

Three eye Trustee's office

When Frank Barnett met the queen

Most everyone knows that our current governor, Bill Haslam, lives in West Knoxville on Sherwood Drive. However, very few people know that another governor (now retired) also lives in Knoxville less than a mile from the Haslam home. He is Frank Barnett, 80, former lieutenant governor and then governor of American Samoa (1975 to 1977) who lives on Orleans Drive in the Westlands.



Elizabeth II with Frank Barnett



Victor Ashe

Barnett attended Bearden Elementary School when he grew up on Lonas Drive and graduated from old Knoxville High. He graduated from the University of Tennessee and UT College of Law.

He was in practice with Howard Baker and Robert Worthington in the original Baker law firm.

He worked for Gov. Winfield Dunn as an administrative aide and later served on the state Board of Regents, appointed by Gov. Don Sundquist.

Barnett was appointed to leadership roles in American Samoa by Interior Secretary Rogers Morton, who worked for President Gerald Ford.

American Samoa today has a population of roughly 55,000, according to the 2010 census. It elects its own governors.

Barnett recalls the four-day visit of Queen Elizabeth II to Samoa in February 1977 as the highlight of his tenure. He and his wife, Carolyn, were hosts for the queen and Prince Philip, who arrived on a British Airways flight but departed on the Britannia, the queen's yacht, which is now decommissioned and berthed near Edinburgh and is open to the public for tours.

The queen also visited Western Samoa, an independent nation. The Barnetts are probably the only residents of Knoxville today who have dined with Queen Elizabeth II on her yacht. Barnett as governor officially welcomed the queen and prince to American Samoa and rode with her from the airport to the Britannia in the harbor of Pago Pago (capital of American Samoa). He describes her today "as extremely gracious and well

Three Republicans — Barry Hawkins, Craig Leuthold and Ed Shouse — are running for Knox County Trustee this year.

Barry Hawkins says the office is overstuffed.

He says that current Trustee Craig Leuthold, who was appointed to the position last July after John Duncan III resigned after pleading guilty to a low-level felony for paying himself and staffers more than \$18,000 in bonuses he knew they didn't earn, "has clearly shown disregard for the taxpayers of Knox County."

Hawkins says Knox County's trustee office employs 40, while Hamilton County's employs 15 and Metro Nashville employs 22.

"I promise to staff the trustee's office comparable to Hamilton and Davidson counties."

Hawkins, who worked in the office for 17 years, says he has "a clear understanding of the waste and tax bur-



Jake Mabe

dens placed on the citizens of Knox County."

Hawkins came under fire earlier this year by Commissioner Dave Wright for being the only Duncan staffer not to repay the \$3,000 bonus for UT County Technical Assistance Services (CTAS) training he did not complete. Hawkins accused Wright of playing politics to help Shouse. Wright said he was reacting to a story in the News Sentinel.

"After receiving payment I questioned (Duncan) about the CTAS payment, and he assured me that it was new office policy and procedure," Hawkins said. "I (also) spoke with my office manager and chief of staff. I was in the process of completing my CTAS

designation then and soon after my job was eliminated.

Hawkins said he did nothing wrong. "And I don't appreciate accusations otherwise."

Craig Leuthold says he is the only candidate who has the experience and knowledge of "the entire property-tax process from beginning to end," having worked in both the property assessor's and trustee's offices.

He is running on his results as interim trustee:

"In eight months, we've collected more than \$7.1 million over the previous year as of the last reporting period in February," Leuthold said. "I've not hired anybody new. And I've had two quarterly audits, both showing that we were 100 percent compliant."

Leuthold attributes that

success to "a lot of hard work."

He disputes Hawkins' numbers about Metro Nashville's staffing, saying the office staffs 22 full-time employees and five-six seasonal employees.

He acknowledges that his office does employ 40 people, "33 full-time employees, six seasonal employees and myself. But Davidson County has no satellite offices. We have five. They don't have bookkeeping and don't do all the functions that we do."

"The City County Building is not very accessible. The satellite offices are very important to keep open, especially for elderly or handicapped people. You can't just park and walk right into this building."

Leuthold

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Resistance is futile on Emerald's proposed charter school

Before the summer is over, the school board will approve the district's first charter school.



Betty Bean

Last week, Steve Diggs (executive director of the Emerald Youth Foundation, an organization that he helped found in 1988 as an inner-city youth ministry that has done immense good work with disadvantaged children in the years since) formally announced that Emerald Charter Schools will submit an application for a tuition-free, K-8 public school, to be called Emerald Academy, on April 1. The school board will vote it up or down before the start of next school year.

They'll vote yes. The school is scheduled to open in August 2015 with 120 kindergarten and first-grade students who will be called "scholars" and will wear uniforms. The school day will be from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., and the school year will be 190 days (10 more than other public schools). The location has not yet been determined, but the search is under way, and so is fundraising. It's going to happen. State law is favorable to charters, and it's gotten hard for local school districts to say no. The signs were there at



Noel Vasquez, Noble Chaney and Olivia Chaney model the Emerald Academy uniforms. Emerald Youth Foundation director Steve Diggs is at right. Photo by Betty Bean

the formal announcement:

The house was packed with enthusiastic parents, kids, suits and neighborhood folks. EYF Community Development Director Kevin DuBose said he has conducted more than 60 small-group meetings all over the inner city and has involved parents, business leaders and pastors, collecting letters of support from 29 groups in the process. Community buy-in does not appear to be a problem, unlike unsuccessful charter efforts in the past.

Diggs singled out Betty Sue Sparks, retired Knox County Schools administrator who is now the Cornerstone Principal in Residence at UT's Center for Educational Leadership, which trains new principals. He thanked her for the work she's done in planning

for academics and special education at the new school (yes, Emerald Academy will accept special-ed students). He also unveiled three groups: the ECS board of directors, a design team and a parent- and community-advisory committee, which are packed with the names of all kinds of stakeholders.

Refreshments were provided by the Knox County Schools Nutrition Department, which Diggs said will also be feeding the charter-school kids breakfast and lunch.

On the iffy side, only two school-board members, Gloria Deathridge and Doug Harris, attended the meeting.

But I'm still betting it happens.

■ **Pam Trainor** gained an opponent and lost the support of many of the

teachers who helped elect her to the school board four years ago when she voted to extend Superintendent James McIntyre's contract in December. Last week, McIntyre took to Twitter to announce:

"After examining options & much dialogue w/ Pam Trainor & Dr. (Roy) Miller I'm going to recommend a \$1.3 million, 4-classroom addition to Mooreland Heights Elementary School."

■ **School politics** spilled into the sheriff's race last week when challenger Bobby Waggoner called out incumbent Jimmy "J.J." Jones for sending his chief deputy to support McIntyre's contract extension.

Waggoner said he would keep out of others' business and focus efforts on patrolling neighborhoods.

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