

@ Work for the Clerk



Knox County Clerk's Office (865) 215-2385

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Special Interest Articles

"Cowboy in the Jungle"

New Training Initiative

They Say It's Your Birthday!

"Wear Red Day" 2010

Your Daily Motivator

Embrace discipline. Run away from discipline, and it punishes you. Embrace discipline, and it enables you to do magnificent things.

You can decide to discipline yourself, or you will surely and eventually have discipline forced upon you. It is far better to choose it for yourself, so you can fashion with it whatever you desire.

You already have the ability to act with self-discipline. Make use of that ability by making it a constant habit.

Discipline doesn't cost you. It pays, over and over again. Discipline makes what you already have, more valuable. And with discipline you can create much more new value.

Do what is in the best interest of everyone involved, even when it is not comfortable or easy at the moment. Long after the immediate inconvenience and discomfort are gone, you'll be enjoying the rewards of choosing to discipline yourself.

Ralph Marston

Yes, I do realize it is not Thanksgiving, the traditional time for giving thanks. But I think about how blessed I am every day to have a great job, working with folks who are taking pride in serving our Taxpayers. As a part of my daily thought process, I realize how lucky and thankful I am to have a job at all!

Just take a look at the nightly news, not only nationally but locally as well. In the last week **East Tennessee alone** has lost in excess of 1,000 (one thousand) jobs. Think of the people who had a job just a month ago. They were putting food on the table, taking trips, going to the movies with their spouses and kids and saving money for retirement (hopefully). Did they know that in a few weeks they would

Being Thankful!

no longer have that job? I doubt it. The story lines are quite distressing. Some of the workers had been employed 10, 20 and 30 plus years and in just an instant their jobs were eliminated. Can you imagine? No more health or retirement benefits? You find yourself just unemployed. Now what do you do?

There is nothing I would like to do more than to give each of you a raise right now but that simply cannot happen in this tough economy. But I do want you to reflect on how lucky you are, we all are, to have a job with good benefits.

We have been watching out for you on a daily basis and we recognized that our revenues are down. We have made cuts in our

budget and made sure wasteful spending of the past was eliminated. When people leave we tighten our belts and we work harder and smarter. We have to. We have no choice. Failure to have made these tough choices would have meant many of you would not be reading this as a Knox County Clerk employee. We still have tough times ahead but working with each other and watching our spending will make a difference. Thus far we have saved over \$640,000 for the taxpayers of Knox County. We have professionalized the office and I am proud to be the Knox County Clerk. As always, thanks for what you do.

Foster D. Arnett, Jr.
Knox County Clerk

Spotlight on Terri Johnson

When Terri Johnson dressed up like a hippie for the Fall Festival (picture at left), it wasn't far from reality.

Terri is a "Parrot Head"—a title rabid Jimmy Buffett fans wear with pride. Her favorite song is, "**Cowboy in the Jungle**" because it's about coping with life under unusual conditions (more about that, later). "I like the song because it has a good beat and Buffett makes it funny", Terri explains.

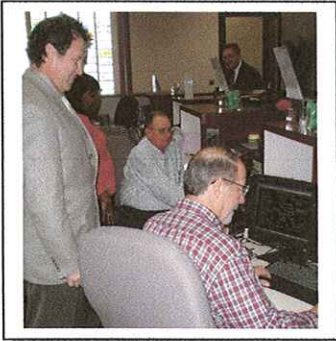
Terri goes about her job at the drive through window, sight unseen by many customers who come into the old courthouse. She stays extremely busy in that area of the first floor. How busy? Just take a look at the transaction report for the last week in 2009 (December 28 through January 2): Terri's 255 motor vehicle transactions show she was the busiest of all motor vehicle clerks in the old courthouse.

About Terri, Knox County Clerk, Foster D. Arnett, Jr. had this to say: "Terri does a super job for us and we are happy to have her."

And now back to that song. The words of the chorus are part of Terri's life philosophy. They say, "...learn to play all of our hunches, makin' the best of whatever comes your way." Great advice, Terri. Peace Out!



New Comprehensive Training Starts



New Director of Training, Tress Patton works with Jack Kerr (foreground) and Steve Elder while Phylcia Washington observes.

Steve Elder and Jack Kerr (pictured at left) moved to the old courthouse for the month of February to process motor vehicle renewals, build titles, issue placards and learn about customer service and employee accountability. That may seem like a lot of material to cover. That's why it's called "comprehensive" training.

"I need them to work on everything they will need to know when they get back on the counter", explained Director of Satellite Operations, Phylcia

Washington. "And I need them ready to go to work by March which is a typically busy month in motor vehicle", she added. "Tress Patton will target areas of training needs and I expect him to develop sound, relevant training for all employees of the clerk's office", explained Knox County Clerk, Foster D. Arnett, Jr.

About his new job, Patton said: "I see my role as capitalizing on this new beginning and enhancing this renewed training with more class time, practical

exercises, role playing and intensive instruction with students studying all transactions and ensuring the employee's confidence is there before putting them before the public eye."

For Kerr and Elder, this is also a new beginning. Both men worked for years as Business Tax inspectors before moving into the Motor Vehicle division.

Tress is a 30-year U.S. Army veteran, having retired at the rank of Command Sergeant Major.

They Say It's Your Birthday!



Be sure to wish the following people "Happy Birthday" when you see them at work during the month of March:

Kim Brewer, in the Business Tax office of the old courthouse celebrates March 1st.

So does **Susan Humphreys** in the Cedar Bluff satellite office.

March 12 is the birthday for **Greg Inman** who works as a title keyer in the Halls office.

Will Johnson, in the Finance Division of the old courthouse celebrates on March 17.

You'll usually find **Fay Wells** in the drive through window or at the switchboard in the old courthouse, so wish her happy birthday on March 17.

Jack Kerr, one of our newest motor vehicle clerks has a March 19 birthday.

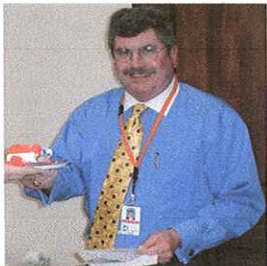
Doris Brady of the Farragut office, celebrates March 23 and so does **Angela Washington** in the big room

of the old courthouse.

The very next day, March 24, **Terrie Brooks** celebrates.

Congratulate **Becky Crews** on March 26. Becky has new responsibilities and a new location next to Notary in the old courthouse.

And **Misty Cloud**, working at Knox Center celebrates her birthday on March 30.



Almost a Leap Year baby! Foster celebrated his birthday early.

Quotes That Inspire Vol Athletes

Many of you know Dr. Michael McIntyre at the University of Tennessee. He is head of the school's professional MBA program. Dr. McIntyre has facilitated many retreats and seminars for management and staff in the clerk's office.

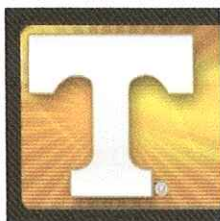
He has put together, with the help of many UT

coaches, a book of quotes that inspire the Tennessee Vols and Lady Vols,

It's called, "Fired Up!" and it also includes some of the world's best motivational speakers. Among them: Coach Lou Holtz, John Wooden ("The Wizard of Westwood" coach at UCLA) and of course Bruce Pearl and Pat Summitt.

From time to time, this newsletter will publish these words of wisdom. In this issue, we begin with some words from Albert Einstein:

"There are only two ways to live your life. One is as though nothing is a miracle. The other is as though everything is a miracle."



Wear Red Day 2010



Cedar Bluff office staff poses for their picture on "Wear Red Day". Above, from left: Kaye Kimble, Darryl Thorpe, Ed Smith, Angela McGee, Vicki Murphy-Dilbeck, John Irwin and Mona Word (seated).

February 5, 2010 was "Wear Red Day" across the country. In the Knox County Clerk's Office, many people participated in the event to increase awareness of heart disease in women. It's the number one killer of women in America.



Others who observed the occasion work in the Old Courthouse. From top, left: Crystal Housewright, Cindy Wyrick, Wendy Iturbe, Melissa Webb and Kim Ellis.



License plates are part of the valuable inventory of the clerk's office. But Jessica Reynolds reminds us that they really aren't worth much without a decal. Still, she has implemented some new security precautions to protect all her inventory.

Some "Best Practices" to Secure Inventory

The recent break-in at the Farragut Municipal Building (February 9) put the clerk's satellite office on notice that they need to take extra precautions to be sure their valuable inventory is safe and secure.

The burglars broke in to the building and went through some offices downstairs. They took some money and a set of keys and then went upstairs to see what they could steal.

Teffie Engwall first noticed the signs of the burglary when she found a set of keys on the floor in the back hallway near the storage room. That's where they keep the plates and placards and the safe is located there.

At first, Teffie noticed the storage room door was open but she didn't notice the door had been pried open. Detectives investigating the burglary

noticed damage on the door facing where it appeared a crow bar had been used to pry it open. The thieves did similar damage to the door of the nearby restroom that wasn't even locked!

The bottom line on the attempted burglary on the second floor is that none of the clerk's inventory appears to have been taken. The safes belonging to the clerk's office and the Trustee were not even tampered with.

Jessica Reynolds, manager of the Farragut satellite office said the money and decals were all locked up in the safe. That's a normal practice every day at close out. She also noted that the placards were all accounted for and even the Tennessee Donor Services cash boxes were un-touched. They had recently been emptied and only had a few dollars and some change in them. This is evidence that the burglars may not have even gone into the room where the deputy clerks work.

Still, Jessica has implemented a few best practices for securing the valuable inventory and cash at all times, including during business hours.

"We now keep the storage room door locked at all times", Jessica explained. "Even though that is not a public area, somebody could wander back there and look around and we might not know they were back there", she continued.

The clerk's office shares that back hallway with the Knox County Sheriff's satellite office. It was their idea to keep that door locked.

Other satellite offices should also restrict public access to their inventory, safe and vault areas. "Our greatest responsibility is to take care of the taxpayer's money. That responsibility extends to the valuable plates, placards and decals that the State of Tennessee issues to us", said Knox County Clerk, Foster D. Arnett, Jr.

Regarding the break-in, the Knox County Sheriff's Department is still investigating.

Employee Anniversaries In March

1st--Rell Smith
3rd--Chris Lynch
12th--Vicki Murphy-Dilbeck
25th--Ed Smith