

ACM, CMA & Recording Academy Member, JESSIE LYNN,

∞ ∞ Crowned Miss Rodeo USA 2022 ∞ ∞



Jessie Lynn Nichols of Prattville, Alabama, was crowned **Miss Rodeo USA 2022** at the 52nd Annual International Finals Rodeo (IFR52) in Guthrie, Oklahoma, on January 16th. This annual event is sanctioned by the International Professional Rodeo Association (IPRA) and The Miss Rodeo USA Association.

Miss Nichols represented the Limestone County Sheriff's Rodeo (Athens, Alabama) and was one of fifteen rodeo queen contestants vying for the title of Miss Rodeo USA.

At the end of the week-long pageant Miss Nichols stated, *“Being crowned Miss Rodeo USA is truly one of the highest honors of my life. I look forward to a fun-filled year with multiple opportunities to represent the sport of rodeo, to give back to the sport that has given me a firm foundation, life experiences, and much success, and to inspire others to get involved and follow their dreams. Having the opportunity to serve as the official ambassador for the International Professional Rodeo Association will allow me the opportunity to give back to the sport of rodeo, its patrons, contestants, sponsors, and those who love the western way of life.”*

Jessie Lynn Nichols, “America’s Singing Cowgirl,” was bestowed the prestigious honor of being crowned the 57th Miss Rodeo USA at the International Finals Rodeo in Guthrie, OK on January 16, 2022. This week-long competition was sanctioned by the International Professional Rodeo Association (IPRA) and the Miss Rodeo USA Association. With this honor, Jessie Lynn becomes the eleventh Alabamian to hold this prestigious title and makes her mark in history by becoming the 6th Limestone Sheriff’s Rodeo Queen to hold the Miss Rodeo USA title.



Story Excerpt from Press Release on Jessie Lynn Nichols – Miss Rodeo USA 2022
Dated January 24, 2022 / Contact info 334-322-7060 / missrodeousa2022@gmail.com

★ ★ ★ ★ **In This Issue** ★ ★ ★ ★

Commentaries:	And Don't Miss:
Will Gambling be Addressed? by Steve Flowers.....pg 2A	Soul Searching Dr. Lester Spencer.....pg 1B
The Anglo-Irish Treaty by Justice Will Sellerspg 2A	Southern Gardening by Judge Peggy Givhanpg 1B
Bits and Pieces: 13th Edition by Rob Tate.....pg 3A	Honoring Our Heroes Dr. Martha Poole Simmonspg 2-3B
Biden Makes History by Perry O. Hooper.....pg 4A	Tears & Laughter Amanda Walkerpg 4B
Freedomworks by John Martin.....pg 4A	Trisston's Tidbits Trisston Wright Burrows.....pg 4B
We're NOT a Democracy! by John Sophocleuspg 5A	Social Security News Kylle' McKinney.....pg 4B
The Hampton Roads Conference by John Taylor.....pg 5A	Home Town Community News Patricia Killough.....pg 5B
Texas Anti-Abortion Law in AL by Ronald A. Holtsford, Esq.....pg 6A	Southern Cuisine Chef Spooner.....pg 6B

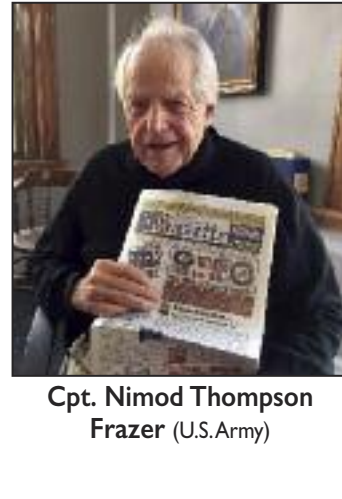
Jessie Lynn Nichols is the daughter of Bryan and Sherri Nichols (both native Oklahomans) and proudly resides in “The Fountain City” – Prattville, Alabama. She is a graduate of Auburn University with a Bachelor of Science in Agriculture Communications and a Master of Science in Agri-Science Education. Miss Nichols has also been accepted into Auburn University’s College of Education Career and Technical Education Ph.D. program.

This genuine “cowgirl at heart” started her rodeo career at the age of 3 and has numerous national, regional, and state titles, as well as numerous world qualifications to her name. During her formative years, Jessie Lynn was heavily involved in her local 4-H Equine Program and spent over 2,500 hours giving back to her community. She also credits the sport of rodeo for her un-rivaled work ethic, drive, determination, and love of country music where she is a current member of the ACM, CMA, and Recording Academy, as well as a multi-award winning Country Music Entertainer, Songwriter, and Producer.

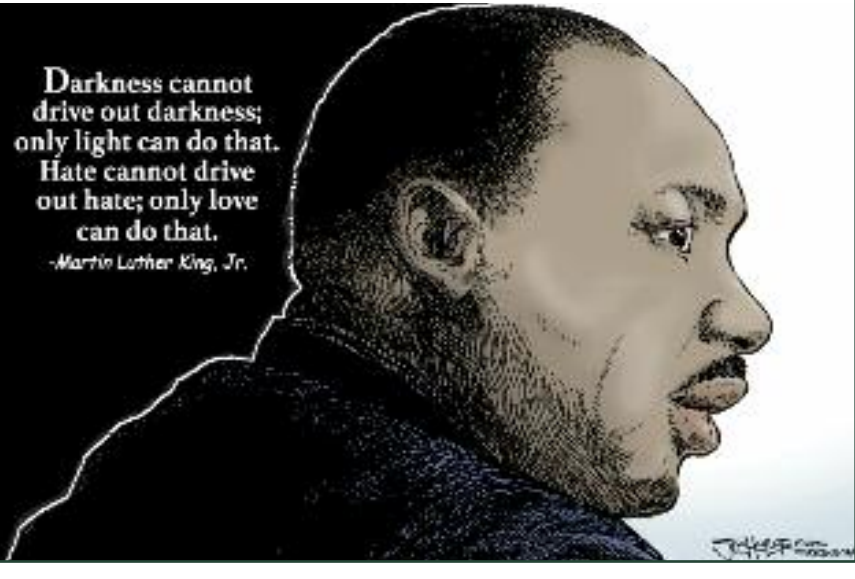
Having developed a love for horses and the art of teaching, Jessie Lynn established her first company (Alabama Extreme Equine Productions) at the age of fifteen. She continues to focus her teaching and horse training skills to assist aspiring equestrians to meet or exceed their goals. During her reign as Miss Rodeo USA, Jessie Lynn will be encouraging others to get out there and “Be a Dreamcatcher,” so they can live life to the fullest and reach their goals.

Congratulations to our Hometown Miss Rodeo USA ~ Fessie Lynn!

Veterans love reading *The Alabama Gazette* each month!



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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.

www.steveflowers.us

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



Will Gambling Be Addressed in 2022?

As the final regular legislative session of the quadrennium evolves, it is apparent that the legislature will not touch any substantive or controversial issues, but simply pass the budgets and go home to campaign. It is election year in the Heart of Dixie.

If legislators are listening to their constituents, they are hearing one thing – Alabamians want their legislators to allow them the right to vote on receiving their fair share of the money from gambling in Alabama. They are simply sick and tired of their money going to Georgia, Mississippi, Florida and Tennessee while Alabamians are paying for those states' schools, roads and bridges.

You can bet your bottom dollar that if a clean lottery/sports betting referendum were to be placed on this November's ballot, it would pass in a New York minute. Even the most conservative folks in our state would vote for it, if for only one reason – they want their money to stay in state. Every time there is one of these high dollar powerball national drawings, every convenience store on our border in the aforementioned bordering sister states' parking lots are jammed with Alabamians clamoring to buy a lottery ticket.

Governor Kay Ivey has had a very accomplished five-year reign as Governor. The Rebuild Alabama road, bridge and infrastructure program was big and much needed. Most of her successes have been housekeeping chores that required a governor, who was willing to put the state first and get these necessary projects accomplished instead of kicking the can down the road like some of her predecessors. However, these accomplishments will not give her a legacy issue that 50 to 100 years from now folks can point to and say Kay Ivey has a legacy.

The legacy awaiting Governor Ivey is the creation of a Constitutional Amendment that garners the tremendous amount of money spent on gambling in Alabama and also a Gambling Regulatory Commission to monitor and police gaming. You are talking about some real money for Alabama. Conservative estimates are \$700 million a year to the state. In addition, there would be 12,000 new jobs.

The legislature and governor by themselves cannot achieve this reaping of the gambling gold mine. It would have to be approved by you – the voters of Alabama – in a Constitutional Amendment. If polling is correct, it would pass 65-35. With it being a constitutional amendment, it needs a three-fifths vote in the legislature to place the initiative on the ballot. The issue was discussed, extensively, and voted on in the 2021 session. It passed in the Senate but never was put to a vote in the House.

The Senate would pass it again. There were 23 votes for the Constitutional Amendment and only 21 were needed for passage. There needs to be 63 votes in the 105 member House to place the amendment on the ballot in this year's November General Election.

Therefore, the question is will it be placed on the ballot this year for Alabamians to vote to reap this financial bonanza? In order to pass the Constitutional Amendment to allow Alabamians to vote on a lottery and expanded gambling, Governor Ivey probably will need to weigh in with both feet and promote the issue in a Special Session.

Because it is an election year, the legislature probably will not want to deal with the issue until after the elections. The primary election is May 24. The current regular session will end in April, so gambling probably will not be dealt with in this regular session. Therefore, the best way to get the amendment on the ballot is a special session during the month of June because it has to be done by the first of July to get on the November ballot. However, with most legislators being unopposed they may take the bull by the horns and pass the constitutional amendment for you to vote on in November without the need for a special session.

In observing the legislature, it is bittersweet seeing Speaker of the House Mac McCutcheon presiding over probably his last session as Speaker. He has done an excellent job as Speaker. He is a kind, even-tempered gentleman, who exudes integrity. He is decisive and fair, and you can tell he is a man of faith who truly cares about the House members, both Republicans and Democrats.

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The Miracle of the Anglo-Irish Treaty

One vision of utopia includes the conversion of weapons of war into farming implements.

The Bible anticipates a time when swords will be beaten into plowshares, and spears will become pruning hooks. But sometimes in our modern world, it happens that bitter enemies with blood on their respective hands

Justice Will Sellers

wake up and realize that compromise is better than conflict.

Overcoming hate is less about love and more about recognizing the reality of the devastating consequences of protracted conflict. When the source of conflict is forgotten and someone finally realizes that an eye for an eye policy creates only darkness, wise leaders assess the future and move to resolve their differences.

Compromise is hard and takes its hardest toll on the statesmen. Those visionaries who see the possibilities of a world transformed by practical necessity must settle for a partial victory in the hope that the future will allow for incremental achievement. Understanding that half a loaf is better than no loaf requires a maturity that recognizes a brighter future is obtained daily as each small victory builds on another. In short, beginning a process for peace that maintains an open dialog is always a step in the right direction.

In Ireland, Michael Collins, adjutant general of the Irish Republican Army, agreed to a compromise with his archenemy, the British. A leader in guerilla tactics of ambush and assassination, Collins was a wanted man. The number of deaths for which he was responsible remains unknown.

As the butcher's bill on both sides was getting costly, Collins could see no future in the continued tit-for-tat. He recognized the futility of tactics that yielded only death and destruction with no possibility of a stable economy, much less an independent republic. This same reality was recognized by the British, who realized they could continue to dominate the Irish with overwhelming force, but the attritional deaths caused by the Irish Republican Army forced them to reassess their objectives. If all they were doing in Ireland was occupying a territory as an unwelcome presence, there was no future. The policy of reprisals was not a strategy for success.

Both sides realized they had nothing to gain from continued war, and each saw a bleak future of continued counter attacks and retaliation awaiting them. The British then took the first step and invited Collins and other Irish revolutionaries, under safe passage, to London to negotiate. Issuing and accepting such an invitation required bravery on both sides.

Each had to deal with less than enthusiastic political support for the endeavor, and given the centuries of animosity, trust, or lack thereof, created an atmosphere of foreboding. The parameters for a treaty to settle their differences were completely undefined.

The British were, in part, motivated by King George V, who encouraged "all Irishmen to pause, to stretch out the hand of forbearance and conciliation, to forgive and to forget, and to join in making for the land they love a new era of peace, contentment, and good will." This was an indirect mandate to Prime Minister Lloyd George to negotiate.

Will Sellers was appointed by Governor Kay Ivey to the Supreme Court of Alabama in 2017. Will Sellers is best reached at jws@willsellers.com



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ROBSERVATIONS...

by Robert Tate

BITS AND PIECES: 13TH EDITION

Guess what folks, it is time for yet another Robservation edition of “Bits and Pieces.” Today, there is just so much going on that it is difficult to pin down just one story. This time, I don’t think any of them are too controversial but interesting nonetheless. As for the first story, let common sense rule. Everybody is entitled to their opinion, but in this case, if you agree with Congresswoman Alexandria Ocasio Cortez (AOC), you are wrong. Sorry. Here goes!

1. STUDENT LOAN FORGIVENESS: I have no idea where in the heck these progressive, Marxist nut jobs come up with some of their ideas. Well, actually they are progressive Marxist nut jobs. That explains everything. Somewhere inside their pathetic little world, they sit around and dream up the most ridiculous ideas. Here is just one of many. I was watching the news several weeks back and AOC was on the floor of Congress spouting foolishness as is often the case. I guess she also tweeted the same nonsense. She actually had the gall to say, “We have a moral obligation, an economic obligation, a political obligation to cancel student loan debt.”

Are you guys out there in newspaper land reading this? She said that you, me and all other Americans have a “moral obligation” to pay off her, and others’ student loans. She is not alone in this vapid stupidity. Fellow “Squad” member Rashida Tlaib fully agrees and bemoans the fact that she still has some \$70,000 dollars in student load debt that needs to be paid off. Afterall, she needed to get the loans to pay for her law degree. This coming from a woman who allegedly is earning rental income from property worth potentially as much as \$250,000 per year. Not to mention that she and AOC both earn some \$174,000 per year as members of Congress. Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer and Senator Elizabeth Warren, want President Biden to do their dirty work for them through an executive order. Nothing has been thus far but the current national federal student loan payment pause does not expire until January 31, 2022. Can we expect some action within the near future? I hope not.

Am I the only out here who sees this for what it is? Clearly, I am not and a lot of people are speaking out. Rightfully so. Let there be no doubt that the entire idea of student loan debt forgiveness is just another way of saying, “Tax payers, you are going to payoff of the student loan debt these kids willingly chose to accrue but now are too irresponsible, lazy and pathetic to payoff on their own. Deal with it.” I’m sorry (actually I am not), if you think that Rob Tate sitting here in Montgomery, Alabama has a “moral obligation” to pay for your college, you are an idiot. Plain, simple, true. Before anybody says something stupid, yes, I went to college. No, my parents could not afford it. Yes, I got student loans. I graduated college in 1983 and made my last payment in 1995 while I was still on active duty in the Air Force. Twelve years and 144 payments later, I paid off my obligation.

I knew I wanted to fly airplanes. I knew on my own I would never be able to do it financially. The only way was through the GSL program. But you know what? I knew at the end of the day, I was going to have to pay that loan back. You know what else? I did. Simple. Please tell me where in the heck anybody has the right to tell me that I have to foot the bill for their or their kid’s college education. There is this pesky little thing in America today called personal responsibility. If you cannot afford college, cannot get a grant, have to rely on student loans, you had better get a degree that will allow you the opportunity to pay off that loan. \$250,000 in student loan debt for a degree or Masters in gender studies or art history is probably not going to cut it. So don’t expect me to pay for you. Sorry. Again, no I’m not. Not even close. And, if you cannot afford college or abide by the expectation that you pay off your own debts, the answer is really simple. Don’t go to college or at least until you are able to satisfy your personal responsibilities.

Here’s another kicker, the authors of an April 2021 study, entitled “The Distributional Effects of Student Loan Forgiveness,” concluded “that universal and capped forgiveness policies are highly regressive, with the vast majority of benefits accruing to high-income individuals.” In other words, if this were to ever pass, the people whose debts would be forgiven, disproportionately are kids from higher income families. Yeah, that’s fair. So instead of trying to pass laws attempting to gouge money from taxpayers, why not pass laws forcing the colleges and universities to reimburse students for financially raping them all these years? They created the problem, let them help fix it. Do not expect me to. Moral obligation? I think AOC has a moral obligation to keep her boney fingers out of my, and your bank accounts. Moving on.

2. MONTGOMERY CRIME: I moved here in July, 1997. Guess what, my wife and I are still here. Somehow, someway, we both fell in love with the River

Region and Montgomery. We have an outstanding church, Harvest Family Church and a great church family. It is one of the things we love most about this city and arguably the main anchor point for us here. Is Montgomery the best place I have ever lived? Nope. The worst? Nope. Well not yet at least. In my Air Force and airline days, I have traveled to hundreds of places around this country. Some really nice, some pretty crappy. Some places that I could see us living. Others, not for any amount of money. But in the balance, this area of Alabama has agreed with us over the years. That is until recently.

I am simply not sure what has happened over the past several years. After Mayor Strange’s revitalization of downtown and the promise it still holds until today, my wife and I at times hardly recognize this city. There does not seem to be a single day that we turn on WSFA and see where there was a shooting. How many this year? Too many. When you look at the rate of violent and property crime in the city and compare those rates to the rest of the U.S., yeah, we pretty much exceed those rates. (<https://www.bestplaces.net/crime/>) By a lot. That is both sad and disgusting.

Too many people have this very myopic view of the world and want to place all the blame on either guns or even the Mayor. To be honest, I did not vote for the man and when you are in the driver’s seat, you have to drive. But I am not going to lay all of this at his foot. Nor are guns the problem. The idiot pulling the trigger is. There is a crisis of character more than anything that is plaguing not only Montgomery but the entire country right now. We have way too many horrible parents raising even more horrible kids. No guidance, no direction, no support, no moral instruction, no emphasis on education, no value on life, no love of neighbor; you name it. Violence and outright sinful behavior is cherished more than morale restraint and righteousness. The result? Turn on the news any night and watch.

But you want to know the truly sad part of this? If this keeps up and gets worse to the point of no return, a lot of people who otherwise love this city but actually love their lives more, are going to bug out of here and go to places where a trip to the Walmart will not mean a bullet to the face and driving down the Eastern Bypass is not an invitation to get in the crossfire of a drive by shooting. If the city does nothing to curb this dangerous swing in violent crime, those of us who can afford to leave, will. It really should not be that hard to understand.

3. NFL: For the first time in years, I actually watched a lot of NFL football this year. The four games this past weekend were phenomenal with each game ending in walk-off field goals. Three leading to wins and one leading to overtime. This is the point here, NFL overtime. The game between the Chiefs and Bills was awesome. But that overtime. Chiefs got the ball, scored a touch-down, game over. The Bills never touched the ball. That is not right. I know the NFL has pushed the idea away for years but I think the game last night showed that they really need to adopt an overtime format more closely aligned with college football. Not only is it 1,000,000,000 times more exciting, it is infinitely fairer. They score, you don’t; they win. They don’t score but you do, you win. You both score the same, you keep going until a victor is crowned. Ta da. Enough said.

4. RUSSIA AND THE UKRAINE: Since I am running out of space, this will be short. Yes, it looks like Russia may indeed invade the Ukraine. My question. Where is the U.N.? Why have they not made any forceful statements? Why does it always seem to rest upon the U.S. and our Allies to always step up to the plate first? Shouldn’t the U.N. say something forceful like, “If you invade the Ukraine, we will revoke your permanent seat at the U.N.” Something? Anything other than the UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres saying that a Russian invasion of Ukraine would be “against international law.” Against international law? No duh, Einstein. But what are you going to do about it if they do invade? Guterres then added, “I’m convinced it will not happen and I strongly hope to be right.” (www.straitstimes.com/world/united-states/un-chief-convinced-russia-wont-invade-ukraine.) Now if that is not a strong diplomatic statement . . . The U.N. is arguably the most feckless international organization on the planet. They are showing yet again.

We just sent more weapons there and the President is considering sending American soldiers. Really? We are going to shed American blood in the Ukraine fighting Russian soldiers. I for one certainly hope that is not a plan. But after the Afghanistan fiasco, who knows what these guys are capable of screwing up and who knows what is going to happen at this point? I saw an interview with a Ukrainian man yesterday. The American reporter asked him what the Ukrainians were thinking. His answer was classic. He said the only thing Ukrainians were wondering was, “Where are we going to bury all the Russian soldiers?” *Now that is an attitude I can get behind.*

Some information about student loan forgiveness expressed in this column can be found at: <https://www.raptureforums.com/politics-culture-wars/government-mandated-student-loan-cancellations-are-fundamentally-unfair/#:~:text=Ocasio-Cortez%20%28AOC%29%20tweeted%2C%20We%20have%20a%20moral%20obligation%20that%20she%20still%20owed%20%2470%2C000%20in%20student%20debt>

DID YOU KNOW?

Fifth in a Series

September 22, 1862, a month to the day after his letter to Horace Greeley saying he had no interest in ending slavery, President Lincoln issued the *Emancipation Proclamation*, to become effective on January 1, 1863.

The Proclamation states it was a “war measure” to take effect only in States “in rebellion”; therefore it did not apply to the slave holding States that remained in the Union: Delaware, Kentucky, Maryland, Missouri, and New Jersey.

“That on the first day of January, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and sixty-three, all persons held as slaves within any State or designated part of a State, the people whereof shall then be in rebellion against the United States, shall be then thenceforward, and forever free.”

The Proclamation provided that if a State of the Confederacy should return to the Union by electing Representatives and Senators to the U.S. Congress, the Proclamation would not apply to that State.

“any State, or the people thereof, shall on that day be, in good faith, represented in the Congress of the United States by members chosen thereto by elections wherein a majority of qualified voters of each State shall have participated, shall, in the absence of strong countervailing testimony, be deemed conclusive evidence that such State, and the people thereof are not then in rebellion against the United States.”

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Biden Makes History

Founder Let the People Speak
Former Alabama State Representative
Alabama State Republican Executive Committee

Alabama Trump Victory Chairman 2016
Alabama Trump Elector 2016
Alabama Trump Team Leader 2020

Biden made history in his first year in office for all the wrong reasons. He has the worst approval rating in the history of modern polling for a President's first year. When he first took office, he had high approval ratings and the Congress was controlled by his own Democratic party. It has been all downhill since. His presidency and definitely the country would be better off if after his inauguration had he just gone back to Delaware and slept for a year in his basement bunker where he ran his campaign. He has alienated all Republicans, the majority of independents, and even hard core Democrats are telling pollsters that they do not want him to run again. His actions from day one destroyed our energy independence that we had finally achieved under the policies of President Trump. This led to soaring gas prices at the pump and skyrocketing natural gas that heats our homes during the dark days of winter. We became the laughingstock of the world with his bumbling withdrawal from Afghanistan. This fiasco emboldened our sworn enemies from real superpowers China and Russia to wannabees Iran and North Korea. They are rattling their sabers daily and it's only a matter of when not if armed conflict will breakout.

As candidate Biden he ran as the great uniter of all Americans. As President, however, he has done everything in his power to divide us. He has called Republicans every name in the book. He has made Hillary's "deplorables" remark look like a complement. He supported legislation and implemented policies designed to separate us by race and class. Don't even get me started on

the disaster that are his insane Covid policies. They are devastating small businesses left and right. He tolerates school children eating lunch outside in sub-freezing temperatures sitting on buckets not allowed to talk to one another. He masked 4-year-old who may never recover psychologically.

As President Obama stated, "Elections have consequences." We must now prepare for an even worse second year of his presidency. The presidential press conference he held to mark his first year in office was just as disastrous and absurd as everything else about the Biden regime. Biden actually made the outlandish statement that he has "outperformed" expectations. Tough to know whether this comes more from delusions of grandeur or outright senility stated political commentator Buck Sexton. It is almost out of the realm of possibility that his failures do not register with this guy. Biden whispered the economy is great, it's just that silly Americans don't realize it. In his press conference he even gave what many felt was a wink and a nod to a "limited incursion" of Russia into Ukraine that the White House had to immediately walk back.

America is worried about crime in the streets, inflation, the broken supply chain, and the crisis at the southern border. Tone deaf Joe can only talk about federalizing elections and his build back broke bill as President Trump's former top Economic likes to call his socialist dream "build back better bill." I like to call it build bigger bureaucracies to control every phase of lives.

In November we have our one and only chance to stop this sprint to socialism. Republican must take back the House and Senate or all could be lost.

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For over 25 years, FreedomWorks has stood to support and protect limited government, minimal taxes, free markets, personal autonomy, and the rule of law.

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- 7. ENERGY & ENVIRONMENT**—Stop abuses and regulations that hamstringing our economy.
- 8. ENTITLEMENT REFORM**—Roll back massive and needless entitlement programs that reward freeloaders, entice illegal aliens, penalize and tax the productive, and can bankrupt our nation.
- 9. BUDGET & SPENDING**—Stop reckless spending and needless programs. Minimize taxes and expenditures. Washington now borrows 40 cents of every dollar it spends.
- 10. CIVIL LIBERTIES**—Protect civil liberty and privacy.
- 11. JUSTICE REFORM**—Ease burdens on taxpayers. Give nonviolent offenders the opportunity to become productive citizens. Stop prosecution and punishment for victimless crimes.
- 12. HEALTH CARE REFORM**—ObamaCare is a disaster. It should be replaced with free-market, patient-centered reforms.
- 13. FUNDAMENTAL TAX REFORM**—Scrap the current complicated code and make taxes low, simple, and honest.
- 14. JUDICIAL REFORM**—The judicial branch of government has overstepped its bounds and increasingly ignores the precepts of common law.

To educate the American people and to preserve liberty, justice, and free markets, FreedomWorks documents and publishes the votes of our House and Senate members on key legislative votes. Any person can check their honesty and integrity with a few mouse clicks.

FreedomWorks gives each one a "scorecard" of his performance, very much like a school teacher gives each student a report card. Those who perform well can be re-elected. Those who fail can be voted out of office.

Back in March 2020, I reported and illustrated the Republicans' and Democrats' lifetime performances. Unlike what George Wallace had claimed fifty years earlier, there was a huge difference between the two parties. Today, that difference has expanded even more.

During this past year (2021), the House Democrats were absolutely dismal. Only two made flat zeros, but a whopping 198 barely bettered them with 6%. Their top scores were 11 members with 13% and 3 with 19%.

Their Senators were even more pathetic. Forty-two made goose eggs. Six made 4%. One made 8%, and one topped out at 12%.

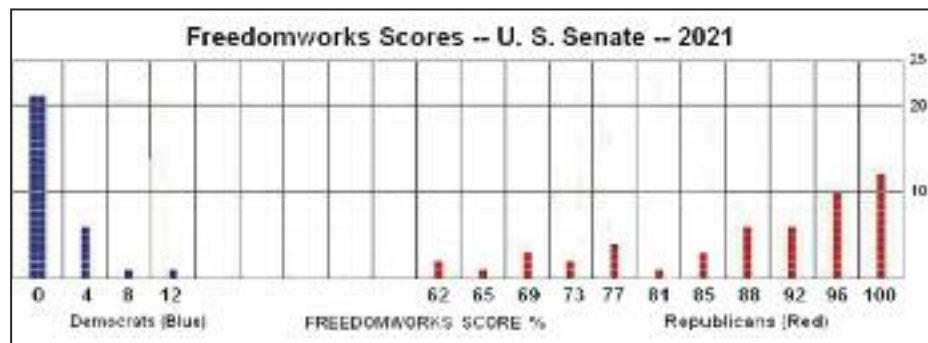
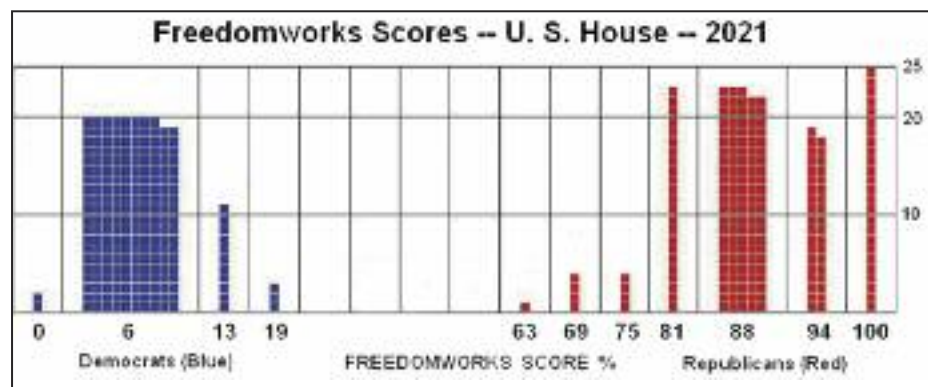
Every last Democrat made an "F"—a very low "F"—all of the way down into the bottom of the sewer with the Nazis and totalitarians. We could call every one a TRAITOR—completely unfit for any kind of public service.

The Republicans performed very well and stepped up with a new record.

Twenty-five House members each made a perfect 100%, and 37 more followed with 94%—all strong "A" grades. One hundred and thirteen made 88%—a "B+." Twenty three made 81%—a "B-," still a decent grade. Four made 75%—a "C." Four made 69%—a "D+." One made 63%—a "D." There were no Republican "F" grades, not even one.

The Republican Senators did almost as well. Twelve made a perfect 100%, followed with 10 with 96% and 6 with 92%—all "A" grades. Ten made a "B" (6 with 88%, 3 with 85%, and 1 with 81%). Six made a "C" (4 with 77% and 2 with 73%). Six made a "D" (3 with 69%, 1 with 65%, and 2 with 62%). Again, there were no "F" grades.

How well did Alabama perform? Fortunately, six of our seven House seats and both of our Senate seats are occupied by Republicans. Every one scored at least 88%. Mo Brooks (Dist 5) and our ex-Auburn football coach, Freshman Senator Tommy Tuberville, each scored a perfect 100%. Alabama's only rotten egg was District 7's Democratic Representative Terri Sewell, who earned a pitiful 6%.



FreedomWorks does not have the capacity to grade state and local office holders, but from their performances here in Alabama, many do not rank well. Among our governor, legislators, judges, county commissions, and various others, we have too many dirty Democrats and even some Republicans who are well below par and should be replaced. Check out their records. Get ready to dump the socialists and authoritarians.

Finally, after four years of suffering from abuse and wringing our hands, we get to vote the bums out in a mid-term election this year. In the primary, we must select strong fiscal conservatives for all offices—people who will give their utmost to protect individual liberty and autonomy, repeal abusive laws, and minimize taxes, spending, and regulations. Keep the ones who perform well. THROW OUT the rotten eggs—the ones who gave us the gas tax increase, shutdowns, lockdowns, mandates, travel restrictions, "Stay at home" orders, expanded budgets, corporate welfare, the proposal to blow millions on three new mega-prisons, and an extreme anti-abortion law that will surely be challenged in the courts and cost us millions more.

SOURCE: FreedomWorks. www.freedomworks.org/about/about-freedomworks

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START MONTH

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We're NOT a Democracy!

There ... I've *finally* typed it.

Dr. Franklin didn't answer, "You have a democracy – as long as you can keep it!" in Philadelphia after closing the Constitutional Convention. Framers and Delegates understood the ills and ends of all democracies, devoutly

John Sophocleus

to be avoided.

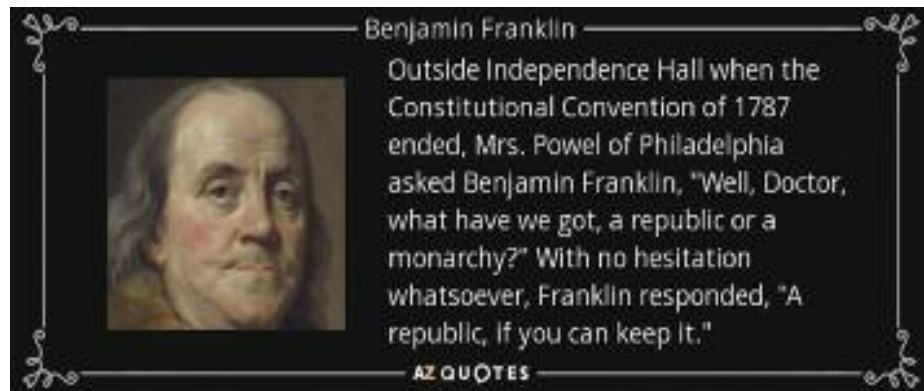
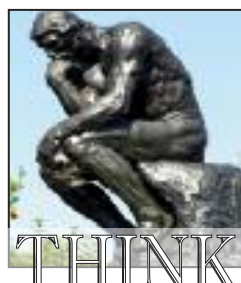
No matter how many times this poor nomenclature is bantered about by corrupt politburo members – from my county commission, to Goat Hill, all the way up to Moscow on the Potomac – it doesn't alter the design submitted and adopted in our 1789 Constitution. The growing, desperate, shrill assertions of 'Democracy' by political pundits, apparatchiks, Pravda-style media and all the other champions of command and control economies these past several score also does **NOT** make Democracy a reality. Further claims in alarm, declaring this non-existent, **over**-romanticized structure [Democracy] in jeopardy aids and abets our political swindlers' camouflaging of the observed more oligarchic result – *i.e.*, political power increasingly more concentrated **away** from the people.

Okay, a result observed by a few, like some *Alabama Gazette* readers who commented on my 'Peaceful Transfer of Power' column [www.alabamagazette.com/story/2021/01/01/opinion/peaceful-transfer-of-power-pax-romana-style/2063.html] wondering if I had 'inside information' writing it **before** the Jan. 6th DC protest. Those seeing irony witnessing the fraction of protestors who indeed turned violent appearing very much like the end result of democracies while being driven by federal hegemony were outstanding! Similarly compelling was commentary on politburo members championing democracy at the same time asserting no reason to arm and protect ourselves from people, while shamefully quick to barricade and summon weapons to defend themselves against the harm they promoted via so many unconstitutional actions. Sad these political thieves, who've destroyed so many lives, are so self-serving they've completely lost all capacity for empathy to consider why their hosts are angry at the parasites.

I've read Jefferson's Declaration making the case for independence and our 1789 Constitution many times; never recall finding the word or the case being made for democracy. Art. 4, Sec. 4 makes clear each State must guarantee a republican form of government, providing sound guidelines in Art. 1, Sec. 2 on how this representative Republic of States will operate at the federal level to execute those few powers enumerated to the central government. Of course, I don't expect my incompetent 'Felon Hubbard' minion congressperson to understand this or champion a movement to make the House representative again as a Trump sycophant; a big govt. modern NY Democrat now wearing the Red jersey. Similarly, our minority gerrymandered congressperson who played one of the larger roles of making people homeless via eminent domain abuse (another 'Trump-love' item) is championing 'voters rights' but offers nothing to make the House (much less other geo-political divisions in our State) more representative. These 'public servants' will continue to cry "**Democracy!**" while my county and the cities within become even **LESS** representative shown in the new census data and redistricting outcomes.

No competent federal jurist would accept, much less champion 'one man one vote' feel-good diatribes if they understand and uphold Art. 2, Sec. 1, knowing the text was put in place to affirm and protect State sovereignty. More specifically that a large, high population State huge margin of victory could

overwhelm other State(s) decisions for their locale. Allowing popular vote determination of the executive branch – esp. with a polarized figure more interested in specific interests over the general welfare (for example a champion of corporate welfare while claiming to care about the poor) would hasten/increase the probability of a State(s) exiting the coalition.

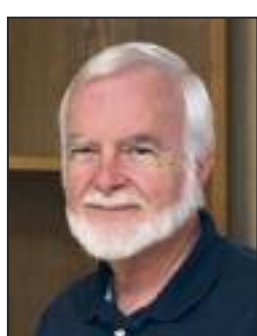
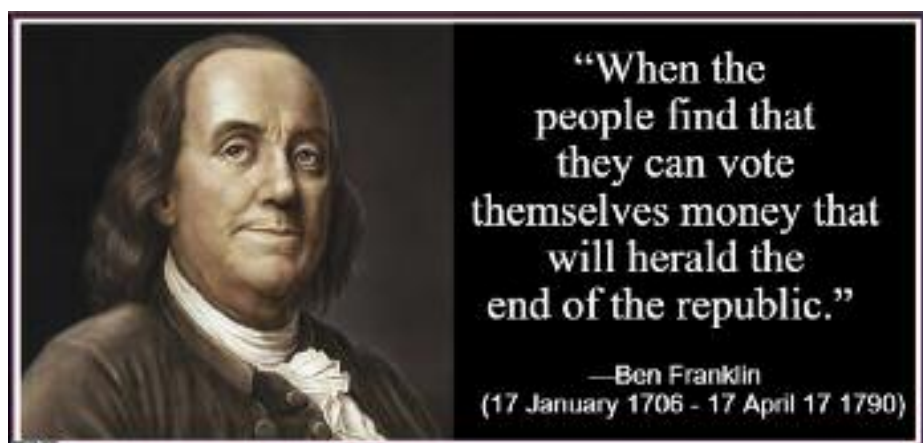


Understand it is foolish for anyone to dream that one day we'll have a one for 30,000 (round-up) representative U.S. House where it is a part-time job, which pays median income. If for no other reason than House members may actually realize what median income is each 2 year cycle. The ratio of one representative for every 700,000 to well over a million in some States will continue to get worse until this forced coalition finally fails. When this column may be reread long after my and this hegemonic union's passing, I pray it will not be believed that this union of States was just another democracy which failed but considered yet another tyrannical oligarchy (also feared by the Greeks) so future generations may identify and defend against the evil of their day.

I ask forgiveness for an old man who was taught to read documents, know some history and make every effort to understand what one observes regardless of the rhetoric and nomenclatures used. I cannot bring myself to call what is happening on the exchanges [DJIA, NASDAQ, S&P 500] these past decades a market or say "Obamacare" choices are a marketplace, etc. when clearly results in a command economy. I know most will continue to waste their votes on authoritarians like Biden and Trump – esp. in a State like Alabama with some of the worst ballot-access laws in the nation. It cuts to the core hearing these authoritarians speak of Democracy while further destroying our well designed Republic, knowing our independence was lost long ago when coerced into a forced coalition.

In closing, I hope the overwhelming majority of authoritarians may at least tolerate the fading years of this old fool. Dr. Franklin's "*A republic if you can keep it,*" response to the Philadelphia lady's, "What have we got, a republic or monarchy?" query remains among my indelible memorized quotes I cannot erase. According to Bartleby and the Yale Book of Quotations this exchange was first printed in the American Historical Review [1906] publishing notes of Maryland Constitutional Convention delegate James McHenry who some know I know dear. I suspect some (like my former student Lance Farrar – no stranger to perjury and historical rewrites in our court system) will assure me authoritarians shall applaud my help in identifying the more important quotes to erase/rewrite for their posterity.

Postscript: appreciate those prompting me to write on the next AU president circling to 'Crash' into Samford Hall 'Leath-style' recalling my www.alabamagazette.com/story/2017/04/01/opinion/installing-steven-crash-leath-as-aus-19th-president/1019.html column trying to avoid that disaster and \$5 mil. hush money exit. We'll see ... perhaps the dwindling righteous at AU can make a stand against the Auburn mafia (you know, that treat you like family) and declare this a failed search. I forecast the usual suspects will install their anointed inside candidate; yet another Leath caliber public servant they can easily leverage to do their bidding – just as they found Crash appealing 5 years ago. Little has changed at AU... foolish to hope President Gogue will take out any more trash (corrupt Deans, etc.) before exiting this second time. Kudos to those who blocked the corrupt Provost from the presidency – easy to imagine the insider installation will be even worse... *this IS Auburn.*



"The Informed Southerner"

The Hampton Roads Conference

Government-approved "history books" claim the War Between the States/Civil War was fought over slavery; however, the main characters in both North and South, including Jefferson Davis and Abraham Lincoln, insisted that was not the *casus belli*. The Hampton Roads Conference provides further insight.

In early January 1865 (after over 3½ years of struggle) American journalist Francis Blair spearheaded an effort to have both sides meet face-to-face to work out a compromise. Blair was concerned about French military presence in Mexico. He envisioned a cessation of the American conflict and re-unification to squelch this perceived threat. (Lincoln was skeptical about this proposition.) Instigated by Blair, a meeting was arranged for February 5, 1865, and the chosen location was Hampton Roads, Virginia. Thus, we have the Hampton Roads Conference.

Representing the United States was Abraham Lincoln and William Seward and representing the Confederate States was Alexander Stephens, Judge William Campbell, and R.M.T. Hunter. Seward requested an informal meeting with no official written records. However, Stephens referenced the meeting in *A Constitutional View of the War Between the States: Its Causes, Character, Conduct and Results*. (Campbell and Hunter both made later references to the conference.)

Lincoln said he favored cessation of hostilities as long as the Southern States pledged their loyalty to the Union and, only under those conditions, would military operations cease. Judge Campbell asked about the terms for rejoining the Union. Stephens suggested a "cooling off" period and stressed that State sovereignty would have to be recognized. Seward claimed that allowing secession would create a tenuous Union, even floating the possibility that individual States might make treaties with foreign countries.

Hunter asked about reunification and forcing the Confederate States to join with the Union Army to invade Mexico. Lincoln and Seward said that was unnecessary. The Confederates made it clear they would never agree to invade Mexico and try to force a specific government on them – that is what they were already fighting against.

The conversation moved to slavery and Stephens asked Lincoln about the status of the slave population. Lincoln made it clear the Emancipation Proclamation was simply a war measure and, if the Southern States rejoined, they could bring enough votes to defeat any amendments tied to ending the practice. He did express a desire to end all slavery within six years. Seward claimed about 200,000 slaves were freed by the proclamation and they would remain free. (Some argue the "war measure proclamation" had no legal basis and actually freed nobody.)

Stephens asked Lincoln about how Southern States representation would play out upon re-entry. Lincoln essentially said their return would be business

as usual, without punishment via reconstruction or otherwise. Campbell asked Seward about the hypothetical results of freeing the slaves. Lincoln chimed in with the old cliché "let 'em root," a variation of root hog or die, which originated from the old practice of turning pigs loose and letting them fend for themselves. A blunt interpretation would be that, in Lincoln's opinion, if they cannot make it on their own, just let them die. With independence at the forefront, the Southern delegation asked about the continued existence of West Virginia. Lincoln said it would remain a "State" even if the Southern States rejoined the Union. (Lincoln recognized the "unconstitutional secession" of West Virginia but failed to recognize the Confederate States' exercise of self-government.)

Lincoln was confident the U.S. Government would be willing to pay \$400,000,000 to compensate slave-owners. He readily admitted the North was as responsible for slavery as the South. Seward echoed the sentiment that a war-weary North would approve compensation. Stephens reiterated the significance of a cooling off period but Lincoln indicated that he was unlikely to change his mind and agree to those terms.

The Southern representatives steadily advocated for independence and the Northern representatives called for reunification. Both sides knew the continuance of slavery in an independent South was dubious given the absence of legal and constitutional protections provided by being part of the Union. Lincoln consistently supported the continuance of slavery where it existed for a limited time and voiced his disapproval of its expansion into other parts of the U.S.

Post war, Julian S. Carr, wrote a pamphlet replying the accusation that Stephens said Lincoln produced a piece of paper with "Union" written at the top and then asked Southern representatives to write whatever they pleased after it. The implication was that Lincoln was exercising benevolence and Davis was being obstinate. Carr cites overwhelming evidence that this never happened.

The conclusion is simple. In August 1864, Jefferson Davis stated: "you may 'emancipate' every negro in the Confederacy, but we will be free! We will govern ourselves." (Magness) In a nutshell – the South wanted to govern itself and the North would not allow it.

Sources:

John V. Denson, "The Hampton Roads Peace Conference During the War Between the States," January 10, 2006, at: <https://www.lewrockwell.com/2006/01/john-v-denson/why-did-lincoln-invade-the-south/>; Phillip W. Magness, "Compensated Emancipation at the Hampton Roads Conference of 1865," at: <https://philmagness.com/2013/05/compensated-emancipation-at-the-hampton-roads-conference-of-1865/>; Julian S. Carr, *The Hampton Roads Conference*, Durham, North Carolina (1917); Alexander Stephens, *Constitutional View of the War Between the States: Its Causes, Character, Conduct and Results, Vol. Two*, The National Publishing Co., Philadelphia, Chicago, St. Louis & Atlanta (1868).

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WHAT CAN THE TEXAS ANTI-ABORTION LAW MEAN FOR ALABAMA?

Liberal leaning states take clues from successful legislation that benefits the goals of liberal thinkers and in the same way conservatives follow the successful legislative achievements of other conservative states. Alabama and much of Texas have many similar conservative values. The influx of Californians to the more friendly tax and economic state of Texas could chip away at its mostly conservative values.

Ronald A. Holtsford

Texas Senate Bill 8 (Texas Heartbeat Act) was passed by the Texas legislature and signed by its Governor, to take effect on 1 September 2021. It prohibits the abortion of an unborn child once a fetal heart beat is detectable. Before my life as a lawyer I was an ARDMS credentialed untrasonographer by examination for ten years and opened a diagnostic ultrasound department under the direction of radiologists at two different hospitals, one here in Montgomery. This occurred in the mid to late 1970's. I only say this to lend credibility to my personal knowledge and involvement with obstetric ultrasonography. The fetal heart is detectable by diagnostic ultrasound at 5-6 weeks gestation. While I was able to observe the sonograms performed on my wife to see my now nine year old son as he grew in her uterus, I have not otherwise been involved in sonography but marveled at the advanced details available that were not available during my active practice as a sonographer.

The Texas law well defines the terms used and points out that just because Roe v Wade allows abortion, the anti abortion laws for the State of Texas were never repealed or edited to allow abortion other than in certain cases such as medical emergencies involving the mother. You will recall that *Roe v Wade* became precedent and recognizes a woman's right of privacy and abortion of an unborn child. Prior articles that I have written on *Roe v Wade* provided background that historical recognition of a child was once it could thrive outside of the uterus. I have never considered that a reason to abort a helpless unborn child just because it cannot live outside of the uterus. Neither small children nor certain debilitated teens or adults can survive on their own and that would be no reason to indiscriminately decide that they should be killed.

The difference in the Texas law is that the State is not burdened with the per se enforcement but rather that private citizens can bring suit against one that

provides or pays for an abortion of an unborn child that has a detectable beating heart. The award is \$10,000.00 or more.

Abortion rights have challenged the law in courts including the United States Supreme Court. A Texas District Court judge did rule the law unconstitutional. The United States Supreme Court issued an opinion in the pre-enforcement stage regarding who could be named as defendants in the case and who could not. The Supreme Court also considered a Writ of Certiorari regarding the Constitutionality of the case. The United States Supreme Court determined it would not hear the case and the case, it appears instead will be remanded to the Texas Supreme Court. A Writ of Certiorari is determined by an appellate court when lower court documents are sent up to determine if it is of such national value that it should be heard. The United States Supreme Court only hears about 100-150 cases per year based on about 7,000 Writs of Certiorari that are submitted.

It is interesting that I read an NBC report where some that oppose the Texas Heartbeat law call it cruel and assert it denies healthcare to women seeking abortions. It seems to me to be pretty cruel to an unborn child to be shredded into small pieces and pulled from the uterus. How can it be considered healthcare when one woman seeks an operation on an unborn child in utero to save its life and also healthcare when you seek to destroy the unborn child's life?

I will continue to follow this and see how other states take the que from Texas.

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

Ronald A. Holtsford, Esq., Ronald A. Holtsford, LLC, (334) 220-3700
7956 Vaughn Road, Box #124, Montgomery, AL 36116, raholtsford@aol.com

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

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Dr. Lester Spencer
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Soul Searching

Envision Your Future (Begin with End in Mind)

On January 10, 2022, Georgia finally won the NCAA College Football Playoff by beating the University of Alabama in the National College Football Championship game. They are now the undisputed National Champions. Stetson Bennett, the Georgia Quarterback, was named the Offensive MVP of the Championship Game.

Bennett is 23 years old and was a walk-on to the Georgia Football Team in 2017. He is 5’11”, 175 pounds. Not very big for an SEC QB. But he had, had a dream since he was a kid. He dreamed of being the University of Georgia Football Quarterback. But it would not come easy. He had to fight and claw his way to the starting position. Bennett had his critics especially after their devastating loss to Alabama in the SEC Championship Game in the same season. But he would stand up to the challenge, because he had a vision of his future.

Stetson Bennett, despite his naysayers, knew something his critics didn’t understand and couldn’t comprehend. He had envisioned his future years before and was moving towards a personal goal for himself. He envisioned himself as the Georgia QB, but, most people didn’t know this, he had also envisioned winning this National Championship Game. A vision is a powerful ally.

In his excellent book, *Win the Day*, Mark Batterson tells the story of the America’s Cup.

“On August 22, 1851 Commodore John Cox Stevens and his six man crew won the America’s Cup in a 53 mile regatta around the Isle of Wight. The race was witnessed by Queen Victoria, who reportedly asked which yacht was second. The infamous answer? “Ah, Your Majesty, there is no second.” Thus began one of the most impressive winning streaks in history.

The New York Yacht Club, of which Commodore Stevens was a founding member, successfully defended the cup for 132 years. They were undefeated until September 26, 1983, when the *Australia II*, skippered by John Bertrand, ended the longest winning streak in sporting history with a forty-one-second margin of victory.

That win was a milestone moment for Australia, hailed like a national holiday. Even America tipped its cap to the *Australia II*. It was awarded Athlete of the Year by ABC’s *Wide World of Sports*. I’m not sure how a boat wins that award, but that’s water under the bridge. The question is this: How was the *Australia II* able to do what no one had done in 132 years? A winged keel designed by Dutch engineers certainly gave the Australian team a technical advantage, but that isn’t what won the race.

If you haven’t tasted victory in 132 years, it’s hard to imagine any outcome other than defeat. The first thing you need to do is convince yourself that winning is possible. How? The answer is the first habit – *flip the script*. You’ve got to rewrite your narrative by telling yourself a different story, a better story.

Several years before the 1983 America’s Cup, the Australian skipper, Mike Fletcher, had read the classic novella *Jonathan Livingston Seagull*. The moral of that story? “Begin by knowing that you have already arrived.” Sounds like Stephen Covey’s second habit of highly effective people: “Begin with the end in mind.” Inspired by *Seagull’s* story line, Fletcher made a recording of the Australian team winning the race. The recording included narration and the sound of a sailboat cutting through the water. A copy of that recording was given to each member of the crew, and they were instructed to listen to it twice a day. They did this – get this – ***every day*** for three years! Before even setting sail, they had won the race 2,190 times!

How did the Australian team bury a long losing streak? They flipped the flipping script! They told themselves a different story over and over again. They won the race because they won the day – 1,095 days in a row!”

If you want to change your story, envision your future. “Begin with the end in mind,” as Stephen Covey explains in his book as the second habit of the Habits of Highly Effective People. Start with your future. Where do you want to end up?

If you want to change your life, start by changing your story.

We can change our story. But we cannot let other people write it for us. We must be the narrators of our own story.

God is telling an epic story and you have a role to play in that story. By God’s grace and with guidance from the Holy Spirit, ask the Lord to give you a fresh vision for your future. Then begin with that end in mind and start writing the story for your own future.

Envision your future and then prayerfully write your story with that end in mind!

Dr. Lester Spencer
Lead Pastor
Saint James Church

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

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Judge Peggy Givhan

Southern Gardening

Potpourri for February

I have always thought of February as being the transition month between winter and spring in Alabama. Of course, it is the month when thoughts turn to love on Valentine’s Day with the expression of “Be my Valentine.” And what could be more welcome than candy and flowers to express well wishes?

Everything about Valentine’s Day just warms my heart. So be sentimental this month with cards, candy and bouquets of flowers. Did you know that St. Valentine was a 3rd century Roman Christian from Terni, Italy who was murdered by Emperor Claudius II for his faith on February 14th? His great transgression was secretly performing marriage ceremonies for Roman soldiers who were forbidden to be married. Another interesting fact was that King Henry VIII made St. Valentine’s Day a holiday in 1537. And all of this in the name of Love.

January and February continue to be the coldest part of our winters in Zone 8, and thus, the best time to spray all shrubs, trees, grass, with a dormant spray. Since we have had a killing frost, now is the right time to perform this task. Test your hose-end sprayer to make sure it is not clogged, or buy a new one. I usually opt for buying a new one because after going to all the trouble of buying the oil, dispensing the oil into the sprayer, and then finding out the sprayer does not work, it is enough to give up. The instructions on the dormant sprayer will give the proper dilution rate to be used. Also, check the instructions for the hose-end sprayer. And what is left to do? Spray away.

The benefits for your garden, trees and shrubs show up next spring when there are no more white flies, no more fleas, and no more pests that hatch from eggs. It is so much easier to nip a problem in the bud, so to speak, than to fight white flies, sucking the nutrients from the leaves of the plants, next summer. I have been using the dormant spray for years and cannot recommend it more. You can purchase this product as Dormant spray or Volk Oil, at any Nursery or Garden center. The oil is shelf stable, can be used for many years and not a



Credit: Les Powell / www.freeimages.com

poison. The product coats the eggs with a fine layer of oil, which prevents the eggs from hatching.

Another potential gardening problem on the horizon is the cost of fertilizer. It may be wise to buy 25 pounds of commercial fertilizer just to have on-hand should prices skyrocket. There has been information in the news about a shortage of fertilizer for agriculture, so just a suggestion to buy now before supplies are scarce. Remember that when using commercial fertilizer, do not let the fertilizer sit on begonia leaves as it will burn the plants. If it gets on the leaves, take a hose and spray the fertilizer off. I am not sure if the shortages would include Osmocote or other time-release fertilizers, but I would buy extra to be on the safe side.

As far as bulbs are concerned, they can all be planted now except tulips and grape hyacinth since they require prior chilling. The daffodils that do best for alkaline soil would be Mount Hood, Ice Follies and Carlton. The others need more acidic soil to thrive. Planting daffodils late will just delay the bloom period for about 2-3 weeks. Cannas, daylilies, fresia, licoris (spider lilies), crocus, amaryllis, allum, snowdrops, gladiolus, crinum lilies, iris, dahlias, and narcissus all do well in Zone 8. I would not plant caladium bulbs until May when the ground is warmer. Squirrels love caladium bulbs, so to avoid feeding the squirrels, plant them in May and not now. Also Asian lilies should be planted in the fall of the year.

I recently read that there are some new varieties of citrus trees and shrubs, which are extremely cold hardy. (1) The Ichang lemon, citrus ichangersis, will grow lemons to outdoors temperatures down to 15-10 degrees; (2) Arctic frost satsuma is a variety of mandarin orange that survives temperatures down to 9 degrees; and (3) The trifoliate orange, Poncirus trifoliata, will survive to -10 degrees. However, be forewarned that this is a massively thorny tree, which is also invasive.

Happy Valentine’s Day & Good Gardening!

Master Sergeant Fenton Wesley Johnson (85)

Master Sergeant (MSgt) Fenton Wesley Johnson served 21 years in the U.S. Air Force. His Military Occupational Specialty Code (MOSC) was Computer Systems Superintendent. He received the following decorations, medals, badges, citations and campaign ribbons: Air Force Outstanding Unit Award, Joint Service Commendation Medal, Air Force Good Conduct Medal, Air Force Longevity Medal, Vietnam Service Medal, Air Force Commendation Medal and Royal Vietnam Campaign Medal.

MSgt Johnson was born August 4, 1936 in Tupper Lake, New York, to his parents, William Chester and Ellen Ruth Johnson. He was reared there and graduated from Tupper Lake High School in 1954. He started an apprenticeship in carpentry when he was thirteen and worked with his father and two older brothers in construction and carpentry. He attended Clarkson Technical College in Potsdam, New York for one year where he studied engineering.

MSgt Johnson volunteered and enlisted in the U.S. Air Force October 9, 1965, and he completed 11 weeks of Basic Training at Sampson Air Force Base, N.Y. While waiting for an assignment he worked in the base wood-working hobby shop. He was then sent to Kelly A.F.B., TX, and worked in automated accounting using the I.B.M. keypunch system for one year. His next assignment was an unaccompanied tour to Pepperell Air Force Base, Newfoundland for 18 months working in personnel, payroll and engineering accounting using the keypunch system. Then he was transferred to Larson A.F.B. Moses Lake, WA, working in the maintenance and personnel areas where he trained other enlisted personnel in using the keypunch card system in accounting for four years. Next, he went to Plattsburg A.F.B., NY, for four years. At Plattsburg, he was involved with secret level work monitoring and reporting Missile status to higher HQ. He was assigned additional duties as the disaster control NCOIC following extensive training in disaster recovery. His next assignment was at McDill A.F.B., FL in the command and control programming section. He served additional duties as NCOIC for the Bold Shot Brim Fire War Games inspection team on four exercises. He was then assigned a second unaccompanied tour to the Korat Royal Thai Air Force Base in Thailand during the Vietnam War where he supervised the punch card accounting system for one year and where he reached the rank of Master Sergeant. His final assignment was as a software programmer in the Civil Engineering Programming Section at Gunter A.F.B., AL, for four years during 1972-1976. This work involved developing programs



and computer technology for 132 Air Force bases around the world as well as serving as technical support to these bases following a computer system failure. MSgt Johnson completed 13 years of work punch card machine environment and suffered hearing loss from the noise of the machines. MSgt Johnson attained the 820th Strategic Aerospace Division 95 Percentile Club by getting the highest possible score on the Specialty Knowledge Test on the computer system programming. He completed 21 Air Force training courses, which is equivalent to a Master's Degree. He retired from military service at Gunter A.F.B. May 6, 1976.



After his military retirement, MSgt Johnson worked for the Tennessee Welfare Information System in Nashville for five months. He then came to Montgomery, AL and worked for the Alabama Retirement Systems for 21 years first as a programmer and then as an Information System Manager. Using the G.I. Bill, he received a B.S. Degree in Computer Information Science in 1979 and a Master's Degree in 1983 in Computer Information Science. He retired from his state position in 1998.

MSgt Johnson and his wife, Genie, have been married 65 years, and they have four children, eight grandchildren and four great-grandchildren. She was a special education teacher for 28 years. As a cabinetmaker, using his carpentry skills, he maintains a woodworking shop designing and creating furniture which he usually gives to his relatives and friends. He has been a leader in Cub Scouts, Webelos and Boy Scouts in Florida and with the Alabama Tukabatchee Boy Scout Council. He also taught computer science at Troy State University. He served as a soccer coach referee and as the District Commissioner of Soccer for the Greater Montgomery area. Both of them have been involved in teaching youth how to bowl through the American Jr. Bowling Congress. For the past 14 years, they have served as volunteers with the Montgomery Police Department. He serves as the patrol coordinator with volunteers who check on houses when owners are on vacation, and she works at the front desk of the Police Department. They are members of the Providence Presbyterian Church of Montgomery.

MSgt Johnson's conclusions about his military service are, "It was very satisfying, It taught me a lifetime career in computer technology and computer systems management. Not only did it give me a chance to serve my country but also an opportunity to become a true leader. It let me carry on what my father and older brothers had started in their military service since I was the youngest in the family."

#end#

Important Resources for Veterans

Veterans Crisis Line: www.veteranscrisisline.net

National Center for PTSD: 855-948-2311 / ptsd.va.gov

Central Alabama Veterans Health Care System

2400 Hospital Road, Tuskegee AL 36083 / 334-727-0550

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/VACentralAlabama>

Veteran Deaths



Bennett

Richard Edward Bennett passed away January 10, 2022. In England, he served as a medic taking care of the wounded from the D-Day landing during WWII. He would have been 98 on January 16, 2022. (See February 2019 issue.)

WWII veteran **William Ellis Duncan** passed away January 10, 2022. He would have been 99 on

February 23. Duncan served in the U.S. Army Quartermaster Corps and transportation unit driving jeeps to supply General George S. Patton's Third Army. (See September 2019 issue.)



Duncan

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TODAY'S WOMAN

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



By Amanda Walker

Tears & Laughter: Waiting and Watching for Purple Martins

Even before daybreak, you can hear them singing their happy sounding songs from inside their swinging gourds. The purple martin song. It will soon be their season. They return every year from their winter homes in South America to raise their young. They fly the same instinctual path across the Gulf of Mexico. The first scouts start arriving in south Alabama in late January and early February.

Those who consider themselves landlord's of the purple martin, are already watching the afternoon skies.

It is a tradition between humans and birds that started with Native Americans. They discovered – perhaps by accident – that purple martins would nest in gourds they would hang from the bare branches of young trees.

Back then purple martins would also nest in hollowed out tree holes and rock crevices, but years later a New York businessman thought it would be a clever idea to bring every bird ever mentioned by Shakespeare to the United States. In Henry IV, Part One, the starling is mentioned, and in 1890, a hundred starling were released in Central Park. It was unknown at the time, but the starling is an invasive species. They are also an enemy of the purple martin. They nest in the same habitats. Starlings are aggressive and will kill baby martins. They will fight adult birds. Over time this caused martins to become fully dependent upon humans to provide their nests.

Purple martins seem to like people as much as people enjoy having them. Being near houses keeps them safer from predators like snakes and hawks. Colonies will even locate in the middle of towns or business districts. And for some people, being near purple martins just seems to keep them happy. It wouldn't sound like spring without them.

Purple martin people don't mind the work it takes to keep gourds and houses in the air for the birds. Like being a landlord of property, purple martin landlord's have to keep the birdhouses and gourds maintained. Gourds have to be taken down after each season. Old nesting material has to be removed and they have to be washed with a bleach solution. Some people keep their gourds freshly painted white. White gourds will be a touch cooler than natural gourds and houses are said to be even cooler than white gourds. The birds return to the same colony they were raised, often the same gourd.

People who love them welcome them. They watch and wait for their arrival this time of year. There is a competition within this subculture to see who can be the first to spot the first scouts of the season. But that is the only competition, and even it is friendly. People who grow gourds and love martins will often give gourds or seeds to anyone willing to put up a pole. They know that if there ever comes a time when people stop going to the effort to put up and maintain gourds, there will come a time when purple martins cease to be.

Purple martins like wide open spaces. They spend their days soaring and darting, collecting insects within their wings. And in the evening, after the sun has set, they return to their nests. Landlord's wait in the afternoons to watch this daily event. To hear the purple martin song.

By late summer, just as suddenly they appeared, they will be gone. In their absence there is stillness. There is silence where there used to be song. And the only thing that keeps a heart from breaking, is the assurance of their certain return.

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



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Ms.Wheelchair America/
Alabama 2005

Trisston's Tidbits ...

By Trisston Wright Burrows
www.trisstonwrightburrows.com

“The Story Behind Valentine's Day”

Flowers, candy, pretty cards, gifts, love, and romance in the air...that's what Valentine's Day is all about...right? At least, that's what the celebration has become in our modern-day society. ***What is the real story behind Valentine's Day?***

Most sources believe that Saint Valentine's Day began with a feast in honor of an early Christian martyr named Valentinus and is celebrated in mid-February to coincide with his burial. Some believe it may also be celebrated at this time in an effort to Christianize the pagan Roman celebration of Lupercalia – a fertility festival related to agriculture, while others deny this link.

Legend has it...Saint Valentinus is remembered as a loving, compassionate and heroic person.

He was a priest during the time when the Emperor Claudius II was persecuting the church, around 250 AD. Claudias had issued an edict that young men were not to marry, as single men made better soldiers. They would not be distracted by thoughts and care of their loved ones but could focus on their call to duty. In the very permissive society of that day (polygamy was popular), the church still viewed marriage as sacred between one man and one woman.

Valentinus believed those who were in love should be able to marry within the Christian church and remain monogamous. He defied the emperor's orders and performed marriages in secret.

Valentinus was caught, imprisoned, tortured, and eventually killed for performing forbidden marriages and for ministering to Christians. Legend is that while Valentinus was in prison, he prayed with and saw the healing of the blind daughter of his jailer Asterius. Asterius and his entire household are said to have come to Christian faith as a result. It is widely believed that before his execution, Valentinus wrote a farewell letter to Asterius' daughter signed “Your Valentinus.” This was the first “valentine.”

Today, the celebration of Saint Valentine's Day has evolved from sending letters, poems, and homemade paper valentines to loved ones to a lucrative business for card publishers, florists, chocolatiers, and jewelers. While the celebration has become more materialistic, we can grasp the opportunity to show our love and concern for others through acts of kindness and compassion. We can share God's love with the world around us. We can make something good out of this special day.

Take time to reflect on what Valentine's Day means, or can mean, to you. Here are a couple of “love” verses from God's Word to inspire you...

“Love is patient, love is kind. Love does not envy; is not boastful; is not conceited; does not act improperly; is not selfish; is not provoked; does not keep a record of wrongs; finds no joy in unrighteousness, but rejoices in the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never ends.” 1 Corinthians 13:4-8

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.” Galatians 5:22-23

God's Valentine to us is and will forever be the greatest Valentine ever given, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Many Blessings!

Photos by Plattmunk & Flaivoloka / freeimages.com

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

Defend Against Scammers Who Target Your Social Security Benefits

One common tactic scammers use is posing as federal agents or other law enforcement. They may claim your Social Security number is linked to a crime. They may even threaten to arrest you if you do not comply with their instructions.

Here are three things you should do:

- Hang up right away or do not reply to the email.
- Never give personal information or payment of any kind.
- Report the scam at oig.ssa.gov to immediately notify the law enforcement team in our Office of the Inspector General.

You should continue to remain vigilant of phone calls when someone says there's a problem with your Social Security number or your benefits. If you owe money to us, we will mail you a letter explaining your rights, payment options, and information about appealing.

Remember that we will never:

- Threaten you with benefit suspension, arrest, or other legal action unless you pay a fine or fee.
- Promise a benefit increase or other assistance in exchange for payment.
- Require payment by retail gift card, cash, wire transfer, internet currency, or prepaid debit card.
- Demand secrecy from you in handling a Social Security-related problem.
- Send official letters or reports containing personally identifiable information via email.

If you do not have ongoing business with our agency, it is unlikely we will contact you. Again, if you get a suspicious call claiming to be from us or law enforcement about Social Security, you should hang up and report it right away to our Office of the Inspector General at oig.ssa.gov.

Submit Your Social Security Disability Update Report Online

We are required to periodically conduct Continuing Disability Reviews for beneficiaries with disabilities. This process requires that beneficiaries complete a Continuing Disability Review packet, that we mail to beneficiaries, to help us update information about their medical conditions and recent treatments.

Additionally, we offer an online option for beneficiaries to complete the Disability Update Report form and provide any supporting documents about their medical treatment or work activities.

We designed this form with convenience in mind — and to save you time. You can access the online form at www.ssa.gov/ssa455-online-form. (Use either Microsoft Edge or Google Chrome for the best online experience.)

When you complete your Continuing Disability Review, you will need your Social Security number, current address and phone number, and a valid email address to complete the form. Also, you must have received a request for an updated disability report in the mail.

Once you “Click to Sign,” you will receive an email from echosign.com asking you to confirm your digital signature. *Check your junk folder if you don't receive it within a few minutes.* If your signature isn't complete your form won't be processed.

Please be sure to let your friends and loved ones know about this new online option.



Social Security Services

By Kyle' D. McKinney, kylle.mckinney@ssa.gov
(334) 479-1242 – Cell / (334) 272-7630 – Fax

Before You Apply for Retirement Benefits: What to Know

Are you thinking about retiring and applying for Social Security retirement benefits? Our online tools can make your planning easier. Visit www.ssa.gov/my-account to access your personal my Social Security account to get an instant and personalized estimate of your retirement benefits based on your earnings record.

It is important that your earnings record is correct because we base your benefit amount on the earnings reported to us. If you find an error, you will want to contact us to get your information corrected. Read our publication, *How to Correct Your Social Security Earnings Record*, www.ssa.gov/pubs/EN-05-10081.pdf, to learn how.

You can also get benefit estimates based on different retirement ages, and choose the best retirement age for you. Don't have a personal my Social Security account? You can create one today at www.ssa.gov/myaccount.

When you're ready to apply for Social Security retirement benefits, you can complete your application online in as little as 15 minutes at www.ssa.gov/retirement. We will contact you if we need any more information. You can check the status of your application with your personal my Social Security account.

You can apply online for your Social Security retirement benefits, and for benefits as a spouse, if you meet all the following criteria:

- You must be at least age 62 for the entire month to be eligible to receive benefits.
- You are not currently receiving benefits on your own Social Security record.
- You have not already applied for retirement benefits.
- You want your benefits to start no later than four months in the future. *(We cannot process your application if you apply for benefits more than four months in advance.)*

Find more information about our online services at www.ssa.gov/online services.

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Home Town Community News

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

FEBRUARY
BIRTHDAYS

- 1

Sara Margaret Auerbach
George Evans
Mary Johnson
- 2

Thelma Alexander
Brewer Box
Shelby Smith
Alvin Turner
- 3

Del Atkinson
Sybil Foshee
Rebecca Hughes
Helen Lankford
Genye Messick
Wayne Robinson
Pam Pouncey
- 4

Paige Box
Anna Haigler Johnson
Helen Rahn Millican
- 5

Peggy Agent
Jean Fuller
Cruise Johnson
Beth Norris
Lila Webster
- 6

Amanda Edwards
Morgan Lee Madison (11th)
Donna Spradley
- 7

Rhonda Black
Mary Helen Fleming
Shelvie Freeman
Rick Marshall
Rodney Powell
- 8

John Barnes
Claudine Nobles
Sharon Owens
Janet Phillips
Abigail Roux
- 9

Lori Meadows
Lucille Wilson
- 10

Jim Soule
Jeanne Villar
- 11

Glen Hataway
Earline Wood
- 12

Chas Hammock (13th)
- 13

Susan Gambrell
Dot Hill
- 14

Carolyn Bowden
Michael Coker
Lyda Crowe
Drew Martin
Hamil Martin
Dorothy Sparrow
Zac Swearingen
- 15

Mildred Durden
Mike Green
Nancy Rabren
Susan Terrell
- 16

James Ellis Fleming (16th)
Joan Kirk
Clark Jones
- 16

Randy Smith
- 17

Brian Betz
William L. Carl (85th)
Chuck Glasscock (58th)
Kathi Farley
Willa Faye Munson
Anastasia Meadow Takacs (6th)
Gavin Noah Takacs (6th)
Alice Tyson
Jean Warren
- 18

Chip Norris
Kermit Paramore
- 19

Anita Jones
Barbara Pugh
Chuck Lear
Dawn Johnson
- 20

Ann Moore
Hayden Ward
Todd Windham
- 21

Victoria L. Carl (22nd)
Alyssa Lear
Jessica Burgess
Jerrell Campbell
Jane Russell
Shirley Yarbrough
- 22

Ellen Adcock
Douglas Evans (72nd)
Jean Finlayson
Hettie H. Harrington
Tim Meadows
Willie Stephens
- 23

Dorothy Bennett
Virgil Culpepper
Nathan Horsley
Ann Spheres
- 24

Katherine Andrews
Cheryl Jarrell
- 25

Bettye Garlington
Lewis Mulleck
Shanny Sansom
Willie Pearl Shepherd
- 26

Erma Dillard
Cassidy Gwin
Dean Moore
Carolyn Watson
- 27

Portia Goss
Evans Hartzog
Jamie Hall
Mary Horton
Gail Royal
Cindy Sellars
Carol Spencer
- 28

Joy Carlisle
Mary Daniels
Debi Nowakowski
Weldon Payne
Charlene Schofield
Freddie Oswalt
- 29

Mandy Azar

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

Durr, Frances Shank (85)	Dec. 17, 2021
Witt, Carol Hilyer (72)	Jan. 3, 2022
Tisdale, Taze Rutherford (97)	Jan. 4, 2022
Latham, Anne Duncan (88)	Jan. 5, 2022
Chambliss, Jr., Bobby Allen (83)	Jan. 6, 2022
Chandler, Jr., Lawrence "Larry" (70)	Jan. 8, 2022
Blankenship, Dorothy Phenolia (83)	Jan. 9, 2022
Campbell, Sr., Thomas Harold (84)	Jan. 9, 2022
Epperson, Barbara "Babs" Tittle (88)	Jan. 9, 2022
Bennett, Richard E., Dr. of Chiropractic (97)	Jan. 10, 2022
Duncan, William "Bill" Ellis (98)	Jan. 10, 2022
Anderson, Joanne "Jo" Eunice (89)	Jan. 12, 2022
Goray, Kathryn Jones (87)	Jan. 12, 2022
Katz, Sharon Marie Berrigan (58)	Jan. 12, 2022
Morris, III, John Marshall (72)	Jan. 12, 2022
Berry, Amy Davis (48)	Jan. 13, 2022
Pike, Claudia Hardin (74)	Jan. 15, 2022
Powell, Sr., Horace Wilton (89)	Jan. 15, 2022
Moore, Sr., William "Bill" Clarence (95)	Jan. 17, 2022
Kelly, Jr., Albert Clinton "Clint" (77)	Jan. 18, 2022
Hawthorne, Dorothy "Dot" Nell Green (91)	Jan. 21, 2022
Kershaw, Christopher Knox (34)	Jan. 22, 2022
Lumpkin, Elizabeth "Lib" Duffee (93)	Jan. 22, 2022
Hill, Dorothy Louise "Dot" Johnson (91)	Jan. 26, 2022
Mulcahy, Patricia "Patsy" (83)	Jan. 26, 2022
Stanford, Leland "Lee" Lloyd (75)	Jan. 26, 2022
Crook, Alfred "Barry" (90)	Jan. 29, 2022

Happy Belated Birthday!

Nick Hughes ~ January 19th

100 Colonel Howard Howell ~ Jan. 31st

Happy Anniversary

14 Gordon & Vicki Davis	20 Hayden & Dee Ward
Clark & Anita Jones	21 Tom & Bettye Garlington
Josh & Jamie McCandless	Gilbert & Ethel Sellers (66th)
16 Gordon & Becky Burton (43rd)	22 Jerry & Debra Morrison (37th)
20 Chuck & Susan Gambrell	28 Pat & Butch Moseley (63rd)

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James E. Myers	Jan. 29
Nina Darby Owens	Jan. 29
Clair Lett	Jan. 28
Gloria Jane Cline	Jan. 25
Helen Arlene Gallion Meddles	Jan. 25
Peter Joseph Kalisky	Jan. 23
Janet Lee Easterling	Jan. 23
Brenda Lee Gallander	Jan. 22
Murry Wesley Dandridge	Jan. 22
Randy Eugene Payton	Jan. 18
Amelia Cruz Ross	Jan. 17
George William Ammons	Jan. 16
Marion John Ayers	Jan. 16
Teddy Allen Keebler	Jan. 15
Mary Ella Davis Ingram	Jan. 13
James Andrew Ingram	Jan. 12
Bobby Ray Hooks	Jan. 11
Robert Kyle Dickey	Jan. 10
Jo Ann Ellis	Jan. 10
Marion Floyd Simpson	Jan. 9
Coley Ray Gardner	Jan. 9
John Paul Cothran	Jan. 9



Southern Cuisine

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

With the weather being cold and wet, I have been spending more time at home. So, every day the same question comes to my mind. What is a good meal to eat on a winter's day? I have watched my share of cooking videos on my computer, my T.V., and my iPad. This makes a long list of meals to choose from. It is a long list, but not much in way of variety.

Every article I read or video I watched has a soup or stew, or a dish that you serve in a 9 by 13 baking dish, or a list of things you can serve between two slices of bread. You need to come up with meals that will satisfy your foodies in your household.

From your pantry, you should be able to prepare a fusion cuisine of Tex-Mex/Jamaican or Asian/Greek. The other limiting feature of the dishes I have found is COVID-19. The limiting feature is that there is a shortage of some food items in the stores and you do not want to spend too much time in a crowded store. Some of us enjoy a self-cooked meal but you need a well-stocked pantry to prepare a meal without worrying about social distancing at the store. Have you heard me praising the benefit of a well-stocked pantry any time in my articles? You do not want to spend your time at home snacking on empty calories. You need to maintain healthy eating habits and minimize mindless snacking – even if you cannot socially distance from your kitchen cabinets. Another reason to prepare regular family meals is because they are linked to higher grades, getting along with others and reduced risky behaviors in adolescents. Family meals are associated with lower rates of obesity and eating disorders.

If you wanted a diet plan for the fifth year in a row that has been labeled the best diet overall, the Mediterranean Diet has always topped the chart. I will start featuring my best picks from this diet, in later articles. I have listed entrees, sides, desserts and snacks in many of my articles. Today, I am listing a breakfast item you can eat for dinner, a cake that is not usually served as a pound cake and a tried and true Southern dish that is an all-time favorite.

The first recipe is one of my favorites. A dish that looks like breakfast but tastes like dinner. I liked it when I was able to stay at my grandparents' house during the summer. My grandfather believed in four meals a day. Breakfast, lunch, dinner and supper five days a week. The first three meals for the day were typical fare. Breakfast was always a typical all-American breakfast: Bacon, eggs, French toast, grits or oatmeal, waffles or cereal. Lunch was normal also. Sandwiches, soups, salads, or chicken fried steaks depending if Granddaddy was busy at the HUMBLE gas station he owned. Grandmother would deliver lunch to the station. The meal we had for lunch would always give me a clue on what was for supper that night. If we had bacon for breakfast and corn for lunch, we would have breakfast for dinner.

Bacon Corn Pancakes

INGREDIENTS:

2 cups all-purpose flour
1 Tbsp sugar
2 tsp baking powder
½ tsp salt
⅛ tsp pepper
2 large eggs, room temp
1½ to 1¾ cups milk
2½ cups leftover cooked corn from lunch (you can use fresh or frozen corn)
1 cup crumbled cooked bacon
⅓ cup chopped onion
Breakfast syrup, dark corn syrup or molasses



METHOD:

1. Preheat griddle.
2. In a large bowl, combine the flour, sugar, baking powder, salt and pepper.
3. Whisk together the eggs and milk and stir that into the dry ingredients.
4. Stir in the bacon, corn and onion.
5. Lightly grease the griddle.
6. Pour batter by ¼ cupful's into the griddle. Cook until bottom is golden brown, turn and cook until done.
7. Serve with butter and syrup.

Yield 18 pancakes: *cooking 18 pancakes guaranteed that I would have plenty of pancakes to snack on the next day!*

The next recipe was a favorite lunch meal while I was working at the Renaissance Hotel in Montgomery. **Hoppin' John** is a New Year's tradition in the South but is eaten all year long. It was offered as a side dish but adding sausage to the recipe would make it an entrée. This recipe uses canned black-eyed peas, which cuts the cooking time down to about 30 minutes.

It is uncertain why the dish became associated with New Year's and good luck. The most likely story is that enslaved people would often have the period between Christmas and New Year's off, since no crops were growing at that time. Hoppin' John was, and still is, often eaten with collard greens, which can resemble paper money, and "golden" cornbread. The peas themselves represent coins. Some families boost the potential of their Hoppin' John by placing a penny underneath the dishes—or adding extra pork, which is thought to bring more luck. Ask anyone that grew up in the South, and they will all give you a colorful but different story about the origins of this dish.

Southern Hoppin' John

from *Taste of Home*

INGREDIENTS:

½-lb sliced bacon, cut into 1-in pieces
1 small green or sweet red pepper, chopped
2 celery ribs chopped
6 green onions sliced
1 cup uncooked long-grain rice
2 cups water
¼ tsp salt
½ to 1 tsp cayenne pepper
½ tsp dried basil
¼ tsp dried thyme
¼ tsp dried oregano
1 bay leaf
1 can (15 oz) black-eyed peas, rinsed and drained



METHOD:

1. In a large skillet, cook bacon over medium heat until crisp. Drain on paper towels; discard all but 2 tablespoons drippings.
2. Sauté pepper, celery and onions in drippings until almost tender. Add rice, water and seasonings.
3. Cover and simmer 10 minutes. Add peas and bacon; simmer 10 minutes longer. Discard bay leaf.
4. Alternative addition would be link sausage (Conceh or Kelley's) cut in one-inch lengths. Add to pan when you cook the bacon and cook sausage as per instructions on package.



Hundreds of years ago, cakes were a sweet type of bread. Many times, people would put dried fruits and nuts in their cake recipes. As a result, the desserts were rough and had an abrasive texture. It wasn't until 500 years later that bakers began to make dessert more appealing. They were able to find ways to break down the flour in the recipes, so cakes could be softer and tastier. To understand the traditional red velvet cake, you must go back in time.

Velvet cakes first came into existence during the Victorian Era. It was during the 1800s that recipes would frequently call for the use of cocoa for luxury cakes. The ingredient of cocoa would help break down the coarse flour. As a result, the flour was softer, and the cake was velvety. They would call the cakes "velvet" cakes and serve them at fancy dessert parties. The word velvet lets guests know the cake will have a smooth and soft texture.

Some people argue that the red color in this cake comes from a chemical reaction between the cocoa and acid. Natural cocoa has a lot of acidities and works well with the baking soda and buttermilk. It also adds a delicious chocolate flavor; the cocoa makes the cake nice and soft.

Around the 1900s, cake recipes with cocoa as the main ingredient began to surface. Devil's food cake is another recipe that requires cocoa as an ingredient.

People were finding recipes for cocoa velvet cakes, red cocoa cakes and other "cocoa" types of cakes. Finally, around 1943, a popular cookbook, "The Joy of Cooking" debuted a red velvet cake. The recipe from "The Joy of Cooking" was the cake's first national mention.

During WWII, soldiers and civilians had to ration off food and supplies. Baking products like sugar and butter were a part of the rations. As a result, some bakers chose to use beet juice in their cakes. You can still find red velvet cake recipes today that call for beet juice. The red color of the beets makes the cake have a more delicious appeal. However, not only do the beets make the cake pretty, but they also make the cake soft. Beets work as a filler that keeps the cake from being dry. People were happy to buy a red cake because it felt more special. The red color of the dessert isn't very important to the flavor of the cake; however, red beet juice will impart a flavor.

Red Velvet Pound Cake

Yield: 16 servings



INGREDIENTS:

Cake:
1 cup butter, softened
1/cup shortening
3 cups sugar
6 large eggs, room temperature
(2) - 1 oz bottles red food coloring
1 tsp lemon extract
1 tap vanilla extract
3¼ cups all-purpose flour
1 Tbsp baking cocoa
½ tsp baking powder
½ tsp salt
¾ cup 2% milk
Icing:
8 oz cream cheese, softened
¼ cup butter softened
½ tsp vanilla extract
3¾ cups confectioners' sugar
½ cup chopped pecans, toasted

METHOD:

1. Preheat oven to 325°. Grease and flour a 10-in. fluted tube pan.
2. In a large bowl, cream butter, shortening and sugar until light and fluffy, 5-7 minutes. Add eggs, one at a time, beating well after each addition. Beat in food coloring and extracts (mixture may appear curdled).
3. In another bowl, whisk flour, baking cocoa, baking powder and salt; add to creamed mixture alternately with milk, beating after each addition just until combined.
4. Transfer to prepared pan. Bake until a toothpick inserted in center comes out clean, 70-75 minutes. Cool in pan 15 minutes before removing to a wire rack to cool completely.
5. **For icing:** in a large bowl, beat cream cheese and butter until creamy. Beat in vanilla. Gradually beat in confectioners' sugar until smooth. Spread over cake; sprinkle with pecans.

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*One can not think well, love well,
 sleep well, if one has not dined well.*