

Happy Valentine's Day!



ALABAMA'S
**FREE
PRESS**

Take One!

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A TEMPEST IN SELMA

Rotarians travelled to Selma MLK weekend to lend a hand to those who suffered a whirlwind of biblical proportions. About a dozen in all, from Montgomery, Auburn and Fairhope pitched in to help clean up. The Fairhope Club's Disaster Relief Trailer carried generators, chainsaws, and all sorts of supplies. It proved invaluable to the workers. Many other disaster teams aided across the City and teamed up to "get 'er done". With no electricity Saturday, the Fairhope contingent left Selma and stayed in a Montgomery hotel with rooms donated by a Dothan Rotarian. A nearby English tavern, Charles Anthony's "The Pub", provided a great hearty meal. All three guests, Mark, Ali, and Brian shared fascinating stories but all were in awe when one of these three Musketeers proclaimed he was a direct descendant of Joan Shakespeare, William Shakespeare's sister! (for non English majors, he was a writer a long time ago that wrote a play about a bad storm, called **The Tempest**)

Sunday's skies shone bright blue during the workday, but many grandfather oaks bowed down bare, never again to see the cirrus curls above. The Rotary team partnered with fellow responders from Tennessee to clean and remove tree debris. This Volunteer couple had made helping others in distress a life's passion, conducting over 100 disaster relief trips to devastated areas. At the end of the day, the Fairhope crew headed home. The trailer was dropped off safely in Montgomery since it would be displayed at the following weekend's midyear Rotary conference in hopes to raise awareness and money to have a Disaster Response trailer for the northern part of our District. The Capital City Club here in Montgomery has taken the lead in this important effort.

Monday rolled in with clouds and mild winds. With rain to follow in a day or two. So much devastation still remained. Power crews still were stringing. Samaritan Purse was still feeding. Red Cross and FEMA were still assessing damage since the President had declared Selma a Federal disaster area.

One of the team memers slowly rolled down a street in his beat up pickup truck passing strewn vehicles that looked like they had come in third place in a Saturday night Demolition Derby in Dothan during the Peanut Festival.

One lone elderly gentleman, with Einstein hair, ever so slowly reached for a roof shingle on the battered ground. He needed help. Asked if he could use some help, he responded with an exasperated sigh, "yes, you are a Godsend". He explained that he needed to get some meds, which under normal circumstances would be delivered, but now he would have to negotiate the debris piles and closed streets to reach the drug store. For the remainder of the day he let Rotary assist him.

Chimney bricks graced the ground like dead roses. Uncountable glass shards glistened up like kaleidoscopes. Aluminum roofing sheets, from two houses away, wrapped themselves around his barren trees like mangled Christmas bows. The worker volunteers didn't talk much, just nodded occasionally. Then a quiet man from Autaugaville walked by and wanted to help, and did. No explanation of why, he just did. Together the workers toted logs, limbs and

William Shakespeare - 1611-

Act IV Scene 1

"We are such stuff as dreams are made on, and our little life is rounded with a sleep."

Act V Scene 1

"O, wonder! How many goodly creatures are there here! How beauteous mankind is! O brave new world, That has such people in't!"



Disaster makes new friends.

aluminum roofing to the street and piled it up a mile high. After several hours it was time to say good bye. The job was mostly done. The victim stood and spoke to the volunteers at length for the first time. His bushy eyebrows could not hide his despair.

Turns out, this house was his medical office where people had come to be healed for over 40 years. A bit later in the day his office assistant (who was in the structure when the whirlwind came) confided that he was around eighty years old. This was his life. He had a contractor coming in the morning to replace the roof. How he was able to secure one so quickly was quite the story, the first of many. But, his patients came first. He is The local psychiatrist.

He shared histories and stories. He recollected when he listened to Joni Mitchell singing in a dingy bar in Boston. He remembered the chess masters outside "Havad Yad"

(Beantowners don't pronounce the R) taking easy money from unsuspecting freshmen who thought they knew all about the gambit. He harkened back to a time in his childhood when his dad ran a used car dealership in Montgomery and his sometimes mechanic was a crooner named Hank Williams (that's Sr.). The singing ruffian would ply his songs in his father's two bay garage to anyone who would listen. His father would have to drive Williams

to local concerts because he was too soused to get behind the wheel. Once Hank came by their house and his dad wouldn't let his young son shake his hand because he considered the man irresponsible and worthless. But, eventually he returned to his construction story asking about our experience in the field.

In turn, one mentioned, almost apologetically, something about his efforts to restore downtown Montgomery by renovating old abandoned buildings. One, the Segall Ice House was used to mature, house and distribute Chiquita bananas throughout central and south Alabama in the first half of the 20th century. He laughed as he interrupted and told me the story of Samuel Zemurray.

Sam was a Selma citizen, he immigrated from Russia around 1900. He started-out with \$150 and a dream, Sam worked for and became president of the United Fruit Company, the largest and most influential fruit company in the world at the time. Sam, the doctor continued, was so wealthy that he once owned the entire country of Honduras, via a coup he orchestrated by overthrowing the then president. Sam "hand picked" a successor who passed very favorable laws for the banana industry. Thus, the term "Banana Republic" was coined about "Sam the banana man, from Selma".

One final note. The doctor was mentioned he was concerned about getting meds from the drug store. They were for his patients, not for him. He puts service above self. He truly is the Godsend to his community, and to the workers he met that day. Dr Hodo will have his hands full over the next weeks and months helping those struggling with grief, loss and uncertainty. Please pray for him and his family. A True Hero.

Tornado Rips Through the River Region Area

23 Tornadoes traveled across 6 counties causing millions of dollars in damages and at least 9 deaths. Autauga County alone had between 50-60 homes destroyed. Had it not been for our excellent local metrologists and early warnings systems, the death count could have been significantly increased.

The story above is only one of hundreds of stories of communities and neighbors coming together to help each other. Please contact FEMA ASAP to insure that you can receive assistance. See page 6 .

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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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SHELBY'S LAST HURRAH

Richard Shelby's last week as our United States Senator was poetically amazing.

The nation watched as he gave his farewell address to the Senate. His speech was followed by a tribute from his longtime friend Senator Patrick Leahey. Senator Shelby and Senator Leahey from Vermont are best friends and co-chaired the U.S. Senate Appropriations Committee together for their final six-year terms, which ended January 3, 2023. They walked out together after a lasting three decade partnership.

The national media made note of the fact that Leahey, a Democrat, and Shelby, a Republican, were the last vestiges of bipartisanship in Congress. They worked together congruently to get things done for the nation and yes primarily for the states they represented. Shelby, who served 36 years as our senator, retired at 88 last month.

To say that he went out with a bang would be a dramatic understatement. As he was making his farewell adieu speech, he and Leahey were crafting their final federal budget. The budget was passed the next day, two days before Christmas. When the experts discerned the 4,000 plus page document, it revealed that Richard Shelby had again played Santa Claus to the people of Alabama. He not only brought most of the money from Washington to Alabama, practically speaking he brought the entire North Pole and Rudolph and all of the reindeer to the Heart of Dixie as he was walking out the door of the U.S. Senate.

The national media dubbed Shelby the "Greatest King" of earmarked procured money for their state in history. Indeed, the amount of federal dollars Senator Shelby brought home to our state as Chairman of the Senate Appropriations Committee is historical. He probably surpassed the previous "King of Pork" for their state, the late Robert Byrd of West Virginia.

In his last hurrah, Senator Shelby appropriated a mind boggling \$660 million of extra earmarked dollars to our state. Folks, that is quite an amazingly, unfathomable, incomprehensible, Christmas gift for our state.

As I was exchanging Christmas greetings with a state senator who is a close friend, I commented about Shelby's departing \$660 million Christmas gift to the state. He quietly commented, "Flowers, that is over 25 percent of our entire state General Fund Budget." However, if you dig deeper into the federal budget that Shelby passed, his \$660 million is also met with upgrades of funds Shelby allocated in previous years to amount to \$4 billion. That is more

than the entire State of Alabama's annual budget. Every part of Alabama was showered with Shelby's gifts, which will make generational changes to our state.

In Huntsville alone Shelby has played a pivotal role in shaping this Tennessee Valley area into the science, space, and technology capital of the south, if not the nation. In his final hurrah, the Huntsville Redstone area received funds for Army research weaponry, a space launch system, nuclear thermal propulsion for the Marshall Space Flight Center, construction of a new FBI Headquarters, which Shelby moved from Washington to the Redstone Arsenal in Huntsville, and several other new buildings at the Redstone Arsenal.

Shelby earmarked a great deal of federal money for his home area of Tuscaloosa including millions for new buildings and education centers for the University of Alabama, funds for a new bridge, and millions for the Tuscaloosa airport.

He took care of the Montgomery/Wiregrass area, which is military laden for years to come. This area received multi-millions in new money for Ft. Rucker for flight training and Air Surface Missiles, along with millions for the Hellfire missiles made in Troy.

There is over a billion dollars going to UAB for biomedical research and new buildings. Shelby has been instrumental in transforming UAB into one of the most pronounced medical research institutions in the nation.

He took care of Mobile for generations to come. There are millions of earmarked funds going to the Port City. In addition, Shelby completed his mission of building Alabama a new deeper and wider Port with a \$200 million dollar appropriation for the Alabama State Port Authority.

In my 2015 book, Of Goats and Governors: Six Decades of Alabama Political Stories, I have a chapter entitled "Alabama's Three Greatest Senators, John Sparkman, Lister Hill and Richard Shelby. If I were writing that book today, Richard Shelby would be alone as Alabama's greatest United States Senator by far.

See you next week.

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

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



Justice Will Sellers

DIVIDING CHURCH & STATE: UNITING FAITH & REASON

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Five Hundred years ago, the Protestant Swiss reformer, Ulrich Zwingli's theology was designated the official religion of Zurich.

The rumblings of the Reformation were just starting. As education expanded, literacy allowed more people to read the Bible, increasing curiosity about theology. Families sent their best and brightest sons to become ordained priests. Seminaries become a concentration of intellectually curious male teenagers; rather than

accept the authority of the status quo, these seminarians questioned the practices of the church when compared to their reading of the Scriptures.

Like Martin Luther, Zwingli had no desire to break from the established church. Instead, he simply wanted to reform the church and conform its practices with his understanding of the Bible.

Having some sense of academic freedom in debating points of theology, Zwingli asked the Zurich City Council to convene a debate to decide which doctrines should be allowed to be preached in the city.

At this time, there was only one church, both literally and figuratively. Zwingli was designated as the minister for the church in Zurich. He was well-educated and influenced by the humanist Erasmus into studying not only the Bible but also other scholarly texts of the virtuous pagans. Zwingli was an engaging and innovative preacher and known for ministering to the sick and downtrodden.

As he began his ministry in Zurich, his unique worship style included reading passages from the Bible in the language of his mostly illiterate congregation. And, as he read through each verse, he would comment on the words of the passage providing interpretation and application to current issues.

Working his way through the Bible, Zwingli began to note differences between the practices of the church and passages in the Bible. His sermons expressed thoughts that were at odds with certain customs and traditions of the establishment.

At first, some of these differences were minor, but, as he preached his way through the Bible, the differences became more significant. When some complained, Zwingli decided the best way to deal with accusations of error was to host a debate. At his request, the city council asked the Bishop to come and discuss Zwingli's 67 points of theology.

Amazingly enough, in January of 1523, Zwingli had not heard of Martin Luther or his 95 theses, but, in many ways, his concerns were very similar.

It is hard to imagine that the agenda for any city council meeting would include a theological debate to decide which Biblical teaching a city would embrace, but it occurred in Zurich.

Separation of church and state was a foreign concept. Government officials and clergy worked together as faith was established, recognized, and supported by the government. Freedom of conscience and liberty of belief was virtually a heretical abstraction.

It made just as much sense for a city to decide the faith of its citizens as it would today to decide a zoning variance.

The debate was held. When the Bishop's scholars failed to effectively debate Zwingli and were unprepared to answer his 67 questions, the city councilors voted and confirmed that Zwingli would continue to be their minister, and his

teaching would be the established beliefs of Zurich.

Zwingli's triumph was the beginning of the Swiss Reformation and would have a lasting impact on the goals, beliefs, and techniques of Protestantism. But with the city establishing a church and the church taking on roles of the state, a collision course was bound to occur. And it did.

Rather than allowing debate over issues and differing ideas, Zwingli did what he accused others of doing. He developed a smug dogmatism, accepting only his beliefs as accurate and squelching all dissent. As a result, he used the power of the state on behalf of the church to punish and even execute those with opposing views. Instead of becoming a bastion of toleration, Zurich became known for persecutions.

So great was Zwingli's zeal for his faith, he encouraged a war against other Swiss cities that rejected his belief system but continued to acknowledge the authority of the Pope. Zwingli would tragically die on the battlefield literally fighting for his faith.

The beliefs that Zwingli held inform Protestant Christianity today. However, his practices in advocating for a politically established church and imposing his beliefs as an official religion without room for dissent could not survive.

What Zwingli and other reformers failed to understand is that the faith they developed from their reading of the Bible would be similarly experienced by others. But, as with any writing, people find different interpretations based on any number of grammatical conventions, preconceived notions, prejudices, or personal experiences.

In establishing a state-sponsored religion, Zwingli should have realized that the ability to argue beliefs and allow open debate is as good for faith as for any thought process. Ideas are polished by debate, and dissent makes faith stronger. A healthy dose of skepticism is good for confirming aspects of faith. For a political community to prosper, toleration of diverse beliefs is entirely appropriate.

Learning from this experience, the United States Constitution was an attempt to allow all beliefs to compete for the souls of the faithful. Americans realized that the personal nature of faith made it impossible to have any government impose it. Unlike the cities and other political subdivisions of the Old World, America would not allow state religions, and would opt, instead, for freedom of conscience. While governments cannot designate and support one faith, it can limit practices so that faith doesn't become a license or an excuse to break established law.

Zwingli and the other reformers showed that engaging in debate about faith was intellectually progressive. But government can only provide a framework of allowing open debate so that faith is discussed and opposing points of view are respected. The debate, however, should never stop, but continue as ideas are challenged and discussed to provide a moral fabric of virtue, peace, toleration, and goodwill to stabilize the state.



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Rob Tate

her about this jewelry I saw on the internet. It is made by Tanaor in Israel and what makes this jewelry so unique is that contained within a tiny box on the piece, in my case a leather bracelet, there is a disk that has the entire KJV Bible engraved on it. I am not talking about a digital copy but due to a new “Nano-technology,” they are able to actually engrave all 3.5 million characters on this tiny disk. I found that to be pretty amazing. If you go to their website: tanaorjewelry.com, you can see their products. And no, I do not get any favors from them. I am just a happy customer. If you ask if the Bible can be read, the answer is yes. If you have a 1,000 power microscope, you can actually read the whole book. But enough of that. Let’s talk classified information.

It all started with Donald Trump and Mar-a-Largo. Classified documents found in his home. People lose their minds. Now, it appears that President Biden has been classified as a “serial hoarder” of classified data. From his offices to his home and even his garage stored behind his classic Corvette. His collection of classified information extends from his time as a vice-president all the way to when he was a senator. Yesterday, I saw where even former VP Mike Pence has classified information located in his home. Let’s not even discuss Hillary Clinton’s private classified server in her house.

Let’s talk intellectual honesty here. When I first heard of President Trump’s collection of classified, I told several people that if he was indeed guilty of a crime, then he should be punished. Absolutely. But at least as President, he does have the authority to declassify documents. Whether this was done or not, we do not yet know. What is certain, neither Pence nor Biden had such authority. What do you think that tells you about having a private classified server in your home?

When I left college, I immediately went into the Air Force and my first operational assignment was that of a KC-135 Tanker copilot at Fairchild Air Force Base in Spokane, WA. I was 23 years-old and from my arrival at Fairchild until my retirement from the Air Force 25 years later in 2007, I had at a minimum a Top-Secret security clearance. I even held a higher classification for a large part of my career. So in terms of classified information, I pretty much know what I am talking about. When I see these intentional lapses of security, I just shake my head and wonder, “Who else?” This flippant attitude regarding classified information is frustrating to those of us who have handled classified information for years and know the consequences of what mishandling will do for you. BTW, when I say intentional lapses, this is just what they are. At the level these people are operating and with the sheer number of documents, I simply do not, will not and cannot believe it to be accidental. Sorry, I just don’t.

When I first entered the world of classified information, I remember the detailed background checks by, at the time to a 23 year-old guy, pretty threatening people. Not only do you answer their questions, but they are going to go around and ask people you know all about your life. Then we get trained, tested, tested, trained and trained some more. Every year. What is classified? How do you handle classified? What are the different levels of classification? What can I do and not do with classified? Let there be no mistake, when someone says they did not know they could not take classified data home, they are lying; to your face.

If someone says they didn’t realize they could not put classified data on a thumb drive or burn it to a CD, they are lying; to your face. All of us familiar within the world of classified data know exactly what is and is not legal. If someone tells you they don’t, they are lying; to your face.

ROBSERVATIONS...

by Robert Tate

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

CLASSIFIED? WHAT CLASSIFIED?



Every single person who has ever had a security clearance knows that you cannot store classified information in a shabby box while being protected by your custom Corvette. There is no gray area here, folks. None. Black and white. Right and wrong. Legal and illegal. No questions; no debate. Why is this so hard for people to understand. People want to debate you although they have no clue what they are talking about. I was on a layover one day going to our hotel. This was just as Hillary’s server issue came up. So, the other pilot and I were talking about it when the van driver jumped in the conversation. “I don’t think she did anything wrong. What’s the big deal?” So I asked the guy what year he got his security clearance and he said he never had one. My response? “So you are sitting there arguing with me over something you have no idea what the h#ll you are talking about! Really?” Needless to say the remainder of the trip to the hotel was rather “frosty.”

Look, handling classified data is serious business. Or rather should be. I had a friend when I was in the Air Force. Let’s call him, “Joe. Joe Bagodonuts.” He was also a KC-135 copilot from another base. But back when Strategic Air Command existed, both bombers and tankers sat a week of alert. For this entire week, we had to stay on the base in our alert facility, close to our airplanes just in case. As part of alert, the first thing we did was we had to go to the intelligence shop and grab all the information for the missions we would be tasked to fly in case the balloon went up. Each crew was given a specific mission to fly and we had to study

it. It was called EWO (Emergency War Order) study. We had to study where we would go, what plane(s) we would refuel, what bases they came from, where we would land, etc. All highly classified stuff. But as we would study, we sat a table with a lot of information piled in front of us. When finished, we would gather the information, put it back in the flight case where it was stored, grab our own gear and go to the alert facility.

Well one day, “Joe” accidentally grabbed a classified document and put it into his own flight kit. He took it to the alert facility and then a week later when he was off alert, he took his flight kit home. There he discovered the document. He immediately drove back to the base and turned it in to the intelligence office. “Joe” was almost court martialed and tossed into jail. Only because of a gracious wing commander did he avoid a vacation in Leavenworth prison. Today, we have people intentionally mishandling classified data and people want to act as though it is totally acceptable because nothing ever seems to happen to the offending big fish.

You ever hear of former CIA director John Deutch. After he left the CIA, they found a cache of classified in his home. Although he lost his security clearance, he did no jail time. Remember when former National Security Advisor for President Clinton, Sandy Berger (or according to Rush Limbaugh, Sandy Burglar), stuffed classified documents in his clothes and socks and tried to walk out of National Archives. Although fined, he did no time in Leavenworth making new friends and was only charged with a misdemeanor.

The Washington Post has an interesting article titled, “U.S. Inconsistent When Secrets Are Loose.”
<https://washingtonpost.com/archive/politics/2000/03/18/us-inconsistent-when-secrets-are-loose/6a928f72-d79b-430d-9c0b-93c67af05568/>.

It details how us mere “peasants” are punished for the mishandling of classified while the “beautiful people” basically get away with clear crimes.

As far as the current situation, I really do not care who you are, what party you are associated with, if you mishandle classified information, especially intentionally, you need to go to jail. What I can tell you for sure is that if I did what Joe Biden has done, I would be in jail today or if I was lucky, out on parole by now. Let no one deceive you. Unless the information has been declassified as possibly in the case of President Trump, this careless handling of classified information is a crime. Pretty simple stuff actually. If these people broke the law, punish them as the criminals they are.



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TIDBITS



Ronald A. Holtsford

IN LIGHT OF THE DOBBS DECISION WHAT IS THE STATUS OF LEGAL ABORTION?



The Dobbs decision overturned the “Constitutional” right to abortion under Roe v Wade. The decision was to return the denial or the availability of abortion to the people (of the various states). Justice Kavanaugh pointed out in his concurring opinion that the Constitution neither provides a right to abortion nor does it allow a barrier to abortion. There is considerable statutory language available from the states and even some states while they were yet territories which criminalized abortion. Most of these statutes were enacted in the nineteenth century; some enacted in the early to mid-twentieth century.

Justice Kavanaugh pointed out that the United States Supreme Court in Roe v Wade had moved from a neutral position to one of deciding for the people. In Dobbs, the Court moves back to the neutral position. There is speculation that the Biden, White House and Democratic members in Congress may push to codify a Federal right to abortion. If that were to happen and a judicial review sought, with the Supreme Court seeking a neutral position one has to wonder the outcome. Is the will of the majority of people through their representatives of the State of Alabama and just over a quarter of all states to completely ban abortion going to remain in place, recognizing the sovereignty of those states? Are the representatives of other states, especially those much larger that incline towards a impersonal view of fetal death for convenience sake going to impose their will through a Federal law that allows infanticide? Should that happen how does a “neutral” Supreme Court then rule for or against the will of state sovereignty?

The other almost three fourths of the states allow for various limits on abortion. Georgia has a six-week cutoff. There are a few states that have no cutoff on fetal age for abortion. There are several states that provide abortion until twenty-two weeks and many that provide abortion until viability. With modern science viability is an unknown. Is the abortion of a child born alive one to be set aside until it dies or is murdered by the abortionist or are measures enacted to save the life of the child? There are children and adults living today that have survived abortion rather than experiencing a joyful and wanted live birth. The Lozier Institute reports about 60% of babies born at 22 weeks survive when they receive active hospital treatment. A 1981 article in the Philadelphia Inquirer noted a baby surviving an abortion as a “dreaded complication”.

Though prior to Dobbs, I ran across an interesting case from 2018, NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF FAMILY AND LIFE ADVOCATES, DBA NIFLA, ET AL. v.

BECERRA, ATTORNEY GENERAL OF CALIFORNIA, ET AL. A California law was passed to regulate pro-life, crisis pregnancy centers. That law required such centers whether licensed or not, “California provides free or low-cost services, including abortions, and give them a phone number to call. Its stated purpose is to make sure that state residents know their rights and what health care services are available to them. Unlicensed clinics must notify women that California has not licensed the clinics to provide medical services. Its stated purpose is to ensure that pregnant women know when they are receiving health care from licensed professionals.” The Supreme Court noted that the state attempted to regulate free speech under the First Amendment by requiring speech contrary to the position of the clinics. California attempted to separate “professional” speech from the speech of other individuals and show reason to regulate it. California regulated such speech asserting that women did not know what type of clinic that they may have entered. The only justification that the Supreme Court saw for such regulated speech was whether or not a pregnant woman would be receiving care from licensed professionals. The case was therefore reversed and remanded to the lower court with support for the pro-life pregnancy centers.

The Dobbs decision settled the lack of Constitutional address of abortion. The states will have to individually figure out the will of their residents. Hopefully, an overreaching Federal government will not seek to impose its will on those unwilling to support a legalized freedom to impose the death penalty on the inconvenient, imperfect or unwanted pre-born.

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

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THE “GIFT THAT KEEPS ON GIVING 20TH ANNIVERSARY

John W.. Giles – President & Chairman - Choose Life Alabama

On the heels of the U.S. Supreme Court overturning Roe vs. Wade, ground zero for saving lives of the unborn children is taking place in approximately 72 pregnancy resource centers across the state. Post Roe Vs. Wade, the pressure at these centers has intensified. This good news is traffic has increased, yielding in saving more lives, but the interchange is soaring operating cost.

Phone calls, office visits, counseling sessions, expanding office hours and demands on staff are being felt in these centers. Rising cost of maternity items, bought by these centers to give away to young women deciding to keep their baby has been impacted by spiraling inflation. A need that has re-emerged as a pressing essential is housing for unwed mothers; in some cases, these young ladies have other children. Generally speaking, these are one-year programs to help the unwed mother through maternity, child birth and getting back on her feet. Critics of the prolife agenda often spew false notions that we do not care about the women, you decide. You and I can help these women in need!

One of the many ways to help these pregnancy resource centers is to purchase a Choose Life auto tag every year. It cost an additional \$50.00 to purchase the tag, \$41.25 goes to the pregnancy resource centers and the rest goes to the state. Since 2003, this tag has produced \$4.4 million, which has been distributed to these centers over the past 19 years. Every year, we sell about 6000 tags and distribute about \$250,000.00 annually. Our goal is the double that to 12,000 tags, now we are talking about \$500,000.00 annually. Think about this, \$1.00 a week enables us to write checks for \$500,000.00 every year.

Many have no clue what takes place in one of these centers. A scared abortion minded young girl walks in wanting a free pregnancy test. Life and death hang

in the balance, one wrong misread body language or misunderstood word and that girl storms out intending to take the life of her unborn child. Little does she know, this abortion may seem to fix a short-term problem, but the trade off is a life time of mental torment from this one decision. The emotions of those volunteers and staff is a roller coaster all day dealing with these volatile young women experiencing an unwanted pregnancy.

These centers are like having missionaries sprinkled geographically all over the state. They offer free pregnancy test, most have access to ultra sounds so the expecting moms can see their baby’s image and hear the heartbeat, counseling them and helping navigate all available resources. In many cases, they host baby showers for these women and give them maternity supplies to set up a nursery. In addition to their full-service deployment of life changing assistance, they give these women unconditional love.

Choose Life Alabama is a low overhead, high impact nonprofit (Alabama Prolife Coalition Education Fund, Inc). We do not even have an office, everything we do is virtual. Our board of directors and everyone associated with this work are volunteers. We have a part-time executive director, who also works full time as Director of a pregnancy resource center.

On our 20th Anniversary, help us to support these women, your \$1.00 can help us write a check for \$500,000.00. Call your County Probate Judge’s office today and upgrade your tag in 2023.

**Choose Life Tags, the
“Gift that Keeps on Giving.”
The U.S. Supreme Court has left a
legacy, you can leave a legacy as well!**



John spent nearly 15 years as Executive Vice President in the family business Giles Enterprises located in Montgomery Alabama. In 1989 Governor Guy Hunt appointed him as Small Business Advocate for the State of Alabama. At the age of 38 John ran as a Republican candidate for Lt. Governor in 1994 and was defeated. Governor Fob James appointed John to serve in his cabinet. In 1989, Governor James was defeated in his reelection bid and John was then appointed President of the Christian Coalition of Alabama where he served for about nine years. John’s new assignment included opposing well financed gambling forces; battling an attempt to pass a \$1.2 billion tax increase on Alabama families, passing prolife legislation, passing a constitutional amendment protecting the sanctity of marriage and visibly and

vocally standing with Chief Justice Roy Moore in keeping the Ten Commandments in the Alabama Judicial Building; all squeezed into his job description. In 2007, the Giles moved to quietly reside at their 40 acre tract of land they named Agnus Dei Farm. A few years ago, John picked up the hobby of beekeeping and became amazed at the natural wonder and miracle of honey and beeswax. He experimented with beeswax and natural oils and created a beeswax and honey lip butter, which launched a new cottage industry on their farm (www.agnusdeifarm.com). John married Deborah his high school sweetheart in 1972 and they had three children; from their two living children they now have 12 grandchildren.

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



John Sophocleus

first thing which came to mind; all the calls we exchanged these past decades. My bride would often get the phone and delight in John Andrew’s demeanor... either delightfully excited or solemnly serious but always purposeful. Closing our Sunday service, Minister Roland Austin once again displayed exemplary pastoral skills providing an ‘audible’ on the quick, eloquently imparting Commissioner Harris’s sense of purpose in his efforts following Jesus’ Path to God in keeping with the Holy Spirit and all the accompanying tribulation.

Harris’s long legacy of political service began in 1986. The first black elected to the Opelika City Council (along with George ‘Tootie’ Bandy) where he served for 8 years until elected to the Lee County Commission in 1994. Standing against corrupt minions relentlessly polluting Lee County into one of the worst in our State, his courage offered a small ray of hope. Harris being the only commissioner to stay clear of the mileage scandal was one of the more notable examples of John Andrew’s sound sense of right and wrong.

In memoriam, I’d like to see his legacy carry-on with what Harris was championing and working toward during his 2022 re-election campaign. Anyone familiar with John Andrew’s respect for keeping power in the hands of citizen voters and his deep understanding of the importance of representative government over the tired old rhetoric espoused by those continuing to take and concentrate power to themselves will not be surprised he was fighting for this till the end.

A draft resolution Commissioner Harris worked on and planned to submit is as follows:

STATE OF ALABAMA
LEE COUNTY
RESOLUTION OF THE LEE COUNTY COMMISSION

WHEREAS, each County Commissioner of Lee County, Alabama has affirmed an Oath to the United States Constitution dutifully adhering to the Article 4, Section 4 guarantee of a “Republican Form of Government” and supportive of the Letter and Spirit set forth in Article 1, Section 2 that representation keep pace with enumeration of population after every federal census for the purpose of limiting concentration of political power over citizens; and

WHEREAS, the Lee County Commission has the legal, moral and ethical responsibility to protect citizens from government usurpation of power and promote the general welfare of Lee County citizens over special interest; and

WHEREAS, the Lee County Commission recognizes and fully supports efforts to maintain representation and strongly denounces anti-democratic efforts to hinder representation regulation as population changes; and

WHEREAS, Lee County real representation [population per commission District] steadily diminished during the County’s first century as population tripled with no adjustment, prompting the addition of one commission District circa 1970 to the current five district determination, and observation Lee County population has tripled yet again this past half-century with no adjustments, suffering faster decay in representation due to the static five district result; and

WHEREAS, the Lee County Commission recognizes the importance of Lee County citizens’ efforts to restore some of their lost representation, more specifically 1970 population was 61,268 - i.e., about one commissioner for every 12,000 residents yet current Lee County population is quickly approaching 180,000 without adjustment in number of commission districts, **real** representation has been reduced to one commissioner for every 35,000 residents who are seeking relief from ongoing loss of representation; and

WHEREAS, Lee County has exhibited widespread support from local organizations championing restoration of representation to have one Commission District for each block of 25,000 in population, including the East Alabama Republican Assembly, League of Women Voters, Lee County NAACP Branch 5038, Lee County Voters League; and

WHEREAS, it is also the duty of the Alabama Legislature with the Lee County Commission to adhere to the Letter and Spirit of their Oaths to the United States and Alabama Constitutions to promote sound public policy.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEE COUNTY COMMISSION

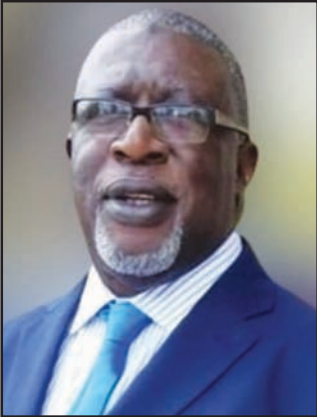
as follows:
We fully support the Letter and Spirit of the United States Constitution and the protections it affords to all citizens of Lee County from concentrating political power as per the stated purpose from Section 35 of the Alabama State Constitution, “the sole object and only legitimate end of government is to protect the enjoyment of life, liberty, and property and when the government assumes other functions it is usurpation and oppression,” championing our quality of life and public safety for all Lee County citizens;

We respectfully request the Alabama State Legislature consider the following text:

The number of Lee County Commission Districts shall not exceed one for every twenty-five Thousand, to be adjusted every decade after each federal census of Lee County population. Upon passage, the number of Lee County Commission Districts will increase to seven, subject to adjustment (increase/decrease) after each decade’s federal census enumeration of Lee County’s population.

DONE this Xth day of Januber, 202X.

IN MEMORIAM:
THE JOHN ANDREW HARRIS RULE



John Andrew Harris, Sr.

Wanting to provide all comments/quotes received w.r.t. Commissioner Harris’s death, I ask forgiveness from those I’ve not included and pray readers appreciate the ones printed below under the space/time constraints. I’ll begin with wonderful correspondences from Commissioner Tony Langley [Dist. 4] who has the most difficult district to cover as representation continues to decay. Lee County voters wisely removed the incumbent in the 2022 primary. Newly elected Commissioner Langley wrote:

“In the short time I got to know Mr. John he was willing to help me during the election process and willing to help me get settled into office. The thing I will remember the most is his willingness to help others.”

What makes this quote endearing to anyone who truly knew John Andrew is undoubtedly forecasting Commissioner Harris would be this way till his last days - esp. those who recall he’d go anywhere (including the early T.E.A. Party meetings) to interact with those he found sincere. It reminded me of his efforts with Rep. Jeremy Gray (his opponent) on this fine young gentleman’s path into public service. Jeremy had to hit the ground running (a little differently from his star athlete days) with the Beauregard tornadoes. I asked Jeremy as the ‘rookie’ legislator from my House District to look to fellow good men in his Party like England and Harris; avoid politicians making corrupt deals with Felon Hubbard minions. I still think it was sound advice. Furthermore, I pray Jeremy is successful getting this legislation (dare I type *The John Andrew Harris Rule* in keeping with his legacy?) passed and be a template for other counties desiring restoration of representation.

Fellow long time Lee County Commission Watcher Peter R. Byrd said:

“John Andrew truly cared about people, **all** people regardless of race or creed. He took his job as commissioner seriously and supported all Lee County, putting himself in harm's way for folks not even in his district. He was not afraid to stand up for anyone who needed help, even though as a county commissioner, more often than not, he stood alone. He stood regardless of the consequences because he believed in justice and fairness and would not allow his voice to be muzzled by those in power. Many in Lee County may not realize it, but John Andrew shielded folks against the greedy and powerful. He was a kind soul and will be sorely missed.”

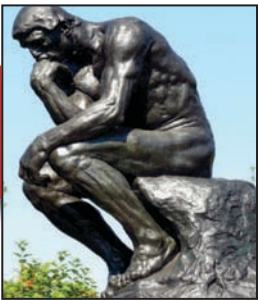
This is powerful coming from a long time witness of good and evil accomplished at Lee County Commission meetings. The only one I can think of better able to assess John Andrew’s service on the County Commission is Fred Woods who passed a few years ago. We were promised a resolution recognizing Woods’ service/reporting by the most corrupt commissioner and one of his biggest enablers - both removed by voters in the 2022 primary. Hard not to consider things of this sort would’ve been different with John Andrew on the commission those lost four years due to his AL House Dist. 83 run. When on the Commission, he made sure (via the *Lee County Voters League* he held dear) George Bandy was well remembered, I’m certain it would’ve been the same for Fred Woods who John Andrew held in high regard. One of many righteous things not done in Commissioner Harris’s absence those four years... given Gov. Ivey’s last two appointments to the Lee County Commission, it appears Lee County will once again suffer.

The final quote I’ll include is from Senator John Rice who remembered John Andrew well with:

“John Andrew Harris helped me win my 1982 AL House election and when he ran for office I did the same for him. We were both pulling for the underdog and we were both passionate about our hometown of Opelika. We worked hard on the issue of changing the form of government in 1984-85 to the system of Mayor/Council that we now have. The legislation that I drafted ended up passing with little to no dissent. Of course it is more complicated than that but John was a good emissary for his people, many of whom are mutual friends. John was Darden High kid and I was an Opelika High kid but we knew each other for years. Our political views were often opposite but our friendship allowed us to always have open dialogue. When I purchased *WJHO* radio in 1991, I always welcomed John, Clarence Harris and George Bandy on the air. A good deal of integration knowledge has gone with John Harris's passing and may he rest well in the arms of his Saviour.”

I thought it fitting to close with a quote from John Rice who has also been a tireless champion of representation and promote citizens’ directing outcomes instead corruption via skewed, concentrated political power. Rice has provided much help and verification on what to write and address in the courts, most notably the Lowder/Hubbard corruption I observed at *AU*. John Andrew was a similar ‘bellwether’ on where to look for things being hid/obfuscated; I’m still amazed he knew about Opelika’s *Gig-City* corruption before anyone else had the courage to tell me about Fuller, et al wrongdoings to expose. I also pray John Andrew is well received as a righteous example of fighting for some things, like keeping one’s soul intact, as much more important than mammon and political gain. How many times did we (OK, those who were actually paying attention) observe John Andrew make a stand against our most corrupt even though Commissioner Harris knew he wouldn’t stop the wrong?

We’ll see if passing the *John Andrew Harris Rule* is the close of this good man’s legacy and becomes a beacon for other counties to restore lost representation. Observing poor recognition of Fred Woods’ reporting to Pete Turnham’s accomplishments as a legislator and a WWII ‘Monument Man’ these past years; rational to forecast John Andrew will quickly be forgotten in Lee County. Nonetheless I evoke the ancient Greek saying for times of this sort, “*Eonia imnemi*” - i.e., may the memory of John Andrew Harris, Sr. be eternal though Jesus Christ this good Christian commissioner held dear and did well in his efforts to follow. In the Spirit of 2 *Timothy 4:7*, this servant of God indeed fought the good fight, finished the course and kept the faith who earned the words conveyed in *Matthew 25:21*, well done good and faithful servant: enter into the joy of thy Lord.



THINK



Wikipedia.com

“I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but of the content of their character”.

– Martin Luther King Jr.

“Not everybody can be famous but everybody can be great, because greatness is determined by service”.

– Martin Luther King Jr.

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John Martin

THE TYRANTS STRIKE AGAIN

Here we go—another dirty trick from the Biden regime.

Back when he hired his new army of 78,000 new IRS agents, nearly tripling the roughly 45,000 we already had, greedy Joe Biden claimed he was only going after “the rich tax cheats.” Now we have the proof that his real targets are poor people—specifically **the poor WORKING people**.

In my October article, I already mentioned that tax collections from wealthy people, in spite of their much higher tax rates, generate only a tiny fraction of the revenue that the IRS extorts from middle and low income people: “In the IRS fact book for 2019 (the most recent year of available records), the IRS audited about 343,000 individual tax returns, but only 8200 were incomes above \$500,000. The IRS audited **LOWER incomes OVER 4,400% MORE** than higher incomes. The tax yield was \$28 million from 4350 \$1 million earners. But 184,000 audits of **low incomes of \$1 to \$25,000** yielded an extra **\$707 million.**”

What is Biden’s game this time? He is already spouting that there won’t be any tax increases for anybody. Even if that claim is really true, he and his cronies are still about to load us with reams of new and expensive, invasive paperwork. After all, he has jobs for those 78,000 new agents. Otherwise, he wouldn’t have an excuse to hire them. That also means additional toil for us—**unpaid slave laborors without a nickel of compensation**.

Furthermore, this scheme is another serious privacy invasion which allows the government to stick its nose even deeper into the smallest details of everybody’s financial affairs.

Until now, few of us had ever heard of the IRS Form 1099-K. Most of us never file a 1099 of any kind. Those are for relatively rich self-employed people who do work on the side.

Last year (2022), Congress made some changes in the **American Rescue Plan Act of 2021** and sneaked in a nasty little surprise that’s almost impossible to find. It lowered the threshold for the 1099-K from \$20,000 to a piddling \$600. That means that this year (2023), low income taxpayers who never suffered a burden like this before are likely to be inundated with 1099-Ks from payment services like Square, Venmo, PayPal, Apple Cash, and also eBay, Etsy, Facebook and Amazon.

The 1099-K is sent to people who sell goods and do part-time work and are paid with these services. Each one will send a separate form, meaning many individuals will receive several to fill out. We will be smothered with “a tidal wave of Forms 1099-K hitting millions of unsuspecting taxpayers and... overworked tax preparers.”

Prior to 2022, this form was required only for 200 or more annual third-party transactions totaling \$20,000 and above. But Biden’s “Gestapo” has now lowered that minimum all the way down to ONE transaction totaling a mere **\$600. SIX HUNDRED DOLLARS**—an amount so absurdly low, almost everybody who earns money in this manner will be forced to perform extra paperwork and suffer the agonizing liability of a painful audit if he fails to comprehend its complications and makes mistakes. Many will suffer the extra expense of hiring professional tax services to avoid the likely penalties of failure. The tax professionals will probably be the only people who could benefit from this scandal. They will certainly profit from the extra work—unlike the poor taxpayers who are forced to perform free extra labor and suffer the agonies of performing complicated mandated bookkeeping duties.

Even working children can be impacted. Those who mow lawns and baby-sit for only \$600 annually will be required to document every little job and keep careful records. If they should become a bit negligent, they and their parents could be victims of IRS retribution. Now a single transaction or several totaling \$600 will receive a 1099-K.

This is just one more case of runaway government overreach where it utterly lacks the morals and common sense to just leave things alone.

Last August (2022), over 70 mostly conservative and free market organizations, including the National Taxpayers Union, Americans for Tax Reform, the Center

for a Free Economy and the American Business Defense Council, sent an open letter to congressional leaders emphasizing the urgency of the issue:

“Under the prior law, a 1099-K was issued only in the event that a business charged customers at least 200 times in a year, and \$20,000 in the aggregate. “H.R. 1319 eliminated the 200 transaction threshold entirely, and lowered the dollar hurdle to just \$600. As a result, both very small business ventures and unwitting non-business taxpayers have found themselves caught in the 1099-K reporting net. Millions of Americans who have never received a 1099-K form before, and don’t know what to do with it, will get one. If they seek help from the IRS, they will quickly run into an overwhelmed agency trying to process this gusher of new 1099-K returns, keep up with filing season, clear out prior backlogs, respond to correspondence, and even answer the 800-number telephone line.”

Ryan Ellis stated: “The letter raises the urgent issue of 1099-K information reporting. If Congress doesn’t act before the end of the year (2022, millions of unwitting teenage babysitters and lawn mowers, college student tutors, people selling junk from their garages and basements, roommates splitting rent, and friends sharing bar tabs will get a new (to them) “1099-K” form from their payment processor. With the IRS ready to hire 87,000 new auditors (and unable to do simple customer service tasks like answering their 800-number), this is the wrong time for the IRS to see every new jot and tittle of your financial life.”

There is one bright spot in this debacle. When the law was originally written, the 1099-K forms would have included all income earned in 2022, including income received prior to the law’s passage—before any taxpayers would have ever thought about keeping the records needed to comply.

Fortunately, on January 3, the IRS spotted this catastrophic mistake and made adjustments for the change to begin this year (2023). But now, get ready for the upcoming 1099-K tsunami.

If the IRS wants more compliance, it should first consider using more carrots and fewer sticks. When the taxpayers are mad, they are less inclined to comply with excessive and abusive regulations. Minimize and simplify the paperwork. There is no reason why we can’t have a single two-sided piece of paper for everybody’s entire tax return; that is ample space to list all of the income and deductions the IRS should ever need.

Another reform the IRS should consider is to go back before 2010, back when it sent every taxpayer a complete booklet in the mail that contained all of the forms and instructions needed to file a return, including an addressed envelope. Better yet, it should also have a stamp on it so we won’t have to run to the post office to buy the one stamp that we use every year.

The IRS should also sell its guns and ammo and use the money to purchase enough phones and supporting equipment to promptly answer their 800 number from people with tax questions.

Just do it. Contented taxpayers will be far less angry and less inclined to cheat.

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CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1:



FEMA News Release

Alabama Counties Eligible for FEMA Public Assistance

PRATTVILLE, Ala.— **Autauga, Barbour, Chambers, Conecuh, Coosa, Dallas, Elmore, Hale and Tallapoosa counties** are eligible for FEMA Public Assistance for debris removal, emergency protective measures and permanent work due to the Jan. 12 severe storms, straight-line winds and tornadoes.

Greene and Sumter counties are eligible for debris removal and emergency protective measures.

FEMA’s Public Assistance program provides reimbursement to local and state government agencies for the costs of emergency response, debris removal and restoration of disaster damaged public facilities and infrastructure. Houses of worship and other nonprofit organizations may also be eligible for FEMA Public Assistance.

3 Ways to Apply for Disaster Aid

ONLINE

DisasterAssistance.gov

FEMA APP

Download the FEMA APP

CALL

800-621-3362

For information on Alabama’s disaster recovery, visit fema.gov/disaster/4684. Follow FEMA on Twitter at FEMA Region 4 (@femaregion4) / Twitter and at facebook.com/fema.

It’s Important to Submit an SBA Loan Application

Prattville, Ala. – FEMA may refer survivors of the Jan. 12 storms and tornadoes in Alabama to the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) with information on how to apply for a disaster loan. It’s important to submit the loan application as soon as possible.

If your application is approved, you are not obligated to accept an SBA loan but failure to return the application may disqualify you from other possible financial assistance from FEMA.

SBA disaster loans are the largest source of federal disaster recovery funds for survivors. SBA offers long-term, low-interest disaster loans to businesses of all sizes, private nonprofit organizations, homeowners and renters.

SBA disaster loans cover losses not fully compensated by insurance or other resources. Survivors should not wait for an insurance settlement before submitting an SBA loan application.

You may apply online using the Electronic Loan Application (ELA) via the SBA’s secure website at disasterloanassistance.sba.gov/. Paper applications may be requested by calling the SBA Customer Service Center at 800-659-2955. If you are deaf, hard of hearing, or have a speech disability, please dial 7-1-1 to access telecommunications relay services or send an email to disaster-customerservice@sba.gov. There is

no cost to apply for an SBA disaster loan.

Homeowners may be eligible for a disaster loan up to \$200,000 for primary residence structural repairs or rebuilding. SBA may also be able to help homeowners and renters with up to \$40,000 to replace important personal property, including automobiles damaged or destroyed in the disaster.

Survivors can apply for disaster assistance at disasterassistance.gov, by using the FEMA mobile app, or by calling 800-621-3362. The helpline is open, and help is available from 6 a.m. to 10 p.m. local time in most languages. If you use a relay service such as video relay service (VRS), captioned telephone service or others, give FEMA the number for that service.

For information on Alabama’s disaster recovery, visit fema.gov/disaster/4684. Follow FEMA on Twitter at FEMA Region 4 (@femaregion4) / Twitter and atfacebook.com/fema.

FEMA’s mission is helping people before, during, and after disasters.

All FEMA disaster assistance will be provided without discrimination on the grounds of race, color, sex (including sexual harassment), sexual orientation, religion, national origin, age, disability, limited English proficiency, economic status.

If you believe your civil rights are being violated, you can call the Civil Rights Resource line at

833-285-7448.



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SOCIAL SECURITY ADMINISTRATION (SSA) SERVICES IN MONTGOMERY

THIS YEAR’S THEME IS A FINANCIALLY CONFIDENT YOU!

BECOMING MORE FINANCIALLY CONFIDENT

Commit to saving successfully during America Saves Week! You can increase your financial confidence by building healthy saving habits and taking advantage of resources available to support your financial stability.

America Saves Week, which runs from February 27 through March 3, is a great opportunity to learn about good financial habits and assess your own saving status. It’s also a perfect time to create a plan, start saving, and begin your journey toward financial stability.

Planning and saving are key to a successful retirement. The earlier you start saving for retirement, the better off you will be in the future. People who have a plan are twice as likely to save effectively. We encourage you to pledge to save for America Saves Week at: www.americasavesweek.org Visit www.ssa.gov/retirement for useful information to help you plan for your retirement.

It’s never too early in your career to begin saving. Our website, www.ssa.gov/people/earlycareer, has resources that can help young workers secure their today and tomorrow. Share our infographic, *Anytime is the Right Time to Save for Your Future*, that provides helpful information about saving at: www.ssa.gov/benefits/assets/materials/retirement/EN-05-10549.pdf

The sooner you start saving, the more your money can grow. Please share this information with someone you love.

SOCIAL SECURITY’S TOP 5 DATA PRIVACY RESOURCES

It is important that you stay safe online. When we collect your personal information, we are committed to protecting your privacy. Please review these data privacy resources:

- 1. A great online resource is: www.ssa.gov/myaccount You can visit this page to open a secure **my Social Security account**, keep track of your earnings record, and identify any suspicious activity.
- 2. Our Privacy Program page at: www.ssa.gov/privacy is a central resource to learn about our Privacy Compliance Program, submit a Privacy Act request, and review our privacy policies and reports.
- 3. In our blog post, *10 Ways to Protect Your Personal Information*, we cover steps you and your loved ones can take to protect personal data. You can check out this blog at: blog.ssa.gov/10-ways-to-protect-your-personal-information.
- 4. Our fact sheet: *How You Can Help Us Protect Your Social Security Number and Keep Your Information Safe*, provides details to safe guard your private information. You can access this fact sheet at: www.ssa.gov/pubs/EN-05-10220.pdf
- 5. Our Guard Your Card infographic at: www.ssa.gov/ssnumber/assets/EN-05-10553.pdf helps you and your loved ones understand when you need to show your physical Social Security card – and when you do not.

We encourage you to help protect your vital information. Please share these resources with your loved ones.

ARE AMERICANS FINANCIALLY EDUCATED ON RETIREMENT SAVINGS?

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

So, how prepared are adults in the United States for their retirement? The National Endowment for Financial Education (NEFE) conducts polls on key issues, like retirement savings, that affect a person’s financial past, present, and future.

Here’s what we have learned over the past year:

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

Lifetime financial education can be a helpful tool in preparing for retirement. This includes understanding Social Security retirement benefits and making the most of retirement income. You can learn more on our Retirement page at: www.ssa.gov/retirement

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

To learn more about NEFE’s mission, visit their website at: www.nefe.org

Please share this information with friends and family



HELP SOMEONE YOU LOVE APPLY FOR SOCIAL SECURITY AND MORE

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

- 1. **Apply for Supplemental Security Income (SSI):** Check if the person you are helping qualifies for SSI – and also apply at: www.ssa.gov/ssi
- 2. **Apply for Social Security Disability Insurance benefits:** When the unexpected happens and a loved one can no longer work due to a serious medical condition, our disability benefits can be a lifeline. Find out more at: www.ssa.gov/benefits/disability
- 3. **Create a personal **my** Social Security account.** If your loved one is planning for retirement or interested in estimating their future benefits, they can create a free and secure **my** Social Security account at: www.ssa.gov/myaccount and view their Social Security Statement.
- 4. **Check the status of a pending application for benefits.** Checking the status of an application is quick and easy with a personal **my** Social Security account. If you don’t have an account, you can create one at: www.ssa.gov/myaccount
- 5. **Appeal a decision for benefits.** If someone you know was denied Social Security benefits or SSI, they can request an appeal. We provide information on how to appeal decisions for both medical and non-medical reasons at: www.ssa.gov/benefits/disability/appeal.html

To discover more ways you can assist others, please visit: www.ssa.gov/thirdparty/

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Call 334-356-6700



MACOA continues to serve seniors!
The Montgomery Area Council On Aging (MACOA)
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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.*
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Chief Deputy Murphy

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Next Class Dates:
February 27, 2023 – April 15, 2023

Sheriff Cunningham and the Staff of the Montgomery County Sheriff's Office would like to invite Montgomery County citizens to participate in our Citizen's Academy. The Citizen's Academy was established in 1997 to educate the citizens of Montgomery County on how the Sheriff's Office operates and to promote public safety among our community members. Classes are designed to be interesting as well as informative. Citizens are given an opportunity to ride with a Deputy on patrol, tour the County Jail, volunteer at events that are sponsored by the Sheriff's Office as well as train on the Firearms Training Simulator.

The Citizen's Academy is a FREE 6-week course that meets on Monday evenings from: 6:00-7:00 pm at our office, located at 115 S Perry Street, Montgomery, AL 36104

All material will be discussed during the meetings and neither homework nor physical activity is required.

Requirements:

- Resident of Montgomery County
- At least 21 years of age or older
- Pass a criminal background check
- Attend weekly meetings

How to Enroll:

Applications can be submitted at our website:

www.MontgomerySheriff.com

Applications can also be requested by calling our Support Services Division at: 334-832-2515

Email Sgt. Garner at: marshawn Garner@mc-ala.org

Fax a request to 334-832-7113
Attention: Citizen's Academy
Registration Montgomery County
Sheriff's Office
Citizen's Academy Registration
115 S. Perry Street, Montgomery, AL.

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. Push notifications are quick, important messages that can notify you of road closure(s), blocked road(s), anything pertinent to your travel, escapee, etc. While our app can help you with many things including checking to see if someone is in the county jail, it is most helpful to receive push notifications. After you have downloaded the app, go through the follow steps to make sure your phone is set up to receive the push notifications:

- Go to your Phone's setting icon.
 - Scroll Down and click "Applications".
 - Scroll down to "MCSO" or "Montgomery County AL Sheriff" ... OR
 - Click "Application Manager", if it doesn't take you directly to the location.
 - Click "Notifications".
 - Turn on "Allow Notifications" & "Previews in pop-ups".
- You should be all set to receive the Montgomery County Sheriff's Office push notifications!*



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The Alabama Highway Patrol was created in 1936. Since its establishment, 29 officers have died while on duty.

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Honoring Our Heroes

Dr. Martha Poole Simmons: A Journey of Service



Dr. Martha Poole Simmons



The Alabama Gazette wants to honor Martha for the many years of service to our veterans. She has spent countless hours interviewing, showing special attention, writing up stories of our great Veterans in our area that has served in so many of our American conflicts and wars.



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

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Veterans Celebrating February Birthdays


Joe Panza - Feb 2	Eugene F. Crooks - Feb. 16
John F. Morrow - Feb. 4	Karen S. Brantner - Feb. 16
Dudley Frank Christian - Feb. 6	William L. Carl - Feb. 17
George C. Winn - Feb. 6	Lee Roy Knight - Feb. 17
Anthony (Tony) Baggiano - Feb. 12	Andrew E. Lindsey - Feb. 25
James Harris Combs - Feb. 15	



Joseph Collins on his 103rd Birthday
Published Biography: January 2023



John David holding his biography
published January 2023




Captain Marvin G. 'Jack' Smith passed away January 12, 2023 at the age of 99. He served in the U.S. Navy during WWII, the Korean War and also the Vietnam War



COMMANDER ROBERT NEALY SCRUGGS JR.





CDR Robert Nealy Scruggs served 22 years in the U. S. military including five years in the U. S. Marine Corps Reserve, 10 years in active duty in the Navy and seven years in the Navy Reserve. His Military Occupational Specialty Code (MOS) was Naval Flight Officer. He received the following medals, citations and decorations: National Defense Medal, Meritorious Unit Commendation with three Air Medals, Vietnam Service Medal, Vietnam Campaign Medal and US Marine Corps Reserve Ribbon.

CDR Scruggs was born October 3, 1938 in Nashville, TN, to his parents, Neal and Monteen Scruggs. He lived there four years, nine months at Alpine, TX, and 14 years at Corpus Christi, TX, where he was reared and graduated from Roy Miller High School May 5, 1957.

CDR Scruggs family has a rich history of its members serving in the U.S. military. Three uncles served in WWII as well as his father who served in the U. S. Marine Corps. He has a son-in-law who retired from the Marines and has a grandson who is an aviator with the Marines. Following the examples of these relatives, CDR Scruggs volunteered to serve in the U. S. Marine Corps, enlisted September 4, 1957 and completed Marine Basic Training at the Marine Depot in San Diego, CA, and advanced combat training at Camp Pendleton, CA. He returned to Corpus Christi and continued serving in the Marine Corps Reserve. He completed an Associate Bachelor's Degree from Del Mar Jr. College in general studies in May 1960. He taught English and speech at Tuloso-Midway High School at Corpus Christi for one year. He then worked as the assistant personnel officer for the American Smelting and Refining Company at Corpus Christi, TX.

CDR Scruggs volunteered and reported for duty to serve in the Navy's flight program January 1, 1965, at NFO Pensacola, FL; however because of a vision acuity problem, he could not become a pilot. On May 21, 1965, he was commissioned as an Ensign, USNR and continued training as a navigator. He completed requirements and was awarded wings as Naval Flight Officer (NFO) January 7, 1966. He reported for training as NFO (Airborne Ops) at NAF Glynco, GA.

CDR Scruggs' first assignment as Naval Flight Officer with Airborne Ops was to Guam with the primary mission of supporting air ops with the Navy Fleet, and the secondary mission was tracking typhoons in support of the Navy's fleet with multiple deployments to the Philippines and Chu Lai, Vietnam. In 1967, during the Vietnam War, he flew in the Gulf of Tonkin assisting in night air ops in the fleet for two years.

CDR Scruggs then served as the military personnel officer at the NAS Chase Field, Beeville, TX, 1968-1971. He went to CA for training in anti-submarine warfare in 1971, and he went to NAS Moffett, CA, for NFA (anti-sub) training from February 2, 1972 to August 18, 1971. Next, he was assigned to VP-17, NAS Ewa Beach, Hawaii, for three years where he often flew patrol ops with deployments to Okinawa, Philippines, and Thailand (Vietnam Ops). He then


served as the aviation safety officer at the NAS Millington, TN, for nine months leaving Navy active duty July 7, 1965. While there, he received a MS Degree in Systems Management from the University of Arkansas in 1975. He then served as personnel list manager for the U.S. Department of Energy at Oakridge, TN. He went into the Navy Reserve in 1975, and he flew with a Navy Reserve patrol squadron at Glenview NAS Chicago starting in 1976. Scruggs retired from all military service December 23, 1983.

After military retirement from the Navy reserve, CDR Scruggs worked in civilian personnel at Arnold Air Force Station at Tullahoma, TN, in 1983. This was followed by employment as civilian personnel officer at Dyess Air Force Base, at Abilene, TX, at Maxwell Air Force Base, at Montgomery, AL, at Aviano Air Base, Italy, at USAF Civilian Personnel School, Maxwell Air Force Base-Gunter Annex, Montgomery, AL, and as head of labor relations training and as CPO at Royal Air Force Mildenhall, England. His last civilian employment was serving as Director of Labor Management Relations training at USAF Civilian Personnel School, Maxwell Air Force Base Gunter Annex. He retired from civilian service June 2, 2000 as a GS-14 with credit for 34 years of service including some credit for military service. He received two Exemplary Civilian Service Awards and one Outstanding Civilian Service award. CDR Scruggs taught courses in Management at Auburn University of Montgomery for one and one-half, and he retired from all employment in 2001.

CDR Scruggs and his wife, Julia, have been married 47 years. He has two daughters and one stepdaughter. Robert "Bob" Scruggs is an active member of Frazer Methodist Church at Montgomery, AL, where he serves as a teacher of the Living Today Sunday school class and volunteers in congregational care such as the cancer support group and various other activities. He enjoys playing golf and pickleball and reading.

CDR Scruggs' conclusions about what his military service means to him are:

"The war in Vietnam was impersonal for us in the beginning because we did not fly out of Vietnam. Once we began flying out of Chu Lai, Vietnam we saw first hand grim evidence of the effects of the war on our troops and the Vietnamese. It was sobering and also made us appreciate the sacrifices that were being made. We were glad to contribute our part in helping the fleet take care of crippled aircraft returning to the carriers and/or conducting search and rescue or whatever else was needed. I am grateful for the opportunity to have served our great nation and to stand with so many wonderful men and women who are willing to make such sacrifice. God will bless America as long as we continue to have those who are willing to support our values in sacrifice."





JOHN F. MORROW: BATTLE OF THE BULGE HERO



John F. Morrow is a 101 year-old WWII veteran who served as a U. S. Army tank driver in the liberation of Belgium, Holland, France and Germany. Lt. General George S. Patton was his commander during the Battle of the Bulge in the Ardennes, a region in southeast Belgium that extends into Luxembourg, Germany and France. The Battle of the Bulge was the major German offensive campaign on the Western Front during World War II taking place from December 16, 1944, to January 25, 1945 during the coldest months of the year in northern Europe. Not only was Morrow enduring extremely hazardous combat, he was also responsible for maneuvering tanks in the Ardennes region in rugged terrain that encompasses rolling valleys, meandering rivers, extensive caves and dense forests. Despite heavy casualties, Lieutenant General George S. Patton's successful maneuvering of the Third Army to Bastogne proved vital to the Allied defense, leading to the neutralization of the German counteroffensive. The Battle of the Bulge was the costliest action ever fought by the U.S.



Morrow was born February 2, 1922, in Big Flat, AK, to his parents, Calvin and Matilda Morrow where he was reared and graduated from Marshall High School. At age 19, he volunteered to serve and joined the U. S. Army. He completed the Army Basic Training learning to drive Sherman tanks at Ft. Knox, KY. The M4 Sherman tank had a five-man crew including a commander, gunner, loader, driver and assistant driver/bow gunner. Further training to drive each of the Army's vehicles was completed at Camp Polk, LA, followed by desert training at Death Valley, CA, paratrooper training at Ft. Benning, GA, and frigid training at

Camp Shanks, New York. All of his military driving within the U.S. was done driving a half-track vehicle. He was deployed sailing on the liner, the Queen Mary, to Scotland landing at Normandy after the Allies D-Day landing. His unit's first mission with the 23rd Armor Division was to recapture Paris from the Nazis. He suffered burns to his eyes and was hospitalized for several weeks. While still driving the half-track, he was wounded three more times. He then joined the 7th Army Division as a tank driver and suffered a bullet wound to

one ear escaping a serious injury to his head because he turned his head to the side just before he was shot. After the success in the Battle of the Bulge, he was the first tank driver to cross the Rhine River as the Army entered Germany. Morrow received the military award, the European Theater of Operations Medal with Four Clusters and also received citations from colonels. His unit participated in the liberation of concentration camps. His unit of tankers gave all of their food to liberated prisoners expecting to be replenished by the supply truck; however his unit was surrounded resulting in having no food or water for three days and nights. He had opportunities to shake hands with Generals Patton, Eisenhower and Bradley. Although it was planned for his unit to go to the Pacific Theater for battle, the Japanese surrendered in August, 1945. Morrow was discharged in October, 1945.

After discharge, Morrow returned to Arkansas where he did some review study at his high school followed by graduation with a B. S. Degree in Science at Northeastern Teachers College in Tahlequah, OK. He taught high school biology and chemistry and coached basketball at Timbo, Marshall and Leslie, AR, for 16 years. His next employment was at Hanford Works, a nuclear production complex, in Richland, WA, for seven years. He returned to AR and worked in dry wall construction in houses and commercial buildings retiring in 1988.

He was married to his first wife, Joyce for 54 years until she passed away, and they had two sons and nine grandchildren. Now he has been married to Carie Nell for 18 years. He and Carie enjoy playing cards and dominoes with friends weekly. Since 1957, Morrow has been serving in the ministry as a pastor. He serves as a pastor to senior adults to the New Home Baptist Church in Elmore County, AL, and the Clearview Baptist Church in Chilton County, AL.

Morrow concludes about his experiences as a tank driver in combat saying:

"The thing that sticks most in my mind is how scared I was, and I was sitting there seeing German tanks shooting at me. I went in because I love this country, and I always want this country to be free. Don't let anybody ever tell you that there wasn't any praying going on out there."



PO3 PEGGY HOLLEY AGE 100



Petty Officer Third Class (PO3) Peggy Holley served three years and 16 days in the Women Accepted for Volunteer Emergency Services (WAVES) in the U.S. Navy. The WAVES were created during WWII to free up male personnel for sea duty. Her final MOS was Petty Officer (PO3) having been promoted from Apprentice Seaman, Seaman 2nd Class, Seaman First Class and Mailman 3rd Class which is a Petty Officer.

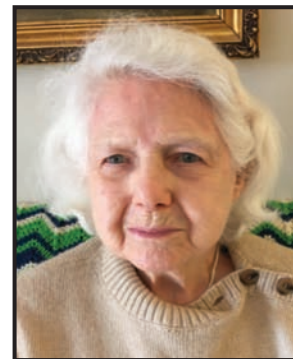


She was born December 13, 1922 in Butler County, AL, to her parents, Joseph and Otie Mae Murphy. She was reared in rural Butler County, and after the family moved to Montgomery, AL, she graduated from Sidney Lanier High School in 1940. She then worked at the Montgomery Fair, a department store in Montgomery, AL, in the basement department where overalls were sold.

PO3 Holley volunteered and joined the U.S. Navy WAVES January 26, 1943 reporting for duty at Birmingham, AL. She entered active service February 16, 1943, and she completed three months

of Basic Training at Iowa State College at Cedar Falls, Iowa. After Boot Camp, she was assigned to Naval Air Station at Atlanta, GA, for clerical work maintaining the manuals of the Navy pilots who were being trained for instrument flying service in WWII. Training some 3,000 pilots and over 4,000 instructors, NAS supported the vast expansion of naval aviation that probed decisive in the Pacific War against Japan. PO3 Holley states, *"I learned about people serving in the Navy. I had grown up in a rural area. The Navy pilots were extremely careful about using the manuals for instrument flying, and I was responsible for updating the data in the manuals. I met some interesting people."*

After discharge from the Navy February 11, 1946, PO3 Holley returned to Montgomery, AL, married Richard Taylor Holley, and they were married for 63 years. Richard served in the Infantry in the U.S. Army for 30 years including service in WWII and in the Korean War. He earned a Bronze Star for service in Papua New Guinea in WWII and a Bronze Star-Meritorious for his service in Korea. During his military service, he and his family lived in Germany as well as at other Army military bases in the United States. They had three daughters and two grandchildren. She recalls sewing and making all of the clothes for her daughters even after they went to college. They enjoyed vacations to Gulf Shores, AL. They were members of First Baptist Church of Montgomery where she served as president of a Sunday school class and served as an outreach leader making calls to church members who were ill. She served as the founding member of the church's committee to hire a social worker to run the church's Caring Center. She worked as a record keeper in the AL Department of Health for 18 years starting out as a clerk and becoming second in leadership, and she found that work interesting and enjoyable.



PO3 Holley conclusions about her life are:

"One thing that I have tried to focus on is the positive. There is no point in focusing on the negative. God gave us good things, and he expects us to follow his teachings. We have to follow God's guidance."

American war casualties:

**AMERICAN
REVOLUTIONARY WAR
(1775-1783): 25,000**

**WAR OF 1812
(1812-1815) 20,000**

**MEXICAN-AMERICAN WAR
(1846-1848) 13,283**

**AMERICAN CIVIL WAR
(1861-1865) 620,000**

**SPANISH AMERICAN WAR
(1898) 2,446**

**WORLD WAR ONE
(1917-1918) 116,516**

**WORLD WAR TWO
(1939-1945) 405,399**

**KOREAN WAR
(1950-1953) 36,516**

**VIETNAM WAR
(1965-1973) 58,209**

**GULF WAR
(1990-1991) 258**

**WAR ON TERROR
(2001-PRESENT) 7,075**

Andy Johnson

Executive Area Sales Manager

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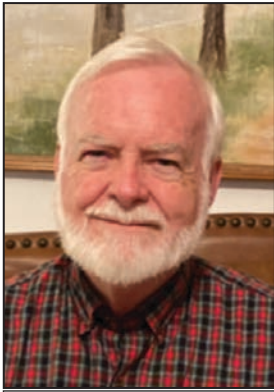
Norman (Tony) Mitchell



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BLACK CONFEDERATES: MYTH OR REALITY?

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



John Taylor

November 2022, The University of Dayton student newspaper ran an article about Al Arnold and his 2015 book, Robert E. Lee’s Orderly: A Modern Black Man’s Confederate Journey. Arnold, a devout Christian descended from a Black Confederate Veteran, has likely relied on his faith to shield himself from the backlash caused by deviating from the “government-approved narrative.” In reality, Black loyalty to the South was critical, as they ran or helped run small and large farms and plantations, traveled with the armies and engaged in fighting, digging fortifications, building bridges and breastworks, black-smithing, scouting, etc. Of course, many were cooks and teamsters and critics argue that they were not really Confederate Veterans. If that were true, cooks and teamsters from other ethnic groups would not be Confederate (or Union) Veterans either.

As a lukewarm abolitionist, Abe Lincoln was criticized by the extreme abolitionists for proclaiming the goal of the war was “preservation of the union.” [As though forcing States in a union they voted to leave has anything to do with preservation.] These fanatics worked feverishly to convince Lincoln to change the goal to the abolition of slavery. One fly in this ointment was that, when you include West Virginia, five Slave States fought for the union.

The Black population in the South was roughly 3.6 million in the mid-1800s. There were approximately 262,000 free Blacks in the South. Henry Lewis Gates noted, prior to the war, the North never had more free Blacks than the South. Another complication arises from the fact that just under 3,800 slave owners were Black. Indeed, William Ellison, Justus Angel, and Mistress L. Horry were large slave owners in South Carolina, August Donato owned slaves in Louisiana, and the list goes on and on. John Hope Franklin wrote that there were 3,000 Black slave owners in New Orleans, equating to roughly 28 percent of the free Blacks living there. The actual situation was complicated and extended beyond Tom Woods’ renowned “Index Card of allowable opinion.”

At least 2,807 Blacks received Confederate Pensions. The post-war financial devastation of the Southern States diminished the number of qualified pensioners, regardless of their race or ethnicity. According to researcher James Hollandsworth, Jr., Blacks receiving Confederate pensions included: 1739 from Mississippi; 121 from North Carolina; 328 from South Carolina; 195 from Tennessee; and 424 from Virginia. If these individuals were not loyal and had no role in Southern Independence efforts, they would have been ineligible for pensions.

In 1863 Confederate General Patrick Cleburne understood the extreme manpower shortage the South faced. He also recognized a large percentage of Blacks were loyal and would fight for the South. Anyone who fought both expected and deserved something in return, specifically freedom and a chance to become self-sufficient. There were mixed opinions among those in the Confederate hierarchy. Initially the skeptics held sway but, over time, more Confederates understood using Blacks as Confederate soldiers was pivotal to

gaining independence. Robert E. Lee supported it, stating: “I believe that with proper regulations they can be made efficient soldiers. They possess the physical qualifications in an eminent degree.” Lee felt they should be rewarded with “immediate freedom to all who enlist, and freedom at the end of the war to the families of those who discharge their duties faithfully (whether they survive or not), together with the privilege of residing at the South. To this might be added a bounty for faithful service.” Of course, the March 13, 1865, Confederate Congress authorization to recruit 300,000 Black Confederates was too late to make a significant impact.

JUST A FEW BLACKS WHO SUPPORTED THE CONFEDERATE CAUSE IN VARIOUS CAPACITIES INCLUDED:

Thomas Williamson, Wheaton’s Battery, Georgia Light Artillery; Neptune, went to war with Captain Low King;

James Clarke, free Negro, fifer in Company K, 28th Georgia Regiment;

Private Levi Oxendine, Free Negro, age 53;

friends Alexander Harris and George Dwell, First Volunteer Regiment of Georgia;

Amos Rucker, 7th Georgia Regiment;

Tim Billing, cook for the Columbus Guards;

Bill Yopp, of Marietta, Georgia, went through the war with his master, Captain Thomas Yopp;

Jim Lewis, servant to Stonewall Jackson and led Jackson’s horse, “Little Sorrell” in Jackson’s Richmond funeral procession;

the Coney family of New Orleans who set up a home warning system beginning with “Damyankees a-comin”;

Alex Street, member of Captain Claiborne’s expert bridge building crew;

Allen Griffin and Emanuel Pinks, of Macon, Georgia...

The same old naysayers will claim Blacks who served the Confederacy were coerced when the actual records reveal a much more complicated situation. With “Lincoln Cultists” and “Righteous Cause Mythologizers” controlling the narrative, thousands of very real Black Confederate loyalists, such as Al Arnold’s great-great grandfather, Turner Hall, Jr., could be transformed into a myth.

Sources: “Author Al Arnold leans on faith to embrace his Confederate ancestry, asks UD students not to fear thinking differently about history,” Lucy Waskiewicz, from Flyer News at: <https://flyernews.com/campus/author-al-arnold-leans-on-faith-to-embrace-his-confederate-ancestry-asks-ud-students-not-to-fear-thinking-differently-about-history/11/02/2022/>; War for What?, by Francis Springer; Union At All Costs: From Confederation to Consolidation, by John M. Taylor; “Looking for Bob: Black Confederate Pensioners after the Civil War,” by James G. Hollandsworth, Jr., Ph.D, from the winter 2007 edition of The Journal of Mississippi History, Vol. LXVIX, No. 4. Posted May 2008.

Elmore County
Pet of the week:

Delilah is a one-year-old female bulldog mix, about 55 lbs. She came to us as a stray and sadly no one came looking for her. She is a chunk, super sweet, loves everyone and great with dogs & cats. She has a laid back personality but also playful and loves toys.

Our adoption fees are \$100 for dogs & \$50 for cats under one-year-old; cats over one-year-old can be adopted by approved adopters for a fee of their choosing. This adoption fee completely covers the mandatory spay or neuter, basic

immunizations, de-worming, microchip, heartworm check for dogs, rabies vaccination if old enough, free health exam with your participating veterinarian.

If you are interested in meeting Delilah any of our pets, our first step is our Adoption Application you can do here: <https://elmorehumane.org/adoption-application-online-form2.html> . Once approved, we will coordinate with you to set up an appointment to meet & adopt.

We are located at 255 Central Plank Road, Wetumpka, AL, 36092, our phone number is 334-567-3377 and our website is www.elmorehumane.org for more information.



CROSSWORD

1	2	3	4		5	6	7		8	9	10	11
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62						63				64		

ACROSS

1. "Without further _____," pl.
5. Sweet 16 gift
8. Steps to the river, in India
12. *Michael BublÉ's " _____ the Last Dance for Me"
13. Bigger than big
14. Nonkosher
15. Big-ticket one
16. October birthstone
17. *#5 Down's target
18. *Reason to celebrate Lupercalia, Valentine's Day predecessor
20. Make over
21. Omit
22. Hexagonal fastener
23. December birthstone, pl.
26. Most gem,tlich
30. Ed.'s request
31. Two dots above a letter
34. Brussels org.
35. Church recesses
37. _____ or chicken?
38. Encourage (2 words)
39. What hoarders do
40. He crossed the Rubicon
42. Jet follower
43. English county courts, in the olden days
45. Gentlemen's gentlemen
47. Chop off
48. Paparazzo's quest
50. Port in Yemen
52. *Heart-shaped box content
56. Range
57. Top notch
58. Baron Munchhausen, e.g.
59. Journalists and reporters
60. Speed unit
61. All is well that does this well
62. Bald eagle's nest
63. Ever, to a poet
64. Tinkerbell's powder

DOWN

1. "Clueless" catch phrase
2. *Get-together
3. End of a break-up phrase
4. Explosive of Czechoslovakian origin
5. *Winged one
6. September stone
7. Bank on
8. * _____ card
9. Not tails
10. '70s hairdo
11. Sylvester, to Tweety
13. Wholism, alt. sp.
14. Monotonous hum
19. Intestinal obstruction
22. "Wayne's World" catchphrase
23. Japanese port
24. Necklace clasp location, pl.
25. Affirmatives
26. *Kisses' partners
27. National emblem
28. Type of weasel
29. BBQ tool
32. Pasturelands
33. Accompanies wisdom?
36. *a.k.a. St. Valentine's Malady
38. *Muse of love poetry
40. Large edible mushroom
41. Long-legged shore bird
44. Regions
46. Bummed about
48. Bell's invention
49. Laurels
50. Homesteader's measure
51. Active one
52. Soap block
53. Hokkaido language
54. Small amounts
55. Formerly, formerly
56. *Romantic destination

Answers on page: 13

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Dr. Lester Spencer

Soul Searching

NO RESERVES, NO RETREATS, NO REGRETS

I have a sign in my office that reads, "No Reserves. No Retreats. No Regrets"

These words remind me to be bold in my convictions and to never consider retreating from standing tall for what I believe! They also remind me to live my life in such a way that when I am old and grey that I will look back on my life and have no regrets!

Let me share with you where I discovered these inspiring words...

In 1904 William Borden graduated from a Chicago high school. As heir to the Borden family fortune, he was already wealthy. For his high school graduation present, William Borden's parents gave their 16-year-old son a trip around the world. As the young man traveled through Asia, the Middle East, and Europe, he felt a growing burden for the world's hurting people. Finally, Bill Borden wrote home about his "desire to be a missionary."

One friend expressed disbelief that Bill was "throwing himself away as a missionary."

A story often associated with Borden says that, in response, he wrote two words in the back of his Bible: "No reserves."

Even though young Borden was wealthy, he arrived on the campus of Yale University in 1905 trying to look like just one more freshman. Very quickly, however, Borden's classmates noticed something unusual about him and it wasn't that he had lots of money. One of them wrote: "He came to college far ahead, spiritually, of any of us. He had already given his heart in full surrender to Christ and had really done it. We who were his classmates learned to lean on him and find in him a strength that was solid as a rock, just because of this settled purpose and consecration."

During his college years, Bill Borden made an entry in his personal journal that defined what his classmates were seeing in him. That entry said simply: "Say 'no' to self and 'yes' to Jesus every time."

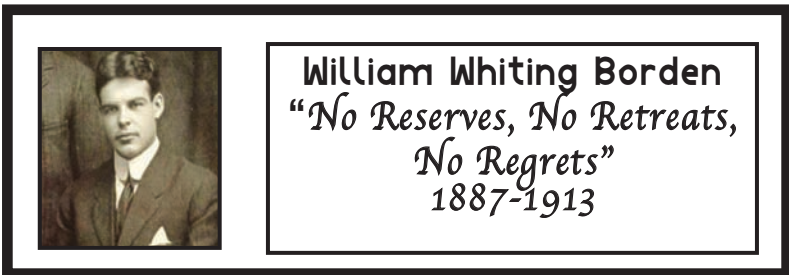
Borden's first disappointment at Yale came when the university president spoke in a convocation about the students' need of "having a fixed purpose." After that speech, Borden wrote: "He neglected to say what our purpose should be, and where we should get the ability to persevere and the strength to resist temptations." Surveying the Yale faculty and much of the student body, Borden lamented what he saw as the end result of an empty, humanistic philosophy: moral weakness and sin-ruined lives.

During his first semester at Yale, Borden started something that would transform campus life. One of his friends described how it began: "It was well on in the first term when Bill and I began to pray together in the morning before breakfast. I cannot say positively whose suggestion it was, but I feel sure it must have originated with Bill. We had been meeting only a short time when a third student joined us and soon after a fourth. The time was spent in prayer after a brief reading of Scripture. Bill's handling of Scripture was helpful... He would read to us from the Bible, show us something that God had promised and then proceed to claim the promise with assurance."

Borden's small morning prayer group gave birth to a movement that soon spread across the campus. By the end of his first year, 150 freshman were meeting weekly for Bible study and prayer. By the time Bill Borden was a senior, one thousand of Yale's 1,300 students were meeting in such groups.

Borden made it his habit to seek out the most "incurable" students and try to bring them to salvation. "In his sophomore year we organized Bible study groups and divided up the class of 300 or more, each man interested taking a certain number, so that all might, if possible, be reached. The names were gone over one by one, and the question asked, 'Who will take this person?' When it came to someone thought to be a hard proposition, there would be an ominous pause. Nobody wanted the responsibility. Then Bill's voice would be heard, 'Put him down to me.'

Borden's outreach ministry was not confined to the Yale campus. He cared about widows and orphans and the disabled. He rescued drunks from the streets of



New Haven. To try to rehabilitate them, he founded the Yale Hope Mission. One of Bill Borden's friends wrote that he "might often be found in the lower parts of the city at night, on the street, in a cheap lodging house or some restaurant to which he had taken a poor hungry fellow to feed him, seeking to lead men to Christ."

Borden's missionary call narrowed to the Muslim Kansu people in China. Fixing his eyes on that goal, Borden never wavered. He also challenged his classmates to consider foreign missionary service. One of them said of him: "He certainly was one of the strongest characters I have ever known, and he put backbone into the rest of us at college. There was real iron in him, and I always felt he was of the stuff martyrs were made of, and heroic missionaries of more modern times."

Although he was a millionaire, Bill seemed to "realize always that he must be about his Father's business, and not wasting time in the pursuit of amusement." Although Borden refused to join a fraternity, "he did more with his classmates in his senior year than ever before." He presided over the huge student missionary conference held at Yale and served as president of the honor society Phi Beta Kappa.

Upon graduation from Yale, Borden turned down some high-paying job offers. It has been reported that in his Bible, Bill Borden wrote two more words: "No retreats."

William Borden went on to do graduate work at Princeton Seminary in New Jersey. When he finished his studies at Princeton, he sailed for China. Because he was hoping to work with Chinese Muslims, he stopped first in Egypt to study Arabic. While there, he contracted spinal meningitis. Within a month, 25-year-old William Borden was dead.

When the news of William Whiting Borden's death was cabled back to the U.S., the story was carried by nearly every American newspaper. "A wave of sorrow went round the world . . . Borden not only gave (away) his wealth, but himself, in a way so joyous and natural that it (seemed) a privilege rather than a sacrifice" wrote Taylor in her introduction to his biography.

Was Borden's untimely death a waste? Not in God's perspective. As the story has it, prior to his death, Borden had written two more words in the back of his Bible. Underneath the words "No reserves" and "No retreats," he is reported to have written: "No regrets."

This story really touched me when I first read it. William Borden didn't die in vain. In his short life he shared the gospel with many, but he also left a great legacy by his life journey and those three simple phrases he wrote in the back of his Bible: "No Reserves. No Retreats. No Regrets."

Yes, these simple proclamations have inspired so many young Christians, missionaries and Pastors to live and give their lives serving Christ without any reservation, without ever considering retreating from the mission and without a single regret!

I pray you will be inspired by William Borden's story and these three statements of faith found in his Bible. May all of us seek to live our lives, as William Borden did, for Christ's sake and the good of others with no reserves, no retreats and no regrets!

If we do that, we will enjoy a rich and satisfying life no matter how long that life may be!

(Quotations taken from Borden of Yale, by Mrs. Howard Taylor, Moody Press, Chicago)



Contemporary Service - 11:00

Traditional Service 9 - 9:30
Open Communion



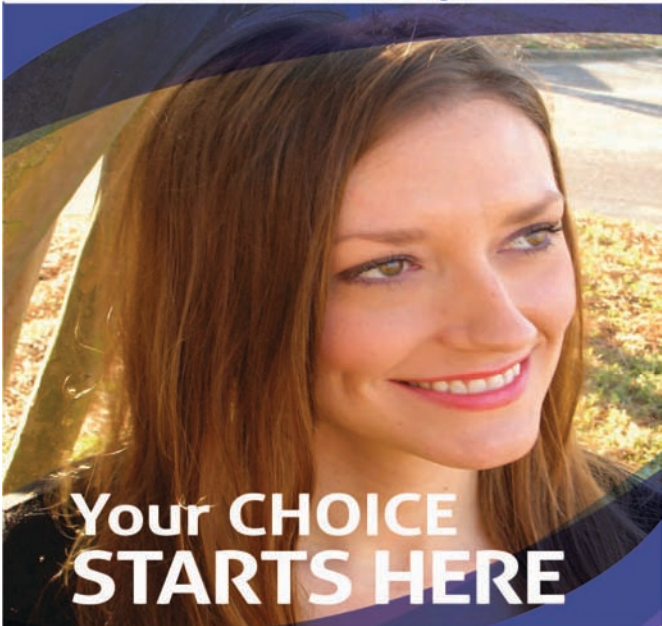
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Judge Peggy Givhan

Southern Gardening



Potpourri for February

In February, our thoughts first go Valentine’s Day with Cupid firing off his arrows of love. I can remember as a child picking out boxes of small Valentine cards at Woolworth’s Dime store to give to classmates. They were adorned with flowers, funny valentine greetings and were appreciated by all. I really have not noticed in today’s world with Email, Tik-Tok, texts, Instagram, and Facebook whether these silly little valentine cards are still sold. February can certainly be named the red and white month with a little chocolate thrown in. In order to get in the Valentine mood, I made a wonderful flower arrangement with red roses, Baby’s Breath (gypsophila paniculate) and white carnations. A fact I was not previously aware of is that Baby’s Breath is toxic and should not adorn cakes or other food., so be careful.

If we had planted daffodils, and narcissi, earlier this year, these should be coming up and blooming their heads off--harbingers of spring. Other blooming bulbs would be: Snowdrops(galanthus), crocus, iris reticulata, Helleborus, and cyclamen. Shrubs which are in bloom are camellias, Kiss -me-at-Gate, and perhaps some Japanese Magnolias budding out. Pansies, violas, candytuft and dianthus round out the mix this month. If your garden has none of the above, start planning for next February’s garden by purchasing these harbingers of spring through the year.

What to plant this month for a spectacular early spring and early summer garden. I have planted tulips in early February, after 6 weeks of chill in the refrigerator, to great success. If fact I have even staggered the planting, some in early January, some in early February for a longer tulip sequence of bloom.

My favorite look is to plant tulip bulbs amongst pansies and dianthus as it gives the pots or the garden a dramatic dynamic. Also experiment with different color combinations such as mixed colored tulips and mono chrome-colored flowers

or vice versa. You want to achieve a uniform contrast rather than a cluttered mess. It is not too late to plant pansies, and dianthus with geraniums and begonias later. We call this a spring garden in progress. Both pansies and dianthus will bloom until the heat of the early summer. Seed that has been sown in the fall, such as poppies, larkspur should be breaking the soil for blooms next month. Also, this is the month to sow the seed of cleome, nasturtiums, petunias and zinnias directly into the ground.

PLANT OF THE MONTH ROSEMARY

A commonly known herb is one of the best small to medium sized shrubs one can place in the garden, pots or herb bed. Plant this perennial shrub in the spring for one of the most aromatic herbs known. Rosemary has many uses from culinary, to medicinal, to insect repellent, to cosmetic. The leaves, fresh or dried, can be used as an antiseptic, as a tonic and diuretic. Mostly we use Rosemary as a pungent flavoring for fish dishes, soups, marinades, egg dishes, and lamb. It is easy to grow, non-invasive and grows to about 3-4 feet high and can get to 5 feet tall. It would need some protection if the winter temps fell well below freezing. I have used this shrub in herb beds, flower beds, and pots.

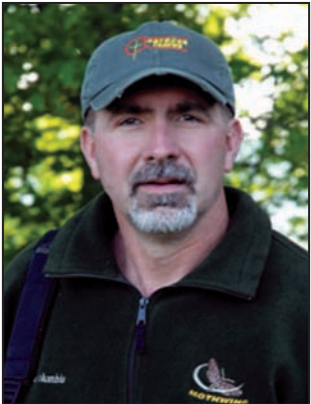


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HAPPY VALENTINE’S DAY AND GOOD GARDENING



Gary Miller

A beautiful buck came out about sixty yards to my right. Just by the size of his rack, I knew he was a good deer – a definite ten-pointer.

I didn’t have much time to gather myself for a good shot because he wasn’t going to stay around long. When I fired I wasn’t sure I had made a good shot, from the way he ran. But shortly thereafter I realized my shot was perfect. He was a beautiful animal with a wide rack. As I began to count his points, I discovered my ten-pointer was only an eight. I say “only” here for emphasis. Because this was an absolute gorgeous deer, and I was still so pleased with it. I was so pleased that if I had known he was an

eight before I shot, I still would have. My pictures verify my assessment. As my friend and I admired the deer, we realized this buck was never going to be anything but an eight-pointer. One could tell that while he would have gotten greater in mass and size, he would always remain a deer with eight points unless some trauma happened.

That doesn’t mean he couldn’t have been the king of the hill, but his limits were there according to his genetics. What did I think of his limits? I thought he was so perfect that I decided to have a picture of him blown up and put on canvas. It arrived two days ago.

I am reminded of the words of the apostle Paul when he explained how every member is important in the church. He compared it to our physical body and admitted that some parts of the body don’t seem as important as others.

He was saying that some will be ten, twelve, and even fourteen pointers, but others will always be a six or an eight.

Then he encourages us in two ways. First by explaining how all parts are needed, no matter how insignificant some may think they are. A good example of that is my foot. It remains hidden underneath a sock and shoe, but without it I am on crutches. And about its little toe, I promise you when it hits the bed frame, the pain doesn’t remain just in my little toe and foot. It reverberates throughout my entire body.

But Paul also encourages us by reminding us how God elevates those in the Body of Christ who seem to have lesser gifts. Here’s what he says: “So, God has put the body together such that extra honor and care are given to those parts that have less dignity” (1 Corinth 12).

What he was saying that while God’s twelve-pointer might gain more attention, His eight gets his picture blown-up, put-on canvas, and displayed in ways like no other. No matter who you are or what position you have, you matter to God and are an extremely important part of His eternal plans.

Make sure to get my new book, full of these articles. Outdoor Truths Volume Four.



I’m always excited about the times I get to go on an extended hunting or fishing trip. The expectations are always high and the opportunity to go with a friend makes the miles pass quickly and the laughs come in abundance. I just returned from my final deer hunting trip of the year. Each day of this four-day hunt offered its own challenges, and hours in the tree stand made nights in a warm bed even more comfortable. We fought cold and windy days along with discovering we were too early for the rut. By the last day my mind was drifting toward home. I was tired of fighting the elements, tired of battling my bodies urge to stay in bed, and tired of being away from family. I wanted to go home.

As I reflected on my desire to leave, I was reminded of a lesson I had learned earlier in life – one that helped me understand more about death and dying.

Over the years I have stood at the bedside of many of the elderly who were sick and dying. Many of them were battling all sorts of illness or disease. Instead of continuing to fight, their desire was simple. They wanted to go home. Not to their brick-and-mortar earthly dwelling but to their heavenly home.

As a young man I never understood why anyone would trade life for death. As an older man, I do. It was not that these men and women wished to cease to live

but it was that they wished to live in a better place; one that promised a new body and where most of their loved ones were waiting.

It was sort of like my hunting trip. It was not that I did not love to deer hunt but when it came right down to it what I really loved more than anything was at home. And not only could I be with the ones I loved, but I could also do it without facing the battles I was looking at right now.

You may have an elderly loved one who is fighting a battle of sickness. You may think they have lost their desire to live. For a Christian that is far from the truth. They have not lost their desire to live, only their desire to do it here.

Remember, God always heals. Sometimes He does it here and sometimes He does it in Heaven.

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

Gary can be reached via email at gary@outdoortruths.org.



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Home Town Community News



A Bridal Shower was held on Saturday, January 28th for **Shelby Smith** at the Marks House in Pike Road, Alabama.



L-R Pat Killough, Paula Lansdon, Leah Floyd, Bride-to-Be Shelby, Nancy Miller, Liz Braswell and Merry Petitti
The shower was hosted by Liz Braswell, Leah Floyd, Paula Lansdon, Pat Killough, Nancy Miller & Merry Petitti.
Shelby and Dillon Owen will be married in Duluth, Georgia the latter part of February.
Guests had a great time celebrating this important milestone, they noshed on delicious refreshments before watching Shelby open her gifts. The guests had a wonderful time wishing Shelby best wishes while enjoying the company of family and friends
Best Wishes to Shelby and Dillon Owen from the Alabama Gazette.

Happy Anniversary

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|---------------|
| Gordon & Vicki Davis | February 14th |
| Clark & Anita Jones..... | February 14th |
| Chuck & Susan Gambrell..... | February 20th |
| Hayden & Dee Ward..... | February 20th |
| Tom & Bettye Garlington..... | February 21st |
| Gilbert & Ethel Sellers 67th..... | February 22nd |
| Jerry & Debra Morrison 38th..... | February 28th |
| Pat & Butch Moseley 64th..... | February 28th |

HAPPY FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS

- | | |
|---------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. George Evans | 16. Clark Jones |
| Tristan Davis 16 | 17. Delilah Davis 13 |
| 2. Brewer Box | Chuck Glasscock 59 |
| Shelby Smith | Anastasia Meadow Takacs 7 |
| 3. Del Atkinson | Gavin Noah Takacs 7 |
| Sybil Foshee | 18. Chip Norris |
| Rebecca Hughes | 19. Anita Jones |
| 4. Paige Box | Dawn Johnson |
| Helen Rahn Millican | 20. Hayden Ward |
| 5. Beth Norris | 21. Jessica Burgess |
| 6. Jason Welch | Jane Russell |
| 7. Rhonda Black | Shirley Yarbrough |
| Mary Helen Fleming | 22. Tim Meadows |
| Rick Marshall | 23. Nathan Horsley |
| 8. Abigail Roux | 24. Catherine Andrews |
| 9. Amy Hall Boyd 80 | 25. Bettye Garlington |
| Lori Meadows | 26. Cassidy Gwin |
| 12. Chas Hammock 14 | 27. Portia Goss |
| 13. Susan Gambrell | Gail Royal |
| 14. Lyda Crowe 73 | Cindy Sellars |
| 15. Nancy Rabren | 28. Weldon Payne |
| Susan Terrell | 29. Dawn Fain |

Belated Birthday Wishes:
Nick Hughes January 19

HAPPY BIRTHDAY TRISTAN DAVIS!

February 1, 2023
Tristans BIG 16th Birthday

T



Brother and Sister Shares February Birthday! Congratulations!



HAPPY BIRTHDAY DELILAH DAVIS!

February 17, 2023
“June Bug” turns 13!

D

NOTICE! Please send Patricia your family and friends:
BIRTHDAYS, ANNIVERSARIES, WEDDINGS AND EVENTS to:
alabamagazette@gmail.com

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

Billingsley, Madya Pearl 82.....	December 31, 2022	Pirkle Jr., James “Jim” Roy 70.....	January 14, 2023
Best, Miriam Mathers 90.....	January 04, 2023	Willbanks, Dr. Daniel Pinckney 85.....	January 15, 2023
Faircloth Sr., John K 82.....	January 07, 2023	Shashy, Dr. Paul Moses 97.....	January 17, 2023
Farrow, Cheryl Smith 76.....	January 07, 2023	Wingard, Dave “Diamond Dave” 66.....	January 18, 2023
Gardner, Kenneth 88.....	January 07, 2023	White, Dennis R. 81.....	January 18, 2023
Pruett, Carroll Kelly 85.....	January 07, 2023	Carlton, Margaret Ellen Thomas 86.....`	January 19, 2023
Bowman, Linda 77.....	January 09, 2023	Stone, Stephanie Stough.....	January 19, 2023
Clark, Jack Daniel “Jacky” 68.....	January 09, 2023	Trawick, Gordon L. 80.....	January 19, 2023
Grant Jr.,Russell Guy 88.....	January 10,2023	Goggin, Heather Michelle Jarvis 44.....	January 20, 2023
Tyson, Alice Hollon 92.....	January 10, 2023	Stephens, Leah Marie Sawyer 41.....	January 20, 2023
Williams, Joseph David 40.....	January 11, 2023	Seale, Turner Chapman 80.....	January 26, 2023
Keith, James “Jim” Warren 76.....	January 14, 2023	Akers, Dr. Ghary M. “Coach Akers” 87.....	January 27, 2023

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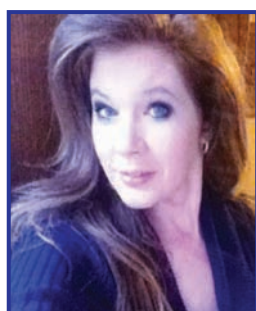
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Annie Joe Whaley Dennis.....	January 07
Judy Grant.....	January 08
Katherin “Kathy” Eakin Davis.....	January 11
Angela Lynne Bough.....	January 12
William Walker.....	January 13
Michael Shane Luster.....	January 15
Dorothy Nell Carpenter.....	January 17
Barbara Claire Heisler Norris.....	January 19
Ronald Shelton Edwards.....	January 19
Ramona Lynne Tucker.....	January 21
Mary Beth Martin Alexander.....	January 21
Myrna Colquitt Edgar.....	January 25
Judy Lazenby Colley.....	January 25
Joyce (Wood) Chandler.....	January 27
Olena Alvarado.....	January 27
Nancy Annette Shaw.....	January 29

Front – Felecia Gassett Shockley, Glenda Gassett Terrell, Michele Gassett Henderson, Donna Boutwell. Back – Eddie Taylor, Dan Shockley, Alex Shockley, Joe Hooks, Mike Colquitt.



Tears & Laughter:

By: Amanda Walker

The best place in Alabama to have a flat tire

Imagine if you will two women driving down the Florida Highway. My friend Shirley and I had spent a few leisurely hours spinning the reels at WindCreek before buying a few chances on the Mega Millions at “The Goose” and taking backroads home.

We had also went through the Arby’s drive-thru and taken advantage of their four for ten dollar roast beef deal and everything was going along exceedingly well, until it wasn’t.

Initially we thought it was the road surface. We were traveling smoothly along – enjoying our sandwiches – and then we were bouncing raggedly. It didn’t seem to be any issue with the engine. And then I asked, “You don’t reckon we could have a flat tire do you?”

I stopped at the stop sign at the intersection of the Florida Highway and Highway 31. To be exact, we were in Canoe. We both exited the car and started circling in a clockwise direction assessing the situation, still holding our roast beefs, and sure enough the back tire on the driver’s side was flat.

We got back in the car and I was able to pull safely off of the road into the edge of an adjacent field. I called my husband back in Wilcox County to deliver the news. He was willing to be on the way, but agreed we could probably have it changed – with it being the two of us – before he could get there. He felt that if we got out of the car and started on it that someone would stop and help. He said, “If you two get out and bend over to start changing the tire...somebody will stop.”

So we both popped out and unpacked the jack and the spare, neither of which had ever been used, and he was right. We had no more than cranked the jack a couple spins before someone stopped. It was an official Alabama State Trooper complete with the reflective emblems on his car. He flipped on those blue lights we generally try and avoid, and I don’t want to exaggerate, but we were absolutely thrilled to see him.

My jack failed. It bent. But the state trooper had an extra he was about to try. The edge of the field was a mix of pavement and mud and we didn’t want the state trooper to get the knees of his pants dirty, so I had a tarp in the trunk I had spread over the ground. It was a severe weather day. The wind was blowing strong and the clouds were approaching.

That is when things took a turnaround. A blue truck pulled in between my car and the state trooper. A man named Jesse stepped out without saying a word and rolled a hydraulic jack under my car like a yo-yo. He came complete with a impact wrench and an air compressor to fill the spare.

The officer stepped back, and stood guard.

I asked him if the state trooper had called him or if he had just stopped, and he said he had just happened along and had the tools. We thanked him and I offered to pay him. He said, “No ma’am, y’all have been my blessing today.” And just as he had arrived, he disappeared into traffic. We thanked Officer Moore too. His shift had ended. He was on his way home. He didn’t have to stop.

The whole experience from our first noticing to being back on the road only took 25 minutes. Canoe, Alabama just has to be one of the best places in Alabama to have a flat tire.

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

Today's Woman

TRISSTON'S TIDBITS:

Ms. Wheelchair America/
Alabama 2005



By: Trisston Burrows

The Ultimate Valentine

There really isn’t any other day on earth like it. If you just look at Valentine’s Day by the numbers, it boggles the brain a bit:

- ♥ **\$130.97 – The average estimated amount an individual will spend on Valentine’s Day.**
- ♥ **\$224 million – The estimated number of roses grown for Valentine’s Day.**
- ♥ **\$18.6 billion – The projected total amount Americans will spend for Valentine’s Day.**
- ♥ **\$1.6 billion – The amount people will spend on candy.**
- ♥ **\$1.9 billion – The amount people will spend on flowers.**
- ♥ **\$4.4 billion – The amount people will spend on diamonds, gold, and silver.**

Not only that, but over 6 million folks will propose on February 14th, and if you are a member of the club that sees Valentine’s Day as S.A.D. (Single Awareness Day), you can actually pick up a Valentine’s card and/or treat for your pet or buy yourself some flowers! Picture yourself as God’s living Valentine to a world that needs His love.

But then after the hundreds of pounds of chocolate have been gobbled, and the millions of cards have been exchanged, and the billions of dollars spent, their comes the inevitable follow up...February 15. That’s the day when we go back to our daily grind and all that focus on love typically gets thrown out with the wrappers and cards. This probably happens because we put so much emphasis on the temporary and emotionally driven feeling called love, which is why it is so important to remember that God sends us a very different message.

“For the mountains may move and the hills disappear, but even then my faithful love for you will remain. My covenant of blessing will never be broken,” says the Lord, who has mercy on you.” Isaiah 54:10

Isn’t this amazing? Long after our flowers have faded and the feelings have waned, God’s love endures beyond even the foundations of the earth! That’s because His love for us isn’t centered in our beauty, behavior or even our love for Him. God’s love flows from the unconditional affection and commitment of the perfect Father’s heart.

The gospel is the ultimate Valentine that should not be kept a secret! And here is the best part. When we decide to share the love that God has for us with others, it will have an eternal impact. In fact, loving others the way that God loves us is the only meaningful thing that will last forever.

This Valentine’s Day, remember that love is so much more than flowers and candy and cards. It is even more than the deepest feelings you experience because real love is expressed by unconditional commitment and unwavering dedication to our loved ones. That’s why God didn’t spend billions of dollars on us. He sacrificed His priceless Child. He didn’t send us flowers, but He allowed a crown of thorns to be put on Jesus’ brow.

Let’s make every day a “Valentine’s Day” for THE Cause in the sense that since God so loved the world, so should we. Picture yourself as God’s living Valentine to a world that desperately needs to know what love is truly all about.

Many Blessings!

The Value of a Woman...

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

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Southern Cuisine

Chef David Spooner, Retired Chef

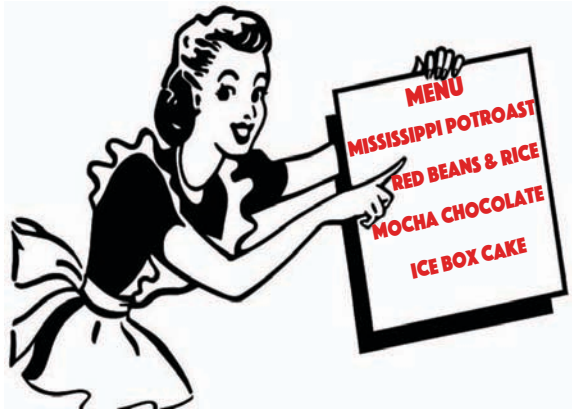
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It seems that the holidays this time of year just are speeding along and will catch you off guard. With Groundhog Day, National Tater Tot Day, National Carrot Cake Day, Thank Your Mailman Day, National Send A Card to a Friend Day, Super Bowl Sunday, Valentine's Day, Random Acts of Kindness Day, National Sticky Bun Day, and with National Waking the Dog Day how do you expect to get any thing done this month? The only day that I could not find an excuse to party was February 24.

You will not have time to do much celebrating this month because the recipes I have for you will take up much of your time. The MISSISSIPPI POT ROAST will take up some time cooking but is light on the prep. The RED BEANS & RICE recipe has many options to pick from in the preparation and the recipe will also require you to follow the instructions carefully. What kind of beans and sausage and how spicy you like you food will give you many options to pick from. The last recipe has a fair list of ingredients and needs a long rest in the refrigerator.

The recipe below is the long one. Read the recipe first to make sure you have all of the ingredients needed and you understand all of the steps.



Red Beans & Rice



INGREDIENTS:

2 tablespoon olive oil - divided
1 pound Smoked Andouille Sausage - sliced into 1/2-inch rounds
2 medium yellow onions - diced
3 ribs celery - diced
2 green bell peppers - stemmed, seeded and diced
5 cloves garlic - minced
1.5 tablespoon Cajun seasoning
1/2 teaspoon cayenne - plus more if desired
2 teaspoon thyme
1 teaspoon salt - plus more to taste
1/2 teaspoon black pepper

3 cans red kidney beans - drained, not rinsed
2 bay leaves
2 cups broth - (chicken stock, vegetable or beef broth), plus more as needed
2 cups white rice - cooked according to package instructions or see notes below

Optional garnishes: - chopped parsley, green onions, cilantro, or hot sauce (like Tabasco)

DIRECTIONS:

Brown the sausage: Heat a large, heavy-bottomed Dutch oven or pot over high heat. Add 1 tablespoon of olive oil and swirl to coat the bottom of the pot. Once hot, add the sausage to the in a single layer and cook for 1-2 minutes before flipping to brown on the other side. Remove sausage from the skillet and set aside.

Sausage: Spicy smoked Andouille sausage is what I used in this recipe. You'll find all kinds of different smoked sausage available at your local grocery store, so pick your favorite. Since it has already been cooked, there's no need to cook more than a few minutes. Can't find Andouille sausage? Alternatives include Mexican Chorizo, kielbasa, or any other spicy smoked sausage.

The "holy trinity" (Mirepoix): To the same pot over medium-low heat, add the last tablespoon of olive oil. Stir in the minced onions, bell pepper, and celery, mixing well to combine. Sauté for 8-10 minutes, stirring frequently. Add the minced garlic, Cajun seasoning, cayenne pepper, thyme, salt, and black pepper. Mix well and continue to cook for 1 minute.

Red beans and broth: Add in the drained red beans, bay leaves, and broth to your pot. Mix well to combine and add additional liquid if needed. Increase heat and bring the red beans to a low boil. Immediately reduce heat to low, cover, and simmer for 15 minutes. If you prefer a thicker sauce, simply whisk together 2-3 tablespoons of tomato paste with approximately 1/2-1 cup of

broth from your pot. Thoroughly mix to combine and gently stir back into your pot.

Return the sausage: Return the sausage back to the pot and continue to simmer for 5-10 minutes more. Season with additional salt and pepper, to taste.

Serve approximately, 1 cup of beans and sausage in a shallow bowl topped with approximately equal amounts of rice. Garnish with fresh chopped parsley or green onions, if desired.

Mississippi Potroast

INGREDIENTS:

Cook Time 8 hrs
Servings 8

(3-4 pounds chuck roast
1 packet ranch dressing mix
1 packet au jus gravy mix
1/4 cup butter
4-5 pepperoncini peppers



DIRECTIONS:

Place roast in the slow cooker and sprinkle the top with the ranch dressing mix and the au jus mix.

Place peppers on top of the mixes, and add the butter. Cook over low heat for 8 hours. Serve with noodles, rice or mashed potatoes.

Enjoy!

Notes
Do not add any water or broth to this! It will make enough liquid as it cooks.

This tastes delicious with potatoes and carrots! I like to add a few quartered russet potatoes and a large handful of baby carrots to the crock-pot when there is about 1-2 hours left of cooking time

My collection of cookbooks just got larger with the purchase of "THE ALABAMA ROOM COOKBOOK". The Alabama Room located in the Hayneville/Lowndes County Public Library is a place designed for preserving the treasured history of our families and county. The ALABAMA ROOM COOKBOOK is the fund-raising publication for the Alabama Room. The citizens of Lowndes county now have a place where anyone can come and research their ancestry. Microfilm from the years 1830 to 1900 are located in the Alabama Room. The purchase of the cookbook brings you "Priceless Treasures of Today and Yesteryear."

Mocha Chocolate Ice Box Cake

INGREDIENTS:

Yield: 8 servings

2 cups cold heavy cream
12 ounces Italian mascarpone cheese
1/2 cup sugar
1/4 cup coffee liqueur
2 tablespoons unsweetened cocoa powder
1 teaspoon instant espresso powder
1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract
3 (8-ounce) packages chocolate chip cookies,
Semisweet chocolate, for garnish



DIRECTIONS:

In the bowl of an electric mixer fitted with the whisk attachment, combine the heavy cream, mascarpone, sugar, coffee liqueur, cocoa powder, espresso powder, and vanilla.

Mix on low speed to combine and then slowly raise the speed, until it forms firm peaks.

To assemble the cake, arrange chocolate chip cookies flat in an 8-inch spring-form pan, covering the bottom as much as possible. (I break some cookies to fill in the spaces.) Spread a fifth of the mocha whipped cream evenly over the cookies. Place another layer of cookies on top, lying flat and touching, followed by another fifth of the cream.

Continue layering cookies and cream until there are 5 layers of each, ending with a layer of cream. Smooth the top, cover with plastic wrap, and refrigerate overnight. Run a small sharp knife around the outside of the cake and remove the sides of the pan.

Cut into wedges and serve.



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