



KNOX COUNTY A Great American Community



Knox County News

I want to spend a few moments this week saying thank you to a few folks. First, thank you to the Knoxville Chamber and the City of Knoxville for working with us to put together the Career Transition Assistance Fair. I hope that those who came to the Fair found what was offered there of some value going forward in their job search.

Second, I want to thank our local media for working so closely with us over the last few weeks to pull together the Mobile Meal-a-thon (you will read about it here in the newsletter). It is a tough economy all around. But when you stop and think about having our senior citizens on a waiting list for food, that's one challenge I felt like we just had to address. I believe that when we all come together on Tuesday, we will eliminate that waiting list, and I'm counting on your help.

Mike Ragsdale

Media joins with County for Mobile Meal-a-thon

Get ready to call 1-866-926-MEAL (6325). An all out, 12-hour request for donations from local media will happen this coming Tuesday, St. Patrick's Day. At the request of County Mayor Mike Ragsdale, local media outlets have joined forces to ensure that we don't have any senior citizens waiting for food.



In recent months, the county's Mobile Meals program has developed a waiting list of those 100+ senior citizens. Mayor Ragsdale met with the General Managers of the major media groups in Knox County and ask for their help to solve this problem and they came together instantly to find the solution.

The Mobile Meals program serves noon meals five days a week and



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Apply Now:

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March 20th deadline for Knox County high schoolers interested in health issues to

holidays to Knoxville and Knox County citizens who are at least 60 years old, who cannot cook for themselves and have no one to prepare meals for them. The cost is just \$3 a day. That's \$65 a month, or \$780 a year.

submit applications to the Youth Health Board. Contact Carrie Thomas for more information: 865.215.5174 or carrie.thomas@knoxcounty.org.

Career Transition Assistance Fair draws 600



33 companies came together to provide information and support to hundreds of East Tennesseans who have been laid off in recent months. The Transition Fair was a joint effort of Knox County, the Knoxville Chamber and the City of Knoxville.

Ragsdale & CEA Board hear from Obama staffers on stimulus package at legislative conference

Economic development and the federal stimulus package were the focus when Mayor Mike Ragsdale presided over a meeting of the Board of Directors of the County Executives of America. The Directors meeting was paired with a legislative conference that allowed mayors and county executives to meet in Washington during this critical economic time to address these issues and to conduct CEA business.

CNN's Senior Political Analyst Bill Schneider led a discussion of the changing government role in the economy. Senior White House and congressional staffers provided briefings on the Economic Stimulus Package. Attendees heard from Dennis Alvord, Acting Deputy Assistant Secretary of Commerce and Jim Kolb, Staff Director of the Highways and Transit Subcommittee of the House Committee on Transportation.

An important action item from the meeting was the nomination of two CEA Board members to serve on a FEMA Advisory Committee. Ragsdale will submit the names to the Obama Administration. The CEA Board also spent time planning for their next meeting, which will be held in conjunction with the annual meeting of the National Association of Counties in Nashville in July.

County leaders "Dine Out for Education"

Knox County Calendar

March 16-20

County Schools Spring Break

March 16

Special Called Meeting of Knox County Commission

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Commission Finance Committee

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Special Called Meeting of County Audit Committee

March 17

Mobile Meals Meal-a-thon

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Commission Intergovernmental Committee

March 20

Youth Health Board application deadline

March 23

Commission Meeting

March 30

Magic Tree House: The Musical

March 31

PTA Roundtable: Hardin Valley Academy

Suggestions or comments?

We'd love to get your input. Send your comments or questions to our [newsletter editor](#).

Quick Links

[Knox County](#)



Superintendent Jim McIntyre, WBIR's Robin Wilhoit, County Commission Chair Tank Strickland, WBIR's John Becker, Mayor Mike Ragsdale and School Board Chair Indya Kincannon enjoy talk issues of the day at Cafe4 as they Dine Out for Education on Tuesday.

Mayor's Office calls for external review of County's internal auditor

During the March 5th meeting of the Knox County Audit Committee, Chief Financial Officer John Troyer and Chief Administrative Officer Dwight Van de Vate presented the County's response to the Community Grants Audit. They also submitted a second report calling for a comprehensive external review of the Office of Internal Audit. A similar item calling for an external quality review of the department was also on the Committee's agenda.

During the presentation, the two noted that the Grants Audit contained errors of fact and was missing documents that were readily available to the auditor. The second report calls for an external review and outlines specific instances in which the Mayor's Office believes Internal Auditor Richard Walls may have violated the Charter of Knox County, the Knox County Code, the General Accounting Office Standards for the Audit Function and the Institute for Internal Audit International Standards for the Professional Practice of Internal Auditing. The document includes a possible concern that Knox County might have suffered losses due to inaction on Mr. Walls part, citing the June 2007 Rodefer-Moss report that identified significant risks and weaknesses in the Trustee's payroll systems. Recently the Trustee's Office did experience significant losses as the result of payroll fraud.

That same report notes that the County Code requires Walls to meet internal auditing standards published by the U.S. General Accounting Office. Under those standards, he is required to have an external peer review at least once every three years and report on the results of that review. The report cited numerous instances where his office did not meet GAO standards, in violation of the Code.

Additionally, the report states that Mr. Walls is required by the Charter of Knox County to conduct an annual audit and review of the Retirement and Pension Board and to report on that review to the County Commission. It further indicates that no such review has been published to the Commission during Mr. Walls' tenure. The pension fund is currently experiencing a severe deficit and is the subject of a lawsuit by a County

employee.

The report concludes with a series of examples where, due to the Internal Auditor's action or refusal to take action, outside intervention was required from a private attorney or from state or federal authorities.

Minky Worden: Human Rights and Reform in China (2009 Wilma Dykeman Stokely Memorial Lecture)

Friends of the Library will present Minky Worden, Knoxville native and long-time observer of contemporary life in China, at the 2009 Wilma Dykeman Stokely Memorial Lecture on Tuesday, March 24, 7:30 p.m. at the East Tennessee History Center.

Worden is the Media Director of Human Rights Watch, where she works with journalists to help them cover crises, wars, human rights abuses and political developments in over 70 countries. She will be speaking on "Human Rights and Reform in China: A Look at Global Consequences," from her recent book *China's Great Leap: The Beijing Games and Olympian Human Rights Challenges*.

Information about all of the events going on at the library can be found on the [library's website](#).

Apply now for Mayor's Youth Action Council Applications available to Knox County teens

Next fall, the Youth Action Council begins its sixth year next fall representing teens in Knoxville and Knox County to ensure that their opinions and concerns are voiced. The YAC wants to strengthen the sense of community and civic duty among teens. It operates through the Metropolitan Drug Commission in partnership with the Knox County Mayor's office and the City of Knoxville Mayor's office.

Members of YAC interact with community leaders who serve as mentors and advisors. YAC members get opportunities to better understand how our local government operates, to experience collaboration and team building, and to experience leadership and public service.

As many as twenty-five high school students serve on the Youth Action Council. The application process is under way. Current high school students in Knox County are encouraged to apply by April 17, 2009. Applicants should be aware of key issues facing youth, as well as possess the desire and creativity to make a change in their community.

Applications and recommendation forms are available at KnoxTeenSource.com or by calling 588-5550. Email Leah Adinolfi at ladinolfi@bellsouth.net if you have any questions or need further assistance. Applicant interviews and selection of finalists will be conducted in early May.

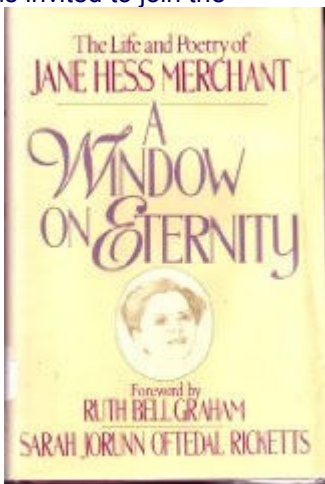
Remembering Jane Merchant Norwood remembers world-renowned poet

Norwood Homeowners Association is pleased to present "Remembering

Jane Merchant" on Monday, March 16, 6:30 PM at the Norwood Branch Library on 1110 Merchant's Road. The public is invited to join the discussion.

Jane Merchant, 1919-1972, was one of the most beloved poets in the history of Knoxville. She was born on her family's farm located at what is now the intersection of Clinton Highway and Merchants Road. Merchants Road is named, not for Jane Merchant, but for her family. Her birthplace was in what is now the Norwood neighborhood.

When Jane Merchant was a small girl she developed a debilitating disease that rendered her bedridden for the rest of her life. She did not attend school, but her personal situation did not slow her down her brilliant mind.



She published thousands of her poems in national publications of the time such as the *Saturday Evening Post*, *Good Housekeeping*, the *Christian Science Monitor* and the *New York Herald Tribune*. She was the author of 10 books of poetry published by Abington Press which sold in the United States, Canada and England. The Knox County Public Library collection has all of her books of poetry as well as her biography, *A Window on Eternity*, by Sarah Jorunn Oftedal Ricketts.

Jane Merchant also carried on a worldwide correspondence with other authors and literary types, and her work and personal courage were praised by other poets such as Jesse Stuart and Carl Sandburg.

For more information, please contact Lynn Redmon at 865-688-3136 or at lynnredmon@bellsouth.net.

Knox County Board of Education seeks student representative

Rising seniors interested in serving on the Knox County Board of Education can download applications at www.knoxschools.org. One student will be chosen to serve as a student voice on the board and successful applicants will express an interest in education policy as well as a desire to serve the needs of their peers. Applicants must be willing to commit to a full year term and a minimum of 15 hours per month as a school board member. Meetings are generally held on Monday and Wednesday evenings beginning at 5 p.m.

Rising seniors currently enrolled in the Knox County School system with a minimum grade point average of 2.75 are encouraged to apply. For more information contact Janice Myers at 594-1629 or email myersj6@k12tn.net

Join us in our efforts to make Knox County *A Great American Community*. **Become a part of the conversation.** Tell us about our programs and services that are working for you, and the ones that aren't. **Support our**

teachers and the great work they are doing to educate our children. **Get involved** with the workforce development effort. **Participate** in the great events our libraries and parks offer. County government starts with you, the citizen, so **join in!**

Sincerely,

Mike Ragsdale, County Mayor
Knox County, A Great American Community