

Inside the Statehouse with Steve Flowers

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

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We Lost Some Good Ones This Year

As is my annual ritual, my year-end column pays tribute to Alabama political legends who have passed away during the year.

Sonny Cauthen passed away in Montgomery at age 70. He was the ultimate inside man in Alabama politics. Sonny was a lobbyist before lobbying was a business. He kept his cards close to his vest and you never knew what he was doing. Sonny was the ultimate optimist who knew what needed to be achieved and found like-minded allies with whom to work. When he had something to get done, he bulldozed ahead and achieved his mission. Sonny was a yellow dog Democrat who believed in equal treatment and rewarding hard work. He was an avid outdoorsman and hunter and mentored a good many young men in Montgomery.

Another Montgomerian who will never be forgotten was Representative Alvin Holmes, who passed away at 81. Like Sonny, Alvin was born and raised and lived his entire life in his hometown of Montgomery. He, too, was a real Democrat and an icon in Alabama politics. Alvin represented the people of Montgomery for 44-years in the Alabama House of Representatives. He was one of the most dynamic and outspoken legislators in Alabama history, as well as one of the longest serving members.

I had the opportunity to serve with Alvin for close to two decades in the legislature. We shared a common interest in Alabama political history. In fact, Alvin taught history at Alabama State University for a long time. He was always mindful of the needs of his district, as well as black citizens throughout the state. Alvin was one of the first Civil Rights leaders in Montgomery and Alabama. He helped organize the Alabama Democratic Conference and was Joe Reed's chief lieutenant for years.

Ironically, we lost another Civil Rights icon this year. John Lewis was born in rural Pike County in the community of Banks. After graduating from college, John joined the Dr. Martin Luther King as a soldier in the army for Civil Rights. John was beaten by Alabama State Troopers near the Edmund Pettus Bridge on the infamous Bloody Sunday Selma to Montgomery march. He became a Civil Rights legend in America. He was one of Dr. King's closest allies. John became almost as renowned worldwide as a Civil Rights leader as Dr. King. John moved to Atlanta with Dr. King and was elected to the U.S. Congress from Atlanta and

served 33 years with distinction. Even though John was a national celebrity, he would take time out of his busy schedule to drive from Atlanta to rural Pike County to go to church with his mother at her beloved Antioch Baptist Church. John died of pancreatic cancer in July at age 80.

Another Alabama political legend, John Dorrill, passed away in January at age 90. Ironically, John Dorrill and John Lewis were both born and raised in rural Pike County near Troy. John Dorrill went to work for the powerful Alabama Farmers Federation shortly after graduating from Auburn. He worked for the Federation for 43 years. For the last 20 years of his career, he oversaw and was the mastermind of their political plans and operations as Executive Director of the Federation. He retired and lived out his final years on his ancestral home place in Pike County. John Dorrill was one of my political mentors and friends.

Another Montgomery political icon, former Republican State Senator Larry Dixon, passed away only a few weeks ago from COVID-19 complications at age 78. He served over 20 years in the state legislature. Larry epitomized the conservative Republican, and his voting record was right in line with his Montgomery constituency. He was known as "Montgomery's State Senator" but his ultimate legacy may be as a great family man. Larry was a devoted husband to his wife, Gaynell, and father to his two daughters. Larry was a good man.

Former Alabama Supreme Court Judge Hugh Maddox recently passed away at age 90. Judge Maddox served 31 years on the Alabama Supreme Court before his retirement in 2001.

One of my favorite fellow legislators and friends, Representative Richard Laird of Roanoke, passed away last week from COVID-19. He was 81 and served 36 years in the Alabama House of Representatives. Richard was a great man and very conservative legislator.

In addition to Richard Laird, Alvin Holmes, and Larry Dixon, several other veteran Alabama legislators passed away this year including Ron Johnson, Jack Page and James Thomas.

We lost some good ones this year, who will definitely be missed as we head into 2021.

Happy New Year!

Reapportionment Will Be Paramount Issue with Legislature

Inside the Statehouse ~ with Steve Flowers

As we close the book on 2020, we will close the door on national politics and get back to the basics, good old Alabama politics. That's my game. It is what I know and like to write and talk about. Some say my prognostications and observations on Alabama politics are sometimes accurate. However, not so much so on the national level.

About a decade ago there was an open presidential race and a spirited Republican battle for the nomination had begun. One of the entrants stood out to me. U.S. Senator Fred Thompson from Tennessee looked like the real thing to me. He was tall, tough, articulate, a movie star, and major player in the Watergate hearings. He looked like a president. He had a deep authoritative voice and gravitas and he had done a good job as a U.S. Senator from Tennessee. He actually had been born in Alabama.

So I wrote a glowing column about how he looked like presidential timber. I went out on a limb and boldly predicted that he was going to win the Republican nomination and would go on to win the presidency. My profuseness was so pronounced that soon after the column was printed it was picked up by his campaign and his wife called me from Nashville and thanked me for my comments. A week later Thompson dropped out of the race. So much for my presidential prognostications.

The Governor and Legislature have a myriad of issues to tackle as the new year begins. A good many issues have to be addressed in the upcoming regular session, which begins in less than a month. The most prevailing problem is the fact that the U.S. Justice Department has sued the state for our overcrowded prisons. They convene in Montgomery the first week of February.

Many of the leaders of the legislature were hoping and somewhat expecting the governor to call a Special Session or two prior to the Regular Session. There are a lot of issues that have to be addressed and are delinquent due to COVID cutting the 2020 Regular Session in half and there is concern that COVID could kill part of this year's session. It will indeed make a precarious environment inside the Statehouse. There are economic development bills that need passing and a ton of local bills legislators need to pass for their districts and then there are big ticket items like the prison problems.

Regardless of how important all of the substantive state issues are, nothing will be as paramount to legislators as reapportionment or the redistricting of their own districts. Self-preservation will prevail. The United States Census is taken every 10 years for a reason. The U.S. Constitution, and concurrently all state constitutions, mandate the count for one reason – to make all congressional and legislative districts have the same number of people. Thus the saying, "one person, one vote." The power of the pencil is granted to the state legislature to draw their own lines and the power rests with them to draw the congressional lines for the state. If indeed, we do lose a congressional seat, then that task becomes exponentially more difficult than if we had our current seven districts.

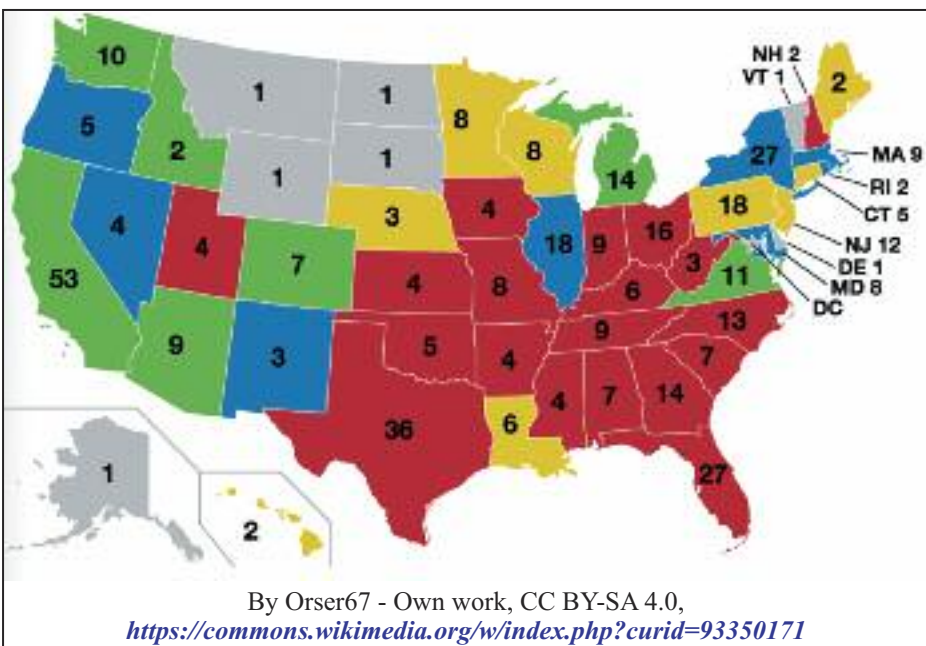
Drawing their own lines will be their primary interest. All 105 House members and all 35 State Senate districts will be drafted and designed by the legislature. Being on the Reapportionment Committee is a plum position at this time. Like most pieces of a legislative puzzle, the resolution to a large degree is accomplished by and within a committee. Every district will be reconfigured to some degree because people do move around and some locales change more than others. Therefore, there becomes a ripple effect all over the state. The Republicans have control of the majority and will use the legislative pencil to retain their super majority. However, protecting their own incumbency will supersede party loyalty. Although, both can probably be achieved.

This 2021 reapportionment is much more pressing than 10 years ago in 2011. They had the luxury of casually passing congressional lines for the 2012 elections. However, legislators did not run until 2014. So the Legislature passed a congressional map in 2011, and legislative map in 2012 at a leisurely pace.

They are under the gun to get both done this year, because the legislature and congress run in 2022. Indeed, they will have to get both done by June of this year, because fundraising for the June 2022 primaries begins this June.

Look for there to be two Special Sessions between now and June – one for congressional redistricting and one for legislative reapportionment.

Let the games begin.



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Is it good to think about any legal issues for the New Year?

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Without specifics about yourself I'll make this answer generic in a personal and in a business sense.

I presume you looked at your financial estate planning (401K, mutual funds, stocks and bonds, life insurance, etc) and as you do you also think about your legal estate planning. After all you are a year

older; you may have gotten married, had a new child, had a child reach the age of majority (19 years), gotten divorced or suffered the death of a spouse or even a child. You may have a child graduate, enter the workforce and be off your payroll. Even if the child is off your payroll you may keep them on your health insurance until they reach age twenty-six (26) as a buffer or necessity if you still have a family plan but it may be that you decide not to continue to carry the young adult child if the plan has changed and the cost can drop significantly. Your financial estate planning goes hand in hand with your legal estate planning and you should discuss that with your lawyer, not that he or she will try to advise you on whether your investment advisor is steering you correctly but rather the impact of your financial worth on your legal estate.

For 2021 **the gift tax exclusion** remains the same for the last few years at \$15,000.00 a person, as a gift (child, grandchild, etc.) not requiring the filing of a Gift Tax return or up to \$30,000 to a person if both you and your spouse gift to the same person once per year. There is a lifetime basic exclusion and generation skipping tax (GST) limit of \$11.7 million in 2021. There may be a tax advantage for the wealthy in that and if this seems to be something that might be helpful to your financial planning you should seek the advice of an accountant or other tax/ financial professional (may include a tax attorney). For 2020, there was a \$11.58 million total estate tax exemption per individual; 2021 will provide a \$11.7 million tax exemption. The total GST and total estate tax exemption are inclusive in total in that they cannot exceed \$11.7 million. The portable portion mentioned above may be available to a surviving spouse who may be able to combine through election their unused estate credit amounts up to a total of \$23.4 million. See your tax professional after the death of the first spouse if your assets are in the millions. Remember that life insurance is considered for estate tax purposes if you have control over the policy (i.e. ability to change the beneficiaries, cancel the policy, etc). Some individuals have large insurance policies and in the past not inconceivable for high middle class people to have an estate over prior limits but the possibility could even exist with some wealthier individuals. If you die in 2021 with an estate of greater than \$11.7 million (or \$23.4 million for a second to die spouse) then that amount over \$11.7 million will be taxed at 40%.

But whoa, it looks as if Joe Biden will take the oath as President later this month. There are some items that may well change and as of this writing are speculative based on communication from the Biden campaign. Rather than the annually successive increase from \$11.7 million this year, set to be rolled back in 2026, it is a distinct possibility that things may roll back this year; how much is anyone's guess.

With that said you need to pull out your **Last Will and Testament** and review it. If you have had any life changes (marriage, divorce, death, large inheritance, new child, etc.) a new Will may be in order. If you don't have a Last Will and Testament you need to have a lawyer prepare one as soon as possible. Why do you need one? Because if you don't then the State of Alabama has one for you. Some of the spousal examples under the rules of intestacy (dying without a Will); (1) first \$100,000 to spouse and then 1/2 of the remaining estate to the living parent(s) when there are no children, (2) if children then the spouse gets \$50,000 and 1/2 of the rest, (3) if one or more of the children are not yours then the surviving spouse only gets half of everything, period. This is probably not the estate plan you have in mind. There are internet sites and software programs that can also assist with a Last Will and Testament but there is no guarantee that it will pass muster regarding state rules on probate nor a guarantee that it will do what you want upon your death. The best chance of meeting estate goals is through a lawyer and if you are of moderate means, you may be surprised that it is less expensive than you think. In the long run a Will may save money since an intestate estate when probated requires the bonding of the Personal Representative and an inventory of the decedent's estate. I run into too many old or non-attorney prepared defective Wills when it really counts and there is an attempt to probate the estate. Obviously such probate is not without issue. If you have an out of state prepared Will it should be acceptable for probate since under the Full Faith and Credit Clause (Section 1, Article 4) of the United States Constitution a valid Will prepared in one state is valid in Alabama. There can be issues so a review with an Alabama attorney is always a good thing to do.

Aside from the Last Will and Testament you may want to have a **Power of Attorney** prepared, both one for financial reasons and health. Most prepared these days are durable which require wording that the power of attorney is effective even in your disability or incapacity. Financial Powers of Attorney became a statutory form as of 1 January 2012. Most attorneys have concerns about the filling in the blank and initialing choices format and most now insert tried and true language used in their practices for their many years. A financial Power of Attorney is now by default a Durable power; however I insert the needed language anyway to make sure that there are no questions about its durability. A Power of Attorney (POA) can be very powerful and placed in the wrong hands can be damaging such as a daughter that is named AGENT and decides to sell your lake house and push you towards moving to an assisted living facility. On the other hand, naming a trusted AGENT and retaining the POA for future needs can be extremely beneficial. The POA can be used so that someone can write your bills for you during incapacity, file your taxes and with health/ Health Insurance Portability and Privacy Act (HIPAA) provisions monitor your care with the doctors and hospital as well as handle medical insurance billing. The POA may also be used to nominate whom you would want as a conservator or guardian should one need to be named for you through a Court proceeding. A health care power of attorney can be used to coincide with the Advance Directive mentioned below should you have need to name another or others to help with health care decisions.

The final personal document would be an **Advance Directive for Health Care**, which is composed of a Living Will and Health Care Proxy nomination. It will allow you to make certain decisions about end of life issues should you later become unable to speak for yourself and two doctors have determined that you will likely die in the near future. This is the document that Terri Schiavo DID NOT have and for that reason the court found the testimony of the "husband" who was then living with another woman to be credible as to Terri's final wishes. Hmmmmm. Naming a Health Care Proxy is the same as naming a health care power-of-attorney such as under a POA. The proxy is given limited rights under which situations that they can make decisions. And by the way, the ex-spouse automatically loses that job as proxy upon divorce. That's dodging a bullet!

If retirement is nearing and you will also receive Social Security consider that the 2021 Medicare Part B will move from the 2020, \$144.60 to \$148.50 per month dependent on whether the senior is subject to the statutory "hold harmless" provision. With higher income brackets so does the cost for Part B increase. For instance those that make more than \$500,000 in 2021 will pay over \$500 per month for Part B. If you need nursing home (skilled nursing) care under Part A,

days 1-20 are fully covered provided you continue to meet Medicare's requirements for those days; the co-payment for days 21-100 (if you qualify) will be \$185.50 per day (\$176.00 per day in 2020). After day 100 you are 100% on your own unless you have some other means of long term care payment. If you have not already checked on long term health care insurance you should do so now. It not only will cover nursing home care but can also cover assisted living or in home care. If you consider this insurance also look carefully at the options since they may be equally as important as the policy itself. This includes inflation increases which are very important or even the option of continued coverage for a certain amount of time when one with "forgetfulness" forgets to pay the premium.

With the exception of a few states and D.C., the individual mandate under the Affordable Care act (Obamacare) was changed to zero. That of course has

been contentious in that without the mandate it is argues that the ACA is null. The time to make health care changes under the ACA has passed (open enrollment) unless you have a qualifying event or become eligible under Medicaid/CHIP. Older Americans may be eligible both for Medicare and Medicaid and impoverished Americans may be Medicaid eligible when they cannot afford premiums under Obamacare and some Americans are eligible for insurance from the market place with subsidized premiums.

If you are currently in business or considering a business what about entity? A sole proprietorship offers pass through taxation but no limited liability. Your personal and business assets are at risk in a lawsuit. A **Limited Liability Company (LLC) or a Registered Limited Liability Partnership (RLLP or LLP)** offers the same pass through tax advantages as well as limited liability. A "C" corporation offers the same limited liability but there is taxation on the corporation and taxation on the shareholders. If you are in one of these entities and about \$80,000.00 plus salary talk to your accountant about the possibility of an "S" corporation election. Current tax considerations suggest that pass through entities not involved as professional service businesses (accountants, attorneys, etc) such as sole proprietorships, LLC's, LLP's and S corporations may take an additional significant percentage off their income. Because pass through entities are taxed at the owner's tax rate this will give an additional percentage decrease in taxable income.

In addition to the advantages of pass through taxation and limited liability there may also be some self-employment tax advantages since some of the income can be paid to a shareholder-employee as a profit distribution. The Internal Revenue Service however looks for Shareholder- Employees that pay themselves substandard salaries for their position in order that they can take more from the company as a distribution and save more on Self Employment taxes. The IRS will consider a reasonable income based on IRS summarized factors considered by a Court case from the Eighth Circuit, which advised shareholders to give them careful consideration in establishing their compensation. The factors are:

- (1) Employee qualifications;
- (2) The nature, extent, and scope of the employee's work;
- (3) The size and complexity of the business;
- (4) Prevailing general economic conditions;
- (5) The employee's compensation as a percentage of gross and net income;
- (6) The employee-shareholder's compensation compared with distributions to shareholders;
- (7) The employee-shareholder's compensation compared with that to non-shareholder employees or paid in prior years;
- (8) Prevailing rates of compensation for comparable positions in comparable concerns; and
- (9) Comparison of compensation paid to a particular shareholder-employee in previous years where the corporation has a limited number of officers.

An "S" Corporation election only exists through the IRS and has specific requirements. So you can be an existing LLC, C Corporation, etc. but elect via the IRS as an "S" Corporation. Ask your accountant about whether it is right for your business.

I hope that this has helped with your question. 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."

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ROBSERVATIONS...by Robert Tate

THE THREE HORSEMEN OF ALABAMA

Hey, aren't there supposed to be four? Yup, but right now I am not talking about the Apocalypse. I am going to write about something I never write about. In the ten-plus years of Robservations, I honestly cannot think of a time I have written an entire piece about sports. A little here and there but never the whole kit-and-caboodle. It is not because I don't like sports. I love sports and played them for the better part of my life. It is just that getting wrapped up in debates about guys and girls playing games is really not my idea of fun. Besides, to me, if you did not shoot down 10–352 airplanes in World War II or fly bomber missions over the German Reich, for the most part and of course there are exceptions, I am pretty much unimpressed. Yet here I am and here goes nothing.

1. THE HEISMAN TROPHY. I have to be totally honest with you. In my non-sports centered mind, this has become one of the most overrated discussions in college football. I love college football but I hate this constant “Race for the Heisman” crap these sportscasters push on us from the very first day of the season. How many times have you turned on the television and before a single game has been played, before a single snap of the ball, these guys on College Gameday or SportsCenter are pushing for so-and-so before he has even stepped on the field? Ummmm, often. To be honest, I really do not think this conversation should even come up until the season is at least half over. Just because someone had a great season the year before does not mean in August of the following year, he should automatically be the Heisman front runner. Let the kids play and let's see what shakes out.

Next, this is my biggest beef. Sometimes I would like to remind these sports pundits that believe it or not, there are actually positions on the field other than quarterback. Can you believe it? I know, heresy!! There are actually other young men, in other positions, who play the game, too. When you listen to these analysts, you might not remember that. Since 2000, in the 20 Heisman races this century, 17 have gone to quarterbacks: SEVENTEEN. In decades past, you at least saw other positions being honored. Whether running backs, halfbacks or receivers, it was recognized that the most outstanding player on the field was sometimes someone other than the signal caller. Let me be totally clear here, I fully recognize that many times the best player is the QB. Last year, Joe Burrows is the perfect example of that. But when I watch the Heisman presentation, year after year not only does a quarterback get the award, he is often surrounded by other quarterbacks in the hunt. If they want to only award the Heisman to the best college quarterback, then so be it. At least be honest about it. There are other players on the field whose efforts are worthy of notice. And here is a dirty thought. Sometimes that guy might actually play defense.

2. NEXT, LET'S TALK ALABAMA. Being a Tennessee guy, this is actually not hard for me to discuss. In 1924, that continually overrated school nestled



in South Bend, Ind. had four players who were called the “Four Horsemen of Notre Dame.” For their time they were pretty good players and made headlines that entire season. When I look at the threesome of Mac Jones, DeVonta Smith and Najee Harris, I like to call them the “Three Horsemen of Alabama.” Okay, if you want a fourth throw in Saban. It is the first time in history that three of the top five Heisman vote recipients have come from the same team. In my not so humble opinion, they should be three of the four finalists—period! I am not going to go through all their numbers right now but we all know where they can be found. What those three accomplished together this year is insane. But watching them play and listening to the announcers, too often you would get the same feeling that there are no other players on the field other than quarterbacks. It was not until the final two games that even some of the most ardent “we hate everybody but quarterbacks” crowd started having to admit what Smith and Harris have accomplished this season. But too often all we ever heard about was Kyle Trask of Florida or Trevor Lawrence of Clemson. It was almost as if these gushing male announcers wanted to have Trask's or Lawrence's baby. Annoying to say the least.

During the SEC Championship game, they kept talking up Trask and all of his touchdowns on the season; comparing him to Joe Burrows from last year. But here is the only stat I want to put in here. Yes, Trask threw for 45 touchdowns and Jones threw for “only” 33 but Florida only had 11 rushing touchdowns while 'Bama had 35, 24 of those by Harris (2 in the SEC Championship game alone). This simply tells me that Alabama had the more balanced offense. I guess Jones could have thrown a bunch of short TD passes to boost his numbers but why? Throwing a lot of touchdowns in today's pass-happy football world should not be a sole indicator of Heisman potential. Yeah, but Trask threw for . . . blah, blah, blah, blah, blah.

In short, in a perfect, intellectually honest world, Harris, Jones and Smith along with either Lawrence or Trask should be sitting in the virtual presentation on 5 January. I really do not care about the two non-Bama guys because neither should get the award above Bama's three although Harris was dutifully snubbed and will not be in contention. That, folks, is a shame. I for one would like to see a non-quarterback finally win. It is interesting to note that the last two non-QBs to win were both Alabama running backs. By the time this column hits the streets, the award presentation will have been made and hopefully the Heisman will have made its way back here to Alabama where in 2020, it most certainly belongs.



John Martin

THE BATTLE OF MAUVILA

This is an open message to all archaeologists in and around Alabama, and especially those who work or are interested in southwest Alabama.

Because of COVID-19 and intense campaigning in our last presidential and congressional elections, almost nobody noticed that an important historical milestone is about to arrive: From this past October 18, we now have less than 20 years to prepare for the 500th anniversary of one of Alabama's greatest historical events—Hernando de Soto's great battle at Mauvila. At this place, 82 Spaniards and as many as 11,000 Native Americans died from battle, injuries, disease, and being burned alive.

Some historians have described Mauvila's location as the Holy Grail of the Soto expedition, but so far, nobody has yet discovered the site. And now, as this important anniversary approaches, current archaeologists seem to show no interest.

In the 1930s, the United States De Soto Expedition Commission was founded to trace Soto's route and placed Mauvila's most likely position in the vicinity of Choctaw Lake in Clarke County. Some villages and other remains have been found in this vicinity, but nothing that could be identified as Mauvila's massive stockade.

Historical documents to determine the location have been few. Furthermore, some history books have added false and misleading notations about the Soto expedition.

We have only four original Spanish documents to describe it with any accuracy. Their four writers were Rodrigo Rangel, The Gentleman from Elvas, Luys Hernandez de Biedma, and Garcilaso de la Vega.

In 1983, Charles Hudson and his associates were able to accurately locate Chiaha and soon afterwards, Coosa.

In 1993, The University of Alabama published complete translations of the four original Spanish documents. These have proven to be very useful in providing accurate details of the expedition.

During this time, I have had many discussions with Mobile historian Jay Higginbotham about Mauvila's location. From Hudson's position of Coosa, over a period of several years, I traced Soto's route down to Mauvila by matching the historical descriptions with the landforms. For details, refer to the e-book, “The Road to Mauvila,” which is available on Amazon.

From Coosa (9Mu102), Soto followed the Coosawattee and Oostanaula Rivers down to Itaba (9FI162) at the junction of the Etowah River in what is now Rome, Georgia. Because of heavy rains, he was detained for eight days while waiting for the river to recede. Soto crossed the Etowah River and followed the east side of the Coosa River through Ulibahali (9FI15), Apica (1Ce309), Piachi (near Hokes Bluff or site 1Et19 near Wharton's Bend), Tuasi (near Lincoln or Ogletree Island), through uninhabited lands, “an old town that had double walls (at or near Hatchet Creek), a new village (junction of the Coosa River and Sofkahatchee Creek), through what is now Wetumpka, and stopped at Talisi, the southern extremity of the province of Coosa.

Elvas said, “The town was large and was located near a deep river. On the other side of the river were other towns and many fields of maize. On both sides, it was a land very well supplied with maize in abundance.”

Garcilaso de la Vega said Talisi was the last settlement in the province of Coosa “and therefore its frontier and defense. This town was exceedingly well fortified.... It had a rampart of wood and earth, [and] a great river almost completely encircled it and thereby made of it a peninsula.”

There can be no argument regarding the location of Talisi. It was on Parker Island (which was then a peninsula), the only landform within many miles that could be “almost completely encircled” by rivers. For miles, the surrounding land is rich and fertile just like the chroniclers described. Further proof is that when Soto's men left Talisi, they immediately crossed “the River of Talisi” (the Tallapoosa) on rafts and canoes.

Talisi was most likely near the original junction of the Coosa and Tallapoosa Rivers. A spot of about 10 acres of 160 feet elevation and ideal for a village lies a quarter mile north of this junction and next to a slough which would have been perfect for a canoe harbor. The probability of Talisi being here is very high—perhaps close to certain, considering the lack of well-suited sites nearby. Archaeologists should get out their LIDAR and ground penetrating radar and scan it thoroughly.

From Talisi, Soto crossed the Tallapoosa River, passed through downtown Montgomery and on into Casiste (1Mt51), Caxa (possibly 1Lo38) on the river not far from Whitehall, and camped next to the river across from Humati (1Ds32) on the other side of the river, where Cahaba was later built. From there, he went through Uxapita (1Wx1), camped in the open, and met Tascalusa at Athahachi (1Mn67).

Soto continued down river to Piachi at a sharp bend in the river opposite the town of Choctaw Bluff, crossed the river, camped in a “beautiful valley” near Colton Pond, and finally to Mauvila, at or near Stolls Point.

The compelling evidence to prove Mauvila is in this location is that practically all of the other land for miles around is either low, swampy floodplain or steep hills. The land at and around Stolls Point is adequately elevated, nearly level, and perfectly fits the description of “on a plain.” It is also well suited for growing large quantities of corn.

How do we find Mauvila? Today we have technology that can find it with a great deal less labor than what was required only a decade of two ago. The first step would be to scan the appropriate areas with LIDAR, which has already discovered numerous new sites in Central America and elsewhere. Ground penetrating radar (GPR) can be used to detect the post holes of buildings and stockades.

The priority things to look for are post holes and evidence of palisades and buildings. Look for items that fit the descriptions. Large houses, buildings and palisades must be checked out. Mauvila itself had a unique palisade of logs “as thick as oxen,” gates on the east and west sides, and towers every 50 feet. Burned daub would be abundant.

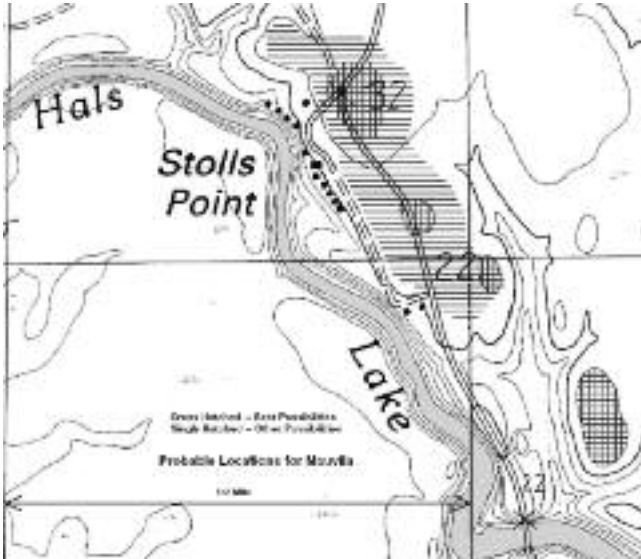
Searching for artifacts would likely be unproductive. When the Spaniards finally left Mauvila, they gleaned up all of the iron and other metal to make nails and other needs. The natives later salvaged what they left behind.

Other artifacts like sherds and flakes are likely to be sparse. This would indicate that Mauvila in 1540 was a very new town, perhaps only a year or two old. One theory is that Tascalusa built and staffed this unique over-fortified complex specifically to trap and combat the Spaniards after receiving word from messengers shortly after they landed in Florida.

Another site that desperately needs serious investigation is the Pine Log Creek site (1Ba462), which has already been determined to be related to the Battle of Mauvila. The recovered “smoking guns” that prove it are two of “the ornaments for saying mass” (a brass candlestick and container) the Spaniards had lost in the fire at Mauvila—items they would have never traded or given away. This proves that the people buried there were important warriors from the battle—Tascalusa's “principals.” Tascalusa's son was very likely one of them. Tascalusa himself is another possibility. Because of their tall statures, they could be easily identified. A serious study of these burials should be a top priority.

There are reports that claim that the property owners of Pine Log Creek refused to let archaeologists dig and investigate the site. Although I am a strong opponent of property seizures, I would support a law that allows scientists to excavate, study and photograph special places like this over the owners' objections, provided they return the artifacts after a reasonable time (or buy them at agreed upon prices). Furthermore, the best way to protect sites from looters is to recover and record the artifacts and let them go to museums and/or private collections.

Let's hope we can have something to show by October 18, 2040.



John Sophocleus

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Peaceful Transfer of Power: Pax Romana style

THINK



I grow weary of so much self-adulation of the forthcoming transfer of executive power to install Biden after four years of suffering similarly poor ‘public servant’ Trump. The world observed ‘peaceful’ transfers of power from Augustus to Tiberius, Herod ‘the Great’ to Antipas, etc. under Roman despotism and hegemony – is this really anything new under our earth’s sun or Son of God these past two millennia?

Trump’s 306-232 Electoral College (57%/43%) 2016 installment over Clinton’s 62,972,226 to 62,277,750 popular vote win was only the SECOND time a Constitutionally correct HoR does not mirror the popular vote as in 1888 when Harrison won the Electoral College (58%/42%) over Cleveland by a 233-168 margin but lost the popular vote 5,537,857 – 5,447,129. Installing Biden with the same 306 Electoral College vote in 2020 is no more a ‘landslide’ than when Trumpocrats proclaimed landslide four years ago. The blue soviets would never agree with Trump’s red soviet nomenclature of a ‘mandate’ four years ago, but we’ve certainly heard the Joe & Nancy Show chorus assert mandate these past weeks.

Will President Trump be the next Cleveland – i.e., two non-consecutive terms? It certainly is possible, some may argue even more so under the current, much more rigged result to protect the duopoly parties via restrictive ballot access laws, ever increasingly distorted 435 limited HoR result as population grows further aiding & abetting hyper-gerrymandered districts, etc. Anyone who understands the arithmetic of our current unconstitutional result is wise to forecast many more close Electoral College outcomes where popular vote results are less likely to mirror the installed winner. CA and NY alone account for the 2020 popular vote skewed to President-elect Biden. Will be interesting to see if voter behaviour changes once the Electoral College (one of the last vestiges of State sovereignty) is removed – would some Californians and New Yorkers who couldn’t stomach voting for Trump (knowing their State’s electoral votes were certainly going to Biden) participate differently?

While I’ve not witnessed the intellect, integrity and guts (perhaps literally, but not the figurative ‘intestinal fortitude’ required) in Trump which Cleveland displayed, I wholeheartedly concur 2020 was yet another rigged election long before the first ballot (legitimate or otherwise) was cast. Understandably the red thief prefers to be in the more dominant duopoly position over the blue thief. As one among the shrinking ranks of productive citizens, I really don’t care which crime family is stealing from me, the Biden family or Trump family. If we have meaningful, more Constitutionally correct elections again I will care about disciplining illegitimate ballots cast – don’t ask me to care which thief steals from me. Furthermore, if States unhappy about the sovereignty afforded by the Electoral College want to “Calexit” and form an explicit forced coalition of states, I applaud a peaceful transfer of power/exit of this sort. I’ve observed no president since Buchanan with the courage to admit there is no authorization in the Constitution forcing a State to remain in the coalition.

Clinton was also 38 Electoral votes short. The four States which made the 2016 difference are as follows:

FLORIDA’s 29 electors were lost by 119, 770 votes, the only non-duopoly candidate on all 50 State ballots (Gov. Johnson) earned 206,007 votes. Most polling found the Johnson ticket (most qualified in terms of actual executive experience) was taking votes from Hillary 2 to 1, prompting the national press to finally cover the only other viable candidate – a.k.a. they “Aleppoed” him. Those who assert Johnson voters would still show to vote duopoly party and more would’ve gone Clinton, most of her 38 elector deficit is covered and only one of the three remaining battleground States listed below changes the result. Nothing new for “Florida, Florida, Florida,” – on average recent presidential results were determined by just over 10,000 votes in this large Electoral College State. If Biden wanted to win Florida (which would’ve proffered something closer to a ‘landslide’ outcome) he could’ve made Rep. Val Demings his VP, but with a poor opponent like Trump, Biden could put in a more extreme blue soviet like Harris. Worse still, Demings would not be very dependable if Biden were to be impeached for his wrongdoings similar to Trump, Val knows the truth on Hunter Biden, et al.

MICHIGAN’s 16 electors were determined by only 11,837 votes, the non-duopoly party candidate earned 173,021 votes. Again, if Johnson voters still showed and disproportionately voted Clinton, these two small margin of victory States change the 2016 result. Trump lost MI by 154, 188 votes. It is estimated only a third of Johnson voters voted Libertarian in 2020. Jorgensen earned 60,381. If past Johnson voters (assuming those who participated did vote mostly Biden) had voted Libertarian again would’ve resulted in approximately 180,000 votes, beating the margin of victory again and closing Michigan’s 16 electoral votes to battleground status again.

PENNSYLVANIA’s 20 electors were decided by 68, 236 votes in 2016, the non-duopoly candidate earned 143, 653; another marginal State where Johnson voters can change the result if they still showed and disproportionately voted Clinton. Many authoritarians advocate forcing citizens to only vote for one of the duopoly candidates and stop wasting votes on their first amendment right to say a pox on both rigged choices. Trump lost PA by 81,049 votes, almost identical to the 79,416 Jorgensen earned. Again, if two-thirds of Johnson voters had not voted Biden, then Jorgensen would’ve beat the margin of victory and PA’s 20 electoral votes would’ve gone Trump again in 2020.

WISCONSIN’s 10 electors were determined by 27,257 votes and the non-duopoly party candidate on all 50 State ballots earned 106, 442. Another small margin of victory State that along with Florida changes the 2016 result for Clinton. Trump lost WI by 20,608 votes, Jorgensen 38,491 beating the margin of victory and again, assuming Johnson voters had not voted Biden WI’s ten electoral votes would’ve been in Trump’s column again in 2020. Again, I want to be very clear I’m not asserting Johnson got Trump elected in 2016 – if forced to vote duopoly (as some totalitarians advocate with so many eligible voters refusing to participate in this corrupt process) I would’ve voted Clinton. Under current circumstances if Biden/Clinton and Romney/Trump were the only choices forced upon Alabama voters, I wouldn’t have participated. I don’t see how anyone could be an accomplice to supporting any of these flawed candidates and hold onto their souls. I remember being told it would be the end of the world if I didn’t vote for McCain – by someone I held in high regard who had to know what a big govt. ‘Keating Five’ crook McCain was.

More specifically notable to 2020 were Arizona and Georgia. AZ was decided by 10,457 votes; Jorgensen earned 51,465 – about five times the margin of victory. If 2016 Johnson voters had voted Libertarian again instead of Biden, this State’s 11 electoral votes would’ve tallied for Trump. GA was determined by 12,570 votes; Jorgensen earned 62,138 – also about five times the margin of victory. This makes GA another State who’s 16 electors would’ve tallied in Trump’s Electoral College column if 2016 Johnson supporters voted for the Libertarian again instead of Biden.

In 2016 I was disappointed Trump was elected, but certain Clinton would’ve been no better. I was proud of Johnson voters going Libertarian to show the Democrats they could’ve won if they shown more concern for civil rights and not taking our life, liberty and property. I doubted the Democratic Party would return to their roots and champion low taxes and smaller government to embrace Johnson voters’ help on the margin in the future. Once Dems got tired of losing to Republicans (who set us on our path of class warfare, corporate welfare, high taxes, etc. imposed by hegemony) their ‘out republicaning’ the Republicans quickly accelerated US in the mess we’ve ‘progressed’ into.

It was something to behold to see the Democrats comfortable enough to install Biden as their candidate up against such an inferior opponent like Trump. When Amy Klobuchar redirected some of her supporters over to Biden at the Iowa Caucus so Joe wouldn’t be DOA at the starting gate made it clear to me the fix was in and ended any possibility I’d vote for Klobuchar. This left Tulsi Gabbard as the only Democratic candidate I would’ve voted for if she’d won the nomination. It is clear someone of Gabbard’s accomplishments and integrity will never get far in either of the duopoly parties.

The saddest outcome of the 2020 election was Johnson voters unwilling to vote Libertarian again to affirm their resolve to not waste their vote on duopoly candidates – esp. when the choices are so poor. Four more years of Trump is easy to forecast as bad as decade or so Biden then Harris. Trump re-election could’ve been a wake-up to Democrats to stop running big govt. thieves, even if the Biden crime family was inoculated (by a Senate which refused impeachment witnesses and testimony) and as untouchable as the Trump crime family.

Seems another opportunity to dissolve or at least dilute the Republican Party and try to move forward toward liberty is squandered. Democrats have at least shown ability to change when they tire of losing, maybe more big govt. Trumpster Democrats (think Blagojevich pardons) will also ‘go Elephant’ still leaving enough of the Party to return to her roots. I’m not holding my breath and will continue to make what little difference I can supporting a small block of well defined voters (Constitution Party, Libertarian Party, TEA Party) who beat the margin of victory. It does happen at times. It was good to see the Becky Gerritson write-in campaign’s 29,548 votes soundly beat the margin of victory and verify them as a force against Roby (and the Dubina, et al ‘public servant’ types) in our politburo impeding our State.

Much discussion of what ‘truth’ is these past years. Jesus often reminds us His kingdom is not of this world. If His kingdom were of this world, then His servants would’ve fought against their king being delivered to corrupt clergy, Herod, Pilate, et al. to be tortured and murdered. Christ came into the world to bear witness and show God’s Truth and Light. Pilate glibly asked Him, “What is truth?” Finding no fault in Jesus, Pilate evoked the Passover tradition to release one condemned man suggesting Jesus to the people as their “King.” The people (some say prompted by their corrupt leaders) successfully cried for the release of Barabbas who despised Roman occupation under sycophantic clergy and governors. By some accounts Barabbas had a well earned reputé for assassination of Romans and taking back ill-gotten gains by the local politburo.

In closing, I have no illusion about ‘the peaceful transfer of power’ we’re about to witness in DC under our hegemonic “Pax Americana.” It is a huge source of despair to see so many defending Biden and Trump, blind to their own interest instead of seeing two demons serving the same evil one. I understand why so many politburo members fear for their lives knowing how evil they’ve become from DC to my local corrupt county commissioners. Perhaps the best illustration was Felon Hubbard locking down Goat Hill when he first learned of the sniper shooting spree when Speaker of the House. I also have no illusions about the future of people suffering Roman type hegemony choosing the path of Barabbas over Jesus.

THE FUTURE OF AMERICA IS UNDIMINISHED BY CIRCUMSTANCE

It was President Harry Truman who said, *“The only thing new in the world is the history you do not know,”* and King Solomon, perhaps the wisest man ever, stated pretty much the same thing a few millennia ago when he recorded in *Ecclesiastes 1:9* that *“there is nothing new under the sun.”*

Recent studies have shown the people look fondly upon the era that was one to two decades prior of their birth as the “good old days,” but few take time to really examine what made those days so seemingly good and why we regard times in which we never lived as better than the present.

Viewing current events through the lens of times that are distant memory can yield many disappointments, but recognizing that the past was flawed and often filled with misery can offer comfort that the future might not be as dim as we imagine. If, as Solomon intoned, there is nothing really new under the sun and the only new things require greater learning and studying on our part, perhaps a good rule of thumb would be to worry less and study history more.

Presidential elections are contentious and have been since the founding of our republic. Don’t believe me? Read Winston Groom’s last book’s discussion of the 1800 election! Some elections are more spirited than others, but each four years there is an opportunity for hope, disappointment, disgust and even advancement. While it is true that elections have consequences and can clearly change the trajectory of our country, history shows us that most changes are not nearly as bad as we fear or as good as we had hoped. Some changes that

occurred years ago, while viewed as earth-shattering at the time, now look fairly benign as we come to accept certain changes and, in retrospect, view them as appropriate and insignificant.

In the almost 245 years of our country’s existence there have been probably a dozen presidential elections that stand out as marking the end on an era – some might say “error” – and the beginning of a new phase in the American experiment. But because American is an open society with freedoms that many across the globe envy, the clash of divergent viewpoints is not only helpful, but good.

If you believe that the arc of the universe is long and bends toward truth, then the testing of ideas politically and otherwise is necessary for progress and keeping the country as dynamic and free as possible. If we believe that right eventually emerges from conflict, then there is little to worry about.

Starting almost 100 years ago totalitarian systems were the rage. Both communism and fascism – two sides of the same coin – were seen as eclipsing liberty and democracy, jettisoning the best of western liberating thought. But these false ideologies could not stand the test of time, and over the last 30 years, systems granting greater freedoms have emerged from former dictatorial regimes. Those authoritarian governments failed precisely because they were rooted in lies and deceptions rather than the firm foundation of truth and liberty.

Truth is not only the best defense, but it is also the most buoyant and will eventually float to the top of any tempest. Time, though, is the magic ingredient; things need time and truth needs space to resist bruising, bullying and battering. Lies, deceit, and fakery carry with them the sharp razzle-dazzle that distracts use from seeing the truth, but there is a point, after time, when truth emerges as the victor.



Justice Will Sellers



Daniel Sutter

PUBLIC HEALTH MANDATES ARE POLITICAL

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Governments across the country have imposed numerous public health policies to control COVID-19. A prominent one has been requiring the wearing of masks in public; Alabama has been under a mask order since July. Americans have largely embraced masks. A recent Harris poll found that 93% of respondents at least sometimes (72% always) wore masks.

Nonetheless, Dr. Don Williamson of the Alabama Hospital Association recently expressed frustration over some Alabamians’ unwillingness to wear masks. He observed, “The election’s over. It should no longer be political.” Mask mandates apply the coercive power of government and politics consists of peoples’ actions to control government. Consequently, public health mandates are political.

The pandemic could have been addressed non-politically through voluntary responses. Consideration of this alternative highlights some effects of government mandates.

Social interactions outside the spheres of politics and crime involve voluntary participation. Everyone who works or dines at a restaurant chooses to do so. Families choose to gather for the holidays. (The pressure we might feel to attend is not truly coercive, appearances notwithstanding.)

Gatherings for commerce or entertainment must happen somewhere. Property rights provide the source of voluntary response to a communicable illness. Property owners get to make decisions about its use.

Owners of the gathering spaces can and will put conditions on entry. Sports fans can be expelled from an arena for intoxication, throwing debris, or verbally abusing players or officials. The arena owners can also require mask wearing.

Business owners want customers to continue patronizing their establishments and employees to continue working. Customers who do not feel safe will stay away. Fewer customers mean less revenue and ultimately less profit or rent for the owners.

When allowed to stay open by politicians, businesses have worked to protect their customers. Retailers reduced hours of operation to allow for extensive cleaning. Grocery stores disinfected shopping carts. Restaurants offered outdoor dining, takeout, and delivery. Some businesses tested their employees and required temperature checks and masks for customers.

Ticketmaster recently unveiled plans for concerts in the COVID-19 world. Fans will need either a vaccination or a negative test 24 to 72 hours prior to the event. Fans will have vaccination or test result forwarded to a third-party medical information provider. This third-party will verify a fan’s health eligibility to Ticketmaster, activating a digital ticket.

Not all business’ plans will work effectively but each has an incentive to continually evaluate each element of their plan. Overall, we can be confident that businesses will choose wisely, as Forbes columnist John Tamny has emphasized repeatedly: “In a free society, there’s no such thing as a ‘do nothing’ response to anything that has the potential to kill.”

Some commentators fear that without a government plan we will have chaos in the market. Yet as economist Ludwig von Mises noted, markets offer a multitude of plans. Business owners will tailor their plan to their unique circumstances.

Each protection measure is costly, like turning away potential customers to keep an empty table between tables of diners. And customers might regard some protection measures as overly burdensome. Businesses have the incentive to protect and assure customers in the least costly way possible.

This process is not political because no one can coerce others for not complying with their requests. Businesses are free to adopt any protective measures they want. When one business discovers a way to protect customers and employees more effectively or at a lower cost, others can emulate this.

We would likely see a wide range of voluntary responses. Given the enormous difference in risk posed by COVID-19 across individuals – fatality risk differs by a factor of one thousand – some businesses and their customers will likely accept a high risk of exposure. Those most fearful would need to take more personal protective action without government coercion.

Wearing a mask to protect from COVID-19 is not political. Requesting guest to wear a mask is not political. But government public health mandates are political, regardless of whether issued by a Democrat or Republican.

WHAT IF

... continued from front page

So what exactly has Trump accomplished given the long but not exhaustive list of barriers to his presidency:

1. Trump began building the WALL even in the face of constant refusals to fund the construction. Now our southern border will open wide as we welcome disease and despair. No American disputes legal immigration. All other countries have much more strict requirements. Illegal immigration will cause many problems;
2. Trump made a record three conservative Supreme Court appointments, or so he was told and so he thought, as did most of his supporters;
3. Trump revived a faltering economy created by O’Bama. Robust growth was enjoyed by all with statistically ZERO unemployment until the pandemic;
4. Trump brought thousands of troops home without starting a war;
5. Trump placed tariffs on countries that have long been competing with American products creating a revival of industry in the U.S.;
6. Trump removed onerous administrative rules that caused delays, litigation and jobs;
7. Trump opened up oil production like fracking and the Alaska pipeline, both long blocked by Democrats, resulting in the U.S. independence from other oil producing countries like OPEC who could dictate prices. Lower gas prices, like \$1.50 a gallon had not been seen in almost 40 years;
8. Trump exposed Republicans, BAD actors and deep staters who have become rich and powerful at the expense of middle America and the poor;
9. Trump for the first time utilized social media to most effectively spread his conservative message. Moreover, Trump exposed the main stream media, both electronic and print as being active supporters of the liberal agenda rather than objective reporting outlets expected by the American public. The resulting disdain and distrust of the media led in part to the outpouring of criticism by the 72 million plus voters who believed President Trump easily defeated Biden if it had been a fair election;
10. Trump brokered a Middle East Peace Accord between Israel, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, AME and others, something the previous administrations both Republican and Democrat gave lip service to, but failed to accomplish. This historic event included moving the Israeli capital from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem.

No other president has accomplished so much in so little time in the face of headwinds from his own petulant Republican Party and the “noble” opposition party.

Please cut this story out and teach it to your grandkids and put it in your will. It is doubtful that any internet site, newspaper or history book will tell the truth. The next four years will dramatically change the American landscape. But, in the end, our joy, hope and love rests with God alone, no matter what circumstances may bring.



Perry O. Hooper, Jr.



Republican State Executive Committee
Former State Representative

Elections Have Consequences

The run-off Senate elections in Georgia are the most consequential elections in American history. If the Democrats sweep these two elections, there will be no checks against a Biden Administration fully implementing its high tax, high regulation, globalist agenda. If the Republicans hold on to one of these seats, The Senate will have the ability to “throttle” the Democrat Agenda.

Close to home, Alabama Senator Richard Shelby is the Chairman of the Senate Appropriations Committee. This makes him the second most powerful Senator behind only Senate Majority leader Mitch McConnell. In this role he has been able to assure that Alabama receives its fair share of infrastructure spending like the recent upgrades to the shipping channels at The Port of Mobile. Under Senator Shelby Alabama received defense appropriations for Maxwell Air Force Base, Fort Rucker, the Anniston Army Depot, and Huntsville’s Redstone that could have easily gone to Military installations in other parts of the country. Thanks to Senator Shelby, Redstone Arsenal is one of finalist for the Space Command Headquarters, which would mean 1,400 jobs and Billions of dollars for the Tennessee Valley. Alabama universities are at the front of the line for Research dollars. According to Politico and other sources his replacement would likely be Patrick Leahy of Vermont. I cannot think of a Senator less in tune with the needs of Alabama and her people. Under Democrat control, Senator Shelby would be out of the loop during all important budget negotiations.

Under President Trump Defense spending has increased 17 percent allowing our Military to keep up with the vast amount of military spending from the Communist Chinese. Not once on the Campaign trail has Biden indicated that the defense budget would continue to rise. In fact, he rarely talked about our national defense. This cannot be good news for the large Military presence in Alabama. According to the Department of Defense, the Chinese Navy is now the world’s largest and we must continue to modernize and build ships. One of the major ship builders for the Navy is Austell located right here in Mobile.

The core piece of Biden’s economic platform is large tax increases on businesses both large and small. Biden’s tax plan would raise corporate tax rates by 33%, from 21% to 28%. Biden has also proposed doubling the tax rate of income earned overseas by U.S. corporations to 21% regardless of the taxes these American companies pay to foreign governments.

Together, these so-called reforms would impose one of the largest tax increases on large corporations and small businesses in American history.

According to the non-partisan Tax Foundation, Biden’s plan would “reduce capital stock by 3.75%, damage retirement accounts; slow total economic growth, reduce the long-term GDP by 1.62%; lower wages by 1.15%. This would hurt tens of millions of working families; and reduce the number of projected jobs by 542,000.

Biden has promised since day one of his campaign an increase in the minimum wage to \$15 dollars an hour. This wage mandate would cause more harm than good. The nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office noted in a 2019 analysis that a \$15 minimum wage would almost immediately eliminate 1.3 million jobs nationwide. Over time CBO analysts stated the number of lost jobs will be millions higher. Low cost of living states such as Alabama would be especially hard hit by job losses. Employers, especially small businesses, simply cannot afford an immediate almost doubling of the minimum wage. Most affected in Alabama would be low skilled workers just entering the workforce.

Biden’s most radical promise is to do away with the American system of shareholder capitalism and replace it with “Stakeholder Capitalism” He championed this “Great Reset” on the campaign trail. The stakeholders would be defined by the Biden Administration and the global elite. What they determine is best for the community, the environment and the “national good” would become the basis for a company’s decision-making process. All of this at the expense of corporate earnings. Earnings which would have increased employees’ opportunities for advancement and increased wages. Small businesses would become an afterthought in this Great Reset.

Biden will be under great pressure to appoint activist Federal Judges who believe in making law from the bench to offset the strict constitutionalists appointed by President Trump. With a Democrat controlled Congress there is a real chance that Court Packing could become a reality not just a liberal pipe dream.

All of these radical promises by Joe Biden would require Congressional approval and cannot be accomplished with a Republican Controlled Senate. Georgia Senators Republican Senators David Perdue and Kelly Loeffler must be returned to the Senate.

THE FUTURE OF AMERICA ...

by Justice Will Sellers ... continued from previous page

So, too, are laws of nature, economics, and physics unchanged by feelings or perceptions. People may like to think that the magic of government will suspend all these laws, but that never happens. Perhaps for a season there is an appearance of suspension but that is really a recalibration to equilibrium anticipating a collapse, which validates the offended law.

The British discovered this long ago when sterling was the measure for global trade and commerce. But, as the Britain Empire and economy constricted and monetary policy expanded, the value of the pound collapsed until the International Monetary Fund had to save the currency. So, while you may spend more than you take in by increasing the monetary supply, after a time the economy is impacted, and spending policies must be reconciled to deficit spending.

This maxim proves true in other areas, too, as there is only so far anyone can go without incurring the restrictions of practical laws that explain the universe as much as they limit government.

The critical thing for any country is the flexibility to withstand change and adjust to violations of these practical laws. The expansion of liberty and freedom of expression is critical to maintain a vibrant political system that marks forward progress based on a consensus from representative government, but is restrained by the good ideas from minority opinion so that, on balance, we are never overextended.

The future of the United States is as bright as we allow and promote constructive debate and maintain an open dialog to argue a position, no matter how vociferously, against diametrically opposed ideas with respect, dignity and decorum. Allowing the clash of ideas is critical so that policies grounded in practical experience are expressed and implemented; but, when failure occurs other views are constantly considered to keep the country intact and moving forward.

I remain confident that our brightest days are ahead of us, and the promise of America continues to burn in the hearts of freedom lovers around the world.

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

*“The Informed Southerner”**The views of submitted editorials may not be the express views of The Alabama Gazette.*

SECESSION

“If any State in the Union will declare that it prefers ‘separation’ over ‘union,’ ‘I have no hesitation in saying, ‘let us separate.’” – Thomas Jefferson

In 2010 Russian Professor Igor Panarin, former KGB analyst, lecturer, and writer tied to Russia’s Foreign Ministry, predicted the economic and moral collapse of these United States, leading to eventual civil war and breakup. His predictions appeared in The Wall Street Journal and other publications. With the 2020 election controversies – thousands of votes mysteriously appearing early on November 4th, hundreds signing sworn affidavits attesting to election fraud, questionable Dominion voting machines, etc. – some in Texas have openly talked about secession.

After considerable bloodshed, the Thirteen Original Colonies seceded from the British Empire. Post-Revolutionary War, Britain and these “United States” signed the 1783 Treaty of Paris, which stated: “His Britannic Majesty acknowledges the said United States, viz., New Hampshire, Massachusetts Bay, Rhode Island and Providence Plantations, Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia, to be free, sovereign, and independent States.” Furthermore, “In 1781, the original thirteen States entered into a ‘Confederation’, and drew up ‘Articles’, one of which said: ‘Each State retains its sovereignty, freedom and independence, and every power, jurisdiction, and right which is not by this Confederation expressly delegated to the United States.’” The States have never relinquished their sovereignty.

Events of the 1800s included:

- In 1803 the New England States threatened secession; the Louisiana Purchase was seen as a dilution of their power. Massachusetts Senator Thomas Pickering stated: “I rather anticipate a new Confederacy exempt from the corrupt influence of the aristocratic Democrats of the South... There will be a separation...”

- Largely due to dissatisfaction with the War of 1812, the New England States considered secession in 1814 during the Hartford Convention. Secession sentiments ebbed after American victory was assured.

- The New England States mulled secession in 1845. “John Quincy Adams and fellow New Englanders so opposed the admission of Texas that they openly urged the withdrawal from the Union.” Again, they saw it as a dilution of power.

- Seven Southern States seceded in 1860-1861. (The remainder seceded after Lincoln’s treasonous call for 75,000 troops to invade sovereign States.)

They protested the North’s perversion of the U.S. Constitution, e.g., usurpation of Southern rights, slavery disagreements, and the punitive protectionist tariffs that supported Northern industry. The late Charles Adams explained: “When Southerners realized what they were up against with respect to a high tariff and a new Congress and Republican administration, only two courses of action seemed open to them—secession from the Union and a low tariff for the Confederate states.”

The American Colonies and Southern States both had valid reasons to secede. As members of a voluntary compact, the Southern States had the best case; whereas, the American Colonies were part of an Empire. Virginia, New York, and Rhode Island entered the Union under the proviso they could withdraw if it was in their best interests. Virginia’s conditions were: “We the delegates of the people of Virginia, duly elected in pursuance of a recommendation of the General Assembly and now met in Convention, having fully and freely investigated and discussed the proceedings of the Federal convention and being prepared as well as the most mature deliberation hath enabled us to decide thereon, do in the name and in behalf of the People of Virginia declare and make known that the powers granted under the Constitution, being derived from the People of the United States, may be resumed by them whensoever the same shall be perverted to their injury and oppression, and that every power not granted thereby remains with them and at their will.” (1788 Virginia Convention.) New York and Rhode Island mirrored Virginia’s language: “their conventions ordained the root principles on which the right was founded: ‘That all power is naturally vested in, and consequently derived from the people’: and ‘That the powers of government may be reassumed by the people whensoever it shall become necessary to their happiness.’”

Even Lincoln, the extreme nationalist, commented on January 12, 1848: “Any people, anywhere, being inclined and having the power, have the right to rise up and shake off the existing government, and form a new one that suits them better. This is a most valuable, a most sacred right, a right which we hope and believe is to liberate the world.”

If Panarin’s predictions come to fruition, we must all hope that it is accomplished peacefully. After all, there is nothing more American than secession.

Sources: Charles Adams, *When in the Course of Human Events – Arguing the Case for Southern Secession*, Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., Lanham, Maryland, 2000; John Remington Graham, *A Constitutional History of Secession*, Pelican Publishing Company, Gretna, Louisiana, 2002; John S. Tilley, *Facts The Historians Leave Out*, Bill Coats, Ltd., Nashville, Tennessee, 1951.

TRUMP’S 2020 GALLUP POLL POPULARITY – THREE REASONS

The green-eyed jealousy over Trump’s historic popularity among Republican and Democrat office holders, including the liberal media has been obviously visible and immeasurably coveted. In a recent Gallup Poll, Trump surpassed Obama in 2020 as the most admired man in America. Michelle Obama polled as the

2020 most admired woman in America. Imagine that, according to this poll, the former President and First Lady, both black are considered among the most admired Americans, and we are accused of institutional systemic racism; give me a break Stacey Abrams! At the peak of the 2020 campaign, during the month of October, Trump crested with 95% approval rating among Republicans. How did he do this? There are three solid reasons; let’s take a look.

In my adult lifetime, there is only one Republican President who stands out among the rest, it was Reagan. He was ingrained with conservative common sense, genuinely patriotic, and he reconstructed and rebuilt confidence in America behind Jimmy Carter, who drove our national pride and economy to a record low. Reagan had a winning personality, very contagious enthusiasm and when he smiled his eyes smiled; quick humor, loved America and his speeches were delivered with passion, depth and authenticity. He was accredited as the great communicator. I can recall many late nights, driving home from weeklong out of town business trips hearing him on the radio. The tears of patriotism blurred my vision, compromised my navigation with the glaring oncoming headlights. Reagan for the last forty years, has been the GOP role model, standard bearer, tuning fork, and the sought-after template for economic, social, moral, and constitutional conservatism among Republicans. Has Trump in his first four years left a much larger foot print for the next generation of Republicans to fill, I think so.

The first reason for Trump’s exponential depth of support is his follow through. Candidate Trump wholeheartedly embraced the Republican Platform issues 100%, he did not just color in a square during the campaign to get elected, but he executed and delivered. The platform issues are not only a winning platform to get elected, but a winning theme to govern. As a self-made billionaire, you do not reach this plateau in life by accident. It takes being goal oriented and laser sharp discipline to conquer these challenges in such a hostile environment. It is as though Trump pressed the pedal to the metal and was driven to get the maximum performance on each of these campaign promises. Promises made, promises kept was the first step in Trump etching in stone his unshakable support. Executed and delivered!

Secondly, Trump is fearless domestically and globally. He was NOT beholding to any donor, special interest group or any Super Political Action Committee. He simply did not care what others thought and for all the right reasons. In an hour of soft metrosexual late-maturing men, Trump’s authentic masculinity and his patriarchal fatherly example, is revered by men and women. As a successful real estate developer, there are so many interferences that attempt to block the progress of a project from the drawing board to the ribbon-cutting. Trump is much like a running back, once given the ball, he only sees the end zone and not the 300-pound middle linebacker; he lowers his head, turns up the maximum RPM’s and leaves nothing on the field except a sea of scattered bowling pins. Fearless, focused and intestinal fortitude is the second ingredient to Trump’s award winning recipe for political success.

The third element of Trump’s doctrine is his “America First” Mission Statement. Every successful businessperson has an internal checklist for the plethora of business decisions each day. I used to tell people over the years to be ready to defend your position as it is squared against the mission statement. I can see Trump sitting in the Oval office with different sides pulling in altered directions with scattered agendas, and he is thinking, the decision I must make here in this meeting, does it meet the America First Mission Statement?

When you watch a Trump Rally on TV, you always notice the people behind him in the crowd, these are everyday citizens. Chanting at ten decibels and cracking the open air with “we love Trump,” and they mean it. My wife Deborah and I went to DC, Saturday December 12th and attended the “Stop the Steal Rally.” I have been involved in many rallies over these 40 years of political activity, but I have never seen anything like this. These folks did not rent limousines or fly in, they drove from all over the country and the visual was a prototype of middle-class America. I have never heard the passion and roar from the crowd like this, it was very moving. I was reduced to tears just watching these people pass by who came from every village and hamlet across America to show fervent support for this man, who had an election stolen from him. There is not any displaced stardom here, but it is an authentic love for Trump from rank-and-file America. They have never in their lifetime had a President of the United States look out for their great country and their personal interest like this before. The bond is unbreakable.

An interesting side note, most Presidential speeches are designed to be lofty, abstract, and vague, only to be left to the taking heads and news anchors to give their varying interpretations. Not Trump, he was plain spoken, no margin for misunderstanding where he stood, and you felt like he was talking with you personally. The average person typically feels their little world does not count, no one listens, and their concerns do not matter to officeholders. Trump earned the confidence of the average person, who feels as though he heard them and went into battle to defend them. This is a critical side note.

So you want to run for office, get elected and fill a stadium of passionate supporters, you need to weigh the cost. Love and embrace to the bone marrow of your soul the GOP Platform issues, own no man or the highly financed K Street lobbyist anything and at all cost put America First.

Greatness is not given or inherited; to the contrary it is earned. Do you have what it takes to engraft these three key principles into your core? Do you have the will and drive to be pinned on the chest weighted with metals earned in battle for economic social moral and constitutional conservatism? If not stay home and cheer from the sidelines?

In four short years, Trump’s footprints are filled with 70, but more likely 80 million votes from Americans motivated by his promises to deliver, being fearless and an unwavering devotion to putting America First.

Photo <https://en.wikipedia.org>

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Stan Hurst
Associate Sports Writer



From Pigskins to Rawhides

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



Heisman WHO?

For the first time in 29 years a receiver has won the coveted Heisman Trophy. With one exception in 1997, Devonta Smith won this most impressive award dominated by quarterbacks and running backs. Devonta Smith – “Smitty” a humble and unassuming

Crimson Tide receiver has brought home another award for Coach Saban’s bunch in Tuscaloosa. In is extemporaneous acceptance speech, Devonta gave credit to his family, his friends and supporters at home. His honest assessment of himself, as too small, not fast enough and not highly sought after was a huge dose of humbleness much needed by not only the sports world but America as a whole. He encouraged all those “not good enough” to believe in themselves, that his example proves that anything is possible if you will work hard enough, trust in yourself and never give up. For me, his words of encouragement meant more to me than his accomplishments on the field.

Devonta Smith was not on the Heisman radar early in the season. It was widely accepted that the showdown would be between highly touted Trevor Lawrence of Clemson and Kyle Trask a Florida Gator. So who could have imagined a 174 pound 6’1” receiver exploding on the scene to become the best player in college football. The 22-year-old senior from Amite City Louisiana did just that. He amassed 1,641 yards and 20 touchdowns this season, averaging 15.6 yards per catch and 105 receptions. This before his “off the porch” performance in the National Championship Game. Smith also scored a touchdown each rushing and as a punt returner, giving him 22 total scores on the year. He was able to accomplish this despite not opening the season as the Crimson Tide’s top receiver, and with more pressure put on his shoulders following an injury to his teammate, and leading receiver Jaylen Waddle. What a season this has been for “Smitty” as he is affectionately know by teammates and head coach Nick Saban.

Seven is the Perfect Number

The Crimson Tide crushed Ohio State 52-24 in Monday nights BCS Championship Game. There is no doubt who is the best team in college football, if there were any doubters. Coach Saban’s Red Elephants played perhaps their best game of the 2020 season last night. The Tide unleashed their quick strike offense and determined defense against the previously undefeated Buckeyes.



The Crimson Tide scored a triple whammy this season: No losses, SEC Champions and National Champions ... then added a Heisman win for running back DeVonta Smith.

The Tide powered through an all-SEC schedule and the SEC Championship Game, with their only close game against the Florida Gators. It was coach Saban’s seventh National Title with one of his best Alabama teams, eclipsing Coach Paul “Bear” Bryant’s Six National Titles.

As coach Saban was unceremoniously carried from the field by 324 pound Landon Dickerson he gave all the credit to his 2020 edition of the Alabama Crimson Tide. Coach Saban gave all the credit to his team and their focus on perfection. A great tribute to game preparation and the desire to not be satisfied until they won the game that they fought for all season. It’s no wonder amongst the accolades accumulated by the Alabama program, that rightfully so; the greatest college football dynasty of all time.

Coach Saban smiled a lot, gave his team and coaches credit as he accepted the National Championship Trophy. I believe that he was satisfied, not with himself, rather the team that fought through this most difficult of seasons. Suffering having had COVID himself and setting the tone and presence of the way his team carried themselves all season long. Coach Saban is a humble man and practices what he preaches. My wife Sharon gave me a great birthday gift a number of years ago with tickets to hear Coach Saban speak at the Montgomery Performing Arts center. This is where I learned more about who Nick Saban truly is; I learned his heart. He spoke little of football and mostly about life. How to stay the course, about battling life challenges and about leading, teaching and preparing young men for life. Life on its terms and how to become champions and most importantly how to set goals, achieve them and overcome adversity.

All good wishes and praise for Coach Saban and his Alabama Crimson Tide, a demonstration on and off the field teaching young men how to become men and responsible members of society.

Coach Saban, you are in our prayers and may many more championships be won in the years ahead.

Roll Tide!

AND THEN THERE WERE NONE

This has been a year in sports like we’ve never seen before, and hopefully will never see again. The COVID pandemic struck the sports world just as it has everything in the USA and beyond. We’ve played a complete schedule of college football games and now there are none left in 2020. The college baseball and basketball seasons were cancelled.

We went into college football playoff season with Alabama facing Notre Dame in round one of the BCS game in Texas. Who could have predicted that we would be playing the Rose Bowl in Texas?

The World Series and the entire baseball season were played with no fans present. The LA Dodgers winning it all in game six of the 2020 edition of baseballs championship.

The spring of 2020 saw football spring practice cancelled, baseball spring training cancelled and for a number of months it was very doubtful that either sport would materialize. Virtually all of my coverage of sports dealt with these missing elements of our favorite sports and only by the leadership of the SEC were we able to have college football in 2020.

A 10-game SEC-only season was a very wise decision and all the Cudo’s go to Greg Sankey, the commissioner of the SEC. The games were all played in the 10-game season home and home; all in the respective SEC venues. Our season was very difficult, not only did the teams have very little time to prepare, each team also had to manage COVID in their respective camps.

While the Auburn Tigers struggled mightily once again this season, conversely the Alabama Crimson Tide looked like they simply had another set of gears to jump into; they blasted through the regular season and won an unprecedented 10 SEC games this season. Crushing Auburn in the season finale and coasting to the SEC Championship, besting Florida 52 to 46. The Crimson Tide walloped Notre Dame 31-14 in the Rose Bowl and then squared off in a showdown with Ohio State for the National Championship.

We also witnessed a pitiful football game with Auburn losing to Northwestern 35-19. The Tigers were missing some key players and appeared less than motivated. The Tigers closed out the Gus Malzahn season with the win

at Mississippi State 24-10. While a win is a win, I must say after watching the game, it was one of the worst ballgames played by the Tigers in decades. They had enough tools to blow out Mississippi, so players were not the problem. The coaching was horrific, and it was almost unbearable to watch.

Auburn now finds its self with a new head coach, Bryan Harsin and my understanding is that none of the assistants will remain. I believe a fresh start is the best thing that could happen at Auburn. Coach Harsin is a successful football coach bringing in a 71-22 record; a 75% winning record. He is also a successful quarterback coach; this has been sorely lacking at Auburn for years. Frankly, I was hoping Auburn would go for the big “fish” Urban Myer and build a dynasty with him. However, his 12-million a year asking price might be the reason he was not mentioned. It was great to see Auburn Athletic Director Allen Greene make the decision to hire Coach Harsin, rather than knuckling under to the divisive forces in the Auburn nether regions, which cause much more harm than good for the football team. It’s common knowledge that some of the Auburn backers twist arms in order to protect their “position” amongst the Auburn faithful. Allen Greene’s decision was the best choice relative to the Auburn team. Auburn has sufficient talent to compete in the SEC albeit not evident in the 2020 season, with four losses in the SEC and finishing the season 6-5.

This writer is hoping the COVID Vaccine rolls out quickly and that we can get back to some kind of normal for the 2021 season. I join the many fans in our state that missed attending games this past season. Missed the tailgating, the mass of humanity at the games and the electricity that comes from being in the stadium for the games. And for me, most of all, watching that Eagle fly!

Happy New Year Sports Fans, War Eagle and Roll Tide!

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

Community Lifestyles



Honoring Our Heroes

By Dr. Martha Poole Simmons

Happy 101st Birthday!



HELEN LATTAL, WWII WAC

A 101st Birthday Drive-by Parade for Helen Lattal, a WWII WAC, was held January 4, 2021, in front of the Central-East AL Chapter of the American Red Cross. The parade was led by representatives of the Montgomery Police and Fire Departments, and other participants including Dr. Amir Farooqi, Director of the Central AL Veterans Health Care System, Admiral Kent Davis, Commissioner of the AL Dept. of Veterans Affairs, members of the Peter Forney Chapter and the William Bibb Chapter of DAR, members of St. Marks Episcopal Church of Prattville, members of the Buffalo Soldiers Club of Montgomery, residents of Oak Grove Inn and others from the Montgomery area. Proclamations and citations from AL Governor Kay Ivey and Montgomery Mayor Steven Reed were presented to Lattal.



Images top to bottom to right: Lattal family waves at the parade participants; Members of the Montgomery Buffalo Soldiers pay tribute to Lattal; Proclamations and citations from Governor Kay Ivey and Montgomery Mayor Steven Reed were presented to Lattal; Montgomery's Police and Fire Department employees were on-hand to honor Lattal.

Helen Lattal's story of service was in the December 2018 issue of the *Alabama Gazette*.

Below is an excerpt along with a link to the full story online (PDF).

Helen Lattal is a veteran of the Women's Army Corps (WAC) having served with 8th Air Force Headquarters at High Wycombe, England. Her three years of service were 1942-1945. Not only was she active in the Selma, AL, community for many years, she also served three terms as the Commander of American Legion Post 20. She is well known in the veteran community and is a very passionate patriot. A special article about Helen was published by the *Selma Times-Journal* on Wednesday, January 14, 2004. ...

... Having learned the secretarial skills of bookkeeping, verbatim shorthand and typing at Moody's Secretarial School in Connecticut where she won ribbons for her speed and accuracy in typing and taking shorthand, she was well prepared to handle such work. Helen worked for the draft board in Connecticut, and after Pearl Harbor, many volunteers came to the office where she interviewed them. In May 1942, the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps (WAAC) were started. Helen volunteered to serve because of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. She went to Ft. Devens, MA, to be assigned secretarial duties. She reported for active duty January 9, 1943, at Ft. Des Moines, Iowa, followed by basic training. Read full story here: https://www.alabamagazette.com/domain/www.alabamagazette.com/cms_data/default/photos/stories/id/1/2/1512/8394902.pdf



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CMSgt Raymond Russell Martin, Jr.

Chief Master Sergeant (CMSGT) Raymond Martin served 30 years in the United States Air Force. His Air Force Specialty Code (AFSC) was Supply Manager, Supply System Analysis Supt., Computer Operator and Inventory Management Supervisor. His decorations, medals, badges, citations and

campaign ribbons were: Meritorious Service Medal with Three Bronze Oak Leaf Clusters, Air Force Commendation Medal, Air Force Training Ribbon, Army Good Conduct Medal, Air Force Longevity Service Award Ribbon with One Silver and One Bronze Oak Leaf Cluster, National Defense Service Medal, Air Force Overseas Long Tour Ribbon, Vietnam Service Medal, Air Force Organizational Excellence Award, Air Force Outstanding Unit Award

with Two Bronze Oak Leaf Clusters, Republic of Vietnam Gallantry Cross with Palm Device, Republic of Vietnam Campaign Medal and Air Force Good Conduct Medal with a Silver and Two Bronze Oak Leaf Clusters.

CMSGT Martin was born to his parents, Raymond Russell Martin Sr. and Edith Martin, October 15, 1938, at Cranston, RI, was reared there and graduated from Cranston High School in 1957. He volunteered and entered military service in the United States Air Force in 1958. At Lackland Air Force Base (AFB), TX, he completed Basic Training and was selected to serve in computer technology after he scored well on an aptitude test. CMSGT Martin spent his entire Air Force career in computer technology at each duty station. His technology career started at the beginning of such technology when punch cards were processed to enter data using the 1050 UNIVAC, and computers were main frames taking up large spaces.

His military assignments as a computer operator took him overseas for over 11 years with the first deployment to Misawa Air Base (AB), Japan, for 14 months followed by deployment to Osan AB, Korea, for 10 months and returning to Japan to Yokota AB for three years. He was then assigned for three years to Plattsburgh AFB, NY, where the Air Force Strategic Air Command was located. His next overseas deployment was to Nakhon Phanom Royal Thai Navy Base for one year during the Vietnam War followed by assignment back to America to Webb AFB, TX, at a pilot training base for two years. He transferred to Otis AFB, MA, for two years and then to Gunter AFB, AL, for four years. His fourth deployment was for five years to Heyford, England, which was formerly used as a Royal Air Force Base and then

used by the U.S. Air Force Strategic Air Command. He returned to America to serve at Langley AFB, VA, for two years and then to Gunter Air Force Base as the Systems Supervisor retiring January 31, 1988.

CMSGT Martin and his wife, Hiroko, were married 52.5 years before she passed away. They had three children, seven grandchildren and one great-grandchild. He is an active member of Frazer United Methodist Church where he has served as a Sunday School teacher in the Agape Class, in the Prayer Ministry and as a communion server. In the past, he enjoyed playing golf especially in Scotland when he was stationed in England, and today he enjoys spending time with his grandchildren.

CMSGT Martin's conclusions about his military service are, "I was serving my country. It's an honorable thing to do in my opinion. My children got to travel around the country and become mature."



Commemorative Coin Presented to Admiral Kent Davis

David Payne presents a POW/MIA coin from the Vietnam Veterans of America, Chapter 607, to Alabama Department of Veterans Affairs Commissioner Kent Davis and Assistant Commissioner Bob Horton. The coin honors America's former prisoners of war (POW) and pays reverence to those service members who remain missing in action (MIA). In addition to serving as the Chapter's Vice-President, Mr. Payne is founder and director of the Vets for Vets Got Your 6 Foundation that provides services to veterans with special needs such as temporary shelter, food, clothing and job placement. Vietnam Veterans of America promotes and supports a full range of issues important to Vietnam veterans and strives to advocate on issues important to all of those who have served in the Armed Forces.



Submitted by John J. Davis — Special Guest Columnist

Assistant Attorney General, Appellate Division, Office of the Attorney General, State of Alabama

R.I.P. BOB LIEBERMAN

I got to know Bob Lieberman almost 30 years ago when I worked with his oldest son, Bruce, on the staff of then Attorney General Jimmy Evans. Bob immediately impressed me as a man of great wisdom and with an understated sense of humor. He had already retired from his job at the Environmental Protection Agency and was still working part-time for it. I knew that he had served in the Army during World War II and had seen combat in Europe. I also knew that he had at one point tried to start his own business, Mister Donut. That was one of the few things that Bob attempted in his life that was not successful.



It failed not because of anything Bob did or didn't do. Double-digit inflation and runaway interest rates did to Bob's dream what the German army failed to do from 1944-1945.

In the spring of 2011, his son invited me to Atlanta where Bob was to receive the Legion of Honor awarded by the French government due to his actions in liberating the slave labor concentration camp located near Mittelbau-Dora. The ceremony was not what I expected. While I knew that Bob was deserving of the award that he was to receive that day, I expected a pro forma type of ceremony. It was anything but that. Until that day, I don't think that I ever cried in public except as a small child. When the French ambassador broke down and started to cry, that is when I lost it. It really wasn't about an almost 90-year-old man being honored that day for an obscure World War II event. It was about a young man, a Jewish-American man, who had just recently graduated

from high school. A young man who had left his home in the heartland of America in Columbus, Ohio, to march across a continent to save the world from an evil totalitarian system. Lieberman's unit was in combat 200 straight days,

including the Battle of the Bulge before the liberation of that camp.

What he saw that day when he and his fellow soldiers liberated the camp would never leave Bob Lieberman's mind or memory for as long as he lived. Some of the survivors of the camp came up to him and his fellow soldiers and thanked them. Some of the survivors were crying.

Bob's story does not end there. He came back home and took care of his parents until the day that he started his own family somewhat late in life in the early 1960s. He was introduced to a girl named Lorraine who lived in Montgomery. He courted her assiduously sometimes writing multiple letters a day! It worked, and the marriage lasted until the day of his death. I remember discussing with Lorraine about Bob's attempt to start his own business, the Mister Donut. She told me that although it had been at the time what seemed like a financial disaster, Bob paid back every creditor that he owed. Today our television screens and radios are blanketed with ads on how to walk away from debts, most of which are not as legitimate as the one from which Bob had refused to walk away. Bob rejoined working with the government and eventually earned his full pension. He put three children through college and was deservedly proud of paying off all debts regarding the purchase of his house in one of Montgomery's nicest neighborhoods.

Like any man, I enjoy a good war movie, but I have a difficult time now when watching a movie about World War II because I know now what a real war hero looks like. It is men and women who are willing to put their lives on hold to protect and defend freedom both here and abroad. It is about young people who have barely begun to confront the difficulties of life and yet have stepped up to confront the greatest evils of life. It is men like Bob Lieberman. His life ended like so many in a nursing home shortly before Thanksgiving. It was his last battle. I think that I speak for everyone when I say that we will always remember, and we will always be proud of Bob Lieberman. God bless you, my friend!



Veterans Celebrating Birthdays

Walter Mabry Whetstone: Jan. 2 Robert C. Cerha: Jan. 14
Jerry Glen Wheat: Jan. 4 Richard Bennett: Jan. 16
Geoff Allen Colt: Jan. 6 Roy McInnis: Jan. 18
Joseph Collins: Jan. 11 Rosa Scott: Jan. 23

Honoring Veterans Who Passed

Willie Lee Maxwell passed away February 6, 2020, just before age 98. Guy Newell Vaughn passed away August 26, 2020, at the age of 94. Both articles were published in the October 2019 issue of The Alabama Gazette.



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

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Officer Pete "Jiggs" Bowdoin, U.S. Navy

Sergeant Gilbert Monismith, U.S. Marine



Above, left to right: Col George Brenton Smith, U.S. Air Force; Col James Carl Poole, Jr., U.S. Air Force; Col Charles Winnick Ashley, U.S. Air Force; Andrew E. Lindsey, U.S. Air Navy



Brig Gen Larry H. Stevenson, U.S. Air Force

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If there is a problem, we will mail you a letter. Generally, we will only contact you if you have requested a call or have ongoing business with us. The latest scam trick of using robocalls or live callers has increased. Fraudsters pretend to be government employees and claim there is identity theft or another problem with one's Social Security number, account, or benefits.

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Our employees will never threaten you for information or promise a benefit in exchange for personal information or money. Social Security may call you in some situations, but will never:

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How to protect yourself and your family!

- If you receive a questionable call, hang up, and report the call to our Office of the Inspector General.
- Don't return unknown calls.
- Ask someone you trust for advice before making any large purchase or financial decision.
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Kylle' McKinney, SSA Public Affairs Specialist, kyle.mckinney@ssa.gov

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★ ★ ★ BEYOND THE SCREEN INTO THE STARS! ★ ★ ★

What's Up?

What's Up? If we're talking about in the sky, the answer to that would depend on where and when you are looking. The universe is vast so for this article, let's focus on some quick trivia in our own backyard; our solar system. During daytime hours, our focus is typically the Sun so let's start there.

The Sun is a star, and it's the nearest star to us. Did you know, there are no stars between our Sun and the dwarf planet Pluto, over 3.67 billion miles away? Not one! In fact, the next closest star to us, Proxima Centauri in the southern hemisphere constellation of Centaurus is 4.24 light years away. A light year is the distance light travels in one year. Since light travels at a constant speed of ~186,282 miles per second, light would travel 5.8 trillion (5.878) miles in one-year. The Sun is ~93 million miles (8 light minutes) from us, and Proxima Centauri is nearly 25 trillion miles (4.24 light years). Pack a lunch!!

The closest celestial body to us is our only natural satellite; the Moon. On average the Moon is only 238,855 miles from us. The moon is about one quarter the size of the Earth. Approximately 49 moons would fit nicely inside the Earth. Generally, most people tend to think of the moon as being out only at night. The truth is the moon is visible during daylight for exactly the same amount of time it is at night. By the way, our moon is the only moon in our solar system without an official name.

The closest planet to the Sun is Mercury. Mercury is covered with craters, all of which are named after famous artists, musicians and authors.

Temperatures range from 800 degrees on the daytime side, to minus 290 degrees on the night side. Despite being almost twice as far from the Sun as Mercury, Venus is the hottest planet in our solar system averaging close to 870 degrees. While Mercury is too small to hold an atmosphere allowing the heat to escape, Venus' thick dense clouds trap the heat and serve to reradiate the planet. Venus also spins very slowly on its axis. One day on Venus is equivalent to 243 Earth days, however, Venus's year is only 224.7 days. Did you catch that? One day on Venus is longer than one year. Odder still, Venus spins backward on its axis as compared to the other planets in the solar system. The last of the rocky midgits (other than Earth) is the rusty red orb called Mars. Mars is only about one third larger than mercury, ergo much like Mercury it has very little of an atmosphere. There have been more missions to Mars than any other planet in our solar system.

Turning our attention to the gas giants Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus and Neptune, we find many similarities amongst them. We have known for centuries that Saturn has rings, but did you know all of the gas giants actually have rings? Jupiter's ring system was first detected by Voyager I as it flew by Jupiter in 1979. Uranus's rings are believed to have been formed by colliding moons that once existed around the planet. Neptune's ring system was discovered when Voyager II flew by the planet in 1989. Unlike the inner planets of Mercury (0), Venus (0), Earth (1), and Mars (2), the outer gas giant planets have a plethora of moons. Jupiter has 79 known moons, Saturn 62 known moons, Uranus 27 known moons, while Neptune brings ups the rear with a meager 14 known moons. The outer two planets of Uranus and Neptune are not visible to the unaided eye.

Next time, we'll look at the dizzying speeds of our planet, sun, solar system and even the Milky Way our traveling.

GaylePlanetarium

https://www.troy.edu/student-life-resources/arts-culture/wa-gayle-planetarium/index.html

By Rick Evans, Director, W.A. Gayle Planetarium

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Anyone entering a County building is required to wear a mask or face covering, have their temperature checked, and practice social distancing.

Chief Deputy Kevin J. Murphy

Sheriff Cunningham would like to remind you that just because the holidays are over, please don't let your guard down. You need to always remain vigilant and aware of your surroundings and the best way to do this is to download the Sheriff's Office new phone APP called "Montgomery County AL Sheriff."

The app can be accessed through your phone's app store. Once you have added this app to your phone, you can easily set your phone up to receive important push notifications. Push notifications are quick, important messages that can notify you of road closure(s), blocked road(s), anything pertinent to your travel, escapee, etc., including checking to see if someone is in the county jail. After downloadiing, go through the follow steps to receive push notifications:

- Go to your phone's setting icon
- Scroll down and click "Applications"
- Scroll down to "MCSO" or "Montgomery county sheriff" O"
- Click "Application Manager," if it doesn't take you directly to the location, Click "Notifications"
- Turn `on` "Allow Notifications" and "Previews in pop-ups"

Social Media

Check out the new Facebook page for MSCO:
<https://www.facebook.com/Sheriff-of-Montgomery-Alabama-102518251601438>

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Sheriff Cunningham would like to personally thank those that gave to the less fortunate during the holiday season! Your generosity means a lot!

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Montgomery County Ends Year with Most Ever Homicides recorded ...

As gunfire and automatic weapons rang in the new year, 2020 closed with the most homicides ever recorded in Montgomery County: 87. The large majority of deaths resulted from black on black crime. Two victims were allegedly killed by the same 16-yr-old; one occurring on December 19, the victim Larry Friendly and the other the first homicide of 2021, the victim Martrell Williams. Let us pray for a safer and more peaceful 2021.

For more information, please see previous issues of the *Gazette*

Nov 5	Hwy 31 River Bridge	Dec 15	2100 Blk Jeff Davis Ave.
Nov 6	3500 Blk Manley Dr.	Dec 17	5600 Blk Carmichael Rd.
Nov 7	4100 Blk Rosa Park Ave.	Dec 18	3800 Blk Liberty Square Dr.
Nov 12	3700 Blk Norman Bridge	Dec 19	4600 Blk Virginia Pines Ln.
Nov 13	900 Blk Ann St.	Dec 26	5000 Blk Narrow Lane Rd.
Nov 16	1800 Blk Gillespie Dr.	Dec 26	4200 Blk Mobile Hwy.
Nov 27	700 North Pass Rd.	Dec 28	400 Blk Arthur St.
Nov 29	2500 McGraw Ct.	Dec 29	4100 Blk Troy Hwy.
Dec 3	S Perry St.	Dec 30	3900 Blk Southmont Dr.
Dec 8	4300 Woodley Sq.		

Total for 2020 **87** (includes vehicular homicide / FBI count: 68)

Total for 2019 **45**

Sources: www.gunviolencearchive.org, www.crimemapping.com, www.montgomeryadvertiser.com

Stats provided by Alabama Gazette staff and are from the listed Sources, This information is not provided by the Montgomery County Sheriff's Office.



Southern Cuisine

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



Hooray, the year 2020 is over! No one thought that 2020 would end up like it did. They are now looking forward to 2021. But we do not know how 2021 will turn out. No matter how 2021 progresses, we have learned a lot about making do with a different set of circumstances, different rules, and different ways that we interact with each other.

The food industry has gone through tough times. How we obtain food, either in the grocery stores or at restaurants, has changed a great deal. We have lost the personal touch that came with someone preparing our meal in a restaurant. Inside dining has been changed to a fast food like grab and go. Restaurants that we liked not just for the food but also for the atmosphere have lost that because of limits on occupancy set by health departments. A pub that usually had 50 people enjoying a pint of bitter or two does not have the same feel when there are only 10.

As I write this article a vaccine is being distributed that may relieve some of the uncertainty we have about the future. We may now have a future where people can again be social, closer than 6 feet. A future where we can go to a restaurant and see and smell and taste how its chef interprets what he thinks is

Southern Cuisine. Then we can go to a grocery store and find the ingredients we think are in that dish and we can create our version of that menu at home and invite family and friends for a repast where our only fear will be, we may eat too much.

Food writers and TV chefs for the most part have carried on creating dishes and teaching us new techniques for preparing meals. The TV chefs have already been social distancing from their restaurant or their home kitchen. The best part is you can hit the go back button and replay the part where you missed an ingredient or a step in the recipe. Food writers give us pictures of dishes that will make you drool and rush to the store to purchase the ingredients. Some food writers scour cookbooks, binge watch TV cooking shows, subscribe to other food writer's food web sites, and just open their refrigerator, freezer or pantry and wait for some inspiration. I scour, binge, subscribe and wait!

My latest binge watching has led to several recipes that I have modified and would describe as easy to prepare, easily obtainable ingredients and taste good. The inspiration for two of these recipes comes from Ina Garten. She fits in my scour cookbooks, binge watch and subscribe categories.

Brown Rice Salad

INGREDIENTS:

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1 pkg Uncle Ben's Long Grain & Wild Rice | 1/2 cup pecans, toasted |
| 2 cans of mandarin oranges | 1/4 cup dried cranberries |
| 2 tablespoons olive oil | (see note) |
| 2 tablespoons freshly squeezed orange juice | 2 tablespoons scallions, white & green parts, chopped |
| 2 tablespoons raspberry vinegar | 1/2 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper |
| 1/2 cup seedless green grapes cut in half | |

METHOD:

- Follow the directions on the packages of which ever you choose.
- While the rice is still warm, place it in a mixing bowl.
- Cut the orange segments in half and add the orange sections to the bowl with the rice.
- Add the olive oil, orange juice, raspberry vinegar, grapes, pecans, cranberries, scallions, 1/2 teaspoon of salt, and the pepper.
- Allow to sit for 30 minutes for the flavors to blend.
- Taste for seasonings and serve at room temperature.



Photo: David & Anne Spooner

Note: I save the packages of a cranberry & pumpkin seed blend that comes with a Sweet Kale salad mix I get from Costco or Walmart. I add the whole pack to the rice. The pumpkin seeds add a nice crunch to the salad. Another Note: The picture for this recipe has two boxes of rice, and after making it I realized that was too much rice.

Shop Local & Buy Fresh!

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



Photo by: Jessica Brockardt / www.freeimages.com

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Fig Preserves & Goat Cheese Crostini

INGREDIENTS:

- 1 baguette**
- 2 tablespoons olive oil**
- 5 oz soft goat cheese**
- 1/4 cup fig preserves**
- 2 tablespoons honey**
- 10 leaves of mint**



Photo: David & Anne Spooner

METHOD:

- Preheat oven to 350°. Slice your baguette into 1/2" diagonal slices. Cutting on a diagonal will give you more space for toppings and looks better. Place baguette slices on a baking sheet and either drizzle or brush olive oil on top of each one, just one side.
- Bake the baguette slices for 5-8 minutes, until the edges are slightly crisp and the center is still soft. They will get a light brown color.
- Whipping your goat cheese will make it creamy and easy to spread, rather than crumbly. Place your cheese into the bowl of a stand mixer or use a hand mixer to whip until creamy. About 1 minute.
- Spread about 1 Tbsp of goat cheese onto each slice.
- Spread about 1 Tbsp of fig preserves on top of the goat cheese.
- Display the crostini on a large platter and drizzle a small stream of honey on top and then add the mint making sure that each piece gets some mint. Serve as an hors d'oeuvre or an appetizer.

Have leftover ham and turkey, cranberry sauce, eggnog and cheese? Then this is a recipe to use those leftovers in an unexpected dish. Your diners will not expect it because the Monte Cristo sandwich is not near as well-known as it once was. The only place I remember that served a Monte Cristo was IHOP. It was a toss-up when I was trying to choose what to eat there. I either ordered the Monte Cristo or their yummy Cheese Blintzes. But alas, I could not find either items on their latest on-line order guide. When you find something good to eat, the menu changes and the whole eating experience changes. I can remember the days when I could drive up to the front of my local K&N root-beer stand, order a ham burger and a root-beer and the root beer was in a frosted glass mug, all on a tray that hooked to your car window. When finished eating, I would flash my car lights and they would come and remove the tray with the mug. So here is a recipe remembering the past!

Eggnog Monte Cristo

(makes 3 whole sandwiches) – Recipe from *Food Network Magazine*

INGREDIENTS :

- Dijon or whole grain mustard**
- Mayonnaise (DUKE'S of course)**
- 9 slices Sandwich Bread** (I used sourdough)
- 6 slices Gouda cheese**, or any smooth easy melting cheese
- Turkey, thin deli sliced**
- Ham, thin deli sliced**
- 1/2 c. Eggnog**
- Freshly grated nutmeg**
- Butter** (for greasing the pan)
- Cranberry sauce** (for dipping)



Photo by David & Anne Spooner

METHOD:

- Layer your sandwiches in this order: bread, mustard, mayo, cheese, turkey, ham, bread, cheese, turkey, ham, mustard, mayo, bread.
- Wrap each sandwich tightly in plastic wrap (to keep the sandwiches compact). Refrigerate 30+ minutes.
- Mix together eggnog and nutmeg. Dip sandwiches in eggnog, then place in skillet with melted butter. Cook over medium low heat until browned, flip and cook other side.
- Remove from heat. Cut into a manageable size, quarters or halves.
- Serve with cranberry sauce for dipping.

Then go on the Mediterranean diet!



Patricia Killough
Community Editor

Please send Patricia your family birthdays, anniversaries and weddings to alabamagazette@gmail.com
The Alabama Gazette will make every effort to include your submissions as space permits.

Home Town Community News

CHRISTMAS
CASH
Giveaway
\$1,000

The Gazette was delighted to give away \$1,000 cash to deserving area residents in time for Christmas!



Happy Anniversary

January 1	John & Greatha Findley (73 rd)	January 14	Mike & Debbie Green (35 th)
January 6	Jim & Beth Maxwell	January 18	Raymond & Ann Tucker
January 7	David & Christina Walke	January 20	Jonathon & Mallory Kohn
January 8	Fred & Nancy Setzer	January 22	Bob & Betty Crowe
January 11	Reneau & Virginia Gates	January 23	Jeff & Nancy Beale
	Ralph & Jessie Southern (73 rd)		George & Sherry McCulley
January 12	Frank & Colleen Rutland		

January Birthdays



- | | |
|--|---|
| 1 Steve Campbell
Butch Metcalf | 15 Hayden Kelly
John McClelland
Ester Covington |
| 2 Velita McFarland (93rd) | 16 Richard Bennett (97th)
Ann Takacs |
| 3 Ben Davis | 17 Randy Childs
Toni Grimes
Charlene McClanahan
Bill Northington |
| 4 Morgan Boone
Jerry Glen Wheat (83rd) | 18 Carly Madison Ellis
Joshua C. Kyser (9th)
Joy Fleming
Leslie Garvin
Laura Hester
Johnny Hassett
Roy McInnis (98th) |
| 5 Jan Johnson
Barbara Harrington
Linda Perdue (66th)
Esther Varon (92nd) | 19 Kaybee Hobbs
Gina Hunt
Connie Bush
Sammy Turner |
| 6 Judy Norman
Jackson Rice
Elizabeth Robison | 20 Caleb Campbell
Dr. Charles Cloutier
Taylor Campbell
Alyssa Spivey
Randy Kelly |
| 7 Nicole Windham
Will Woodall
Tim Pierce
Danny Bush | 21 Tonya Cooley
Cory Griffin
Jane Russell
Julio Vazquez
Elizabeth Phibbs |
| 8 Joshua Nix (22nd)
Betty Chesnutt (95th)
Sam Cassels
Burks Crane
Marilyn Evans
Mary Ellen Millis
Scott Mills
Trey Norris
Gwen Pearson (92nd)
Sarah Morgan Smith (17th)
Blake Webb
Brett Tolerson | 22 Kayla Cook
Jonathan Aplin
Tim Wilsford |
| 9 Edna Hargrove
Bobby Mills
Brittany Mitchell
Megan St. Clair Stewart
Guy Newell Vaughn (95th) | 23 Pam Higgins
Jason Selvage
Ridge Newell
Bernice Bryant |
| 11 Jim Aro
Liz Klauss
Sue Woodall (81st) | 24 Donna Gail Andersen
Tina Campbell
Anne Pinkston |
| 12 Corey Campbell
Carson Lane Abbott
Liz Braswell
Brenda Moseley
Clarice Caldwell
James Barton | 25 Katie Scarlett Boyd (11th)
Susan Crawford
Mary Beth Wadsden
Ellen Robbins |
| 13 Theresa Henderson
Shirley Kirksey Jones
T. J. Mills
Bob Maddox
Joe Thomas (93rd) | 26 Mary Price
Mack Terrell |
| 14 Tiffany Andrews
John Black
Robert C. Cerha (74th)
John T. Killough (72nd)
Stan Neuenschwander
Doug Young | 27 Sophie Boyd
28 Baleigh Windham
Darrell Self
29 Kim Kelley
30 Wanda Horsley
Betty Jones
Doris Miller
31 Will Garrett
Hannah Johnson |
| 15 Jennifer Williams | |

The Alabama Gazette's Sympathy is with Maria Hudson in the passing of her beloved sister, Faye.

December 15, 2020

Alabama Gazette's Sympathy to the families of...

Harruff, James Richard "Dick" (85)	Nov. 14
Heath, June Lois (85)	Nov. 15
Cobb, Henry David (97)	Nov. 27
Hubbard, Henrietta Hill (91)	Nov. 27
Walkley, Stephen "Steve" Cecil (74)	Nov. 28
Mullins, Peggy Rebecca High (88)	Nov. 29
Munson, Willa Fay Stevens (87)	Nov. 29
Neeley, Aubrey E. (88)	Nov. 29
Carr, Sara Evelyn "Lynn" Dick (94)	Dec. 1
Ward, Joel Thomas "Tommy" (80)	Dec. 1
Williams, Eloyse (74)	Dec. 1
Jackson, "Jack," Jr, Sidney W. (95)	Dec. 2
Jones, Jr., Amos Berney (87)	Dec. 2
Dixon, Frmr. Senator Larry (78)	Dec. 4
Planutis, Jean Austin (101)	Dec. 5
Jordon, Jon Merritt (74)	Dec. 6
Kamburis, Charles "Charlie K" Antonio (84)	Dec. 6
Wilson, William "Bill" Richard (93)	Dec. 6
Metcalf, Clarice Eiland (92)	Dec. 7
Gregory, Raye Austin (72)	Dec. 9
Willford, Katherine "Kathy" Lucille Deskins (76)	Dec. 9
Callahan, Martha Ann (86)	Dec. 10
Hare, Jean Wynne (93)	Dec. 10
Gauntt, Margaret Ellen (71)	Dec. 11
Horton, Martha Ellen Beane (84)	Dec. 11
Maddox, Alva Hugh (90)	Dec. 11
Carastro, Lt. Col. USAF, Ret. Lawrence Robert "Bob" (90)	Dec. 12
Dawson, Lawrence Franklin (89)	Dec. 12
Roberson, David Earl (79)	Dec. 14
Best, Edith Faye	Dec. 15
Graetz, Jeannie (90)	Dec. 16
Smith, Geraldine "Jerry" Phillips (86)	Dec. 16
Hobbs, Joyce Cummings (93)	Dec. 18
Freeman, Dr. Moses Nathaniel "Buddy" (91)	Dec. 19
Rodgers, Joan Clair Miller Turner (88)	Dec. 21
Barfoot, Doctor Susan Grace (74)	Dec. 21
Fagan, Chief Richard L. (81)	Dec. 24
Bailey, Daniel Lawrence (81)	Dec. 25
Byram, Anne R. (90)	Dec. 25
Melton, Jean Webb (93)	Dec. 25
Bozeman, Archie Terry "Ted" (83)	Dec. 26
Dowdy, Mary Terry (94)	Dec. 26
Graydon, Belle Phelps (93)	Dec. 26
Jordan, Fay Park (90)	Dec. 26
Mills, Sandra "Sandi" K. (72)	Dec. 26
Barganier, James Irby (74)	Dec. 28
Cobb, Carl Bracken (84)	Dec. 28
Cox, Patrick Joseph (68)	Dec. 29

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In Memory Of

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Mary Carleton Holland	December 8
Freddie M. Slaughter	December 9
Peggy Johnson Robinson	December 11
Charles Malone Cook	December 12
Nancy Spears Fuller	December 12
Judy Mason Moore	December 14
Sarah Jane Favor Smith	December 16
Martha Ann Harden Levins	December 16
Michael Kevin Walsh	December 20
Jimmy Allen Monk	December 21
Gloria Jean Franklin Sides	December 21
Eugene A. "Johnny" Feragne	December 21
Emily Katherine Law	December 22
Richard Anthony Bene	December 22
Jefferson Lee Vaughn	December 22
Lisa Evans	December 24
Mary Dowdy	December 26
Charles Anthony Calhoun	December 29
Linda Marie Meeks	December 29
Iris Sweat Milhous	December 29
Johnnie Mae Black	January 1
Leslie Carol Brewer	January 3

TODAY'S WOMAN

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



By Amanda Walker

Tears & Laughter: The Two Sides of Education in Alabama

I sometimes talk – half in jest – about this book I am going to write one day called, “The Two Sides of Camden.” I would call it that because there are two sides of Camden. And the two sides each have two sides as well.

These two sides tend to spill out all over the county. They cross the river and seep into the surrounding counties of the Black Belt on all sides. I see it and recognize it here, but it is everywhere across the state. I suppose to some extent, it may be like this everywhere. But where I am is all I know.

The two sides of Camden are not as cut and dried as saying the rich and the poor, or the blacks and the whites. Wilcox County is a fluctuating 80-some-odd percent black. Not all blacks here are poor. Not all whites are rich. It doesn't take that much to be considered rich here. And there is a difference between being poor and living in poverty. There are plenty of each.



Photo by miljan vulovic / freeimages.com

Just barely getting by is normal. It was that way long before the term COVID entered our atmosphere. It has been that way since the turn of the last century. It is not new. It is not going to change. That is the set up. That is the reality. So kids who grow up here grow up on one side, or the other. The two sides grow up side by side together. They have full awareness of one another. Just one side seems to have more prevalent drug abuse, incest, and other obvious dysfunction.

If a child is fortunate enough to be born on the one side, they have a safety net that won't let them fail. But the only hope a child has if they are born on the other side...is to get an education. It is the only ticket out.

It has come to light that there are possibly thousands of unaccounted for students across the state since the coronavirus shutdowns started. The children who have not been accounted for yet are not from families who vacation down at the coast twice a summer. They are not the children of single mothers who are going to do whatever it takes to make sure their needs are met. It is rather the students who need the structure and safety required by public schools who are suffering, and will continue to suffer, from the decision to close schools during the pandemic.

And let's be honest. Teaching students a core education has become more complicated the more politicized and unionized the education system has become over the years. There was a time when one woman in a single room schoolhouse could educate children. Education is not that complicated of a thing. The system is what has become complicated. But here was a system that had held parents to a minimum standard of accountability for generations. Every school day, by law, parents had to have their children dressed and on a bus or delivered to the school by about 7:50 in the morning. If they were not at school, it was noted. If their absence was prolonged, the school had the authority to check on the child. Teachers are trained to notice, and are charged – again, by law – to report any signs of abuse or neglect. And now it seems those students who needed this protected perspective of organized schooling are the ones who are lost.

What an incredible shame. What a failure.

The very ones whose only hope of getting to the other side was the opportunity of getting an education are the ones most hurt by the consequences of closing schools.

I don't know where our leaders get their wisdom anymore.

Maybe be a bit stingy in extending them your unwavering faith.

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



Ms. Wheelchair America/
Alabama 2005

Trisston's Tidbits ...

By Trisston Wright Burrows
www.trisstonwrightburrows.com

“Let There Be Peace on Earth”

Happy New Year! Whew! We made it! Thank you, Jesus!! What a wild ride 2020 was...from the COVID-19 Pandemic to civil unrest to the Presidential election.

Recently, I was reminded of a beautiful song that is often sung around the holidays, you've heard it..."Let there be peace on Earth and let it begin with me." Have you ever taken the time to figure out what that really means? Sounds like such a simple concept. I think it means finding peace and joy within ourselves and then sharing that peace and joy with others.

John 14:27 reminds us, *“Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.”*

As I watch the violence and discord on news, I know that the common thread for all people on Earth is a mutual desire for a peaceful and fulfilled life. We must start by looking within at who we are and why we are here.

Perhaps Matthew 5:14-16 says it best, *“...You're here to be light, bringing out the God-colors in the world. God is not a secret to be kept. We're going public with this, as public as a city on a hill. If I make you light-bearers, you don't think I'm going to hide you under a bucket, do you? I'm putting you on a light stand. Now that I've put you there on a hilltop, on a light stand - shine! Keep open house; be generous with your lives. By opening up to others, you'll prompt people to open up with God, this generous Father in heaven.”*



Photo dailyverses.net

Indeed! We are called to be light. Let your light shine, my friend...especially now! So, as we move forward into a new year, 2021 and beyond, let's set our intention to be the instruments of peace and light-bearers that God has called us to be. As the song says, “Let there be peace on Earth and let it begin with me.”

Happy New Year & Many Blessings!

Women of Hope is an organization of caring and compassionate women dedicated to providing Hope and encouragement to families surviving breast cancer and promoting awareness to those unaware of the potential devastating effects of this disease.



Visit: www.thewomenofhope.org/

WOMEN OF HOPE is a non-profit Foundation for Breast Cancer Support and is classified by the U. S. Department of the Treasury as a 501 (c)(3) organization under the code of the Internal Revenue Service.



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Dr. Lester Spencer

Lead Pastor

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

Soul Searching

Realistic Expectations for 2021

MOST OF US ARE READY FOR AND EXCITED ABOUT THE ARRIVAL OF 2021, AND MOST OF US ARE GLAD TO BE PUTTING 2020 IN THE REARVIEW MIRROR, RIGHT?

Everyone I know is anxious to return to some semblance of normalcy, and it is tempting to look toward 2021 as the cure for all our problems related to this past year. But as much as I and many others want to do just that ... it might be a big mistake!

Now, I view myself as a very positive leader. One of my favorite quotes is this:

A pessimist complains about the wind.

An optimist believes it will change.

A positive leader adjusts the sails.

As a positive leader, I always want to cast a hopeful vision for the future. But I might add that I also try to be a realistic, positive leader. And while I am genuinely excited and positive about the New Year, I think it is possible and wise to plan for a positive future in the New Year and also be realistic about our expectations for 2021.

So, here are 4 ways to embrace realistic expectations for 2021:

1. The shut down happened overnight. But the recovery and reopening will be much more gradual ...

For your business, organization, school or place of worship, there may not be a “reopening day” or even a season where everyone goes back to “normal”. Whatever the new normal may be.

Vaccines are being distributed and given right now to front line workers, nursing home patients and high-risk individuals. But we don’t really know how long it may realistically take to get enough people vaccinated so that we can experience what they call “heard immunity”.

We don’t know how long it will take for all the restrictions to be lifted. Government regulations are one thing. Human behavior is quite another. So, it may take a while for people to feel comfortable and safe getting back out in public places.

So, be patient, be flexible, relax as much as possible, and let the year unfold and reveal one day at a time!

2. Normal is being redefined ...

We all long for normal. And by that I mean the way things were before mid March 2020 shut down and before the Government recognized the dangers of COVID 19 and how contagious it was.

Emerging from this pandemic probably will not be the return to normal we all hope for. At least, not in the short run.... and maybe never! That is because normal is being redefined as I write this. The longer this pandemic drags on, the longer temporary habits become permanent ones. Normal will most likely be a strange and unpredictable mix of the familiar and the new.

I do believe that people will return to live events once things are definitely safe. Restaurants, gyms, schools, churches, football stadiums, basketball arenas and businesses of all sorts will all reopen to capacity once again. Some offices

will reopen for in-person work. Vacations will resume. Airports will once again be busy as ever. Resorts will fill up once more.

But, it is also true, that many businesses will have closed during this pandemic. It is reported that a third of the restaurants in the country will have shut their doors forever. Two large gyms in our area just shut down permanently. Lots of companies have downsized and many of them will not go back to providing in person workspaces in huge, expensive office complexes.

We could see a 10 to 30% variation in the way things were. And that is no small thing. So, my point is this. Don’t plan for or expect everything to go back to pre-pandemic “normal”. Be open to new ways of looking at and planning for the future.

3. Unpredictability is the biggest certainty ...

We all like certainty. Right? I sure do. But have we really ever had certainty? Even before the pandemic, no one could promise you certainty. What we had was some form of predictability before the COVID crisis. But like a tsunami, the worldwide pandemic swept all our predictability away. This unpredictability will probably be around for a while longer. Months for sure. Maybe longer.

So, 2020 did some good things. It has taught us agility, flexibility and the ability to move fast and change again. These are great tools to take with us into 2021 as we plan, prepare and work. They may be even more important in the future! The past is littered with businesses, organizations and churches that died because things changed and they didn’t.

4. Positive leaders face the brutal facts (But never lose hope) ...

Jim Stockdale was an American Vice Admiral captured and imprisoned in the Vietnam War. He was held and tortured for seven long years. Stockdale said the first people to die in captivity were the optimists, who kept thinking things were going to get better quickly, and they would be released. When that didn’t happen “they died of a broken heart,” Stockdale said. They lost hope!

Stockdale argued that the key to survival was to combine realism and hope. He put it this way: “This is a very important lesson. You must never confuse faith that you will prevail in the end— which you can never afford to lose— with the discipline to confront the most brutal facts of your current reality, whatever they might be.”

The greatest positive leaders confront the brutal facts but never lose hope. I believe that you and I can prevail in the end in whatever endeavor may lie before us. But there may be some brutal stuff we need to face and get through before things gets better. Crisis leadership falls apart when leaders embrace two extremes: pessimists only see the real, and naive optimists only see the ideal. When you embrace both, you discover true positive leadership!

Whether you are the leader of a family, a business, an organization or a church, 2021 can be a great year for all of us and the people we lead! If we chose to embrace these realistic expectations for 2021, I have no doubt that this New Year can be the best ever!

Happy New Year!



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Southern Gardening

Potpourri for January

by Peggy Givhan



**Judge
Peggy Givhan**

Perhaps we are turning the corner in 2021 with the COVID virus and life will get back to normal. I am certainly ready and I know you are, too. Along with other gardeners of good cheer, we are always the optimists – that only good will come out of a bad situation. It's funny that during our lockdown, we go through our tried and true traditions such as decorating the house,

baking cookies and cakes, leaving small gifts at our friends' doorsteps, listening to Christmas carols, and watching church services on the television instead of being physically present. And in January, taking down the decorations, and watching the football playoffs. We are just creatures of habit. I believe it is these little customs that make life worth living.

If your garden looks a little bleak, we can look around and find gorgeous blooming shrubs such as sasanquas and camellias, with different varieties showing a wide range of colors from deep red, to pink to white and infinite variegated color combinations. We also see

Kiss me at the Gate fragrantly opening its buds, plus some winter annuals attempting to make a show. In October, I have planted white and bright pink dianthus along a border with surprisingly healthy lush gray-green lambs' ears. Much of the other parts of the garden look vacant, but these areas have been sown with zinnia, poppy and larkspur seed. I call it my underground garden. I make sure I have marked with spray paint the seeded areas in the bed, and have noted these areas on the plan. My tulips have been in the crisp of the refrigerator since around the first of November, and I will plant them around the middle of the month. (Tulips have to be chilled at least a month prior to planting since our area does not get enough cold weather for them to bloom on tall stems.) After planting the tulips, I will over plant with any color pansies in order to have a two-dimensional affect when the tulips bloom. This is also a great time to plant narcissus and daffodils. If you can find daffodil varieties, Mount Hood and Carlton, these are extremely reliable for our area. By now, I am positive everyone has cut back their perennials, which need to be mulched to keep the roots from freezing. ALSO NOW IS THE TIME TO SPRAY TREES, SHRUBS AND FENCES, ETC. WITH VOLK AND LIME SULFURE TO RID YOUR YARD OF WHITE FLIES AND OTHER PESTS.

In my large pot garden in the back of the house, I have cut back geraniums and Dragon Wing begonias severely so that they are easy to transport inside when the temperature gets below 28 degrees. Plumbago is amazingly cold tolerant for a tropical, and can withstand some really cold temps, however they will be severely trimmed and brought indoors probably this month. Other tropical plants such as hibiscus, mandevilla and Meyer Lemon trees have already been safely moved indoors.

PLANT OF THE MONTH – GINGER LILY

HEDICIUM or ginger lilies are what I call the sopranos of the garden scene starting in late July or early August until frost. Tall, stately and many varieties fragrant, one wonders why more gardens do not have mass plantings of this beautiful perennials. They are native to tropical Asia and India and were a favorite of the South for years past. There are dozens of species and range from height of 2 feet to 9 feet. H. coronarium, also called the common ginger lily, is a favorite of the southern growers. Probably the most fragrant, gets to heights of 6 feet, and makes a great cut flower. You do not need very many in a vase to perfume a whole room. So good advise would be to plant the corms now, so you will not miss out this summer for an addition to your garden.



Photo by Gardenia.net

Good Health, Good Cheer, and GOOD GARDENING.