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Morgan County Today

Psalm 100:3

www.mocotoday.com

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Tuesday, March 25, 2025

Your Community. Your News.

75¢

Sweet Sixteen Bound



Morgan County Today
Your Community. Your News.

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**Ms. Avery Pearl
Pet Columnist**

Pet Perspective with Ms. Avery Pearl

We Lost a Great Man

Morgan County lost another leader and honorable Man of God on March 1st in a terrible car accident, that also injured his beloved wife.

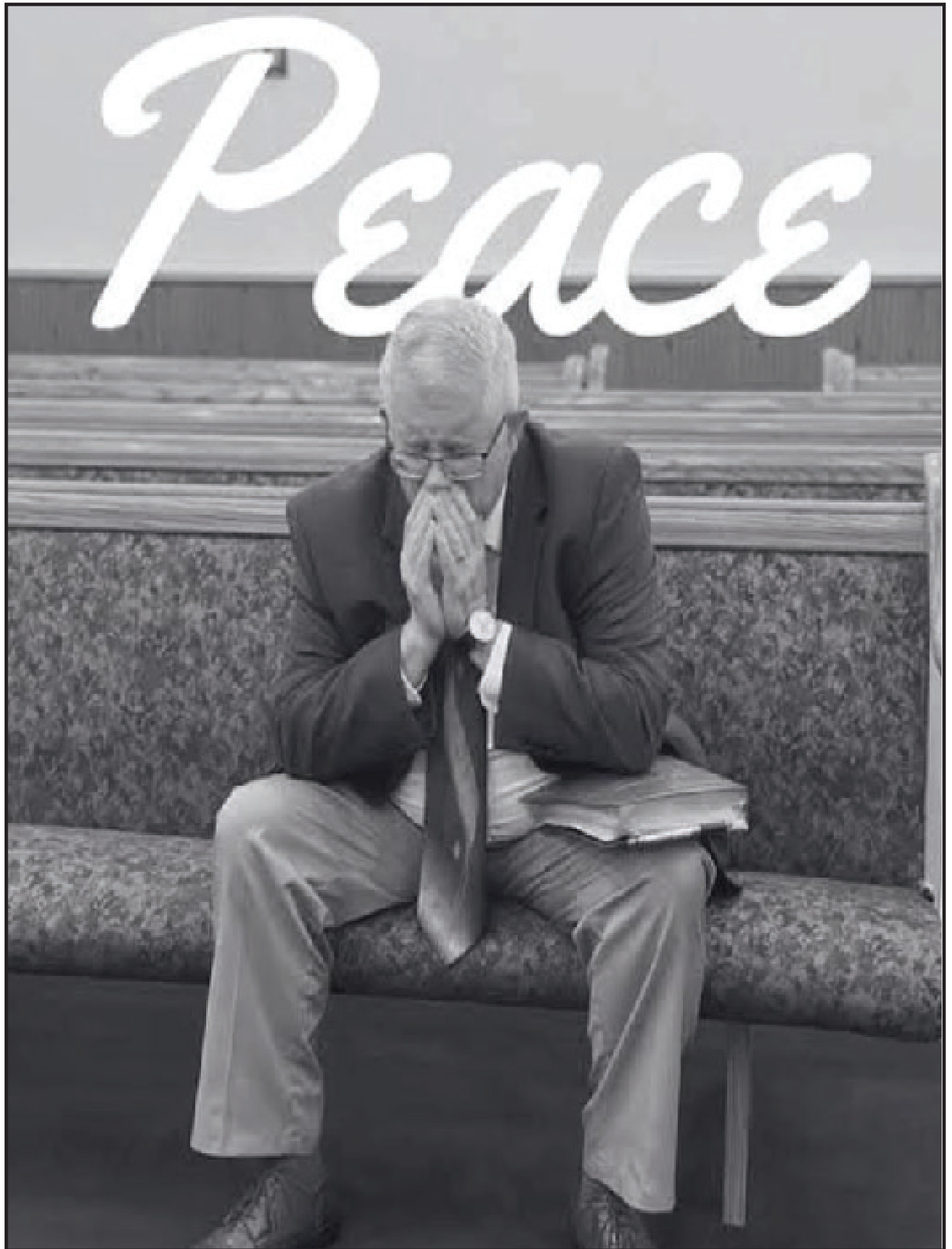
Bobbie served his community for decades at SmartBank. He was a dedicated member at New Life in Mossy Grove for almost 50 years.

Bobbie and Linda lost their home in the Mossy Grove tornado. Yet, they still helped the other families in every way they could.

Bobbie would want his passing to help others see that the ramifications of drunk driving are devastating to innocent victims, like himself. In hopes it would deter others from making the decision to drink and drive. His family and church lost a remarkable man because someone made that life altering decision.

He would also pray that the people responsible for taking his life would get saved. Then, show others if the Lord can redeem them, he can redeem anyone.

We honor the life of a great and kind man. Mr Bobbie Hester. Please pray for his loved ones during this most difficult of times.



WEEKLY WEATHER

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Wed 26	65°/36°	
Thu 27	67°/45°	
Fri 28	73°/56°	
Sat 29	73°/57°	
Sun 30	71°/50°	
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COMMUNITY CALENDAR



Save the Date: 25th Annual Spring Planting and Music Festival

Oneida, Tennessee - Mark your calendars for the **25th Annual Spring Planting and Music Festival** on **Saturday, April 26, 2025, at Big South Fork National River & Recreation Area**. This beloved event offers a unique opportunity to step back in time and experience the Appalachian way of life that has played such an important role in the history of the Big South Fork area.

Celebrating the traditions of early Appalachian settlers, the festival highlights the self-reliant practices of subsistence farming, a way of life that relied on the surrounding forest and passed down generations of knowledge, skills, and values. Visitors will enjoy live demonstrations of traditional crafts, including woodcarving, blacksmithing, beekeeping, textile weaving, hide tanning, and longbow hunting. Children and adults alike will be delighted by old-time toys, and farm animals.

Toe-tapping Mountain music will be performed throughout the day by talented local musicians, creating a lively and authentic atmosphere. A festival favorite, plowing and planting with mules, will take place at the Lora Blevins field, offering a rare glimpse into historical farming practices. Additional demonstrations will be hosted at the Oscar Blevins Farm Site.

This free, family-friendly event runs from 9:00 AM to 4:00 PM (ET). Shuttles will transport visitors between key locations so they can enjoy all the festival has to offer. Bring a lawn chair or a blanket, relax, and spend the day immersed in music, history, and heritage.

Come celebrate this way of life with us as we provide memorable opportunities for you to experience this important part of our history. For more information about this event, click here: <https://www.nps.gov/biso/planyourvisit/springplanting.htm>

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior
Big South Fork NRRRA News Release Release Date: March 18, 2025
Big South Fork National River and Recreation Area 4564 Leatherwood Road Oneida, TN 37841
423-569-9778 phone www.nps.gov/biso

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.

Tiger Prowl 5K Was A Beautiful Success

The Tiger Prowl 5K sponsored by the Track & Field Team went beautifully. Here are some highlights.

Originally, the 5K was scheduled for the morning of Saturday, March 15 but had to be rescheduled for the afternoon of Sunday, March 16 due to weather conditions. The attendance was great even after rescheduling. There were participants from near and far. The course went out the drive of Sunbright School, turned left onto Burrville Road, and then returned to the school. Some chose the one-mile course while others chose the 5K (3.1 mile) course. The event finished and awards were given. The following received awards for their awesome efforts during the 5K. Men's first place was Silas Adkisson from Rockwood, second place was D.R. Swanner from Somerset, KY, and third place was Billy Ward of Sunbright. Women's first place was Alisha Shoemaker of Winfield, second place was Kelly Adcock of Coalfield, and third place was Chrissy Graham of Sunbright.

Sunbright Track & Field Team cannot thank the race sponsors enough. So if you have the opportunity to support these sponsors please do: Schuberts Funeral Home, Cobb-Vantress, Highland Communications, Roane State Morgan County, WECO, Plateau Electric, Ridgeview Behavioral Health Services, and Sneakerburg.

The Track and Field Team plans to make this an annual event. Our annual goal is to grow the event. Next year we hope to add a chip timing system. Come join us.

This has been a fun and helpful fundraiser for our team. Thank you to everyone who made it possible!



— In Loving Memory —

Barbara Nell Macklin



Barbara is survived by her brother Franklin "Bunk" Stringfield; special niece Trula Hall and her husband Gene Hall; and a host of nieces, nephews, and extended family and friends.

The family will receive friends Wednesday, March 19, 2025 at Schubert Funeral Home in Wartburg from 12:00-1:00 p.m. with the funeral to follow at 1:00 p.m. Interment will follow in the Piney Church Cemetery in Oakdale.

Schubert Funeral Home is honored to serve the family of Barbara Nell Macklin.

Barbara Nell Macklin of Oakdale passed away at her home on Saturday, March 15, 2025.

She is preceded in death by her husband Charles "Charlie" Macklin; parents Roy and Bertha Stringfield; sisters Nellie McCoy, Mable Armes, Betty Armes, and Nancy Knight; brothers Vanius, Vivian, Carl and Roy Stringfield, Jr.

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

Martha Delores Heidel



lores Henry and brother-in-law Samuel Henry; sister Nancy Jackson and brother-in-law Curtis Jackson; mother-in-law Rita Heidel and father-in-law Rex Heidel; sister-in-law Karrie Walker and brother-in-law Larry Walker; special nieces and nephews Maurice Zapata, Toni Howard, Andrew Polder, Linda Polder, Deborah Elias, Tyler Walker, Colton Walker, Aaron Walker, Antanita Elias, Arthur Elias, Jeffery Cruz and a host of extended family and friends.

Martha Delores Heidel of Lansing passed away peacefully on March 13, 2025, surrounded by her husband Kevin and daughter Isabell (Izzy).

Martha enjoyed taking trips with Kevin and Izzy. She enjoyed watching Izzy cheer and spending time with her family.

She is preceded in death by her father John David Lewandoski, Sr.; step-father Jimmie Northrup; brother John David Lewandoski, Jr. (Mijo); and niece Tasha Cruz.

She is survived by her husband Kevin Heidel; daughter Isabell Valentina Rita Heidel; mother Valentina Northrup; sister De-

The family will receive friends Monday, March 17, 2025 at Schubert Funeral Home in Wartburg from 4:00-6:00 p.m. with the funeral to follow at 6:00 p.m. with Deacon Vic Landa officiating. Graveside services will be Tuesday at noon in the Heidel Cemetery in Wartburg.

Schubert Funeral Home is honored to serve the family of Martha Delores Heidel.

Psalm 123:1

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

Joseph "Joe" Daniel Roberts, 39



Preceded in death by his father, Donald Roberts, grandparents Kenneth (Nancy) Goddard and Earl (Bessie) Roberts.

Survived by mother, Linda Roberts of Coalfield sisters, Kimberly Roberts of the Joyner community, Amy Jones of Wartburg, and a very special niece, Zoe Jones of Wartburg.

Joseph "Joe" Daniel Roberts died unexpectedly on March 15, 2025, at his residence. He was only 39 years old. The family is so deeply saddened and shocked by his sudden death. Joseph was born on February 24, 1986.

Joe enjoyed four-wheeling and racing. Joe had a rescue "doghter" Macey who was his whole world. Joe's dog would follow his every footstep in his daily activities and stay in his truck as he mowed yards for work.

His passing has left a void in the hearts of his family, friends, and many more whose lives were touched by him. Remember him not for the ways his life ended, but for the way it was, lived, and for the profound impact it had on the lives of those who had the pleasure of knowing him.

Schubert Funeral Home is honored to serve the family of Joseph "Joe" Daniel Roberts.

Gene T. Myers Jr., 57



Isaac Smith; granddaughter Charlee Dyer and Merissa Boswell and a host of nieces, nephews and extended family.

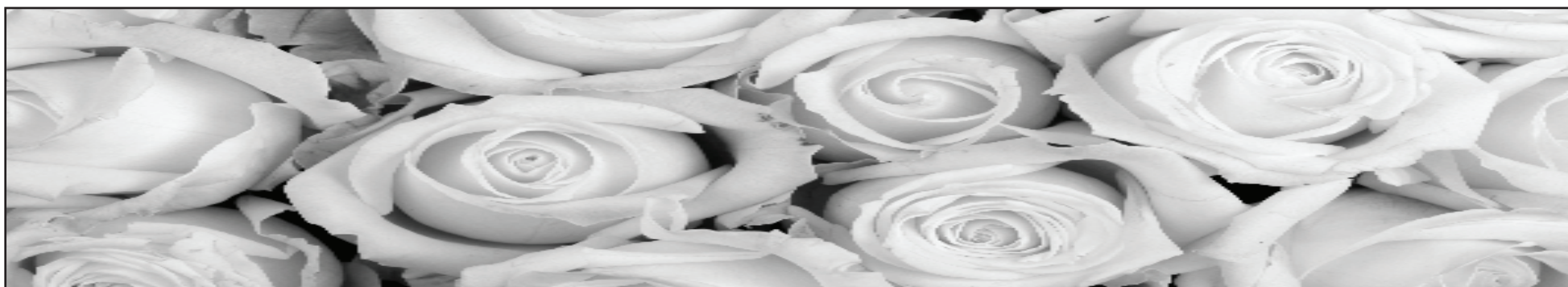
The family has chosen cremation, and no services will be scheduled at this time.

Schubert Funeral Home is honored to serve the family of Gene T. Myers, Jr.

Gene T. Myers, Jr., age 57 of Wartburg formerly of Georgia passed away March 31, 2025 at Methodist Medical Center of Oak Ridge.

He is preceded by his parents Mary Bone and Gene Myers; wife Belinda Myers; daughter Breanna Boswell; brother Ricky Stanley; grandparents Mamie and Gordon Westmoreland.

He is survived by his daughter Danielle Myers; sons Timothy Myers and Adam Mchan; sisters Star Hamby and Teresa Fields; grandsons Alex and



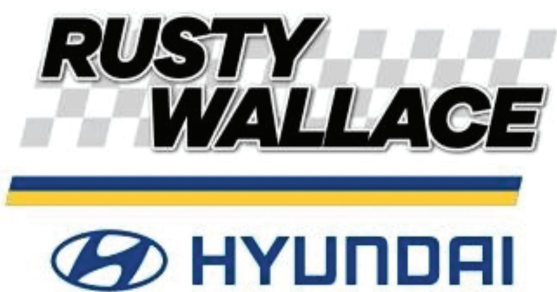
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Historically Speaking

Recollections From a Sister – part 1

By Ray Smith - Oak Ridge City Historian

Lou Ann (Harris) Cristy asked to publish memories of her brother, Chris. I am pleased to do so. Chris was included in an earlier Historically Speaking column by Jack Bailey. Please learn about Chris' life from his sister's perspective.

Mathew Christian Harris, Jr. (Chris)

Chris died in medical care in Murfreesboro, Tennessee on January 26, 2024, with his wife beside him.

Chris was born July 13, 1943, in the Charles N. Bacon Hospital in Loudon County, TN. His Mother, Marguerite Eloise Carter Harris took him home to Lenior City and presented Chris to his sister, Lou Ann, who was 25 months old. She said to both, "You belong to each other!" That was the way it was for the rest of his life. By the time Chris was a year old our father and mother were divorced, and we were raised by a committee of Eloise and her parents. They lived in Marshall and Jackson Counties, Alabama, in Dutch Valley, Clinton, Rt. 1, and Oak Ridge TN. Chris entered Jefferson Junior High in 1955 and was graduated from Oak Ridge High School in 1962.

Once in Oak Ridge, Chris became employed at age 12 years with a Jackson Square route for The Knoxville Journal and The Oak Ridger newspapers, simultaneously. He was employed by the dental molder at Jackson Square and the barber at Elm Grove keeping their floors swept at the end of each day. He bought Mother Eloise's television. He achieved Eagle in Boy Scouts. At age 12 he was confirmed as a youth in the Lake City Methodist Church. Commonly the family would hear his voice at mealtime: "Who's going to ask the blessing?"

Chris earned a scholarship through the records set for the mile-relay (3:27.6) and the two-mile relay (8:09.7) in the Tennessee State High School Track and Field Championships in 1962. He ran track in his socks at the beginning. Coach Nick Orlando saw Chris running on Blankenship Field after school and asked Chris to run with the track team. The records show that 1962 was the last year that Oak Ridge High School won the Tennessee State Track and Field Championships. He attended Memphis State University, Tennessee Wesleyan College and various other colleges taking courses in which he was interested. His expressed a goal was "to be the President of the United States."

He registered for the U.S. Army in Clinton, TN., January 17, 1966, serving a total of 4.5 years on active duty. Then he served in the Army Reserves in Kentucky and Nashville, TN. He achieved the rank of Lt. Colonel at retirement. He was an active member of the American Legion Forty and Eight, a veterans organization dedicated to serving its community of Gallatin, TN. He was dedicated to the scholarships for nurses' education that the chapter sponsored.

Chris registered for the U. S. Army believing not in the reason for the war in Vietnam, but "not being able to allow another person to serve in MY stead for the United States." Like many others returning from service in Vietnam his health was compromised. In the Reserves he was especially effective serving as friend "official," per assignment of his superiors, to military men whose wives and girlfriends cut their relationships with them while the men served in the Vietnam War. Special thanks for Dr. Frank Genel-la of Oak Ridge, now deceased, for his close friendship. He worked for the Tennessee Valley Authority in Alabama, living in Langston, and

later transferring to Gallatin, Tennessee until retirement. He researched the life of "pure-bred" Brittany spaniels and had them trained as show-dogs.

November 18, 1989, he and Charlotte Ann Morris of Nashville married. The two welcomed their "pride and joy" in February 1991 with the arrival of Hilary Ann Harris. Among Chris' interests was his exploration of the life of the buffalo/bison. He purchased a large farm on the outskirts of Nashville and for decades attended annual Buffalo Conventions taking his family by car to see the sites enroute. At one time he owned eight buffaloes which he nurtured on a smaller farm until the discovery that the hay he served them was not nutritious enough for them to survive. The rest of his life he read buffalo journals.

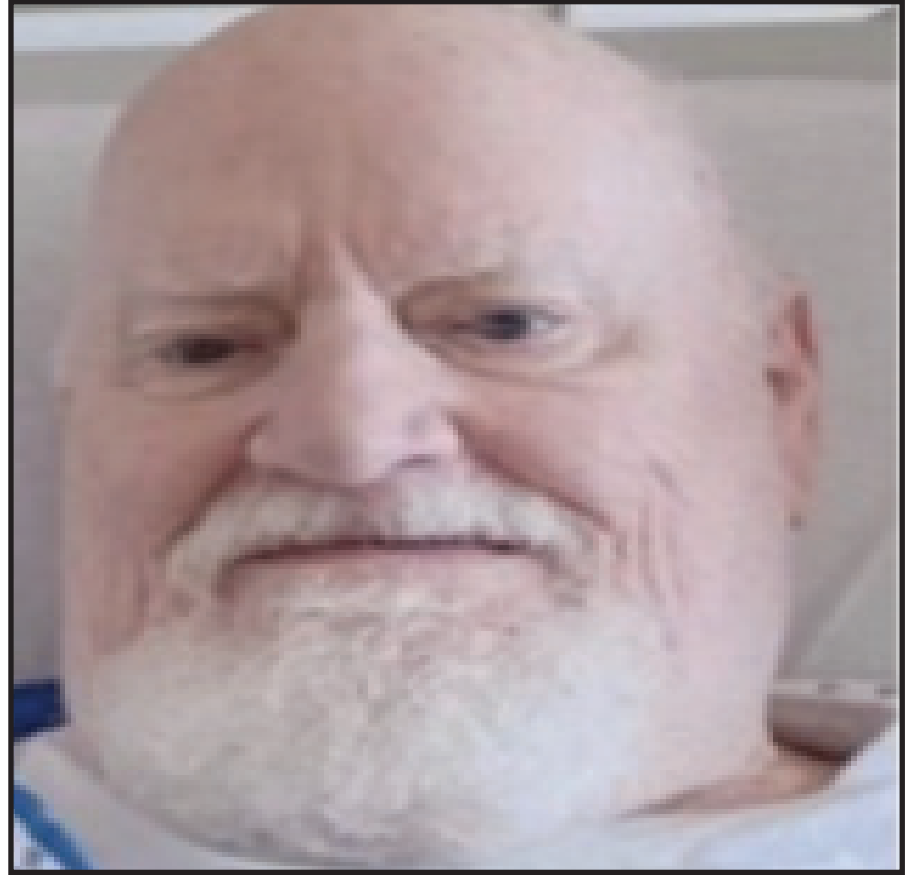
His last decades he pursued assets in real estate. He had an eye for purchasing property that was cheap now but had potential for the future. The farm 20 miles from Nashville and a few miles south of I-40 alongside I-840 was a good example. Not long after buying that property it was announced that there was to be a NASCAR racetrack to be built just off I-840 very near Chris' property. Chris then got the idea of a buffalo park that visitors to the track would be drawn to. But the racetrack was never built so the buffalo park did not happen. But this location near Nashville, 20 miles, and the two interstates was the ideal place for a cell phone tower. The value to the cell phone companies was great and Chris made a great profit selling a portion of the farm to them.

After retiring from TVA, he kept working as manager of night shifts at service stations, truck stops, convenience stores and banks. He was an avid collector of duck stamps and buffalo memorabilia. He grew and canned delicious tomatoes. An avid hunter, he had deerskins made into trophy mountings and custom deerskin coats and gloves for Mother and Lou Ann.

Deceased before Chris were his playmate uncle Joseph Sidney Carter, Jr. (died at age 15), Mother Marguerite Eloise Carter Harris; grandparents, Annie Lou Evans Carter and Joseph Sidney Carter, Sr.; aunts Ada Evans Carter, Wilma Maude Carter Holland, and Evelyn Hope Carter Blackerby (Awyer P. (Blackie)); cousins. Julia Lee Holland Gasque (Who was Chris' Best Woman at his and Charlotte's Wedding), (Mac Roy Gasque III).

Survivors are wife, Charlotte Ann Morris Harris; daughter, Hilary Ann Harris; son-in law Luis Ortega; grandson, Joaquin Ramon Ortega; granddaughter, Iris Mar Ortega, all of Nashville area. Sister, Lou Ann Harris Cristy and brothers-in-law, Stephen Samuel Cristy, Oak Ridge, TN, and Randy Morris of Antioch, TN; cousins, Carrie Lou Blackerby Keith (Arthur) of Canada, Mac Roy Gasque IV (Rebecca) of Kingston, TN and Carter Doran Gasque, Langston, Alabama; niece, Jennifer Lee Cristy Strawn (Ben); nephews, Matthew Joseph Cristy (Mary Abreu) and Samuel George Cristy (Celerina Miguel, deceased); grandnephews and nieces: Joshua Brown, Garrett Brown, Alexander Miguel Cristy, Bogart Strawn, Liesl Cristy, and Amelia Miguel Cristy

EXTRA special caregiver and family



This photo was taken after I groomed his beard just prior to the last in-person visit we shared, December 24, 2023.

(Courtesy of Lou Ann Cristy)

member: Lisa Marie Orman Bean made it possible for Chris to live and know his grandson, Joaquin, who was 14 months old when his grandfather died!

A private burial with full U.S. Army honors was held at the Harris Family Cemetery, Antioch, TN following services February 7, 2024, at Woodbine Funeral Services, Hickory Chapel, Nashville, TN.

Recollections from a sister:

The Oak Ridge Years

In 1955 we were able to move into Oak Ridge to live with our mother. Chris and I lived at 118 Tennessee Avenue. He really had a big world there. He met many boys and girls and could walk the few blocks to school at Jefferson Junior High.

We were "rural" moved to the city. Mother had commuted to us for twelve years. Being employed by the Atomic Energy Commission and having a steady career she decided that we could live with her, finally.

She found the E-2 apartment and went to Management Services Incorporated (MSI) to rent it. It was in walking distance for her work, most convenient from Jackson Square, and directly on the city bus route for Lou Ann to go to the high school. The apartment was "available," but the clerk told her it was not available to her.

She returns to her office and was discussing her disappointment at not being able to rent it. Her boss then, John Croxall, called MSI and told the clerk, "Do what you can to make that apartment available to El." (His nickname for Mother). Soon Mother got a call telling her that it was available. We later learned that the barrier had been that mother was a single parent (the term politically-correct in 2024). With two children there was concern that she might not be able to continue to pay the rent being a factor. When asked how the clerk had gotten it available for Mother they explained: There had been a murder in that apartment. When the couple who were touring it saw the blood in the closet floor where it had not been cleaned, the couple declined the offer.

So, Mother who still lived in the dorm was able to access renting it. MSI at the dorm provided Mother with a disinfectant and a lamp from their lobby to use to prepare for our arrival three days before school started when Chris and I became new resident of Oak Ridge, TN.

- Continued on Page 8

**Historically Speaking
Recollections From a Sister – part 1**

By Ray Smith - Oak Ridge City Historian

Mother had not intended to share that information about the murder with us. However, a neighbor, Mrs. Taylor who was employed at the post office then at Jackson Square, told Chris, age twelve, the story. Chris told Mother who was aware that Chris often had bad dreams he shared with us, responded. "Now, had we moved into a house where someone died of a contagious disease, it might be somewhat harmful for a while. But when someone is killed our house is not contaminated." She explained that she disinfected the house.

Chris and I have hearkened back to the attitudes of our times often. We both expressed to each other the strength we gained for living through them, especially due to the foresight and the calm way Mother helped us as a trio face difficult times.

We moved to be with Mother according to her to find a path through which we would attain college degrees and have the opportunities she could best provide for us.

We had just the furniture we needed, a bed each, a chair and sofa in the living room and a dining table. Chris's and my beds and two matching chests of drawers were former original Oak Ridge dorm furniture our family had purchased for the grandparents' home. It was comforting to have those familiar items which lessened stressful situations. It turned out that those two beds and chests of drawers have been passed through my sons, grandchildren, and recently passed to Chris's grandsons Joaquin and his soon to arrive little brother.

At twelve Chris began working and saw himself "the man of the family and needing to earn money." Mother encouraged him to use his money for what he needed. After the television he purchased "for the family," he ordered a taxidermy kit. He nursed a stray cat who was always getting in fights at night. He kept a pet squirrel which gnawed the bottom of the closet door trying to get out. He was a young "businessman" ordering a classy bow and arrow set he took on a hike with the Boy Scouts.

By that time, he had become adventure-some and carried other scouts' food items which were too heavy for them. Then he sold them back

to them for a profit when they arrived at the trail end and campsite. Once he left his bow and arrow set on the trail and when he returned it had been taken. It was a hard lesson from which I could not protect him.

Since he was interested in camping, we cleared the land making a lawn of property behind our apartment reaching a creek that ran parallel to East Tennessee Avenue and diagonally from Jackson Square gas station behind present-day Big Ed's Pizza. He purchased a tent, and we camped on summer weekend nights. The police told Mother that some young boys roaming the empty dormitories nearby at night had caused damage. So, to be sure Chris was protected from those issues Mother and I took turns staying up to "chaperone" the campouts.

I might have joined him sleeping out more, but we discovered that grass fleas were attracted to me when I took my turn at the tent. We had to be careful that I removed my shoes and socks before entering the house because the fleas would collect in our area rug where I commonly sat in our living room after my chaperone shift. The grass fleas would continue to eat my feet and legs for days following. The fleas did not bother Mother nor Chris.

One camping night Chris decided he wanted a cold coke. He left home about 10:00 p.m. and went to the Studio Apartments, now located across from what is currently the Soup Kitchen, to obtain his coke from the vending machine in the lobby. The machine did not return his money nor did it release the coke bottle. Trying to get the bottle to release, he stretched his hand and arm



FABULOUS RECORD—The Oak Ridge two-mile relay team, pictured above, set a new record Saturday in the State Track Meet in Memphis. The quartet of Wildcats ran the distance in 8:09.7, bettering the old mark by nine seconds. Left to right—Jack Bailey, Charles Kite, Chris Harris, and Bob Taylor.

This photo was published in the Oak Ridger, March 23, 2012, in "Historically Speaking." It was shared in his funeral video. The contributor of that story was Jack Bailey, teammate. Lou Ann was away from home attending Tennessee Wesleyan College as a junior when he earned this publicity and awards. He was a specimen of excellent health in 1962, a senior at Oak Ridge High School soon to graduate.

(Courtesy of Jack Bailey and Oak Ridge High School)

up the channel. He was caught in the machine. A patrolman came and rescued him. The patrolman brought him home and talked to mother seemingly to decide if Chris was trying to rob the vending machine. It was determined that Chris told the truth, "That machine took my money, so it owed me a coke."

Thanks, Lou Ann Cristy, for your fond memories of your brother, Chris.

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IRS workers reinstated



David Zubler
Columnist

Approximately 6,500 IRS probationary workers have been reinstated who had been fired last month.

Federal judges in two separate rulings ordered the Treasury Department to rehire probationary employees.

The Trump administration promptly appealed the cases. White House Press Secretary Karoline Leavitt called the court's injunctions "entirely unconstitutional". The fired IRS employees received a letter telling them that they had been fired for

poor performance. But the administration had not conducted any such performance assessment.

Michelle Bercovici, a lawyer who represents federal workers said, "When an agency acts, based on false information, not only does it set the action up for being overturned," she said. "It also means the agency is not going to have many defenses to its actions and could be liable for fees."

The federal government will pay probationary employees who were laid off in February, not to work while lawsuits work their way through the courts. An IRS email to reinstated employees stated, "While you are being reinstated to federal service, you are also being placed on administrative leave. You should not report to duty or perform any work until receiving further guidance".

"The tremendous uncertainty associated with this confusion and these administrative burdens impede supervisors from appropriately managing their workforce" said Mark Green, an assistant secretary of the Interior Department, in his declaration filed with the court.

All employees reinstated would need to be onboarded again. The process would include reinstating applicable security clearances, reenrolling in benefits programs, and receiving government-furnished equipment, and obtaining new security badges.

"Work schedules and assignments are effectively being tied to hearing and briefing schedules set by the courts. It will be extremely difficult to assign new work to reinstated individuals in light of the uncertainty over their future status" Green said.

Doreen Greenwald, national president of the National Treasury Employees Union, said "While placing these employees on paid administrative leave still deprives agencies of their service, it does allow these mistreated civil servants to continue to receive their pay and benefits as the legal battle continues," Greenwald said Monday. "This is a chaotic and disrespectful way to treat the federal workforce that could have easily been avoided if the administration had followed the law in the first place and not indiscriminately fired thousands of employees for no reason."

Jeff Eppler, a former IRS manager who retired at the end of 2023, said "It's very frustrating for the taxpayers if you're not able to get in to talk to anyone, or if you have to sit online for an hour and a half before you can talk to someone. Obviously, that's a major frustration for our taxpayers," Eppler said.

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.

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John Chapter 4



Melvin Howard

(John 4:1-26) Jesus and the Samaritan Woman: When Christ heard that the Pharisees were aware that he was making and immersing more disciples than John (though Jesus did not personally do the immersing, but indirectly through his disciples), he knew opposition in Judaea was mounting. So he departed for Galilee in the north. Normally, Jews bypassed Samaria, detouring around the hostile territory by means of the Transjordan road. John's expression, "he must needs" may suggest a divine imperative (Lk. 2:49; Jn. 9:4). The Lord and his disciples

came to the community of Sychar (possibly 'Askar) about a half-mile from Jacob's well. The Lord was tired from the travel and so he sat down by the well while his disciples went into the village to purchase food. John says it was the sixth hour (v. 6). According to Jewish times, this would be at noon. This is the common view. However, if John, in the late first century (in the post-destruction-of-Judaism era), was using Roman time, it could have been six a.m., or more likely six p.m., since this was the normal time for women obtaining water.

A Samaritan woman comes to the well to draw water, and Jesus engages her in conversation "Give me a drink." She is shocked that a Jew would make such a request of a Samaritan--especially a woman! The Savior broke two barriers at once. Normally, Jews had no dealings with Samaritans, who were considered to be a mongrel breed--a cross between Hebrews (of the northern kingdom) and the Assyrians who had invaded Israel centuries earlier (2 Kgs. 17:24-31). Jesus replied that if this woman knew about "the gift of God" (v. 10), she would request it. The "gift" is subsequently defined as "living water" (v. 10; an obvious figure of speech), "water" that could quench one's 'thirst' eternally (v. 14).

The woman, not understanding the Lord's symbolic terminology, protested with what she believed to be a valid argument. "Sir, you have no vessel to use, and the well is deep." Today the well is about 125 feet deep; in the seventh century A.D., it measured over 200 feet. The biblical record is very precise. She wondered: "Are you greater than our father Jacob" who used this well? Note her allusion to a Hebrew ancestry. The Lord continued his cryptic dialog. "Those who drank [a present tense; drink habitually] of this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks [takes a drink--note the contrast in tenses] of my water will never thirst. Rather, such becomes a spring that bubbles up unto eternal life." It is no mere placid "well." The "water" Christ provides can issue in eternal life, but the consumer must choose to drink (Rev. 22:17). Though the woman still literalized his language, she wanted that water.

To establish his credibility as a spokesman for God, the Lord said: "Go call your husband" (v. 16). He was using "husband" in an accommodative sense; presently, he will expose the man as a non-husband. Words take their meanings from context. Her response--"I have no husband"--was evasive. It probably was a lie from her vantage point; from the divine perspective it was true. Christ answered: You have, in fact, related the actual truth. You have had five husbands, and the man with whom you now are living is not your husband [in any legitimate sense]." Shocking? Yes. Brutal?

No. Necessary? Absolutely!

The impact was immediate and turned and turned out to be an index to the poor woman's sincere heart--in a sinful body. The conversation quickly turned to religion. First, she acknowledges Jesus as a prophet (one with supernatural insight). She is "not far from the kingdom." Second, she draws a contrast between Hebrew worship and Samaritan worship. "Our fathers worshipped on this mountain" (v. 20). This was nearby Mt. Gerizim (2,849) feet high) on which a Samaritan temple had been built long ago (mentioned by Josephus), but which has been destroyed at least a hundred years earlier. "You Jews contend that Jerusalem is the appropriate place. What, therefore, is the truth about worship?"

The Lord responds with a stunning answer. The time would come when neither on Gerizim nor in Jerusalem would the Father be worshipped. (This could have been veiled allusion to the eventual destruction of the temple in A.D. 70). He continues with strong language: "You [Samaritans] worship that which you do not know; we [Jews] worship that which we know, for salvation is of [out of] the Jews" (v. 22). This final phrase is a reference to himself.

Jesus then speaks to the nature of "true" worship--that which the Father seeks in those who would worship him. Three components are specified: object, attitude, and form. (a) God, a Spirit (not a work of gold or stone), is the proper object of worship. (This context focuses on the Father. However, since both the Son and the Holy Spirit are deity, they too are proper recipients of worship.) (b) There must be an appropriate disposition in worship--one of sincerity and reverence (Josh. 24:14). This effectively negates the bizarre notion that everything one does in worship (c) Worship must be offered consistent with the prescribed pattern of truth. Otherwise, it is "will-worship" (Col. 3:16-17; 2:23).

The woman attempted to absorb this dramatic new body of information. Though her perception was severely skewed, she said: "I know that Messiah is coming [the Messiah]...when he arrives he will declare [[in a fresh, authoritative way] unto us all things." (The Samaritans believed that only the five books of Mo-

ses were inspired; thus, she must have believed the Pentateuch contained messianic prophecy.) The "bomb" then was dropped. The Lord said: "I who am speaking to you am he" (v.26).

(John 4:27-38) The disciples return: At this time, the disciples returned from the nearby community. They were amazed that he was talking with a woman, yet none of them asked about the conversation (v. 27). In the meantime, the Samaritan woman, in her excitement, left her water pot and returned to the village, saying (present tense; repeatedly): "Come, see a man who told me all things I ever did." The Lord had not told her "all things" she ever did, but it was so significant she felt as if her entire life had been laid bare. Then she asked, with psychological brilliance: "This couldn't be the Messiah, could it?" (so the emphasis in Greek). She didn't adamantly affirm it; but skillfully she planted a seed! The people streamed out of the city (the Greek tense) to see him (v. 30).

The disciples encouraged Jesus to eat something, but the Savior said he had food of which they knew not. They misunderstood his saying, but perhaps caught the gist when he further said that his "food" (nourishment) was to accomplish the will of his Father. He subordinated the physical to the spiritual. The expression, "four months" to harvest time (v. 35), may be a calendar comment (which would make this December-January) or a mere proverbial saying; in either case, it is mentioned to contrast what is normally expected with what is occurring presently. The Samaritan "harvest" has ripened immediately! Christ then emphasizes the cooperative labors between the sower and the reaper; each depends upon the other) v. 36-38).

(John 4:39-42) Fantastic Success in Sychar: Out of that city many of the Samaritans believed on the Lord. And it was because of the evangelistic zeal of one woman of a disreputable character. The Samaritan people kept begging (the force of the Greek) him to stay with them, he remained there for two days. How very different from the time when he was refused Samaritan hospitality (Lk. 9:51). Those two days were a tremendous success, for "many more believed." And they indicated to the woman that at first their belief was grounded in her testimony; now they believed on the basis of what they had heard personally. They then "knew" (fully knew) that this indeed was the Savior of the world (v. 42). That "world" included not just Jews, but Samaritans as well! Luke's account in the book of Acts is a marvelous follow-up to John's record (8:5).

(John 4:43-45) The Galilean Ministry Begins (Mt. 4:12; Mk. 1:14-15; Lk. 4:14-15): Jesus departed from Samaria and crossed over into Galilee. The migration is explained as being due to the fact that a prophet has no honor in his own country. Some interpret "his own country" as Judaea, while others suggest that he had Galilee in mind. The latter seems to best fit the context. Though his own country normally might resist him (Nazareth [Lk. 4:16-30]), he nonetheless would have a ready reception in Galilee, for many of these people had been in Jerusalem for the Passover feast and they saw his deeds there (v. 45).

(John 4:46-54) The Nobleman's Son: When the Lord entered Galilee, he bypassed his hometown of Nazareth and went straight to Cana, where he had performed the water-to-wine miracle. There was a certain "nobleman" (king's officer) there. He apparently was on the staff of Herod Antipas, who held the title of a king (Mk. 6:14). The man had a son in Capernaum (sixteen miles away) who was very sick--even at the point of death. When the nobleman heard that Christ was in Galilee, he went to him and begged him to come down to the community and heal his son. The Lord replied: "Unless you [plural; the people of the area] see signs and wonders, you will never believe." This might superficially sound gruff, but it was not. Jesus was not reticent to test people's faith. It brought out the best in them (Mt. 15:21).

Accordingly, Christ said, "Go your way, your son lives." The tense suggests from that moment onward his life was fully restored. The power of the Lord's word, spanning the miles, was amazing indeed. John records that the nobleman "believed" (instantly) without even knowing the result by report or observation. As he traveled homeward, he was met by servants who informed him of his son's welfare. When he inquired as to the precise time, he was told it was the seventh hour of the previous day. Clearly, it was not a gradual recovery, but instantaneous. The father then knew for certain there was no natural explanation for the healing. The "second sign" refers to Galilee (2:9), for he had done signs in Jerusalem (2:23).

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