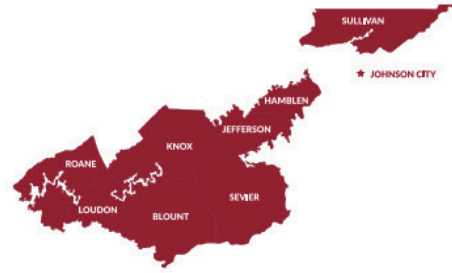




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# Morgan County Today

Psalm 100:3

www.mocotoday.com

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Tuesday, January 14, 2025

## Your Community. Your News.

# 75¢





**Morgan County Today**  
Your Community. Your News.

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**Ms. Avery Pearl  
Pet Columnist**

# Pet Perspective with Ms. Avery Pearl

## Snow and Stuff

The weather people were right! That in itself is a miracle. We got about 5 inches of SNOW! Before that though, people went to the stores and bought the Snocentials. Milk, bread, toilet paper, crackers, sandwich stuff, batteries. You know the stuff that you need in case the

power goes out.

Any-woof after the snow started, Ms Ivory and me went out to potty. Wouldn't you know, she stopped right in her tracks and didn't want to touch the cold white stuff. Poor little thing, she hates it. Me, I wuff it!

Well, I do have a lot more fluff than she does. Mimi don't want us to be cold so she makes sure we have warm coats on, even though I probably don't need one.

Also, Ms Ivory really does not like to get her paws all wet, cold and messy. She's kind of prissy like that.

Yesterday evening she finally gave in and quickly made her way to the area that Pap had cleared off, just for her to potty. Ain't he just the best Pap ever?

She got right to it, did her business. Then, she got so embarrassed. She tried to cover her business with the snow but, was unsuccessful. Mimi told her not to bother, it was alright and not to worry about it. I felt sorry for her.

So far, we have been staying warm and I have been having a ball in the snow. Ms Ivory, not so much.

Hope you all stay safe and bundle up when you go outside cause, I noticed you guys don't have a lot of fur.

For more of my Pet Perspective like and follow me on Facebook at Ms Avery Pearl.



**WEEKLY WEATHER**

**CITIZENS  
GAS  
UTILITY DISTRICT**  
MORGAN of Scott and Morgan Counties

Tue 14	31°/20°	
Wed 15	32°/18°	
Thu 16	38°/27°	
Fri 17	43°/34°	
Sat 18	42°/33°	
Sun 19	39°/31°	
Mon 20	37°/24°	

# COMMUNITY CALENDAR

**The Deer Lodge Abner Ross Center** meet on the third Monday of the month at 6:00 PM.

**Coalfield Genealogical and Historical Society** meets the second Tuesday of every month at the Senior Citizens Building at 6:00 PM.

**Morgan County Republican Party** meets the last Thursday of every month at 7:00 PM at the American Legion in Wartburg.




**Tennessee 811**  
Know what's below.  
Call before you dig.



# January 2025

## Morgan County Schools

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
		<b>HAPPY NEW YEAR</b> 1	<b>NO SCHOOL</b> 2	<b>NO SCHOOL</b> 3
<b>NO SCHOOL</b> 6	7 Breakfast: Hot Cocoa/Donut, Juice Lunch: Chicken, Rattlesnake Pasta, Green Beans, Roll, Pudding, Side Kick	8 Breakfast: Pancake on a Stick, Fruit Lunch: Hamburger on a Bun & Trimmings, Baked Potato Wedges, Baked Beans, Fruit	9 Breakfast: Chicken Biscuit, Fruit Smoothie Lunch: Variety of Soup, Hot Ham & Cheese Sandwich, Fresh Veggie Sticks & Dip, Garden Salad, Fruit, Brownie	10 Breakfast: Waffle, Fruit Lunch: Pizza or Garlic French Bread, Steamed Corn, Caesar Salad, Veggies & Dip, Fruit Cup
13 Breakfast: Sausage Biscuit, Fruit Lunch: Popcorn, Chicken or Wings, Mashed Potatoes, Steamed Broccoli, Tossed Salad, Roll, Strawberries	14 Breakfast: Cinnamon Rolls, Yogurt Breakfast Brunch: Eggs, Burrito, Gravy & Biscuit, Sausage, Chicken, Potato Patty, Grits, Fruit Parfait	15 Breakfast: Steak Biscuit, Juice Lunch: Baked Spaghetti, Green Beans, Tossed Salad, Garlic Bread, Fresh Berries	16 Breakfast: Breakfast Pizza, Fruit Parfait Lunch: Hoagie Bar & Soup, Pasta Salad, Baked Chips, Fresh Veggies & Dip, Tossed Salad, Orange Wedges	17 Breakfast: Egg Biscuit w/ Sausage, Fruit Lunch: Chicken, Macaroni & Cheese, Pinto Beans, Fresh Salad, Corn Bread, Fruit, Side Kick
<b>MARTIN LUTHER KING JR HOLIDAY</b> 20	21 Breakfast: Steak Biscuit, Juice Lunch: Chili, Grilled Cheese Sandwich, Fresh Veggie Sticks & Dip, Garden Salad, Side Kick	22 Breakfast: Breakfast Burrito, Fruit Lunch: Variety of Pizza, Corn on the Cob, Caesar Salad, Veggies & Dip, Fruit, Cookie	23 Breakfast: French Toast, Fruit Smoothie Lunch: Chicken Alfredo, Steamed Broccoli, Garden Salad, Garlic Bread, Fruit	24 Breakfast: Chicken Biscuit, Fruit Lunch: Hotdog, Chili, Tater Tots, Garden Fresh Salad, Jell-O w/ Fruit
27 Breakfast: Cinnamon Roll or Pastries, Hot Cocoa Lunch: Chicken Nuggets, Macaroni & Cheese, Steamed Broccoli, Tossed Salad, Roll, Fruit	28 Breakfast: Breakfast Pizza, Fruit Lunch: Taco Salad or Chicken Fajita, Lettuce, Tomatoes, Cheese, Steamed Corn, Refried Beans, Fruit Cup	29 Breakfast: Sausage & Biscuit, Juice Lunch: Salisbury Steak, Mashed Potatoes, Green Beans, Garden Salad, Hot Roll, Fruit	30 Breakfast: French Toast, Fruit Lunch: Hamburger or Chicken Sandwich, Lettuce, Tomato, Cheese, Pickle, Onion, Crisp Baked Fries, Baked Beans, Veggies w/ Dip, Orange Slices	31 Breakfast: Ham Biscuit, Fruit Parfait Lunch: Soup, Grilled Cheese Sandwich, Garden Salad, Fresh Veggies & Dip, Fruit

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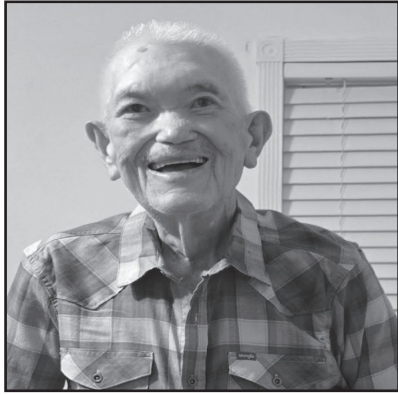
*"A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches"*  
Proverbs 22:1





— In Loving Memory —

**Dale Wendell Byrd Sr., 88**



ron, of Robbins; Johnny Byrd and wife An, of Killeen Texas. Daughter: Hope Miske, of Robbins. Grandchildren: Angela Byrd and husband Charlie Garcia, Johnny Byrd, Sabrina McMahan and husband Douglas, Justin Byrd and wife Rachel. Great Grandchildren: Johnny, Evelyn, Bristol, Carson, Airabella, Galaxie, Ibbby, Holley, and Finley. Special friend Leroy and Diana Cox.

Dale Wendell Byrd Sr., age 88, departed this life at home peacefully with family on January 5, 2025.

Wendell was preceded in death by his parents: William Andrew and Ibbie Byrd. Wife: Naomi Ruth Byrd. Brothers: Glen, Lee, Robert, Buddy, and Lewis Byrd. Sisters: Jean Booth, Mary Connor, and Ruthie Slaven. Special friend: Howard Pace.

He is survived by his sons: Dale Byrd Jr. and wife Sha-

The family will receive friends Saturday at 11 a.m. with services at 12 p.m. Rev. Michael Carroll will officiate. Burial will be in Mt. Hope cemetery in Deer Lodge. Family and friends will serve as pallbearers.

*Schubert Funeral Home is honored to serve the family of Dale Wendell Byrd, Sr.*

**Jeffery Lee West, 50**



Jeff is survived by his children, Hannah Sexton (Chase) Wittke and J. Tyler (Caitlyn) West; mother of his children, Jeanie Sexton; parents, James and Glenna West; brothers: Jimmy (Lisa) West and John West; nephews: Jody (Cara), James, Ryan and Taylon; nieces: Jadelyn, Jordan, and Bella; Mother-in-law, Ruth Sexton; uncles: Roy, Danny, and Eddie; aunts: Bea, Nelann, Mary, and Cathy; special friends: Amber Lowe, Ray Adcock, Cynthia and Jeff Martin, and Odetta Berry and family; along with a host of other family and friends.

Jeffery Lee West, age 50 of Wartburg, passed away suddenly at Roane County Medical Center on Saturday January 4, 2025. Jeff was an avid hunter and loved fishing with his son. He also enjoyed riding his Harley. Jeff was passionate about music and was proficient at picking the mandolin, of which he played bluegrass music with his family in the West Brothers Band. They played in festivals and at family gatherings. His most loved thing to do was spend time with his children and family. Jeff will be greatly missed by everyone that loved him.

Pallbearers: Jody West, James West, Chase Wittke, Ray Adcock, and Ryan Jackson.

The family will receive friends Wednesday January 8, 2025 from 2:00 – 3:00 p.m. at Schubert Funeral Home in Wartburg. The funeral will follow at 3:00 with Bro. Timmy Russell officiating. Interment will follow immediately after at Wind Rock Cemetery in Oliver Springs, TN.

He was preceded in death by his grandparents: Anna Laura and Jesse Lloyd West, and Wilburn and Lizzie Patterson; uncles: Avery, Junior, Terry, Donnie, Robert, Hubert, and Randell; aunts: Faye, Wanda, Juanita, Brenda, and Editha; cousins: Vanessa, Shelena, Jennifer, and Emily; and father-in-law, Billy Sexton.

*Schubert Funeral Home is honored to serve the family of Jeffery West.*

**Psalm 123:1**

**Unto thee lift I up mine eyes,  
O thou that dwellest in the heavens.**

**Hallie Harris, 76**



(Riki), Ron (Tammy), and Bill Harris; daughters: Ann (Robert) McCann and Ashley (Billy) Keeton; brothers: Cass Branstetter, Wilburn Branstetter, Johnny (Marilyn) Branstetter, and Chester (Marianne) Howard; sisters: Katie (Mark) Lewis and Teresa (Greg) Gilbert; along with 9 grandchildren and one grat-grandchild.

Mrs. Hallie Harris, age 76, of the Chestnut Ridge community passed away suddenly Monday January 6, 2025 at her home.

She was preceded in death by her husband, William Lee Harris; parents, Roy and Dorothy Branstetter; brothers: Arnold, Robert, and Daniel Branstetter; and sister, Hazel Brown.

Graveside service will be Wednesday January 8, 2025 at 12:00 noon at Flat Rock Cemetery in Chestnut Ridge with Bro. Danny Jones officiating.

*Schubert Funeral Home is honored to serve the family of Hallie Harris.*

She is survived by her sons: Jason (Suzianna), Tojo (Lori), Roy

**Obituaries must come from a funeral home to be in the newspaper.**





— In Loving Memory —

**Nancy Ann Goddard, 90**



She leaves behind her daughter Linda Roberts of Coalfield, who was always by her side; grandchildren Kimberly Roberts of Joyner, Amy Jones of Wartburg, Joseph Roberts, and great granddaughter Zoe Jones were a constant source of joy in her life. She adored Zoe and cherished every moment spent with her. Her sisters Betty Duncan of Chattanooga, Thelma Bruce, and Reba Woods of Oak Ridge who shared many beautiful memories with her throughout the years.

Nancy Ann Goddard graced this world with her presence for 90 remarkable years. On January 7, 2025 she passed away peacefully surrounded by her loving family. She was born on May 14, 1934. Nancy's life was a testament to her hard work, dedication, and love for her family and friends. She worked for the Morgan County Schools for almost 20 years until her declining health.

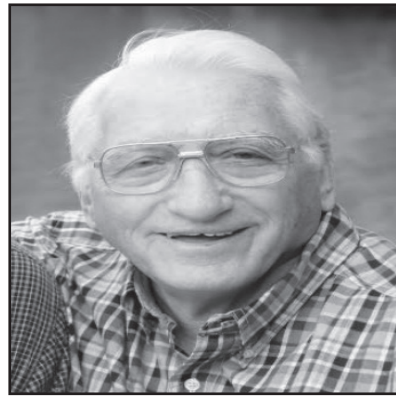
Nancy was a devoted mother, grandmother, sister known for her kindness and warmth.

She is preceded in death by her parents Ethel and Eliza Crowe; siblings Roberta Hall, Sylvester Burgess, and Exie Keathley and son-in-law Donald Roberts.

The family will receive friends Thursday, January 9, 2025 at Schubert Funeral Home in Wartburg from 5:00-7:00 p.m. Graveside services will be on Friday at 10:00 a.m. in the Western Cemetery in Coalfield.

*Schubert Funeral Home is honored to serve the family of Nancy Ann Goddard.*

**Stanley Barton Butler, 88**  
**United States Marine Corps Veteran**



friend Betty Parks and a host of nieces and nephews.

In addition to his parents, he is preceded in death by his wife Patricia Coffman Butler; sisters Susie Rose, Ruby Mae Inman, and Allene Bellman; brothers Ernest Nearing, Harvey Fred, Leonard Clay (L.C.), and Walter Glenn.

Stanley Barton Butler of Oakdale, Tennessee went home to be with the Lord on Wednesday, January 8th, 2025 at the age of 88. He was born in Harriman, Tennessee to the late Fred and Cora Butler. Mr. Butler was a 1957 graduate of South Harriman High School. He honorably served as a member of the United States Marine Corps and was a 32 year retiree of Lowe's. He was a member of Boswell Chapel Baptist Church.

The family will receive friends on Tuesday, January 14th from 11:00 am to 12:30 pm at Schubert Funeral Home in Wartburg. Funeral services at 12:30 pm with Bro. Chris Inman officiating. A graveside service to follow at Roane Memorial Gardens.

*Schubert Funeral Home is honored to serve the family of Stanley Barton Butler.*

He is survived by his son Ernie Butler and his wife Jennifer; granddaughters Courtney Hinds, and her husband Chris, Cora Butler and Emily Butler; great-granddaughter Carsyn Hinds; sister Ellen Daniels and her husband Glenn; special

**Psalm 86:4-5**

**4 Rejoice the soul of thy servant: for unto thee, O Lord, do I lift up my soul.**

**5 For thou, Lord, art good, and ready to forgive; and plenteous in mercy unto all them that call upon thee.**







David Zubler  
Columnist

### 2025 tax changes

The IRS adjusts the tax brackets every year to stop “bracket creep”, which happens when inflation pushes taxpayers into a higher income tax bracket without an increase in real income.

The standard deduction for 2025 is:  
Married Filing Jointly \$30,000 Single \$15,000  
Head of Household \$22,500

The maximum child tax credit is \$2,000 per qualifying child. That applies to children under 17 who are dependents in your household. The refundable portion of the tax credit is \$1,700 per

qualifying child. Refundable tax credits are called “refundable” because it is the amount of credit you will receive if you don’t owe tax. For example, if you owe \$1,000 in taxes and qualify for a \$1,700 refundable credit, you will receive a \$700 refund.

The maximum earned income tax credit (EITC) in 2025 for single and joint filers is \$649 if the filer has no children. The maximum credit is \$4,328 for one child, \$7,152 for two children, and \$8,046 for three or more children.

#### The 2025 tax brackets are:

Tax Rate	Single Filers	Married Filing Jointly	Heads of Household
10%	\$0 to \$11,925	\$0 to \$23,850	\$0 to \$17,000
12%	\$11,925 to \$48,475	\$23,850 to \$96,950	\$17,000 to \$64,850
22%	\$48,475 to \$103,350	\$96,950 to \$206,700	\$64,850 to \$103,350
24%	\$103,350 to \$197,300	\$206,700 to \$394,600	\$103,350 to \$197,300
32%	\$197,300 to \$250,525	\$394,600 to \$501,050	\$197,300 to \$250,500
35%	\$250,525 to \$626,350	\$501,050 to \$751,600	\$250,500 to \$626,350
37%	\$626,350 or more	\$751,600 or more	\$626,350 or more

The 2025 business mileage rate increased to 70 cents per mile. The medical mileage rate is 21 cents per mile and the charitable mileage is 14 cents per mile.

People often hear capital gains tax and think it’s a bad thing. But as you see below, for many people the capital gains rate is zero. The highest capital gain rate is 20% which is much better than the highest ordinary income tax rate of 37%.

#### The 2025 Capital Gains Tax Brackets are:

	Unmarried Individuals	Married Filing Jointly	Head of Household
0%	\$0	\$0	\$0
15%	\$48,350	\$96,700	\$64,750
20%	\$533,000	\$600,050	\$566,700

In 2025, the first \$19,000 of gifts to any person are excluded from tax, up from \$18,000.

The Energy Efficient Home Improvement Credit has improved in 2025. In previous years, there was a lifetime cap on how much you could claim. Beginning in 2025 you will be able to claim up to \$3,200 a year.

*David Zubler is a nationally known tax accountant and Enrolled Agent that resides in East Tennessee. He is the author of six tax books and a syndicated columnist who has shared tax advice on podcasts and national TV and has been referred to as America’s Tax Guru. He is the founder and president of Your Tax Care. He represents clients nationwide before the IRS and provides tax strategies, and tax education, including David’s one-minute tax tip radio recordings at YourTaxCare.com. David can be reached at (865)363-3019 or by email at david@yourtaxcare.com.*



**FROM OUR FAMILY TO YOURS**  
**Many wishes for**  
**a wonderful holiday season**  
*and Happy New Year!*

---

Regular Hours M-F 9am-5pm  
 Holiday Hours  
 Wednesday, November 27th-Closing at 2pm  
 Thursday, November 28th-Thanksgiving Day CLOSED  
 Friday, November 29th-CLOSED  
 Tuesday, December 24th-Christmas Eve CLOSED  
 Wednesday, December 25th-Christmas Day CLOSED  
 Thursday, December 26th-CLOSED  
 Tuesday, December 31st-Closing at 1pm  
 Wednesday, January 1st-New Year’s Day CLOSED

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## Historically Speaking

### Fission: A Novel of Oak Ridge

By Ray Smith - Oak Ridge City Historian

Leslie Schover contacted me and asked that I review a book she was writing. I am often asked to do that for authors writing about Oak Ridge and I gladly agreed to her request. I later invited her to be a guest on Hidden History: Stories from the Secret City video cast, to which she agreed. And, she agreed to write about her soon to be published new book, *Fission, A Novel of Oak Ridge*, in *Historically Speaking*. Enjoy her story of how the book came to be.

\*\*\*

Although I grew up in the Chicago area, Oak Ridge, Tennessee was a part of my family's lore. My father, Donald Schover, was recruited at the age of twenty-three to work as an electronics technician with Dr. Charles Coryell's group at the University of Chicago. He then accompanied the Met Lab chemists to Oak Ridge in September 1943. The adventure began when he and my mother, age twenty, were invited to dinner by the Coryells and were informed that night about the need for my father's skills to create instruments to measure the plutonium needed to beat the Nazis in developing an atomic bomb.

Thus, they both knew at the outset about the purpose of the Manhattan Project. Although my older sister had already been born, my mother followed my father to Oak Ridge several months later, leaving the toddler with my maternal grandparents. Both Mom and Dad lived in the dorms for several months until their Cemente B on West Malta Road was ready and they could bring their daughter to live with them.

When I was old enough to appreciate the story, they told me about the welcome party when my mother first arrived. My father was a popular guy because he was in charge of the pure alcohol needed for the Coryell chemistry lab—also used as the basis for creative punch recipes in “dry” Oak Ridge. While their friends shared punch in the lobby of the Guest House, the custom was for married couples to take turns using the private room upstairs, since even conjugal visits were forbidden in the single-sex dorms. This is an aspect of Guest House history that may not be familiar to present-day Oak Ridgers!

They had many humorous stories about their Oak Ridge years, including my mother's incomprehension when the man at the grocery asked if she wanted her purchases “in a poke” and refused to allow her to buy cokes unless she could present empty bottles (although she had just moved there). She was shocked when one of the wives who had grown up in the South asked why my blonde, hazel-eyed mother did not look Jewish, and was puzzled at her lack of horns.

After the culture shock, however, she said that she made some wonderful friends despite their different backgrounds. My father told me about the Glendenin Cocktail, an alternate name for the radioactive isotope that renowned chemist Lawrence Glendenin accidentally imbibed when he ignored safety precautions and pipetted it directly into his mouth.

He also told a tale that he thought may have been an “urban legend” about a guard patrolling the Clinch River who accidentally shot his horse in the head while attempting to bag a rabbit for dinner. Fearing the army's wrath, the guards decided to get rid of the evidence by burning the dead horse, but unfortunately started a brush fire instead. These stories are a reminder that the average age of people in Oak Ridge during the war was twenty-seven.

I was born in 1952. Growing up during the cold war gave me a healthy fear of nuclear weapons. I still vividly recall watching Kenne-

dy's speech on television during the Cuban Missile Crisis. I had previously asked my father why we were not building a bomb shelter in our backyard. I was devastated when he told me, “Honey, it wouldn't help.”

Later, when I was seventeen, my father and I watched the newly declassified Japanese films of the horrendous health effects of the bombings on people in Hiroshima and Nagasaki. I asked my father how he felt in retrospect about working on the Manhattan Project. He told me that the fear of a Nazi atomic bomb had been a very powerful motivator.

He still believed that at least the initial bombing of Hiroshima had saved the lives of many soldiers who would have died in an invasion of Japan, although he was more cynical about Nagasaki. He thought the government at the time wanted to see how a plutonium-based bomb would perform on a major target, despite the success of the Trinity Test.

He was one of the sixty-seven signers of the Oak Ridge version of the Szilard petition, asking Truman not to use the atomic bomb on Japan without first demonstrating its destructive potential. He also spent several months working in Japan in the 1970s.

I had always wanted to do something with my parents' Oak Ridge stories, and over the past two years, I have incorporated them into a novel, *Fission: A Novel of Oak Ridge*. It will be published in early 2026 by SheWrites Press.

I was inspired long before the success of the movie *Oppenheimer*. I became fascinated when reports began appearing about two recently discovered Soviet spies in Oak Ridge, Oscar Seborer and George Koval (see Ann Hagedorn's excellent book, *Sleeper Agent*, Simon & Schuster, 2022).

Both were in the Special Engineer Detachment (S. E. D.) and worked in X-10 during my father's time in the Coryell group. Both were electronics engineers, like my father. Both were also Jews of Eastern European ancestry, just a few years older than he was. Koval, in particular, was a Radiation Health Officer.

My father had an accidental radiation exposure when his buddies carefully surrounded a very “hot” sample with lead bricks—but neglected to shield the side on the wall that adjoined my father's desk in the next office. I suspect this incident occurred before Koval arrived in Oak Ridge, but I wondered if Dad had known either spy. I imagined how indignant he would have been to find out about their betrayal.

Of course, by then, both my parents and their friends and colleagues were long deceased. Although the main characters in the novel are based on my parents, I created a totally fictional love triangle between the wife in the couple and the spy. Here is a summary of the plot:

“It is 1943 and Doris Friedman, a University of Chicago undergraduate with aspirations to be a concert pianist or lawyer, finds herself the 20-year-old mother of a sickly, premature baby. Her husband, Rob, an electronics prodigy, is recruited to work in Oak Ridge on the atomic bomb and Doris joins him. Both spouses are told about the bomb from the outset. While Rob works around the clock, Doris struggles with learning to nurture her cranky daughter and wonders if she will ever be more than a housewife. Fear is always present that the Nazis will get the bomb first and win the war. Doris makes friends with Betty, a Richmond debutante who initially believes that Jews have horns. Doris helps Betty through a miscarriage and copes with Rob's getting an overdose of radiation and trying to enlist to fight at the front. At times their marriage splits her heart in



Leslie Schover, Phd and author of *Fission: A Novel of Oak Ridge* (Courtesy of Leslie Schover)

two, like fission splits an atom's nucleus. She falls into a flirtation with an army engineer, only to discover that he is probably a Soviet spy. She turns him in, at the cost of revealing her own infidelity. Rob and his fellow scientists sign a petition asking Truman not to use the bomb on Japan without first demonstrating its power. However, Hiroshima and Nagasaki are annihilated. Rob and Doris return to Chicago where they try to repair their marriage as the cold war begins.”

In preparing to write the novel, I did a deep dive into Manhattan Project history, including major historical works and documentaries, oral interviews from the Atomic Heritage Foundation, books of Ed Westcott's photos, personal accounts about Oak Ridge during World War II, the Public Broadcast Series that D. Ray Smith hosted, online information, and other novels about the Manhattan Project. I was also surprised and delighted to find that Dr. Coryell's daughter Julie Coryell had edited and published hundreds of pages of interviews with him (by Joan Bainbridge Safford) in the book *A Chemist's Role in the Birth of Atomic Energy* (Prometheum Press, 2012).

For the first time I really understood what my father's work had been during those years. Even better, I got to meet Julie over the internet, and we have become dear friends. I also corresponded with another Coryell group offspring, Ted Gest, a journalist and Washington bureau chief of *TheCrimeReport.org*. His father, the late Howard Gest, PhD, had contacted me when he saw my father's obituary in 2007 and wrote an essay about the Szilard petition ([https://biology.indiana.edu/documents/historical-materials/gest\\_pdfs/hgSzilard.pdf](https://biology.indiana.edu/documents/historical-materials/gest_pdfs/hgSzilard.pdf)).

Ray has been a terrific resource, reading at least two drafts of the book and commenting on historical accuracy. He sent me a link to a Clinton Lab phone book that had numbers and addresses for my parents and other people I recognized from their stories.

My mother had been commandeered by a Colonel in Oak Ridge to help him choose a piano for the officers' recreation hall. He insisted that his driver take an unfinished road, and they got stuck. In fleshing out her anecdote I also got information from the Knoxville historian, Jack Neely, on piano stores in Knoxville during that era and the availability of Steinways.



**Historically Speaking****Fission: A Novel of Oak Ridge**

By Ray Smith - Oak Ridge City Historian

Ann Hagedorn was kind enough to have a call with me about the story of George Koval. The one thing I have not done yet is to visit Oak Ridge, but I hope to remedy that in the next few months and to treat Ray to a thank-you dinner!

I spent my own career as a clinical psychologist and had written three self-help books, a textbook, and numerous book chapters and journal articles, but had not produced any fiction (at least not knowingly) since college creative writing courses.

Writing this novel has been an explo-

ration for me of my parents' early lives. I was struck by my mother's limited choices, once she married and quickly got pregnant. I also thought much more deeply about my parents' experiences as first-generation Americans and their struggle to get educations, succeed in their jobs, and assimilate into the suburban world of privilege that they provided for me.

I thought I knew them both quite well—better than the average daughter—but so often I wanted to ask questions that had never occurred to me while they were alive. Of course it is a novel, and not a memoir, so I had the liberty of making up the answers.

In fact, the biggest challenge was to create a dramatic story that would hopefully keep the reader interested, since each of our lives is

ultimately, rather ordinary. I hope I have caught some of the genuine spirit of Oak Ridge during its early years and that readers of this column will mark their calendars and look for Fission in 2026. \*\*\*

Thank you, Leslie, for the background you shared that brought you to the point of writing Fission, A Novel of Oak Ridge. I am glad to have helped a bit with your book. I found it enjoyable to read and very believable as it describes life in Oak Ridge well. I also look forward to yours and Julie's interview on Hidden History: Stories from the Secret City!



Engagement photo of Donald Schover and Janet Moss (Courtesy of Leslie Schover)





# Luke Chapter 17



**Melvin Howard**

(Luke 17:1-4) Warning to those causing stumbling: Speaking to his disciples, Jesus issued a warning about causing “stumbling.” It was a matter of “take heed to yourselves” (v.3). Occasions of stumbling are bound to come. Sometimes they are self-inflicted, caused by carelessness. At other times, vicious false teachers precipitate such. In some cases, stumbling is precipitated by thoughtless followers of the Lord. Hence, the warning: “Woe to him through whom they come” (v.1). The value of the soul is so paramount that it would be better for one to be drowned in the sea than to be the one who causes “little one” to stumble, one who has begun to follow

Jesus but is yet without maturity. The term “better” suggests there is a punishment greater than a violent death.

This does not mean that sin is to be ignored. If a brother sins, he is to be “rebuked.” This term covers a range of actions---from making one aware of his sin, to encouraging him to forsake it, to chastising him for remaining therein (Mt. 18:15-17). Rebuke should always be done in the spirit of gentleness (Gal. 6:1) and with the aim of restoring the person. When the offender repents (has contrition and makes the effort to change), forgiveness should be extended, even if he fails again multiple times. The door of forgiveness ought always to be open.

(Luke 17:5-10) Unprofitable servants: The Lord’s apostles may have expressed consternation at the incredible challenge of the obligation to forgive, but recognized their weak faith; hence, they requested of the Savior: “Lord, increase our faith.” It is a virtue when one can identify a weakness and seek remedy. The Teacher told them “faith” is not to be measured so much in quantity as in quality. If they but had the faith of a grain of mustard seed, they would be able to do seemingly impossible things (v.5; Mt. 17:20; 21:21). But a word of caution is appropriate. As faith increases, it could tend to make one smug---and that could be dangerous. Jesus, thus, provides an illustration to encourage humility.

The “Who is there of you” expression is a favorite of the Lord’s: it appeals to a particular truth one should know already. A servant is attending to his duties, plowing a field or tending sheep. As the working day concludes, the servant returns to the house. Does the master invite his servant to sit down and have dinner? No. Instead, the servant must first care for his master; afterward, he may see to his own needs (v7). Actually, the master is not even required to think the servant for doing that which was his obligation (v.9). Here, then, is the application: even so, when one has done all he was commanded to do, he should humbly acknowledge that he still is “unprofitable.” He merely has done his duty. This would be considered a hard pill to take unless one acknowledges the true holiness, sovereignty, and majesty of Almighty God.

Here are some principles to be derived: (a) God is the Master; we are his servants. By virtue of being our Creator, he has the right to expect our devoted service (Rom. 9:21). (b) Service to God ensures man’s greatest happiness (Isa. 43:7). (c) Humanity has a “duty” to God (Eccl. 12:13) as a result of the Creator-creature relationship. (d) None of us ever does “all” we are commanded (Rom. 3:10, 23; Phil. 3:12). (e) Though we are to contritely consider ourselves as unprofitable in view of our failures, at the end of time God will say, “Well done, you good and faithful servant” (Mt. 25:23). (f) We are only relatively unprofitable---especially in view of what it cost our Master to buy us (Acts 20:28; 1 Cor. 6:19). (g) There is a duty to be done and commands to be obeyed. Salvation is not unconditional. (h) We must, therefore, strive for true humility.

(Luke 17:11-19) The ten lepers: We are again reminded that Jesus and the disciples are methodically making their way toward the Savior’s Jerusalem destiny. In the process, they passed along the border of Galilee and Samaria. As a certain village was entered, there were ten lepers standing far off, with raised voices, “saying”; “Jesus, Master, take pity on us” (v.13). These men obviously knew of Christ and had come to believe in him. The term “Master” reflects the conviction that the one so addressed possesses authority. The request is a strong one. The Lord responded: “Go show yourselves to the priest.” Under the law, this was required for certification of cleansing and integration back into the religious life of the community (Lev. 14:2-32).

Luke’s language is most revealing: “As they went, they were cleansed” (v.14). He commanded, “Go”; they “went” (obeyed) and they were “cleansed.” Faith coupled with submission produces results. One of these men, when he “saw he was healed” (it was not a mere hunch) turned back and came to the Lord. With a loud voice he glorified God (an acknowledgement of Christ’s association with God), fell at the Lord’s feet, and gave him thanks---an act appropriate then and now. The historian adds: “and he was a Samaritan” (v.16). Luke does not hesitate to exalt a Samaritan above the nine who, apparently, were Jews. Jesus responded to the praise, but asked: “Weren’t ten cleansed? But where are the nine? Was there no one else who returned to glorify God?” The Lord was saddened by the ingratitude of the nine, who stood in glaring contrast to the “stranger” (one of another race; a foreigner). Christ then said, “Arise, go your way: your faith has made you well” (v.19). The tense of the verb indicates an abiding cure.

(Luke 17:20-21) The coming kingdom: The Pharisees asked Jesus when the “kingdom of God” would come. They probably had in mind the establishment of a political regime similar to that of David and Solomon’s era. Their inquiry may even have been sarcastic. Christ gave a brief answer---exactly what they deserved. The kingdom will come not with “observation.” This, obviously, is a terse response to their question. “The kingdom will not come as you anticipate, with much fanfare, ostentation, prancing horses, and marching armies. The kingdom will be within [among] you.” There is respectable disagreement among scholars on the meaning of “within you”, or “in the midst of you”. Whichever view one settles on, it must harmonize with Scripture generally. Possible meaning are: (a) “The one who is responsible for the kingdom is in your midst already, but you have not recognized him.” (b) “The kingdom will not come with a flamboyant conquest, but

quietly, by means of the gospel operating on your hearts.”

(Luke 17:22-37) The second coming: The Lord’s attention is now directed to his disciples and the hardships they will face after he has been taken from them and they await his final return. Unfortunately, some allege that the following context deals with the destruction of Jerusalem. This is solely on the basis that some of the same figurative language is employed as used in Matthew 24. This ignores the fact that similar figures can denote different events when the context so indicates---as it clearly does in this instance.

Jesus warned his disciples of difficult days ahead. Due to persecution, they would “desire to see one of the days of the Son of Man” (v.2). The expression, “one of the days of the Son of Man,” is the equivalent of “his day” (v.24). Elsewhere in the New Testament, it is called “the day of our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Cor. 1:8), or simply “the “the day of the Lord” (2 Pet. 3:10). In this context, it is also referred to as “the day that the Son of Man is revealed” (v.30) and is an allusion to the day of Christ’s return to judge the world.

The meaning, therefore, of the Savior’s prophecy was that the disciples, in the ominous times to come, would long for the return of their Master. But they would not “see it.” This last phrase hints that the Second Coming would not occur in their day. There are other passages which suggest the same note of caution.

In the parable of the ten virgins, the bridegroom tarried, he delayed his coming (Mt. 25:5; 24:48; Lk. 12:45). In the parable of the talents, the Lord would not return until after a long time (Mt. 25:19). This effectively refutes the notion that the Second Coming of the Lord occurred in AD 70, as the radical preterist heresy contends.

The disciples, therefore, were to ignore any false teacher who might seek to take advantage of tumultuous times and proclaim that the Messiah had returned. There were Messianic pretenders in those days (Acts 5:36-37; 21:38), and the Lord’s people were not to be deceived by them. As a brilliant burst of lightning that illuminates the entire heavens, so would be the arrival of the Lord at his final coming. This clearly indicates that the coming here envisioned was not the destruction of Jerusalem, which was a local event that affected but a minute portion of the human family.

The Lord sought to further prepare the disciples for the shock in store for them. His “generation” would largely reject him. This would involve many elements of suffering by the Savior (v.25; Psa. 22; Isa. 53) and ultimate rejection by crucifixion. He would be the stone which the builders rejected (Psa. 118:22; Mt. 21:42). Jesus cautioned that his return would be unexpected, just like in the time of the great Flood and, later, the destruction of Sodom---when so many were ill-prepared for a divine judgment. By way of contrast, Christ warned that when “the day” of the Son’s revelation comes, his people should be in a state of preparation. In the language of a first-century cultural setting, the Lord says that those on the housetop should not attempt to recover goods from within their houses, and those in the field should not attempt to return home. The language is not a suggestion that these activities could be accomplished; rather, it is a dramatic caution for constant preparation.

This narrative is concluded with a discussion of the separation that is to take place at the time of Christ’s return (Mt. 25:31). The faithful will be “taken” to be with the Lord; the disobedient will be “left” to the withering blast of judgment. The details of this awful fate are supplied elsewhere in Scripture (Mt. 25:46; Mk. 9:47-48; 2 Thes. 1:7-9; Rev. 14:9-11, etc.).

Again, we must emphasize: this context is not to be confused with the destruction of Jerusalem. In the context of Matthew 24, when dealing with Jerusalem’s fall, the refugees are urged to “flee unto the mountains” (v.16). This would have no relevance for those remaining at the time of the Lord’s Second Coming; on the final day of earth’s history, there will be no mountains to provide safety from judgment. This clause, therefore, is understandably omitted in Luke 17, because the discussion here pertains to the Second Coming, not the destruction of Jerusalem.

The language of Luke 17, thus, is highly figurative. It is what might be called an idiom of priority. As one scholar observed: “In Matthew 24:17, 18 and Mark 13:15, 16 these words are spoken of flight before the destruction of Jerusalem. Here flight is neither expressed nor understood. The point is absolute indifference in all worldly interests as the attitude of readiness for the Son of Man” (Plummer).

The Lord concludes his discussion of the Judgment by using a common figure of speech. “Where the body is, there will the eagles [vultures] also be gathered together” (v. 37). While this same imagery is employed by Matthew to depict the destruction of Jerusalem (24:28), it is used here to represent the idea of the carnage that is associated with those who are spiritually dead.

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