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# 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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## Prison Issue Unresolved

There were two major issues not resolved during the just completed regular legislative session. Gambling and prisons were left on the table and up in the air.

It is foolish to not address a resolution to get some revenues for the state from gambling, which currently exists in Alabama. However, it is not imperative that the problem be solved.

The prison problem is another question. It has to be addressed. The federal courts will take over Alabama's prisons and tell the governor and legislature what to do to alleviate the crisis. The federal courts will win that fight every day of the week. They will act and give the legislature the bill for the expenses.

It is happening now in California, and the same scenario happened in Alabama five decades ago during the George Wallace versus Frank Johnson era. Judge Johnson prevailed and told Alabama what to do with prisons and sent them the bill.



Photo by Peter Szustka/FreeImages.com

The legislature, governor and U.S. Justice Department are all in agreement that Alabama has to have three new prisons to alleviate unconstitutional overcrowding.

The governor proposed privatizing leasing three new men's prisons. Governor Ivey and the Alabama Department of Corrections proposed a lease project as the solution to replace many of Alabama's aging overcrowded and understaffed prisons. In February, Ivey signed a 30-year lease

agreement for two of the three new prisons, unilaterally, without legislative authority or input. The national firm, Core Civic, was chosen to receive the lease agreement and to build new prisons in Elmore and Escambia counties.

However, the privatization plan has been thwarted by the Private Prison Firm's inability to garner financing. In May, Bloomberg News reported that all three banks that were to finance the venture were backing out completely.

The lease plan expired on June 1. Therefore, the route that legislative leaders

prefer is that the state own the prisons and pass a bond issue to pay for them.

Legislative leaders primarily and importantly Finance Committee Chairmen, Steve Clouse of Ozark and Arthur Orr of Decatur, believe that there needs to be a Special Session called by Governor Ivey to address the building of three new men's prisons and floating a bond issue to pay for them with the state owning the prisons.

Representative Clouse has brought up another valid reason for there to be a Special Session regarding prisons. The state received guidelines in the waning hours of the session from the Treasury Department on using the four billion dollars Alabama is expected to receive for state and local governments under the American Rescue Plan passed by Congress. The legislature will be the appropriator of that money. It may well could be used by the state for prisons.

Another factor that will be on the table are the locations of the prisons. A change from the lease plan to a prison bond issue would probably alter the locations to land already owned by the Department of Corrections. This land is available and was actually purchased adjacent to the current prisons at the time new prisons were last built over three decades ago during the last Wallace Administration.

This land around the prisons was purchased for future expansions. During the planning a blue ribbon study commission was hired to determine the best locations for the prisons. The commission suggested that they should be near the metropolitan areas of the state. Wallace looked at the proposal and said that looks good, but I think we will probably put those prisons in Barbour County. Gov. Wallace's home county was Barbour.

The bottom line is that the prison lease plan proposed by the governor is dead. The other given is that new prisons have to be built to address a myriad of problems that have been outlined in the Justice Department suit.

This issue has to be addressed. Therefore, it looks imminent that at least two Special Sessions are in store for this year – one on reapportionment of legislative and congressional districts and one on prisons.

We lost our oldest past governor, Gov. John Patterson, on June 5. Gov. Patterson passed away at his ancestral home at age 99 surrounded by his family. Patterson was governor from 1959-1963. He defeated Gov. Wallace in the 1958 Governor's Race, which featured a field of 14 candidates. Patterson was attorney general of Alabama prior to be elected governor.

Until next time ...

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## Magna Carta's Peer Review

*If the 4th of July has a pre-game, it is June 15th.*

On that date in 1215, the Magna Carta was signed, beginning a gradual process of defined individual rights and limiting the power and authority of the British crown. The Declaration of Independence, which outlined the colonists' desire for freedom from the

edicts of King George, is a direct descendant of the Magna Carta.

It would be foolish to argue that the Magna Carta anticipated all the rights and freedoms we enjoy today, but it certainly planted those seeds 806 years ago. Those seeds sprouted in the form of the development of common law and fully germinated in the U.S. Constitution.

Perhaps one of the most unusual rights secured by the Magna Carta is the right to a jury trial; such an integral part of the court system but those who live in common law countries fail to recognize its uniqueness. Modern countries have limited the use of juries as most governments prefer having only a judge make decisions. Juries can be unpredictable and messy with uncertain results at times contrary to desires of the powerful; regardless, English-speaking countries recognize the importance of having individual citizens decide factual disputes and mete out punishment.

Judges were typically appointed by the King, and, while learned in the law, were often unfamiliar with the standards of the community they judged. Juries were developed to provide a commonsense approach to the law, to provide a check on the crown's power expressed through judges and to achieve a sense of factual fairness.

The international community discusses the rule of law and debates fundamental human rights, yet most countries restrict the jury system. Inasmuch as individual rights are touted and basic freedoms extolled, juries are given short shrift. Fair trials are demanded in a host of international legal agreements, but in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the European Convention of Human Rights, there is no right to a trial by jury.

The Magna Carta set in motion a concept that in order for the law to be fair, community leaders needed to be a part of the process. Demanding fairness is easy to mandate but assuring fairness and acceptability of decisions requires a jury. The signatories to Magna Carta understood what moderns seem to forget.

The populism reflected in the jury system is simply not something the legal process of other countries tolerate; most are afraid of the common sense of their average citizens.

The language in the Magna Carta provided that punishments, proceedings and prosecutions required "... the lawful judgment of peers and by the law of the land." This idea was cultivated by the English legal system until it expanded to include not only criminal cases, but civil cases, as well.

And the decision of a jury was respected to the point that any factual finding

by a jury could not be altered by a judge. This served to limit judicial power and balance the interest of the crown with the community.

Before the American Revolution, various taxes imposed on the colonists were enforced in courts with appointed judges but no juries. Omitting juries outraged colonial lawyers, who realized the crown's end run was the denial of fundamental rights they previously enjoyed.

These rights were further limited when royal governors attempted to override jury verdicts when the results were unfavorable to the crown. Just like dictators today, autocrats throughout history were afraid of a commonsense citizenry integrally involved with the legal system.

One argument against allowing any review of a jury's decision was that to do so, substituted the royal governor for a "jury of peers." When the King limited the use of juries, the colonists were so antagonized that many leading citizens begin to contemplate a separation from England. But, in any separation, the system of common law and the right to a trial by jury would remain, albeit unrestrained by a monarch. In a sense, diminishing jury trials started the move toward independence.

When the U.S. Constitution was drafted following the hard-fought revolution, there was no guarantee to a trial by jury. To remedy this omission, and not wanting to rely on custom alone, an enumerated bill of rights was proposed to guarantee a right to a trial by jury in criminal matters in the Sixth Amendment. But the Bill of Rights went one step further; and, with the Seventh Amendment, provided that the right to a trial by jury would also apply in civil cases:

"In suits at common law . . . the right of trial by jury shall be preserved, and no fact tried by a jury shall be otherwise re-examined in any court of the United States, according to the rules of common law."

Under the English legal system, juries were used in civil cases, but in an abundance of caution, the founders wanted to make certain this fundamental right could not be eliminated by a later government; a written bill of rights guaranteed this.

Thus, a legal system impaneling a jury is so accepted that we find it odd when other countries have only a judge. Former U. S. Supreme Court Chief Justice William Rehnquist acknowledged, "The right to trial by jury in civil cases at common law is fundamental to our history and jurisprudence."

The jury system we rely on to resolve disputes assigns average citizens an important role in our legal system. Beginning with the Magna Carta, the right to a trial by jury, though limited, was initiated as part of the common law that grew into the system we accept wholeheartedly today.

Some 806 years ago, the concept began as a test of strength between the monarchy and nobles, spawning a fundamental right unique in the world.

*Our Declaration of Independence and Constitution owe much to their ancestor, the Magna Carta.*

Will Sellers was appointed as an Associated Justice on the Supreme Court of Alabama by Gov. Kay Ivey in 2017.



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# ROBSERVATIONS...

by Robert Tate

## GIVE AN INCH. . .

According to a 19th century legend, the Truth and the Lie meet one day. The Lie says to the Truth: "It's a marvelous day today"! The Truth looks up to the skies and sighs, for the day was really beautiful. They spend a lot of time together, ultimately arriving beside a well. The Lie tells the Truth: "The water is very nice, let's take a bath together!" The Truth, once again suspicious, tests the water and discovers that it indeed is very nice. They undress and start bathing. Suddenly, the Lie comes out of the water, puts on the clothes of the Truth and runs away. The furious Truth comes out of the well and runs everywhere to find the Lie and to get her clothes back. The World, seeing the Truth naked, turns its gaze away, with contempt and rage.

The poor Truth returns to the well and disappears forever, hiding therein, its shame. Since then, the Lie travels around the world, dressed as the Truth, satisfying the needs of society, because, the World, in any case, harbours no wish at all to meet the naked Truth.

[www.linkedin.com/pulse/truth-lie-meet-one-day-world-seeing-naked-turns-its-gaze-waghelstein-1c](http://www.linkedin.com/pulse/truth-lie-meet-one-day-world-seeing-naked-turns-its-gaze-waghelstein-1c)

I thought long and hard before I decided to pen this Robservation. In today's ridiculous "woke" atmosphere, the reasons should be obvious. Anytime someone voices a dissenting view from the left's "cancel culture," things tend to get a bit testy. Fangs come out, hatred spews and everyone goes into attack mode – despite any truth staring them in the face. The cancel culture mob is not interested in facts but only in pushing their agenda and crushing any opposition, often using the foulest of language and most offensive methods imaginable. I still find it amusing that ANTIFA, the supposed "anti-fascists" are, through their own doctrine and virulent behaviors the most fascist among us. Just because you claim to be anti-fascist does not mean you are. Actions speak louder than words.

Today's Robservation is troubling on so many levels that I really do not know where to start. Some may read this and immediately label me a "homophobe" or some other tag that does nothing to uncover any truth but rather is solely meant to punish anyone (including yours truly) with a dissenting view. In a previous column, I addressed this specific issue and will once again do so just to get this out in the open. Here goes; I for one could care less about someone's sexual proclivities. I DO NOT CARE. Pretty simple, huh. Whether I agree with you or not, it does not mean I hate you or wish evil upon you. I have had both homosexual friends and relatives. I simply do not care. There are however, lines never to be crossed yet are trespassed daily at increasing rates. There are many lines in the sand and no matter what people want to pontificate, in this world there are times when there are clear lines of demarcation separating right and wrong. Sorry but there are. (See "Truth" at the beginning) An adult wanting to have sex with a child or the poisoning of young minds with aberrant ideologies like the acceptance of socialism and communism here in America are just a couple examples.

An article appeared in the news this past week that reported the hosting of a "Drag Queen" show held at Nellis Air Force Base. Yes, the same place that is home to the USAF Thunderbirds and one of the most demanding air combat training exercises in the world, Red Flag. Below are just two links to articles about this insanity.

[www.rt.com/usa/527308-nellis-airforce-drag-show/](http://www.rt.com/usa/527308-nellis-airforce-drag-show/)

[www.breitbart.com/politics/2021/06/21/exclusive-nellis-air-force-base-hosts-first-ever-drag-queen-show-essential-morale-cohesion-readiness/](http://www.breitbart.com/politics/2021/06/21/exclusive-nellis-air-force-base-hosts-first-ever-drag-queen-show-essential-morale-cohesion-readiness/)

An official AF release stated, "The event was sponsored by a private organization and provided an opportunity for attendees to learn more about the history and significance of drag performance art within the LGBT+ community. . . ensuring our ranks reflect and are inclusive of the American people is essential to the morale, cohesion, and readiness of the military. Nellis Air Force Base is committed to providing and championing an environment that is characterized by equal opportunity, diversity and inclusion."

Despite this, I do not see any evidence to support the claim that this event was "essential" to readiness in the military. I still have many ties to current and former military members who I have worked with and although we may be considered by some to be "dinosaurs" in our thinking, military readiness, morale and cohesion was something we took very seriously back in the days of Strategic Air Command, EWO, the Iron Curtain, the Fulda Gap, etc. When I entered the Air Force in 1983, emphasis was correctly placed on defending America, training and preparing to kill those who need to be killed in time of war. You know, important stuff like real readiness; not watching a drag queen show on base.

I fly and talk with many young kids today, C-17, F-15, F-16, F-18, A-10, B-1, B-52 pilots and many support personnel and their views are rarely if ever those reflected within our press. Why would they be? It goes against whatever narrative they are trying to push on us. I had to talk a young, Navy F-18 pilot

off of the "I am getting the heck outta 'Dodge'" ledge one day when he was so fed up with the lack of what is essential for a combat pilot and being replaced with what he felt was constant indoctrination on social issues. There is a real concern when young men and women tell me that many times it seems as though warfighting thought and preparedness is put on the back burner in favor of social justice indoctrination. I am not advocating a Neanderthal and repressive view towards any of those in our society (see paragraph 2 – I do not care), but no, these ideas should not trump military readiness. These, in my historically minded view are two separate issues.

Here is where the title comes into play. Several years ago, I flew with a young C-17 pilot and he was telling me that an Air Force readiness inspection team landed on his base (which is normal). As part of their inspection, however, if they went into an office and saw a "Maxim" magazine on somebody's desk, they were written up. Yes, the same magazine sold in the BX at the time. We are not talking about Playboy, Penthouse or other clearly inappropriate material but a Maxim magazine. I will be the first to admit there is no place for gratuitous nudity in the workplace and is something I am glad is no longer pushed or tolerated. When I flew for NATO, you should have seen the stuff allowed in the squadrons back in the late 80s and early 90s. Pretty repressive stuff actually and definitely counterproductive for dual gender unit morale. I for one am glad it is gone.

Next comes squadron heraldry and history. Luckily for me, I never saw this first hand. As a historian, this would have pissed me off to no end. It still does. Another young pilot was telling me this sordid detail. In the Air Force, there are many squadrons whose history dates back to the US Army Air Corps and World War II. In many squadrons, there would be wartime photographs of the men and airplanes that entered combat against our enemies. These men flew, fought and died by the tens of thousands while killing even more people at the behest of their national leaders. But shame on them for painting provocative nose art on their airplanes and heaven help any squadron photos that dared display such an "affront." Topless, scantily clad women were often the norm. Afterall, we were sending these young men out with a great chance of never seeing another sunrise so what if they painted their airplanes up? The real travesty here is not the historical photos but the cowardly edict to remove them public viewing.

I will be the first to admit that in 2021, there is no place for similar artwork on the nose of airplanes. None. But as I read somewhere and pardon my paraphrase, "History is not there for you to like or dislike. It is there for you to learn from it. And if it offends you, even better." So, in one fell swoop, the sacrifices of thousands of young men have been deemed worthless and offensive, worthy of damnation and to be forever hidden. (See The Truth again)

So now I am to the overall rub of this column. Although magazines like Maxim are considered to be too taboo within squadron life (maybe so) and unit history, heraldry, memory and the sacrifices of thousands are also considered to be too risqué in the current woke arena (definitely NOT), having a drag queen show on a military base is somehow seen as not only acceptable but somehow essential to operational readiness. How in the heck is this any less "offensive?" Do we not see this? I love a statement I heard somewhere that said, "I can explain it to you but I cannot understand it for you." This, in my mind's eye IS NOT an LGBTQ issue but one of military readiness and a serious lack of focus on what is important. If military readiness remains a cornerstone in our armed forces, and that at times seems to be quite a big "if," you can rest assured that the Chinese, Russians, North Koreans and Iranians take their readiness seriously and are most certainly laughing at us today.

*Give an inch? See where that takes us.*

## More ... from Steve Flowers

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## Legislative Session Essentially Successful

The 2021 legislative session ended [in May] with an impressive slate of legislative accomplishments.

A goodly amount of the credit for the success of the session goes to the leadership of the new President Pro Tem, Senator Greg Reed of Jasper, who just completed his first session in this role.

The Senate was deliberate, effective and efficient as it took up a longer than usual list of issues given the legislature's early departure from Montgomery last year due to the pandemic.

The Senate's accomplishments include successes that range from economic development incentives, COVID-19 relief, legislation to support military families, election security, broadband expansion and more.

The Senate was also able to pass a constitutional amendment to allow the people of Alabama to vote on whether the state would finally legalize, cap and control gaming and a lottery. Although this bill did not make it through the House, it was an impressive feat to move this hotly debated topic through the Senate.

The legislature dealt successfully with the state's budgets, which is the legislature's number one responsibility. While the COVID-19 pandemic has led to many states across the country having to cut their budgets, the state of Alabama's two budgets – the General Fund Budget and the Education Trust Fund Budget – were the largest ever passed in state history.

Senator Reed and the budget chairmen in both chambers were successful due to years of conservative budgeting by the legislature, as well as the resilience of the Alabama economy. Alabama's conservative budgeting approach has given the state the resources needed to provide funding to support Alabama students, public employees, and to give our government agencies the resources they need as they work to improve our state.

The Education Trust Fund Budget, the state's largest budget in history, provided a record-breaking \$7.67 billion in funding. The budget provides a substantial amount of funding to address critical educational needs across the state,

the most noteworthy of these being meeting the high demand for certified math and science teachers.

There are around 7,500 secondary level positions for math and science teachers statewide, and only 4,300 of those are filled with properly certified individuals. Science and math are critically important subjects for the educational success of Alabama students, and to excel in these areas, it requires our state to be able to recruit and retain credentialed teachers.

To address this concern, the budget included the Teacher Excellence and Accountability for Mathematics and Sciences (TEAMS) Act program to raise the salary schedule for math and science teachers so that they will make more money moving forward. Starting in the 2021-2022 school year, well-trained and educated middle and high school math and science teachers could earn up to \$15,000 in additional pay each year.

The budget also provides funding for Governor Ivey's recommended 2% across the board pay raises for all teachers, support workers, and transportation workers. The budget allocates about \$80 million for these raises that go into effect on September 30, 2021. The budget also funds the school nurse program to ensure there is a nurse in every school system and sets up a retiree trust fund to present teachers with bonuses.

It is not only educators who will see pay raises as a result of these budgets. In the General Fund Budget, the largest ever passed by the state, the legislature included a 2% pay raise for all state employees. The budget also includes a 7.2% increase for the Department of Mental Health and a 12.5% increase for the Alabama Law Enforcement Agency.

While the regular session has come to a close for the year, there are still several potential special sessions that could be called by the Governor. These could include special sessions to deal with issues ranging from gaming, to prison reform, to redistricting.

*Until next time ...*





Ronald A. Holtsford

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# Was FRANCES SCOTT KEY ALSO A LAWYER IN ADDITION TO WRITING THE STAR-SPANGLED BANNER?



Key was a lawyer and obviously had other talents as well. Key was born in 1779; his father was a lawyer and a judge. Though Frances considered becoming an Episcopal priest, he decided to go into law instead. He “read” law under his brother-in-law and Judge Jeremiah Townley Chase. He passed the Bar in 1801.

He was considered a good lawyer, practicing in Frederick, Maryland and Washington, D.C. His law practice was successful and was involved in several important cases, appearing even before the United States Supreme Court. He was a part of the Burr Conspiracy where Vice-President Aaron Burr was accused of treason. His arrest for treason actually occurred in Alabama as Burr was accused of wanting to start a new country. Remember of course that Burr had shot and killed Alexander Hamilton in an illegal duel.



Key was against a war with Great Britain as he believed the issues could be worked out diplomatically. War of course did occur, known as the War of 1812. Key became a member of the Georgetown Light Field Artillery and was a witness to a battle outside of Washington, D.C. later that year. When the British burned the Presidential mansion it was believed that Baltimore would be attacked next. A physician, Dr.

William Beanes who had detained some British soldiers who had plundered the locals in Maryland was arrested by the British. Beanes family asked Key to intervene and with the permission of President James Madison he set about to obtain Beanes release.

Before beginning his trip he asked wounded British soldiers to write letters favorable to Beanes treatment of those soldiers and their wounds. Key had to make his way under a flag of truce before he could ask for the release by the British officer in charge. The British officer initially declined to set Dr. Beanes

free but after reading the several letters from the wounded British on how well they were treated by Dr. Beanes, the decision was made to release him.

The British realized however that Key, Beanes and another that had accompanied Keys had seen too much as they were preparing to attack, Fort McHenry. Key and the others were secured away from the battle area. Key watched the battle which began on September 13th, and continued for about twenty-five hours. As the early morning hours of September 14, 1814 begin to change to light he was inspired upon seeing the flag of McHenry still flying high. Key pulled out an envelope from his pocket and wrote the words down as he was inspired. The poem was titled “In Defence of Fort M’Henry” and the prints were distributed by his brother-in-law.

It was not until 1916 that President Woodrow Wilson proclaimed the Star-Spangled Banner should be played at certain official events but it was under President Herbert Hoover in 1931 that it was made the national anthem.

While Independence Day has no linear connection to Key, I hope that Key’s participation as an American lawyer, patriot and poet inspires us when we hear the Star-Spangled Banner on Independence Day.

*As the late Paul Harvey would say, “now you know the rest of the story.”*

*As always if you do not have an attorney, ask a trusted friend or family member or contact the Alabama State Bar, Lawyer Referral service.*

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## SPECIAL GUEST COMMENTARY

# Sidney Lanier High School Name Change Smacks of Overkill

*Full disclosure mandates that I aver that I graduated from Sidney Lanier High School in Montgomery in 1968.*

Technically, the actions of a governing organization in the Capitol City regarding name changes for three high schools aren’t anybody’s business if he/she doesn’t live there.

And my family now resides in a rural area of Elmore County.

However, a lot of folks who now reside in the Lake Martin area attended Montgomery public schools when the integration of that school system was in its infancy, so they’re probably paying attention to the current transition regarding high school monikers.

*A brief historical perspective is appropriate:*

Sidney Lanier High School opened in 1910. Its original location was on South McDonough Street. The building transitioned to a junior high school when Lanier moved to its gargantuan, castle-like structure on South Court Street in 1929.

And it isn’t out of line to speculate about whether the original namings of Lee and Jeff Davis were done in defiance of the inexorable advent of integration.

Originally envisioned to lessen the population of Lanier High, Robert E. Lee High School opened in September of 1955, about 15 months after the landmark **Brown Vs. Board of Education** decision.

Three months later, Rosa Parks was arrested on a city bus in front of the Empire Theatre on Montgomery Street.

Jefferson Davis High School opened in 1968.

*(TANGENT: The same “defiance” question is valid concerning the placement of the Confederate Battle Flag/naval jack over the Alabama State Capitol in the early 1960s. That action was apparently more of a, er, generalization but was still confrontational).*

It needs to be emphasized that Sidney Lanier himself was no Confederate icon like Lee or Davis; he was merely an enlistee who was a prisoner of war during the conflict. Afterwards, he became a renowned poet (hence the sports teams’ nickname) and briefly resided in Montgomery and Prattville before returning to his hometown of Macon, Georgia.

There was also a Sidney Lanier High School in Macon. It was consigned to history in a merger about 50 years ago.

A bit of irony concerning Montgomery’s Lanier High School is the fact that

the original plaintiff of the lawsuit to desegregate the Capitol City’s public schools wanted to attend Lanier, and he did, when the courts ruled in his favor.

Accordingly, a name change for a landmark of the original Civil Rights Movement might dilute the importance of said landmark when chronicling the history of civil rights.

A similar scenario has occasionally been proffered concerning the Edmund Pettus Bridge in Selma, which was named after a Confederate general and Klansman. Its name and place are so important to civil rights history that some minority activists have publicly advocated leaving its name intact.



Photo: <http://www.lanier.mps-al.org/>

Even a Lee High School graduate with whom I conversed questioned the renaming of Lanier compared to Lee and Jeff Davis (and he’s a generation younger than me).

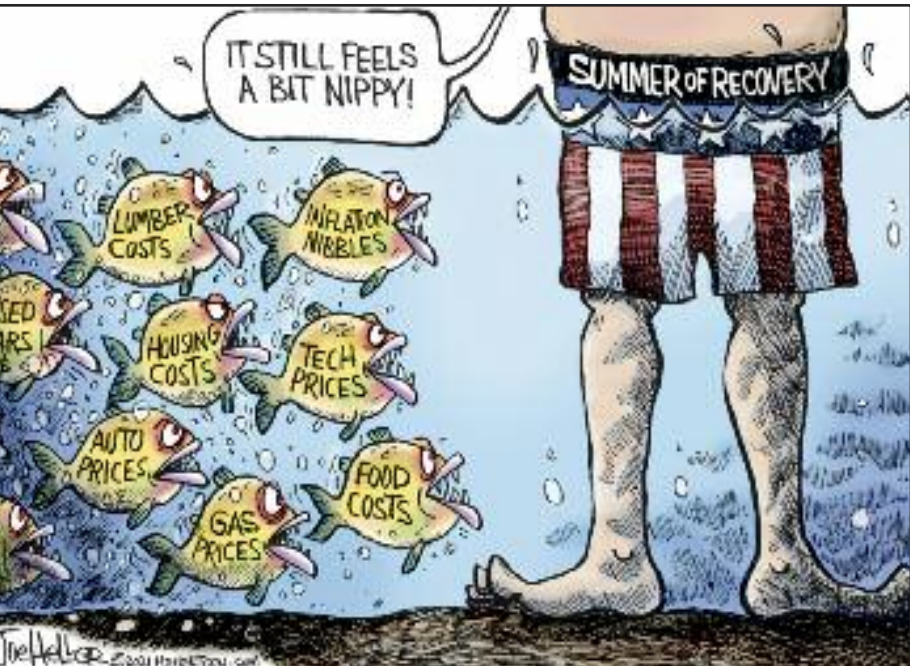
For a lot of observers, the idea of renaming Lee and Jeff Davis is ultimately a “Perhaps-I-can-sympathize-but-I-can’t-empathize” notion, given the demographics of the student populations of those two schools.

And Lanier is statistically similar.

So call this the viewpoint of a “proprietary alumnus” if you wish, but the Montgomery school board’s rationale for changing the name of historically-important Sidney Lanier High School doesn’t add up.

Willie G. Moseley is the Senior Writer for **Vintage Guitar Magazine**, News Editor Emeritus for **The Tallassee Tribune**, and the author of 14 books.

## TO LAUGH OR NOT TO LAUGH . . .

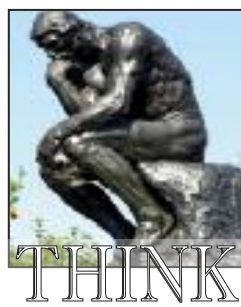




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# Hamming it Up in Hubbardland

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John Sophocleus

Inveterate readers won't be surprised I found it timely to revisit ongoing "Malice in Hubbardland" type corruption given the observed persistence here in Lee County... even while former House Speaker Hubbard serves his inconsistently reduced sentences in State corrections. In fact, ALDoC facilities he shepherded toward the current unconstitutional result while 'serving' in Montgomery. The spirit of Sponge Bob Riley, Yella Grubber, Bride of Felonstein, et al remains alive and thriving. Long time fellow Lee County Commission watcher (Peter Byrd) grows weary of me saying, "Felon Hubbard was a **BIG** weed to pull, but as with that garden you hold dear... the job of weeding is **never** done."

Lee County elected officials (dare I type **installed**, with some of most restrictive/anti-competitive ballot access laws in the nation?) continue to have legal and ethical issues eerily similar to Auburn's Mike Hubbard, once believed in so strongly and publicly – even by the chief county law enforcement officer while Mike was under investigation and indictment. It required great courage to stand against this corrupt public servant who was **not** shy to threaten and abuse his power to thwart **being** disciplined before finally convicted as a serial felon. If not an "I like Mike" minion, expect to be discriminated against, threatened, not win contracts and jobs (as I suffered at AU under Felon Hubbard and his public servant minions like Ed Richardson, Board members Lowder, et al) regardless of expense or reduction in quality to consumers, students and taxpayers. The Hubbardland playbook is as effective as ever in my county.

Years ago I could go to District Attorney Brandon Hughes who listened and at times addressed issues I'd research and write about in the *Gazette* – e.g., an engineer not bonded because the probate judge's negligence to follow the law and keep our county out of jeopardy, RSA fraud 'Grand theft auto-allowance' at AU, Gig-city Opelika theft from OPS rate base payers, etc. There was a palpable change in DA Hughes' tenor when we documented an illegal change order which appeared to be getting too close to this corrupt county commissioner's purse. After fellow Commission watcher Byrd was harangued by this corrupt commissioner and Byrd wouldn't yield, the campaign to do everything in his power to attack anyone supportive of our efforts was made clear. Soon thereafter, DA Brandon Hughes was indicted on perjury and charges of using his office for personal gain. The interim DA installed made it clear she does not want my input – understandable I suppose if aligned with Felon Hubbard minions or afraid to be bullied or suffer inconsistent scrutiny when addressing corruption Riley/Hubbard Inc. directly promotes.

A recent Assistant DA hire made it clear in motions submitted to Judge Russell Bush's District Court he would do this corrupt commissioner's bidding against one of our Commission watchers. Successful at upping a 3 month 'I'm sorry for exercising my Civil Rights' probation agreement into 24 months made this corrupt commissioner absolutely giddy he could so easily abuse his power and status without proper jurisprudence oversight in Judge Bush's Court.



Sophocleus revisits "Malice in Hubbardland."

The *hamming it up* chapter of our 'Malice in Hubbardland' novel in Lee County now unfolds as Commissioner Robert Ham is immersed in a rock quarry scandal. In one of his many 'Judas Rhetoric' moments espousing he cares about the goodness of Lee County to cover his avarice, Ham promised he was '**all in**' fighting against the quarry but appears to have some business relationship with the endeavour. Full of hubris (with a few of his most supportive minions) they arrogantly claim they are elected to do things of this sort and if not re-elected (fat chance in this uncompetitive State which protects Republicrats) they'll be fine with knowing they were trying to 'do right.' When voters tell them not to do something, they simply have a low turnout, poorly advertised special election to get their minions to carry the day. Felon Hubbard was re-elected when anyone who wanted to see could determine what sort of public servant this felon had become.

Forecasting the Lee County DA's office will grow increasingly corrupt and our State Ethics Commission proving itself a failure (at best) these past years or (at worst) part of the corruption; what does Commissioner Ham have to worry about? I expect to see more Felon Hubbard type 'hamming it up' outcomes in Lee County if there are no political consequences to suffer. Most disturbing Judges like Bush and Walker I once held in high regard are aiding and abetting this public servant's (Ham) corruption and reducing the sentences of a convicted serial felon when the people are trying to discipline Ham and Hubbard types in the courts where the duopoly ballot box is so clearly failing.

**Postscript:** was pleased so many readers contacted me to applaud one of the most corrupt Deans I suffered at AU is finally gone as an administrator. Some recall I devoted much to get a lawsuit in federal court to expose this Dean's actions against an English Instructor my eldest Goddaughter held dear. After revealing this public servant's character/integrity under deposition, the University settled but allowed this Dean to remain in position to promote even more first amendment civil right violations evidenced by current federal lawsuits where this Dean is a named defendant. A few months ago I wrote it was long overdue for President Gogue to remove administrators of this sort in spite of his disdain for micromanaging. Now it is time to remove lieutenants who've aided and abetted these violations along with lower level administrators/minions exacerbating the observed 'Ugliest Pillage on the Plains' result. If Pres. Gogue removes enough of these malefactors, the future may again become bright for AU. Commissioner Ham threatened me after exposing a dirty laundry list of past and recent corruption in my 3 minutes allowed to address commissioners. Seems our civil rights in Lee County are trod upon equally by corrupt County commissioners to our largest Lee County employers like AU rife with First Amendment lawsuits and EAMC the commission fails to engage in their oversight role and kites bonds to pay settlements for lawsuits. Felon Hubbard is in prison... plenty more big weeds to remove before their growth chokes us.

Lee County Commissioner Robert Ham being sworn in. Source: Facebook

## "The Informed Southerner"

# DAVIS, O'CONNOR, AND THE RIGHT OF SELF-GOVERNMENT

July is an important month in the American Republic. Longstanding traditions surrounding the 4th inspire many individuals to be thankful they are Americans. Holiday celebrations often include fireworks, flags, barbecues, and other activities.

**After the 1776 Declaration of Independence and a bloody war, the colonies successfully seceded from the British Empire. At the war's conclusion, the 1783 Treaty of Paris, defined the parties to the agreement: Great Britain on one side and thirteen "free, sovereign and independent states..." on the other. A confederation of distinct, independent States was created – not a nation.**

Jefferson Davis was not generally considered to be an expert politician (such as Lincoln, who possessed cunning and a natural ability to manipulate matters as he felt necessary for his benefit). Davis was a man devoted to principle and to the tenets of the Declaration. He was a devotee of agrarianism and possessed full understanding of true federalism, State Sovereignty, and "government by consent." Davis had an intellectual depth that Lincoln lacked.

After the South failed to gain its independence, much attention was focused on apprehending Davis, as the President of the Confederate States of America. Davis was captured near Irwinville, Georgia, May 10, 1865, by troops from the Fourth Michigan. He was sent to Fort Monroe, Virginia, where he was held in a damp casement and initially placed in leg irons. Davis faced torrid and often absurd accusations from the Northern press concerning leading a "rebellion," authorizing mistreatment of Union prisoners, and plotting to assassinate Lincoln. Over time, outrage from the Northern public helped get the shackles off Davis and have him moved to a more humane environment. Davis was held captive for two years.

During his confinement, Davis repeatedly asked for a trial. He wanted the courts to validate the voluntary and consensual nature of government and the fact the sovereign States of the South did not commit treason. In creating the Confederate States of America, eleven Southern States called conventions and/or held popular votes to determine whether or not remaining in the old union was to their benefit—they decided it was not. (Virginia, Arkansas, Tennessee, and North Carolina left after Lincoln called for 75,000 troops to invade the original seven seceding States.)

The situation with Jefferson Davis caught the eye of renowned New York Attorney, Charles O'Connor, who knew a winning case when he saw one. There were numerous angles available to O'Connor in his defense of Davis. First of all, the recently "passed" Fourteenth Amendment (it is very likely this legislation was not legally passed) could be used to show that, by being disallowed from holding public office, Davis had already been punished. Also, since the Southern States voluntarily left the Union, Davis was not actually a U.S. citizen and could not have committed treason. Of course, had Lincoln been alive he would have disagreed. In his warped "soviet-styled" logic, Lincoln claimed the Southern States did not literally leave the Union (he claimed they were merely "out of their practical relationship") and they had no right to self-determination without permission from the other States.

Another development involved the 1866 publication of *Is Davis a Traitor?* by Albert Taylor Bledsoe (perhaps food for a future article). Bledsoe was a

respected lawyer, mathematics professor, Episcopalian priest (and later a Methodist minister), and ex-Confederate officer. In his book, he referenced the commentary of the Founders to show the federal government was a creature of the States and the union was formed under compact. The massive documentation in this book caused distress in federal government prosecutorial circles.

Yet another option for the defense of Davis involved Philadelphia Attorney William Rawle's 1829 book, *A View of the Constitution*. This text was used for several years at West Point; in the book, Rawle stressed, "The Secession of a state from the union depends on the will of the people of such state." The States possess ultimate sovereignty and it is up the people (and their representatives) of those States to decide which government they wish to be a part of.

After serving as U.S. Secretary of the Treasury under Lincoln, Salmon P. Chase served as the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court from December 15, 1864 through May 7, 1873. Chase was apprehensive about the entire Davis situation. (Chase allegedly passed the 14th Amendment defense option to O'Connor.) In correspondence with U.S. Secretary of War Edwin Stanton, Chase stated: "If you bring these leaders to trial. It will condemn the North, for by the Constitution, secession is not rebellion... His (Davis) capture was a mistake. His trial will be a greater one. We cannot convict him of treason." Judge Franz Lieber (Lieber Code) concluded that "After studying more than 270,000 Confederate documents, seeking evidence against Davis, the court discouraged the War Department: 'Davis will be found not guilty,' and we shall stand there completely beaten."

Jefferson Davis wanted a trial, he refused a pardon, and he said he would do it all over again. Davis was correct on every count--needless to say, the trial of Jefferson Davis never happened.

Sources: *Is Davis a Traitor?*, by Albert Taylor Bledsoe; *The Long Surrender*, by Burke Davis; *A View of the Constitution*, by William Rawle; *Southern Heritage411.com*; *Union At All Costs: From Confederation to Consolidation*, by John M. Taylor.

**EDITOR'S NOTE: We apologize as the very beginning of John Taylor's article in the June issue was omitted. To read the complete article, please visit [www.AlabamaGazette.com](http://www.AlabamaGazette.com) and download the June 2021 PDF.**

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## Is INFLATION FINALLY HERE?

The 12-month change in the Consumer Price Index (CPI) exceeded 4 percent in April for the first time since 2008. Many economists have been predicting inflation following a 25 percent increase in the money supply in Spring 2020. Has inflation finally arrived?

**Daniel Sutter**

Inflation was a major issue in the 1970s and early 1980s. We experienced double-digit inflation between 1974 and 1981, hitting 14 percent in 1980. The U.S. has dramatically reduced inflation since then.

Economists distinguish between inflation, an increase in the prices of most goods and services, and changes in relative prices, where selected goods become more expensive. A “pure” inflation would be a nearly simultaneous equal percentage increase in all prices (including wages).

Inflation is costly and avoidable while relative price changes signal changes in demand or supply. Consider lumber, which has experienced a significant price increase. Lumber production capacity fell after the housing boom ended in 2007 and the pandemic temporarily disrupted production. Demand increased due to DIY projects during the shutdown and new housing construction.

Lumber’s high price is painful but useful. The market is telling people to use less lumber until production increases. Efficient markets require changes in relative prices.

COVID-19 and government responses have produced numerous economic dislocations. For example, online school instruction increased demand for computer chips for laptops. Meat packing plants were virus hotspots. And tariffs from the trade war with China have boosted some prices.

Inflation is very different; as economist Milton Friedman observed: “Inflation is everywhere and always a monetary phenomenon.” In the U.S., the Federal Reserve generates inflation.

The Quantity Theory of Money holds that under certain conditions, the money supply and the price level change proportionally. A doubling of the money supply doubles prices. This explains why many economists think 2020’s money supply increase must portend inflation.

Except the Federal Reserve doubled the monetary base, which ends up determining the money supply, during the Financial Crisis in 2008 (the monetary base increased 50 percent in 2020). Free market and Austrian economists predicted significant inflation. Austrian economist Robert Murphy of the Contra Krugman podcast bet economist David Henderson in 2008 that inflation would top 10 percent in 2013 (and lost). An enormous monetary supply increase never produced inflation.

Why? For one, banks began holding excess reserves instead of loaning out all available funds. The Federal Reserve started paying interest on banks’ reserves in 2008, which coincides with banks holding excess reserves. Yet the interest paid on reserves has been very low, so other factors may be driving excess reserves.

Personally, I think the bigger story than inflation over the past year is the emergence of a shortage economy. From cars to chlorine to dog food, many things are not available for purchase.

We are suffering shortages instead of price hikes. General Motors could raise the prices of new Blazers and Corvettes, two models on significant back-order, to bring the number of buyers in line with this year’s reduced production, or “clear” such markets. Price increases to clear markets would have driven the CPI much higher.

When economists refer to prices, we mean market-clearing prices. Market-clearing prices ensure the availability of goods for purchase today if needed, albeit at high prices. Prices which do not clear markets are not meaningful, as an old debating trick illustrates.

In the 1980s, socialists argued that essential consumer goods were more affordable in the Soviet Union than the U.S. But the comparison was bogus. The Soviets had government-set prices, with goods frequently not available at official prices. U.S. stores were brimming with goods for purchase at market-clearing prices.

The current hike in the CPI may be due to COVID-19 economic dislocations and not a general inflation. Yet the price increases we have not experienced are a bigger story. The CPI is misleading when the items you want to buy are always “temporarily out of stock.”

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## CHANGE AGENT OR CONFORMIST – A NEW LINE IN THE SAND

Your silence is not only viewed as an endorsement, but adversarial notions will prevail with no visible opposition. A Change Agent has their finger in the dyke, while a Conformist runs for cover. The human body has been divinely created with adrenal glands, producing the natural chemical Adrenaline, which triggers the flight or fight reactions. America was born out of opposition to Great Britain’s overreach; America can be defeated without the first shot being fired. Nikita Khrushchev, former Premier of the Soviet Union, made a chilling prediction, “we will take America without firing the first shot.” He was talking about unleashing Marxist Leninist Communism into our country, eroding us from within. Friends, we need to be sober and vigilant, America is now under attack.

A new term that has recently emerged publicly is “Critical Race Theory (CRT),” however it has been around since the late 1970’s. CRT has two pillars. First, if you were born Caucasian, you are automatically labeled a white supremacist and guilty of invoking systemic racism and intentionally suppressing minorities on every front. The second pillar is the U.S. Constitution is now labeled a racist document. The CRT prescription is a reset strategy, promoting a modern day racial emancipation. The modern day emancipation is to procure economic (reparations), social and political rights or equality for a specifically proposed fabricated disenfranchised sector. It is another product of a mass shake-down. Wow, how does American history square with the prevailing CRT notion; electing Barak Hussein Obama II, a black man for two terms as President of the United States, with blacks representing 13.4% of our population? It took white people to elect and reelect Obama. Am I on drugs or seriously confused!

CRT is now being supercharged by Biden, the Democrat Party, Black Lives Matter (BLM), the liberal and social media, and of course, Hollywood. Every sector of our society is now facing the mounting pressure to kneel and obey this new world order of thinking. K-12 and higher education, the Department of Defense, other cabinet led agencies, publicly traded Trans-national companies and the list goes on of institutions being held hostage by this new pandemic, CRT. Individuals, government leaders and corporations who endorse CRT are now defined with a new term, “Woke.” Every hamlet in every village will be impacted by CRT, soon to show up on your door step. Are you going to be a Change Agent or Conformist, let’s look at three examples of being a Change Agent?

Captain Matthew Lomeir, United States Space Force, who earned a stellar military record, was fired and removed from his command after challenging the new Biden DOD CRT training, citing it is rooted in Marxism. He maintained Marxism is in direct conflict with the U.S. Constitution, which every soldier is sworn to protect. Jessica Mendez, a Loudon County Virginia mother of two, strongly criticized the curriculum being taught, brainwashing her children against America and the Constitution. Several families have joined her in this plight and have been met at every station in life being accosted, bullied, protested at their homes and called racists. CJ Pearson, a black University of Alabama student speaks out against CRT, now dominating the UA and other

campuses across the country. A First Amendment lawsuit has been filed against The University of Alabama. There are scores and scores of examples throughout the country, but these three examples is where average citizens, in the comfort of their life, have been battered and challenged to the point of taking action, what about you? Where these three stood up to Goliath, a 100 more will go down on their knees and conform to weakness. WOKE Corporations knee jerk funding for BLM, allowed co-founder Patrisse Collins to spend millions on personal homes, and yes she is a self-proclaimed Marxist. Friends, this is exactly what Khrushchev predicted decades ago, the CRT is a tool of Marxist Leninist Communism seeking to erode America by taking out the Constitution.

In the strongest possible terms, one cannot discount or underestimate the lethal and effective strategy of the CRT, eating away at the fabric of our nation like hungry moths. Since our inception 245 years ago, the fine thread that has held this nation together is the Separation of Powers Doctrine and the Bill of Rights, both deeply embedded in our U.S. Constitution. This is why leftist groups constantly advocate rewriting the constitution, which has been a trusted firewall, brilliantly designed by our founding fathers. Nancy Pelosi and company are not only tearing up the State of the Union Speech on live TV, but their endorsement of the CRT will shred the constitution before our eyes, unless challenged by the boy’s finger is in the dyke. Will that be you?

There are multiple erosions today decaying the fabric of our great country, however the Critical Race Theory is being unleashed like a Trojan horse in America and it is now on your doorstep about to ring your door bell. My friendly suggestion is for every economic, social, moral, and constitutional conservative family get well acquainted with this subject, as if preparing for a national televised debate. Know more than your opponent about American History, the Constitution and the Marxist origins of the Critical Race Theory. There are so many conservative resources in your reach, just to name a few: Breitbart, Gateway Pundit, Revolver News and The National Pulse. Knowledge is power my friends, don’t get caught on the battlefield without ammunition to back up your constitutional position.

There is war going on for the heart and soul of our country. Our Constitution, the Bill of Rights, particularly the First Amendment, which was designed by our founding fathers to protect us from an overreaching Federal Government, is under siege. It is the Alamo! It is not a matter if you will come face to face with this fierce CRT debate; it is when it happens. Be Ready!

One with courage and a made up mind is a majority, others will follow your lead. There is a line being drawn in the sand which will affect every American. Will you carry the torch or let the wind blow it out? Will you preserve the blessings of liberty to our posterity, or will you kneel down and sell generations to come into the slavery of Marxist Communism? Please remember, our known enemies, China and Russia, both Communist countries, greatly benefit from the effect of the CRT unleashed in America.

***Will you be a Change Agent or Conformist? Fight or flight?***

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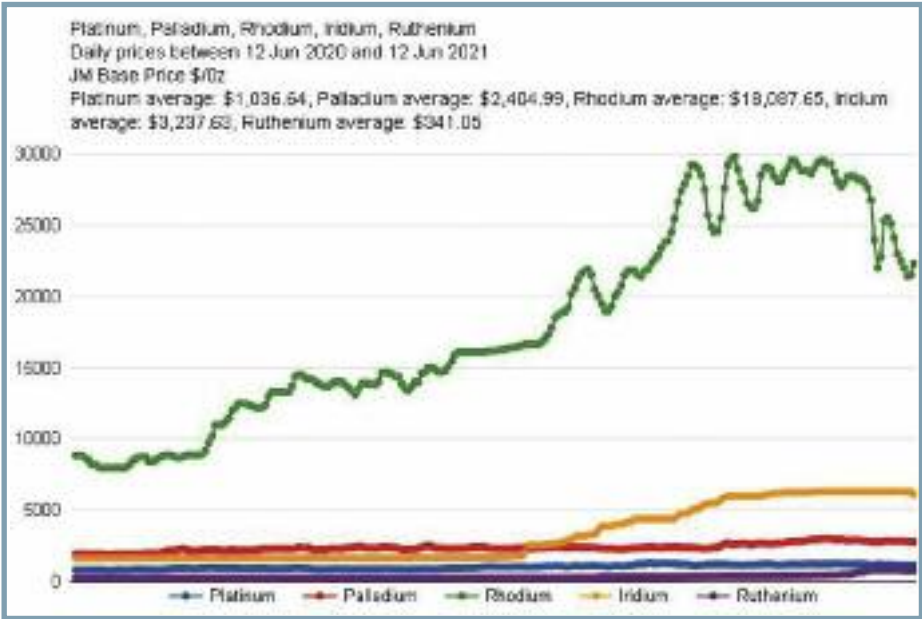
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# The PGM Dilemma

What are PGMs, you ask?

They are platinum group metals. There are six of them—ruthenium, rhodium, palladium, osmium, iridium, and platinum. They are noble metals—highly resistant to corrosion, acids, and decomposition. Like gold, they are also very rare—the rarest and least abundant stable metals in the Earth’s crust. Here they are listed in milligrams per kilogram (below right).

44 <b>Ru</b> 1 x 10 <sup>-3</sup> Ruthenium	45 <b>Rh</b> 1 x 10 <sup>-3</sup> Rhodium	46 <b>Pd</b> 1.5 x 10 <sup>-3</sup> Palladium
76 <b>Os</b> 1.5 x 10 <sup>-3</sup> Osmium	77 <b>Ir</b> 1 x 10 <sup>-3</sup> Iridium	78 <b>Pt</b> 5 x 10 <sup>-3</sup> Platinum



PGM price hikes are not about to stop. Consumption is likely to escalate for the foreseeable future as China and India (with over a billion people each) buy and drive increasing quantities of automobiles, and government regulations push for more and more extreme air pollution control mandates.

In spite of the runaway demand, PGM production is not increasing. With the exception of a single mine in Canada, they are by-products of nickel and copper smelting and processing. Most PGMs come from a single source, the Bushveld complex in troubled South Africa, which produces over 75% of the world’s annual supply. Russia’s Norilsk, Canada’s Sudbury deposits, and Zimbabwe provide most of the remainder.

The annual global production of palladium is only 207 tonnes (metric tons), platinum 192 tonnes, ruthenium 30 tonnes, rhodium 28 tonnes, iridium 3 to 4 tonnes, and osmium less than a tonne. There is no practical way to materially increase the production of any of these over a long period.

Of course, old catalytic converters are recycled. Scrap processors pay very good prices for them—so good that converter theft has become a chronic problem in many cities. With battery-powered reciprocating saws, thieves raid parking lots and steal hundreds. Replacing them nationwide costs millions of dollars.

Even when converters are recycled, a 100% PGM recovery is impossible. During normal use, bits of the catalyst shake loose and are scattered along the highways. In the recycling process, additional losses take place via careless handling. Also, an unknown number of converters not removed from scrapped cars go directly to the crushers and shredders, causing their PGMs to be mixed into the scrap steel and therefore lost. After a few generations, a substantial portion of our PGMs will become scattered across the planet in microscopic particles that are impossible to recover—just about the time when the world’s mines begin to run out.

How do we solve this dilemma? First, let’s ask ourselves, “Are catalytic converters really necessary?” And are there any substitutes for PGMs in them? They have only been around for a few decades. Before that time, automobiles did not have them, and we still had reasonably clean air.

Somewhere, we must respect the law of diminishing returns and stop regulating our industry and citizens to death by attempting to eliminate that last smidgen of effluents that are but a small percentage of what nature pours out with thunderstorms and volcanoes. Never forget the catastrophic damage the EPA did to Volkswagen for “cheating” to enhance its fuel economy by releasing a few extra milligrams of nitrogen oxides.

Catalytic converters also have other problems. In addition to the costly thefts and associated crime, converters are guilty of starting wildfires. I don’t even have to get started on explaining how destructive these can be.

Because of their extreme scarcity, production of PGMs is likely to decline in a few years. Combined with vastly increased consumption, the future of adequate supplies is grim. After a few generations, with our PGMs consumed and dispersed, we will be unable to provide even the catalytic demands of essential industries. Once that happens, unless non-PGM catalysts can be developed in the future, numerous segments of economies around the world will irreparably suffer.

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John Martin

Below, they are listed in parts per billion. Two sources show considerable disagreement on some of them. The discrepancy on platinum is huge, and I cannot explain why.

### PGM Abundance – Parts per billion

<b>Ru</b>	<b>1.0</b>	<b>1.0</b>
<b>Rh</b>	<b>0.7</b>	<b>1.0</b>
<b>Pd</b>	<b>6.3</b>	<b>15.0</b>
<b>Os</b>	<b>1.8</b>	<b>1.5</b>
<b>Ir</b>	<b>0.4</b>	<b>1.0</b>
<b>Pt</b>	<b>37.0</b>	<b>5.0</b>

Of these six, platinum and palladium are the most abundant and also the most familiar. They are widely used in jewelry, industrial equipment, and catalysts. These two also have lower melting points than the others and are reasonably easy to fabricate. Also, both of them are readily available as investment coins and bars.

The other four—ruthenium, rhodium, osmium, and iridium, are hard and have extremely high melting points—some not a great deal lower than tungsten. They are very difficult to fabricate and are normally used in specialized applications. Investment bars of any of these are extremely hard to find (for rhodium and iridium) and probably impossible (for ruthenium and osmium).

However, they are often used as alloying agents. An alloy of 90% platinum and 10% iridium is a standard for most platinum jewelry. Because of its near zero thermal expansion, this alloy was also used for the Bureau of Standards’ kilogram and meter bar.

Because of its brightness and hardness, rhodium is plated onto silver rings to prevent tarnishing and onto “white gold” to make it white. To be honest, there is no such thing as white gold. It is typically alloyed with platinum and/or palladium to make it somewhat white, but true whiteness comes from a plating of rhodium. This can be problematic when a ring must be re-sized or whenever the rhodium plating wears off after long or hard use. Today, platinum is much less costly than gold. If you want a white metal, buy platinum (the tried and true 90% Pt/10% Ir alloy) instead of “white gold.”

In recent years, because of an increased interest in element collecting, several companies have begun producing one centimeter density cubes of many elements. Cubes of the more common ones can be purchased on eBay and other online sites for a few dollars each. But precious metals are obviously pricey. Those that are also difficult to fabricate are even pricier. A serious collector who wants a set of the six PGMs will have to shell out thousands of dollars. Here is a one centimeter cube of iridium. It weighs 22.65 grams, about two thirds of a troy ounce.

### Iridium Mirror Cube 99.95%

\$9,000.00

This metal is twice as heavy as lead but is unfortunately a property very few people will get the chance to experience. You see, Iridium is breathtakingly rare and expensive. That it is mined at all is really only due to it riding shotgun as a minor "contaminant" of other precious metals, particularly platinum-bearing ores.

Most of the annual supply of iridium is turned into crucibles: shot glass-shaped molds that can withstand extremely high temperatures without melting or corroding. These crucibles are bank-breakingly expensive acquisitions for even well-funded laboratories... not exactly the type of item you expect to find on eBay.

Iridium is also notoriously difficult to work with. The metal refuses to melt (which again explains why they'd be made into crucibles) so shaping it requires special methods. While not brittle it is nevertheless very inelastic. An imaginary lengthy bar made of pure Iridium could be made and when held up would shatter under its own weight rather than bend even a little.



Now what is the dilemma concerning PGMs? Recently, huge quantities of rhodium, palladium and platinum are being swallowed at record levels to satisfy the exploding demand for catalytic converters, which now consume about 77 percent of the world’s supply. Producing them, of course, has pushed PGM prices to astronomical levels. A few years ago, palladium stood at about \$700 per ounce. Now it has quadrupled to about \$2800. Rhodium has

shot up from about \$1100 up to a recent record high of (are you ready for a shock?) \$29,800 per ounce this past March 22. (No, the \$29,800 is not a typo). Today (June 12), it has slipped back to \$22,750. And just since the beginning of this year, Iridium has jumped from about \$2000 up to \$6000. This chart shows the steep increases over a single year.



Republican State Executive Committee  
Former State Representative

## A Six Trillion Dollar Budget is Complete Insanity

President Biden and the Democrats led by Chairman of the Senate Budget Committee, self-avowed Socialist Bernie Sanders, have proposed an unbelievable \$6 trillion budget for fiscal year 2022. This budget would have the federal government spend more as a share of the economy than at any other time since World War II

when we were fighting for our survival as a country. According to the non-partisan Tax Foundation this level of spending would immediately slash economic growth while killing tens of thousands of private sector jobs. This is fine with the leftist Democrats in Washington.

The fiscal 2022 budget request, the first of Biden's presidency, lines up all the socialist programs of the Democrat Party. The \$2.5 trillion American Jobs Plan, the \$1.9 trillion American Families Plan are incorporated into Biden's \$1.6 trillion request for annual operating expenditures for all government agencies. This represents nothing short of a complete transformation of government’s role in the economy. The long time goal of Socialist Bernie Sanders is finally being realized, economic dominance of the American economy.

Despite all this new government spending, the Pentagon is a mere after-thought. A dwindling budget will force the Navy to cut construction of next-generation warships and weapons, according to a memo by acting secretary Thomas W. Harker. Proposed cuts in the defense budget, will put much-needed upgrades for the Navy on the back burner. The proposal forces the Navy to cut 11 battle-ready ships and shrinks funds put aside to build boats and weapons by

more than 5 percent. These cuts come at a time when the Chinese are massively building up their naval capacities. The budget signals a complete reversal of President Donald Trump's plans to grow the fleet significantly, with one Trump administration plan calling for 500 vessels by 2045. Defense is of so little importance to Joe Biden, that he has not yet announced whom he will nominate for Secretary of the Navy. The Biden administration instead of protecting our homeland wants to invest in domestic programs such as universal Pre-K.

As is the mindset of today’s Democrat Joe Biden has never seen a tax that he did not want to increase. His budget proposal calls for the highest corporate tax rates in the developed world. He also calls for higher capital gains taxes and the reinstatement of the aptly named death tax. This tax will not allow family farms and small businesses to be passed on to the next generation. This is not a problem to the progressive Democrat Party that favors socialism over capitalism.

Under Biden’s programs, even with massive tax increases total public debt will soon surpass the annual value of GDP. This is what happened to once prosperous Venezuela. No economy in history has ever recovered when debt exceeds output. As Senator Lindsey Graham stated: “This tax and spend budget will break the back of our economy and will destroy future generations’ ability to achieve the American dream.”

We must do everything in our power to stop this insanity in the 2022 election cycle. If we do not, we will be at the point of no return.

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



# Support local Law Enforcement



**Sheriff Derrick Cunningham**



## Montgomery County, Ala. Sheriff's Office

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*Please continue to wear masks when visiting the Sheriff's Office if at all possible. Thank you!*

### Social Media



#### Social Media

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Twitter

#### Search

Sheriff of Montgomery Alabama  
Mcsoal  
[mcso.alabama](http://mcso.alabama)  
MG\_Twitter

### COURTHOUSE ANNEX I CONSTRUCTION

As renovations progress on Montgomery County Annex I, located at 100 S. Lawrence Street, the public entrance and security screening will temporarily move to the entrance on Adams Street between Lawrence Street and Perry Street.

**The Montgomery County Commission will no longer require masks to be worn inside Montgomery County Offices.**

Commissioners are strongly encouraging the public and employees to exercise personal responsibility and continue to wash hands, practice physical distancing, and wear masks when appropriate.

(Note: some offices still might request mask wearing at their discretion)

### Sheriff's Office App

If you haven't already heard, the Montgomery County Sheriff's Office has a phone app called "Montgomery County AL Sheriff" that 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:

- 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"

You should be all set to receive the Montgomery County Sheriff's Office push notifications!



**Chief Deputy Kevin J. Murphy**

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Sheriff Joe Sedinger



### Remembering Young Lives

On the afternoon of Saturday, June 19, 2021, a tragic vehicle accident occurred on Interstate 65 in Butler County, claiming the lives of 10 people. Two of these were a father and infant daughter from Tennessee. The remaining victims were from the Alabama Sheriffs' Girls Ranch in Tallapoosa County.

The Alabama Gazette wishes to extend its heartfelt prayers to all of those affected by this horrible situation, including the families, friends and first responders.

The following is from the Tallapoosa County Sheriff's Girls Ranch Facebook page and Go Fund Me account:

The Tallapoosa Co. Girl's Ranch suffered a devastating loss on June 19, 2021. One of our vehicles was involved in a multi-car accident in Greenville, Alabama that took the lives of eight of our precious girls, staff member's children, and relatives. We are raising money to help with funeral related expenses, medical costs for the injured and counseling for the others of this devastating event.

More information about Boys & Girls Ranches of Alabama: We provide loving, supportive homes for abandoned, abused and neglected children at four locations throughout the state. We provide these boys and girls with all the necessities plus education, basic and independent living skills so they will be prepared for adulthood after leaving our care. Our supporters help us raise Alabama's needy children into successful adults. Thank you for considering making a donation to the children!

Please consider donating here: <https://www.gofundme.com/f/tallapoosa-co-girls-ranch>

Our hearts are heavy today. Our ranch has suffered great loss. As some of you may have heard, one of our ranch vehicles was involved a multiple car accident this afternoon. Please send prayers our way as we navigate this difficult time. We will update information as we are able, and if you have any questions feel free to contact us. Thank you for your thoughts and prayers and respecting the privacy of our large and extended families.

~ Tallapoosa County Sheriff's Girls Ranch



Please Join The Alabama Sheriffs Youth Ranch Family on July 15, 2021

for

A Celebration of Life  
Memorial Service  
Honoring

The Eight Children Who Are Now In Our  
Savior's Presence

Church of the Highlands - Auburn East  
2001 East Samford Avenue  
Auburn, AL 36830

1:00 P.M.

Public is welcome to come rejoice with our Ranch Family

"He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away."  
Revelation 21:4



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Micah Messer

SPECIAL GUEST COMMENTARY

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# The Truth About Critical Race Theory

**Critical Race Theory at its face is racism and a violation of our Constitution.** The United States started as a country with many different people and different cultures. Our history has dark elements, specifically slavery, something everyone should recognize and be willing to face. However, our history does not define our present. Instead, we should study history so we may avoid its pitfalls. Unfortunately, for many in our higher education institutions and government it is being ignored. Yet again, we are facing racism in this country.

Racism has no place in our country. Critical Race Theory also has no place in our country. Our Declaration of Independence from the British Empire gives all men equality: “We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights...” It took many years and the blood of hundreds of thousands of men and women to bring these rights to all.

Marxism in the form of race classes has begun to seep its way into American life. The 13th, 14th, 15th, and 19th Amendments to the Constitution; the Civil Rights Act of 1964; and the Voting Rights Act of 1965 explicitly give all men and women, without regard to race, the Rights guaranteed in the Constitution and the high ideals of the Declaration of Independence. Critical Race Theory, otherwise known as racism, seeks to strip these away from anyone considered not a minority.

Critical Race Theory argues that the systems of governance, the ideals of the Republic, are at its roots racist. The problem with this idea is it is simply

not true. It uses the same concepts outlined by Carl Marx’s pamphlet *The Communist Manifesto* by replacing the “working class” with “race class.” Instead of the working class attempting to overthrow the “boot” of the Capitalists, it is the “minority class” attempting to overthrow the “boot” of the “majority class.”

Racism exists, yes, but our Republic form of government is not built on the predication of racism but rather on the ideals of the Declaration of Independence. Critical Race Theory seeks to bring down equality and our form of government and re-create it into a socialistic society; much like those of the failed Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, Cuba, and China where hundreds of millions of people were killed over the last couple hundred years.

Critical Race Theory teaches that all whites are guilty, that they should be removed from any form of power. Critical Race Theory states all whites are, by their very nature, racist and if you deny this, you are more guilty by

trying to cover it up. Critical Race Theory is contrary to everything our Country and State stands for. It should be fought in the halls of government; it should be fought in the classrooms of our schools; and, with all effort, it should be fought in the discourse of our public squares. Critical race theory is wrong, it is evil, and it is racism.

Micah Messer is a Smiths Station Resident, a Veteran, and an IT Professional.



## WHAT EAGLE FORUM IS DOING ...ALABAMA STATE SCHOOL BOARD

Eagle Forum and Alabama Policy Institute offered a resolution to the Alabama State School Board banning concepts of Critical Race Theory (CRT). Please be sure to read the short cover letters [below] from Eagle Forum and API which provide the rationale for the resolution. The state school board will review this resolution along with others offered at their July meeting. They are expected to vote on a resolution to address CRT at the August meeting. Please call or email your Alabama State School Board member and ask him/her to review, discuss and support the Eagle Forum/Alabama Policy Institute resolution.

### STOP CRT AT THE LOCAL LEVEL

It's important that we address CRT at the state level; however, the Biden administration is setting up grant applications for local systems that will require CRT and revisionist history like The 1619 Project . We have made it easy for you to help stop CRT at the local level. You can print and offer our local school board CRT resolution to your own local school board. All you need to do is add in your school system's name. The rest is done for you!

### OTHER CRT RESOURCES

- Briefing book: [http://christopherrufo.com/CRT-BRIEFING-BOOK?MC\\_CID=340FBEAFE6&MC\\_EID=0CC763C62A](http://christopherrufo.com/CRT-BRIEFING-BOOK?MC_CID=340FBEAFE6&MC_EID=0CC763C62A)
- AG Marshall joins 20 States AGs in Opposing funding for Critical Race Theory in Schools: <https://psd-to-wp.us2.list-manage.com/track/click?u=8f701b9034681ec30d1f1103b&id=dce1112cec&e=0f0d0a1060>
- Biden Set to Push Critical Race Theory on U.S. Schools: [https://www.nationalreview.com/corner/biden-set-to-push-critical-race-theory-on-u-s-schools/?utm\\_source=recirc-desktop&utm\\_medium=homepage&utm\\_campaign=right-rail&utm\\_content=corner&utm\\_term=first](https://www.nationalreview.com/corner/biden-set-to-push-critical-race-theory-on-u-s-schools/?utm_source=recirc-desktop&utm_medium=homepage&utm_campaign=right-rail&utm_content=corner&utm_term=first)
- BOOK: *Faultlines: The Social Justice Movement and Evangelicalism's Looming Catastrophe* by Dr. Voddie Baucham: <https://www.voddiebaucham.org/fault-lines/>
- BOOK: *Be The People* by Dr. Carol Swain: <https://carolmswain.com/books/>

**ATTEND AN EF MEETING:** <https://alabamaeagle.org/events/>







**Stan Hurst**  
Associate Sports Writer

*a confession, I have a granddaughter playing for LAMP. I went to many tournaments and various games. I got to talk to fans and coaches, umpires and sportscasters. I witnessed amazing athleticism that will surely carry some of the players to the college level.*

I was one of the scorekeepers for the regional tournament held at Lagoon Park here in Montgomery. That was an amazing experience and a lot of hard work. I was assigned to Field 5 and ran the board and kept score for every game played on it. I had several teams of sportscasters and journalists that worked beside me, and I got to know them. Some were full-time professionals and some were what I'll call "bi-vocational" sportscasters. These guys were every bit as good as the other professional teams of sports people. The team from the Columbiana was lots of fun to work with and to see just how polished they were. I was fascinated with their technical prowess. It seems they were missing an important cable when they were setting up their gear. Not to be defeated, they strapped cables and headphones and a Mac together; their work would have made NASA proud.

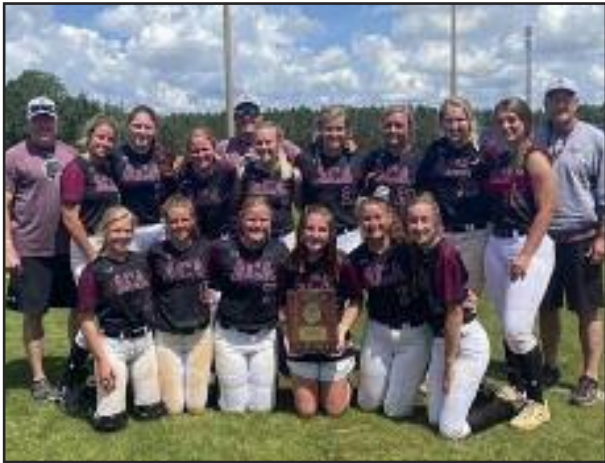
During the regional tournament I witnessed a pitcher have a 14-strikeout game. I watched as a third basewoman hit back-to-back homeruns and then received two intentional walks at her next two plate appearances. Additionally, I can't say enough good things about the staff at Lagoon Park. These folks were great to work with and really know how to host a softball tournament. I saw the grounds crew turn a soggy mess into a playable infield in just under an hour. Since I had Field 5, I was responsible for every game played. The grounds crew could rake and restripe the field quicker than I could get down the three flights of steps for a much-needed break. I was amazed at the can-do attitude of the team inside the tower; they served us well.

High school softball players are very serious athletes. Many if not most of them work year-round on their craft. Practice, working out, private coaching instructions, playing full summer and fall seasons, and playing on travel teams. These are comprised of real serious players and coaches and managers and parents, sacrificing time and treasure to make this all happen.



*This Young Lady (left) is Emily Needham; daughter of Audra and Rob Needham, she plays for the St. James Trojans of Montgomery. She is a true phenome at 12 years old (13) now and is a starting pitcher for the Trojans. She has a cadra of pitches and rockets a 60+ mile per hour fastball. I watched her pitch a complete game against LAMP and won 2 to 1. A real nail biter. I've seen her rack up strikeouts against some fierce competition. Emily possesses great poise and no moment seems too big for her. While St. James did not make the tournament this year, we can expect big things from St. James softball next season.*

*(right) Alabama Christian Academy played through a very competitive 4A Regional in Gulf Shores; ultimately winning and going on to the State Championship in Oxford, Ala. The State Championship was ultimately by Rogers High school from Florence, Ala.*



# From Pigskins to Rawhides

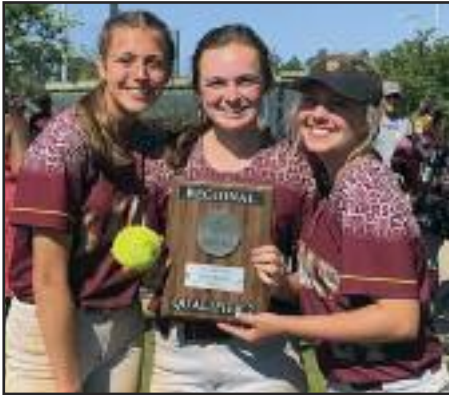
The views of this editorial may not express the views of The Alabama Gazette.



## Finally a complete Softball Season in 2021

*These young yadies are part of the LAMP softball team that finished in the runner-up position at the regionals held in Gulf Shores, and earned a place in the State Tournament. Important to note that Catlin Russell is an extraordinarily talented pitcher. And we're looking forward to their collective Senior season next year. The two teams from Montgomery that made it to the 4A Championship in Oxford were ACA and LAMP.*

*From left to right: Gracie Norris, Catlin Russell and Chandler Ming*



### Montgomery Area Softball Round-up top ten finish by Division:

- 5A Tallassee second (25-8-2) Elmore County third (26-9) Brewbaker Tech. finished fourth (22-7)
- 4A LAMP finished seventh (20-7) St. James tenth (17-6)
- 3A Prattville Christian finished number One -State Champion (23-6)
- 1A Brantley landed first place (19-8)

### C'mon, Montgomery, let's Play Ball better!

I should note with great concern that Montgomery has lost the opportunity to host the Softball Championship series. Oxford, Ala., hosted this year and will, by contract, host it next year as well. The AHSSA had asked Montgomery to make improvements to our Lagoon Park. Since Montgomery wasn't "listening" we lost the opportunity to host this great event. Now this championship series has been hosted in Montgomery continuously beginning in 1976! So how in the world did Montgomery lose it? The blame falls upon the previous administration and other elected leaders.

I spoke to an AHSSA official while working the regional championship series at Lagoon Park. The reason is straight forward: needed improvements have not been made to Lagoon Park. Over the past 20 years Lagoon, which is our park, has needed upgrades, and these have not been accomplished. I have to ask the question: how is it that Oxford Alabama can have the desire and financial commitment to build a state of art softball facility and Montgomery did not? Its leadership, that's the answer. Montgomery City Government in the prior administration ran rabbits and either overlooked, or simply did not care enough to upgrade Lagoon Park.

As far as Lagoon Park fields, the playing surfaces are exceptional as are the team and leaders tasked with keeping them so. However, it is set up for Men's Softball, with deep outfields to accommodate adult play. When High School softball games are played on it, temporary fences are set up. Calling them temporary fences is really misleading. These are in fact pedestrian blockades with some foam orange cushions spread across the tops. These temporary fences have gaps at the foul lines. I observed balls hit to deep left field that landed just inside the foul line, then roll through the gap into no-man's land behind temporary fences – twice!

If you're an umpire, how do you call that? A ground rule double is the only call you can make. This robs the team at bat from hitting a triple or scoring a run many times. The central tower complex has many challenges, as well, starting with poor lighting inside for night games. Add to that the inability to hear what's going on down on the field, the inability to hear the homeplate umpire and other umpires. One game I worked had a scenario with a bizarre event that happened with a batter advancing to first, which was called an out. Now I saw a discussion going on and saw the batter head to the bench (there are no dugouts at Lagoon) I scored it an out, which was the call I saw (can't hear anything). I was very concerned the umpire had lost the number of outs and gave the batting team four. What must have happened is that the call was reversed and then the batting team replaced the player on first with a Sub. Now I could not see it because the discussion took place in front of the first base coaching box in foul territory. So in this case, as a scorekeeper, it would require clairvoyant powers to figure one like this out.

And finally, logistics are perfect for the championship to be played in Montgomery. We're almost smack dab in the middle of the State. With it played in Oxford, the closest hotel room for my wife, whom attended, was 30-plus miles away. Losing these games is a black eye for Montgomery and our community loses a fortune financially.

*Until Next Time . . .*

## Southern Gardening Potpourri for July



**Judge Peggy Givhan**

### July, the most patriotic month of the year.

Although this past year has had the lockdown, perhaps this July 4th will mark our "getting back to normal" time. I personally feel so patriotic I could bleed red, white and blue. I have a patriotic pot garden in my back yard with huge red geraniums, white vinca, white petunias, and blue salvia.

### So Happy Independence Day.

Perhaps you have noticed that plants in the big box stores and nurseries are much more expensive than pre-pandemic. Of course we can sow seeds, such as zinnias, and cleome this time of year. But cloning or rooting is another option. So here is a list of plants

- that I have rooted in water and/or moist soil in empty flats or trays that I had on hand:
- |                         |               |
|-------------------------|---------------|
| 1. Dusty Miller         | 6. Kalanchoes |
| 2. Dragon Wing Begonias | 7. Coleus     |
| 3. geraniums            | 8. Impatiens  |
| 4. plumbago             | 9. Sedum      |
| 5. petunias             | 10. Lantana.  |

There are many more, but these were plants I had, so just tried these.

Did you know that apple cider vinegar might be just what the doctor ordered to keep your plants pest free and to help them to thrive. I watch YouTube at times on gardening topics and then try these tips in my garden. I am amazed at the great uses for apple cider vinegar and will share my experiences with you. Apple cider vinegar can be used as follows:

1. Fertilizer – this is great for acid soil loving plants. Dilution ratio is 1:3 and then spray onto the soil around the plant. Do not spray the leaves of flowers but tomato plants would be okay.
2. Cleaning agent for garden tools to sterilize them after use in the garden. Even rusty trowels can be soaked overnight in a pail and rust just disappears.

We have learned how important to clean our hands during this pandemic, and the same is true for the garden.

3. Eliminates weeds from cracks in sidewalks or driveways. Just spray these directly with undiluted vinegar but avoid spraying any plants.

4. Discourages pets and other animals from entering the garden. They do like the odor. You will need to soak rags with vinegar and place them strategically around the periphery of the beds. You will need to reapply the vinegar each week.

5. Kills slugs and snails almost immediately. Also it will kill ants outside and in the home. Just spray with a dilution rate of 1:3. This trick prevents any bug spray poison on counter tops.

6. Kills mold and residue from clay pots.

7. Eliminates aphids and other chewing pests. Use a light dilution of vinegar to water, such as a tablespoon to a quart of water and begin spraying.



**PLANT OF THE MONTH – MONARDA** (Lamiaceae,) Monarda is a member of the Mint family of plants. Its common name is Bee Balm, or bergamot and it is an herb, very easy to grow. The leaves of this plant are used in commercial teas such as Earl Gray Tea.

Another feature of the plant is that is has a square stem. A summer bloomer, it has a variety of bright colors from red to violet to bright pink. If you want to attract hummingbirds, Monarda fits the bill.

*Happy Fourth of July and Good Gardening!*





# Honoring Our Heroes

## Sergeant Major James Earl Jackson

years in the United States Army, and this service included three deployment tours in Vietnam for 36 months, one in Korea, two in Germany and one in Guam. His family has four generations of members serving their country in the U.S. Army as his father, his two sons, a grandson and he have served. His decorations, medals, badges, citations and ribbons were: Legion of Merit, Meritorious Service Medal, 1st OLC, Army Commendation Medal, 1st OLC, Army Achievement Medal, Good Conduct Medal 10th AWD, National Defense Service Medal 2nd Award, Vietnam Service Medal with nine service Stars, NCO Professional Development Ribbon with number three, Army Service Ribbon, Overseas Service Ribbon with number Three, Republic of Vietnam Gallantry Cross with Palm Unit Citation, Republic of Vietnam Campaign Medal, Driver and Mechanic Badge and Drill Sergeant Identification Badge.



SGM Jackson was born in Wetumpka, AL, to his parents, James H. Billingsley and Annie Pearl Robinson. He was reared in Alexander City, AL, where he was an outstanding baseball player in the shortstop and centerfield positions, graduating from Laurel High School in 1964. He was drafted to play on the minor baseball league, AL/GA/FL Instructional League, GA, where he played for three months.

SGM Jackson volunteered to serve in the U.S. Army to avoid the draft, and he enlisted October 29, 1964, completed Basic Training at Ft. Jackson, SC, followed by training in logistics with supply, maintenance and transportation at Ft. Eustis, VA. At age 18, he deployed to Vietnam for his first tour for 13 months in the Central Highlands with the Military Assistance Command Vietnam (MACV). He returned to Ft. Jackson, SC, for eight months, and although he suffered from PTSD, he received orders to return for a second tour to Vietnam for 11 months to the Central Highlands, serving with a transportation and convoy operation team on route QL19, which ran from An Khe to Pleiku and surrounding provinces where his unit experienced enemy fire and ambushes regularly. Returning to the USA, he was assigned to Ft. Rucker, AL, with an aviation unit for one year. Next, he volunteered for his third tour to Vietnam to the Mekong Delta where he served in engineering clearing jungles, clearing roads and building bridges for one year.

After leaving Vietnam, SGM Jackson was deployed to Karlsruhe, Germany, with engineering at various military bases through the country for three years. He then returned to Ft. Rucker, AL, for two years with support for the aviation school. He then served as a drill sergeant at Ft. Jackson, SC, for four months and at Ft. Gordon, GA, for 2.5 years. Next, he served with the 197th Infantry at Ft. Benning, GA, with a transportation unit for three years.

His second tour to Germany was at Geissen with a transportation unit supporting artillery units in Europe. He next went to Ft. Hood, TX, working for the G4, for Logistics Operation with the 1st Calvary Division for two years. He was then deployed to Camp Casey, Korea, with the 2nd Infantry Division with support logistics where he was awarded the “Leader of the Year Award” as 1st SGT. He returned to the USA for his last two assignments. He served as the Director of Logistics (DOL) as the Sergeant Major for three years at Ft. Benning, GA. Lastly, he served at Ft. Bragg, NC, with the G4 logistics. He retired at Ft. Benning GA, October 31, 1994.

After military retirement, SGM Jackson worked in civil service as a traffic manager with Military Sea Lift Command. He worked at Singapore, Japan and Guam. He served as the boarding officer, inspecting ships that carried supplies to American military to the islands in Southeast Asia in the Pacific Ocean. He returned to the USA and worked with the Directorate of Logistics (DOL) as the contracting officer for aviation airfields, at Ft. Rucker, AL. This was followed by working as the Traffic Manager at Robins AFB, GA at the Defense Distribution Center, responsible for movement of material world-wide. He also worked as Traffic Manager for Defense Contract Management Agency (DCMA), London, England, an agency of the US federal government responsible for administering contracts for the Department of Defense and other authorized federal agencies. In addition, he had one overseas assignment in Kuwait working with contracts and transportation operations for military units.

**Senior Master Sergeant Jackson B. Dismukes, Jr.: Age 81**

Senior Master Sergeant (SMSgt) Jackson B. Dismukes, Jr. served four years in the U.S. Navy and 20 years in the U.S. Air Force Reserve. His Military Occupational Specialty in the U. S. Navy was Communications Maintenance Technician, and his Military Occupational Specialty Code in the U. S. Air Force Reserve was Superintendent of Engineering. His awards, medals and decorations include the Navy Good Conduct Medal, Air Force Commendation Medal, Air Force Outstanding Unit Award, Air Reserve Forces Meritorious Service Medal, Air Force Longevity Service Award, Armed Forces Reserve Medal, Small Arms Expert Marksmanship Ribbon and Air Force Training Ribbon.



SMSgt Dismukes was born in Atlanta, GA, August 8, 1939, to his parents, Jackson B. Dismukes Sr. and Miriam Jane Clark Dismukes. He was reared as an Army brat as his father served as a physician in the military, and he lived at military bases wherever his father was assigned. He graduated from the Heidelberg American High School in Heidelberg, Germany, in 1957. He attended Alabama Polytechnic Institute for one quarter and then volunteered to serve in the U. S. Navy beginning January 31, 1958. He completed Navy Boot Camp at San Diego, and then he completed training in electronics at Treasure Island, San Francisco, CA. He served at a Naval facility communications facility at Morocco. He then went to Washington, D.C. to the "C" School working on specialized equipment. He was then deployed to the Turkish-U.S. Logistics Attachment 12 at Istanbul, Turkey. He was discharged December 22, 1961.

Following his discharge, he graduated from Auburn University with a B.S. Degree in Business Administration in 1965. He worked three years at Sears Roebuck in the credit department and then at First National Bank which later became Regions Bank in Montgomery, AL, in its charge account service as office manager followed by working as branch manager at several branches in Montgomery.

SMSgt Dismukes entered service in the U.S. Air Force Reserve January 1981. The Air Force Reserve is an integral part of our country's dominant presence in air, space and cyberspace. With readiness as its primary charge, the Air Force Reserve contributes daily to the Air Force mission and is actively involved in operations around the world. His team was responsible for the primary engineering emergency force that maintained real property for its unit at Maxwell Air Force Base, Montgomery, AL. The team was ready within 48 hours to go anywhere in the world to rebuild or repair the infrastructure at an air base. SMSgt served one weekend each month and two weeks each summer. In addition, he served Man Days during vacation time from his work at the bank. He was deployed to Eglin Air Force Base, FL, for an operations readiness inspection going through a drill for a combat zone. He also served in Granada and West Germany. He was discharged August 26, 1999.

After he retired from military service, he continued working in Montgomery, AL, at Regions Bank until 2004, and then he ran the security for the Hyundai Motor Company's storage park. Next, he worked at American Lock and Key, a locksmith shop for two years retiring from all employment in 2005.

SMSgt Dismukes and his wife, Carolyn, have been married 56 years, and they have two children and three grandchildren. They have enjoyed traveling, especially bus tours, camping and square dancing. They are members of St. James United Methodist Church where he sang tenor in the choir, and they led the senior adult group, Young at Heart.

SMSgt Dismukes' conclusion about his military service are: "I enjoyed it. It helped me to appreciate what I've got, and I feel sorry for those who don't understand and for those who seem to be proud that they don't understand. I have always appreciated the service of the veterans, and I am sorry that some don't get the recognition that they should. I learned on my deployments that if I met the people halfway and would be honest with them, in most cases the people would meet me halfway and would be honest with me. I would like future generations to remember that I loved my country. We were not warmongers, and we were proud of what we did. There are a lot of benefits, and one is the medical coverage of Tri-Care for Life."

... continued on page 2B

*#end#*



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## MSgt Willie Durham

Master Sergeant (MSgt) Willie Durham served 20 years in the U. S. Marine Corps. His Military Occupational Specialty (MOS) was Career Recruiter. He received the following military awards, medals, decorations and ribbons: Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medal with one star, Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal with five stars, National Defense Service Medal with one star, Marine Corps Good Conduct Medal with five stars, Sea Service Deployment Ribbon, Marine Corps Recruiting Ribbon with five stars, Navy Unit Commendation with two stars, Meritorious Unit Commendation with two stars, Certificate of Commendation (18), Letter of Appreciation (five) and Meritorious Mast (14).

MSgt Durham was born May 22, 1965, in Montgomery, AL, to his parents, Willie George and Susie Mae Durham. He was reared in Montgomery and graduated from Jefferson Davis High School in May 1983. Having participated in U. S. Marine J.R.O.T.C. during high school, he joined the U.S. Marine Corps in July 1983 and completed basic training at Parris Island. He then went to CA for training in personnel administration followed by his first assignment at the Naval Air Station, Millington, TN, a center for training Navy and Marine aviators of helicopters and fixed wing aircraft. He was then deployed to Okinawa as assistant administrative personnel chief for one year. While at Okinawa, he had a six-month TDY to Osan, Korea. Next, MSgt Durham completed training at the Marine recruiter's school at San Diego, CA. His first recruiting duty was at Birmingham, AL, in 1988-1991 followed by one year at Macon, GA, at Atlanta, GA, for three years and for three years at Montgomery, AL, in 1995 where he supervised other recruiters and where he remained until he retired from military service in October 2003.

Following his military retirement, MSgt Durham spent one year with CIN-TAX, a uniform supply company, followed by one year of internship with State Farm Insurance Company. He has been a State Farm Insurance agent with his own agency, Willie Durham Agency, at Montgomery, AL, for the past 16 years.

MSgt Durham and his wife, Terrie, have been married 37 years, and they have one son. She serves as the Office Manager of his State Farm Insurance agency. They enjoy traveling, eating at restaurants and reading. They are active members of the New Home Missionary Baptist Church at Mount Meigs, AL, where he serves as the Vice Chairman of the Board of Deacons and sings in a male chorus. She serves as the President of the Deacons Wives. He has a giving spirit toward others in his community as Montgomery Housing Authority, President of the Montgomery Sunrise Rotary Club, Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Montgomery Chamber of Commerce, Board of Habitat for Humanity, Hope Inspired Ministries and Child Protect. MSgt Durham states, "It is important that if everybody wants this community to be a good community, then everybody needs to find something that he can do to make it better. My faith is important to me. I think that everything that God does is for a reason. When much is given, much is required."

MSgt Durham expresses the impact of serving as a U.S. Marine as follows, "Because the majority of my career as a Marine was spent in the recruiting service, I was directly impacting recruiting the quality of the people who would be serving the Marine Corps and this country. It really defines who I am as a citizen today. The Marine Corps gives back to the community a much better person than it receives. The Marine Corps gave me self-confidence and the ability to work together with people in my personal life and in my business. It gave me an opportunity to meet a lot of people all over this country."

## Honoring Fallen Vietnam Veterans

The members of Central Alabama Chapter 607, Vietnam Veterans of America, wish to honor our fellow Vietnam Veteran brothers and sisters who are not with us anymore, whether their passing came during combat or many years later.

### The Fallen Comrade Table

The tablecloth is white, symbolic of the purity of their intentions in responding to their Country's Call to Arms.

A single red rose reminds us of the family and friends who continue to keep the faith.

The black ribbon is for the heavy heart, which we all feel at their loss.

A slice of lemon on the plate is symbolic of the countless fallen tears of families and friends.

An inverted glass represents the fact that they can no longer partake with us.

A lit candle is the light of hope to illuminate the journey to their Final Post.

The empty chair shows that they are no longer with us.



## Peter Forney Chapter DAR Celebrates Flag Day

Members of the **Peter Forney Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR)** celebrated the June 14th Flag Day at a luncheon meeting at Sinclair's East Restaurant on June 12. Regent Terry Dotherow presided, giving welcome, greetings and an invocation. ***The Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America*** was led by Melissa Scott, and the members read the first verse of ***The Star Spangled Banner*** led by Faye Stewart. ***The American's Creed*** was led by Blythe Romaine, and the salute to the flag of Alabama was led by Marilyn Tucker. Delores Cork led the members in singing the State song, ***Alabama***. Melissa Scott presented detailed information on the history of the creation of the American flag followed by members reading one verse of George M. Cohan's ***"You're A Grand Old Flag."*** Pictured: ***On the left is Terry Dotherow, Regent of DAR, and on the right is Melissa Scott, Treasurer. The ladies flank an exhibit of images depicting the American flag's history.***



## Sergeant Major James Earl Jackson . . . continued from page 1B

His last overseas employment was with the U. S. Army Africa Command, Stuttgart, Germany as Transportation Manager providing logistical support for Africa. His last Department of Defense (DoD) assignment was with United States Army Security Assistance Command (USASAC) which implements assistance programs to eligible foreign governments. He was awarded several Civil Services Medals and Awards during his Civil Service employment. He retired from employment in 2016.

SGM Jackson and his wife, Trinces, have been married 40 years, and they have two sons, two daughters, seven grandchildren and one great-grandchild. He is a member of Chapter 607 Vietnam Veterans of America, and he enjoys working out and volunteering within the community.

SGM Jackson's conclusions about his military service are, "It was an honor to serve and make a difference. The tradition and example that my father set were my motivating factors to excel. My ambition was to exceed his expectations. He had been my mentor and taught me to how to utilize all military leadership traits and principles. My mom always taught us to always do our best. I never regret not playing professional baseball. My whole mindset changed after my first tour of duty in Vietnam. The military was just great for me at that time and a purpose to be used as an instrument for God's purpose. In the military, everyone is on the same accord to accomplish the objective. The cohesiveness, structure, bearing, loyalty, dependability, integrity, initiative, unselfishness and endurance that the military teaches are second to none. What you learn in the military can be taken back to your community to make it better."

## Memorial Day Tribute May 31, 2021 in Montgomery

Members of Chapter 607 Vietnam Veterans of America presented a Memorial Day observance at the offices of the Alabama Gazette on May 31st. Jessie Donaldson, President of Chapter 607, served as Master of Ceremonies. LeonArd Norman gave the invocation and the benediction. President Jessie Donaldson reported on the number of Americans who lost their lives in each of the wars in which Americans have been involved. This brought special meaning of Memorial Day to the Vietnam veterans who were present because 58,000 Americans lost their lives in the Vietnam War. The names of the local Vietnam War dead were read aloud.

Taps was played with an echo by the two buglers, Babs Couch and her daughter, Turner Grace King, who played Taps with an echo.



## Veterans love reading *The Gazette*!



These service members enjoy reading the *Gazette*. Their articles were published in the June 2021 issue.

(left) **Hugh David McCracken, Jr.,** Col. U.S. Air Force

(above right) **John Gibson Hamilton** Lt. Col. U.S. Air Force

(right) **Kenneth O. Brewton, P.O.** Second Class U.S. Navy



## D-Day Celebration and Remembrance



***A Remembrance of D-Day was celebrated at the Open Door Baptist Church of Prattville on the 77th anniversary of D-Day. Red Cross Service to the Armed Forces volunteer, Martha Poole Simmons, represented the Red Cross and spoke to the congregation about the mission of the Red Cross to serve America's active duty military and veterans. She described the loss of 10,000 lives at D-Day and how the victory marked the beginning of the end of WWII in Europe. She presented a biographical sketch of the 97 year-old WWII veteran, Dr. David E. Hayhurst, a member of the congregation who fought in the liberation of France, the Battle of the Bulge and the Battle of the Rhineland. The Rev. Ken Stodola, Pastor, urged the congregation to remember the three ways that Esther led her Jewish people from annihilation in ancient Persia by using a Cause, Courage and Commitment comparing this history to the challenges America faces today. He challenged Americans to never forget how our freedoms were won. Dr. Hayhurst was honored on his birthday, April 1, 2021, at a drive-by parade in Millbrook led by Red Cross volunteers and staff. Dr. Hayhurst's article was published in the June 2019 issue of the Alabama Gazette. (pictured are Dr. Hayhurst and Dr. Martha Poole Simmons)***



## Veterans Celebrating Birthdays

James Carl Poole: July 1

Raymond Keel: July 9

James Edwin Salminen: July 3

Gilbert R. Monismith, Jr.: July 13

Thomas Miller Derickson: July 4

Charles Winnick Ashley: July 24

William C. Stewart: July 5

Robert Shafton Kohn: July 28

Bill Allison: July 9

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

## Resources for Veterans

Veterans Crisis Line: [www.veteranscrisisline.net](http://www.veteranscrisisline.net)

National Center for PTSD: 855-948-2311 / [ptsd.va.gov](http://ptsd.va.gov)

Central Alabama Veterans Health Care System  
2400 Hospital Road, Tuskegee AL 36083 / 334-727-0550  
Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/VACentralAlabama>





# Playtime: It’s Not Just for Kids, Say Experts

While most of us associate playtime with childhood, adults are increasingly acknowledging the importance of play and leisure time for themselves. A new survey commissioned by The Genius of Play and conducted by OnePoll finds that 89% of adults have learned to appreciate the importance of play and leisure time over the past year. What’s more, 84% say taking time to play helps them be more productive at work. “You’re never too young or too old to play,” says Anna Yudina, senior director of marketing initiatives at The Toy Association, which spearheads The Genius of Play. “In fact, research links play with a number of wellness benefits in adults, such as reducing stress, boosting life satisfaction, and empowering people to be creative, flexible thinkers.”



PHOTO: (c) Paul Bradbury / iStock via Getty Images Plus

To incorporate play into your life, consider these tips from *The Genius of Play*:

- **Take on a Hobby:** Seventy percent of adults picked up a new hobby or leisure activity over the past year -- and with good reason. Hobbies can be a source of positive emotions, get you outdoors, encourage physical activity and social interactions, and spark creativity. From roller skating to dancing to crafting to playing an instrument, consider taking on a new, playful hobby or revisiting one you enjoyed during childhood.
  - **Plan a Game Night:** While play often occurs spur-of-the-moment, life is hectic and schedules are jam-packed. Consider scheduling time for fun to ensure it happens. For example, make one evening each week a totally screen-free, stress-free experience. Order pizza (or your household’s cuisine of choice) and break out games and puzzles. You might even consider planning themed trivia nights delving into your favorite subjects.
  - **Hop in the Car:** Whether you choose a destination that allows you to simply relax, or you take on a more active adventure, a trip can broaden your horizons and rejuvenate you when you’re feeling down or just trapped in the daily routine. Consider taking a just-for-fun trip on your own, with a friend or partner, or pack up the car and bring the kids.
  - **Bring out Your Inner Child:** Parents, grandparents and other adults with a kid in their life can spend more time playing with the little ones. Not only is play the perfect way to bond, research highlights a number of associated health benefits. Those who play with children burn 20% more calories per week, and researchers link playfulness to creativity, spontaneity and positive attitudes. Intergenerational play can help adults maintain cognitive skills as they age and even extend their life. A study published in the journal “Evolution and Human Behavior” found that grandparents who help out with grandchildren live longer. If you’re looking for some inspiration, visit thegeniusofplay.org for tons of fun, free games and downloadable activities.
- “While our primary mission is educating parents and caregivers about play’s vital role in child development, adults need time to play too,” says Yudina. “We hope to motivate people of all ages to play more -- whether it’s by embracing personal hobbies or by spending more time playing with their kids.”

Source: StatePoint

Are you looking for an independent living community designed for seniors who are able to care for themselves and wish to live independently?

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(solution page 5B)

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*Alabama Public Affairs Specialist, Social Security Administration  
 4344 Carmichael Road, Suite 100, Montgomery, Alabama 36116*



## Happy Birthday, Medicare! What Happens When You Turn 65

This July marks the 56th anniversary of Medicare. Did you know you can apply for Medicare online even if you are not ready to start your retirement benefits? Applying online can take less than 10 minutes. There are no forms to sign and we usually require no additional documentation. We'll process your application and contact you if we need more information.



Knowing when to apply for Medicare is very important. You have a limited initial enrollment period to apply. If you miss the initial enrollment period, you may have to pay a higher monthly premium. If you're eligible for Medicare at age 65, your initial enrollment period begins three months before your 65th birthday and ends three months after that birthday. Visit [www.ssa.gov/benefits/medicare](http://www.ssa.gov/benefits/medicare) to apply for Medicare and find other important information.

Some Medicare beneficiaries may qualify for *Extra Help* with their Medicare prescription drug plan costs. To qualify for *Extra Help*, a person must be receiving Medicare, have limited resources and income, and reside in one of the 50 states or the District of Columbia. Read our publication *Understanding the Extra Help With Your Medicare Prescription Drug Plan* for more information at [www.ssa.gov/pubs/EN-05-10508.pdf](http://www.ssa.gov/pubs/EN-05-10508.pdf).

The official Medicare website at Medicare.gov offers many online services where you can find answers to these questions:

- What does Medicare cover? [www.medicare.gov/what-medicare-covers](http://www.medicare.gov/what-medicare-covers)
  - Where do I find forms for filing a Medicare appeal? [www.medicare.gov/claims-appeals/how-do-i-file-an-appeal](http://www.medicare.gov/claims-appeals/how-do-i-file-an-appeal)
  - How can I let someone speak with Medicare on my behalf? [www.medicare.gov/claims-appeals/file-an-appeal/can-someone-file-an-appeal-for-me](http://www.medicare.gov/claims-appeals/file-an-appeal/can-someone-file-an-appeal-for-me)
  - What do Medicare health and prescription drug plans in my area cost, and what services do they offer? [www.medicare.gov/plan-compare](http://www.medicare.gov/plan-compare)
  - Which doctors, health care providers, and suppliers participate in Medicare? [www.medicare.gov/forms-help-resources/find-compare-doctors-hospitals-other-providers](http://www.medicare.gov/forms-help-resources/find-compare-doctors-hospitals-other-providers)
  - Where can I find out more about a Medicare prescription drug plan (Part D) and enroll? [www.medicare.gov/drug-coverage-part-d/how-to-get-prescription-drug-coverage](http://www.medicare.gov/drug-coverage-part-d/how-to-get-prescription-drug-coverage)
  - Where can I find a Medicare Supplement Insurance (Medigap) policy in my area? [www.medicare.gov/medigap-supplemental-insurance-plans](http://www.medicare.gov/medigap-supplemental-insurance-plans)
- Please share these helpful resources with friends and family today.

## Access Social Security's Retirement Benefits Online



Keeping you informed about our benefits and services is important to us. Preparing for retirement is one of the most significant decisions you can make and we're here to help. A great place to start is our retirement portal at [www.ssa.gov/benefits/retirement](http://www.ssa.gov/benefits/retirement).

Our website has helped millions of people get ready for and apply for Social Security retirement benefits. On our site, you can:

- Find the information you need, quickly and easily.
- Learn about the benefits.
- Be better prepared to apply for retirement benefits online.
- Create your personal **my Social Security** account to manage your retirement benefits.

Our retirement benefits portal is easy to use, whether you are ready to learn about, apply for, or manage your retirement benefits. You'll find the portal pleasing to the eye, informative, and optimized for mobile devices.

Visit our retirement benefits portal today at [www.ssa.gov/benefits/retirement](http://www.ssa.gov/benefits/retirement) to "Learn," "Apply," and "Manage" your retirement benefits. While you're there, subscribe to receive retirement information and updates.

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The most convenient way to change your direct deposit information with us is by creating a **my Social Security** account online at [www.ssa.gov/myaccount](http://www.ssa.gov/myaccount). Once you create your account, you can update your bank information from anywhere.

We are committed to protecting your personal information, so we take steps to verify who you are. If you already have an account, we verified your identity when you created your personal **my Social Security** account. If you can't remember your username or password, don't worry. At the sign-in screen select **Forgot Username** or **Forgot Password** and follow the simple but secure steps to reset them.

When you are ready to change your direct deposit, we highly recommend that you do not close your old bank account until you have seen your Social Security deposit show up in the new bank account.

We always strive to put you in control by providing the best experience and service no matter where or how you decide to do business with us. Remember, you can do much of your business with us online at [www.ssa.gov/online-services](http://www.ssa.gov/online-services).

## What Did You EARN At Your First Job? Social Security Can Tell You

Ever wonder what you earned the year you worked your first job? Or perhaps any other year you worked? We can tell you. Your earnings history is a record of your progress toward your future Social Security benefits. We keep track of your earnings so we can pay you the benefits you've earned over your lifetime. This is why reviewing your Social Security earnings record is so important.

While it's your employer's responsibility to provide accurate earnings information to us, you should still review your earnings history and inform us of any errors or omissions. This is so you get credit for the contributions you've made through payroll taxes. You're the only person who can look at your lifetime earnings record and verify that it's complete and correct. If an employer didn't properly report even just one year of your earnings to us, your future benefit payments could be less than they should be. Over the course of a lifetime, that could cost you tens of thousands of dollars in retirement or other benefits to which you are entitled. It's important to identify and report errors as soon as possible. As time passes, you may no longer have easy access to past tax documents. Also, some employers may no longer exist or be able to provide past payroll information.

The easiest way to verify your earnings record is to visit [www.ssa.gov/myaccount](http://www.ssa.gov/myaccount) and set up or sign in to your personal **my Social Security** account. You should review each year of listed earnings carefully and confirm them using your own records, such as W-2s and tax returns. Keep in mind that earnings from this year and last year may not be listed yet.

You can find out how to correct your Social Security earnings record by reading our publication *How to Correct Your Social Security Earnings Record* at [www.ssa.gov/pubs/EN-05-10081.pdf](http://www.ssa.gov/pubs/EN-05-10081.pdf).



*Please help inform others by sharing these messages with family and friends.  
 Kylle' McKinney, SSA Public Affairs Specialist, kylle.mckinney@ssa.gov*

## WORLD ELDER ABUSE AWARENESS DAY

A partnership of Central Alabama Aging Consortium and The Montgomery County District Attorney's Office



*On June 15, the Montgomery County District Attorney's Office and Central Alabama Aging Consortium partnered for the World Elder Abuse Awareness Day Rally to increase the community's understanding of the importance of protecting our seniors against abuse, neglect, and exploitation. Elder abuse is a socioeconomic issue that affects the entire nation.*

*Approximately 1 in 10 Americans every year are victims of elder abuse, with women and seniors over the age of 80 being more susceptible. Both physical and non-physical losses can result from elder abuse, such as increases in health and legal costs, furthering the isolation of older Americans in the community.*

Report Elder Abuse: **One Place Family Justice Center** at 334-262-7378.

**CENTRAL ALABAMA AGING CONSORTIUM (CAAC)** is a part of a state-wide aging network that provides a variety of Home and Community based services to the region's senior and disabled populations and their caregivers. CAAC coordinates services for these targeted populations in Montgomery, Autauga, and Elmore counties. The primary goal is to develop, coordinate, and support services in the community that support an active and independent life-style where those we serve can live and thrive.



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## MACOA continues to serve seniors!

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

*If you can help, please call 334-263-0532.*

115 East Jefferson Street / Montgomery, AL 36104 / <https://www.macoa.org>





# Southern Cuisine

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

Currently, Chef Spooner is tending to family matters, so we are happy to include some previous favorites he submitted to the Gazette. With summer heating up and the recent July Fourth celebrations, consider a light, cool salad for a satisfying meal or, if a salad isn't enough, try Chef Spooner's suggestions below to add some substance to that crisp lettuce ... create one of his other tasty recipes found here!

**From May 2018 Southern Cuisine and Chef Spooner:** Salads do not fill me up unless I load them up with everything besides greens. Eggs fill me up but they all taste the same unless you add many other yummy bits. My favorite item to add to salads and eggs is cheese. It fills you up and there are hundreds if not more types of cheese. Food fact: there are over 1800 specialty cheeses from over 70 countries. Just in the United States, the list starts at acappella, a goat milk cheese that has a buttery taste and comes from California, to zwister, a cow's milk cheese that is tangy and semi hard from Utah. These are two of the over 200 varieties of cheeses in the United States. I counted nine types just in the cheese drawer of my refrigerator.



Photo: Steve Buisinne / FreeRangeStock.com



Cheese adds a variety of tastes and textures to a menu. Moreover, it can be eaten for every meal during the day. Moreover, you will not be surprised to know that cheddar cheese and mozzarella are by far the most popular cheeses in America. Cheddar is typed by its taste, mild, medium, or sharp. In addition, it is classified as a semisoft to hard cheese.

A low moisture content variant of mozzarella has been specifically formulated and prepared for use on pizza. Breaded mozzarella sticks and string cheese are popular snack foods.

There are cheeses that you can grill. The best to grill or fry is Haloumi due to its high melting point. It is delicious, and as such, one of the biggest issues it poses is the risk of overeating. Tip: An 8 ounce chunk equates to 680 calories, 54 grams of fat and almost 3000mg of sodium, hence when it comes to haloumi, portion control is crucial.

*Like any perishable food, there are procedures to follow so you do not end up as a statistic from the CDC.*

Keep your cheese refrigerated and in a sealed airtight container.

Store between 32 degrees and 40 degrees Fahrenheit.

Remember high-moisture and soft cheeses have a shorter shelf life.

Hard and semi hard cheeses may be frozen for up to 8 weeks, but should then only be used for grating, shredding and cooking.

We have covered eggs, salad, and cheese. Let's make a pizza! The recipe I found did not want me to make the pizza crust from scratch, but I wanted something that would work eating it with my hands.

## Breakfast Pizza

*This easy, homemade breakfast pizza has bacon, eggs, tomatoes, spinach, and cheese. Note: I tried this recipe with garlic-flavored naan, but the pre-cooked bread over-cooked before the eggs were cooked. I need to tweak the recipe some, because the naan worked well with this recipe. Serves 2*

### INGREDIENTS:

Packaged store bought pizza crust, any brand you like, just do not use a pre-cooked crust.  
Enough to make (2) 8-in pizzas.  
2 oz cream cheese softened (opt)  
Handful baby spinach  
4 oz (1/2 cup) shredded mozzarella cheese or more to suit your taste  
8-10 cherry tomatoes, sliced in half  
Two large eggs



4 strips cooked bacon, chopped  
Kosher salt  
Fresh ground black pepper

### METHOD:

1. Preheat oven to 400 degrees.
2. Spread the cream cheese thinly on each crust.
3. Top the crust with spinach, mozzarella, and tomatoes, leaving the center open for the egg. Make a slight indentation in the center of the crust to keep the egg from running out. Gently break an egg the center of each crust and finish with bacon.
4. Bake 12 to 14 minutes, until the crust has browned and the egg white is set. Season with salt and pepper.

*You have seen the warnings on menus about eating undercook eggs, so cook them accordingly.*

I have been finding recipes for typical Southern meals that are not your run of the mill recipes. I am a fan of fried catfish, but it tastes so much better when someone else that has the right equipment and the practice to turn out corn meal battered catfish, steamy hot and tender. I have been cleaning up my BBQ pits, in anticipation for a long productive grilling season. And I plan to grill more fish this summer. Therefore, what better way to start than with grilled catfish?

If you were eating fried catfish at a fast food restaurant, French fries would be a common side. So why not have potatoes with your grilled catfish. Since the catfish is not fried, we will not fry the potatoes either. These potatoes will have a much better plate presentation than ordinary fries.

## Grilled Catfish with Tomato Olive Relish



Serves 2

### INGREDIENTS:

1 cup chopped Kalamata olives  
1½ cups chopped cherry tomatoes  
2 Tbsp olive oil  
1 Tbsp chopped parsley  
Zest from one lemon  
¼ cup feta cheese  
(2) 6-oz U.S. farmed-raised catfish fillets

### METHOD:

1. Pre-heat grill to medium high and wipe with olive oil to prevent sticking.
2. Combine the olives, tomatoes, olive oil, feta, lemon zest, and parsley in a bowl.
3. Gently warm the relish so it is not cold when you top the fish.
4. Grill the fish fillets until they start to flake. About 3-4 minute per side.
5. Place fillets on warm plates and top with relish.

## Tattooed Potatoes with Parsley and Rosemary

### INGREDIENTS:

2 oz (4 Tbsp) unsalted butter  
1/3 cup olive oil  
4 small-medium baking (russet) potatoes  
8 fresh flat-leaf parsley leaves and/or fresh rosemary sprigs  
Coarse salt  
Fresh ground pepper  
Roasting pan or glass baking dish



Serves 4 to 8

### METHOD:

1. Heat oven to 450° F. Place roasting pan or dish in oven with olive oil and butter; once butter has melted, just a minute or two later, remove from oven.
2. Halve each potato lengthwise. Place one parsley leaf in the center of four halves and a rosemary sprig on the other four, then sprinkle cut sides generously with salt and pepper.
3. Arrange face down in pan with melted butter; try not to nudge them around or the leaves will move.
4. Roast potatoes for 35 to 45 minutes (depending on size) until tender. There is no need to turn the potatoes over unless they get so dark underneath that they risk overcooking before becoming fully tender. This can happen with a metal roasting pan or an oven that runs hot. If the potato is tender, lift up one and check underneath for some browning of the potato. **Serve immediately; cut sides up.**

*Our fondest memories are made gathered around the table with family and friends.*

# SURVEY SAYS ... Southerners Can't Cook! Editorial by Chelese Beck

Recently, the Alabama Gazette received an email stating a survey had been conducted during the Pandemic and here are the results ... WAIT FOR IT

**Pandemic Platters: Survey reveals that the average Alabamian can only cook 5 meals ... \***

### Wait ... WHAT?

The South is known for its delicious, comforting food. I'm sure when Chef Spooner reads this month's issue, he will be as appalled as we were at the Gazette to read this survey.

We can't help but wonder: *what 3,300 Southerners did they survey?* Have they ever heard of Emeril Lagasse or Paula Dean? Or Chef Spooner? I think not!

I grew up in the deep South, and I grew up on Southern cooking. No fast food or microwavable options to be found when you visited either of my grandparents' homes.

My father's parents lived on a farm. They ran cattle and grew their own vegetables. Every time we would visit, there would be bowls of hot, boiled peanuts sitting out for us to savor. And not these giant convenience store kind

from Brazil. Real peanuts are grown in sandy soil and are much smaller and a little sweeter (thank you, Boll Weevils!) Anyway, the peanuts were only an appetizer to be followed by incredible family meals served several times a year. We would always sit down to a smorgasbord my grandmother had slaved over for hours. There were no less than two kinds of most anything from meats to vegetables to breads to desserts. All freshly cooked, grown or homemade. These dinners with my cousins, aunts, uncles and grandparents are at the roots of my childhood memories. And don't forget, you could dine on leftovers for days!

My other grandparents were not farmers, but after retirement, they moved to the lake. While all of my grandparents regularly attended church, this granddaddy was especially religious. He'd go fishing EVERY day TWICE a day: once before dawn and again before dark. Meals at their house consisted often of freshly caught bass and crappie filets. I actually never tasted catfish or ate a fish with bones until I was in my 20s! Most Sundays after church, my grandmother would fry up a chicken she had bought whole and then cut up before frying in a cast iron skillet with Crisco. I figured out later that, THAT (cast iron skillet and Crisco) was the secret to perfect, crispy fried chicken! Of course, my favorite part was the pulley bone. Try finding one of those nowadays!

continued page 6B ...



# Support Local Arts & Culture, Non-profits & the Community!

aka continued, "Southerners Can't Cook" from page 5B

While my granny could cook, my mom never really tried to learn until she met my dad in college. She was very intelligent ... she had my dad's mom teach her Dad's favorite recipes! And how to make REAL Southern sweet tea!

Growing up, I never spent much time in the kitchen with my mom. She passed away thinking she never taught me to cook ... but actually she was wrong. I watched her make homemade spaghetti, roast beef, fried pork chops and so many other delicious dishes time and again. *I promise you, Mom, I learned more than you ever knew!*

It's no wonder so many of us turn to food for comfort. One of the foods I make with my meals that comforts me the most is my paternal grandmother's dressing. When I first made it, I realized that her "egg bread" was identical to my maternal grandmother's cast iron cornbread. The best of those generations can always find a place at my table. And I am confident that my arsenal of recipes handed down greatly exceeds five meals. I hope that my own grandchildren get to share in the experience of these amazing Southern meals. My youngest daughter has already proven at 26 that she can certainly cook more than microwavable meals, and definitely exceeds this "5 meal" stigma.

Aside from these great meals, how many Southerners have also brought their own food to the table? Whether a hunter, fisher, gardener or farmer, it's a way of life to eat something you personally harvested down here. (*See My Big Fish story below*). I feel sorry for those who think meat comes from Winn Dixie. Oh wait, that's also Southern. Guess who is going to survive if we do wind up in more than just another cold war with Russia? We Southerners, that's who!

Anyway, as the old saying goes, "The South Shall Rise Again!" ... if it's only for hand-kneaded biscuits in the morning like my grandma made, I'm OK with that. As for the company conducting this survey from Colorado, I think it's time you got out of your cubicle and discovered the REAL South!

\* **References:** Survey Article distributed by [www.cherrydigitalcontent.com](http://www.cherrydigitalcontent.com) (Portland, OR), and Survey conducted by [www.gearhungry.com/pandemic-platters](http://www.gearhungry.com/pandemic-platters) (Denver, CO)



Me on the left with my sister and the biggest bass I've ever caught at about 6 years old!

## My Big Fish!

If you've fished at all, you likely have a great fishing story. And as any fisherman knows, all fishermen are liars. However, this tale is true of my one and only **BIG Fish!**

My granddaddy, sister and I were fishing under the bridge at Blue Creek Marina on Lake Martin. I was on one end of the fishing boat, my sister in the middle, and my granddaddy at the back controlling the motor. Even at that young age, I knew how to fish but I still don't like setting live bait or taking a fish off the hook!

Anyway, I felt a bite and began reeling it in. Suddenly, I couldn't! A larger fish had taken my fish as bait! My sister tried to help but that fish wasn't cooperating. So my granddaddy had to handle it.

Together, I caught this huge bass that I believe weighed 7 1/4 pounds. My granddaddy already had two this size mounted on the cabin walls he once caught under that same bridge on the same day.

**So do you know what we did with my fish after Granny snapped this picture? WE ATE IT! OOPS!**

Years later, we all pondered why we didn't mount it?! No one thought about it for some reason, but it made for good eating and a better tale!



montgomeryballet.org  
contemporary, dance conditioning, etc.)

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Montgomery Museum of Fine Arts	Sun. 12 PM – 5 PM	Montgomery, AL 36117
	Mon. Closed	Free Entry + Free Parking
	Tue. – Sat. 10 AM – 5 PM	<a href="https://mmfa.org">https://mmfa.org</a>



### W.A. Gayle Planetarium

#### Show Times

M-T: 9:30 am, 1 pm, 4 pm

F: 9:30 am

Saturday and Sunday: Closed

General Admission: Ages 5/up: \$7.50

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



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**Keep Checking for Upcoming Events!**

## Humane Society of Elmore County News



When many owners can no longer care for a pet, or when their pet has had a litter, many of these owner's advertise these unwanted pets as "free to a good home". While these owners mean well & some free pets end

up in wonderful homes, we still strongly advise against this approach as "free" is all too often seen as "worthless."

Studies show that pets obtained for free are less likely to ever be taken to a veterinarian for basic immunizations and checkups, let alone and illness or injury, and even less likely to be spayed or neutered eventually leading to even more unwanted puppies and kittens. Free pets are also more likely to be abused and/or discarded because "there are plenty more where that one came from!" We ask about the original source of a pet when pets are surrendered by their owners and can say that well over 90% were originally obtained as "free to a good home" pet.

And while this is not intended to scare or offend, there are some harsh realities of what has been known to happen to "free" pets. There are those who get a puppy for their children or grandchildren and then when it is six-months to a year old they 'get rid of it' and later on get another puppy or kitten for the "children" to play with until it too outgrows its cuteness. Small puppies and kittens can be used as snake or other predator food. Some horrible people will purposely get a free animal for purposes of torturing it or using it in some bad-taste prank. There are people who buy, steal or get free animals for the purpose of 'flipping' them to anyone for a few bucks, use for breeding stock, or to be used as bait dogs by dog fighters.

So what should you do if you need to re-home your pet? If your pet came from a responsible breeder, call them to see if they can take it back or assist with placement as a truly responsible breeder will be there for the animal they produced. You should consider charging a fee that will not only 'value' your pet but discourage resale of pets to others. Spay or neuter your pet to avoid attracting backyard breeders or puppy mill operators. Interview potential new owners by asking for their identification, phone number, previous pet experience, their current pets and children in the household, how the pet will be contained, and their veterinarian's name as a reference. Keep their contact info, call their veterinarian for a reference and if at all possible, visit their home to see how and where your pet will live before your release it to the new owner. For the puppies or kittens, or if you cannot afford to have your pet spayed or neutered, ask the new owner to pledge that they will have the puppy/kitten fixed by the time it is six months old and the adult immediately. If a potential adopter isn't willing to give you their information or let you visit their home our advice is to politely send them away empty handed. You owe it to your pet to take the time and effort to make sure it goes to a good home.

If time is critical or you are simply not willing to screen potential owners, then please take your pet to a reputable public or private shelter rather than give it away free to someone you know nothing about. Each county in our tri-county area has an open-admission shelter and while none of us can guarantee placement due to overwhelming numbers, we will do our utmost to find adoptable pets loving and lifetime homes. We work to screen & educate adopters to make sure they are appropriate and ready to take on a new pet and our adoption fees cover immunizations, de-worming, microchip (includes the registration) and the mandatory spay or neuter.

AND, if you take home a new Shelter Pet and it does not work out for most any reason, all of us will take our adopted pet back. We actually have it in our Adoption Contract language, and we do that to protect our pet. We committed to it once, so once back with us will do so again.

Humane Society of Elmore County | 255 Central Plank Road | Wetumpka, AL 36092  
[www.elmorehumane.org](http://www.elmorehumane.org) | 334-567-3377

## NEW! Classified Ads

Email Submissions to: [ALGazetteSubmit@gmail.com](mailto:ALGazetteSubmit@gmail.com). Picture Ads are \$5/mon. Please email quality pictures. Number of pictures and length of text dictated by available space. \$5 fee can be sent via PayPal to [alabamagazette@gmail.com](mailto:alabamagazette@gmail.com). Classifieds can be submitted by mail, postmarked no later than the 20th of the month prior to issue, and picture payment can be made by check and sent to: **Alabama Gazette, 12 E. Jefferson St., Montgomery, AL 36109.**

Solution from pg 3B

6	4	1	3	9	8	7	5	2
5	7	8	4	1	2	9	6	3
2	3	9	5	7	6	1	4	8
4	1	7	8	6	9	2	3	5
3	8	6	2	5	7	4	1	9
9	2	5	1	4	3	8	7	6
7	6	4	9	8	5	3	2	1
8	5	3	7	2	1	6	9	4
1	9	2	6	3	4	5	6	7

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Patricia Killough  
Community Editor

# Home Town Community News

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

## The Passing of a Local Legend: DR. H.B. "WOODY" BARTLETT BARTLETT RANCH of Pike Road, Ala.



**Dr. Haywood "Woody" Bellingrath Bartlett**  
June 6, 1937 - June 13, 2021

Dr. Haywood "Woody" Bellingrath Bartlett died Sunday, June 13 in Montgomery, AL after a life well-lived. Born June 6, 1937, he was 84. Woody's father expected him to follow in his footsteps and become a doctor, but Woody had his own plans and set out on a path to become a veterinarian.

... Early in his career he owned his own mobile veterinary practice but as his horse and cattle operation grew, he focused that practice on his own animals and started a local hardware and feed and seed store, The Feed Lot in Pike Road, AL. He held a Biannual sale which became known as a place to purchase quality home-raised weanling and yearling fillies and two-year old, started geldings as well as aged, experienced ranch horses. Woody looked forward every year to the colt-starting clinic held around his birthday and loved entertaining the many cowboys who came to assist along with potential buyers, friends and local ranchers...

Woody also was a pilot, and late into his life he still flew a Stearman, a Piper Cub, a Cessna as well as a Navy T-6 Texan World War II Aircraft.

He is survived by two sons, Haywood "Woody" Bellingrath Bartlett, Jr. of Fort Collins, CO and Warren Bartlett of LaGrange, WY, two grandchildren, Caroline Starr Bartlett of Michigan and Haywood "Hayes" Bellingrath Bartlett III of LaGrange, WY. He is also survived by his sister, Elmore Bartlett Inscow of Montgomery, AL. Also survived by his former wife Ruth Barksdale Mason. He was preceded in death by his parents, Elmore Bellingrath Bartlett and Dr. Haywood Sommerville Bartlett, and his second wife Kelly Bartlett.

Additional survivors include his border collie and constant companion, "Bob" B. Bartlett, and his beloved gelding, Cats a Cowboy "Little Cat."

In lieu of flowers, the family asks that donations be sent to the Marks House, P. O. Box 640202, Pike Road, AL 36064, in honor of Dr. Bartlett.

A celebration of his life will be held at 755 Old Carter Hill Road in Pike Road Alabama on July 24th at 5:00 PM.

View the complete obituary: <https://www.legacy.com/us/obituaries/montgomeryadvertiser/name/haywood-bartlett-obituary?pid=199087431>



**Jacob Thomas Chesnutt, Jr.** - WWII veteran, Jacob Thomas Chesnutt Jr. passed away on June 16, at the age of 99. His article was published in the *Alabama Gazette* in the June 2019 issue.



**Veteran Sylvester Cannon** - Cannon, age 94, passed away June 15. His article was published in the March 2020 issue of the *Alabama Gazette*.



**Perron "Buck" Lowe** - Lowe, passed away June 15, 2021 at age 97. His article was published in the March 2019 *Gazette*.

## Alabama Gazette's Sympathy to the Families of...

Smith, Jr. Ernest W. (81).....	May 11
Cleveland, USAF (Ret.) Lt. Gen. Charles "Chick" (93) .....	May 22
Harris, Robert "Bob" Herman (74) .....	May 24
Jackson, Suanne Reid (86).....	May 26
McCarty, Jr., Dr. William Loring (81).....	May 28
Riddlebarger, Dorothy Ivey (100) .....	May 29
Dennis, Gerald "Pop" (77) .....	May 31
Patterson, Gov. John Malcolm (99).....	June 4
Clifton, Robert "Gary" (Bubba) (64).....	June 5
Allen, Donna-Mai (93) .....	June 7
Campbell, Thomas Frank (52) .....	June 9
Dickinson, Dorothy "Dot" Gilbert (97) .....	June 9
McCulley, George Whitely (87).....	June 9
Cumbee, Robert Maxwell (84).....	June 10
Branch, Mildred Davies (96) .....	June 11
Furnald, Donald George (89).....	June 11
Manasco, William "Bill" T. (81) .....	June 12
Slate, Darlene Ann Larkin (85) .....	June 12
Bartlett, Dr. Haywood "Woody" Bellingrath (84).....	June 13
Graham, Ruth Glover "Baby Ruth" (73) .....	June 14
Parker, Sr., James MacLeod "Jimmy" (90).....	June 14
Parker, Mary Alice Luckie (101) .....	June 14
Prichett, John Taylor (45).....	June 14
Young, Jr., William Edward "Red" (81) .....	June 14
Crump, Elizabeth Burford .....	June 15
Lowe, Parron "Buck" (97).....	June 15
Massey, Jeane Pope (92) .....	June 15
Farish, Gay Nell (79) .....	June 16
Smith, Frances Broadway (90).....	June 16
Wills, Wallace Howard (66).....	June 19
Groome, Zelda Mae Evans (91).....	June 20
Thomas, Laura Olivia Capps (87).....	June 24



## JULY BIRTHDAYS

- |                         |                              |
|-------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1 Alan Moore            | 13 Stacey Nestor             |
| Butch (Mary) Moseley    | 14 Annie Bouchard            |
| Linda Foxworth          | Miriam Head (90th)           |
| 2 Ralph Davis           | Lansdon O'Mailia             |
| Lexie Turnipseed        | 15 Joan Collier              |
| George Pugh             | Farley Pugh                  |
| Voncille Talley         | Summer Rice                  |
| 4 Audrey Grant          | Paige Stringer               |
| Peggy Hubbard           | 16 Charlie Lamar             |
| David Johnson           | Sherry Tucker                |
| Lynn McKinley           | 18 Linda Carleton            |
| Cindy Smith             | Ann Marie Dean               |
| 5 Ann Emory Harris      | Laurie Smilie Sanders (94th) |
| Kathy Ingram            | Sharon K. Walker             |
| Joyce Todd              | 19 Mary Lamar                |
| 6 Vicki Davis           | Emma Ruthe Walker            |
| Skip Mainor             | 20 Tony Mitchell             |
| Glenn Stringer          | 22 Freddie Strength (72nd)   |
| Amber Wooten            | Vangie Walmsley              |
| 7 Knox Crowe            | 23 Alana Jones Breedlove     |
| Carolyn Grant           | Helen Broadway               |
| Willie B. Jackson       | Zachery Dibole               |
| Taylor Mills            | Matthew Grant                |
| Brian Mosley            | Rusty Moseley                |
| Greg Mosley             | Jim Scott                    |
| Cindy Young             | 24 Barbara Garrett           |
| Betty Vann              | 25 Ashley Corbin             |
| 8 Mickie Ann Boyd       | Rod Nowakowski               |
| Helen Dibole            | Becky Windham                |
| Fred Setzer             | Brantley Woodall             |
| 9 Joe Douglas           | Ty Woodall                   |
| Katherine Kirk          | 26 Jason Adams               |
| Kathryn Ann Sikes (8th) | Judy Mann                    |
| Doris Wallace (92nd)    | Stacy Dickinson              |
| Irene Woodham           | 27 Jimmy Norman (63rd)       |
| 10 Jeffery Horton       | 28 Arnold Fuller             |
| Pam Stewart             | Melanie Higgins              |
| Al Webb                 | 29 Hilda Glover              |
| 11 Abby Boyd            | 30 Shawn O'Mailia            |
| Luke Frady              | Emory Tucker                 |
| Ann Green Tucker        | Ronnie Wallace               |
| James Tucker            | 31 Brenda Davis              |
| Trenton Windham         | Meloney Gwin                 |
| 12 Cary Dean            | Caroline Vocino              |
| Bonnie Williams         | Marie Hudson                 |
| 13 Jeremy Dickinson     | Stephanie Randall            |



**Happy Belated Birthday to James "Hot Shot" McGinty (88) ~ June 18, 1933**

## Happy Anniversary

- |                                  |                                   |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 2 Bob & Liz Morris               | 19 Don & Nancy Rabren             |
| 3 Everett & Alice Cole (51st)    | 20 Spears & Carrie Rhodes         |
| Dennis & Karen Weber             | 21 Justin & Bethany Mims          |
| 7 April & Hugh Smith, III (13th) | Shannon & Cindy K. Miles          |
| 8 Bill & Charlotte Gaston        | 26 Blake & Amanda Wise            |
| 10 Fred & Jeanette Waldo (61st)  | 28 Archie & Charlotte Mote (65th) |
| 12 Dorothy & Glenn Fuller (63rd) | 31 Zachery & Jennifer Gibbs       |
| 16 Laird & Sarah Bone            |                                   |

**Happy Belated 50th Anniversary to Billy & Shirley Rotten (6-26) and Monty & Kathy Gordon (6-29)**

*Celebrating 40 Years of Service!*

# Gassett Funeral Home and Crematory, LLC

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## In Memory Of

Nora L. Hood .....	June 26
Ila Kate Gibbons Esco .....	June 25
Johnny Eugene Johnson, Jr. ....	June 22
Fraser C. Raines .....	June 22
Meta Harris .....	June 22
Marion Daniel .....	June 21
Cheryl Diane Williams Cummings .....	June 20
Henry Howard Wall .....	June 20
Fred Glenn Causby .....	June 18
Seth Henry Albritton .....	June 17
Emily Miriam Mulder Vickers .....	June 17
Dani Lockette Christy .....	June 14
Almarine "Rene" Sunday .....	June 14
William (Bill) T. Manasco .....	June 12
Shirley Claire Poole .....	June 8
Judith Kay Lanier .....	June 4
Lynn Edward Sorrells .....	June 2
Mary Katherine Howard .....	May 28
Dorothy Sue Hellums .....	May 27
Janice Wamble Dunn .....	May 27
Robert Eldredge Thrash .....	May 24



# 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 Hydrangeas are Blooming

**It is July. The hydrangeas are blooming.**

It has always struck me odd how it is that we can know something is coming up...we know it is on the way, and yet, we are still taken back a little by its arrival.

I knew July was on the calendar. Knew it was next. But when I turned the page in my planner to the month of July...it didn't seem possible. The clock seems to tick too quickly sometimes. It's equal opportunity, but it waits for nobody.

Turning the page to a new month feels like a fresh start. Or at least it does when it is thirty blank days stretched out side-by-side into weeks. Of course once all the have-to-do's, and appointments, and need-to and should-do notes are plotted, it doesn't look so blank anymore.

But as to why it is that in the face of looking forward to what is coming next, I go back...I don't know.

I am from common people who lived common lives. They lived in common houses, and worked common jobs.

It was a typical early July afternoon in Mobile that day. I remember, because the hydrangeas were blooming.

The city of Mobile played a recurring role in my childhood. My dad grew up in Mobile. My grandparents lived there, as did one of my favorite aunts. I had cousins there.

We also went to church in Mobile. It's a long story. A long story with a lasting impact, but I will spare the reader these details. I went to church in Mobile every week, on Saturday. I had a church family there that still holds meaning to me.

My best friend lived there. She went to the same church. We were so close at times that it was hard to distinguish where one of our families ended and the other began. We were seamless. I spent countless weekends with them, and several weeks during the summers.



Photo: [plantedwell.com](https://www.plantedwell.com)

Her parent's influence upon my life and my nature cannot be overstated, nor can my appreciation for them. Outside of my own mother, if there was any woman who I admired and slightly patterned my life after, it was Edwina Thomas. She ... was not common, though "just" a housewife and mother. I liked that.

But on this particular July afternoon, we were visiting my Aunt Martha.

### Hydrangea Meaning:

- \* **White hydrangea** symbolizes grace and abundance, but of all varieties, it's also the one most often associated with bragging. For most occasions, this is not a demure choice!
- \* **Pink hydrangea** is said to resemble a beating heart. It symbolizes romance and love and is a great flower for weddings.
- \* **Purple hydrangea** symbolizes wealth and abundance and a desire for understanding someone more deeply.
- \* **Blue hydrangea** can express regret or asking for forgiveness. But it's also associated with declining a romantic proposal.

Martha Brown. Nobody ever pronounced the "r." She had a huge personality and the gift of humor. She was a joy. Her husband was Joe. Joe Brown. He was a mechanic. He always smelled like diesel and had a cigarette in his hand. I loved him. He chuckled a lot. He was always happy it seemed, at least in his face. I know their life was troubled. There were struggles. But those were set to the side on Saturday afternoons.

There were plans to fry flounder together later in the evening. The kind with two eyes on one side. Mama had a new hushpuppy recipe she was trying. But that would be later, after dusk, after the streetlights glowed. My grandparents were on their way over. The sun had not yet set. We were all outside. There were lawn chairs scattered about.

They were talking about the hydrangeas. How pretty they were that year. There were two huge ones on each side of the front steps. They were blue. Some in the back were purple. And they were going on and on remembering which relative used to have which color growing where back when they were growing up.

Those voices. Mingling against the lengthening afternoon shadows.

***I guess I will always still hear them echoing come July.***

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



Ms.Wheelchair America/  
Alabama 2005

## Trisston's Tidbits ...

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

*"Baby, You're a Firework!"*

In what seems like another life to me now, I worked in my family's firework business. During the more than 30 years of selling fireworks, I often wondered why people were so drawn to them. And one day while pondering this thought, I saw a banner hanging outside with the word "Joy" in the middle.

Indeed, fireworks are designed for joy. They are constructed with specific elements that radiate certain colors and patterns...barium chloride for green, copper compounds for blue, lithium carbonate for red, aluminum and magnesium for whites and silvers. The designers know exactly the effect they are looking for when they put the fireworks shell together. And their work is a gift of joy to our eyes.



Photo: Katy Smith/[freeimages.com](https://www.freeimages.com)

Pop songs have made the analogy that we are like fireworks. It's corny, but true. We were designed with specific elements...a measure of wit or sensitivity or hospitality, a helping of talent or skill or curiosity, a sprinkling of unique insight or perspective. When the Designer planned us, He knew exactly the effect He was looking for. Believe it or not, like a firework, you are designed to be a joyous gift to the world.

Sometimes we assign the designation of shining to the likes of pop stars, poets, preachers and prophets. When the Holy Spirit came upon Zechariah at his son John the Baptists birth, ***"He said, 'And you, my child, will be called a prophet of the Most High; for you will go on before the Lord to prepare the way for him...to shine on those living in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the path of peace.'"***

*Luke 1:76-79*

I know we are all thinking that it sounds about right for a prophet. But for me? Yep, you were designed to shine!

***"For You formed my inward parts; You wove me in my mother's womb. I will give thanks to You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; Wonderful are Your works, And my soul knows it very well...."*** Psalm 139:13

You are designed specifically by God for a purpose, here in this time and place. Just like a specific firework fits into and enhances a fireworks show. You were designed to shine the light of God through who you are and what you do. You are designed to reflect and carry that light. But that's not all. Jesus said:

***"You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead, they put it on its stand and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven."*** Matthew 5:14

And who is always the source of light? God. He created us in His image and breathed life into us. Any light we have is a result of His creation. He did put individual, unique light in each of us. It is illuminated by the presence of His spirit living in us.

We share light in at least three ways:

We Emit...We carry it in us and into the circumstances and situations we encounter.

We Reflect...We convey the light.

We Amplify...We have the opportunity to recognize the light in people and call it out.

So the next time you see a firework in the night sky and feel that touch of joy and wonder, remember that is how God feels about you! And, He has a plan for you to shine the light of joy to the world.

Baby, you are a firework! Shine on, my friend!

***Many Blessings & Happy 4th of July!***

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## Quick Tip!

Use rubbing alcohol to clean stainless steel.  
Put some on a few cotton balls and have at it!



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*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.*





**Dr. Lester Spencer**  
Lead Pastor  
St. James United Methodist Church  
9045 Vaughn Road, Montgomery, AL

# Soul Searching

## Freedom!

Only four people ever successfully escaped to freedom from the federal prison on Alcatraz Island. The following story is an excerpt from my book, *Free For All*, which explores the different ways we can experience God’s amazing grace. It is only by God’s grace that we can be truly free!

Alcatraz Island sits in the middle of San Francisco Bay, surrounded by almost two miles of turbulent and treacherous water. For nearly one hundred years, the island housed a prison, and the place earned the nickname “The Rock” because it was inescapable.

Constructed as a United States Army fortress in the 1850s, the 22-acre island became an Army prison during the Civil War. In 1933, Alcatraz was turned over to the Department of Justice to be used as a federal penitentiary, and during the next 30 years, it housed some notorious criminals – Al Capone, Whitey Bulger, Bumpy Johnson, and Arthur “Doc” Barker, son of the infamous Ma Barker, were among its denizens.

Prisoners sent to Alcatraz did not escape, and those who tried, served as a caution to the rest. Doc Barker successfully climbed the prison walls but was shot to death on the beach while trying to construct a makeshift raft. Joseph Bowers was shot while trying to climb the fence and died from injuries sustained in the fall. Aaron Burgett overpowered a guard while taking out the garbage. He jumped into the water and tried to swim, but his body was found two weeks later floating in the bay.

Over the years, 14 documented escape attempts ended in prisoners being killed or presumed drowned in San Francisco Bay.

There’s usually an exception to every rule, and someone did escape Alcatraz. No swimming, no makeshift life raft, though. Four inmates simply walked out in 1903. An inmate who was the brains behind the operation worked in the prison print shop. He created a copy of a piece of letterhead bearing the War Department logo and on it wrote a letter remitting the sentences of himself and three other prisoners. He forged the signatures of Judge Henry Morrow and Major Williams. A second prisoner, who worked as a prison postal clerk, smuggled the letters out of the prison. An outside accomplice mailed them to the prison commander, Major Paxton. Believing the documents to be authentic, Paxton released the four prisoners. These inmates who escaped by means of a fake pardon were never found.

You’ve been granted a pardon – a genuine one! You’ve been set free, and your release orders were signed by the One who judges all humankind. That’s the whole point of these verses in Paul’s letter to the Ephesians:



Photo Credits: D Ramey Logan, CC BY-SA 3.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=27725542>

*God saved you by His grace when you believed. And you can’t take credit for this; it is a [free] gift from God. Salvation is not a reward for good things we have done, so none of us can boast about it. For we are God’s masterpiece. He has created us anew in Jesus Christ, so we can do the good things He planned for us long ago.* (2:8-10, NLT)

You’ve been set free, and your release orders were signed by the One who judges all mankind.

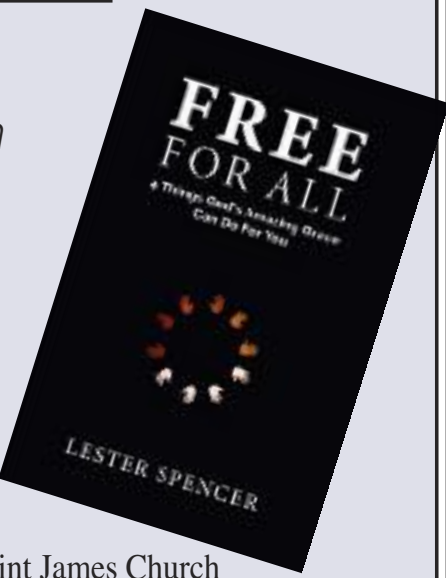
*Our freedom has been bought with a price. But it is free for all by God’s grace!*



Source: [www.imb.org](http://www.imb.org)

## Free For All

By **Lester Spencer**  
Available on Amazon  
in paperback and  
digital format.  
Also available at  
**Saint James Church**  
and online: [sjlife.com](http://sjlife.com)



Dr. Spencer is Lead Pastor at Saint James Church in Montgomery, Alabama and writes the *Soul Searching* column for *Alabama Gazette* each month.

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## Historic Brown Chapel AME Church in Selma Receives Restoration Grant

On June 23, 2021, Governor Kay Ivey attending the Restoration Ground-breaking of Historic Brown Chapel AME Church. The Historic Brown Chapel AME Church Preservation Society, Incorporated (Foundation) received from the National Park Service (NPS)-African American Civil Rights Grants, totaling 1.3 million dollars for restoration and repair work to Brown Chapel AME Church. Finally, the total cost of the grants submitted was \$23,500.00 that was paid by the Foundation. Our architect, Richard Hudgens, led the Church’s examination and study along with structural and electrical engineers.

Brown Chapel was built in 1908 and is a complex edifice. After all studies were completed, Mr. Richard Hudgens compiled and submitted plans for structural restoration and repairs of Brown Chapel on 3/10/2019 to the NPS for review and permission to proceed to the next step.

Permission has been granted by NPS to proceed in late 2020. The contractor chosen to do this historic restoration work is The Lathan Company of Mobile, AL. Mr. Jerry Lathan, owner.





# Special Election



# Sept. 7th

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