







# Inside the Statehouse with Steve Flowers

*Steve Flowers is Alabama's leading political columnist. His weekly column on Alabama politics appears in over 60 Alabama newspapers. He served 16 years in the state legislature.*

[www.steveflowers.us](http://www.steveflowers.us)

## STELLAR GROUP STUDYING GAMBLING IN THE STATE



*The views of submitted editorials may not be the express views of The Alabama Gazette.*

Another legislation session has passed, and Alabama still has no lottery. Actually, the legislature does not in itself have the authority to pass a state lottery, they can only authorize a ballot initiative to let you vote on a lottery. It takes a constitutional amendment.

The lottery would pass in a vote in Alabama simply because Alabamians are tired of their money going out of state to Georgia, Florida, Mississippi and Tennessee. All our surrounding Southern sister states have lotteries and Alabamians are buying lottery tickets in those states, paving their roads, and educating their students. It would pass in Alabama in a unified bipartisan vote. Alabamians who would not or never have bought a lottery ticket would vote for it, and those that must trek to our bordering states to buy them definitely would vote in favor. It is well known that the locations that sell the highest numbers of lottery tickets in Florida and Georgia are on the Alabama border.

The lottery proposal this year was doomed from the beginning because Governor Kay Ivey in her State-of-the-State address announced that she was taking an interest in the issue and announced a study group to study gambling policy for the state. Governor Ivey had never taken a position for or against gambling as Lt. Governor or during her campaign for governor or as Governor. Therefore, when she took to the stage in the State-of-the-State, it was apparent that she was finally weighing in on the issue.

Well, folks, she did not just appoint any old study group, she quickly named a panel of Alabamians that are blue chip, top of the chart, super Alabama leaders. This distinguished group is above reproach and have no ties or for that matter no real interest in gambling. Most of them have probably never even bought a lottery ticket or pulled a slot machine lever. However, you can bet that this group will come up with a wise and prudent approach to how Alabama should address the gambling solution for our state.

Kay Ivey has been able to get the best citizens in Alabama to participate in major decisions and initiatives. However, it would be difficult to find a bluer ribbon, stellar accomplished group of Alabamians as she has selected and

garnered to serve on this panel to study gambling.

It will be chaired by former Montgomery Mayor, Todd Strange. He has been successful in business and government and is above reproach and well respected. Other members of this impressive group include Rey Almodovar of Huntsville, who founded and runs a major engineering firm in the Rocket City; Deborah Barnhart of Huntsville, who is the Chief Executive Officer emerita of the U.S. Space and Rocket Center in Huntsville; Walter Bell of Mobile is the past chairman of the world's largest reinsurance companies and a former Alabama Commissioner of Insurance; Dr. Regina Benjamin of Mobile, who is a physician who served as the 18th Surgeon General of the United States and before that was President of the Medical Association of Alabama; former State Treasurer and retired banker, Young Boozer, who is universally respected; Sam Cochran, who has been Mobile County's Sheriff since 2006; Liz Huntly, a widely respected attorney and child advocate in Birmingham; Carl Jamison of Tuscaloosa, a third-generation shareholder of one of Alabama's largest and oldest public accounting firms; former Alabama Supreme Court Justice and Court of Appeals Judge, Jim Main; and the legendary journalist, Phil Rawls, who recently retired as Alabama's leading and most respected reporter – he covered Alabama government for the Associated Press for 35 years.

Perhaps the most respected and accomplished member of this elite panel is Bishop Dr. Mike Watson. He is the Bishop in Residence at Canterbury Methodist Church in Birmingham and is serving as the Ecumenical Chairman of the Council of Bishops. He has served and founded major Methodist Churches in Dothan and Mobile. He is also the past president of the Mobile School Board. I have known Mike Watson since our college days at the University of Alabama. I have never known a better man.

You will probably see this study group's recommendations on the top of Governor Ivey's agenda when she gives the 2021 State-of-the-State address next February.



**Ronald A. Holtsford**

## HAVE YOU READ ANY INTERESTING CASES LATELY?

I decided to look at the Alabama Supreme Court website for recent slip opinions. A slip opinion is basically the first draft majority opinion of an appellate court before its publication in various case reporters. Looking at the opinions, I noted a couple of things. In addition to the opinions of the Alabama Supreme Court on various cases, there exist several approvals or denials on Writ of Certiorari or Writ of Mandamus. A Writ of Mandamus is used when a

higher court orders a lower court or governmental entity to perform a task that they are legally obligated to do. If a case will not be heard by the highest court of a state or the United States Supreme Court as a matter of right then a Writ of Certiorari must be presented to that Court. For instance, with the United States Supreme Court, they only accept about 100-150 cases to hear of the 7,000 or so Writs of Certiorari that are filed by petitioners. Typically, those cases accepted need to be timely as to national issues and must be acceptable to a minimum of four justices.

With these odd times the United States Supreme Court has adapted. Live oral arguments have been available recently as the Supreme Court Justices have sheltered in place and conducted telephonic cases. Chief Justice John Roberts of course procedurally conducted the cases calling on each Justice to have the opportunity to ask counsel for the parties various questions of fact. Justices are given the opportunity to question based first on the Chief Justice then upon seniority. Of interest I heard Justice Thomas ask several questions as his time came around. Justice Thomas is known for generally not asking many questions during in person proceedings. It is reported that whenever Justice Thomas asks a question everyone gets very quiet because he is an infrequent questioner and the wisdom of his questions is soaked in by those listening. The other interesting item was Justice Ginsburg phoning in and participating from her hospital room after a recent hospitalization.

One slip opinion that I reviewed from mid-May was the Alabama Supreme Court case, Deborah K. Shannon v Jenna Kathryn Smith. This was an appeal from The Jefferson County Circuit Court. Started simply enough as Smith was stopped behind Shannon at a red light in 2016. When the light changed to green, Smith's cell phone fell down by her feet and she began to move forward. Problem is, Shannon was not and was rear ended by Smith who later claimed neck and shoulder pain as well as vertigo and migraines. I just have to wonder how fast Smith could have been going.

Though Shannon sought treatment even by a chiropractor and acupuncturist she claimed she was unable to manage her pain. In June 2017, Shannon sued Smith for over \$47,000 for medical expenses, compensatory damages for pain and suffering as well as punitive damages. While Smith acknowledged her fault she objected to the injuries.

This is where you see some top notch lawyering. There was good evidence that these injuries had occurred prior to the accident. Shannon's treating physician testified that the injuries could be from the accident but Smith's counsel brought forth that Shannon had not previously admitted as being in the Atlanta Axe Throwing League. Shannon had not told her treating physician about her axe throwing participation and the injuries that she was suffering from

were also consistent with axe throwing. Fortunately these were axe throwing injuries and not as a result of being the recipient of a thrown axe. It seems there

was not a lot of knowledge about Shannon's prior medical history. Records from a Georgia urgent care were also produced that showed treatment for dizziness and migraines about seven months before the accident. The jury in the trial court believed Smith and Shannon asked for a new trial, which was denied.

Shannon appealed and it was held that the trial court acted within its discretion by denying a new trial. Smith had shown good evidence that the injuries existed before the accident so there was absolutely no reason for a new trial.

With no knowledge of Shannon's build I have to believe a woman that throws an axe in competition has such a sturdy build to withstand a small bump from a vehicle as they begin to move following a red light. Certainly not an exciting group of facts from the accident but the sleuthful revelation of an axe thrower was an eye opener. I almost have to believe the Supreme Court was more interested in this axe thrower than to affirm a lower court's decision where strong evidence was bias enough against a new trial.

Just a side note, I have had the pleasure to meet both former Chief Justice Lynn Stuart and current Chief Justice Tom Parker. At separate meetings they were both kind enough to ask if they could join me for a small breakfast. Both very nice and engaging individuals. If you happen to look at the Alabama Supreme Court web site and read the biographies of the justices I think you will be very impressed by their educational and professional histories. They are as a group some of Alabama's brightest jurists and we are blessed to have them. The justices of the United States Supreme Court are chosen by the sitting President; they are vetted and then either voted for in the affirmative or rejected. Their perceived leanings are important factors in the judicial determinations and the effect on the people of the United States. As an example a majority liberal leaning court held for "Jane Roe" in Roe v Wade, based on a woman's privacy. Since that time various conservative leaning states have attempted to protect the unborn using various legal strategies. There is certainly an argument for legislative approved jurists even though the appointment is for life. Alabama uses a vote to determine its justices. As long as Alabama remains a conservative leaning state the Alabama Supreme Court will on occasion butt heads with the United States Supreme Court. But these justices serve at the pleasure of the voters and their terms are generally much shorter than those on the Federal bench for various reasons.

***Shelter when possible and stay safe!***



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**The Alabama  
Gazette**  
**Office (334) 356-6700**

**Volume 20  
Issue 9  
©2020**



**The Alabama Gazette**  
**16 pages / 2 sections**

The Gazette, (*now The Alabama Gazette*) was created in the year 2000 for the people of Central Alabama with the intent of being a thought-provoking, non-partisan publication reaching over 20,000 readers monthly. Written comments, stories, advertisements, social and church events, as well as classifieds are always welcome. The publisher is not responsible for errors in text reprinted from other sources. Furthermore, this publication does not establish due diligence on authors or advertisers and cannot guarantee that their offerings or writings are correct or suitable. We assume no responsibility for errors or omissions. We reserve the right to print, edit or condense any and all contents submitted. The publisher reserves the right to refuse advertising and submissions at its own discretion. All articles, ads and photographs may be subject to copyright.

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# ROBSEVATIONS...

by Robert Tate

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## THINGS I HAVE LEARNED DURING LOCKDOWN

It is amazing to me that so many people have had such a hard time during the lockdown. I am not talking about the financial issues that are affecting most people because those issues are real and agonizing for many. Never underestimate the stresses that others are undergoing. What I am talking about, however, are the people that are becoming increasingly restive to the point of violence because of sheer boredom. People are getting angry and irritated about some pretty stupid, meaningless stuff. Sitting back and watching the meltdown of some, I have begun to piece together some things I have learned during our Wuhan Lockdown. For me, this has been a time for reflection and thought. But here is some of what I have learned.

1. I love being home with my wife. Not so much that I have just now learned this, but every day it is hammered home that I do not mind being in her presence every single day. In fact, there is no other place I would rather be and if I do have to be somewhere else, I clearly want her there as well. I cannot believe all the stories, memes and video clips I see of people, hopefully they're acting, that don't like being at home with their spouse. That is certainly not my reality. When retirement does come, I will not be that guy who has to go push shopping carts at Walmart just to avoid being home.

2. Led Zeppelin. I love Led Zeppelin. I always have. During this lockdown, I have rediscovered how much I love their music and why, in my not-so-humble opinion, they are the greatest Rock band in history. Their music is just that good. The music that Page, Plant, Bonham and Jones made is magic. I was fortunate enough to see them in concert back in high school and I wish I had been able to fully appreciate them for what truly gifted musicians they were/ are. Now that I "play at" guitar, I appreciate their music even more. Rock on!

3. Professional sports. Here is something that I have felt for years now but has really come to fruition these past couple of months. **WHO CARES????** Personally, I have come to really hate professional sports. For me at least, I don't see how a grown person can go to a stadium, watch millionaires play baseball, basketball or whatever, wearing a jersey with some guy's name on the back, cheer and get angry all while spending a ton of money to watch, did I mention millionaires, play a sport. One thing this lockdown has shown us is certainly one group of non-essential workers. I get it, people like to watch sports, as do I at times, but where the proverbial rubber hits the road, professional sports, to me at least, is way at the bottom of my "I could not care less" list.

There was an article today saying that some NFL players will test positive as they move ahead with the season. Without sounding too mean spirited, I just want to say, "I don't care." I don't. Not one bit. Not about anyone getting the virus because that is tragic for anybody. But I do not care, not in the least, about the NFL season. My give-a-hoot level for professional basketball is even less. As an example of how much I hate professional basketball, let me paraphrase a routine from the comedic duo Stiller and Meara. As a married couple, they were having an argument, Meara says to Stiller, "You know how much I hate you? If I could take every grain of sand on the planet and write the words 'I hate you' on it, and then multiply that number by infinity, that is how much I hate you." Yeah, that is me and basketball. Pretty much. But the bottom line of the lockdown, professional sports, to me, has proven to be quite worthless in the big scheme of things. Just don't mess with my SEC football.

3. Hollywood. Want to talk about non-essentials? I love going to the movies with my wife. The popcorn, the candy, the experience. But in reality, is it that important? Not really. 'Nuf said.

4. Aggressive Drivers. Coming back into the post-lockdown world, although it has been slow, probably rightfully so, I have seen way too much aggressive driving. My brother said he read an article about people getting out of quarantine and basically losing their minds behind the wheel. I was driving down the Bypass the other day and was fixin' to make a right hand turn into one of the

shopping centers across from Lowes. As a habit, I always look in my rearview mirror to see if the person behind me is slowing down or if I am about to be pummeled by someone. All was good and as I was getting ready to make my right turn, from the right lane, I looked up one more time and I saw this young lady (I am being nice) speeding down the shoulder at around 40 miles per hour. I slammed on my brakes as this troll blew past me, kicking up dirt and rocks since the shoulder there is so small. She didn't even slow down and sped off into the distance, probably on her way to pick up her phoned-in coffee order at Starbucks or more likely she was late for a meeting with her parole officer. Sorry, but no excuse here for that kind of driving. Just be careful out there peeps, I am sure many of you are going to see some crazy driving stunts out there. Protect yourselves.

5. Church from home is not the same. Not even close! Our church has done a fantastic job of live streaming church services, meetings with our pastor and others in our church staff and the creation of teams within the church where members remain in contact with others. But alas, it is not the same. Looking forward to things getting back to normal.

6. Our government lies. No surprise here, I guess. All most of us want is honesty regarding this Wuhan virus. Masks/no masks. Prisoners released will only be non-violent offenders yet almost every day we see stories of violent offenders killing, raping or robbing just days after their release from prison. Just the other day, some low-life career criminal who had been arrested some 70 times in his pathetic life was released and promptly stabbed an 80-year-old woman to death in broad daylight. Hey, if you are going to continue releasing violent criminals, at least let us know when and where so we can protect ourselves. The lies and misinformation seem to come almost daily. The infection rates are up, the rates are down. One state opened their beaches and within two days, supposedly, there was a huge spike in Wuhan cases there. But I thought you told us there was a 14-day gestation period. All we ask for is truth and transparency. Now, the CDC announced that the virus is actually not easily transferred from hard surfaces. But didn't you guys say . . . Never mind.

7. Joe Biden. Like I said in my last Robservation, get that man out of there.

8. Writing. Last of all, I really love to write and am getting a lot of it done these days. That being said, writing historical non-fiction on the scale of my current project is a lot more time consuming than I had first imagined. Most of my published writings have been WW II historical non-fiction because that is what I love. But the early writing stages in this genre is tough. As it should be. Most people do not want to write a book full of historical errors. For example, most mornings I like to write for 2-3 hours and try to knock out 5 to 10 notecards worth of information. Yesterday, in a three-hour writing session, I was only able to finish one card. The day before two. Why? Yesterday, for example, as I was reading over the notes on the card, my stupid brain went into hyper speed over-drive and said, "Hey, T8er. You do realize in such and such book behind you on the shelf, there are a bunch of original documents you haven't thought of using yet. Think of this different angle. You can put all of this in the book." So, there I sit with a desk full of books, my iPad, papers flying around and more and more information to make my case being shoved into Microsoft Word. Facts, facts, check, check, re-check, more facts and this is before I can even hope to get to the fun part, I mean for me the really fun part of editing and rewriting. So, at this stage of the book, it is sluggishly slow, minutia type of work. But I do love it.

9. As I was getting ready to send this in, I saw the following story about a racist Volkswagen advertisement in Germany. I watched it. Yup. Pretty much. And yes, all I drive are Volkswagens. Here's the Link. Brother! My question would be, "Who the heck in Germany thought this was even close to a good idea?" ~ <https://youtu.be/JA8zrtk2YQU>

*So much for my Wuhan lockdown. (Go online to read June's Rob 2.0, pg 1C)*



## Montgomery County, Alabama Sheriff's Office

(334) 832-4980 ♦ [www.montgomerysheriff.com](http://www.montgomerysheriff.com)

**All employees and anyone entering a County building will be required to wear a mask or face covering, have their temperature checked, and practice social distancing.**

### Social Media

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**Register NOW for our Firearms Familiarization Courses for 2020!**

### Firearms Familiarization Course

We know that learning how to protect yourself is very important in today's world. The class is held at our Sheriff D.T. Marshall Firearms Training Center and is FREE to Montgomery County residents! The morning session is classroom instruction on firearm safety and firearm laws. The afternoon session allows citizens to practice shooting on our Firing Range for the remainder of the class (if you would like). All classes are under the instruction of the Montgomery County Sheriff's Office Range Master.



\*\*\*\*\*

#### Course Requirements:

- Montgomery County Citizen
- Obtain a Montgomery County Pistol Permit (prior to the course date)
- Complete an Application for the Course

\*\*\*\*\*

**2020 Course Dates: July 11, August 8, Sept 5, Oct 10**

#### Pistol Permit Questions?

**334.832.1335 or 334.832.1337**

**Course Questions or to Obtain an Application?**

**[Lisa.Crenshaw@mc-ala.org](mailto:Lisa.Crenshaw@mc-ala.org)**

**334.832.1339**

**Your safety is our primary concern; therefore, we ask that you do not bring children to this class.**



**Sheriff Derrick Cunningham**



### Online Pistol Permit Renewal Service Available

The Sheriff's Office is has a new service for the renewal of Pistol Permits for Montgomery County Residents.

The Montgomery County Sheriff's Office will process pistol permit renewals through our new online service. Renewal requests are processed online with Credit/Debit Cards and the new permits will be returned to you by mail. This service will streamline the process and allow residents to renew their Montgomery County Pistol Permit from home. If you have any questions regarding this new service, please contact us at (334)-832-1335.

## Office Protocol: Covid-19 (Coronavirus)

The Sheriff's Office will continue to operate at normal capacity as much as possible via telephone and internet; however, we have listed below a quick reference contact guide to various Sheriff's Office Divisions.

**If you have Pistol Permit or civil-related questions (evictions, subpoenas, etc.), please dial 334.832.1335 or 334.832.1337.**

**If you have warrant-related questions, please dial 334.832.2579 or 334.832.2516.**

**Our Investigations Unit is still actively working and if you need to speak with someone in that Division, please dial 334.832.2532.**

Our office staff will continue working Monday-Friday from 8:00 am-5:00pm. Our website [www.MontgomerySheriff.com](http://www.MontgomerySheriff.com) is a great source of information as well as our app! Our Detention Facility remains closed to all visitation including vendors except for deliveries to maintain the normal operations of the facility. Additionally, inmates will still have access to the phone system to call their loved ones.

*We appreciate your patience during these stressful times and hope to resume normal operations soon.*

**SANITIZE AND STAY ALIVE!**





John W. Giles

(<https://www.alreporter.com/2020/05/12/opinion-an-open-letter-to-the-people-of-alabama-from-jeff-sessions/>). He has served Alabama and the United States with honor, dignity, and courage. When he returns to the Senate, he will again – I have no doubt. Let’s set the record straight.

**Myth #1:** Sessions should not have not accepted the appointment to Attorney General if he knew he would recuse himself.

**FACT:** Jeff had no knowledge of Comey’s secret investigation into the Trump Campaign until after he was sworn in as Attorney General. Then he discovered he was, as a critical member of the campaign, both subject of and witness to the investigation. He could not morally or legally oversee such an investigation and recused himself. The law is clear – the Attorney General cannot direct or shape any investigation of a campaign in which he was a central figure. Jeff refused to break the law – he cannot and will not break the law because his principles are built on bedrock. Simply put, Sessions recused to avoid violating his conscience and breaking the law.

**Myth #2:** Sessions allowed Comey to serve as Director of FBI.

**FACT:** Sessions advised President Trump from the beginning to fire Comey and repeatedly thereafter. Only the president can hire or fire the FBI director under law. The President did not immediately take Sessions’ advice, and terminated Comey months later on May 9, 2017, after Sessions had already turned over the investigation to the Deputy Attorney General appointed by President Trump.

**Myth #3:** Sessions should have resigned after recusal.

**FACT:** The morning after of the Mueller appointment as Special Counsel, Sessions personally handed a letter of resignation to the President. Trump refused to accept the resignation, writing on the letter itself, “Not Accepted” and “Make American Great Again.”

**Myth #4:** Sessions was a weak Attorney General and should not have recused.

## Jeff Sessions Myths Dispelled

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**FACT:** When Sessions left office in November 2018, former Attorney General for Ronald Reagan Ed Meese, Attorney General to George W. Bush, and now-Attorney General Bill Barr wrote: “Jeff Sessions ... has been an outstanding attorney general ... [and] set an example of personal grace and dignity under enormous pressure...focused on fulfilling the mandate of the administration in which he has served. He has acted always out of concern not for his personal legacy but rather for the legacy of the Justice Department and the rule of law.”

Jeff is the epitome of strength under pressure – serving President Trump dutifully and honorably at every step. As Attorney General, he tackled rising crime, taking on violent illegal alien gangs like MS-13, cracking down on so-called “sanctuary cities,” and launching the most aggressive project to uncover and prosecute Chinese spies in the US. He fought on all counts and won.

Jeff’s decision to follow the law was evidence of the courage of his convictions and his commitment to do what is right, no matter what. If he had not followed the law, it would have enabled the President’s enemies to say that the investigation was corrupt and prevented both President Trump’s and Session’s full exoneration.

**Myth #5:** Trump will not be able to work with Sessions as U.S. Senator.

**FACT:** Jeff was the first Senator to endorse Trump for President – even when everyone thought he was nuts. Jeff was simply doing what was right – for Alabama and for America. He campaigned tirelessly for President Trump; he served as the chairman of Trump’s National Security committee on the campaign, and served him and his America First agenda dutifully as Attorney General. They share the same priorities – ensuring a strong military, protecting the unborn and our Second Amendment, confronting China’s lies and theft, bringing back “Made in America,” and securing our borders. There will be no better America First ally for President Trump in the Senate than Jeff Sessions. Jeff has never said a negative word about the President or written a tell-all book. That’s not the Jeff I know – he doesn’t hold grudges; he holds fiercely to his principles.

**Myth #6:** Sessions begged to become AG.

**FACT:** As his first major supporter and central architect of the America First agenda, Sessions helped Trump become president. At President Trump’s request, Jeff was the one to formally nominate President Trump at the 2016 Republican Convention. They worked side by side for months, and Jeff was honored to be asked to become Attorney General and serve the President and the American people. When called, Sessions answers but Jeff never begs – never once.

*John W. Giles is the past President of the Christian Coalition of Alabama and has publicly endorsed Sessions.*



John Martin

As I am writing this (mid-May, 2020), the American people are still suffering from the sanctions that our governors, mayors and other authorities have imposed onto them and the U. S. economy. Unfortunately, most of us are still ignorant of the catastrophic, long-term consequences. At this time, it is impossible to calculate the final cost. But people who are knowledgeable about economics can understand that this three month shutdown of much of our business will total in the trillions of dollars. (The latest estimate I have seen so far is sixteen trillion, but if things don’t open up quickly, this figure could jump much higher.) When the dust finally settles, perhaps two or three years later, most people will begin to understand that this massive and needless combination of overreach and abuse from multiple government perpetrators will reveal itself as the greatest act of world-wide treason and forced economic suicide in history.

For centuries, we have had epidemics, both great and small, and we have gone through them with little long-term consequences. Somehow this year, for the first time ever, governments all over the world, including ours, have imposed unprecedented abuses onto their populations that are violating civil rights and destroying economies everywhere.

Chuck Baldwin, rightfully, called this outlandish overreaction “the greatest con job against our Constitution and Bill of Rights.... These unconstitutional and dictatorial lockdowns and shutdowns must never be allowed to happen again.... We must make the motto, ‘Never Again.’”

What will be the consequences of this outrage? I doubt that even one person in ten is aware of the grave catastrophe that will soon sweep all over the world.

For starters, think about what happens when economies shut down. First, people lose their jobs and end up with no incomes to support themselves. Next, the production of goods and services quickly diminishes, resulting in serious shortages. Next, with few people producing income, tax revenues plummet, which means there is no money to assist the masses of unemployed and provide other essential services. And finally, social unrest can balloon to the point of riots and even a civil war—a “Mad Max” scenario that nobody would even want to imagine.

Instead of thousands of people dying, the death toll could run into the millions. Even if we open up everything and go immediately back to normal, several years might be needed for our economy to fully recover. But if we drag these roadblocks several more months into the future, like California is planning, a full recovery might take decades, if ever.

So what would have happened if we had never implemented any of these sanctions? Some people would jump up and scream that thousands more people would die from the “dreaded” COVID-19. Yes, a few more might die, but throughout our history of past epidemics, we have survived and recovered. We could have done it this year if our government “leaders” had enough common sense to withhold foolish actions and had left it up to the people to decide for themselves how much “safety” they wanted and allowed them to carry on their businesses and lifestyles unimpeded.

Instead, our foolish, power-hungry politicians demanded impossible sacrifices, and large masses of people, at least at first, obediently followed their orders like a swarm of lemmings and marched into the sea of destruction and despair.

Today, thankfully, more people are resisting. A week or two of “stay at home” with no income, no recreation, and no travel can be managed. But extend that to several months, while rent, bills, debts and other obligations pile up, the majority of us will suffer irreparable losses. Jobs, homes, families, goods and

## The Oppression Continues

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services, and even lives can be destroyed.

Paul Noel, a registered nurse at Huntsville, Alabama, had this to say: “The current situation is being defaulted to try to save all sick persons. The problem is that it is being done at the expense of society as a whole to even survive. By not making a decision to go back to work, we are condemning millions of our fellow citizens to DEATH by starvation. That is already threatening to be much more of a killer than COVID-19 could ever be.

“This is the choice of opening up. Yes people will die. Yes, it will be rough. But if we don’t open up, the situation will begin more with each passing day to kill thousands, then millions of people as we fail to support our people. The claim of ‘non essential jobs’ is a lie. The lifeguard at the beach isn’t essential? We can close the beach, but when we do, we end his LIFE! When we tell people not to go on vacations, we do the same thing for those who run hotels and make meals, etc. THERE ARE NO NONESSENTIAL JOBS! ALL JOBS ARE ESSENTIAL. This is why freedom is worth dying for, for without it there is no LIFE.”

Jon Michael Sakamoto wrote: “The longer we lock down, the more permanent the damage to our economy becomes.... Everybody needs that to live, right? So what happens when our supply chain closes down? We starve! Our kids’ educations... part of the economy. Our military, law enforcement, Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, food stamps. What about the fuel we need to run our vehicles and provide power to our homes? What happens when that goes away? Every government program is funded by the government’s ability to tax. But if there is no income to tax, what then.... So... it’s not that we think it’s ok to open the country again; it’s that we realize that not to open back up is certain death for millions!”

Steve McCann said: “Hundreds of thousands of businesses are on the verge of bankruptcy and permanent closure. 33+ million are unemployed; many are forced against their will to be dependent on government largess... A thriving economy, the kind we are now destroying, is the source of our security, the financing of our health care system and our children’s future. Without it, this nation as we know it will cease to exist.”

So how do we deal with the coronavirus? We do it the same way we have dealt with the flu (and all other epidemics) in the past. We let the people decide how to take care of themselves, and LEAVE THEM ALONE. Government mandates are NEVER the solution.

The ONLY SOLUTION TODAY is to IMMEDIATELY STOP the lockdowns, “stay at homes,” shutdowns and all other mandates that have been imposed and let the people return to their jobs and everyday activities.

### SOURCES

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## Murders in Montgomery City & Montgomery County for 2020

This year has been a deadly one for citizens of Montgomery and surrounding areas. As of June 5, Montgomery and rural Montgomery County have experienced 31 homicides. Below is a list of the reported incidents by the Montgomery Police Department or the Montgomery County Sheriff’s Department identifying the location of murders by gunfire or other methods.

Jan 6	700 blk of Coliseum Blvd	Apr 1	2200 blk of Cherry St	May 29	3900 Norman Bridge Rd
Jan 12	5900 blk of Monticello Dr	Apr 10	S Decatur and Arba	May 30	700 blk of Grave’s St
Jan 17	4200 blk Mobile Hwy	Apr 14	Regency Park Comm Ctr (stabbing)	Jun 2	4100 blk Troy Hwy
Jan 18	2800 blk of Vaughn Plaza Rd	Apr 18	200 blk of E Woodland Dr	Jun 4	5000 blk Woods Crossing
Jan 18	1500 blk of Mobile Hwy	Apr 25	Community of Grady	Jun 5	N. Panama & Madison
Jan 23	2300 blk of Stella St	Apr 26	4000 blk of Norman Bridge	<b>Total for 2020 through June 5 **31**</b>	
Jan 30	1800 blk of Hillsdale Dr	Apr 29	1700 blk of Jackson Ferry Rd/Witcher	<b>Total for 2019, 45 victims</b>	
Feb 2	4000 blk of LH Hamilton Rd	May 3	1500 blk of Jean St	<b>Sources:</b> <a href="http://www.gunviolencearchive.org">www.gunviolencearchive.org</a>	
Feb 11	700 blk of Sandra St	May 6	2900 blk McQueen St	<a href="http://www.crimemapping.com">www.crimemapping.com</a>	
Mar 8	Greenbrook Dr	May 6	4400 Danbury Ct	<a href="http://www.montgomeryadvertiser.com">www.montgomeryadvertiser.com</a>	
Mar 9	900 blk W South Blvd	May 19	1300 blk Woodmere		
Mar 11	1000 E Blvd (beating- died Apr 12)	May 19	Seibles Rd and Narrow Lane		
Mar 19	2200 Woodley Sq	May 20	Radio Two Rd N Peake Rd (Ramer)		



*The views of this editorial may not express the views of The Alabama Gazette.*

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## THE GREAT BAILOUT: struggling to our next abnormalcy



The struggle from DC on down to my Lee County commissioners (along with politburo mayors) in the effort toward our next distorted result is full steam ahead. Gamblers on Wall Street – investors is poor nomenclature where market forces no longer drive results – reveal they're betting that 'whatever can be bailed-out WILL be bailed-out' remains Trumpocrat policy as Dow, NASDAQ and S&P exchange indices return to "bubble, bubble toil and trouble" results. The recent \$3 trillion air patch (more trillion dollar patches to come with the usual 'worst of both worlds' bipartisan outcomes) didn't allow 'fed air' to escape much below the last big 'TARP' of hot air to avoid market discipline from the 2008 Fannie/Freddie fraud result. While poorly educated leaders like McCain and Obama evoked 'Too big to fail' platitudes; only a handful of non-soviet economists offered a corollary that GM, Goldman, et al had long been 'too big to exist' except for government distortions.

The so-called 'Great Recession' was a high watermark for the federal government to prosecute and imprison administrator, banker, bureaucrat, developer, et al fraud and bring Fannie and Freddie to end or at least again require 20% for mortgages to weather a downturn and not be upside down for 'strategic defaults' and other despicable actions. I'm guessing some of my readers were much like me before getting my first mortgage (did without for years to come up with the 20% down payment and pay for lower points) to think themselves foolish in retrospect... the Prodigal son's brother is nothing new. Finance Professors and economists who championed mortgages in excess of valuations were seen as great experts as they proffered FDIC stress like Lowder's Colonial Bank folly. It appears most of them did very well and were promoted in modern academia as facilitators/supporters of more government power.

The crisis *du jour* is often used to empower more government bureaucracy and power; instead of reducing our unconstitutional military engagements abroad to reduce blowback, the attacks were a great way to install our KGB (Dept. of Homeland Security) and further federal subsidization of the airline industry. Yet another 'too big to exist' except for the distortions of govt. 'regulations,' eminent domain abuse, tax breaks, etc. Perhaps the only exception in my lifetime was the federal response to an 'existential threat' from TMI (Three Mile Island) invisible radiation. What were the odds our President at the time was a nuclear physicist with strong moral character (unlike the type of strength observed from more modern executives) to actually know what he was talking about and provide sound leadership. Of course there would be no private nuclear power plants without govt. protection – no insurance company would dare contract for such a devastating liability. How many said the world would end without nuclear fueled electricity to continue growth? Carter sure took his lumps for blocking new nuclear plants and advocating coal as the more rational result. Many economists cite Carter refusing to play games with the money supply before an election as foolish – it took courage to employ Volker and stand by him after the LBJ/Nixon years – don't expect this from our current executive. His loss gave us an even bigger govt. Democrat from Nixon's California, running as a Republican, who exploded debt per capita not seen since FDR.

Some asked my thoughts on China which stemmed from the President I consider the worst in my lifetime. My 'mind's eye' can still picture Pop's "Nixon's thru in '72," bumper sticker on the back of his old blue 1965 Chevy Bellaire – not that I think McGovern would've been much better given the

advocating even more crowding into urban areas – seems they didn't like my questions about likely health/pollution issues if history was any guide. Anyone not in-line with the soviet end had to be silenced/shown to be a pariah for the UN show.

If we DID have/elect people wanting a more Constitutional policy following Article 1, Section 8, Clause 1 which states, "all imposts, duties and excises shall be uniform throughout the United States," and it is universally accepted that "imposts, duties and excises" are antiquated words for what are more commonly called tariffs today – i.e., taxes on imports – we'd observe more production of our comparative advantage. Before the Republican Party gave us the first federal income tax there were enough members of Congress who held to their oath of office impeding such a deleterious tax upon their nation. This design leads one to understand why there was NOT a two year appropriations limit put on the Navy, as is placed upon the Army – also not followed today. Those who wrote and ratified the Constitution wisely feared large, long standing federal armies, but realised a Navy would be an integral part of defining, defending and enforcing property rights on the high seas to facilitate regular commerce.

That's why so much ink is spilled on maritime issues, piracy, etc. in the enumerated powers. Navy and Marines would operate under the same administration (reduce duplication and yes that means abolishing the FBI to increase the investigatory division of the US Marshals, shutting down the CIA, NSA, et al agencies for ONI to again be effective) for immediate deployment requirements and Congress could decide to decrease or increase arsenals, bases, dock yards, forts, equipment, magazines, soldiers, sailors and ships when forecasting how great a defense force would be required to address those few issues the people of the States ceded to federal authority. Now we have a Commander in Chief who wants to crucify a Capitan trying to defend his aircraft carrier, righteously caring for his assets and crew in his charge to defend our nation of States. Even more illustrative, it seems our current executive doesn't understand the labour distortion of an income tax imbedded in export prices where cost of trade is not incorporated into imports discouraging domestic production.

In some empathetic way I want to applaud the dumb masses who champion 'build the wall.' They sense something is wrong, but almost all had govt. education or politically correct private education (delighted to read more are seriously considering home schooling given where our nation is headed) to have no idea how the federal govt. was designed to work. Once ONI put Wuhan on the hot-spot list, customs checks and (if warranted) quarantine those coming into States financed by the tariff on their ticket, bill of lading, etc. If one wants to voluntarily (unlike our sailors/marines) be on some monstrous cruise ship 'petri dish' – OK with me, do it on your own dime. The uniform tariff on that ticket will be used to pay for quarantine accommodations when deemed necessary. Those who cannot properly provide documents (some may recall 'Without Papers' when we had a more functioning system) must be held for the duration instead of locking down 50 States under the current failed result. There was a time when we understood to 'flatten the curve' you had to get in front of it before letting it into your economic system. Now with our overbuilt airports, roads, etc. (there would be much fewer overland truckers suffering the current circumstances if the ICC had not killed our railroads – most tractor trailers would be making trips from rail hubs to local destinations) contagions of this sort move much more quickly with increased difficulty to contain and trace/follow contact trails.

If we returned to a more rational federal funding source and used existing land from our coastal fort system (as they became more obsolete) we would've been able to accommodate those requiring quarantine. These facilities would also be available for those attempting to abuse the unconstitutional system which has evolved these past several score without separating families and other inhumane detainee results. Don't expect Trump to applaud ONI and end CIA, FBI, Homeland Security, NSA, et al alphabet soup – he's more interested in TV ratings and championing the "Space Force" too ignorant to know it is the Navy's job; much of the nautical tools to solve the navigation problems of inner space translate into problem solving for outer space. Please do not send me reasons you think equally corrupt Biden will somehow be an improvement – I'm ashamed of those who continue to defend these two pieces of carbon of such poor character and integrity. Do you really think Ukraine Joe understands much less will somehow now champion the Constitutional result instead of struggling to another even more virulent, abnormal result? Those who support and vote

for Bidens/Trumps ARE the problem – sadly those least able to defend themselves from their harm are also the ones who least understand. As usual they'll suffer the most while adoring the strong man destroying them.

**Postscript:** thanks for the many kind calls, e-mails, letters, posts, etc. on the passing of my earthly father. Some assumed he was a victim of Covid-19 which is untrue... he died peacefully (just after his 90th birthday) of natural causes associated with being blessed to have lived such a good long life. He delightfully expected to be home from the hospital later that day as a victim of circumstances prohibiting visits from those he loved for days. Knowing he was good with God was best inheritance my father could possibly leave me. It was difficult to see so many family and others who held him dear banned from attending his funeral services – esp. at the gravesite where it could've easily accommodated distancing requirements. Similarly difficult to endure bureaucrats and politburo down here say it is 'time to circle the wagons' in true self-serving spirit for their own ends with the usual 'Judas rhetoric' of claiming to care about the poor and disadvantaged. My father was a strong, wise man who understood he had to be strong and of enough means to be able to take care of his family and have enough to help others. I ask all to show similar strength and wisdom in the difficult times to come. I don't have names to specifically pray to my Heavenly Father for those who were with my earthly father during his final days, but I'm certain God knows who they are and the reason for my prayer – we're blessed to still have good people of this sort in our midst in these terrible times which could have been attenuated. My father earned being around good souls of this Spirit and a peaceful exit.



duopoly choices. Nixon foolishly opened China aiding and abetting the communists desperately propping up their command economy. It would've been difficult for such a vast over-centralised system to avoid imploding without our trade – esp. under the modern federal income tax subsidized trade result. Some may recall a column advocating return to a more Constitutional/rational trade policy instead of observed bi-polar swings between rabid free-traders and protectionists: <https://www.alabamagazette.com/story/2018/02/01/opinion/toward-a-more-rational-constitutional-immigration-policy/1275.html>

We're no longer in the era of an impeached president with decency to follow a statesmen like Barry Goldwater's (very scarce in today's Senate) advice and resign. Now we're in an era of pardons which would make corrupt Gerald Ford blush. Today we have impeachment/acquittal Kabuki theatre to inoculate Biden and Trump from consequences – again, still waiting to 'Lock Her Up.' Imagine if all that time and effort had been devoted toward the federal government accomplishing those few things authorised in the document so we'd be less exposed to and closer to viral (not political) inoculation or at least less virulent, "flatter" results.

Some reports have ONI (Office of Naval Intelligence) noting the Wuhan flu/SARS CoV2 in mid November. If we had executives who understood the Constitution and took their oath of office seriously, they would've inquired if our Sailors and Marines were being kept out of harm's way and if customs were making arrangements to block and check persons coming from this 'hot spot.' I know Kabuki players argue origination from a lab, wet market, etc. IT DOESN'T MATTER. In fact, I expect China, Russia, et al to lie about things of this sort similarly corrupt as we've become on black ops, currency manipulation, etc. these past several score. I wish more knew about our Constitution and history – the 'Spanish flu' of 1918-9 got the name not because of origination but because their press was not controlled enough to cover it up early on in Europe. Imagine how less profound that pandemic may have been in the US without so many infected returning from WWI had we allowed Europe to stay in their horrific stalemate instead of paving the way for German National Socialists two decades later.

Again, this is a result of poorly educated executives installed by our anti-competitive election process which puts Bushes, Clintons, Obamas, Trumps in power... they simply don't care/know what they are authorised/supposed to do, more interested in their own ends. I applaud Trump getting rid of the White House pandemic response unit and stop federal funding of the WHO (and CDC if on a roll) along with other things not authorised to the central government and left to States. It does make sense to have a few at the ICC prepared to have a pandemic plan in place to keep commerce regular (exchange of information and equipment to highest valued destinations) when an outbreak/hot-spot(s) arise within a State. Money spent on WHO, CDC, etc. is unconstitutional and would be better spent in the Navy to immediately identify and work on response for national security and advise customs on severity. I remember being 'quarantined' at an Agenda 21 meeting put on by the Lee County politburo





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# Did We Give Informed Consent?

Our Federal and state governments implemented unprecedented measures beginning in March to stem the spread of COVID-19. Informed consent provides a foundation of medical ethics. Did our elected officials and public health experts get our informed consent for policies that have put 30 million Americans out of work?

Medical experiments have often been performed on unsuspecting subjects, like the infamous Tuskegee Experiment. The U.S. Public Health Service in 1932 began studying the health effects of syphilis on African- American men recruited with a promise of free health care. Even after penicillin emerged as a treatment, the study participants still only received placebos and went untreated until public revelation in 1972. Informed consent became the ethical dividing line. According to the American Medical Association, “The process of informed consent occurs when communication between a patient and physician results in the patient’s authorization or agreement to undergo a specific medical intervention.” A patient should be provided information on “the burdens, risks, and expected benefits of all options, including foregoing treatment.”

We canceled sports and public gatherings, closed schools and universities, and shuttered nonessential businesses to “flatten the curve.” The new Coronavirus can be transmitted by persons without any symptoms, so isolating the sick is not necessarily effective for COVID-19. Millions of cases over just a few months would overwhelm hospitals; avoidable deaths would result from critically ill patients not receiving the best possible care.

Several epidemiological studies offered frightening worst-case scenarios. The highly influential study from Imperial College in London projected that 81% of Americans would get the illness with 2.2 million deaths. Stay-at-home orders seemed prudent to prevent such a disaster.

Yet even extreme social distancing will not prevent COVID-19 cases and deaths, only delay them. Everyone is potentially susceptible to a brand-new virus; staying home to keep from getting sick does not change this fact. That

two weeks or two months of lockdown would prevent the feared deaths from ever occurring was a false hope.

The epidemiological models did not hide this. The Imperial College study warned that with relaxation of suppression measures, “transmission will rapidly rebound, potentially producing an epidemic comparable in scale to what would have been seen had no interventions been adopted.” To avoid these 2.2 million deaths, our current policies would “need to be maintained until a vaccine becomes available (potentially 18 months or more).”

Herein lies the potential lack of informed consent. Was it ever clearly explained that our policies were merely going to delay the health crisis? Would we have chosen to bear such immense economic pain for only a stay of execution?


The policies implemented in March will likely prove unsustainable. The nationwide lockdown was inevitably going to either be relaxed or simply collapse as Americans began ignoring the orders, and long before a vaccine or cure would be available. The policy debate has been couched as a choice between public health or the economy, an unconstrained pandemic or a depression. Our unsustainable policies might deliver a depression and a pandemic.

Our delaying action though has bought us time. We have learned more about the foe. We have controlled trial evidence that Remdesivir effectively treats COVID-19 (it is not a cure, but it helps). Doctors have learned that some healthy young persons who have fallen seriously ill were having an immune system overreaction to COVID. And some patients may have been ventilated too quickly.

We have also expanded health care system capacity. Temporary hospitals have been established and ICU beds added. We can test many more people for the virus now and have antibody blood tests as well. We should soon have adequate supplies of protective equipment for health care and nursing home workers.

Knowledge and preparedness should save lives in a potential “second wave.” We can use lessons learned to help reopen businesses and schools safely. Buying time may prove to be the shutdown’s greatest benefit.



 **Perry O. Hooper Jr**  
Republican State Executive Committee  
Former State Representative

*The views of submitted editorials may not be the express views of The Alabama Gazette.*

# MEET THESE UNSUNG HEROES

There are many unsung heroes in Alabama’s fight against the Wuhan novel Coronavirus-19. 175 of them are working tirelessly in the Unified Command center, a “war room” set up by the Governor to lead Alabama’s 24/7 response to the pandemic.

Located in the RSA Tower in downtown Montgomery, Alabama’s Unified Command for COVID-19 Response is a team comprised of four state agencies – the Alabama Department of Public Health (ADPH), Alabama Emergency Management Agency (AEMA), Alabama National Guard, and Alabama Forestry Commission. Together, they have joined forces to lead the state's effort to fight the deadly coronavirus.

Retired Col. Jim Hawkins of the Alabama National Guard came back from the private sector to help coordinate this herculean effort. Agencies are working together collaboratively for the good of the state. AEMA Director Brian Hasting pointed out that at any time other cabinet agencies can be called upon to assist.

“People bring so many different skill sets and so much expertise,” Harris said. “Things that we don’t have internally at the Health Department, and so we are so fortunate to have all of that in Alabama and have all of that on the same team working together.”

In the data division, masked Guardsmen collect information about how many beds, ventilators and intensive care unit spaces are available, providing as close to real-time information as possible to the Department of Public Health and the state. According to Dr. Harris “We’re not making policy in the unified command. We’re arming the administration with the facts.”

The logistics division takes requests from medical facilities and first responders around the state for more protective equipment like masks and gloves. They use the National Guard, Alabama Forestry Commission and public health

employees to distribute material from the state’s stockpile to places where it is most needed.

Procurement efforts are led by Ken Reid and Bethany Elliot. Reid is the subject matter expert (SME) and vets all PPE for authenticity and approval. Elliott is head of the procurement team and negotiates product selection and purchases products along with Joint Unified Command. ”Tracking down the PPE is getting somewhat easier but is still a challenge.

Our normal supply chains were almost non-existent, they just didn't have product enough to support everyone and so we needed to go outside of the normal supply chains, she stated.

Nursing home residents are vulnerable because chronic health conditions place them at risk for serious illness and possibly death if they become sick from COVID-19. Medical Operations Branch Chief Col. Lisa Pierce said her team is focusing its attention on nursing home facilities and the kind of decontamination services they need. The National Guard is providing those services free of charge and is training the nursing homes on how to properly sanitize. These services would cost as much as \$10,000 per facility.

They are always thinking ahead. As we press forward, they are planning on how they will support the reopening of schools. All four state agencies have been working together since late March, putting aside all individual egos, and doing what is best for the state of Alabama.

This operation is another prime example of Governor Kay Ivey’s leadership. She does not crave attention posturing in front of the cameras as so many Blue State governors are doing. Her only motivation is to get Alabama safely back to work and back to school while taking extra precautions protecting the most vulnerable from this unseen enemy. Please join me in giving a special thanks to these unsung heroes.

(Go online to read more from Sutter & Hooper in Section C)

## Wuhan Virus in Alabama Update ... continued from front page.

In contrast, the approximate number of deaths during the same period (2016 figures per CDC):


Heart Disease: 6,000	Firearms: 600
Cancer: 5,000	Diabetes: 500
Respiratory Disease (Not)C-19: 1,500	Kidney Disease: 400
Stroke: 1,500	COVID-19: 600
Accidents: 1,300	

It is clear now that the individuals most at risk include the elderly and those with underlying health conditions; the most pronounced being diabetes and obesity. Of reported deaths in Alabama, 98% include these risk factors. The overwhelming number of Alabama citizens either do not have the Wuhan virus, or are asymptomatic, have flu like symptoms for a couple of weeks. Montgomery hospitals are receiving patients throughout the southern part of the state, which has put a significant strain on services, beds and personnel.

According to a press release from the Baptist Health organization, no COVID-19 patients have been transferred to Birmingham.



If you or a loved one has these underlying health conditions, try to stay at home, get outside in your yard and get fresh air and sunlight. Wash hands regularly and limit contact with people you do not know. While many public agencies and businesses are requiring people or suggesting that customers must wear a mask on the premises, wearing a face mask is a debatable issue. Last month, the prestigious New England Journal of Medicine published the following as it relates to face masks:



**The NEW ENGLAND  
JOURNAL of MEDICINE**

May 21, 2020  
N Engl J Med 2020; 382:e63  
DOI: 10.1056/NEJMp2006372

**Excerpt:**

We know that wearing a mask outside health care facilities offers little, if any, protection from infection. Public health authorities define a significant exposure to Covid-19 as face-to-face contact within 6 feet with a patient with symptomatic Covid-19 that is sustained for at least a few minutes (and some say more than 10 minutes or even 30 minutes). The chance of catching Covid-19 from a passing interaction in a public space is therefore minimal. In many cases, the desire for widespread masking is a reflexive reaction to anxiety over the pandemic.

Whatever you decide, please respect those agencies and businesses trying to protect their employees and the public, and also respect your peers while we hope this Pandemic is over soon.





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## SOCIAL SECURITY'S ONLINE SERVICES ARE READY FOR BUSINESS

During this time when our physical offices are closed to the public, you may wonder, "How can I get help from Social Security without visiting an office?" You can find the answer at [www.ssa.gov/onlineservices](http://www.ssa.gov/onlineservices), which links you to some of our most popular online services. You can apply for retirement and disability benefits, appeal a decision, and do much more.

Our newest my Social Security feature, Advance Designation, enables you to identify up to three people, in priority order, who you would like to serve as your potential representative payee in the event you ever need help managing your benefits. We have updated our Frequently Asked Questions at [faq.ssa.gov/en-us/Topic/article/KA-10039](http://faq.ssa.gov/en-us/Topic/article/KA-10039) to answer questions you may have about Advance Designation.

You can also apply for Medicare online in less than 10 minutes with no forms to sign and often no required documentation. We'll process your application and contact you if we need more information.

Visit [www.ssa.gov/benefits/medicare](http://www.ssa.gov/benefits/medicare) to apply for Medicare and find other important information. If you're eligible for Medicare at age 65, your initial

enrollment period begins three months before your 65th birthday and ends three months after that birthday.

We've organized our Online Services webpage into four popular categories for easy navigation:

- **Review Your Information.** You can access your secure, personal information and earnings history to make sure everything is correct. You can even print statements with ease.
- **Apply for Benefits.** You can apply for retirement, disability, and Medicare benefits without having to visit a field office.
- **Manage Your Account.** You can change your direct deposit information and your address online.
- **Find Help and Answers.** We've answered your most frequently asked questions, and provided links to publications and other informational websites.

Let your family and friends know they can do much of their business with us online at [www.ssa.gov](http://www.ssa.gov).

### Access My Social Security from Your Home

With so many services available online through my Social Security, signing up for a secure account will help you conduct Social Security business from home.



With your personal my Social Security account, you can:

- Estimate your future benefits with our Retirement Calculator to compare different dates or ages to begin receiving benefits;
- Check the status of your Social Security application;
- Review your work history; and
- Request a replacement Social Security card (in most States).

If you already receive benefits, you can also:

- Get a benefit verification or proof of income letter;
- Set up or change your direct deposit;
- Change your address;
- Request a replacement Medicare card; and
- Get a Social Security 1099 form (SSA-1099).

You can even use your personal my Social Security account to opt out of receiving certain notices by mail, such as the annual cost-of-living adjustments and the income-related monthly adjustment amount notice. Instead, through the Message Center you can receive secure, sensitive communications.

Let your friends and family know that they can create a my Social Security account today at [www.ssa.gov/myaccount](http://www.ssa.gov/myaccount).

### Social Security & Protecting Elders from Scams

June is World Elder Abuse Awareness Month. Throughout the month, government agencies, businesses, and organizations sponsor events to unite communities, seniors, caregivers, governments, and the private sector to prevent the mistreatment of and violence against older people.

Scammers often target older people. They use fear to pressure people into providing personal information or money. In times like the current pandemic when people are particularly vulnerable, scammers will pretend to be government employees, often from Social Security, to gain people's trust to steal their money and personal information. The most effective way to defeat scammers is by knowing how to identify scams then hanging up or ignoring the calls.

#### What you can do

If you get a Social Security scam phone call, hang up, report it to our law enforcement office at [oig.ssa.gov](http://oig.ssa.gov), and tell your family and friends about it! We're telling as many people as we can that government agencies will never:



- Tell you that your Social Security number has been suspended.
- Tell you about crimes committed in your name, or offer to resolve identity theft or a benefit problem in exchange for payment.
- Request a specific means of debt repayment, like a retail gift card, prepaid debit card, wire transfer, internet currency, or cash.
- Insist on secrecy about a legal problem, or tell you to make up stories to tell family, friends, or store employees.

Scammers continue to develop new ways to mislead you. They might use the names of Social Security officials and tell you to look them up on our public websites (where they learned the names themselves). Or, they might email you official-looking documents with a letterhead that looks like it's from Social Security or Social Security's Office of the Inspector General (OIG). Don't believe them! Social Security will NEVER email you attachments that have your personal information in them.

If you ever owe money to Social Security, the agency will mail you a letter, explaining your payment options and your appeal rights. If you get a call about a Social Security problem, be very cautious. If you do not have ongoing business with the agency, or if the caller mentions suspending your Social Security number or makes other threats, the call is likely a scam. Ignore it, hang up, and report it to us at [oig.ssa.gov](http://oig.ssa.gov). We are working to stop the scams and educate people to avoid becoming victims.

### Social Security Benefits for Children with Disabilities

SSA's Supplemental Security Income (SSI) program helps children with qualifying disabilities and their families. For this program, a child must meet all of the following requirements to be considered disabled and medically eligible:

- The child must have a medical condition, or a combination of conditions, that result in "marked and severe functional limitations." This means that the condition(s) must very seriously limit the child's activities.
- The child's condition(s) must have been disabling, or be expected to be disabling, for at least 12 months; or the condition(s) must be expected to result in death.

Compassionate Allowances are a way we quickly identify diseases and other medical conditions that, by definition, meet Social Security's standards for disability benefits. Thousands of children receive benefits because they have one of the conditions on the list at [www.ssa.gov/compassionateallowances/conditions.htm](http://www.ssa.gov/compassionateallowances/conditions.htm).

A child must also meet other eligibility requirements. Since we only pay SSI to disabled people with low income and limited resources, a child, who is not blind, must not be working or earning more than \$1,260 a month in 2020. A child who is blind must not be working or earning more than \$2,110. This earnings amount usually changes every year. In addition, if the parents of the child or children have more resources than are allowed, then the child or children will not qualify for SSI. You can read more about children's benefits at [www.ssa.gov/pubs/EN-05-10026.pdf](http://www.ssa.gov/pubs/EN-05-10026.pdf).



Visit [www.ssa.gov/people/parents/](http://www.ssa.gov/people/parents/) to learn more about all we do to care for children. Please share these resources if you know a family or friend who needs our help.

### Qualifying for Supplemental Security Income with Social Security

We pay monthly Supplemental Security Income (SSI) to people with disabilities who have low income and few resources, and people who are age 65 or older without disabilities who meet the financial limits.

Income is money you receive, such as wages, Social Security benefits, and pensions. Income also includes things like food and shelter. The amount of income you can receive each month and still get SSI depends partly on where you live.

Resources are things you own, including real estate, bank accounts, cash, stocks, and bonds, which we count in deciding if you qualify for SSI. You may be able to get SSI if your resources are worth \$2,000 or less. A couple may be able to get SSI if they have resources worth \$3,000 or less. If you own property that you are trying to sell, you may be able to get SSI while trying to sell it.

We will not count economic impact payments, also known as coronavirus stimulus payments or CARES Act payments, as income for SSI. These payments will also not count as resources for 12 months. You can read more about qualifying for SSI at [www.ssa.gov/pubs/EN-05-11000.pdf](http://www.ssa.gov/pubs/EN-05-11000.pdf).

If you're an adult with a disability intending to file for both SSI and Social Security Disability Insurance, you can apply online for both benefits at the same time if you:



- Are between the ages of 18 and 65;
- Have never been married;
- Aren't blind,
- Are a U.S. citizen residing in one of the 50 states, District of Columbia, or the Northern Mariana Islands; and
- Haven't applied for or received SSI benefits in the past.

We're here for you. You can find more information at [www.ssa.gov/benefits](http://www.ssa.gov/benefits).

Kylle' McKinney, SSA Public Affairs Specialist, can be reached by e-mail at [kylle.mckinney@ssa.gov](mailto:kylle.mckinney@ssa.gov)

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# Dani Loeb becomes the first Alabamian to make U.S. Ski Team

*Dani (Karyl) Loeb*, the daughter of **Ricky and Jamie Loeb of Montgomery, Ala.**, has been recognized as the newest member of the **U.S. Aerial National Team for the years 2020-2022**. The nomination was officially announced on May 7, 2020 by the U.S. Ski and Snowboard Association. Dani was born in Montgomery and raised on a farm in the community of Pintala. “She has always been energetic,” her mom says. “Her dad and I put her in gymnastics at United Gymstars and Cheer at a young age because all she wanted to do was flip and twist.” When Dani was 12, the family moved to Coppell, Texas, where she trained at Texas Dreams Gymnastics. It was here that the recruiter from the U.S. Aerial Team noticed Dani’s ability. **The sport of Aerials combines gymnastics and skiing; two things Dani loves.**

She attended the talent identity camp in Lake Placid, N.Y., made the development team, and never looked back. Dani lived with 11 other athletes from all over the United States at the Olympic Training Center in Lake Placid for two years before her move to train in Park City, Utah, the official training site for the National Team.

The road to the National Team has had ups and downs. Dani spent the first year of development learning how to ski. The next year, she had **significant finishes such as third place Junior Nationals and second U.S. Nationals**. Dani also finished top American female in the Last World Cup before the 2018 Olympics in Pyeong-chang, South Korea. Last year Dani had a minor knee injury causing a setback in



training. Still, she closed the year hard, and **while in Valmalenco, Italy, she became the first American to win a European Cup**. Dani returned to Park City, Utah, and rehabbed and trained intensely. With the help and support of her coaches Jack Boyczuk and Jana Johnson, she had a great year competing in the North American Tour. She **podiumed seven times this past season, accumulating four silvers, two golds, and a win at Junior Nationals**. Dani earned a spot once again to compete for the U.S. in Junior Worlds, but unfortunately, the season was cut short because of COVID-19. **As a result of a Top 30 World rank and being the fourth-ranked U.S. female Aerial Athlete, Dani was awarded a spot on the U.S. Team**. Dani received a two-year nomination that will guarantee her a spot on the National team through the 2022 Olympics. (Although this does not secure her a spot on the Olympic team.) For the time being, Dani is spending time at her home on Lake Martin. She is also delivering lunches with a great group of volunteers for Wetumpka Middle School. “I get to ride a school bus and provide lunches for kids who may be missing that meal every day. It is such a wonderful feeling to see the smiling faces.” “I am so overwhelmed by the support I have been getting from everyone. I want to thank you all for the kind words. I will do my best to make Alabama Proud!” If you would like to follow Dani’s progress and day-to-day happenings, please follow her on her Instagram at *[dani.loeb](#)*.

LEFT: *Dani Loeb (middle) receiving the first place award for U.S. Jr. National Championship.*

## The MidSouth Chapter of the ITPA is proud to award the 2020 Billy D. Young Memorial Scholarship to *Josie Layne Hussey*.



The Mid-South Chapter of the ITPA is a group dedicated to giving back to the communities we serve and supporting our employees and their children through scholarships, charitable giving, and disaster relief. The scholarship was established in Mr. Billy D. Young’s memory to support fellow telecommunications workers that are employees of member companies of the Telecommunications Association of the Southeast (TELSE) or the ITPA Mid-South Chapter in educating their children. This scholarship is made available through the MidSouth Chapter and is supported by the individual Pioneer Clubs in the chapter. Josie is the recipient of a \$1,000 scholarship. She is a graduate of Hooper Academy and will continue her education at Troy University. She plans to pursue a degree in Biology or Animal Sciences before enrolling at Tuskegee University for Veterinary School. She is the daughter of Bay and Beverly Davis. Consideration for the scholarship included academic information, community involvement, sports, clubs, employment, and other extracurricular activities. Additionally, each student submitted a 1,000 word essay. Josie excelled both inside and outside the classroom during her high school career and was much deserved of the award. The ITPA congratulates you on your hard work and dedication to studies and wishes you the best of luck as you pursue your dreams! Mon-Cre Telephone Coop is a proud member of TELSE and the Mid-South Chapter of the ITPA. For more information, please visit *[midsouthitpa.org](#)*.

# Alabama Ag Credit Doubles Scholarship Fund

This last semester has been tough on all students in one way or another. Some are missing their high school graduation. Others have had to move off campus earlier than expected. And some students or their families have lost income. Due to these uncertain times, **Alabama Ag Credit** has chosen to expand its college scholarship program this year and award 23 scholarships, instead of 10 as initially planned. Each scholarship is valued at \$1,000. “For the Alabama Ag Credit Board of Directors, the decision to more than double our annual scholarship fund was an easy one,” said Doug Thiessen, Alabama Ag Credit chief executive officer. *“If there’s ever a time young people need the support and generosity of their community, it’s now. We hope these scholarships will make a difference for the 23 student recipients as they start their next school year – whatever that may look like this fall.”*

### Congratulations to the association’s 2020 scholarship winners:

Student Name	Attending
Shelby Marsh	Auburn University
Blake Carroll	Auburn University
Peyton Parkman	Auburn University
Mathew Prater	Auburn University
Alesia McGraw	Auburn University
Hudson Hines	Coastal Alabama Community College
Caleb Jordan	Coastal Alabama Community College
Caleb Powell	Coastal Alabama Community College
Nicholas Walton Saunders	Enterprise State Community College
Taylor Paris	Jacksonville State University
Garrett Barefoot	Lurleen B. Wallace Community College
Jacob Meadows	Mississippi State University
Caroline Parkman	Mississippi State University
Emily Strickland	Mississippi State University
Emma Wendland	Samford University
Aaron Trawick	University of Alabama
Hill Stabler	University of Alabama
Reid Shackelford	Trenholm State Community College
Noah Carnley	Troy University
Rebecca Starling	Troy University
Sidney Davis	Troy University
Patrick McNeil	University of Alabama Birmingham
Chole Nance	Wallace Community College



The scholarship program was open to Alabama Ag Credit borrowers’ children and grandchildren attending an institution of higher education. In addition to this scholarship program, Alabama Ag Credit awards scholarships for students at the two land grant universities in its territory: Auburn University and Tuskegee University. **About Alabama Ag Credit** Alabama Ag Credit is a member of the nationwide Farm Credit System and provides financing for farms, timber and forestry operations, agribusinesses, country homes, recreational land, and other rural property in 40 counties in central and south Alabama. The financing cooperative has offices in Demopolis, Dothan, Enterprise, Monroeville, Montgomery, Opelika, Selma, Spanish Fort, and Tuscaloosa. For more information, visit *[www.AlabamaAgCredit.com](#)*. Media Contact: **Amber Pratt**, (334) 270-8687 Director, Marketing & PR, *[Amber.Pratt@AlabamaAgCredit.com](#)*

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THE ALABAMA

# Gazette

Montgomery, Autauga, Elmore, Crenshaw, Tallapoosa, Pike and Surrounding Counties

## Community Lifestyles



### Dr. Lester Spencer

Lead Pastor

St. James United Methodist Church  
9045 Vaughn Road, Montgomery, AL

## Soul Searching

### A MESSAGE TO ALL GRADUATING SENIORS

#### A Message to All Graduating Seniors: The Secret 4 C's of Success

Three military recruiters accepted an invitation to speak to the Senior Class of a local high school. It was agreed that each recruiter would take fifteen minutes to make his pitch. The army recruiter went first, but he spoke for more than twenty minutes. The navy recruiter also spoke for twenty minutes. The Marine Corps recruiter, realizing that his fifteen minute speech had now been cut to about two minutes, walked to the podium and spent the first sixty seconds in complete silence as he looked over the crowd. He finally said: "I doubt whether there are two or three people in this room who could make it as marines. But I'd like to see those two or three of you as soon as this assembly is dismissed." He turned and left. But when he arrived in the cafeteria, he was mobbed by a herd of high school students.

We love challenges – We want to do something significant with our lives. Listen for the challenges that are calling you!

I believe all of those graduating High School Seniors and College Seniors want to do something significant with their lives. Therefore, I want to share with you the secret 4 C's of success.

First, I want to congratulate all the 2020 Graduating Seniors, and I wish you the very best as you enter into this new chapter of your lives! I know God has great plans for your life and that many opportunities await you.

And, of course, there will be challenges too. Many of you have already experienced great challenges in these last few months of the COVID-19 Pandemic where you have had to shelter at home, work remotely, do online classes, be separated from your friends, and, for many of you, forgo the parties and celebrations associated with your graduation.

But I believe and I pray that you will be a stronger person and a better leader because of this challenging crisis. In order to help you and empower you for future success, I want to share with you the secret 4 C's for your success.

#### The First C – Character

*"Blessed are those who keep God's statutes and seek Him with all their heart..." Psalm 119:2*

Socrates put it this way: "The first key to greatness is to be in reality what we appear to be."

Character is who you are when no one is looking. Image is what people think we are. Integrity is what and who we really are.

To be a person of character means you are a person of your word. It means you keep confidence. You show up on time. You do what you say you are going to do. Stand up for what you believe.

If people trust your character – they trust you. Remember this – trust is all you have. If you break trust, it's very hard to get back!

Guard your character. Protect it. Be cautious and be wise as people are always watching to see your true character. So be wise in what you say, where you go, what you put on social media and who you choose to be associated with.

#### The Second C – Competence

*In Romans 12:8, Paul tells us to make the most of whatever gifts we have been given. Sharpen them. Perfect them.*

Now, you have been doing this in school as you have been preparing yourself and sharpening your gifts and skills, but this has just been the beginning. As you move into the next season of your life, continue perfecting and honing your gifts and talents.

Now that you have graduated from High School or College, you have a great advantage. But you need to continue to grow and learn. In fact, one of the greatest lessons you learn through higher education is how much you still have to learn. So be humble. Be teachable. Be eager to learn more. Be passionate about getting better.

#### The Third C – Chemistry

Jesus gave us the golden rule, *"Do unto others as you would have them do unto you!"*

Whatever your next chapter holds for you will involve you relating to other people. In order to be successful, you will need to further develop greater relational skills, people skills. The "Like" Factor applies to everyone. I like to work with people I like to be around. Isn't that true for all of us?

The fact is: A successful life is all about teamwork.

If you are headed off to college or a technical school, you have hired a team of professors and teachers to teach you, train you, prepare you and pour into you.

But you must work with them as a team. And the better chemistry you have with that team, the better and more successful you will be.

If you are starting a new job, you are joining a team hired to carry out a mission, a purpose. The better chemistry you have with that team, the more successful you will be and the more successful that business will be as well.

Chemistry has a great deal to do with your attitude. So, decide now that you are going to have a great attitude. It's been said, "Life is 10% what happens to me and 90% how I react to it." And how I react to it depends on my attitude!

#### The Fourth C – Christ!

*"I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." – Paul, Philippians 4:13*

I believe that in order for your life to align the way God intends and to fulfill your God given purpose, Christ must be at the center of your life!

I love this quote: "The main thing is to keep the main thing the main thing." For me, the main thing is Christ and his purpose for my life.

Christ has radically changed my life. My last year of High School and my years in College was the season for me that God used to reveal my true purpose and mission in life. It was in the critical years between graduating High School and graduating from Auburn University that God did a course correction in my life. It was in this chapter of living life that God called me to be a Pastor. I found my "Calling" in these years as I put Christ first in my life.

I believe everyone of you has a "Calling" in life. A purpose beyond just serving yourself. Your calling may be very different from mine. You may be called to be a nurse or a lawyer or an engineer, or a doctor or a teacher or a counselor or a veterinarian or something else entirely. But I believe God has a calling for your life. And through Christ, you can discover that calling.

#### How can you do that as you move forward into the next chapter?

1. Be active in a Christ centered church and attend worship regularly.
2. Get involved in a weekly life group/small group or bible study.
3. Find a place to serve others in the name of Christ.
4. Spend time in meditation and reflection on and with Christ every day.

#### Congratulations Graduating Seniors!

Apply these 4 C's of success and you will experience all God has for you!

Blessings,  
Dr. Lester Spencer

#### Saint James Church Activities, Worship Services & Coronavirus Outreach Ministries:

*We will worship ONLINE ONLY until this crisis is over.*

We are offering our worship services and messages at our online campus at [live.sjlifecommunity.com](http://live.sjlifecommunity.com) each Sunday at 9:30 am and 11:00 am. Our services are also available on our website at [www.sjlifecommunity.com](http://www.sjlifecommunity.com) and Facebook page [@sjlifecommunity](https://www.facebook.com/sjlifecommunity).



This summer ~ VIRTUAL VBS!

June 14 from 3 pm - 6 pm

More info: <https://sjlifecommunity.com/events/2020/6/15/vacation-bible-school-2020>

Our church family, Janeese and I are praying for each of you. We love you and believe the Lord will be our strength and confidence during this challenging season!

Please let us know how we can serve you during this time!

*Always Choose Faith Over Fear,*

Lester and Janeese Spencer  
Dr. Lester Spencer  
Lead Pastor  
Saint James Church

Rev. Janeese Spencer  
Founder and Executive Director  
Venture Life Coaching



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# Honoring Our Heroes

By Dr. Martha Poole Simmons

## John L. Cannady, Jr.: Age 62

John L. Cannady, Jr. served in the United States Air Force for 22 years and seven months. He

received the following medals and awards: AF Meritorious Service Medal, AF Commendation Medal, AF Achievement Medal, AF Outstanding Unit Award, AF Organizational Excellence Award, AF Good Conduct Metal, Outstanding Airman of the Year Ribbon, National Defense Service Metal, AF Overseas Short and Long Tour Ribbons, AF Longevity Award, NCO Professional Military Education Graduate Ribbon, Small Arms Expert Marksmanship Ribbon, AF Training Ribbon NCO of the Year 1992 and 1993 at Maxwell Air Force

Base (AFB). Cannady was promoted to Master Sergeant (E7) under the Stripes for Exceptional Performers (STEP) Program in December, 1995. His entire life personifies dedication and the desire to be the best in what endeavor in which he is engaged whether it is in military service or in civilian life.



Cannady was born April 15, 1958, in New York City to his parents, John L. Cannady and Divina Cannady. He was reared in the Bronx until 1969 attending PS82 and PS104 after which his family moved to Allentown, PA. He graduated from Parkland High School in El Paso, TX, in June, 1976.

Cannady joined the U.S. Air Force in September, 1976, because he thought that this branch of military service could give him the most bang for the buck. He completed four weeks of Basic Training at Lackland AFB in San Antonio, TX, followed by deployment to Hellenikon Air Base in Athens, Greece, for one and one-half years working as an Aerospace Ground Equipment mechanic after scoring the highest on an aptitude test of mechanics and electronics. He was transferred to Deep Creek AFB and Fairchild AFB in Washington for two years and to Langley AFB in VA for four years working as an educator of people on the care of nuclear trailers which were used to carry nuclear bombs. His next assignment was to Chanute AFB in Illinois for three years where he became a teacher of pneumatics, hydraulics, gas, diesel and turbine engines, electronics and military science.

Cannady's reasons for becoming a teacher are, "My whole life I wanted to be a teacher. I had the opportunity and the skills in the mechanical and electrical fields, so I thought maybe I might be a good teacher, and I gave it a try." His next assignment was teaching Professional Military Education, which included communication skills, leadership skills and military science as the Commandant/Program Manager/Dean of Education at the military school at Anderson AFB in Guam. His last assignment was at Maxwell AFB in Montgomery, AL, as a curriculum developer, educator and statistician for three years retiring in 1999.

Cannady continued his education while serving in the Air Force. He took courses at Spokane Community College and the University of Maryland in general studies. He passed 25% the College Level Examination Program (CLEP), and he graduated from Faulkner University with a B. S. Degree in Management of Human Resources. In addition, he earned an M.S. Degree in Adult Education from Troy University in 1997.

After retiring from the Air Force in 1999, Cannady worked at McMillan International Academy in Montgomery, AL, as the computer teacher/coordinator. After teaching three years in the classroom and taking eight education courses, he received a "B" level teaching certificate. He then taught at Baldwin Arts and Academic Magnet School for three years and then to Brewbaker Technology Magnet High School as the technology teacher and technology coordinator. Cannady provided leadership in opening the Industrial Maintenance Technology Course for Career Tech at Carver High School and Lee High School where he taught for one year. His next assignment was to Booker T. Washington Magnet High School for five years followed by a return to Brewbaker Technology Magnet High School where he served as the technology teacher and tech coordinator for three years. After six months as the technology coordinator at Pike Road School, his final teaching position was a return to Brewbaker Technology Magnet High School for three years retiring in May 2018.

Cannady and his wife, Kay, have been married 20 years, and Cannady has three children and eight grandchildren. He enjoys his friends addressing him by his nickname, Katphishe. Throughout many years, he has been heavily involved in serving others in the Montgomery community including the Salvation Army, the American Red Cross, the Montgomery Zoo (also Board Member), the Montgomery Humane Shelter and the Family Karate Center. While in Greece, he volunteered with the Red Cross and participated in Operation Fiery Vigil. He also taught CPR, babysitting, first aid courses. He voluntarily took the CPR class Annies, the dummies, home and made repairs on the artificial facial skin. He received recognition as Red Cross Volunteer of the Year 1991 while stationed at Guam and served as the Facilities Coordinator at the Central AL Chapter of the American Red Cross. Cannady was the American Taekwondo Foundation National Martial Arts Champion for four years in a row 2000 - 2003.

When reflecting on his achievements, Cannady says, "Sometimes I get there, and sometimes I don't, but don't stop trying." He concludes about this military service, saying, "At the beginning, it was just getting away from home. While I was in it after about a year, I enjoyed being a part of that team. It was even greater when I was overseas. We knew everybody at work where we were close knit. It was incredible camaraderie."

Cannady feels deeply about his commitment to teaching others saying, "It was my lifelong dream. One of my plans was to be a major league baseball player, but I fell short on this. Once I got into the classroom, I felt like I had reached my highest pinnacle of success for me because my goal in life was to impart all of the information that I knew to be correct and right. That was the greatest thrill of my life to educate everybody in the military and in public life."



Personal note from Chelese Beck, *Alabama Gazette*: **John Cannady was my daughter's Taekwondo instructor in the early 2000s. He was a caring, compassionate leader. Master Cannady is one of those special people who leaves a lasting impression, and he instilled many amazing qualities in all of his students. (Cannady is pictured above with Cori Beck after a tournament.)**

## Billy Gillyard McKenzie: Age 91

Billy Gillyard McKenzie served in the U. S. Marine Corps for two years wearing the Eagle, Globe and Anchor (the universal emblem of a Marine), and although his time of service was brief, he was discharged possessing a high regard for the special training given to him while he served as a Marine. McKenzie's service in the U. S. Marine Corps had a significant impact on his



life that advanced his future by developing the qualities of inner and outer strength, loyalty to country, leadership in the community, integrity, responsibility, commitment and perseverance. McKenzie received the National Defense Service Medal.

McKenzie was born December 8, 1928, in Tallassee, AL, to his parents, George and Clara McKenzie. He was reared there, and he played left and right end and linebacker with his high school football team under the leadership of Coach J. E. "Hot" O'Brien winning 57 consecutive victories, and in 1948, he graduated from Tallassee High School with intentions to study and to fly Piper Cub and Cessna planes. During his youth, he learned how to hunt and to fish, and as a youth he earned money working in the electrical shop in the local cotton mill and spraying for mosquitoes along the Tallapoosa River as well as cutting grass for the power company. He attended Alabama Polytechnic Technic Institute (Auburn University), worked several years for the AL Power Company in Gadsden and Leeds, AL, building substations. He then attended a mortuary school in Nashville, TN, became licensed as a mortician and worked at the Mann Funeral Home in Tallassee, AL, for the next eleven years except for the time that he served in the U. S. Marines.

McKenzie registered for the military draft December 9, 1946, one day after his 18th birthday. McKenzie's military service began with his service in the Alabama National Guard 31st Infantry Division in Tallassee for three years from November, 1947, until the end of December, 1950. Because of the required length of service for people who enlisted was four years, he waited to be drafted which required only two years. McKenzie reported for active duty at Maxwell Field (Maxwell Air Force Base) March 5, 1952, and was selected to serve in the U. S. Marines. He completed Marine Boot Camp at Parris Island, SC, where he was selected as platoon leader based on his prior National Guard experience and ROTC at Auburn University, reached the rank of E3 and was stationed at

Mar Photographic SQ33 Maw Airfmmf Service #1293087. After reaching the rank of Private 1st Class, McKenzie was sent to duty as a radio operator on C-47 planes with a group known as the "gooney birds" at Cherry Point, NC. His next assignment was to Jackson Naval Air Station in Jacksonville, FL, for 10 months where his sergeant told him, "Yours is not to wonder why, yours is just to do or die." He learned parachute folding and other different disciplines of the Navy and Marine Corps. McKenzie was assigned to electronic maintenance in an electronics group and sent to Miami, FL, with Vmj-33 Dmaw Airfmmf USMS. The Korean War had reached an end, and McKenzie received his discharge March 4, 1954, returning to Tallassee, AL.

McKenzie became a successful entrepreneur excelling in every business venture. After working as a mortician, McKenzie worked as the personnel manager of the Tallassee Cotton Mill owned by Mt. Vernon Mills where he was involved in the integration of employees during the civil rights movement in AL. He completed training in hospital management at the University of AL at Birmingham. McKenzie studied law at Jones Law School in Montgomery, AL and was a guest lecturer in medical jurisprudence at Auburn University at Montgomery. He worked as a hospital administrator building a new nonprofit hospital followed by purchasing and managing hospitals in Evergreen, AL, and Jackson, AL. He remained in Evergreen 1977-2006 managing the Evergreen hospital. McKenzie officially retired in 2006, and his son, Gill McKenzie, purchased his 94% interest in Gilliard Health Services from McKenzie and his wife, Mary McKenzie. McKenzie experienced success in real estate ventures including the purchase of 1100 acres of hunting land along Highway 14 at Tallassee, AL. He purchased one of the first condos in San Destin, FL, established Clairwood Subdivision and River Hills Subdivision, beautiful, planned communities along the Tallapoosa River in Tallassee.

McKenzie has significantly served others in the Tallassee community as a Boy Scout leader receiving the Silver Beaver Award given by the Tuckabatchee Council of the Boy Scouts, a deacon and Sunday school teacher in First Baptist Church of Tallassee, a member of the Tallassee Rotary Club, the Chairman of the Tallassee Red Cross Blood program, a member of the Tallassee Parks and Recreation Board and President of the Tallassee Chamber of Commerce. He oversaw the construction of the Lakeside Golf and Country Club in Tallassee. He purchased and then for six years operated the Tallassee Guest House, a facility used for weddings and other occasions as well as a bed and breakfast facility. McKenzie later donated the Guest House and its property to the City of Tallassee. He was inducted into the Tallassee High School Hall of Pride for 2020.

McKenzie and his wife, Mary George, have been married 70 years, and they had one son, and three grandchildren. They have enjoyed traveling to New England and to mountains near Cold Mountain, NC. McKenzie has fished in Canada near the Arctic Circle and hunted game not only in Alabama but also in other countries for many years. He went on 11 safaris to Africa, and on his first trip he hunted exotic animals including kudu, a warthog, a gemsbok and a red hartebeest. On other safaris, he hunted the Big Five, the lion, elephant, cape buffalo, rhinoceros and leopard. He authored the book, *Bwana The Unordinary Life of Billy Gillyard McKenzie*, which may be purchased from Lulu Enterprises, Inc. Bwana means "master or boss" as it pertains to African hunting referring to "master hunter." In order to be called Bwana, one must hunt the Big Five.

McKenzie's conclusions about his service as a U. S. Marine are, "The Marines taught me my values, responsibility and discipline. This enabled me to be the best that I could be in all that I did."



### James Harris Coombs: Age 79

Coombs was born at the barrier island, Wildwood, New Jersey, February 15, 1941, to his parents, Leroy and Martha Coombs. He was reared there graduating from Cape May High School at Cape May, New Jersey, a seaside resort city. At age 19, he volunteered and joined the U. S. Marine Corps beginning as an enlisted man and completing 20 years of service in 1978 retiring at the rank of Chief Warrant Officer 3 (CWO3). His awards and medals include:



National Defense Service Medal, Good Conduct, With Two Stars, Vietnam Service Medal with Three Stars, Vietnam Campaign Medal with Device, Navy Commendation Medal with “V” Device and Vietnam Cross of Gallantry Medal with Palm and Frame Device.

Coombs completed Boot Camp at the Marine Corps Parrish Island recruit training facility, and after Boot Camp, he worked with self-propelled track tanks equipped with bulldozer blades used in building roads excelling so well that he became the only corporal teaching other Marines including officers in the use of such equipment for two years. He then switched to recruiting Marines returning to Parris Island for training in Marine recruiting becoming only the

7th Marine Corps corporal to complete this type of education and had a three-year assignment at Atlantic City recruiting Marines. Coombs had an interest in learning how to operate computers and completed a month of IBM computer training, which later resulted in his spending 43 years in computer science including time in the military and in civilian life. Using his computer skills, he completed three tours at the Cherry Point Marine Corps Air Station. Coombs served one year in Vietnam using his computer skills trying to save people’s lives figuring out what routes in combat were the safest for helicopters to fly. He completed Boot Camp at the Marine Corps Base Quantico to become a Warrant Officer. His next assignment was to be in charge of data processing for the command at the Naval Station Great Lakes, IL. This assignment was followed by service at the Naval Air Station in New Orleans, LA, followed by an unaccompanied tour to Japan for one year. His last assignment was at the Marine Corps Air Station in El Toro, CA where he retired.

Using his computer skills, he worked with 30 companies all over the USA and throughout the world. After military service, Coombs worked as a computer analyst for the Kubota Tractor Corporation in CA, Jim Walters Homes, Inc. in Tuscaloosa, AL, Syntrega USA, Inc. in Birmingham, AL, and Mitchell International in Memphis, TN, retiring in 1986. Moving to the Lake Martin area near Alexander City, AL, Coombs worked at the Russell Do It Center and at Walmart assisting contractors involved in building houses and at the Wind Creek Casino in Wetumpka, AL, as a security guard.

Coombs enjoys woodworking especially restoring antiques, gardening and reading. Following a destructive tornado to the Children’s Harbor, a Lake Martin, AL, place for children who are seriously ill and their families to be themselves, to have fun and to relax, he voluntarily worked in repairing the damaged facilities. He has been married to his wife, Dana Christine, for 47 years, and they have one daughter, eight grandchildren and one great-grandchild. He has two sons from a previous marriage He and his wife enjoy living close to some of their children and grandchildren and being part of their lives.

When Coombs reflects on what being a Marine means to him he says, “It means service to our country. I come from a family that is service-oriented. During WWII, my father was in the U. S. Coast Guard in charge of protecting the lighthouses on the eastern coast of the USA. My mother was in the Eastern Star. My brothers were Eagle Scouts. Being a Marine means a great deal of pride. Whenever I see a Marine wearing a Marine veteran’s hat, we speak to each other where members of other military services don’t usually stop and converse.”

### Gary Dean (73) & Wanda Sue Mehlhoff (71)

Senior Master Sergeants Gary Dean Mehlhoff and Wanda Sue Mehlhoff are U. S. Air Force veterans. They are a married couple who each served 26 years. His medals are: Meritorious Service Medal with one oak leaf cluster, Air Force Commendation Medal with three oak leaf clusters, Vietnam Service Medal with



four BSS, Republic of Vietnam Gallantry Cross with Palm, and Republic of Vietnam Campaign Medal. Her medals are: Meritorious Service Medal with two oak leaf clusters, Air Force Commendation Medal with three oak leaf clusters and Air Force Achievement Medal with one oak leaf cluster.

Senior Master Sergeant Gary Mehlhoff was born in New Rockford, North Dakota, October 26, 1946, to his parents, Elmer and Lorraine (Weisenberger) Mehlhoff. He was educated in kindergarten through the eighth grade in North Cedar Falls, IA. He graduated from high school in Harlowton, MT, where his father worked as a linotype operator. Gary volunteered for service in the U. S. Air Force in September, 1965. His Basic Training was at Lackland AFB, TX, and his technical training was at Sheppard AFB, TX, where he trained to work as an air passenger specialist with freight and passenger services at airports. His military career took him to many military installations, including his first assignment to Travis AFB in CA for 1.5 years followed by a temporary duty (TDY) to Yokota, Japan, for six months. In December, 1967, he was sent overseas to Tan Son Nhut AB, Vietnam, for 13 months working on in-country passenger service where fortunately his assignment ended one day before the heavy attack on the base during the Tet Offensive. His next assignment for two years was to Fairchild AFB in Spokane, WA, along with a TDY to Guam followed by an overseas assignment back to Japan. Then he was retrained into the administrative career field and assigned to Malmstrom AFB in MT for two years; to Incirlik CDI, Turkey, for 15 months; then to K. I. Sawyer AFB in MI for six years. Next, he was retrained into the personnel career field and assigned to Ramstein AB in Germany for three years retiring there at the rank of Senior Master Sergeant.

Gary concludes about his military service saying, “It meant that I got to serve my country and defend it if need be.” He received an Associate Degree in Business Administration from the Community College of the Air Force and in

October, 1991, using the G.I. Bill, an Associate Degree from the University of Maryland through its Global Campus in Germany. Returning to the U.S., he worked armed security at the U. S. Navy Shipyard in Washington, D.C. for three years. He then worked locating property for the Buyer’s Agent, a real estate company in Montgomery, AL, for several years. Since his second retirement in 2001, he has enjoyed playing golf.

Senior Master Sergeant Wanda Sue Mehlhoff was born at Maxwell, AFB, in Montgomery, AL, April 25, 1949, to her parents, Sergeant Jesse Ralph Danner and Susie Mae (Henderson) Danner. She was educated in the Montgomery schools at McMillan Elementary, Baldwin Junior High School and Sidney Lanier High School. After graduation, she worked making nylon twine/rope along with security at Johnson Cordage Company in Prattville, AL. Senior Master Sergeant Mehlhoff enlisted in the U. S. Air Force December 27, 1973, beginning service at the rank of Airman 1st Class as a WAF (Women in the Air Force). Her Basic Training was at Lackland, AFB, TX. Her previous employment with machines, prepared her for her Air Force training at an Air Force technical school at Chanute AFB, IL. Her first assignment was at Barksdale AFB, LA, as an Air Force jet engine mechanic working on B-52G and KC-135A airplanes. Her ingenuity and determination to do an excellent job were important aspects of her work. Her second assignment was to Incirlik CDI, Turkey, where she worked for 20 months in the Detachment 16, Communications Squadron changing her service to administration because of a back injury. She was transferred to Maxwell AFB in Montgomery, AL, for a special duty assignment involved in the assignment of Air Force officers and noncommissioned officers to Air Force ROTC in high schools. Her next assignment was to RAF Bentwaters in England for three years followed by an assignment to K. I. Sawyer AFB in MI in administration in Standardization/Evaluation, 644th Bombardment Squadron and then with the Site Activation Task Force which worked with General Dynamics and Boeing for the air launched cruise missile for six years. She served at Ramstein AB in Germany for six years in the 1964th Communications Group as the chief in administration where she was referred to as the “Fire Woman” solving problems and preparing for inspections. She continued service there working in the administration of logistics at Headquarters USAFE. She was then hired for Presidential Support at Andrews AFB; however, because of illness, she worked in the Presidential Operations Group. Her final assignment was another special duty assignment to Ira C. Eaker College for Professional Development, Maxwell AFB as chief of administration retiring January 1, 2000.

After retirement, she cared for her ill father for 4.5 months and her ill mother for seven years. After caring for her father, she went back to school and received a degree in Graphic Arts/Webpage Design and Illustration Design Techniques. She worked with the Alabama Department of Public Health doing wellness checkups in schools, prisons and Alabama State agencies. Since retirement, she has enjoyed investigating her genealogy, gardening and being with a sewing group and her grandchildren. Her conclusions about her military service are, “When I started in the Air Force, it was a job, but as time passed, I realized it was a calling. Being in the military effected my personal growth. I wouldn’t trade it for anything. There were a lot of bad things which happened, but I focus on the good things which has made me a better person. “

Having met when both were stationed in Turkey, the Mehlhoffs have been married 41 years, and they have four children and six grandchildren. They are members of East Memorial Baptist Church in Prattville, AL.



## Patriotic Ceremony for Veteran’s Funerals



Veterans are entitled to a patriotic ceremony at their funerals. Raymond Keel will provide this service for free!

- Families should take a copy of the veteran’s DD214 discharge papers to the funeral home and ask for an honor guard to conduct a flag ceremony.
- Although the funeral home can arrange for the honor guard to include a bugler to play “Taps”, that bugler may bring a bugle and play a tape recording.

- To arrange for a “live bugler”, contact **Raymond Keel**, a veteran who attend veterans’ funerals and plays “Taps” live.
- Call him at 334-233-8736. He is the Assistant Director of the organization, Bugles Across America for Alabama.
- Go to this web site: <https://www.buglesacrossamerica.org> and fill out the form for requesting a live bugle providing the date, location and time of the internment.
- There is no charge for the military honor guard or for the live bugler.





### Lt. Col. Joel A. Burdette: Age 49

Lt. Col. Joel A. Burdette is a highly decorated U. S. Marine Corps veteran who had two successful combat tours. He participated in Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Southern Watch in Afghanistan and Saudi Arabia respectively from December, 2001, through May, 2002, as a Joint Interface Control Officer Detachment Commander, and he led the Tactical Air Operations Center Detachment to Kuwait and Iraq in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom from January 15, 2003 through June 2003.



Lt. Col. Burdette’s numerous medals and awards include: the Meritorious Service Medal with Two Gold Stars, Joint Service Commendation Medal with Two Gold Stars, Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medal with Gold Star, Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medal with Two Stars, Presidential Unit Citation, Joint Meritorious Unit Award, National Defense Medal with Bronze Star, Armed Forces Expeditionary Service Medal, Afghanistan Campaign Medal, Iraq Campaign Medal, Global War on Terrorism Medal Sea Service Deployment Ribbon (two), the United States Coast Guard Meritorious Team Commendation ribbon, Certificate of Commendation (Individual Award), Letter of Appreciation (four), Expert Rifle Qualification Badge (five), Expert Pistol Qualification Badge (seven).

Lt. Col.. Burdette was born May 6, 1971, in Marysville, CA, at Beale Air Force Base to his parents, Joseph and Sharon Burdette. He was reared in Tallassee, AL, and in 1993, he graduated from Auburn University with a B.S. Degree in Aviation Management and was commissioned as a Second Lieutenant in the U.S. Marine Corps and transferred to Quantico, VA. After being commissioned, he completed entry-level officer training and graduated from The Basic School class in May, 1993.

Lt. Col. Burdette continued his military education and received well-earned promotions throughout his service. 2nd Lt. Burdette was then assigned to Marine Corps Communication Electronics School and graduated from Air Defense Control Officer Course with the 7210 Military Occupational Specialty. After Air Schools, he was assigned to MACS-6, Cherry Point, N.C. and served there in various billets to include Watch Commander, Tactical Air Operations Center Officer and Assistant Operations Officer.

Lt. Col. Burdette served as an instructor and a commander at many military installations. He transferred from MACS-6 to Air Schools in 29 Palms, CA, as an Air Defense Training Section (ADTS) instructor in December, 1997. He served as an instructor and then as Officer in Charge of the ADTS. He attained

a Senior Instructor rating while at Air Schools and was promoted to Captain. He was then selected to attend Amphibious Warfare School. Upon completion of AWS in May, 2001, he was assigned to MACS-1, Yuma, AZ. He was promoted to Major (designated as MOS 7202) and served as the TAOC Detachment Commander there until July, 1994. He then reported to Maxwell AFB, Alabama, at the Air Command and Staff College and graduated in June, 1995, earning a Master’s degree in Military Operational Art and Science. Major Burdette then transferred to Quantico, VA and served as the Marine Air Ground Task Force (MAGTF) Staff Training Program Aviation Combat Element (ACE) Section instructor and OIC preparing the Marine Expeditionary Forces in support of OEF and OIF. He then transferred in July, 2008, to U.S. Marine Forces Command in Norfolk where he was promoted to the rank of Lt. Col. and served in the G-3/5/7 for Marine Aviation Current Operations. Lt. Col. Burdette then served as the Commanding Officer of 2nd Low Altitude Air Defense Battalion in Cherry Point, NC from December 16, 2010 – August 31, 2012. He last served in the 2d MAW G-3 Operations section prior to retirement June 30, 2013, completing 20 years of service in the U.S. Marine Corps.

Lt. Col. Burdette has graduated from numerous MOS schools to include Top Gun 04-97, Weapons and Tactics Instructor Course 2-98 (MOS 7277), Marine Division Tactics Course, Joint Aerospace Command and Control Course, Joint Tactical Information Distribution Systems Joint Interoperability Course, Multi-Tactical Digital Information Link Advanced Joint Interoperability Course, Network Design and System Management Course, and Joint Interface Control Officer (JICO) Course 00-03. He has participated in numerous exercises to include working with the Royal Air Force in the Netherlands where he was designated a JICO during Joint Project Optic Windmill-5. He has attained all qualifications within the TAOC to include Senior Air Director (SAD), Senior Air Defense Commander Operations Officer (SADC Ops) Officer and Senior Air Defense Commander (SADC).

Since his military retirement, Lt. Col. Burdette served as the Commandant of Cadets at Lyman Ward Military Academy, and he has worked in the health-care industry as the Executive Director and Administrator of multiple senior living and memory care facilities. Currently, he is the Chairman of the Connection Foundation and is also serving as Vice President of Leadership and Development for Community Eldercare Services which is based in Tupelo, MS, with skilled nursing and assisted living facilities in MS, TN and AL.

Lt. Col. Burdette and his wife, Stephanie have been married 26 years, and they have two sons. Their son, Joseph, is currently serving in the U. S. Coast Guard. They are active members of Grace Point Community Church in Wetumpka, AL. They also enjoy boating at Lake Martin and attending Auburn University football games where they support the Auburn Tigers cheering, “War Eagle!”

The U. S. Marine Corps emblem of an eagle, a globe and an anchor is used to represent the amphibious nature of the Marines and to emphasize the close ties between the Marine Corps and the U. S. Navy. Lt. Col. Burdette reflects upon his service in the U. S. Marine Corps saying, “. Once you’ve earned the Marine Corps emblem, it opens a doorway to all kinds of networks, friendships and relationships with people. The Marine Corps is a brotherhood. After 20 years have gone by, you can pick up the phone and pick up right where you left off. It’s a family, and you always have that network of support to help you and a shoulder to lean on. Whenever I see a Marine’s sticker on his car, I honk the horn and wave. I have a Marine sticker on the front and a retired Marine sticker on the back of my car. The Marine Corps motto, “Semper Fi,” means always faithful to country and to each other and looking for ways to help each other. It certainly instilled in me a discipline and an appreciation for life when we see how blessed we have it in this country.”

## Our Veterans Celebrating Birthdays

**Eugene Thomas Beasley: June 7th**

**Marvin Kent Speigner: June 10th**

**Maxine Mullins: June 10th**

**Henry D. Cobb: June 20th**

**James Manley: June 29th**

## Honoring Veterans Who Have Passed

**Thomas Daniel Davis**  
May 15, 1920 ~ May 12, 2020

**Thomas Daniel Davis**, a U. S. Marine who survived the attack on Pearl Harbor on Dec. 7th, 1941, passed away May 12, 2020 just 3 days before reaching his **100th birthday**. **Montgomery Mayor Steven Reed** issued a special proclamation declaring May 15, 2020, Thomas Daniel Day, and the proclamation was delivered to him at the Bill Nichols Alabama Veterans Home in Alexander City on May 8, 2020, 4 days before he passed. Davis served in three wars, namely, WWII, the Korean War, and the Vietnam War completing **30 years of military service**.



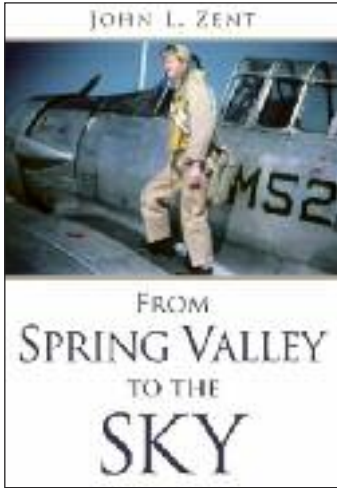
Appeared in *The Alabama Gazette* in November 2019.



### WWII Vet Celebrates 95 Years with a Parade



*WWII veteran Charlie Lynn celebrated his 95th birthday on May 23, 2020. He was honored with a parade! Two Red Cross volunteers, Carol Stafford (left) and Dr. Martha Poole Simmons (right), drove the Red Cross emergency response vehicle behind a Montgomery Fire Department truck. The parade went by Charlie's house in Dalraida and was led by Montgomery Police cars. Charlie's article was printed in the April 2019 Alabama Gazette. He was an Army Air Corps gunner in a B-17 flying 25 missions from England to Germany.*



### FROM SPRING VALLEY TO THE SKY

A small farm boy’s dream of flying, his life during the depression years, and his “once in a lifetime chance” to become a pilot in the U.S Navy during World War II. It includes many stories of his interesting travels to countries around the world including a visit to his mother’s ancestral home in Ireland, and his participation on the Berlin Airlift and during the Korean War and after.

ISBN 978-1545655160

*This book is written by the 94-year-old Veteran, John L. Zent, who served as a pilot in the U. S. Navy for almost 22 years. It is available for purchase online at Amazon as a Kindle or paperback publication or ordered at book stores.*



**If you know of a Veteran who deserves to be honored,| please email us at [alabamagazette@gmail.com](mailto:alabamagazette@gmail.com)**

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**Stan Hurst**  
*Associate Sports Writer*

NASCAR, but no fans are allowed.

The news each day brings less clarity and more confusion about the future of sports events. NASCAR is surviving only because it makes more money from television than on fans in the stands. Come to think of it, perhaps this is one of the things that makes this particular motor-sport attendance, experiencing a spiraling decline in fan participation at races over the past decade. Is it over exposure on TV; perhaps. From my vantage point it’s more than that. It’s the boring uniformity of the cars; remember when it was call “Stock Car” racing. Well these are not stock cars anymore. The cars these days are tightly controlled race cars with only the body skins separating them, and these are very similar. Gone are the days of the Allison’s, the Petty’s and Red Farmer. No dark horse favorites and no single manufacturer that can dominate races. In the desire for parity the NASCAR races are just, mostly, well, boring. No wonder attendance at races have fallen dramatically.



*Photo by Niels Kolb / FreeImages.com*

market teams, to make the financial end of the game work. So without the ticket revenue it's hard to imagine covering the average MLB team payroll of \$122 million per team. Now that’s for a full season, not half a season. How many players will report for a prorated salary is anyones guess. It appears that MLB will start the season at or near the All-Star break in some fashion. The guidelines are draconian and there will be no fans present. It’s also very likely that some of the “stars” will be missing in action. So much for everyone doing their part in a tough situation. South Korean Baseball is being played, with no fans, but rather of pictures of fans on poster boards occupying the seats. I find it interesting that in my lifetime, it was not unusual that MLB payers held a second job during the off season, but that is when the notion of helmets replacing hats was very controversial.

The NFL is convincing me that they are playing the games and working all of the details out later. It looks almost like business as usual for the NFL. The plan currently is to play the entire season, and there will be some form of health screening in place to admit fans to the game. Additionally, the NFL has announced what the protocols are going to be for the players relative to COVID-19. It looks like daily testing for each player and a stringent isolation for infected players. And by the way, the average team salary expense is \$188 million. The NFL plan is for a full season, so they at the moment, do not have the issues with revenue compared to MLB, with half a season and no fans.

The NBA may or may not start practice and may or may not have a session as of this writing. The NBA team average payroll average is \$130 million. Most of the revenue is television revenue, and frankly the NBA’s plan is so convoluted its impossible for me to write about it.



# From Pigskins to Rawhides



*The views of this editorial may not express the views of The Alabama Gazette.*

## To Play or Not to Play ... What’s the Question?

So there is the contrast between these four professional sports. MLB, this is the plan based on no fans in attendance and the NFL plan, business as usual, well sort of, but fans in attendance. NASCAR, no problems, we don’t need fans. The NBA, well I’m just not sure.

The NCAA football commissioner is still somewhat confident in a complete yet adjusted season. The thinking here is that the games involving across USA travel is problematic. So for example, games involving USC and Alabama will likely be canceled, with each team rescheduling a conference or regional team. Will this reshuffling of schedules actually include more conference games or more of the “cup-cake” U games. This remains to be seen, I surely hope it is the former rather than the latter. Spring season has been cancelled with one prominent coach telling us that his team can be ready to play in four weeks if necessary. Does that mean an earlier fall practice or does it mean the season will be pushed back a few weeks, or a combination of both. Obviously the choice and decisions here are vastly different than Major League Sports. Let's remember that the player athlete is also, and most importantly a Student Athlete. And in this arena the safety and health of the Student Athlete must be the most important consideration. There are no million dollar contracts for our kids and the health concerns are, and most be the deciding factors.

Locally, kids sports are also have an extraordinary responsibility to the kids that play. Babe Ruth Baseball has cancelled the season here in central Alabama. Dixie Youth is wise and still waiting. Three of my four grandsons are playing Dixie Youth Baseball. Sure I want to see them play, but not as much as I want them to be safe. And I’m confident that’s what everyone wants.

We live in the world we have, not the one we necessarily want. And the times we are presently in just puts an exclamation point on the previous sentence. There can be no political rational in the decisions the adults make for the kids. No conspiracy theories, no agendas, just keep them safe. Set good examples for them. Yes we’re all in this thing together and there are better days ahead. When? We just don’t know. What we do know is this: “And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good”

*Next time!*



*Photo by Jeramey Jannene / Free Images.com*



**Judge Peggy Givhan**

June not only is the month for brides and weddings, but the first month of summer. Children are out of school, families take trips to the beach and our new graduates find themselves floating on cloud “9”. For those of us who are not caught up in all this joy and celebration, we can spend free time sprucing up the garden scene, adding swathes of colorful flowers across our home landscape. This month is a great time to complete our summer garden schemes made in the dead of winter. Or if you are sometimes like me, the garden scheme began later, like in March or April. The nurseries and garden centers display voluminous quantities of all sorts of plant material for your pots and flowerbeds. So lets pick up our garden gloves and trowels to create the most dazzling flowerbeds ever.

I have always looked at gardening as not only a creative endeavor, but a philosophy which centers on what pleases you, the creator. Gardens may change over the years, one year one may attempt to have nothing but colorful annuals, formal in structure, and other years, one may add tall stately perennials or biennials, with gradients of high and low to give more texture than color. Some gardeners have one plan that they have perfected over the years, and stick to that, not even changing the color scheme. Some want their flower garden to be finished with one planting and others want a changing kaleidoscope of plants. One thing about gardening is that you learn a lot about yourself. You learn by making many mistakes, and allowing these mistakes to morph into successes.



*Logee's*

I believe one attribute that all gardeners strive for is that the garden should be peaceful and restful to view and enjoy. If you are a beginning gardener, study, take notes and photos of the gardens at Botanical and other public gardens, study pictures of gardens in magazines, or attend courses to enhance your knowledge of how to start a garden. But the important item on the agenda is to get started, somewhere be it simple pots or a small flowerbed. One can always expand from there.

## Southern Gardening

*Potpourri for June*

*by Peggy Givhan*

**Editor’s Note:** *Reprinted from June 2017. During COVID-19, we hope that everyone’s lives are getting closer to normal. Continue to be safe and enjoy some fresh air!*



*Pinterest*

Here is a list of really good gardening books that have helped me in my quest for being an expert gardener, which one day I hope to become:

1. *Manual of Woody Landscape*, by Michael A. Dirr
2. *Perennials for American Gardens*, by Ruth Rogers Clausen and Nickolas H. Ekstrom
3. *How to have a Green Thumb Without an Aching Back*, by Ruth Stout
4. *The Country Garden*, by Josephine Nuese.

**PLANT OF THE MONTH – REX BEGONIAS** – cultorum group

What an enchanting and exotic collection of plants which are not grown for their flowering ability, but for leaf coloration and texture. My Grandmother loved these begonias, and shared hundreds of rooted cuttings with her neighbors and friends. The intriguing puckering of leaves and the wide range of color variations lend these begonias to many different gardening opportunities from pots to the beds. Mostly shade loving, the variety, "Fireworks", are a perfect combination for Japanese painted fern, *Athyrium niponicum*. Soggy soil, over fertilization, and prolonged wet leaves is the kiss of death for these plants. They thrive in a well drained, humid, and shady environment. We are always searching for colorful plants that can jazz up these shady areas. Try these, you will become fascinated like myself.

**GOOD GARDENING!**





# Southern Cuisine

**Chef David Spooner, Retired Chef ~ Volunteer Fireman, Lowndesboro V.F.D., St. Paul's Episcopal Church, Lowndesboro Board of Registrars, Lowndes County**

*Our economy depends on cash flow. Our farmers, ranchers and other small businesses need as much help as we can afford. Buy local and help your fellow Alabamians. Also, don't forget to donate to your local food bank whenever possible!*



Here we are, still not knowing what is going to happen next. As I said in my last article, let's look positively; let's look at the bright side. Hopefully by the time you read this, people will be out and about, even if they are leery of what lurks ahead. We may still be six feet away from everybody, but at least we can talk to them face to face, not looking at them through a computer screen. The thing I missed the most was not being able to share a meal either at a social gathering at my home or in a restaurant or at someone else's home. I was happy to see the drive-thru windows and order pick-up spaces at restaurants were busy. At least there will be some revenue coming in to keep people employed and help the establishments to stay open. Even then, there will be many small businesses that will not make it. So, get out there and give them your support.

There are friends that need support too. Sharing a meal, socializing and even meeting new people are necessary activities after being cooped up because of

the stay at home guidelines from the government. You have been preparing meals at home and have reached the end of your imagination on how to prepare all the bulk items, (pasta, rice, canned soups, canned tuna, and canned tomatoes) you stored away for a oncoming emergency. Now you need to start cooking with fresh items on your menu. In addition, it is a good time to introduce new items and a part of a menu you probably do not pay much attention too, like hors d'oeuvres. Also, try new ways to prepare eggs, instead of scrambled or fried. And since the weather is better and you have been confined indoors, try what would be called casual outdoor dining with your friends. Using an iconic ingredient in Southern cooking will be a good start. Show off your imagination and try preparing okra somewhat differently, not fried but grilled! There is not much better than something grilled and with lots of butter.

## SKEWERED OKRA

### INGREDIENTS:

Okra, fresh, 2-3 inches, as many as you want to eat

1 stick butter

3 sprigs of fresh thyme (or ½ tsp dried thyme)

½ teaspoon ground cumin

Skewers or a grill basket

### METHOD:

1. Blanch okra for three minutes in boiling water remove & pat dry.
2. Make thyme butter by melting butter & adding thyme & cumin.
3. Skewer the blanched and dried okra or place in a grill basket to prevent it from going through the grill grates while cooking. *I use two skewers to hold the okra. It keeps them from spinning around and keeps them flat on the grill.*
4. Place skewers over hot grill that has been preheated to around 450° F.
5. Grill until slightly browned, about five to six minutes on each side. The time depends on how hot your grill gets.
6. Brush okra with melted butter two to three times while grilling. Serve the grilled okra warm and enjoy!



## GRILLED SHRIMP & JICAMA

### INGREDIENTS:

½ to ¾ lb. peeled & deveined shrimp, *see note*

½ half jicama, peeled & julienned

1 Tbsp sesame oil

1 Tbsp minced garlic

½ tsp ginger, fresh minced or dried

2 Tbsp sesame seeds

3 Tbsp soy sauce

1 tsp cornstarch

¼ tsp sea salt

¼ tsp dry mustard



**Yield: 4 servings**

*Note: too large shrimp and there will be fewer per serving, too small and they will be just too small!*

### METHOD:

1. Combine sesame oil, garlic, ginger, sesame seeds, soy sauce & corn starch. Heat in a small pan, slowly heat until sauce thickens.
2. Grill shrimp in a grill basket or skewered until just cooked.
3. Place hot shrimp in a large bowl, add sauce & jicama. Toss until everything is coated.
4. Divide & serve on a bed of lettuce on individual plates.

While you're outside and grilling, help out the Gulf shrimp industry and grill up some shrimp and serve it with another ingredient I introduced you to, **jicama**. For more on jicama, check out the April 2020 issue of the *Alabama Gazette*. The tender shrimp and the crunchy jicama go good together. The Asian inspired seasoning it a good fit also.

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## FLORETS POLONAISE

### INGREDIENTS:

1 1/4 lbs. mixed cauliflower & broccoli cut into equal-sized florets.

1/4 cup butter or 4 Tbsp of olive oil

Finely grated rind of 1/2 lemon

2 garlic cloves

1/2 cup breadcrumbs, baked

2 eggs, hard boiled

salt and pepper



**Yield: 6 servings**

### METHOD:

1. Trim vegetables & break into equal-size florets.
2. Place the florets in a steamer for 10 minutes or a pan of boiling salted water for 5-7 minutes, until just tender.
3. Toss steamed vegetables in the butter or oil & transfer to a serving dish.
4. While the vegetables are cooking, mix together lemon rind, garlic & baked breadcrumbs.
5. Finely chop the eggs & mix together with remaining ingredients.
6. Sprinkle chopped egg mixture over the cooked vegetables & serve at once.
7. Add salt & ground fresh black pepper as a final touch. *I like to put just enough salt to bring out the flavors and let people put more if they are a salt lover.*

Hopefully, by the time you read this, things are somewhat back to normal, even if it is the "new" normal. It will be the time when we can visit with friends face to face, go out to eat, enjoy a pint at the local pub, children can build sand castles with their friends. And at least do not forget those that tirelessly gave their all and were there to protect us.

*Enjoy!*

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**Patricia Killough**  
Community Editor

# HOME TOWN COMMUNITY NEWS

*Please send Patricia your family birthdays, anniversaries and weddings to*

*alabamagazette@gmail.com*

The Alabama Gazette will make every effort to include your submissions as space permits.

## Down the Street Delivers to Essential Workers!

*Gail Royal, owner of Down the Street Café on Zelda Road in Montgomery*, has been providing meals to essential workers. On Wednesday, May 6, Gail, her daughter Jamie and 9-year-old grandson, Caleb, helped deliver 100 plates of food for the staff at Jackson’s Hospital that included pulled pork, baked beans, potato salad, light bread, pound cake and tea.



Down the Street has been cooking Boston butts, slabs of ribs, and chicken halves, which are sold to the public in order to help raise the funds to feed staff in all three hospitals in the Montgomery area during the Pandemic. Baptist South also received plates this past month with Baptist East scheduled to receive plates this month. Gail wants to show the community’s appreciation to these workers, and also thanks the public for its continued support.

## Belated Congratulations to Jud & Paula Huett on their First Anniversary, May 31, 2020!

## Happy Anniversary

- |                                |                                 |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1 Bill & Harlan Ratliff (64th) | 12 Bobby & Nicole Burton        |
| 2 Tony & Kate Smith            | Tommy & Jennifer Champion       |
| 3 Joe & Amy Boyd               | 15 Tim & Stacy Nester           |
| Tom & Vivian Ledbetter         | 18 Lera & Kim Evans             |
| Rick & Ann Pascal              | Eddie & Rhonda Spivey           |
| 4 Claude & Joan Collier        | 21 Mr. & Mrs. Wayne Cobb        |
| 5 Frank & Linda Clayton        | 22 Mr. & Mrs. Mike Crutchfield  |
| Charles & Beverly Ming (65th)  | 23 Harold & Susie Van Patten    |
| 6 Shayne & Patrice Wasden      | Mike & Mary Pat Sikes           |
| 8 Ken & Karen Deavers          | Matt & Melanie Smith            |
| Jim & Joy Fleming              | Dan & Marcelle Thompson         |
| 9 Slade & Skeeter Rhodes       | 25 Mike & Brenda Moseley (59th) |
| Johnny & Jean Sport (64th)     | 28 Vance & Ruth Cordle          |
| 11 Jason & Hope Marsh          | 29 Billy & Betty Gallops (52nd) |
| Mr. & Mrs. Steve Young         | 30 Gary & Linda Beaty           |

## June Birthdays



- |                               |                        |
|-------------------------------|------------------------|
| 1 Ruby Henley                 | Madilyn Sellers (12th) |
| 2 Christian Grant             | 13 Rachel Miller       |
| Amber Holbrook                | 14 Kerry Brown         |
| Pat Moseley (81st)            | Julie Echols           |
| Mike Moseley (81st)           | Kelly Kilgore          |
| Barbara White                 | 15 Angie Ashurst       |
| 3 Eleanor Haynie              | Greyson James Looney   |
| Margie Johnson                | Caty Jane Turnipseed   |
| Kade Wallace                  | 16 Saralu Belkofer     |
| 4 Denver Taylor Moore (1st)   | David Morrow           |
| 5 Braden Crowe                | Terri Ratliff Taylor   |
| Michelle Crowe                | Carson Tucker          |
| Lane Carter Johnson           | Garrett Tucker         |
| Maggie Mills                  | Anna Shay Wasden       |
| Johnny Rush                   | 17 Susan McGuire       |
| 6 John Michael Higgins        | 18 Mary Jane Flurry    |
| Kathryn Meredith Hilton       | Jonathan Lowe          |
| William Grant (77th)          | 19 David Vinson        |
| 7 Jeannie Handey              | 20 Linda Reynolds      |
| Frank Litchfield              | Michael Taylor         |
| James Stanley                 | 21 Mary Raley          |
| 8 Georgie Harris              | 22 Nita Tidwell (97th) |
| 9 Faye Boyd (63rd)            | 23 Thomas Berrey       |
| Laura Smith                   | 24 Alice Ivey          |
| 10 Chelese Beck               | Joe Sedinger           |
| Juanita Beckman               | 25 Janet Treat         |
| Jeffery Horton                | 26 Jan Morris          |
| Seth Lumley                   | 27 John Donahey        |
| Justin Manning                | 28 Paul Hanson         |
| Melinda Newell                | Tricia Norris          |
| Sylvia Phillips               | 29 Ansley Brown        |
| 11 Betty Gentry Holmes (64th) | Lauren Moffitt         |
| David Livingston              | Dot Rebren             |
| Ashley Owens                  | 30 Kathy Blount        |
| 12 Gary Crowe                 | Gordon Davis           |
| Charlotte Gaston              | Wyatt Echols           |
| Beverly Ming                  | Jonathan Killough      |
| Mackenzie Richardson (12th)   |                        |



## Happy 12th Birthday to Daniel Selvage May 21, 2020!

## Gazette’s Sympathy to the families of...

Whetstone, Peggy Ruth Sealy (88) ..... April 25  
Blackmon, Jr. Dr. William L. (91) ..... April 26  
Maddox, Justin Thomas (28) ..... April 28  
McMahan, Mary Frances (Bet) Moore (99) ..... April 29  
Stough, Jr. Cecil Cabott (78) ..... April 29  
Borders, Sue Perkins (84) ..... April 30  
Broadway, Charles (Buster) T. (85) ..... April 30  
Staton, Emma Dunlap (94) ..... April 30  
Stringer, Kenneth H. (Pops) (83) ..... May 1  
Anderson, Jr. William (Will) R. (60) ..... May 4  
Brock, Joann Bird (83) ..... May 4  
Malone, Evelyn Joy (85) ..... May 4  
Barnes, MD, FACS, Zerney (Zeb) Burns (94) ..... May 5  
Mulcahy, Michael Hugh (83) ..... May 5  
Ogburn, Catherine (Cathy) Eugenia Vinson (67) ..... May 7  
Burton, Herbert Oran, Capt. USN (91) ..... May 8  
Krueger, Aimsley McDonald (61) ..... May 8  
Williams, Frances (MeMe) Sansom (100) ..... May 8  
Boyd, Jerry Donald (Donnie) (75) ..... May 9  
Newman, Susan Hall (75) ..... May 9  
Petty, Barbara Sue (83) ..... May 10  
McVay, Joel R. (73) ..... May 13  
Nichols, Sara (Sally) Smith (82) ..... May 13  
Reak, Oscar J. (98) ..... May 13

George, Phyllis (former Miss America) (70) ..... May 14  
Jones, Jean Lindberg (93) ..... May 14  
Webber, Denise (Mama D) McClellan (96) ..... May 14  
Jinright, Annie Lee (91) ..... May 15  
Nettles, Anne Porter (95) ..... May 15  
Dunlavy, Darold Lee (79) ..... May 16  
Walter, James Northcutt (91) ..... May 16  
Brooks, Jacqueline (Ms. Jackey) Britts (92) ..... May 17  
Gunn, Sr., Tommy Jack (85) ..... May 17  
Pritchett, Mamie Johnson (90) ..... May 17  
Hines, Hugh Howard (86) ..... May 18  
Kohn, Lanaye (26) ..... May 18  
Lamica, Dorothy (Dot) J. Defee (78) ..... May 20  
Turnipseed, Cynthia (Cindi) Leigh (60) ..... May 20  
Stallings, Jr., Daniel (Dan) Rush (90) ..... May 21  
Chambliss, Byron Scott (95) ..... May 22  
Cornwell, Beverly Ann (78) ..... May 22  
McGill, James (97) ..... May 23  
Sanders, Jr., William (Bill) ..... May 23  
Conner, Roianne Houlton (68) ..... May 25  
Courson, Leland (Lee) & Stephanie (63,61) ..... May 27  
Ward, Warren Linton (89) ..... May 29  
Dye, Coach Pat (80) ..... June 1

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## In Memory Of

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Rosemary Sides Weeks – May 28, 2020  
Dan Phillips Jarrett – May 27, 2020  
Nick Ernest Greavu – May 26, 2020  
Clara Mae Duke – May 24, 2020  
Charles Anthony “Tony” Lazenby – May 23, 2020  
Eva Jean Edwards – May 18, 2020  
Merle Lee Rolan – May 18, 2020  
Linda Darlene Johnson – May 17, 2020  
Lewis Donald Porter – May 17, 2020  
Monana Forehand Nummy – May 16, 2020  
Richard Neil Jordan – May 13, 2020  
Barbara Cotlin Lacy – May 13, 2020  
Joe A. Overton, Jr. – May 13, 2020  
Emily Cherie Curlee – May 12, 2020  
Lynn Junior Wright – May 08, 2020  
Barbara Garrett Cain – May 07, 2020  
Jeffrey Lamarr Roy – May 06, 2020  
David Lee Shaner – May 04, 2020  
Bo Bozeman – May 03, 2020  
Merrill Shelton Nobles – May 02, 2020  
Stanley Bernard Riley – May 02, 2020  
Sandy Glynn Steele – May 02, 2020  
Melissa Jayne White – May 01, 2020  
Charles Walter Calhoun – April 29, 2020  
Toska Marie Courbron – April 26, 2020



# TODAY'S WOMAN

***The Value of a Woman...Be very careful if you make a woman cry – because God counts her tears.***



## Tears and Laughter: How to Cook a Mean Pot of Greens

By Amanda Walker

Last week I mentioned in this space how we eat a lot of greens down here in the Black Belt. I am sure other people in other places also eat a variety of greens. There are even people up north who try and serve greens. I doubt they cook them right, and their family probably won't eat them, but they try.

I was bragging about how I was taught how to cook turnips by one of the best cooks in Possum Bend, and much to my surprise I received an email asking for the recipe. That is when I realized I do not have a recipe. There are no written down instructions.

It is more of a method, or a technique. And I am not out to start an argument amongst cooks across the state of Alabama. There are several variations of the right way to cook greens. Not as many ways as there are to cook them wrong, but several, and they all start with two basic necessities – a big pot and several hours.

Because of the time involved, nobody makes turnips for people they don't care about. The decision to cook turnips is a commitment. And there is a whole lot more to it than adding bacon. If your secret ingredient is bacon, you don't have any secrets. The secret may be that people have been lying to you for years about your greens. If all you have been using to season your turnips is bacon, you have not really been seasoning them enough at all. Bacon is good, add it if you want to, but fry it and crumble it first and add it toward the end of cooking if you do.

The first step is to cooking turnips is to boil a few ham hocks or smoked pork neck bones in the big pot with a sliced onion. If the store where you shop does not offer smoked ham hocks or neck bones, then you may not live in a zip code where anyone should even attempt to cook turnips the right way. And by a few, I mean a lot. Like half a pot full. Cover them with water and cook them until they fall off the bone. This will take a couple of hours at the very least.

During this entire time, you will be washing the turnips or collards or kale or mustard or kudzu or whatever your green of choice. Music in the background is recommended. You wash them and rinse them and wash them again. Then you soak them and start over. They are leaves of plants that grown from the ground in gardens. You cannot wash them too much. Take a break if you need to, but get back to washing them. Then you have to remove all of the stems. All of them. If you can see them they are too big to stay. You do not want to chance having a pot of tender greens with tough stems. Worse than that would be to have a big pot of wonderfully tender and tasty greens, with grit. So rinse them one more time.

Once you are convinced that your turnips are free from even a single grain of sand, remove the pork from the boiling broth and set it to the side to cool. You will debone it and add it back as the greens cook. Add the leaves to the broth, along with more onion. By the time you are done boiling them, the onions will disappear. Nobody will know they were ever even there, but taste-wise they matter. Stir them occasionally. You will also want to add salt and pepper and sugar and more salt. Not too much sugar, just a teaspoon or so, to take away any bitterness. This when other people may add other things like peppers or vinegar or cannellini beans. There are variations, but there are no shortcuts. Boil them until they are as tender as you like them.

The final step is to take out an iron skillet and make cornbread, but that's another column, for another week.

Amanda Walker is a contributor with *AL.com*, *The Selma Times Journal*, *Thomasville Times*, *West Alabama Watchman*, and *Alabama Gazette*. Contact her at [Walkerworld77@msn.com](mailto:Walkerworld77@msn.com) or at <https://www.facebook.com/AmandaWalker.Columnist>.



## Trisston's Tidbits ... "Turning Uncertainty into Hope"

By Trisston Wright Burrows  
[www.trisstonwrightburrows.com](http://www.trisstonwrightburrows.com)

Ms.Wheelchair Americal/  
Alabama 2005

Have you ever felt that nothing is going your way? It may be at work, or family, or everyday problems. What is your typical reaction? Do you move toward feelings of "why me?" or "grrrr...not again"? Or do you pause and think "what is my life trying to tell me right now?" Friends...let me tell you, that is the question.

How you respond to the difficult things that happen to you can mean a difference in a life of anger or joy, a life of despair or hope. I once heard a wise person say "Life is an adventure. It's not a package tour." Being at ease with not knowing is crucial for answers to come to you. If you are dissatisfied in the unsettled state, you can't hear what God is trying to tell you.

I believe that uncertainty is really your spirit saying something is off balance. For me, hope lives in these uncomfortable moments when you have doubts and don't know what to do. When these moments arise, get still. Get quiet, listen, and wait. Clear space to allow. God will tell you what to do.

***Many Blessings!***



*"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD,  
"plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope  
and a future." Jeremiah 29:11*

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# Rob 2.0 ...I AIN'T BLACK!

by Robert Tate

The day after I submitted my last Robservation, Presidential candidate Joe Biden uttered the following statement. “If you have a problem figuring out whether you’re for me or Trump, you ain’t black.” When I first heard this, I honestly thought I was being “punked” by my friend up in Huntsville. “C’mon, Roger. Nobody is that stupid. There is no way Creepy Joe said that.” Dang if I wasn’t wrong. He did say that. He said exactly that. In a previous Robservation, I said that I felt sorry for the guy. He is clearly fighting dementia and/ or senility and should not be allowed anywhere near the White House; or pretty young women. But now, sympathy has turned to an odd sort of anger.

I for one am tired of people on the left, the same people who hate America, kill babies by the millions, want to trample our Second Amendment rights into the mud and want to institute a perverse form of socialism, eventually leading to communism, into our country. His mindset, or what little remains thereof, perfectly illustrates the Neanderthal mentality of so many on the other side of the fence. For so long, Blacks have been expected to “toe the line” of the Democratic Party that those of us who have shunned their progressive, communistic leanings for decades are routinely and openly chastised by men like Biden as well as other Blacks who reside comfortably on the Master’s plantation.

Not Black? Why? For thinking for myself? Because I will not willy-nilly wander off a cliff following the herd of lemmings who themselves refuse to think for themselves? Because I dare believe in our Constitution while being able to recognize that an imperfect document written by even more imperfect people still exists as arguably the best governmental document ever written? Because I support my country although its history is stained red with the blood of thousands of my people who have been oppressed for centuries in this country? “No sur, massa Biden, I no wanna be here no mo.”

Who in the hell does this 800-year-old bigoted man think he is? Well, since his brain is almost totally gone, who knows who he thinks he is. Regardless, how can he, and his handlers think that he speaks for all Blacks? If I could, I would ask the man the following questions.

- Was I Black when my ROTC summer camp Field Training Officer planted a stolen ring in my dresser in hope of getting me thrown out of the Air Force because he didn’t feel Blacks should be flying airplanes?
- Was I Black when my ground school instructor while in ROTC conveniently “lost” my test, which I scored a 100% btw, because she simply could not give the only Black guy in the class an “A”. Yes, my test was the only one out of 35 that she “lost.”
- Was I Black when my crew was in Portsmouth, NH and an old lady walked past our Air Force van and said, “Thank you boys for helping to protect the country.” When I thanked her, and she looked at me, stomped her foot and said, and yes, I quote, “How dare you talk to me you G-D N----r.” Creepy Joe, is that Black enough for you?
- Was I Black when back in 1993 while flying the NATO AWACS, I decided to do something for Black History month and organized an AWACS

The views of submitted editorials may not be the express views of The Alabama Gazette.



flight to fly over Bosnia during the war that was going on then. I got a call to go see the Component Commander, USAF General Blume. He asked me about my plan and told me that “all” the other NATO countries at Geilenkirchen were concerned about it. An entire airplane full of Black people that is. I said, “Sir, you do realize that the Germans have done this. As have the Dutch. And the Canadians, Belgians and Danes. Nobody cared about that. They forget a couple of things, sir. First, I am one of the best pilots in this Component. You have flown with me several times. You know it as does everybody else whether they want to admit it or not. Second, every crewmember in this Component is a professional. Do these people think we are going to take-off, fly over Bosnia and have an inflight party?”

The General looked at me, said you are right and he approved it on the spot, regardless of whether any Euro-trash disagreed or not. As a side note, as the only Black pilot there, I had to find a copilot so I thought, what is the closest to Black that we have here? So, I approached one of my Italian friends from another squadron and asked if he wanted to fly on this mission. He said, heck yeah. This guy was part of the Italian demo team, The Frecce Tricolori, that crashed at the Ramstein Air Show in 1988. He flew right through the fireball after three other aircraft hit mid-air. We were missing one other crew position so I got one of our Japanese American guys from another squadron to fill in.

\* \* \* \* \*

My list goes on and on; you guys have absolutely no idea. There has been no shortage of my Blackness directing things in my life. Things obviously seen and who knows of the countless things unknown to me. The point is that nobody, especially some political mouthpiece like Joe Biden, has the right to tell me how Black I need to be. How Black I need to act. How Black I need to think. People like him enjoy nothing more than to see the deadening affects of “group think” within entire sets of people. If they can get all Blacks, poor Whites, Hispanics, women and of course the illegal immigrants and the thousands of dead people who cannot wait to vote for him, then they can control an entire voting block although they have done nothing for that block of voters for half a century or longer.

Sorry, Creepy Joe, although I still feel sorry for you and think you need to bow out before you embarrass yourself even more, you are now officially an idiot savant in my book. As if I am expected, as a retired Air Force Lt. Col., Captain at Delta Airlines, author and overall charming guy, to vote for some, lying and clearly mentally impaired socialist fool. That is never going to happen.

NEVER!



Daniel Sutter is the Charles G. Koch Professor of Economics with the Manuel H. Johnson Center for Political Economy at Troy University and host of Econversations on TrojanVision. The opinions expressed in his column(s) are the author’s and do not necessarily reflect the views of Troy University or the Alabama Gazette.

## MORE FROM SUTTER ...

### Did the Lockdown Save Lives?

In March, states undertook dramatic and unprecedented measures to stem the spread of the SARS2-COV virus. And yet COVID-19 has claimed 100,000 lives in the U.S. Was the lockdown effective? Economists

frequently address such questions in our research.

Seeing the unseen, or the path that we did not choose, is the key here. It is the fundamental challenge of economics, as illustrated by Frederic Bastiat’s parable of the broken window. A shopkeeper must replace a broken window. A neighbor, perhaps offering solace, points out that if windows never got broken, the town glazier would starve. To avoid believing that broken windows boost the economy, we must recognize what the shopkeeper did not buy due to replacing the window.

Economists visualize the alternative paths we could choose. What would have happened if we didn’t pass NAFTA, or hadn’t bailed out banks during the financial crisis, or if we raised the minimum wage to \$15 per hour? The term counterfactual refers to the unchosen path.

Economists devise principles for constructing counterfactuals. Scenarios must be logically coherent and consistent with the available evidence. We must avoid overly optimistic or pessimistic alternatives.

I have never estimated potential deaths in an outbreak of a disease but have researched tornado warnings and “worst case” tornadoes. Like most economists, I recognize the challenges in evaluating the lockdown.

Here’s a first challenge. WalletHub has scored the strictness of states’ COVID protection measures. The average COVID fatality rate for the ten states with the strictest lockdown policies is 686 per million residents, versus a fatality rate of 68 for the ten least strict states, or one tenth as much. The three highest fatality rate states are among the ten strictest states.

Does this show that lockdowns cause COVID-19 deaths? No. The states suffering the worst outbreaks will impose the strictest measures. This is the endogeneity of policy problem. Ignoring this issue would lead us to conclude that hospitals cause death because many people die there. Controlling for policy endogeneity is a major research focus.

Another problem arises because states imposed policies and Americans realized that COVID-19 was a serious health threat at about the same time. The NBA suspended its season March 11, people sharply reduced travel around March 15, and the first state stay-at-home order took effect March 19. We have very few data points to tease out the effect of various policies from behavioral changes.

The United States was slow in rolling out testing for COVID-19, creating another challenge. If we compared the number of COVID-19 cases in the month before and after lockdowns to test effectiveness, the total would rise simply because many more people were tested. Can we detect a decline in infections during a period of expanding testing?

Even if March’s lockdown was effective, the policies may not be effective in another time or place. Policy effects may not transfer for several reasons. For the COVID lockdown, an important factor is peoples’ willingness to comply. If Americans do not favor shutting down the economy for a second wave of the virus, stay-at-home orders may prove ineffective when reimplemented.

Researchers at Columbia University have evaluated the lockdown, based on computer simulations with travel data between cities and reported cases and deaths. The policies appear to have stemmed the illness; indeed implementation of the same policies two weeks earlier could have avoided 83 percent of U.S. deaths through May 3.

The sophisticated technical analysis here, I think, obscures a bigger point. “Nonpharmaceutical interventions,” as epidemiologists call such policies, do not prevent COVID-19 deaths. Americans who did not get COVID this spring can still get sick next fall. Only a vaccine or effective treatment will truly prevent deaths.

Whether school closings and stay-at-home orders slow an outbreak is an important and really challenging research question. This question must be answered before we compare economic costs and health benefits. Ultimately a lockdown is merely a delaying action. Delaying actions are only worth fighting as part of a larger strategy.

### The Future of College (Sutter)

COVID-19 has disrupted almost all aspects of life, including higher education. Colleges moved classes online during the spring semester and some observers believe that this will permanently change higher education. I think this will create new focus on how college creates value.

Online education has existed for years. Arguably though, the willingness of the nation’s most prestigious universities to shift online affirms the quality of online instruction. I would caution about reading too much into any response to this unprecedented pandemic.

Higher education’s predicament becomes much greater if the 2020-21 year ends up online. I will not try to forecast the progression of COVID-19 here, but the California State University system recently announced online classes for fall. An online year would produce an immediate financial crisis and a longer term viability challenge.

Universities take on considerable debt for classrooms, dorms, dining halls, and recreation centers. Tuition may pay for classroom buildings, but room and board payments service the bonds for dorms and dining halls. Similarly, many football schools have financed stadium improvements using revenue from long term television contracts. Universities will almost certainly have a need for a government bailout.

The longer term issue would begin when campuses reopen. Will students return in the new normal? Focusing on college’s value proposition for students helps here.

Most traditional academics believe that online education is low quality, but this may simply reflect our biases. I see student learning styles as more relevant; some students’ can learn readily online. A parallel I think is the large state university versus a smaller college. Some students can succeed with the anonymity of the giant lecture hall; others need a personal connection with professors and classmates.

Why employers value college degrees is also relevant and there are three competing sources here. First and most prominent is human capital. In this view, classes teach skills and knowledge used in jobs. A second explanation is signaling, in which a college degree provides valuable information about a student’s talents even though course content is not used in jobs. Finally we have legal restrictions; laws, primarily licensure, require a person hired for certain jobs to have a specified degree.

Online education can most readily supply legally required degrees. When job seekers and employers view the degree as merely checking a legal box, both will want to meet the requirement with minimal cost.

The signaling function might be the most difficult to replicate online. Education works as a signal when only students possessing certain traits (e.g., the ability to learn challenging material quickly) earn a degree or high grades. Credible signaling requires a level of familiarity only face-to-face interactions have traditionally afforded.

continued on next page ...



## Pat Dye: a Tigers Tiger

a tribute to Coach Pat Dye: 11-6-1939 ~ 6-1-2020

*We are missing a great friend, an excellent coach and a wise and a courageous competitor in the loss of Coach Pat Dye.*

Coach Dye played offensive guard and linebacker for the Georgia Bulldogs, following in the steps of his 2 older brothers. After graduation, Coach Dye played three years of professional football in Canada.

Once his professional football career ended, Coach Dye began his coaching career at the University of Alabama as a defensive coach for Coach Payl "Bryant" Bryant. He served in that position from 1965 until 1973 when he received his first head coaching job at East Carolina

University. There his teams won more than 72% of their games, placing Coach Dye second in all-time coaching wins for the Pirates. In 1980, Coach Dye accepted the head coach position at Wyoming. When he arrived, the Cowboys had not had a winning season in 10 years. In Coach Dye's first season, Wyoming posted a 6-5 record. In a single season, Coach Dye was able to turn the team around and establish a winning culture for the Cowboys.

Coach Dye arrived at Auburn after the 1980 season at Wyoming. The facts are that when Wyoming acquired the services of Coach Dye, they forgot to sign his contract, so when the call came from Auburn, Wyoming had no recourse and was forced to release him from his contractual obligations.

At Auburn, Coach Dye amassed 99 wins for a 71% wining percentage from 1981 until 1992; third all-time. Coach Dye arrived and took over an Auburn team that was 29-25 during the previous 5 seasons. A team that had lost eight

straight times to rival Alabama. Coach Dye defeated his mentor Coach Bryant in 1982, 23-22 in Coach Bryant's final game.

So much has been written about Coach Dye since his death; personally I miss him on the field coaching the Auburn Tigers. I've always pulled for the underdogs. And certainly Auburn was for many years until Coach Dye arrived on the scene. Coach Dye instilled a winning culture at Auburn long before the term had been coined. Coach Dye, not unlike Coach Bryant, always gave credit to the team for the wins and always accepted blame for the losses. These were the now, the long past days of shielding the players; the student athletes from mistakes. I can remember that when a penalty was called, only the offending players number was called out, rather than his name. Coach Dye always looked out for his players, whether it was encouraging a freshman or standing behind a star player who took himself out of a game.

When we think of Auburn football rivals obviously Alabama is the first thing to pop into your mind. My most enjoyable Auburn rivalry during Coach Dye's career is hands-down, Auburn versus Florida State. These were all extraordinary games and usually very close with the exception of the 1985 game played in Auburn. The Tigers won that one 59-27, which started as a typical very close game. The Seminoles and Tigers were very evenly matched on paper. However, Bo Jackson rolled up 176 yards rushing with 30 carries and two touchdowns. Coach Dye went 4-3 against the Seminoles as he faced off with Legendary Coach Bobby Bowden. The Tigers first game against the Seminoles for Coach Dye was in 1983 with Auburn pulling out a victory in a close one, 27-24. This game was in Tallahassee, and I remember listening to it on the AM radio. Unfortunately this was during the period of time when the NCAA was concerned about too much TV exposure.

***Coach Pat Dye, a great football mind and a great leader. His impact on Auburn Football is likely not fully appreciated even today.***



**Stan Hurst**  
Assoc. Sports Writer

*The views of submitted editorials may not be the express views of The Alabama Gazette.*

## MORE FROM HOOPER ...

### RISE UP FOR AMERICA



*Perry O. Hooper, Sr.*

In times of crisis every day Americans become heroes. They put their talents to work to serve their neighbors. They truly become their brother's keepers. A Brooklyn Physician in the Epicenter of the virus in New York may have said it best. She served her mandatory quarantine period after being exposed to the virus and told Time magazine: "I am a mother of three children. I have an 11-year-old, an 8-year-old, and a 5-year-old. I chose medicine to really help people. My husband, my parents, my in-laws, everybody around me told me, 'That's it. You're not going back. We want a wife and a mother. We don't need a cardiologist.' Everybody came to me and told me, 'Do not go back.' But I felt it was a moral duty. I thought it was unethical to not go back. I love my children more than anything in the world. I love my husband. I could not have not gone back. I had to help."

First responders, medical workers have put aside their fears for their personal safety and are performing their essential duties during this time of crisis at extraordinary levels. Workers performing essential services such as grocery store employees, also continue to serve the public despite the elevated risk levels. Active duty military and reserve units alike are working 24 7 building fully equipped field hospitals in unlikely places such as New York's Central Park and Javits Convention Center.

I would like to give an incredibly special thank you to Hillary Wellborn. With a true servant's heart, she left the relative safety of Ashland Alabama and traveled to New York City to serve as a volunteer nurse. I would also like thank my good,

friend Hillary's father in law Paul Wellborn, CEO of Wellborn Cabinets, and her husband Jason for their support of her on this mission of mercy.

General Motors has retrofitted an automobile plant in order to produce ventilators. Mike Lendell has turned his "My Pillow" plant into a reusable cloth mask plant. Proctor and Gamble shuttled technicians on their corporate jet in order to get an out of service toilet paper machine up and running in their Albany Georgia Plant. Alabama can count on its utility workers as always to continue their hard work in ensuring power is delivered safely to every Alabama home, hospital, and business during these unprecedented times.

Gone are the days when every household has a sewing machine. Three Central Alabama groups have used their sewing skills to produce mask for use in health care facilities. Sue Tang saw the need and took the challenge personally. She had her three alteration facilities producing masks for use at Jackson Hospital immediately after they closed their doors to the public on March 17th. Like the atre workers across the country, The Alabama Shakespeare Festival's costume department staff is producing masks for Baptist Medical Center. Auburn Associate Athletic Director Dana Marquez also took up the challenge. He has led a small team of Auburn Athletic Department staff members who have been sewing masks at Auburn's equipment facility for use at East Alabama Medical Center.

It is up to everyone to do their part. Practice social distancing whenever you are in public. Do not hoard food and other essential supplies. Lend a helping hand to a neighbor in need. We can get through this together and come out of it stronger as a Country when we defeat this unseen enemy.



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The Alabama Department of Agriculture and Industries (ADAI) has been serving Alabama farmers and consumers for over 120 years, and the *Alabama Farmers and Consumers' Bulletin* has been published since 1916! In late 2019, *Alabama Gazette Publishing, LLC*, contracted with ADAI to produce the Bulletin. The Gazette has been in business for twenty years and its small, but experienced, staff is dedicated to bringing quality media products to Alabamians.

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Some facts about Alabama's agriculture and industries climate: Agriculture is one of the top two industries in the state. One out of every 4.6 jobs is related to Alabama agriculture, and the industry contributes approximately \$70.4 billion to Alabama's annual economy. Alabama's top commodities include poultry, cattle and calves, greenhouse and nursery, cotton, and soybeans. The state makes its mark nationally, ranking second in the country in broilers, catfish and quail; third for forestland, peanuts and sod; and sixth for pecans. (Source: ADAI)

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Thank you for allowing us to share the new and improved *Alabama Farmers and Consumers' Bulletin* with you, and we hope you continue to safe during these unexpected times.

~ The Alabama Gazette staff ~

## The McCain Treachery Exposed

Recent court filings show Senator John McCain (R) indeed provided news outlets with the now totally discredited "Steele" dossier after months of denials and outright lies. The dossier had been funded by the DNC and the Clinton presidential campaign.

These latest discoveries are part of a lawsuit against *Buzzfeed* by a Russian businessman implicated in the dossier. The revelations came from unsealed documents made available June 5, 2020.

FBI agent Bill Priestap confirmed he received the false dossier form the late Senator John McCain in December of 2016 and he then slipped it to *Buzzfeed*, which broke the initial allegations.

A McCain associate, David Kramer, admitted under oath on December 13, 2017, that he shared the fraudulent dossier with McCain's blessing to a dozen news outlets including ABC, CNN, NPR and the Washington Post and other distributions also included the Obama administration.

More incriminating evidence is anticipated to show a grand conspiracy contrived by leaders of the Democratic Party and top officials in the O'Bama administration to thwart President Trumps effort to "drain the swamp" and expose corruption at our government's highest levels.

*by Staff Writer*

*The views of submitted editorials may not be the express views of The Alabama Gazette.*



***The Future of College (Sutter) ... continued from previous page.***

The usefulness of online education for human capital depends on the skill or knowledge. Consider learning to play a musical instrument (something I know only from reading about). Such instruction is usually one-on-one or in very small groups; watching a how-to video by one of the world's leading musicians does not work well. Music teachers have offered lessons on Zoom during the pandemic; perhaps virtual instruction will prove effective.

Higher education involves valuable experiences outside of the classroom. While this might sound like an apology for parties and football games, for many people, college is a valued part of growing up. People make lifelong friends and often meet their spouses. College is about more than just book learning.

A four year party might seem unnecessary, but life is about more than mere survival. Fine food and elegant dining is not just about efficiently ingesting calories. Clothes for many people are fashion statements. This is normal in a prosperous society; the quality of the journey becomes paramount, not merely getting from A to B.

The economic slump, I think, threatens higher education's long term viability more than COVID-19. The pandemic may trigger a depression leaving the United States and the world substantially poorer than at the start of 2020. If so, we will be able to afford fewer luxuries, including traditional college.