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THE ALABAMA

Gazette



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MARCH 5TH - ALABAMA STATE WIDE PRIMARY ELECTION 2024

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THE GAZETTE IS “THE VOICE OF REASON”!

The Alabama Gazette strives to make itself even more relevant to you and the community that we serve. To this end we are adding more news content to both future issues as well as to the website. In coming days we will be posting new content to our website. Read current legislative news posted on our website by Brandon Moseley.

Read our online issues at: www.alabamagazette.com

Brandon Moseley



The New Lead Reporter at The Alabama Gazette

The Alabama Gazette is continually striving to make itself even more relevant to you, our readers, and the community that we serve. To this end we are adding more news content to both future print editions of our

newspaper as well as to the web site. In the coming days, we will be updating our website with five days a week new news content in order for us to better serve you.

I am Brandon Moseley, the new lead news reporter at the Alabama Gazette. I have over 14 years of experience in covering political news in Alabama for a variety of online and print publications. I have covered elections, the Alabama Legislature, the Governor and other constitutional offices, the Alabama congressional delegation, economic development news, as well as general interest stories, including some sports. We will begin updating our site with original news content in coming days.

I am a seventh generation Alabamians and a thirteenth generation American. I have a bachelor’s degree from Auburn University in Animal & Dairy Science. I graduated from John Carroll High School in Birmingham. I have worked for over a decade in the agricultural sector and managed my family’s timber holdings for years following the liquidation of our brood cow herd. I am a former life and health insurance agent.

Our focus at the Alabama Gazette will always remain faith, family, and country. That will never change. Our news content will be a new service to keep our readership and the greater Alabama community better informed citizens. Our focus will always be on factual reporting and not slanting the news to fit any partisan or personal agendas.

To connect with the author of this story or to comment, email brandonmreporter@gmail.com



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2024 Alabama Regular Legislative Session Begins

On Tuesday, February 6, both Houses of the Alabama Legislature met for the first time in 2024. **Alabama, like the Congress of the United States, has two legislative bodies – a Senate and a House of Representatives.**

The **Alabama House of Representatives has 105 members. The Alabama Senate has 35 State Senators.** The most powerful member of the **House of Representatives is the Speaker of the House.** The most powerful member of the Alabama Senator is the **Senate President Pro Tempore.**

Since 2010 the Alabama Republican Party has controlled both Houses of the Alabama Legislature with filibuster proof super majorities. There presently are two vacancies in the Alabama House – a district up in Madison County and another in Marshall County. **Republicans have a 75 to 28 majority in the House and a 27 to 8 in the Senate.**

The current **Speaker of the House is Rep. Nathaniel Ledbetter (R-Rainsville).** Ledbetter is beginning his second year as the Speaker. **State Senator Greg Reed (R-Jasper) is the current Pro Tem. of the Senate.** He is in his third year leading the Alabama upper chamber. The **Lieutenant Governor, Will Ainsworth (R), presides over the Senate** when the Senators are in session on the floor of the chamber.

Much of the work of both Houses is not in an actual legislative day, but rather in committees. For a bill to pass a member of the Legislature has to introduce it, it has to pass out of committee in its house of origin, pass that house, clear committee in the second house, and then pass in the second house. If a bill changes in the second house from the form that it passed in the first house and then it still could be vetoed by the Governor – though the Legislature can override a gubernatorial veto with a simple majority vote.

Alabama Governor Kay Ivey (R) presented her legislative priorities during her seventh state of the state speech Tuesday night February 6.. There are a maximum of thirty legislative days in a regular legislative session. The primary purpose of the session is to pass the two state budgets.

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INSIDE THE STATEHOUSE With Steve Flowers

Steve Flowers is Alabama’s leading political columnist. His weekly column appears in over 60 Alabama newspapers. Steve served 16 years in the state legislature. He may be reached at: <https://steveflowers.us/>

2024 Legislative Session



The 2024 Legislative Session begins next week. It will be difficult to replicate the success of last year’s regular session. The 2023 year was a premier year for any first year of a quadrennium. Indeed, it may be one of the most momentous in state history. It was historic because of the vast amount of money available to be appropriated. When asked what grade I would give the legislative session at its conclusion, I gave it the highest I have ever given: B+. It would have gotten an A, but legislators were given such a leg up by having so much money to spend that it was like they were being able to take their finals as an open book exam. Last year’s Education Budget was an historic \$11.5 billion. The \$3 billion General Fund Budget was also record shattering.

The legislature granted \$150 to \$300 one-time tax rebates to all Alabama taxpayers. State employees and all educational employees, including all teachers, received a 2% percent cost of living raise.

The legislative leadership for the next three years of the quadrennium was established. In the State Senate, President Pro Tem Greg Reed (R-Jasper), Education Budget Chairman Arthur Orr (R-Decatur), Rules Chairman Jabo Waggoner (R-Vestavia), and General Fund Budget Chairman Greg Albritton (R-Escambia), will be kingpins. In the House of Representatives, the key players will be Speaker of the House Nathaniel Ledbetter (R-Dekalb), and because of their positions, Education Budget Chairman Danny Garrett (R-Trussville) and General Fund Budget Chairman Rex Reynolds (R-Huntsville), and Rules Chairman Joe Lovvorn (R-Auburn) are leaders.

The bottom line big three leaders of the legislature are Greg Reed, Arthur Orr, and Nathaniel Ledbetter. Reed and Orr are veteran Senate leaders. Senator Reed, by virtue of being the leader of the Senate, is powerful. Senator Arthur Orr has settled in as a power to be reckoned with as the long-time veteran Chairman of the Senate Education Budget Committee. He has written so many education budgets that he wields a lot of power with his pencil.

The new kid on the block in this triumvirate of power is first term Speaker of the House Nathaniel Ledbetter. Speaker Ledbetter may very well be the most

powerful person in the Alabama Legislature. He has molded the House around him. His entire inner team of Garrett, Reynolds, and Lovvorn are all first year major committee chairmen, who are very loyal to Ledbetter, as are all of the other major committee chairmen and almost all of the Republicans in the House. He has also won the support and trust of the House Democrats. I have not seen this kind of bipartisan cooperation and harmony in the lower chamber in a long time, if ever.

Ledbetter’s down home, quiet, honest and compassionate leadership is paying dividends for the success of the legislature, as well as the state. Ledbetter has a loyalty among the 30 freshmen legislators never before seen. The reason is simple. He, along with his friend, the crafty, savvy, Huntsville political guru, Steve Raby, elected most of them. He and Raby raised most of their campaign money and crafted their campaigns. Folks don’t forget that kind of help, but their loyalty is also based on the fact they like and trust Ledbetter. He is sincerely interested in them. He wants the House to work and succeed because he wants the state to succeed. He also does not have a big ego. He is not driven by self-indulgence or gratification.

Nathaniel Ledbetter was born and raised in Dekalb County. He was first elected to the legislature in 2014. So, it has only been nine years ago that he was a freshman, like the ones he is leading. Ledbetter was elected Majority Leader of the House in 2017, only three years after his arrival. He worked very closely with his ally, former Speaker Mac McCutchen, for five years. He was the choice of McCutchen to succeed him as Speaker.

Before his election to the legislature, Ledbetter was also on the City Council and the Mayor of Rainsville. He is close friends with legendary Alabama lead singer Randy Owen. They both love their Sand Mountain home.

Nathaniel Ledbetter will continue with his calm, collected and reasonable leadership this year and the remainder of this quadrennium, and probably for years to come.

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

Lessons from the Death of a Tyrant

One hundred years ago, Vladimir Lenin died.

Lenin was an unlikely revolutionary. His story was not one of meager beginnings or social depravation. Rather, he came from a family of means that had little connection with the proletariat he came to champion. He was well educated, attended college, and became a lawyer.

But, during his “*education*,” he was radicalized when exposed to Marxism and embraced its view of 19th century revisionist history. Throwing facts aside, the history lessons he accepted were those of class struggle;

Justice Will Sellers

of the haves vs. have-nots, of capitalism vs. socialism with an ultimate conclusion that the end of history was a workers’ paradise where everyone was equal and shared everything in common. Obtaining that result was now his goal.

Lenin’s evil genius was to take the tenets of Marxism and superimpose them on his Mother Russia. For, unlike the more modern Western European countries, Russia had no real history of government organizations that balanced power and allowed for the popular participation of elections. Instead, Russian history saw government as the one strong man expressed in people like Ivan the Terrible, Peter the Great, and a list of autocrats who were absolute dictators in the most totalitarian sense. The ideas of the enlightenment as it related to government, freedom of dissent, and liberty of conscience were seeds never germinated in Russian soil.

While Marx’s ideas in other parts of the world were discounted because they were incompatible with colloquial, cultural experiences, in Russia they had a chance of succeeding because its social structure was different. It was primarily agrarian with an economy barely touched by the industrial revolution, and its Orthodox religion was hardly sympathetic to the lower classes. In short, Russia was ripe for revolution.

Though the pre-Bolshevik czars were not loved, they were at least tolerated and occasionally made attempts to liberalize Russia. Even with a pogrom here and there, the lower-class serfs had minimal creature comforts, the tax burden was bearable and the government remote.

This would change with Russian entrance into **World War I**.

As Russia mobilized for war, patriotic fervor swept the country and unified everyone in what was predicted to be a short and simple conflict. When the conflict was not quickly concluded, this nationalism receded, as support for the war drained the population of both food and money. When military successes remained distant and casualties mounted, the czar was ultimately forced to abdicate in favor of a coalition government of sorts.

Unfortunately for the czar, he had believed his senior military officials and their optimistic view of Russia’s military might. He hitched his entire reputation to supporting the war effort, and when stalemate caused the economy to tank, he took the easy way out and simply resigned. Lenin now had his opportunity. He had looked for that perfect storm of confusion, instability, and conflict and now had it. Without a czar as a national center of gravity, Russia was ripe for a new leader, but Lenin wouldn’t have been anyone’s first choice.

He was an exile in Switzerland and not popularly well known. As a writer of political tracts, his audience was limited to middle class Russian radicals, but his historical interpretation that war was a tool of imperialists and capitalists caught the eye of German intelligence.

In one of the most significant expressions of the law of unintended consequences, Germany provided transportation and support for Lenin to enter Russia. The thought was that Lenin would end the war, and rather than being divided militarily on two fronts, Germany could focus its energy on defeating the Western allies.

For Lenin, ending the war with Germany, although costly and consequential, would stanch Russia’s bleeding figuratively and literally. Plus, it would give him a platform to argue that his performance in bringing peace merited a mantle of leadership for other initiatives.

But Lenin was in the minority in what amounted to a coalition government, and even with his articulate speeches and engaging personality, his ideas for Russia’s future were not well received.

Minority status, though, has never prevented revolutionaries, much less communists, from succeeding. Status was status; minority or otherwise, it gave Lenin an aura of legitimacy allowing him a toehold that he would parlay into a foothold to gradually gain control of the government.

Using what limited power he had to obtain influence and consolidate his grip of authority, Lenin made his plan work. He understood that in revolutionary situations, masses matter most, and so he worked to gain acceptability with the lower classes as well as the military. At the end of the day, he had bypassed both the middle and officer classes with an appeal to serfs and enlisted men to support him.

He organized them into soviets or local councils who would have governing authority much like our counties and states. Initially this authority was used to nationalize all industries and confiscate land to create collectives for everyone. Equality was guaranteed since the state owned everything, and the workers shared in the fruits of their collective labor.

But this didn’t work. Not at all. While farmers and factory workers had experience in doing their specific job, they had neither the education nor experience in governing or actually managing anything that the vast collectives required. Things fell apart in a hurry.

Disagreements were met with brutal suppression, and because Lenin had the army under control, summary executions for dissenters was easy. In a matter of no time, Lenin’s regime was no different than those of the czars. Even though different classes might be in control with different theories of government validating to their actions, the net result for the country was the same - dictatorial control, brutal repression, and an unaccountable governing elite.

Lenin’s legacy was devastating for Russia if not the world. He created an ideology that resulted in the deaths of tens of millions and repressed the very people he sought to liberate.

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Owners Loretta Grant and Sam Adams
wish all a **Very Merry Christmas!**

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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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Robservations...

By: Rob Tate

Bits and Pieces #18

As usual, there always seems to be a lot going on in the world. So this week I bring to you my not-so-world-famous “Bits and Pieces; version 18.”

1. The Border (Again): Several columns back, I wrote about our southern border. And in that time, it has not gotten any better; only worse. It is sickening to watch and from my perspective, the true human tragedy is not necessarily the plight of the illegal immigrants, sad as it is on a personal level, but rather what is becoming of this country. It is not that I am a heartless guy but the reality is this. Who do I care more about? People from dozens of other countries, many who have ulterior motives in coming here or do I care about American citizens and my country first and foremost? The real question is, **“Do I really need to ask this?”** www.worldpopulationreview.com/country-rankings/percentage-of-illegal-immigrants-by-country. The world population review says that America has between 11.3 And 10.9 million illegal immigrants. That equates to approximately 15% of our total population. I am not talking about immigrants but illegal aliens living among us.

According to a Fox News report I saw just two days ago (**25 January 2024**), in the month of **December alone, we had 302,034 migrant encounters (again, illegal aliens)**. For comparison, the population of Cincinnati is 309,513. And for the entire **Fiscal Year to date, we have seen 785,422 encounters**. The entire population of Seattle, Washington is less than that by over 36,000 registering in at 749,256 people. Over 24,000 total immigrants sneaking across our border are from China. The argument that the illegal immigrants are almost exclusively Mexicans looking for a better life is what my Australian friends call, **“Twaddle.”** People from over 160 different countries have been caught by our agents at the border. The vast majority of these are in no way properly vetted and yet turned loose into the interior of the country. Some people are certainly good people but mixed in with them are many criminals, sexual predators, terrorists, murderers, and the like. Safe? Smart? Are we doing right by our own people? No, no and no! I would personally rather see 100 **“good”** people excluded than allow one murderer or terrorist into the country who will kill a single American citizen. Is it acceptable for us to close, even temporarily, American schools and deny our children access to schools in favor of illegal immigrant children? You can answer that one. www.msn.com/en-us/news/us/chicago-democrat-torches-city-leaders-as-clinics-close-closed-schools-used-to-make-way-for-migrants/ar-BB1hdby4. www.nbcnews.com/news/us-news/nyc-decision-move-migrants-tent-shelter-school-storm-draws-fire-rcna133236

As Americans, we need to get a grip on this. Just the other day, the Mayor of New York, Eric Adams, foolishly (**actually stupidly**) suggested that people should open their homes and let complete strangers, from God knows where and what their motives might be, to move in. nypost.com/2023/06/05/adams-wants-new-yorkers-to-house-migrants-in-private-residences/ Insane. You first, pal. I have mentioned before one of my five all-time favorite movies is Guess Who’s Coming to Dinner. The original and not the horrible comedic remake. In the movie, the Monsignor tells Spencer Tracy’s character that there is nothing more satisfying than seeing a bleeding-heart liberal come face to face with his beliefs. This is what we see in every sanctuary city and state in the country. It was all fun and games as long as states like Texas bore the brunt of the illegal immigration problem. But now that cities like New York, Chicago, LA and others are dealing with the migrant surge, they don’t like it. Me personally, they asked for it now they need to deal with it. Letting these people into our homes is not the solution.

But not surprising, when asked whether the border was secure, President Biden emphatically said, **“No.”** Then, as expected, he blamed the Republicans for the crises at the border. This coming from a man who during his entire time as President argued that the border was secure. But now that an election is coming, he has no choice but to change his tune. Or rather those behind the scenes have told him what to say. Either way, more to come on this subject, I am sure. At least according to polls from the IA caucus and NH primary, Americans are beginning to see the border as the most important issue concerning this country. Without a secure border, we will not have a country.

2. Chinese Mutant COVID:www.msn.com/en-us/health/medical/china-is-testing-killer-covid-variant-with-100-mortality-rate-for-mice/ar-BB1hcS3y. Here is something scary for you. My question would be, **“Why is this allowed”**

and **“What could possibly be the purpose of this?”** A team of Chinese scientists have been experimenting with a new mutant strain of Covid that is achieving a mortality rate of 100% in specimens infected. These specimens typically died within a week. This article describes the symptoms and the affects of this virus. Let’s not forget the Chinese bio lab that was discovered in California with various vials of dangerous substances like Ebola and HIV back in 2022.

3. Israel Cease Fire: This is a quick one. For those who are seriously butt-hurt over what is happening in Israel, you can march up and down any street in America, you can burn flags, cry, stomp your feet and lash out at anybody who disagrees with you, but you must remember one thing. You do not have the power to demand anything. You can ask, plead, debate, suggest, argue or whatever peaceful method you choose, but you cannot **DEMAND** an Israeli cease fire. It is not and never will be up to you. You have no say whatsoever. It is a war started by Hamas and would I like to see it end? Yes. Absolutely. The older I get, the more I hate war. But if you are attacked, you have every right to fight back and do whatever it takes to **“end the threat.”** You do not have the right to punch me in the nose and when I start kicking your butt up and down the street, have your friends and relatives demand I stop pounding your face. You started it. How about you tell your friend not to punch me in the face and I would not mop the floor with him. And if I stop kicking his butt, what guarantee do I have that he will not punch me again at a later date? How about the feckless U.N. start putting some legitimate pressure on Hamas? But this will not happen. With all that was going on in the world in 2022 for example, the U.N. General Assembly placed 15 resolutions against Israel alone while making 13 total against the rest of the world. No surprise. The U.N. could not hide their anti-Semitism if they tried.

If you have not heard, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees in the Near East (**UNRWA**), one of the United Nothings’ largest programs, just had twelve members from its organization accused of helping and aiding Hamas in the 7 October attacks against Israel. Surprised? Why? More to come on this. And yes, the US has temporarily stopped sending money to this organization and we are its largest contributor. More on this another time.

4. Boeing: A door panel blew out of an Alaskan Airline 737 Max. This of course after two crashes of a similar airplane in 2018 and 2019. Other than my 170 or so hours from Air Force pilot training, all my 14,000 hours of flight time has come in Boeing airplanes; 14 different platforms. I love the Boeing product. But, in the last several years, I have become quite disappointed in them. (**One day offline, ask me about the greatest plane I have ever flown, the 757**). This entire 737 Max issue is disheartening. There is a documentary on Netflix called Downfall: The Case Against Boeing. This documentary is a must watch. Absolutely a must watch. You will see how a great and trusted company, one of the most prestigious companies in American history, can fall. This is because corporate greed and their moving away from decades long bedrock principles of safety and quality, those that the company were founded on, were sacrificed to the alter of the mighty greenback. In the end, 346 people died. But at least when **CEO** Dennis Muilenberg stepped down, the company gave him some \$62 million in cash and stock. Watch it.

5. Kenneth Smith Nitrogen Execution: So many people came out to support this guy. Where was all the support for his victim? Through the years, I have heard the same tired and inane argument that the death penalty is not a deterrent. This is correct. It is punishment. I think the craziest argument was that nitrogen hypoxia was untested. Some people hung their hats on that argument. **“Well, Rob. What do you say to that?”** Easy. Bullets. Bullets? Yeah, firing squad. Centuries of proven, tested effectiveness. What about hanging? Lethal injection? Being untested is a spurious argument at best. Come on people, let’s not lose sight of the fact that this guy was a murderer. If we are to use the death penalty in certain cases, don’t let it drag on for 30 years. Being on death row for that long is itself the actual cruel punishment. If you don’t want to see the death penalty used, stop murdering people. And no, the death penalty is not murder. Sorry, let’s not go there.

6. Thanks for the comments I got from my last column. It was certainly different for me. More like that may follow in the future.



James Dotherow

Alabama while passing through our state. Each of these patriot soldiers has a special story to tell, and many of them will never be found in history books. Walter Filmore Ross, Sr. was born in 1761 in Caroline County, Virginia and died on October 25, 1848 in Autauga County, Alabama. He is buried in the Ross Cemetery in Deatsville in present day Elmore County.

Walter Ross was born in Virginia before he moved to North Carolina and was drafted into the army and served 3 months under Lt. John Jarman, Capt. George Wilson & Col. Thomas Wade, who was the highest commanding officer in Anson County, North Carolina. He served 2 separate occasions after the war as a scout under the command of Capt. John DeJarnett scouting the Tories, serving 3 month each time. He was frequently ordered to enter Cumberland and Robeson County and several times into South Carolina in the vicinity of Lynchess Creek. He scouted with a man by the name of Thomas Douglass and ordered by Col. Wade to make stoves for the use of the Army which duty they performed and also to carry letters to Capt. McNeill in Cumberland County. He was sent to Marlborough District in South Carolina after a load of leather. He was never attached to a larger Army regiment. He was engaged in small skirmishes with the Tories but never fought in any major battles. He never received a written discharge.



Gen. John Archer Elmore SAR Chapter Honors Revolutionary War Soldier Walter Filmore Ross, Sr.

The General John Archer Elmore SAR Chapter is proud to share with you a brief story of Revolutionary War Soldier Walter Filmore Ross, Sr., who is buried in Elmore County, Alabama.

Although Alabama was not in existence at the time of the American Revolution, almost 1,000 Revolutionary War soldiers are buried in Alabama.

Many permanently moved to Alabama while others died in

The family moved to Autauga County, Alabama, about 1820/1822. Margaret Williams Ross filed for her bounty and land entitlement as the widow of a Revolutionary War Pensioner and stated that she married Walter Ross on July 10, 1790. Walter Ross died October 25, 1848 and to this marriage, they had the following children: Betsey, William, John, Andrew, Nancy, Galespie, Francis and Catherine Ross. He was pensioned at a rate of \$30 per annum commencing March 4, 1831 for service as a private in North Carolina militia. His widow was pensioned in a like amount.

The General John Archer Elmore Chapter of the Sons of the American Revolution honors our Revolutionary War patriot ancestors by promoting patriotism, serving our communities, and educating and inspiring future generations about the founding principles of our country. In conjunction with the upcoming 250th Anniversary of the Declaration of Independence, we honor soldiers of the American Revolution buried in the River Region of Central Alabama.

The Sons of the American Revolution is a lineage based organization composed of members who are male descendants of people who served in the American Revolutionary War or who Sons of the American Revolution Alabama SAR Gen. John Archer Elmore Chapter contributed to establishing the independence of the United States.

The Gen. John Archer Elmore Chapter was formed in 2007 to serve the River Region of Autauga, Elmore and Montgomery Counties, as well as surrounding counties. Our

chapter meets the second Tuesday of each month at The Fantail Restaurant in Millbrook from 6 – 8 pm. Any male who is a lineal descendent of an ancestor who supported the war for American Independence is eligible for membership in the Sons of the American Revolution. If you are interested in joining the Sons of the American Revolution, please contact our Registrar Earl Gillian, Jr. at pbpossum99@aol.com .



Ronald A. Holltsford

My own parents received a telephone call several years before their deaths in which my Mom answered the phone. The voice on the other end of the phone said, *“hi Grandma”*. My Mom responded by saying, *“oh Mike (not his real name), I was thinking about you”*. Now the exploiter knew the grandson’s name and how to address my Mom. He explained he had gone with friends on the spur of the moment to Spain and I have forgotten the details but it was something like his wallet was stolen or was arrested for something minor and was asking for money. My Mom told my Dad that *“Mike”* was on the phone and had whatever issue and needed money. My Dad was not heartless but I think he smelled a rat and told him sorry he couldn’t help and the telephone conversation ended. My Dad’s instinct was right but unfortunately this scheme has worked all too often. More recent schemes have involved higher tech criminals that have obtained voice samples and used those for more authentic sounding conversations.

Another scheme I am aware of are individuals that contact lonely older men or women. They may carry on the ruse for months and create a long distance relationship with these older people. The ruse makes the older individuals feel attractive and wanted again, but eventually a need for money from the exploiter comes and once the hook is set the need for money may continue for months while the lonely person waits for the exploiter to carry out some promise and/or pay back the money.

Of course another method is an individual who has been named as agent or attorney in fact under a power of attorney for an older person and ends up withdrawing money for their own use until the older person finds themselves with their one *“trusted”* support person gone with their money and they may be too embarrassed or mentally/ emotionally frail to pursue the offender with criminal charges or civil action.

Are there any things to consider for my elderly parents in exploitation by criminals?

Criminals that would exploit the elderly are heartless subhumans. Elderly individuals that may be suffering mild dementia, are lonely, have trouble discerning nefarious schemes and have only sporadic support from family may be especially prone to exploitation. To make it worse they are now generally reliant on life savings, investments and social security to live. That could be a huge chunk of money that could be ripe for picking.

A case was settled two years ago, in United States v. Epsilon Data Management, LLC, where the DTC (Direct to Consumer) unit in Epsilon Data Management, LLC sold customer data having to do with millions of Americans to organizations involved with mail fraud. The data sold was over a nine year period ending in 2017 and much of it was targeted towards the elderly. The fraudsters sent materials mostly dealing with sweepstakes and astrology readings; anyone that responded would receive nothing of value. The sale of data continued to occur to fraudsters even when the DTC unit knew many organizations that they had sold data to had been arrested but continued selling the data anyway. In fact the number of Americans data compromised exceeded thirty million Americans. Those that sell data have a responsibility not to see such data to organizations that they know or have a reasonable suspicion that they will attempt to swindle those whose information is provided.

Apparently, the swindlers had significant success in their schemes. Postal inspectors have a duty to protect the public from such deception and were heavily involved in the prosecution of Epsilon and those that purchased the data.

Of the \$150 million that Epsilon was ordered to pay for facilitating such fraud, \$127.5 million of that was to reimburse those defrauded. Apparently, following the discovery, Epsilon was very compliant in correcting their failures as much as possible and putting practices in place to not be a part of such activity in the future.

I hope that this has helped with any questions about elder exploitation. If you need a lawyer you can contact the Alabama State Bar Lawyer Referral service or ask a trusted friend about a lawyer that they might recommend.

This article is informative only and not meant to be all inclusive. Additionally this article does not serve as legal advice to the reader and does not constitute an attorney- client relationship. The reader should seek counsel from their attorney should any questions exist.

"No representation is made that the quality of legal services performed is greater than the quality of legal services performed by other lawyers."



Col John Eidsmoe

WAS THE FATHER OF OUR COUNTRY AN INCOMPETENT GENERAL?

“First in war, first in peace, first in the hearts of his countrymen.” So said General Henry *“Light Horse Harry”* Lee, speaking the eulogy of our first President whose birthday we celebrate this month.

But recent polls suggest that many Americans hardly know who George Washington was, when he lived, or what he accomplished.

Some even challenge his military skills, saying he was at best a mediocre tactician, lost more battles than he won, almost lost the war, and at one point was almost removed as commander because of widespread dissatisfaction in Congress, the public, and within the army.

Dave R. Palmer’s book, George Washington: Military Genius (**Regnery 2012**) comes as a welcome antidote to such ignorance. A retired three-star general and Vietnam veteran, General Palmer served as superintendent of West Point and military historian, General Palmer is well qualified to assess Washington’s military capabilities.

Consider what Washington had to overcome. Few if any have assumed command of an army under such adverse circumstances. The *“army”* of the American colonies consisted largely of untrained local militias who were unused to working together with militias of other colonies. Even though he had never commanded a large army before his appointment by Congress, Washington had to inculcate discipline into these ragtag soldiers and weld them into a cohesive fighting force. And he had to build a navy from virtually nothing.

Normally a commanding general serves under a Secretary of Defense who serves under the President. But during the War, the new United States had no president and no Chief Executive and no executive branch of government; the president of the Continental Congress was more like the current speaker of the house. For the conduct of the War, Washington had to act as chief executive, which meant he had to work with Congress and with the states to establish military policy and funding for the war.

This was especially difficult because under the Articles of Confederation, Congress had no power to tax. Congress could only send “requisitions” to the states which were little more than requests for funds, and some states complied, if at all, only after all their local budgetary needs were met.

The new USA had no State Department, so General Washington had to conduct foreign diplomacy and even establish foreign policy. He effectively built an alliance with France, working with some like Lafayette and Rochambeau who shared American ideals and with others who wanted to help America only to destabilize England. And Washinton was an impressive diplomat; his large size and graceful movement made every monarch in Europe, standing beside him, appear to be his valet.

He was less successful with the Germans, perhaps underestimating King George III’s Hanoverian German connections and ability to raise thousands of Hessian (**German**) soldiers to serve the British cause as mercenaries. But he did manage to recruit the Baron von Steuben, a Prussian military officer who was able to instill discipline into American troops.

Washington’s understanding of tactics was innovative for his time. In eighteenth-century Europe, battles commonly consisted of soldiers lined up in columns on opposite sides of a battlefield, firing volleys at each other. But Washington had served in the French and Indian War of the 1760s, and he had seen firsthand the Native American tactics of fighting from behind rocks and trees, and he adopted those and other guerrilla tactics for American soldiers. He also understood the need for military intelligence and built an extensive spy network. He freely sought the opinions of his subordinates, even though, like every good leader, he didn’t always follow their advice.

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And the key to his military success was his ability to inspire confidence. His soldiers, like the nation as a whole, had such confidence in his patriotism, his integrity, and his compassion for them, that they were willing to sacrifice everything for him and for the American cause.

Yes, Washington lost a lot of battles. After all, he was facing the largest and best-trained army in the world. But he also won some key victories, and he knew that sometimes he had to win battles at greater cost than they appeared to be worth, to uphold the morale of his troops and of the nation – and to dampen the morale of the British back home.

Ultimately, Washington was a hard-headed realist. He knew that his meager forces were no match for the most powerful empire on earth. England had a population of nine million plus their colonies abroad, compared to America’s 3-4 million; this gave them the ability to call forth many times more soldiers. Their soldiers were well-provisioned and well-trained, unlike the Continental army which often starved and lacked weapons, ammunition, and even warm clothing, and some soldiers deserted because they were unpaid and their families were starving at home. If the British had amassed all their forces into the colonies with a determination to win at all costs, there is no earthly way Washington could have prevailed.

Washington’s goal, therefore, was not to defeat the British In an all-out war. Rather, his goal was to win just enough battles so as to appear successful, and to convince the British people that pursuing the War to a conclusion would be worth the cost in and resources.

And he succeeded, bringing the British to a surrender at Yorktown in 1781 and to France for the Treaty of Paris of 1783 that recognized American independence.

And bringing the War to a successful conclusion, Washington did the unthinkable: Like Gideon of the Bible and the Roman general Cincinnatus, he voluntarily abdicated his position. He submitted his resignation to the Congress and the thirteen governors, and returned home to Mt. Vernon intending to be a farmer for the rest of his life.

But God had other plans. As the nation descended into anarchy and chaos, Washington was called out of retirement to serve as President of the Constitutional Convention of 1787 and as America’s first President from 1789 to 1797. And he again voluntarily relinquished power, declaring that two terms as President are enough and returning home, to die two years later in 1799.

Humanly speaking, the fledgling nation could not have survived, let alone flourished, without George Washington’s helpful hand.

*So Happy Birthday, General Washington!
You were the first, and you were the best.*



George Washington



John Sophocleus

A ‘Valentine’ themed column was requested for the February **Gazette**... I thought, Lord help this poor wordsmith - esp. when writing from the heart. Once again, help provided via Scriptures. I believe God answers all sincere prayers - sometimes the answer is **no**. Seems there’s no fool like an old fool for Christ; a moniker more obvious as my life comes to a close. Oldsters seem reluctant to share ‘University of Hard-Knocks’ education with others who may benefit, in particular our posterity working their way to adulthood. How many can provide examples of a prayer answered NO, to **later** understand God’s reply?

I met the woman I would ask to marry and the one actually married on about the same day in 1986. This fellow grad student was much better looking than I (picture changes with my columns these past decades confirm I’m not a very good-looking nor a particularly ugly man) she was a bit smarter than I (OK, I’m a little above average there, but highly attracted to ladies who engaged in ‘cerebral intercourse’ - my earthly father frowned upon much of any intercourse before marriage) **and** best of all she wasn’t shy about her strong faith. Her no was devastating and further complicated by insisting difficulty staying away from me; making it more difficult/longer to complete grad school as God provided my way.

I met Theresa as a teller at the local bank. She knew I was a struggling student with no money, but doing OK with a well paying job working my way through school and buying my first home. She always looked at me awkwardly (a resplendent young woman, sophisticated - i.e., out of my league, usually dressed exquisitely enough for even a rube like me to notice) and often messed-up my transactions. I still remember my bride’s teller number because of so many corrections! In short, I thought she didn’t want me at her teller window, finding me a little weird and out of place in upstate SC... which was easy to imagine. Much harder to imagine an extraordinary, angelic woman like Theresa would settle for one God made clear was a NO to the one I prayed on years before...

Approaching a third of a century later, I **still** cannot explain why Theresa followed me to AU; why God shepherded such a blessing in my life. Seems in our world of free will God struggles with what’s available for one of His angel lambs navigating this world. Sobering to know how unearned this blessing has been and the only thing I could think to do... try to be a better man for my bride. If you truly love your spouse and want them to have a better life, become a better mate. Thirty years ago, I think I was doing well endeavoring to be a better man, until the government made us homeless from the house we paid off in 1995. It was one of the most amazing things to see Theresa be stronger than I ever imagined. The only explanation I can muster (seeing the result of her past experiences) is defense from exogenous evil can be weathered better than sabotage from within a marriage. No doubt external evil we’ve endured (from corrupt probate judges up to the Robert’s Supreme Court; County Commissioners to Senators) has been profound and unrelenting, yet a small **internal** evil/pollutant can be much more devastating. Entering the final chapters of my life, ‘status quo ni’ is daunting enough - perhaps my bride witnessing her aging, injured husband struggling to continue his tasks and duties is more endearing each passing Valentine’s Day.

A young man’s fancy rejected didn’t have the wisdom to know the beatitude God was aligning. I may not have been spiritually mature enough to appreciate Theresa until years later. Young people in similar despair may benefit from us

Happy Birthday My

Beautiful Bride:

A Valentine’s Day Baby!



oldsters sharing ‘Hard-Knock U.’ experiences. I can testify to the blessings described in Proverbs below; I pray God finds me a good steward of this wonderful manifestation of His Love in my life.

Proverbs 31:10-31 CEV
[Contemporary English Version]

A truly good wife is the most precious treasure a man can find! Her husband depends on her, and she never lets him down. She is good to him every day of her life, and with her own hands she gladly makes clothes. She is like a sailing ship that brings food from across the sea. She gets up before daylight to prepare food for her family and for her servants. She knows how to buy land and how to plant a vineyard, and she always works hard. She knows when to buy or sell, and she stays busy until late at night. She spins her own cloth, and she helps the poor and the needy. Her family has warm clothing, and so she doesn't worry when it snows. She does her own sewing, and everything she wears is beautiful. Her husband is a well-known and respected leader in the city. She makes clothes to sell to the shop owners. She is strong and graceful, as well as cheerful about the future. Her words are sensible, and her advice is thoughtful. She takes good care of her family and is never lazy. Her children praise her, and with great pride her husband says, “There are many good women, but you are the best!” Charm can be deceiving, and beauty fades away, but a woman who honors the LORD deserves to be praised. Show her respect—praise her in public for what she has done.

So much of this describes my bride! OK, the parts about the husband some will find a little weak, but this is about Theresa, my Valentine’s Day baby - now 73. She’s more beautiful today than when I first saw her at 35! I love every line and little crack as the angel inside appears more brilliant with age. So appealing she doesn’t wear ‘make-up’ and in fact didn’t care about excessive material things as I wrongfully imagined. Physical beauty and sophistry has a way of concealing angel and demon... the treasure is so much clearer each passing year with my bride.

God has pressed hard upon me to put away childish and worldly things. Government taking the home I held dear, mandated insurance stealing cherished vehicles, educates polluting teaching environs, etc. shepherds appreciation for true blessings... the greatest blessing I’ve ever known is my bride Theresa - ‘Soteria’ in Greek, meaning salvation. I forecast my bride will do well in her final judgment. In the Spirit of salvation, I have no greater motivation than doing my best pleading for God’s mercy; wanting to continue this blessing with my bride in this pure Love. I pray to be with Theresa at one of His many mansions which man can never take nor destroy. This old fool for Christ feels increasing fear and comfort having Jesus as an empathetic advocate before God when weighing the words and deeds of this sinner doing his best to follow Christ’s example.

I’ll close with **Proverbs 19:14 - House and riches are the inheritance of fathers: and a prudent wife is from the LORD.** When asked about ‘the secret’ to our marriage these past decades, I do my best to make clear God is no secret to me and my blessed bride; the success results from our greater Love - we both love God more than ourselves. Theresa is an integral part of my salvation, I pray the Lord allows this earthly manifest of Love in heaven... this is my Valentine’s Day prayer.

Economic ~ Social ~ Moral ~ Constitutional Conservatism

“Let the people vote!” is the
pinnacle of deception.



John W. Giles
Former
President &
Chairman
Choose Life
Alabama

When the Alabama Legislature was feverishly pushing the gas tax hike, did you ever hear a legislator say, “*Let the People Vote?*” Or how about this one: “*I am personally prolife, but I believe a woman has a right to choose?*”

The latest use of this ever-popular legislative phrase is, “*I am personally opposed to the expansion of casino gambling, but let the people vote.*”

The phrase, “*Let the People Vote,*” has been in Alabama since the last lottery vote miserably failed years ago. Given that gambling or gaming appears to be headed back to the ballot, it’s time to talk about this phrase – the cowardly legislative bait-and-switch, two-step tap dance of “*Let the People Vote.*”

Alabama Legislators cannot pass a simple statutory bill expanding gambling. The only way they can constitutionally legalize it is by removing the lottery prohibition from the Alabama Constitution.

Let me assure the readership with all certainty that large scale casino gambling in Alabama would already be here, if it was as simple as passing a statutory bill like raising taxes on gasoline. Instead, legislators must sweet talk and sugarcoat the idea for the public because passing a constitutional amendment is an extraordinarily weighty matter.

Here is the bottom line: Any legislator who votes yes on the proposed constitutional amendment is saying they think gambling is good public policy and want their constituency to affirm this vote. But what gets me is when a legislator says, “*I am personally against gambling, but I am allowing my people the right to vote.*”

Hogwash!! That legislator is not giving you the right to vote, the Alabama Constitution gives you that right.

You remember the cliché, “*two-faced?*” Letting the people vote is trademark double dealing; it’s insincere, deceitful, weak, cowardly, disingenuous, and counterfeit. Legislators say, “*Let the People Vote,*” on the one hand, while

raking in big gambling bucks, posh trips, fancy dinners and the like with the other. The gambling bosses over the decades have made charlatans out of once good people.

Many public policy discussions make our blood boil through disingenuous and deceitful elected officials at the state and national level, but this should send us all over the moon.

Next time you hear a legislator declare they are giving you the right to vote on gambling, I urge you to ask the following questions: Do you think a seedy gambling industry that preys on the poor, our elderly, and youth is good public policy? Have you accepted gambling money – direct or indirect – washed and sanitized through several PACs? And why are we talking about regulating an already illegal enterprise? Why not just close them down? Furthermore, did you commit to a lobbyist representing the gambling lobby that you would vote yes on the constitutional amendment? Good luck on getting truthful answers to these questions.

In the Garden of Eden, the Lord was emphatic about not eating the beautiful fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Once Adam and Eve ate the forbidden fruit, they were immediately separated from God and curses of life were unleashed on them.

“*Let the People Vote*” appears to be a beautiful piece of fruit on the tree, giving you the option to partake. But the curses unleashed on this state following a pro-lottery vote will be immeasurable. The gambling industry will corrupt government at all levels, white collar crime will increase, as will embezzlement, while addictions will destroy the lives of the poor, the elderly, and our young people. This outwardly beautiful fruit is loaded with worms and rot.

Simply put,
GAMBLING IS POOR PUBLIC POLICY!

“Let the People Vote!” Unfortunately, that phrase is the
pinnacle of deception!



John Martin

America’s First Nitrogen Execution

This past January 25, Alabama established a new milestone to implement the kindest, safest, simplest, and most practical method of execution known to man—nitrogen asphyxiation.

Oklahoma was the first state to adopt this new procedure. In April 2015, Governor Mary Fallin signed a bill to allow it, and on March 14, 2018, Attorney General Mike Hunter and Corrections Director Joe M. Allbaugh approved it as the primary method of execution. In March 2018, Alabama became the third state, after Oklahoma and Mississippi, to accept nitrogen asphyxiation for execution. But until now, no nitrogen executions had taken place. Finally after a six year delay, Alabama became the first state to actually perform it.

Alabama’s new execution protocol at the Atmore prison uses the same gurney that had been used for lethal injection and a *“full facepiece supplied air respirator”* to be placed over the prisoner’s face. After a chance to make a final statement, the warden, from another room, would introduce the nitrogen through the mask for at least 15 minutes or *“five minutes following a flatline indication on the EKG, whichever is longer.”*

On January 25, 2024, 58 year old Kenneth Eugene Smith was strapped onto the gurney where he made his final statement, *“I’m leaving with love, peace and light.”* Then he made the “I love you sign” with his hands facing his family members who were present as witnesses. *“Thank you for supporting me. Love, love all of you.”* Then he passed away after receiving the 22 minute oxygen deprivation procedure.

Governor Kay Ivey said the execution was justice for the murder-for-hire of 45-year-old Elizabeth Sennett in 1988. He had viciously stabbed her ten times. Alabama’s previous attempt to execute Smith by lethal injection in 2022 had been called off because the prison staff couldn’t find a vein to connect an IV line.

The state had predicted the nitrogen procedure would cause unconsciousness within seconds and death within minutes. State Attorney General Steve Marshall admitted that it *“has now proved to be an effective and humane method of execution.”*

We now have a beginning to avoid the lengthy, expensive, and cruel waiting periods of many years for death row inmates to be eliminated with swift, safe, and humane justice for both the condemned and the public.



Nitrogen asphyxiation (or hypoxia by nitrogen) might seem like just tying a plastic bag over one’s head and letting him suffocate. But that is not the way it’s done. Carbon dioxide quickly builds up and causes the subject to suffer a great deal of stress. For a humane execution, suffering is not desired. The subject must go to sleep peacefully, and in no uncertain terms.

Death is not caused by the nitrogen; it is physiologically inert. Death is caused by the absence of oxygen. The purpose of adding pure nitrogen is to vent out the CO2 and prevent the trauma that it causes.

The procedure is simple. Ordinary people with no special training can perform it, and no special equipment or facilities are required. The subject is strapped into a chair or onto a gurney, and an airtight hood is placed over his head and sealed around his neck. A hose is attached to introduce the nitrogen, and a small opening on the front near the bottom can allow the exhaled carbon dioxide to escape.

A cylindrical tank like those used in welding shops can provide the nitrogen. After it de-pressurizes, it is very cold and prone to fogging.



It would pass through several feet of metal pipe to warm it to room temperature before being administered.

The subject breathes normally. With the constant removal of the CO2, he feels like he is breathing normal air and is not subjected to the hypercapnic alarm response caused by inhaling excess CO2. There is no panic sensation. In as little as a minute or two, he loses consciousness. In as little as a few minutes, he stops breathing. At this point, the nitrogen can be turned off. To ensure a certain death, the hood would remain in place another 30 minutes or more. A doctor or nurse would be present to determine and pronounce death.

Since the body is not contaminated with any poisons or chemicals, it is perfectly safe to use for organ donations. Lethally injected bodies cannot be used for this purpose.

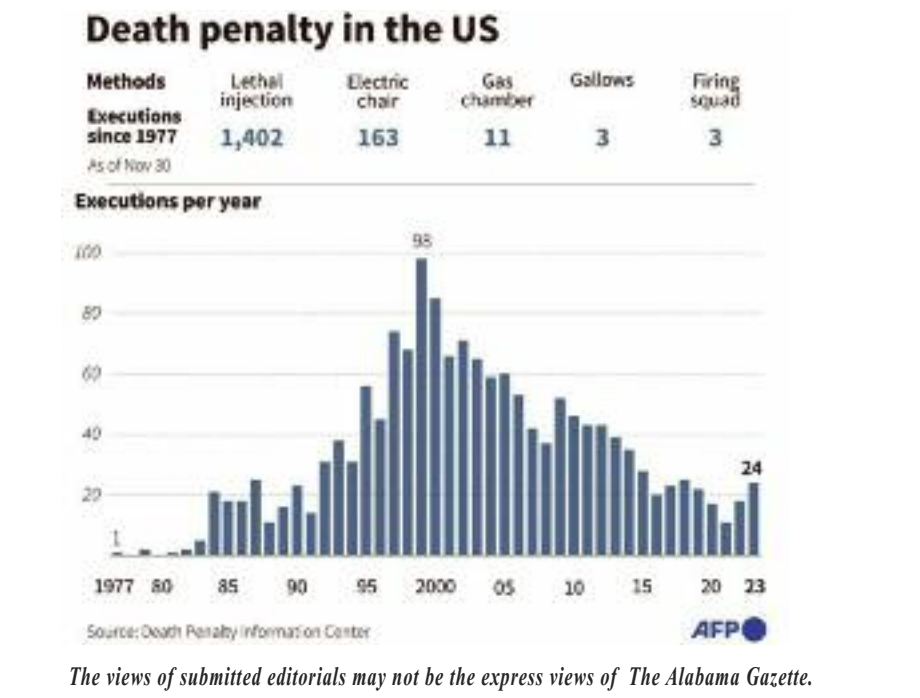
The procedure is absolutely safe for all personnel and bystanders. No dangerous chemicals or any special containment room is needed. The spent nitrogen and CO2 are simply vented into the air. They are perfectly harmless. Don’t forget that the air we breathe every day is 79% nitrogen and a small amount of CO2 is already present.

Nevertheless, the new procedure had plenty of detractors. Sant’Egidio Community, a Vatican-affiliated Catholic charity based in Rome, urged Alabama not to go through with the execution and claimed it was *“barbarous”* and *“uncivilized.”* Justice Sonia Sotomayor, and two others argued, *“Having failed to kill Smith on its first attempt, Alabama has selected him as its ‘guinea pig’ to test a method of execution never attempted before. The world is watching.”*

The world is certainly watching. It is probably asking, *“How can you develop a new procedure without testing it?”*

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David Nichols

(ALBOE) are vital players in Alabama’s school policies and practices

The National Assessment of school progress (NAEP) is the nations most trustworthy student assessment provider. Mandated by congress in 1969, NAEP’s role is to evaluate our nation’s students’ scores in the fundamental subjects.

It’s NAEP’s 2022 Nation’s report, a bi-annual academic assessment for all states public K-12 schools, asserted that Alabama’s reading has remained unchanged in the past 30 years. Alabama uses it’s assessment to follow the state’s Course and Study and the Alabama Literacy Act. Yet, our childrens reading achievement continues to drop. In 2018, on the Superintendent’s recommendation, the ALBOE voted to contract with data recognition corp. To purchase a state achievement program to fulfill the mandate - the Alabama Comprehensive Achievement Program (ACAP).

State Superintendent Dr. Eric Mackey suggested that Alabama incorporate NAEP standards into it’s state standards. The differences between NAEP’s 2022 reading proficiency measurement and those of ACAP are shocking. in 2022, reading achievement on the ACAP showed that 78% of third-grade students scored **“on or above grade level.”** NAEP begins it’s reading assessment with the 4th grade. It’s 2022 percentage for reading **“on or above grade level” (proficient)** was 28%.

This discrepancy flies in the face of claims that 78% of Alabama’s students read on grade level. Does the ACAP align with the curriculum - the Alabama Reading Initiative?

An October 26, 2022, Education week article entitled “NAEP Scores are a **“Critical Reality Check. Kids pay the Price If They Are Misrepresented.”** The author, Scott Marlon, says **“State leaders should avoid the temptation to cherry pick the results (2020) to tell the most positive story...the results do not support arguments about how school reopening policies affected scores. the NAEP results send a clear message for state policymakers: They need to step up in a big way before we lose a generation of students.”**

The Alabama Board of Education is the primary elected educational policy-maker. That body seems satisfied with the **“same old, same old”** way or options of moving struggling readers to the next grade level, whether they can read or not.

Alabama schools have participated in state and federal programs to improve

Alabama’s Schools Are In Crisis: Time for an Overhaul

testing performance. **“No Child left Behind,” “Alabama Reading and Math Test,” “ACT Aspire,”** and now **“Alabama Comprehensive Achievement Program.”** yet, reading, math, and science have remained unchanged.

As a child, I recall when our state was struggling near the bottom in its quality of education. A familiar derogatory phrase was **“Thank God for Mississippi.”** Today, Mississippi far surpasses Alabama in it’s quality of education. in a New York Times commentary (**December 15, 2019**), author Emily Hanford shares how Mississippi has worked it’s way up the list on our nation’s academic rankings. We can no longer use Mississippi as a scapegoat to make us feel better about Alabama’s cellar position.

In 2013, Mississippi ranked last on NAEP’s reading assessment. More recently, in 2019, Mississippi’s reading percentage of students at the proficient level was 32%. It was notable, partly because Mississippi was the only state in the nation to post significant gains on the fourth-grade reading test. For the first time, Mississippi gained the distinction of ranking on par with the national average.

What was Mississippi’s secret? All elementary school teachers are now funded and trained in the science of reading before becoming certified teachers. Currently, Alabama does not provide funding for this training.

The ALBOE tends to reduce the rigor of existing testing if students fail to perform adequately. The Praxis is a test that all would-be teachers must pass to obtain their teacher’s certificate. When Alabama schools’ superintendents recognized a need for qualified teachers, it was revealed that nearly 1600 college graduates had not passed the praxis. Our State Superintendent recommended to the ALBOE to lower the passing score for less qualified teacher applicants.

In 2023, ALBOE, supports by State Superintendent Eric Mackey and Governor Kay Ivey, the ALBOE Voted to lower the passing score on the ACAP achievement examination. This action was taken due to a two-point drop in state-wide scores, again lowering the bar to get more passing scores. Former Prime Minister Winston Churchill is quoted as saying, **“It is not good enough to say ‘we did our best’; we must do what is necessary.”**

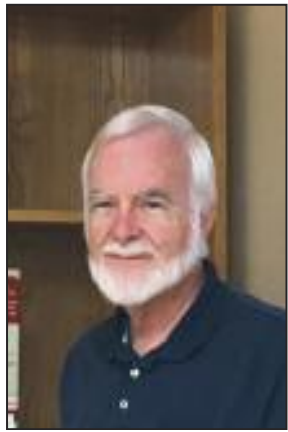
During the 2019 Alabama Legislative session, Senator Marsh introduced a dynamic piece of legislation that would have changed education governance at the state level. Though it passed, a referendum stopped it’s implementation. It’s time to revisit that effort.

Dr. David Nichols is a freelance writer for news outlets in Alabama. His writing focuses on education, law enforcement, and government. He is a long-time educator and school administrator. Nichols holds a doctorate of Education from the University of Alabama.

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



“It is well that war is so terrible, or we should grow too fond of it”. Robert E. Lee



John Taylor

One might ask: Why did the colonies seek independence if the goal was replication of the mercantilist British Empire they left? Lee’s beliefs are typically criticized by the usual suspects: neocons/Trotskyites, **“globalists,” “socialists,”** and others who despise the traditional Christian South. These individuals dominate **“higher education,”** corporate media, and what some generously call **“entertainment.”**

There are many areas concerning Lee that rile those who harbor strong hatred for the South. For example, many criticize Lee because he was the steward over the Custis slaves. They conveniently ignore that Lee opposed slavery, treated those under his control in the manner prescribed in the Holy Bible, and freed the slaves under his stewardship on December 29, 1862. Lee stated: **“If I owned four millions of slaves, I would cheerfully sacrifice them for the preservation of the Union, but to lift my hand against my own State and people is impossible.”** (Abbeville)

Lee has also been criticized for believing Blacks were better off in America than Africa (**most were slaves in both**). He was a man of his times but, unlike many of his contemporaries (**like Lincoln**), Lee was not known to advocate deportation of Blacks or to refer to them in derogatory terms (**like Lincoln, William T. Sherman, John Sherman, Ben Wade, etc.**)

Lee opposed secession, even referencing it as **“revolution”** but, once Virginia voted to secede (**after Lincoln called for the invasion of sovereign States**), he felt duty-bound to follow. He saw the horrors of fighting against one’s own family. Furthermore, invasion of a State was deemed to be a treasonous act of which Lee, or anyone who understands a voluntary federal republic, would take no part in.

At the behest of Winfield Scott, Lincoln offered Lee command of Union forces. He respectfully declined, a major reason being his unwillingness to fight against his own people. Lee loved the original Union and dutifully served in the U.S. Army for decades; however, he did not view the federal government as a de facto God (**as did Sherman and others**).

Lee fought for independence. Ironically, this angers many Americans – especially those who believe the fallacy that the sovereign States are not really sovereign.

In the West Point Class of 1829, Lee finished second and received no demerits. Lee was adamant about duty, contra our present world of **“What is in it for me?”** Lee won the admiration of Presidents Theodore Roosevelt, Dwight D. Eisenhower, John F. Kennedy, and others. He has been praised worldwide by statesmen, religious leaders, scholars, etc. The present military **“woke**

leadership,” which distances itself from Lee, is like a parody from the old National Lampoon magazine or Saturday Night Live. What a sad world we live in when great Christian men like Lee are demonized. The Book of Isaiah states: **“Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!”** These are the times in which we live.

On February 18, 1874, four years after Lee’s death, Georgia Senator Benjamin Harvey Hill addressed the Southern Historical Society: **“When the future historian shall come to survey the character of Lee, he will find it rising like a huge mountain above the undulating plain of humanity, and he must lift his eyes high toward heaven to catch its summit. He was a foe without hate, a friend without treachery, a soldier without cruelty, a victor without oppression, and a victim without murmuring. He was a public officer without vices, a private citizen without wrong, a neighbor without reproach, a Christian without hypocrisy, and a man without guile. He was a Caesar without his ambition, a Frederick without his tyranny, a Napoleon without his selfishness, and a Washington without his reward. He was obedient to authority as a servant, and loyal in authority as a true king. He was gentle as a woman in life; modest and pure as a virgin in thought; watchful as a Roman vital in duty; submissive to law as Socrates, and grand in battle as Achilles!”** (Martin)

Lee stated: **“My chief concern is to try to be an humble, earnest Christian.”** **“Woke”** statists e.g., Seidule, Warren, Milley, Austin, will likely never understand honor and integrity as they are antithetical to their world. Thus, they will never understand great men like Robert E. Lee.

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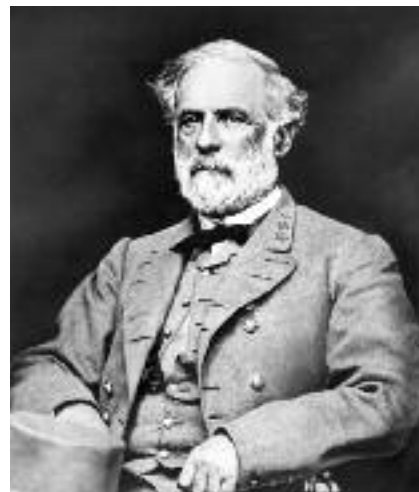
Note: From the January 1961 issue of The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography (volume 69), pp. 2–6, at: <https://leefamilyarchive.org/reference/essays/rachal/index.html> ;

Robert E. Lee Quotes at: <http://www.sonofthesouth.net/leefoundation/Notable%20Lee%20Quotes.htm>; and **“Tom DiLorenzo’s Guide to American History,”** by Llewellyn H. Rockwell, Jr., at: <https://www.lewrockwell.com/2023/12/lew-rockwell/tom-dilorenzo-guide-to-american-history/>

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

Robert E. Lee: An Exemplary American

The assaults on Robert E. Lee and anyone who fought for Southern Independence never abate. Lee symbolizes most things his critics hate – he was a devout Christian; he believed in the sovereignty of the States within a voluntary federal republic; his primary allegiance was to Virginia (his **“country”**); and he felt “Union” at the point of a bayonet undermined the entire American experiment in self-government.

Robert E Lee
www.scv4.org



Kenneth Paschal - (R-Pelham)
ALGOP Outreach Coalition, Director
House of Representative, District 73
House Military & Veterans Affairs,
Vice Chair House Education
Policy Committee
U.S. Army Retired
205-807-7252



Promoting active participation in voting among church members is a valid objective.

Encouraging and promoting the active engagement of church members in voting is a legitimate goal. One effective strategy to achieve this is by dedicating a designated Sunday, known as "Voter Registration Sunday," to encourage the registration of voters. However, it is important to emphasize that endorsing specific political candidates under the church's name can pose a risk to its tax-exempt status. Despite this concern, religious leaders can still foster responsible citizenship and promote involvement in the democratic process.

To facilitate this, churches can take various steps such as organizing non-partisan events focused on voter registration, setting up registration tables, disseminating information through newsletters, and providing details about election dates and absentee ballots. Moreover, churches can encourage members to seek out candidates who align with their religious principles and promote engagement as poll workers or poll watchers. It is crucial to encourage active participation and well-informed voting among Christians, particularly during this election season.

While acknowledging the potential risks of politicizing the Church, it is important to promote

greater involvement of Christians in the political arena in Alabama. The Church should prioritize spreading the gospel and nurturing discipleship, centered around the teachings of the gospel, while avoiding entanglement in political agendas.

It is essential to bear in mind the scripture found in Romans 13:1, which calls individuals to willingly submit to governing authorities. From this passage, one can infer that Christians should, at the very least, participate in the political process by exercising their right to vote in elections.

Based on the available data, an estimated 80 million individuals attend churches in the United states on an average Sunday. However, it is concerning to observe that approximately 40-50 million of these individuals did not exercise their voting rights in the last presidential election. Surprisingly, FaithWins reports that nearly 40 percent of this group are not even registered to vote. To ensure active participation in the upcoming 2024 elections, it is crucial for the church community to empower their congregation members. The church possesses the potential to make a profound impact, and engaging all Christians in this process is of utmost importance.

To facilitate this, below is key information about the 2024 elections in Alabama.

- 1. March 5, 2024 - Presidential Preference/ Alabama Statewide Primary Election**
- 2. April 16, 2024 - Primary Runoff Election**
- 3. November 5, 2024 - General Election**

For more detailed information on the 2024 Election Administrative Calendar specific to Alabama, please visit [\[https://www.sos.alabama.gov/alabama-votes/voter/election-information/2024\]](https://www.sos.alabama.gov/alabama-votes/voter/election-information/2024).

To understand the voter registration process, it is recommended to visit the official website of the Secretary of State at alabamavotes.gov and select the **"Register to Vote"** option.

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A Safer Alabama

With 23 years of appellate experience and 17 years as a prosecutor, Rich Anderson is the conservative candidate that Alabama needs for the Court of Criminal Appeals.

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Founder Patriots First
Former Alabama State Representative
Alabama State Republican Executive Committee

www.letthepeoplespeak.us

Time for Republican Unity - Time for Nikki Haley to Support Donald J. Trump



In the wake of the New Hampshire primary where former U.N. Ambassador Nikki Haley suffered yet another setback, the path forward for the Republican Party has never been clearer. Republican National Committee Chairwoman Ronna McDaniel's statement on Fox News couldn't be more accurate: ***"I'm looking at the map and the path going forward, and I don't see it for Nikki Haley."***

Nikki Haley ran a commendable campaign, there's no denying that. Her efforts were marked by a clear vision and a strong commitment to conservative values. Yet, in the brutal arithmetic of politics, numbers speak louder than words. After losing both the Iowa Caucus and the New Hampshire primary, it's evident that her campaign lacks the momentum necessary for a successful bid for the presidency.

With only 10 months until the general election, it's imperative for the Republican Party to unite. In some states, voting actually begins as early as September. Fragmentation and prolonged primary battles only serve to weaken our position against our common opponent: all the democrats on the ballot especially Joe Biden. Chairwoman McDaniel's assertion is not just a suggestion, it's a loud and clear call for consolidation: ***"It's time to coalesce behind the eventual nominee, who is going to be Donald J. Trump."***

Ron DeSantis, understanding the stakes, has already suspended his campaign, demonstrating the foresight and unity essential for our success in November.

Now, it's time for Nikki Haley to follow suit. Her support for Donald Trump could be a turning point, bringing together the party and focusing all our resources on the ultimate goal: defeating Joe Biden.

The path to victory in November is clear. It involves rallying behind a leader who has already proven he can carry the mantle of the presidency, who can energize the base, and who stands as the bulwark against the liberal agenda that threatens the very core of American values. That leader is Donald J. Trump. As Ronald Reagan preached, we must be the big tent party. We have no time to remain in our pup tents.

Nikki Haley's campaign brought important issues to the forefront, and her voice remains vital to the party. But the best way for her to serve the country and the conservative cause at this juncture is by supporting Donald Trump. Her experience, combined with Trump's leadership, can forge an unbeatable team poised for victory.

The call from Ronna McDaniel is not just a strategy, it's an urgent necessity. In politics, timing is everything, and the time has come for unity. For the good of the party and the country, Nikki Haley should suspend her campaign and throw her full support behind Donald Trump. Only united can we ensure a Republican victory in November and **make America Great Again!**

Honoring Our Heroes



City of Pike Road Honors Veterans

The City of Pike Road held its 12th Annual Veterans Appreciation Ceremony at the Veterans Memorial Park on November 5, 2023.

Commemorative bricks with the names of 12 veterans and their branches of service were installed on the floor of the pavilion. The Capitol Sounds Band played patriotic music. The invocation and the benediction were given by the Rev. John Toney. The Pike Road Intermediate School SGA led the Pledge of Allegiance to the American flag, and the Pike Road Junior High School Show Choir sang the National Anthem. Pike Road Mayor Gordon served as master of ceremonies. The Mustang Battalion Army ROTC Color Guard laid a wreath beneath the monument honoring those who have sacrificed so much for our country. General Andrea D. Tullos, Commander and President, Air University Maxwell Air Force Base gave a patriotic address.



Master Sergeant
Ronnie E. Kinsfather



Corporal
Andrew C. Nolin



Petty Officer 2nd Class
Samuel Brown



Col Dennis M. Drew

Hope you enjoy reading the Gazette as much as these guys.

FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS

Joe Panza Feb. 2nd
Dudley F. Christian Feb. 6th
Anthony Baggiano Feb. 12th
James H. Combs Feb. 15th
Eugene F. Crooks Feb. 16th

Karen S. Brantner Feb. 16th
William L. Carl Feb. 17th
Stephen M. Davis Feb. 21st
Lee R. Knight Feb. 22nd
Andrew E. Lindsey Feb. 25th

IN MEMORY OF OUR FALLEN HEROES



1st Lt. John Osburn
David served in
the Korean War.
He Passed away on
January 26, 2024.



Col Henry P. Fowler
was a prisoner of war
in the infamous Hanoi
Hilton in Vietnam.
He passed away on
January 26, 2024.



John F. Morrow
He drove a tank
during the WWII
Battle of the Bulge.
Passed away on
January 21, 2024



**YOU ARE
NEVER
ALONE...**

*Always Remember the
Men and Women who have
served our great nation and
the sacrifices they made.*

Veterans Crisis Line

DIAL 988 then PRESS 1
www.veteranscrisisline.net



Private First Class William Lee Struthers: Age 92



Private First Class (PFC) William Lee Struthers served three years in the AL National Guard that was activated for combat service at Korea during the Korean War. His Military Occupational Specialty (MOS) was Truck Driver hauling Omunitions to the fronts. His Unit, the 252nd, National Guard Unit, the First Transportation Unit from Hamilton, AL, received the Presidential Unit Citation near Chuncheon, South Korea, and was cited for thwarting a 12-Division assault going against the 2nd Infantry Division during May 16-22, 1951. This truck unit was attached to the Eighth Army and caused more damage than any other truck company attached to it. His Unit also received the Meritorious Unit Citation which was cited particularly for its performance helping to fight off 12 Chinese Divisions during that spring offensive. The 252nd carried more tonnage than any other truck company attached to the Eighth Army. He also received the Good Conduct Medal.

PFC Struthers was born July 12, 1931, to his parents, at Montgomery, AL, where he was reared. After graduating from high school there in 1949, he worked for the AL Highway Department at Hamilton, AL, with road compaction preparing roads before paving. He voluntarily joined the AL National Guard at Hamilton, AL, in 1949. His Unit was activated September 2, 1950 with his rank as Recruit. His Unit was sent to Ft. Lawton, a U.S. Army post at Seattle overlooking Puget Sound which was the second largest port of embarkation of soldiers and materials for the Pacific theater. After bivouac training there for 2.5 months, in December, 1950, he sailed for Korea on the USNS Sgt. Sylvester Antolak, a Boulder-Victory-class cargo ship and landed at the port at Pusan, Korea, December 28, 1950 after a 14 day voyage with many soldiers enduring sea sickness. While serving in the combat zones in Korea, he served in 16 areas including Taegu, Pusan and Panmunjom. His unit moved often avoiding being hit by the Chinese attacks. He endured extreme cold wearing insufficient clothing and while sleeping in inadequate sleeping bags. Many soldiers suffered frost bite and frozen feet. He served 16 months in a combat zone until his Unit was rotated out of Korea sailing from the port, Pusan. After having a 30 day furlough to go home to Montgomery, AL, he was discharged at Ft. Jackson, S.C. in May 1952.

After his military service, PFC Struthers worked at a Coca Cola company at Montgomery, AL, delivering Coca Cola products to businesses for three years until August 1955. He then worked for 36.5 years until 1992 with Insurance Service Office at Montgomery, AL, which operated in five states inspecting buildings pending approval of insurance. Next, he worked with the State of AL in the Risk Management Department for four years retiring from all employment in 1996.

PFC Struthers and his wife, Peggy, were married 67 years before she passed away, and they had three children, six grandchildren and 12 great-grandchildren. He has been a member of Eastern Hills Baptist Church at Montgomery, AL, for 59 years. He volunteered and went on 30 missions trips to many states with Carpenters for Christ, a men's organization that constructs new churches, upgrades existing ones and helps others with building needs.

PFC Struthers' conclusions about his military serve are, "It means more to me since I have gotten older than it did when it began. I have hardly ever mentioned anything to my family about what happened to me at Korea. I talked to my brother who served in the U.S. Marines at the battles at Bougainville and at Solomon Islands. Sometimes the family did not hear from him for two or three weeks. I was 14 years old during that time. In Korea, I saw many troops wounded and dead bodies being carried to a field and loaded for evacuation via plane. We had some close calls over there. One night I was traveling with a convoy of 16 trucks loaded with 155 mm artillery caliber shells. Someone coming from the site of the proposed battle site came and told the caravan to turn around because the Chinese were waiting up ahead to attack the convoy. If we had continued, we would have been attacked. Sometimes as I lie down at night, I think about what could have happened. I have attended several reunions from our Unit at Hamilton, AL, and in 2018 only 12 of the 100 had been able to attend." He would like to be remembered as a servant of Christ who protected me and has given me this long life.





Col Richard Thomas Aldridge: Age 57



Col Richard Thomas Aldridge served over 28 years in both the Active duty and Reserve components of the U.S. Air Force. His Active duty periods were from March 1989 to February 1999 and January 2002 to January 2005, and he served as an Air Force Reservist from February 1999 to January 2002 and January 2005 until his retirement in September 2016. Col Aldridge’s Air Force Specialty Codes (AFSC) included: (1) Satellite Engineer, (2) Systems Engineer, (3) Program Manager and (4) Academic Instructor. He received the following decorations, medals, badges, citations and campaign ribbons: Meritorious Service Medal with three Oak Leaf Clusters, Joint Service Commendation Medal

with one Oak Leaf Cluster, Air and Space Commendation Medal with two Oak Leaf Clusters, Joint Service Achievement Medal, Air and Space Achievement Medal with one Oak Leaf Cluster, Joint Meritorious Unit Award, Meritorious Unit Award, Air and Space Outstanding Unit Award with four Oak Leaf Clusters, Air Force Organizational Excellence Award with two Oak Leaf Clusters, Combat Readiness Medal, National Defense Service Medal with One Device, Iraq Campaign Medal, Global War on Terrorism Medal, Armed Forces Reserve Service Medal with one Oak Leaf Cluster, Air and Space Expeditionary Service Medal, Air and Space Longevity Service Award with three Oak Leaf Clusters and the Air and Space Training Ribbon. He earned a Senior Space Operations badge from his eight years in what was Air Force Space Command and an Acquisition badge for his five tours as a program manager and systems engineer.

Col Aldridge was born to Lee and Olga Aldridge on May 20, 1966 at Kessler Air Force Base (AFB), Biloxi, MS. Col Aldridge is the third generation in his family to serve in the U.S. military including his grandfather, Thomas Forbes Aldridge, who served during WWII in the U.S. Army and who was one of those that were at the French hospital for several months. His father, Lt Col Lee Aldridge, also served in the U.S. Air Force. He grew up in MS, OK, OH, MD, MA and Belgium while his father served at various military installations. He graduated from Bedford High School at Bedford, MA, in 1984. Having participated in the Junior ROTC while in high school, Col Aldridge then received an ROTC scholarship and graduated from the University of Alabama with a B.S. Degree in Electrical Engineering in 1988 and was commissioned as a 2nd Lieutenant in the U.S. Air Force.

His first assignment was as a GPS Satellite Engineer at Falcon Air Force Base, CO, which is now Schriever Space Force Base as part of a new program called Operational Experience (OpEx). The intent was for an acquisition officer to receive five years of operational experience before going into the acquisition corps. His second assignment was at Hanscom AFB, MA, as Program Manager for the Joint STARS flight and mission crew simulators. After two years, he then served as a Flight Commander and instructor at the Squadron Officer School at Maxwell AFB, AL, for three years. At that time, he left Active duty

going into the Air Force Reserve, but he remained at Squadron Officer College in a variety of roles: Operations Officer, Deputy Director of Curriculum, Reserve Adviser and finally Acting Vice Commandant. After 13 years at Maxwell, he moved on to be the Deputy Director of Engineering at the Oklahoma City Air Logistics Center and the Individual Mobilization Augmentee to the 20th Operations Group Commander at Peterson AFB, CO. His final military job was as the Deputy Director of Engineering at the Air Force Life Cycle Management Center at Wright-Patterson AFB, OH. For the last 10 years of his military career, Col Aldridge also served as an Air Force civilian. After he was promoted to the Senior Executive Service in February 2016, he was selected as the Program Executive Officer for Business and Enterprise Systems at Gunter Annex Maxwel AF Base and soon retired from all military service on September 30, 2016. Col Aldridge retired from his civilian career on April 30, 2023.

Col Aldridge’s military career included two deployments. The first was to Balad, Iraq, and to Ali Al Salem, Kuwait, as a Reserve combat logistics squadron commander under the 332nd Expeditionary Mission Support Group in 2005 providing support to Air Force personnel performing intelligence, civil engineering, long-haul convoy, and security forces missions in lieu of Army personnel. In 2008, he served at US Central Command (CENTCOM) at MacDill AFB, FL, as a logistics planner within the Operation Directorate's (J3) Coalition Coordination Center, ENDURING FREEDOM.

His reflections upon his military service are: *“My military career was wide in scope with a lot of experiences. It was awesome because I did so many different things. I grew up with two parents who had servants’ hearts and were dedicated to serving. Because we lived on and off military bases, we got to see it all. My Mom served with the American Red Cross and with a variety of volunteer organizations. So we had two good examples. Just growing up, it was ingrained in me that you need to serve others and your country.”* He would like people to remember him as a man who served people and made a difference.

Col Aldridge and his wife, Denise, have been married 28 years. Denise served 28 years in the Air Force, 12 years on Active duty (1989-2001) and 16 years in the Air Force Reserve (2001-2017), retiring as a Lt Col. Her career was split as an audiologist and academic instructor. They have three children, and they are members of the Church of the Highlands at Montgomery, AL. He is a member of the Armed Forces Communications and Electronics Association. He enjoys woodworking and painting in watercolors and acrylics, and he and his wife have become avid pickleball players.



Lt. Col Lee Forbes Aldridge: Age 82



Lt. Col Lee Aldridge served 33 years in the U.S. Air Force. His primary specialty was Acquisition Management Officer and Electronics Engineer, but he served in myriad other fields. He received the following medals, badges, citations and ribbons: Defense Meritorious Service Medal, Air Force Meritorious Service Medal with one Oak Leaf Cluster, Air Force Commendation Medal with one Oak Leaf Cluster, Air Force Organizational Excellence Award, Air Force Good Conduct Medal with one Oak Leaf Cluster, National Defense Service Medal with one Oak Leaf Cluster, Air Force Overseas Long Tour Ribbon with two Oak Leaf Clusters, Air Force Longevity Service Award Ribbon with seven Oak Leaf Clusters, Small Arms Expert

Marksmanship Ribbon, Air Force Training Ribbon and foreign decorations including the French Air Medal.

Lt. Col Aldridge was born December 28, 1941 to his parents, Thomas and Mildred Aldridge, at Minneapolis, MN. His Swedish grandfather reared him while his father and four uncles were in military service during WWII. Lt. Col Aldridge credits his grandfather with making him who he is. He taught him right from wrong, how to skate, how to fish, how to love God, etc. When his father was discharged and returned home in 1945, his father taught him how to disassemble and repair cars, carpentry, electricity and other practical necessities of life. He participated in football and hockey during high school and graduated from Richfield in High School in MN in June 1959. Although he was an average student in high school because of his involvement in sports and work, later in life he excelled academically. Two weeks after graduation, he volunteered for military service in the U.S. Air Force at the urging of his grandfather and his uncle, a US Army sergeant.

Lt. Col Aldridge’s military service began with six weeks of basic training at Lackland Air Force Base (AFB), TX, followed by technical training at Kessler, AFB, MS, graduating first in his radio repair school. His first assignment was with the Allied Forces Central Europe (AFCENT) at Pierrefonds, France 1960-1962 at a NATO radio-relay site where he became fluent in German and French. His skills in the uses of these languages proved to be influential in numerous future military assignments. In 1962, he was transferred to HQ AFCENT at Fontainebleau, France, to be in charge of the transmitter section of the depot maintenance facility. He also worked for four months in charge of the Allied Forces technical translation section during exercises. In 1965, he returned to Kessler, AFB, MS, as a radio relay instructor and was promoted to Staff Sergeant. While at Kessler, he enrolled in the Airman Education and Commissioning Program. He completed technical courses in physics and mathematics for one year with the University of Southern MS at Kessler AFB. He then earned a Degree in Electrical Engineering from Oklahoma State University in December 1969 on the Dean’s List. He was commissioned as a 2nd Lt. in the U.S. Air Force in 1970 after completing the Air Force Officers’ Training School at Lackland, AFB, TX as a Distinguished Graduate.

He then earned a Master’s Degree in Electrical Engineering at the Air Force Institute of Technology (AFIT) at Wright-Patterson AFB, OH, in 1971. Following graduation from AFIT, he was assigned to the missile division of the Foreign Technology Division and was the first analyst of any US intelligence agency to conclude that the Soviet SSNX-8 missile was stellar (star) guided. He served in 1973-1977 at HQ Air Force System Command at Andrews AFB,

MD, where he was the Command Career Motivation Adviser and Junior Aide to the AFSC Commander as the Command Junior Officer Adviser. While there, he led in the AF wide changing of the name, Junior Officer Council to Company Grade Officer Council. He was then selected for successive career broadening assignments as the Executive Officer to the AFSC Deputy Chief of Staff of Personnel in 1975 and the Executive Officer of the Program Management Assistance Group in 1976.

In 1977, Lt. Col Aldridge was assigned to the Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe (SHAPE) as the Executive Officer for Special Projects and Liaison Officer to the Belgian Military Construction Service. In 1982, he was reassigned to the AF Electronics Systems Center at Hanscom AFB, MA, as the International Programs Director for the E-3 AWACS system where he was responsible for the multi-billion dollar sales of the E-3 AWACS to NATO, France, the United Kingdom, Japan and Australia. In 1988, Lt. Col Aldridge was selected as the first Director of Military Cooperative Research and Development at the U.S. Embassy at Paris, France. Lt. Col Aldridge was selected for promotion to full Colonel in 1991, but he declined the promotion and elected to retire at the request of his wife. Lt. Col Aldridge retired from military service at the Pentagon in September 1992.

Following his military retirement, Lt. Col Aldridge worked for Westinghouse Systems International as Vice President for North African Operations in Casablanca, Morocco, in charge of installing integrated air defense and air traffic control systems throughout the Kingdom. In 1994, he returned to the Boston area. Lt. Col Aldridge accepted a position as a special assistant for international affairs with The MITRE Corporation, a Federally Funded Research and Development Center, that provides specialty engineering and technical guidance to the US Government. From 1998-2001, he served as the Chief Engineer for the Royal Saudi Air Force AWACS wing. In 2001, he transferred to Maxwell Air Force Base Gunter Annex, AL, as the manager of the MITRE computer engineering office. In 2011, Col Aldridge retired from all employment.

Lt. Col Aldridge and his wife, Olga, were married 59 years before she passed away in 2022. They have two children, seven grandchildren and one great-grandchild. They enjoyed traveling most of all. He is a member of the Military Officers Association of America. He is particularly proud of his son, Col (USAF, Ret.) Richard Aldridge for his 24 years of active service in the U.S. Air Force followed by eight years as a member of the US Senior Executive Service.

Lt. Col Aldridge’s primary conclusions about his military service are: *“I was brought up in an extremely patriotic family. My Swedish grandfather instilled in me that it was duty to serve my country! I enjoyed my work, the places where I worked and the overall camaraderie of the greater military family. My Polish-born wife became more American than most natural-born Americans. She was a major influence particularly during my commissioned years!”* He would most like to be remembered as being an honorable and trustworthy person.





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If you need a new or replacement Social Security card, we've got great news! You may be able to complete, or at least start, your application on our website – and, if necessary, use our online scheduling tool to book an appointment at a local office.

Start your application

Do you need to apply for a Social Security number (SSN) and card? You can visit www.ssa.gov/number-card to begin the process. You'll answer a series of questions to determine whether you can:

- Complete the application process online.
- Start the application process online, then bring any required documents to your local Social Security office to complete the application, typically in less time.
- Complete the application process at your local office.

If you can't complete the application online, you must visit a Social Security office. To learn more, please review our publication, *Your Social Security Number and Card*, at www.ssa.gov/pubs/EN-05-10002.pdf.

Replace your Social Security card

Want to replace your card? **The Card Replacement Screener** on our Replace Social Security card webpage at www.ssa.gov/number-card/replace-card helps you determine the best way to do so.

Depending on your situation, you may be able to request a replacement card without visiting a local office. Choose "Answer a few questions" on the Replacement Card webpage at www.ssa.gov/number-card/replace-card to get started. Even if you can't complete the process online and must visit an office, you can still save yourself time by starting the application online.

Were You Asked to Come into an Office? Here's What You Should Know

If you start the application online and we determine you need to come into an office, you can use our new **Online Self-Scheduling option**. This option allows you to:

- Select your language preference.
- Select the most convenient office to receive service.
- Choose to receive communications and appointment reminders through email or text.
- Conveniently use your mobile device to check-in for your appointment.

You can also reschedule, modify, or cancel your appointment online without having to call or visit the office.

Please note that this service is not available in Guam, Northern Mariana Islands, or American Samoa. We hope to make it available soon.

It's never been easier to do business with us! Please share this information with your friends and family—and post it on social media.

HELP SOMEONE YOU LOVE APPLY FOR SOCIAL SECURITY AND MORE

Sharing is caring. This Valentine's Day, take time to remind your loved ones that Social Security helps people in all stages of life. We provide easy and convenient ways to learn about and apply for benefits. Using our online services, you can assist friends and family members to:

- 1. Apply for Supplemental Security Income (SSI).**
Check if the person you are helping is eligible for SSI – and start the process online – at www.ssa.gov/ssi.
- 2. Apply for Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI).**
When the unexpected happens and a loved one can no longer work due to a serious medical condition, SSDI can be a lifeline. Find out more at www.ssa.gov/benefits/disability.
- 3. Create a personal my Social Security account.**
If your loved one is planning for retirement or interested in estimating their future benefits, they can create a free and secure **my Social Security** account at www.ssa.gov/myaccount and view their benefit estimates.
- 4. Check the status of a pending application for benefits.**
Checking the status of an application is quick and easy with a personal **my Social Security** account. If you don't have an account, you can create one at www.ssa.gov/myaccount.

- 5. Appeal a decision for benefits.**
If someone you know was denied Social Security benefits or SSI, they can request an appeal. We provide information about how to appeal decisions for both medical and non-medical reasons at www.ssa.gov/benefits/disability/appeal.html.

To discover more ways you can assist others, please visit www.ssa.gov/third-party/.



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The Montgomery Area Council On Aging assists senior citizens by providing services to promote independent living, by offering opportunities to enhance quality of life, and by increasing community awareness of senior issues. You can help! MACOA needs volunteers once a week to deliver meals.

If you can help, please call **334-263-0532**.
115 East Jefferson Street / Montgomery, AL 36104 /
<https://www.macoa.org>

HOW TO SPOT A SCAM

Now is the perfect time to protect yourself from scams that can damage your finances and reputation. We can work together to keep your personal information safe!

Stay informed of the latest scam trends

Fraudsters continue to change their tactics. Make sure you understand the latest scam trends at www.ssa.gov/scam. Stay informed by:

- Following reliable news sources.
- Subscribing to scam alert newsletters.
- Staying connected with your local law enforcement agencies.

The more you know, the better prepared you'll be to identify and avoid scams.

Think carefully before sharing personal information

Phishing is one of the main ways that scammers attempt to trick people into providing personal information. Pay close attention to emails or messages asking for your username, password, or other personal information.

Scammers pretend to be from familiar organizations to gain your trust. Stay alert when receiving calls that you did not request claiming to be from banks, government agencies, or other well-known companies.

When in doubt, contact the organization directly through official channels to verify that the request is real before sharing any personal information or making payment.

Use strong passwords

Create strong, unique passwords like a phrase with upper and lowercase letters, numbers, and special characters. Don't use passwords that are easy to guess like birthdays or names. Consider using a password manager to generate unique passwords and securely store them for each of your online accounts.

Be savvy with QR codes

QR codes are increasing in popularity. They're in restaurants, on parking meters, in emails, and on social media.

Scammers have noticed! They are physically placing fake QR codes on top of official ones or creating fake QR codes on social media advertisements to get access to your personal information.

Never scan random QR codes. If the QR code looks odd or altered, do not scan it.

Protect your social media profiles

Take a moment to review the privacy settings on your social media platforms and limit the amount of personal information you share publicly.

Fraudsters may use your social media posts to personalize scams or get access to your accounts without your permission. Regularly check your friends list and remove any unfamiliar or suspicious accounts.

This month, let's make protecting ourselves against scams a top priority. We can significantly reduce the risk of being scammed by staying informed, being alert and careful, and safeguarding our accounts.

We invite you to watch our video at www.youtube.com/watch?v=cyaUWT-FLw3c to learn how to identify the red flags. Please share this information with those who may need it – and post it on social media.

ARE AMERICANS FINANCIALLY EDUCATED ON RETIREMENT SAVINGS?

Financial education helps people learn about savings, credit, and loans. It also helps them prepare for life changes and the unexpected. When planning for retirement financial knowledge is essential.

So, how prepared are adults in the United States for their retirement? The National Endowment for Financial Education (NEFE) conducts polls on how retirement savings affect people's financial well-being.

Here's what we have learned:

- *In a financial well-being poll conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic, 85% of respondents confirmed that some aspect of their personal finances was causing them stress. For 31% of respondents, that concern was "having enough saved for retirement."*
- *In that same poll, 70% said they made financial adjustments due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Of that group, 27% increased contributions to their emergency savings, retirement savings, or other savings or investments. In comparison, 21% tapped into emergency savings—or borrowed against retirement savings.*
- *In a poll about financial education mandates, 80% of adults said they wish they were required to complete a semester- or year-long course focused on personal finance education during high school. Also, 88% think their state should require a semester- or year-long course for high school graduation.*
- *In that same poll, 84% of those approaching retirement age said "spending and budgeting" should be taught in schools.*

Lifetime financial education is helpful when it comes to retirement preparation. This includes understanding Social Security retirement benefits and making the most of retirement income. You can learn more on our Retirement webpage at www.ssa.gov/retirement.

A personal **my Social Security** account should be a part of your financial plan. With an account, you can verify your earnings history, get personalized retirement benefit estimates, and more. If you don't have an account, you can easily create one at www.ssa.gov/myaccount.

To learn more about NEFE, visit their website at www.nefe.org. Please share this information with friends and family.

Remember to always monitor your blood sugar levels and speak with your healthcare provider about any dietary changes.



Dr. Lester Spencer
President Pro Tem



The Serenity Prayer was written by Reinhold Neibuhr (1871 -1971) who was a theologian, ethicist and commentator on politics and public affairs. He taught at Union Theological Seminary for 30 years and was one of America’s leading public intellectuals receiving the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 1964. He has been and is revered and respected by clergy persons and lay people alike. Presidents and politicians alike on both sides of the isle have been and are influenced and impacted by him. He wrote over 155 books which can be found on Amazon, in bookstores and in libraries around the globe. Many of his books are required reading in Universities and Seminaries around the world.

I must say he is one of my favorite writers and several of his books have greatly influenced my thinking and my beliefs about God, humanity, the church, politics, government, good and evil as well as the redeeming work of Christ in the world. Without a doubt, Dr. Neibuhr was one of the greatest intellectual giants in the church and in our country.

I share all of this to remind us that this great intellectual respected by so many was also one of the most articulate defenders of the orthodox Christian faith and the message of Jesus. He is also the author of this seemingly very simple Serenity Prayer. It seems simple until you start to reflect on the profound meaning of the words in this prayer.

I want to challenge each of us to do several things with this Serenity Prayer:

Memorize it.

Commit to memorize this prayer. Write it on a note card and practice reciting it everyday. Start with the first sentence. **“God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change; Courage to change the things I can; and the wisdom to know the difference.”** These first words of the prayer alone will are liberating and powerful. But do not stop there. To help you memorize it, print out a copy of the prayer and tape it to your bathroom mirror. Attach it to the inside cover of your Bible. Whatever you have to do to commit this to your memory.

Speak it.

Pray it out loud directly to God every morning, every night and throughout the day as you need it. Do not just blindly repeat it. Say it to God. Ask for the serenity, the wisdom and the courage. Make it your main prayer every day, and it will begin to change how you see your life, your relationships, your circumstances and your God.

Reflect on it.

Meditate on the meaning of the words in this prayer. Write down the things you cannot change and begin to surrender them to God. Write down the areas in your life where you need courage from the Lord to make changes that will bless and benefit you and others. Reflect on what it means to live one day at a time and enjoy each moment at a time. What hardships do you need to accept and how might you surrender to His will in greater ways?



The Serenity Prayer

God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change;
Courage to change the things I can;
And wisdom to know the difference.

Living one day at a time;
Enjoying one moment at a time;
Accepting hardships
as the pathway to peace;
Taking, as He did,
this sinful world as it is,
not as I would have it;
Trusting that He
will make all things right
if I surrender to His Will;
So that I may be
reasonably happy in this life
and supremely happy with Him
forever and ever in the next.

Amen

Commit to live it.

Make a decision that you are going to seek to live out this Serenity Prayer. Commit to pray it everyday and look for ways to put it into practice. The last line states that if we do all the aforementioned in this prayer, that we can be reasonably happy in this life and supremely happy in the next. Think about that for a minute. It is so true. If we put into practice the words of this prayer, we can, by God’s grace and if we surrender to His will, be reasonably happy in this life. But supreme happiness will only come when we enter into His eternal presence in paradise.

The Serenity Prayer has helped to set a lot of people free from trying to fix and change things (people and circumstances) beyond their control. This prayer has also empowered many to rely on God for their peace and serenity as they are given the courage by God to change the things they can. And, of course, the ones who truly find peace and serenity are the ones who discover the wisdom of God in knowing the difference between the things they can do something about and the things they can’t!

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By : Michael J. Brooks

citations.

“I can drive as fast as I want and not get stopped,” he said.

I didn’t ask, but wondered if he recommended this to his teenaged daughter whom I knew at age 15 was just learning to drive.

In the privacy of his house this was probably a **“do as I say”** admonition rather than a **“do as I do”** kind of thing.

Maybe it’s part of my getting older, or maybe it’s just my growing conviction that Christians ought to drive like, well, Christians.

We live in an era in which many drive like demons. Even when I’m driving the speed limit, some speed past me, and I’ve been tailgated, honked at and gestured for driving five miles below on the interstate. I often wonder why people are in such a hurry.

Consider a bloody story in the Old Testament about Israel’s tenth king, Jehu. The prophet Elisha anointed Jehu as king, and commissioned him as God’s avenger for the evil house of Ahab. Jehu quickly became the ancient Equalizer.

Reflections.....

I traveled with a deacon years ago and noticed the radar detector mounted on his windshield. When I asked about it he explained it was cost-effective since it saved him from traffic

He Driveth Furiously

He murdered the sitting king, Jehoram. He also ordered the murder of Ahaziah, the king of Judah, and the wicked Queen Jezebel cast down from a balcony to her death. The two soon-to-be-slain kings recognized Jehu from afar because **“he driveth furiously,”** or as the NIV renders, **“he drives like a maniac”** (2 Kings 9:20).

It’s believed an ancient chariot could reach a speed of 35-40 mph. My generation remembers seeing this in the classic movie, **“Ben Hur,”** when Charlton Heston raced around the coliseum. But though he didn’t reach the speed of modern automobiles, Jehu was known for his dangerous driving.

I remember having a talk with a youth pastor about slowing down while driving the church van, that, after all, had the church name emblazoned on the side, and was most often full of impressionable teenagers.

Many of us, likewise, present a terrible witness with discourtesy on the highways.

An alternative is to leave early and drive calmly, listening to soothing music or scripture apps or praying. I’ve heard it said that music is among the finest ways to lower blood pressure. Relaxing while driving is a great way to relieve stress and restore our souls and may help us show greater kindness toward fellow travelers. Drive time can be time with God.

Scripture exhorts Christians to present the whole of our lives in obedience to Christ. If he is to be sovereign of our lives, he’s to be lord of our driving, too.

“Reflections” is a weekly faith column written by Michael J. Brooks, pastor of the Siluria Baptist Church, Alabaster, Alabama. The church’s website is siluriabaptist.com.



Judge
Peggy Givhan

February is the iconic month for Valentine's Day. And who does not like receiving happy cards, chocolate candy, and flowers. Even if your New Year's Resolution includes fasting from candy, I declared that Valentine's Day can be an exception. Just do not go overboard. As Ben Franklin admonished, "everything in moderation". But how many people realize we also have a Federal and State holiday, President's Day, which falls on February 19th. President Thomas Jefferson, one of the founding fathers and third President of the United States, was an outstanding gardener whose home and gardens at Monticello outside of Charlottesville, Virginia are open to the public. I have visited this site at least four times, and there is always something new to see and learn.

As we head into warmer weather, let's be sure we have completed the following chores to get a head start for the spring.

1. Take out any debris left in the beds such as sticks, twigs, dead or moldy plant material so that insect eggs do not have an environment to thrive.
2. If there are any spent flowers or foliage, take this material away.
3. Trim back any perennials that have been nipped with the frost, such as pansies, dusty miller, or dianthus.
4. Go through Plant catalogs to get an idea for new flowers which would include requirements such as light, water, height, spacing.
5. Check your gardening tools, and replace any that have passed their prime.
6. Cut back rose bushes.
7. DO NOT cut back the dead stalks on hydrangeas since they will only bloom later on old growth.

While the weather is still cold, the most important step for a healthy garden is to spray with Volk Oil or a winter dormant oil. I know I sound like a broken record on this task, but maybe you love white flies which suck the life out of plants come summer. The requirement for spraying is that your location has had a hard freeze. I would definitely say our River Region has met this criteria.

SOUTHERN GARDENING

Potpourri for FEBRUARY

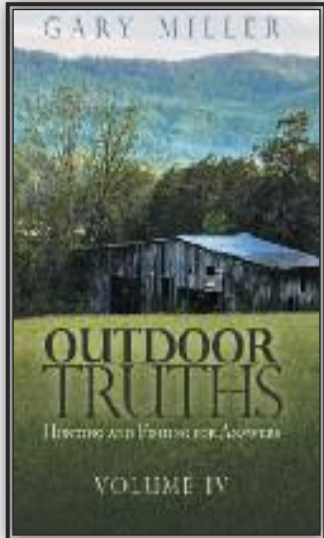


Not only will I want to spray the garden area, but the grass, up in the trees, the shrubs including under the leaves, hedges, fences, brick walls, etc. This spray coats the insect eggs with oil preventing the eggs from hatching. And the insect eggs would include fleas, and roaches besides white flies. The best tool for this task is a hose-end sprayer which can be purchased at garden centers and nurseries. If you have roses which are susceptible to fungus and mold, lime sulphur is the solution. Lime sulphur is available in a liquid form and also a water soluble powder which can be mixed with Volk oil so that you can kill two birds with one stone.

PLANT OF THE MONTH--ASTILBE

Astilbe, also known as False Goat's Beard or False Spirea, lends itself to the shade or partial shade areas of the garden. It is in the family of Saxifragaceae and native to mountain ravines and woodlands in North America and Asia. There exists eighteen species of rhizomatous flowering plants within this family. Astilbe, a perennial, which grows from one to four feet tall, makes for a good cut flower. One can have Astilbe blooms from early spring to late summer by planting different varieties. Bloom colors include pink, red, white, peach, lavender, and purple. Their feathery appearance lends a somewhat magical look to any shady garden site.

HAPPY
VALENTINE'S DAY
AND GOOD
GARDENING!



There is no doubt we are built for the light. Light was one of the very first creations of God. I think the most obvious reason is that without it we wouldn't be able to see all the other creation. The beauty of the mountains and trees, the plants and animals would never be fully appreciated without a light to see it by. With light we understand those things that we see, touch, smell, and hear. It

Distances Unknown

Gary Miller has written Outdoor Truths articles for 20 years. He has also written five books which include compilations of his articles and a father/son devotional. He also speaks at wild-game dinners and men's events for churches and associations.



Gary Miller

Winter undoubtedly thwarts many outdoor plans in most parts of the country. If you don't believe me, just wait until the first warm weekend in February. There will be more lawnmowers heard than any other time of the year. It's not that they want to mow their lawn, but it's just that they have cabin fever. Another problem with the winter is the amount of light in each day.

There have been several times when one could hunt all day and stay out less than twelve hours. That means twelve hours in the dark. And even though my children think I live most of my life in the dark, I'm not ready to do it literally. I guess you could say that at this time of the year we must live our lives in a cold and dark place. That doesn't sound too exciting. And the truth is depression is far more likely to occur during these cold and dark days than when it is warm and sunny.

puts things in perspective and shows the harmony that each part of nature has with the other.

As a child I was very afraid of the dark. My own bedroom became a prison for me each night. As I got older, however, I began to love being outside at night. I used to think it was the darkness that gave me comfort, but it was not. It was the light. It was each star and constellation. It was the moon and the flickering lights that came from distances unknown.



It was not the sea of blackness, but it was how one tiny speck of light could penetrate that sea, that mesmerized me. There is no wonder Jesus said of Himself, "I am the light of the world." I understand that. I understand what He was saying was simply that he gives everything perspective, purpose, and peace. He illuminates the unknown. He makes plain the path. He brings harmony to chaos. By His own life He penetrated a dark world with a light of hope, and He gave us all an invitation to live in this light where we never have to be afraid or unsure and where we can enjoy every minute of each day, no matter if the calendar says June or January.

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Home Town Community News

*NOTICE! Please send Patricia your family and friends:
BIRTHDAYS, ANNIVERSARIES, WEDDINGS AND EVENTS to:
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February Birthdays

1. Tristan Davis (17)

2. Brewer Box
Shelby Smith Owen

3. Del Atkinson
Sybil Foshee
Rebecca Hughes

4. Paige Box
Helen Rahn Millican

5. Beth Norris

6. Jason Welch

7. Rhonda Black
Mary Helen Fleming
Rick Marshall

8. Abigail Roux

9. Amy Hall Boyd (81)
Lori Meadows

12. Chas Hammock (15)

13. Susan Gambrell

14. Lyda Crowe (74)

15. Nancy Rabren
Susan Terrell

16. Clark Jones
17. Delilah Davis (14)
Chuck Glasscock (60)
Anastasia Meadow Takacs (8)
Gavin Noah Takacs (8)

18. Chip Norris

19. Anita Jones
Dawn Johnson

20. Hayden Ward

21. Jessica Burgess
Jane Russell
Shirley Yarbrough

22. Tim Meadows

23. Nathan Horsley

24. Catherine Andrews

25. Bettye Garlington

26. Cassidy Gwin

27. Portia Goss
Gail Royal
Cindy Sellars

28. Weldon Payne

29. Dawn Fain



February Obituaries

| | |
|---|---------|
| Miller, Robert Marion (65)..... | Jan. 8 |
| Strong, Susan Masters (77)..... | Jan. 8 |
| Walters, Alice Berry (88)..... | Jan. 8 |
| Crider, Eugene (97)..... | Jan. 9 |
| Nickols, Frances Evelyn (81)..... | Jan. 9 |
| Evans, William “Billy” Alan (79)..... | Jan. 10 |
| Coats, William Craig (88)..... | Jan. 11 |
| Swain, Patricia “Patsy” Biggio (89)..... | Jan. 11 |
| Landry, George Armond (93)..... | Jan. 12 |
| Pearson, Dr. Gwendolyn Smith (95)..... | Jan. 12 |
| Dubose, Patricia Narrows (77)..... | Jan. 13 |
| Stewart, Dr. G.T. (91)..... | Jan. 14 |
| Anderson, Dr. James “Jimmy” Noble (84)..... | Jan. 15 |
| Jimenez, Evelyn Shelly (82)..... | Jan. 15 |
| Rogers, Brenda Missy (53)..... | Jan. 15 |
| Brown, Ronald Wally (80)..... | Jan. 17 |
| Cauthen, Abner McGehee (76)..... | Jan. 17 |
| Center, Dr. Hayden Darwin (87)..... | Jan. 17 |
| Bailey, Betty Jean (85)..... | Jan. 19 |
| Goodman, Ola Mae (92)..... | Jan. 19 |
| Runkel, Myra Ann Russell (81)..... | Jan. 19 |
| Upchurch, Benjamin Edward (96)..... | Jan. 19 |
| Cordes, Audrey Mae Vieths (83)..... | Jan. 22 |
| Davis, Eloise Manning (94)..... | Jan. 22 |
| Davis, Myrtle Smith (88)..... | Jan. 22 |
| Pollard, Chase Anthony (30)..... | Jan. 23 |
| Golomb, MD Philip N. (90)..... | Jan. 24 |
| Ludden, Viola Hudson (83)..... | Jan. 24 |
| Fincher, Brenda Jo (58)..... | Jan. 25 |
| Fleming, Debra “Joy” Kyser (69)..... | Jan. 25 |
| Harrell, Tamera Lee (60)..... | Jan. 25 |
| Curry, Jonathan Patrick (27)..... | Jan. 26 |
| Philips, Larry Mack (84)..... | Jan. 26 |
| Wharton, Mary Ellen (97)..... | Jan. 26 |
| Bern, Helen Rosen (90)..... | Jan. 27 |
| McGough, Sr. Homer Elton (105)..... | Jan. 27 |
| Parsons, Olive Ann (86)..... | Jan. 27 |
| Little, Harold Ray (75)..... | Jan. 30 |
| Slade, Gaines Burchfield (82)..... | Jan. 31 |
| Moore, Jr. William Hal (79)..... | Feb. 3 |
| Cline, Irma Beth (98)..... | Feb. 4 |





Photo courtesy of Samantha's Southern Smiles Photography

*Mary Ellen Grant & John Edward Ford
were joined in Holy Matrimony
on January 13, 2024.
The Ceremony was held at The Chapel at The Waters,
Pike Road, Alabama
and officiated by Reverend Jim Peters.
Parents of the Bride are
Mr. and Mrs. Tanner Grant of Montgomery.
Parents of the Groom are
Mr. and Mrs. Millard Edward Ford, Jr.
of Lake Kiowa, TX.
Grandmother of the Bride-Loretta G. Grant, Montgomery, Al.
Reception was held following the ceremony.*

*Love bears all things,
believes all things,
hopes all things,
endures all things.*

1 Corinthians 13:7

February Anniversaries

| | |
|-----------------------------------|---------------|
| Gordon & Vicki Davis | February 14th |
| Clark & Anita Jones..... | February 14th |
| Chuck & Susan Gambrell..... | February 20th |
| Hayden & Dee Ward..... | February 20th |
| Tom & Bettye Garlington..... | February 21st |
| Gilbert & Ethel Sellers 68th..... | February 22nd |
| Shelby & Philip Owen 1st..... | February 25th |
| Jerry & Debra Morrison 39th..... | February 28th |
| Pat & Butch Moseley 65th..... | February 28th |



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By: Amanda Walker

Tears & LAUGHTER

Chicken fever will spike as spring approaches!

Based entirely upon my casual observation, women seem to be more susceptible than men, and children ag it on, but for some reason many people who have never so much as grew a turnip patch suddenly will get the urge to raise chickens as soon as January is behind us.

All that has to happen for someone to catch chicken fever is to visit a farm supply store. A woman can go in there, maybe just shopping for a new pair of bib overalls, and then, innocently enough, she will see the cute little biddies chirping and hopping around under a heat lamp. The next thing she knows there’s a cardboard box full of baby chickens in her backseat and the kids are trying to feed them fries on the ride home.



It is easy for anyone to justify having a miniature farm. All you have to do is say it will be an opportunity for the children to learn responsibility and that the money saved by using the eggs the hens produce will offset the cost.

The average healthy hen with good genetics in the prime of her life with proper diet, housing, sanitation, and protection from predators, averages producing about 300 eggs a year – or 25 dozen.

A pullet, or girl chick if you prefer, will cost between \$4 and \$6. Some backyard chicken farmers say it is a waste of money to buy pullets because usually there will end up being a rooster in the mix anyway. So you may as well save yourself a couple of dollars and buy straight run chicks, which means might get both hens and roosters, and they will run between \$2.50 and \$4 each – depending on the breed of the chicken and the location of the farm store.

If you buy chicks too young you will also want to buy a heat lamp, and any business-minded chicken person will also want to calculate the cost of building a coop. I can’t quote the price of lumber and wire, but I do know you can buy a dozen large grade A’s at Piggly Wiggly for like \$2.89. Or you can get a full-grown hen roasted and ready for supper for under \$8.00.

But cost aside, once you get them home and get the pin built, you will be able to call yourself an official keeper of chickens and sleep as you have known it will no longer exist. You will find yourself lurching awake often in the night asking, “Was that a chicken?”

As it turns out, people aren’t the only ones who like to eat chicken. Coyotes, your dogs, your neighbors’ dogs, stray dogs, cats, raccoons, foxes, and possums are all very fond of them too. And a healthy chicken snake in the prime of its life with good genetics can eat over 300 eggs a year.

You won’t be able to just go peacefully back to sleep once you are startled awake by a squawking chicken. Because your kids are going to give every one of their ugly chicks names like Sweet Baby Betty or Miss Sparkle Feathers, and the things die easy already. I don’t know why, but they have a high mortality rate, which is upsetting, so it won’t be the kids staggering out to the chicken coop with a flashlight and shotgun in the predawn hours of the morning.

You might tell yourself while you are there at the farm store that you will be happy with only getting five of them, half a dozen at the most, but you will be wrong. And don’t go near the ducks. You can’t tell much about what a chicken is thinking by looking them in the face, but ducks have vibrant personalities. They also eat more and are much messier.

If you ever get chicken fever, duck fever usually isn’t far behind. It is almost unavoidable. If you catch it, just remember you can’t put a price on a good time.

1 Corinthians
Chapter 13

Love is patient, Love is kind.
It does not envy, it does not boast,
it is not proud. it does not dishonor others,
it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered,
it keeps no record of wrongs

www.Dailyverses.net



Barbara Harrington

I have joint problems and muscle pain which doesn’t seem to get better.

Do I tell them that the lymphedema in my arm makes it difficult to do simple things to prepare dinner or start a load of clothes in the washing machine? Small tasks like picking up grocery bags to bring into the house is frustrating because I have to make a plan before picking one bag up, shifting it to my healthy arm and having the key ready to unlock the house.

If someone is fussing about me being late, I want them to remember I can’t do things as fast as before.

When Friends Ask

My brain works a little slower, yes chemo brain is a real thing. I have gone through this before still it seems people don’t understand that chemo kills brain cells. It is why I have difficulty spelling words or remembering someone’s name. I have started doing trivia online to exercise my the brain, hopefully it helps.

It is exciting to have my hair come back but I need a little time to make those chemo curls look good. I am not experienced with curls, the only time I ever had curls was when I was young and my mom had a perm put in my hair! It is a lot different from my normal straight hair.

Things are different now but I can say being a TWO TIME cancer survivor is challenging but a blessed time too. I worked hard for a year both times to say I am a Survivor, and I am spending as much time as possible with my family. My husband asked me recently if I was keeping my wig. I quickly told him I was because I am going to be ready if I get another visit from the evil cancer cells.

The Value of a Woman...

Be very careful if you make a woman cry because God counts her tears.

Today’s Woman

By:Trisston Wright Burrows
site.trisstonwrightburrows.com



Ms.Wheelchair
America/Alabama
2005

Trisston’s Tidbits:

“Showing Christ-Like Love”

It’s that time of year again, when the stores are filled with red and pink candies, stuffed animals and heart-shaped boxes of chocolates. Some people look forward to Valentine’s Day each year, while others are impartial or may even dislike it.

The holiday centered on love does not only have to be applied to couples though. No matter how you feel about this holiday, as Christians, we are called to love at all times. Why? Because God first loved us. He sent His son, Jesus, to die for our sins so that those who believe in Him may have eternal life.

Romans 5:8 says, **“But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”** While we were undeserving, God showed love to us. Therefore, we are to show love to others.

When it comes to true love, we can look to the life of Jesus as our example to follow. His love was shown through His actions and in the way He lived. For example, He served others and always did so with a humble attitude. This can be seen in **John 13** when Jesus washed His disciples’ feet.

In addition, the love of Jesus was not selective, as He walked among men and spent time with those who were considered outcasts by society. This can be seen in **Luke 19** when Jesus empathizes with Zacchaeus, a tax collector who was looked down upon by others.

True love is not solely based on attraction or our emotions. Rather, true love is an action. **1 John 3:18** says, **“Dear children, let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth.”**

There are many ways to show love to others in our daily lives, such as by taking time out of our busy schedules to care for someone else. Acts of true love do not have to be extravagant – they can be as simple as encouraging someone when they are down or being a good listener.

So, let this Valentine’s Day serve as a reminder of the importance of showing Christ-like love to others. Remember that true love is selfless and sacrificial. Ultimately, when we show this kind of love to others, we point them to Christ.

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For I know the plans I have for you,
declares the Lord, plans for welfare
and not for evil, to give you a future
and a hope. Jeremiah 29:11

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Montgomery County Sheriff's Office

The Montgomery County Sheriff's Office is excited to be on Neighbors in our efforts to connect with residents and improve the safety of our communities. Neighbors allows you, the user, to share photos, videos and information related to local crime and safety incidents so fellow residents can stay informed. The Montgomery County Sheriff's Office can view what local residents have posted publicly to Neighbors and can now chime-in with relevant updates or safety alerts to help residents stay informed. You do not need a Ring device to join Neighbors. Anyone with a smartphone can download the Neighbors App in order to receive updates and have the option to post photos or videos from any device. Feel free to spread the word and make sure to always report criminal activity and emergency situations directly to the Montgomery County Sheriff's Office by calling **911**.

<https://ring.com/neighbors>

Join the Neighborhood!
Your neighbors are already here.

LIFE SAVING CITIZENS AWARDS

Sheriff Cunningham presented citizens awards to Pike Road residents who rescued a small child from drowning and performed lifesaving measures.

The child has made a full recovery!

(L-R) Mayor Gordon Stone, Jon Patton (with son), Samantha McCall, Melody Patterson and Oustin Washington. (Back row) Montgomery County Commissioners (L-R) Dan Harris, Carmen Moore-Zeigler, Ronda Walker, Isaiah Sankey and Doug Singleton.

"I am forever grateful for these citizens and all those in the Montgomery County community!"

Sheriff Cunningham



Autauga County SHERIFF'S OFFICE



(334) 361-2500

162 W 4th Street,
Prattville, AL

www.autaugasheriff.org



Sheriff
Mark Harrell

ELMORE COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE



(334) 567-5546

8955 US-231

Wetumpka, AL 36092

<https://www.elmoreso.com>



Sheriff
Bill Franklin

Lowndes County SHERIFF'S OFFICE



(334) 548-2222

1 S Washington St
Hayneville, AL 36040

www.facebook.com/LowndesCountyAlabamaSheriffsOffice/

LowndesCountyAlabamaSheriffsOffice/



Sheriff
Chris West

POLICE OFFICERS PRAYER

Lord I ask for courage
Courage to face and
Conquer my own fears...
Courage to take me where
Others will not go...
I ask for strength
Strength of a body to protect
others and strenth of spirit to
lead others...
I ask for dedication.

Dedication to my job to do it well.
Dedication to my community, to keep it safe...
Give me Lord, concern for others who trust me and
Compassion for those who need me...
and please Lord through it all
Be at my side.

AMEN

U. S. CUSTOMS AND BORDER PROTECTION



MISSION STATEMENT

Protect the American people, safeguard our borders, and enhance the nation's economic prosperity.

ENDURING MISSION PRIORITIES

Counter Terrorism – Anticipate, detect and disrupt the threat of terrorists, their weapons and actions to protect the people and economy of the United States.

Combat Transnational Crime – Detect, deter and disrupt transnational organized crime that threatens U.S. national and economic security interests at and beyond the border.

Secure the Border – Protect the Homeland through the air, land and maritime environments against illegal entry, illicit activity or other threats to uphold national sovereignty and promote national and economic security.

Facilitate Lawful Trade and Protect Revenue – Enable fair, competitive and compliant trade and enforce U.S. laws to ensure safety, prosperity and economic security for the American people.

Facilitate Lawful Travel – Enhance, enable and transform the travel experience by anticipating, detecting and intercepting threats prior to and at ports of entry.



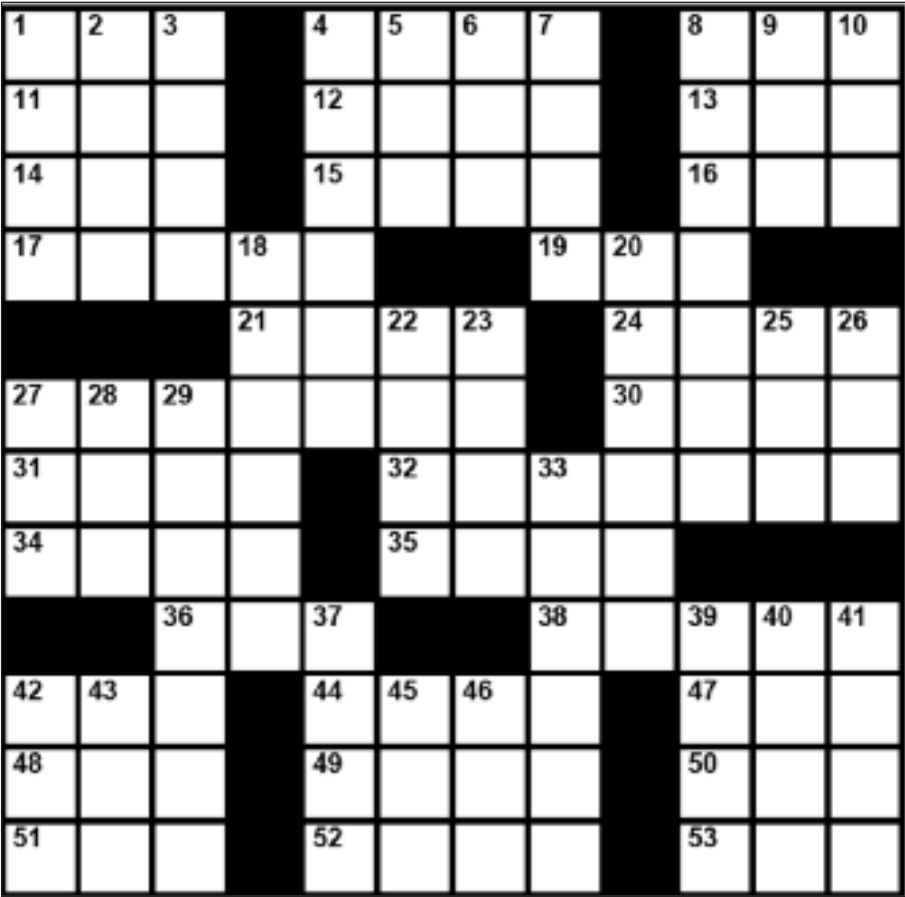
MYLES MELLOR
CROSSWORD

Myles Mellor is one of the top crossword writers in the world. Published in over 1000 magazines, newspapers and web outlets. Over 20,000 cross-words published worldwide. Visit him at:

<http://www.themecrosswords.com/>

Also see his CBS interview at:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7emsBZqvohY&t=22s>



Across

- Group with the rock opera "Tommy," with "the"
- Wind
- Split soup
- Shrouded
- Fairy tale's opening word
- Torment
- Back
- Strengthen, with "up"
- Unrefined rock
- Projected
- Convert into leather
- Study
- Catamaran
- Resourceful
- Of that kind
- Peanut and coconut extractions
- It's a bit over a common speed limit
- Orchard unit
- Neon sign word
- Stock wood
- Took off with
- Consumes
- Handles
- Keep out
- Have markers out
- Trifling
- Terminate
- Unite inseparably
- Navy commando
- Agreed

Down

- "Come again?"
- Winning, card for example
- Emanation
- Old mansion decoration
- "Take ____"
- ____ Mountain, British Columbia
- Took a powder
- She, e.g.
- Handle
- Bronze, for one
- Wipes away
- Out
- What is more
- Like a billionaire's pockets
- Behave
- Biblical possessive
- Tent bed
- Lungful
- Delighted
- Schooner, e.g.
- Murmurs
- Observe
- Track assignment
- All's well, that ____ well
- "____ do you do?"
- Astonish
- Sight
- Pitcher's stat.