.

Yang explains. “Rather, we want to make sure that if we are going to allow people to purchase and own firearms that we are doing everything we can to emphasize safety and security.”

To achieve this undertaking, Students Demand Action advocates for universal background checks and extreme risk protection orders, the latter of which would temporarily prohibit an individual from purchasing or possessing a firearm if a court has deemed they are dangerous to themselves or others.

As part of this effort, the organization’s volunteers make an annual trip to Nashville, where they talk with legislators such as Bo Watson, Patsy Hazlewood, Yusuf Hakeme and Chuck Fleischman about gun-related legislation.

Yang says she hopes they listen.

“Research shows that in states in which laws like these have been passed, there have been reductions in deaths and unintentional shootings,” she claims.

“And when the numbers make sense, our legislators and government officials should take note. If it prioritizes the safety of our communities, then it’s worth serious consideration.”

Yang says she is concerned about large national organizations intervening in the relationships between constituents and legislators, and says she believes the only way to tackle the intrusion is to mobilize enough “people and voices” in support of common-sense gun laws.

“That would be the best way to let our representatives know that if they don’t listen to what we have to say, then they will have a lot of frustrated and angry constituents who will not vote them back into office.

“Our concerns about safety should be their priority as public servants, and if it’s not, then we need to hold them accountable.”

Yang’s involvement with Students Demand Action currently extends beyond the local level to her participation on the organization’s national advisory board, which is made up of 16 student leaders and gun violence survivors from across the country.

Laura Becker, a volunteer leader with Moms Demand Action in Tennessee and pastor of Northminster Presbyterian, says Yang is ideal for the national role.

“Yoonie is a natural leader, a confident speaker and a determined advocate for gun safety in this country,” Becker says. “Her future is bright as she continues to find her voice and works for the things that matter to her.”

In addition to her activism, Yang remains an active senior at Signal Mountain High, where she’s part of the International Baccalaureate Diploma Program and a National Merit Semi-finalist. She also participates in student council, mock trial and Youth in Government, and served as editor-in-chief of her school’s yearbook.

In-between these activities, Yang managed to post the highest possible ACT composite score of 36. Only one-tenth of 1% of all test takers scored the perfect score on the test, ACT reports.

As Yang looks to the future, she aspires to major in foreign affairs and
Trout Unlimited contributes $11,000+ to aquarium’s program

Trout Unlimited has provided another round of critical funding to the Tennessee Aquarium’s effort to restore the state’s only native trout species.

Since 2013, Trout Unlimited’s Appalachian chapter has funded the Tennessee Aquarium Conservation Institute’s propagation of Southern Appalachian brook trout. This golden-speckled, red-finned game fish is the only trout species native to the southern reaches of the Appalachian Mountains.

Despite the many challenges brought on by COVID-19, this year’s $11,168 grant is about $800 shy of the organization’s record contribution of $11,950 in 2019.

To date, Trout Unlimited’s grants have provided more than $68,000 to the program. These funds are possible thanks to the sale of special brook trout-themed Tennessee license plates.

With this most recent grant, Trout Unlimited has provided more than $11,000 to fuel the Conservation Institute’s effort for three consecutive years. The work to spawn, raise and eventually release juvenile Southern Appalachian brook trout into the wild would not be possible without this funding, says Meredith Harris, the Aquarium’s reintroduction biologist.

“Tennessee Aquarium Conservation Institute reintroduction biologist, with a Southern Appalachian brook trout. Photograph provided

“Their support is everything,” Harris says. “The amazing people at Trout Unlimited are conservation heroes in their own right.”

Called “Brookies” by anglers and scientists, the brook trout was once found in streams all along the eastern United States. The species’ southern strain — the Southern Appalachian brook trout — is genetically distinct from northern populations.

By the latter half of the 20th century, however, Brookies had disappeared from much of their historic range. Currently, the species occupies just a fraction of the waterways in which it used to thrive.

In the 1980s, the Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency began the marathon march to restoring Brookies to southern waterways. In 2012, the Aquarium joined the effort by lending its facilities to spawn, hatch, raise and release juveniles.

With the release of this year’s class of propagated fish, the restocking effort has seen more than 2,200 brook trout returned to their native waters.

The money contributed by Trout Unlimited funds every aspect of the restoration effort, from the collection and spawning of wild adult broodstock in the fall to the release of juveniles each spring.

This year, the restoration of the Southern Appalachian brook trout reached a significant milestone: Wildlife managers observed wild spawning at Little Stony Creek, a release site where efforts had been concentrated for several years.

With this sign that the creek’s brook trout population was self-sustaining, stocking began on Shell Creek, a nearby stream several ridges removed from Little Stony.

Additional work will soon begin on stocking another location, North Fork Tellico, an historical Southern Appalachian brook trout stream in the Cherokee National Forest.

“These fish will be stocked in the Tellico watershed in a wilderness area that was home to non-native Rainbow Trout until they were wiped out by drought,” says Steve Fry, president of Trout Unlimited’s Appalachian Chapter. “The Southern Appalachian brook trout will have a better chance of survival, as it’s their natural home.”

Sources: Tennessee Aquarium Conservation Institute

Habitat for Humanity calling for volunteers at Restore locations

Habitat for Humanity of Greater Chattanooga Area is calling on volunteers to serve at their ReStore locations this holiday season.

The Chattanooga ReStore, 1201 E. Main St., and the Ooltewah ReStore, 9408 Apison Pike, are open Tuesday-Friday, 9 a.m.-5 p.m., and Saturday 9 a.m.-4 p.m.

While both locations are looking for individual volunteers 18 or older to assist with organizing inventory, stocking shelves and cleaning and sanitizing, Habitat says the Ooltewah location has the greatest need.

Habitat is discouraging groups of volunteers this season due to the risk of COVID-19.

“Volunteers are critical to both the success of our home builds and our ReStores,” says Hannah Muller, Habitat’s volunteer engagement manager. “While the ongoing pandemic has limited the number of people we can have on-site at a time, we’re still able to safely accommodate individual volunteers.”

The ReStore locations serve as home improvement stores and donation centers. Habitat ReStores sell new and gently used furniture, appliances, home goods, building materials and more.

The ReStores are also accepting tax-deductible donations of household goods, furniture, appliances and building materials. All proceeds from reselling donations go to rehabbing and repairing homes in partnership with low-income homeowners in the community.

Source: Habitat for Humanity
No winter slowdown in area housing market statistics

When the temperature starts to dip in early fall, home sales usually follow. People start preparing for the holiday season and are less inclined to buy or sell a home.

But the predictable has been anything but in 2020. Real estate hasn’t cooled, and Realtors are as busy as we’ve been all year.

In October, buyer activity remained higher than normal for this time of year despite housing inventory being much lower than even one year ago in many parts of the market. Multiple offers remain a common occurrence in many areas, keeping buyers and sellers on edge during transactions.

Adding to the hot market, mortgage rates dropped to record lows again in October, helping to offset the rise in home prices seen in many markets across the country. Continued buyer demand might temper any price retreats this year and keep the traditional winter price dip at bay well into the future.

Locally, new listings in the Chattanooga region increased 3.5% to 1,174. That pending sales increased 27.6% to 1,073 shows how important it is to use a Realtor. They can often find homes before they’re placed on the market.

Inventory levels shrank 50.7% to 1,504 units, a demonstration of how competitive the market is for buyers.

The median sales price increased 19.1% to $250,000, continuing the trend. Days on market decreased 18.6% to 35 days, which reflects how quickly homes are being sold. Sellers were encouraged, as months supply of inventory was down 55.9% to 1.5 months.

Danielle Farrell calls herself The Dancing Realtor in an effort to combine who she is, a dancer, and what she does (sell homes).

Dancing Realtor or home-selling dancer?

Farrell just can’t seem to separate the two, aims for excellence in both

By David Laprad

Many Realtors claim to have their finger on the pulse of the housing market. But as a dancer, Realtor Danielle Farrell hopes to be able to feel the rhythm of the industry.

Farrell, 26, certainly feels the rhythm of the music she hears. In TikTok videos posted on her Facebook page (www.facebook.com/danielle.farrell1), she grooves in perfect time to various hip-hop songs, demonstrating attitude and swagger few real estate agents offer as part of their business persona.

Farrell can’t even refrain from dancing while hosting a new real estate tips show she’s broadcasting through Facebook titled “Donuts with Danielle.” In an episode featuring Bryan Matthews of Movement Mortgage, Farrell’s shoulders rise and fall to a beat only she hears as Matthews discusses the dos and don’ts of credit.

“I can’t help it; I’ve been a dancer my entire life,” she says, her face barely containing a cheek-busting smile. “Besides, I don’t want to be a boring Realtor; I want to tie my dancing to real estate because people love to have fun.”

As much as Farrell enjoys dancing, she says homebuyers and sellers who are looking for an agent who’s all-business can relax; just because she calls herself The Dancing Realtor doesn’t mean she asks her clients to do a two-step with her during listing appointments or showings.

“Dancing is just an icebreaker; it makes me more relatable to people,” Farrell explains. “My dad says people work with who they like.”
Many ways to save money

A closer look at water conservation in your home

From hand-washing to yard maintenance and everything in between, homeowners in the Tennessee Valley use a considerable amount of water throughout the day. In fact, the average American family uses more than 300 gallons of water per day at home, the Environmental Protection Agency reports.

Reducing water consumption has become a top priority for homebuyers and builders. A recent survey from the National Association of Home Builders states water-conserving fixtures such as high-efficiency toilets, faucets and shower heads were rated as essential or desirable home features by more than half of the respondents.

The following are a few water-saving ideas for your home inside and out.

Eliminate leaks

An easy way to save water is to make sure you have no identifiable water leaks. Ten percent of homes have leaks that waste 90 gallons or more per day.

Common leaks inside your home are found in toilets or faucets. Irrigation systems or garden hoses can be sources of leaks outside your home. Most leaks are relatively simple to repair and require few tools or hardware.

Tankless water heaters

These units are designed to save energy by heating water only when needed. They are similar in cost to traditional gas water heaters but are 30% more efficient, according to the U.S. Department of Energy.

High-efficiency toilets

Older, inefficient toilets use as much as six gallons per flush and are considered a major source of wasted water in many homes. All new toilets since 1992 must be 1.6 gpf or lower. High-efficiency toilets are 1.28 gpf or lower, and those with the Environmental Protection Agency’s WaterSense label have also been performance-tested and are worth considering if you replace your toilet.

More information about the EPA’s WaterSense program is available at epa.gov/watersense.

Faucets

The latest water faucets technologies for your kitchen or bathroom are designed to shut off the water automatically immediately after use. Turning off the tap while brushing your teeth can save as much as 3,000 gallons of water per year.

If replacing your fixture isn’t an option, consider installing an aerator to reduce water use. An aerator is an inexpensive faucet accessory that can be easily retrofit to a conventional faucet.

Shower heads

Showering accounts for nearly 17% of residential indoor water use. A common misconception about low-flow shower heads is that the water will come out as a steady trickle. In fact, modern low-flow shower heads deliver consistent water pressure allowing a person to wash and rinse without any issues while also conserving water.

WaterSense certified shower heads have been tested to demonstrate they perform as well or better than conventional shower heads.

Washing machines

If you’re in the market for a new washing machine, a full-sized Energy Star-certified clothes washer uses 14 gallons of water per load, compared to the 20 gallons used by a standard machine.

There are other ways to save water while doing laundry such as washing a full load each cycle.

Landscape design

You can design your yard for water-efficiency by incorporating plants that are defined as low water use or drought tolerant. Similarly, native plants can survive the local climate with minimal watering.

How you water your yard can also save water; smart irrigation, sensors and even what time of day (avoid midday) makes a difference. To hire an area professional who can help improve your home’s overall efficiency, visit the Home Builders Association of Greater Chattanooga’s online directory at HBAGC.net.

>> FARRELL

Farrell is not just a dancer at heart, she’s also a dancer by trade. In addition to teaching dance at her studio – Raw Art Dance and Entertainment in Cleveland – she leads a creative movement gymnastics dance program for girls at Lookout Valley Nazarene Daycare.

and operates a nonprofit that teaches dance at the Boys & Girls Clubs of the Ocoee Region.

While Farrell’s students are no doubt impressed with her twists, turns, dips, snaps and everything else in her expansive repertoire – as well as eager to learn her moves – there’s a mission behind her dancing. Farrell doesn’t just use her art to carve moments of joy out of a day, she uses it to shape lives.

“I use dance as a vehicle to mentor young girls,” she says. “I bring them in with, ‘You wanna dance? Then and I find out who they are.’”

Farrell says parents bring their daughters to her for one of three reasons: they have low self-esteem, they need physical activity, or they have a passion for dance. But nine times out of 10, she says, they need someone to pour into their lives and lift them up.

“I could tell you countless stories of young ladies who were not doing well in school, and now, it’s like the difference between night and day. One girl’s parents had separated and she needed an outlet; now she’s one of the strongest dancers on my competitive team.”

Farrell tried to remember when dance came into her life, but she says it would be like trying to recall when she learned to walk. Raised in Holland, Michigan, by parents with roots in Trinidad – where dancing is engrained in the culture – it’s always been a part of her life.

After Farrell’s family moved to Cleveland and her parents saw she was more serious about dancing than the average Caribbean girl, they began paying for lessons. Following a brief stint at Oral Roberts University, Farrell returned home and opened Raw Art Dance.

“My dad said, ‘Why don’t you open a dance studio?’ so I did,” she says.

Farrell says she’s in real estate because her mother suggested it. “She said it’s a career path with endless opportunities. I don’t have to be an agent forever; I could also flip houses and go into investing. There’s a lot I can do.”

While real estate is not something Farrell would have considered if someone else hadn’t planted the idea in her head, she says it’s a good fit for her personality, as she loves networking and connecting with people.

“I also get to help people with the biggest purchase of their lives, which is a lot of pressure, but I love to see people win.”

Although Farrell knows her way around a dance floor (really, any flat surface will do), she just received her real estate license in September, making her as green as agents come. But she says she’s a quick study and has a strong team behind her at Exit Realty Scenic Group.

“The training at Exit is phenomenal. It’s part of why I feel as confident as I do,” she says. “I’m under a great set of teachers.”

To her credit, Farrell already has two buyers in her pocket and is courting a seller. Just like a dancer who’s learning the basics, she’s doing her due diligence and looking forward to the day when her moves become fluid and natural.

“I’m going to make a name for myself,” she says. “I don’t want to work under someone else trying to make their name bigger; I want people to know me.”

If that requires Farrell breaking out in dance to make someone laugh while making the biggest purchase of their lives, so be it.

“I don’t want to disconnect from who I am to be someone I’m not, so I’m trying to put who I am and what I do together,” she says. “I want to go about real estate my own way, following certain systems and models but putting my own twist on things.”

>> GCR PRESIDENT

From page 9

The market is fast and the inventory is tighter than it’s been in a long time. But as Realtors, we have the latest tools and technology to serve our clients and community well. That’s Who We R. Greater Chattanooga Realtors is The Voice of Real Estate in Greater Chattanooga. A regional organization with more than 2,400 members, Greater Chattanooga Realtors is one of 300 local boards and associations of Realtors nationwide that comprise the National Association of Realtors. Greater Chattanooga Realtors serviced Hamilton and Sequatchie counties in southeast Tennessee and Catoosa, Dade and Walker counties in northwest Georgia. Information: www.gcrnet.net; 423-698-8001.
New music education program launches in Chattanooga

Two music industry mavens have teamed to launch a new music education program for all ages in Chattanooga. Chattanooga Music Academy will offer private instruction in voice and piano and provide a comprehensive study of music technique, theory, history and performance. Various class packages will be offered based on a student’s desired outcome and level of experience, and both socially distanced, in-person lessons and virtual opportunities will be available.

Registration is underway for the inaugural season, which begins in February.

Executive Director Scott Willis will teach voice. Willis serves on the voice faculty and as director of opera at Berry College in Rome, Georgia, and is the music director at Northside Presbyterian Church in Chattanooga.

Willis was previously with the Druid City Opera Workshop in Alabama and the Harrower Opera Workshop in Atlanta. He is an alumnus of Middle Tennessee State University, East Carolina University and the University of Alabama. Chattanooga Music Academy co-founder Kathleen Spencer will offer lessons in voice and piano.

Spencer hails from New York where she co-founded City Lyric Opera in 2016. Spencer produced eight operas there along with numerous events and concerts that utilized locals who have since launched international careers.

She is an alumnus of the Manhattan School of Music and Middle Tennessee State University. Information: www.chattamusicacademy.org

Source: Chattanooga Music Academy

SmartBank assists local family after tornado destroys home

Among the homes destroyed by the April tornado was that of SmartBank client Tracy Haire.

As she searched for a new home, Haire approached SmartBank for assistance with her loan. Thanks to the Federal Home Loan Bank Disaster Reconstruction Program, a program designed to allow homeowners to rebuild, purchase or rehab their home, SmartBank was able to assist her immediately.

“I had no idea where to turn after the tornado,” Haire says. “I came to SmartBank on the advice of a friend, and they were able to assist in the financing of a new home in a matter of days.”

The FHLB Disaster Reconstruction Program offers grants of up to $20,000 to help eligible households. It also offers qualifying households who are renting at the time of a disaster up to $5,000 toward a down payment or closing cost assistance on the purchase of a home.

Lisa Messier, vice president, residential lender at SmartBank, assisted Haire through the FHLB Disaster Reconstruction Program application process and was able to get her approved in less than three days.

“The application process for the disaster reconstruction program is straightforward,” Messier says. “Tracy was on a tight deadline to close, but we were able to work quickly to meet her deadline and issue the down payment for her new home.”

Through the FHLB’s Disaster Reconstruction Program and Carol M. Peterson Housing Fund, which provides grants to fund accessibility and emergency repairs for low-income special needs and elderly homeowners, SmartBank has assisted clients in securing grants totaling more than $100,000 over the past year.

Southern Honda Powersports donates to Austin Hatcher Foundation

Southern Honda Powersports has donated two motorcycles, made by BSA and Triumph, to the Austin Hatcher Foundation for Pediatric Cancer. Austin Hatcher’s patients will modify these motorcycles as a part of their industrial arts therapy, which is provided at no cost to the individuals facing childhood cancer.

“After hearing the story behind the Austin Hatcher Foundation, industrial arts therapy resonated with us as a tool for recovery in more ways than one,” says Tim Kelly, owner of Southern Honda Powersports. “We’re thrilled to provide the foundation with these motorcycles.”

“These motorcycles will provide a fun and interactive challenge for our patients,” says Austin Hatcher Foundation President Amy Jo Osborn. “We’re grateful to Southern Honda Powersports for making this opportunity possible for our families.”

Industrial arts therapy is an educational therapy program in which patients use hand, power, or machine tools to build wood or metal objects. The program also includes small engine repair and automobile maintenance programs.

The foundation plans to auction off the motorcycles once they are fully outfitted to help support its programs.

Source: Austin Hatcher Foundation
NOTICE OF SUBSTITUTE TRUSTEE’S SALE
WHEREAS, default has occurred in the performance of the covenants, terms, and conditions of a Deed of Trust dated December 28, 1998, executed by BRUCE JACK LONG, IRIS A. LONG, and wife, Amanda Long by Warranty Deed recorded January 7, 1999, in Deed Book 200314, Page 150, Register’s Office of Hamilton County, Tennessee, to the Holder, Wilson Credit, not individually but as trustee for Mortgage Electronic Registration Systems, Inc., as beneficiary, for nominal consideration; Wilson Credit is successor to the Beneficiary, Title, Inc., as Trustee for Mortgage Electronic Registration Systems, Inc., as beneficiary, for nominal consideration; said Deed of Trust was last transferred and assigned to Scottie Robinson, as Substitute Trustee, not individually but as a duly appointed Trustee, by virtue of the power, duty, and authority vested and imposed upon said Substitute Trustee by virtue of said Deed of Trust, and the title is believed to be good, as shown by the record; the beneficial interest of said Deed of Trust was last transferred and assigned to Scottie Robinson, as Substitute Trustee, not individually but as a duly appointed Trustee, by virtue of the power, duty, and authority vested and imposed upon said Substitute Trustee by virtue of said Deed of Trust to the highest and best bidder for cash, the following described property situated in Hamilton County, Tennessee: Being Lot No. 28, Eastland Estates, Unit Two, as shown by plat recorded in Plat Book 29, Page 256, in the Register’s Office of Hamilton County, Tennessee.

NOW, THEREFORE, notice is hereby given that the entire indebtedness has been declared due and payable, and that the undersigned, Rubin Lublin TN, PLLC, as Substitute Trustee or his duly appointed agent, by virtue of the power, duty, and authority vested and imposed upon said Substitute Trustee will, on December 10, 2020, at 10:00 AM at the Front Steps of the Hamilton County Courthouse, Chattanooga, Tennessee, proceed to sell at public outcry to the highest and best bidder for cash the Property, being sold with the express reservation that the Property is being sold with the express reservation that no representation or warranties of any kind, including fitness for a particular use or purpose.

This sale is subject to all matters shown on any recorded plat; any unpaid taxes; any restrictive covenants, easements or setback lines that may be applicable; any prior liens or encumbrances as well as any priority created by a fixture filing; and to any matter that an accurate survey of the premises might disclose. This property is being sold with the express reservation that no representation or warranties of any kind, including fitness for a particular use or purpose.

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It's appearing from allegations in Plaintiff's Bill, which is sworn to, that the defendant is a non-resident of the State of Tennessee, so that the ordinary process of law cannot be served upon him upon the face of the record in this cause.

It is ORDERED that publication be made for four successive weeks in the Hamilton County Herald, a newspaper published in Hamilton County, Tennessee, notifying said non-resident that unless ALBERT EMANUEL DURHAM answers and makes defense to said complaint in the offices of the Circuit Court Clerk of Hamilton County, Tennessee, within thirty (30) days after the fourth weekly publication of this order, the same will be taken as admitted by ALBERT EMANUEL DURHAM.

It is ORDERED that publication be made for four successive weeks in the Hamilton County Herald, a newspaper published in Hamilton County, Tennessee, notifying said non-resident that unless STEVE THOMAS SPEED answers and makes defense to said complaint in the offices of the Circuit Court Clerk of Hamilton County, Tennessee, within thirty (30) days after the fourth weekly publication of this order, the same will be taken as admitted by STEVE THOMAS SPEED.

This 19th day of November, 2020.

LARRY L. HENRY, CLERK
Deputy Clerk

Attorney for Plaintiff:
LISA LYNN CONNER
Docket No. 2015157

STATE OF TENNESSEE
COURTNEY NICOLLE LINDSEY DURHAM

Edward D. Flowers, Circuit Judge

ORDER OF PUBLICATION

It appearing from the record in this case that the defendant is a non-resident of Tennessee, and certain property or money has been attached by ALBERT EMANUEL DURHAM and the case will be set for hearing ex parte or without Kwanna Cunnings presence.

This 27th day of October, 2020.

LARRY L. HENRY, CLERK
Deputy Clerk

Attorney for Plaintiff:
BRIAN ALLEN CALDWELL
Docket No. 2056132

STATE OF TENNESSEE
COURTNEY NICOLLE LINDSEY DURHAM

Edward D. Flowers, Circuit Judge

ORDER OF PUBLICATION

It appearing from the record in this case that the defendant is a non-resident of Tennessee, and certain property or money has been attached by ALBERT EMANUEL DURHAM and the case will be set for hearing ex parte or without Kwanna Cunnings presence.

This 13th day of November, 2020.

LARRY L. HENRY, CLERK
Deputy Clerk

Attorney for Plaintiff:
PRO SE
Docket No. 27, Dec. 11, 18, 2020 201434

STATE OF TENNESSEE
COURTNEY NICOLLE LINDSEY DURHAM

Edward D. Flowers, Circuit Judge

ORDER OF PUBLICATION

It appearing from the record in this case that the defendant is a non-resident of Tennessee, and certain property or money has been attached by ALBERT EMANUEL DURHAM and the case will be set for hearing ex parte or without Kwanna Cunnings presence.

This 17th day of November, 2020.

LARRY L. HENRY, CLERK
Deputy Clerk

Attorney for Plaintiff:
J. Wheeler, D.C.
Docket No. 2001956

STATE OF TENNESSEE
COURTNEY NICOLLE LINDSEY DURHAM

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LARRY L. HENRY, CLERK
Deputy Clerk

Attorney for Plaintiff:
BRIAN ALLEN CALDWELL
Docket No. 2056132

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LARRY L. HENRY, CLERK
Deputy Clerk

Attorney for Plaintiff:
LISA LYNN CONNER
Docket No. 27, Dec. 11, 18, 2020 201434

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This 27th day of October, 2020.

LARRY L. HENRY, CLERK
Deputy Clerk

Attorney for Plaintiff:
BRIAN ALLEN CALDWELL
Docket No. 2056132

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LARRY L. HENRY, CLERK
Deputy Clerk

Attorney for Plaintiff:
LISA LYNN CONNER
Docket No. 27, Dec. 11, 18, 2020 201434

STATE OF TENNESSEE
COURTNEY NICOLLE LINDSEY DURHAM

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BRIAN ALLEN CALDWELL
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Attorney for Plaintiff:
LISA LYNN CONNER
Docket No. 27, Dec. 11, 18, 2020 201434

STATE OF TENNESSEE
COURTNEY NICOLLE LINDSEY DURHAM

Edward D. Flowers, Circuit Judge

ORDER OF PUBLICATION

It appearing from the record in this case that the defendant is a non-resident of Tennessee, and certain property or money has been attached by ALBERT EMANUEL DURHAM and the case will be set for hearing ex parte or without Kwanna Cunnings presence.

This 27th day of October, 2020.

LARRY L. HENRY, CLERK
Deputy Clerk

Attorney for Plaintiff:
BRIAN ALLEN CALDWELL
Docket No. 2056132

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This 19th day of November, 2020.

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This 27th day of October, 2020.
Overtime win at Baltimore could kick-start late-season run

Titans seem at their best in worst of times

Colts once again stand in way of playoff goals

By Terry McCormack

If the Titans want to win the AFC South and guarantee themselves at least one home playoff game, they probably must win this week at 7-3 Indianapolis. The 7-3 Titans put themselves behind the 8-ball two weeks ago when they allowed the Colts to come in and manhandle them in the second half on their way to a 34-17 win. Now, the Titans have to find a way to return the favor to retake control of the division.

First down

No special teams breakdowns. When you have the luxury of having played a team just over two weeks before the rematch, the problems of the first loss are still fresh wounds. The Titans’ special teams were woeful against the Colts and it figured prominently with their loss. Trevor Daniel and Stephen Gostkowski were better against the Ravens, but they cannot afford any critical mistakes against Indy the second time around.

Second down

Keep it running through Henry. It seems so simple to say give the ball to Derrick Henry often. But earlier in the season, the Titans were guilty of being too cute at times, rather than just building momentum with their star running back. Besides, a good downhill running game can lend confidence to a patchwork offensive line that needs to keep pushing forward.

Third down

Play a little press coverage. The Titans have had too many instances where they have played too far off the receivers in third and short situations. No one made them pay more dearly for it than Philip Rivers, whom the Titans should be challenging to beat them deep, given that he has lost a little off his fastball over the years. More press coverage up on the wideouts can help take away some of those short completions and yards after the catch.

Fourth down

Bend but don’t break. The Titans played a lot of that style of defense last season, and it worked for them. This year, they have been far worse on that side of the football, but against Baltimore, they were able to stall some drives in the red zone and force field goals. The third-down defense still is a problem, but if the Titans can make the Colts drive the field and then get a stop before too much damage is done, then, if the offense is clicking, it can be a formula for winning.

Derrick Henry was stymied for much of the second half against the Ravens, but – like the Titans - came alive in the second half, including this 29-yard touchdown run to seal the overtime win.

“I know Will Compton was excited to play, and made some plays, and made some tackles,” he adds. “It is really difficult to go all week with a group of guys that are practicing a game plan, especially with one that is as specific as it was this week.

“Having guys go down, and having guys step up to be able to execute that without having to change everything, just a lot of credit to our players – those of them that stepped in and executed.”

How deep did the contributions on this Titans team go? Backup quarterback Logan Woodside completed his first NFL pass, sneaking in as the personal protector on a fake punt and firing a completion to Nick Westbrook-Ikhine, who had an interception in the game, was filling in for starting safety Kenny Vaccaro.

As the game wore on, more unexpected contributions came from unexpected places. Guys like Geoff Swaim, Cameron Batson and Breon Borders were called upon to play roles in Sunday’s win.

There was Will Compton, tossed on the scrap heap a couple of times by the Titans and then brought back, filled in when linebacker Jayon Brown went down with a broken and dislocated elbow, ending his season.

And David Quessenberry, a cancer survivor and the Titans’ third left tackle this season, finished the game when Ty Sambrailo, himself a replacement for Taylor Lewan, went down in the fourth quarter.

The one guy who did not appear surprised that the Titans managed to come away with a win playing practice squad players, underrafted rookies and castoffs was Vrabel.

“I think guys are ready for their opportunity,” Vrabel says. “They are excited to play. I think Aaron Brewer was excited to play. I think Amani Hooker and Josh Kalu were excited, and nobody is more into it than David Quessenberry.
Safe and good values

Your first new car? Consider these picks

By Brent Romans | Edmunds

While most people start learning how to drive with a hand-me-down car from parents or relatives, there comes a time when they want to get their first new car. With hundreds of models to choose from, narrowing the list to just one can seem overwhelming.

To help them start, Edmunds’ experts compiled a list of four new vehicles that excel in the areas first-time owners would be wise to prioritize. These include a low starting price and high safety scores.

Stylish small SUV:
2021 Kia Soul

Saying a car looks like a box on wheels would normally be a compliment. But in the case of the Kia Soul, it somehow works. This small SUV has a distinctive upright theme, while the X-Line has gray fender cladding for more of an off-road vibe.

The Soul is easy to get in and out of and has plenty of room for passengers. It also comes with a pleasing number of features for the money.

For example, every Soul except the base LX comes with advanced driver safety aids that can help reduce driver distraction and mitigate imminent collisions. Another bonus is Kia’s excellent five-year limited warranty.

Negatives are few but include a bit too much wind and road noise on the highway.

Our pick: Soul S, $21,710

Sporty small hatchback:
2021 Hyundai Veloster

Small but fun, the Hyundai Veloster is a unique pick because of its three-door layout. It has a single door on its driver’s side and two doors on its passenger side. This configuration creates a sporty, coupe-like appearance with the added benefit of an extra rear door to make it easier for rear passengers to get in and out. The Veloster is also a hatchback, which makes it easier to load luggage and cargo than in a sedan.

The Veloster’s standard 147-horsepower engine is fine, but consider getting the available turbocharged engine. It makes a stout 201 horsepower and gives the Veloster quick acceleration. The extra power is also a pleasing complement to the Veloster’s sharp handling.

Our pick: Veloster Turbo R-Spec, $24,445

Sensible midsize sedan:
2021 Honda Accord

Just like Kia, Hyundai offers a five-year limited warranty. On the downside, the Veloster’s ride quality is a little stiff, and the cabin can get noisy at highway speeds, especially when the car is equipped with high-performance tires.

Our pick: Veloster Turbo R-Spec, $24,445

Sensible midsize sedan:
2021 Honda Accord

Few vehicles get closer to “no-brainer” pick status than the Accord. It’s consistently one of the top-selling cars in America, and the latest-generation Accord is one of Edmunds’ favorite midsize sedans. It’s roomy, upscale and enjoyable to drive.

The Accord’s standard turbocharged engine provides pleasing power and above-average fuel economy. The Accord Hybrid is even more efficient, sipping fuel to the tune of 48 mpg in the EPA’s combined city/highway estimate.

Honda’s smaller Civic is a smart alternative to the Accord if you’re looking for a lower price. Going with the Accord, however, gets you a slightly bigger back seat and trunk. The interior is nicer, too, with more upscale materials.

Infotainment and safety features on the Accord are abundant, though they’re not as simple to operate as those in some rival sedans.

Our pick: Accord LX, $25,725

Efficient midsize SUV:
2021 Toyota Venza

Hybrids have a somewhat justified reputation for being a little dorky. Yet there’s nothing dorky about the new Venza.

After a five-year hiatus, Toyota has taken this nameplate off the shelf for a 2021 midsize SUV fitted exclusively by a hybrid powertrain. This Venza has a sharp-looking exterior and a well-equipped cabin that wouldn’t seem out of place in a Lexus.

The Venza is good for an EPA-estimated 39 mpg in combined city/highway driving. This is among the highest estimates you can get from a hybrid SUV. All-wheel drive comes standard, too.

As for negatives, the Venza’s cargo area isn’t as big as those in some other rival SUVs, such as the Ford Edge or Honda Passport. But if you want comfort, versatility and high fuel economy from your first vehicle, the Venza will work out great.

Our pick: Venza LE, $33,645

Edmunds says

Your first new car should be sensible, but there’s no rule saying it can’t be memorable, too. Start with one of these four vehicles and then do some research and comparison shopping to find the best deal.

Brent Romans is a senior editor of written content at Edmunds. Instagram: brent.romans.