

RUSTY WALLACE

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DAY
2025**

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Psalm 100:3

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WEEKLY WEATHER



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Wed 21	74°/54°	
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**Ms. Avery Pearl
Pet Columnist**

Pet Perspective

Congratulations Class of 2025!

Stay safe. Never stop learning. Be kind. Be humble.

Remember where you came from as you spread your wings and explore this wonderful, beautiful, scary world.

May God bless you all!

From Morgan County Today, Ms Ivory and me, Ms Avery Pearl!

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



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.

Morgan County Chamber of Commerce along with Roane Alliance will once again have their ROAM'R Jeep Festival.

This year it will be Saturday, June 7th beginning again at Swan Pond in Harriman.

The ride will begin at 3pm and will end at Brushy Mountain Prison.

I am asking any vendors that would like to participate to let me know ASAP. 423-539-1769

Several of you sponsored this event last year (thank you) and I'm hoping we can get even more this year.

We are looking for Title Sponsorship - 300.00. Your logo will be displayed on all material and signage
Also looking for Stage and Contest Sponsors - 100.00. Logo displayed on/around stage and contest areas.

City of Sunbright Meeting

AGENDA FOR May 20, 2025 - Meeting to start at 6pm

CALL TO ORDER:

PRAYER:

PLEDGE:

Agenda:

-Proposed Budget 2025-2026

-Renewed contract with Morgan County Sherriff's Department

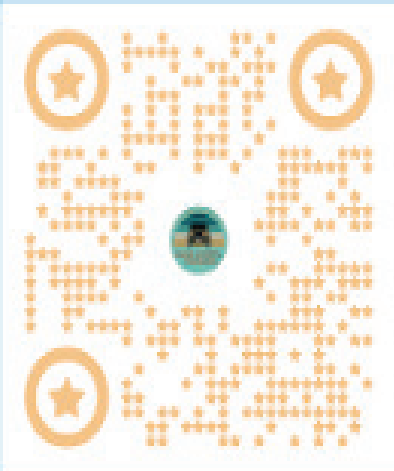
-Discussion of Hometown Hero Banners

-Beautification Committee will meet immediately following.

2025 ROAM'R JEEP FESTIVAL



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— In Loving Memory —

Mallory “Mel” Colin Shannon, 46



Mallory “Mel” Colin Shannon, age 46, passed away peacefully May 9, 2025 at his home.

He is survived by his wife Heather Shannon of 25 years. Daughters Kaylin and Khloe Shannon. Father Coy Shannon, siblings Ona (Joey) Bunch, Sonia Byrge, Ellery (Rechelle) Shannon. Sister-in-law Melissa (Adam) Stephens. Nieces and Nephews: Ashton and Kaitlyn Byrge, Dylan and Bethany Bunch, Bryson, Alley, and Addison Shannon, Gracie, Taylor, and D.J. Stephens.

He is proceeded in death by his mother Betty Shannon, in laws Roger and Anna Honeycutt, nephew Levi Shannon. Grandparents: Herbert and Elizabeth Shannon and Wiley and Kizzie Carroll.

The family will receive friends Tuesday, May 13, 2025 at Schubert Funeral Home in Wartburg from 12:00 – 2:00 p.m. Graveside services will follow in the Mill Creek Cemetery in Sunbright.

Pallbearers are Kaylin and Khloe Shannon, Peyton Smith, Jacob Lowe, Adam Stephens, Ashton Byrge, Dylan and Joey Bunch.

Schubert Funeral Home is honored to serve the family of Mallory “Mel” Colin Shannon.

Psalm 123:1

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



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





David Zubler
Columnist

Benefits of the new tax bill

The House Ways and Means Committee voted in favor of the bill, making the 2017 tax cuts permanent and adding other deductions. The extension of the 2017 Tax Cuts and Jobs Act (TCJA) provisions would mean that most people wouldn't see much of a change in their tax brackets because their tax brackets would remain at the same levels they've been at since the cuts took effect in 2018.

According to the House Ways and Means Committee, the proposed bill would provide taxpayers with an average \$1,300 tax reduction.

The bill would increase the standard deduction by \$1,000 for individuals and \$2,000 for married couples from 2025 to 2028.

The bill eliminates the tax on tipped income and overtime pay, but only from 2025 through 2028. The bill would include "an above-the-line deduction for qualified tips received by an individual in an occupation which traditionally and customarily receives tips during a given taxable year".

The Child Tax Credit increases from \$2,000 to \$2,500 per child for 2025 through 2028 but drops to \$2,000 after that.

The TCJA put a cap of \$10,000 on the deduction of state income taxes and property taxes. The new deduction cap would rise to \$30,000 under the bill, but the bill would include income thresholds before the deduction phases down to at least \$10,000.

Senior citizens 65 and older would get an extra deduction of \$4,000 per filer. The new deduction could be used by anyone who itemizes or takes the standard deduction. However, there would be an income limit, with the \$4,000 deduction available for people with a modified adjusted gross income of \$75,000 or less for single filers and \$150,000 for married couples who file joint returns.

The bill would also allow a deduction for vehicle interest for up to \$10,000. The deduction would be phased out for people with a modified adjusted gross income above \$100,000 for single filers or \$200,000 for

married couples. Vehicles must have been assembled in the U.S. to qualify for the deduction. This deduction would last through 2028.

There is no plan to eliminate taxes on Social Security income. Eliminating the tax on Social Security was controversial because those taxes fund Social Security. Eliminating tax on Social Security would speed up the insolvency of its trust funds.

The bill increases the Qualified Business Income (QBI) deduction from 20% to 23%. This deduction would allow small businesses to subtract 23% of their qualified business income from their taxable income. Businesses qualifying for the QBI deduction include sole proprietorships (often gig workers), partnerships, and S corporations.

The bill increases the estate tax exemption to \$15 million, adjusted for inflation, and permanently extends the provision.

Several experts have questioned the bill for different reasons. According to Congress' Joint Committee on Taxation, the bill would add \$3.8 trillion to the deficit through 2034.

"Many of the new provisions in the bill would make the tax code even more complex", said Garrett Watson, the Tax Foundation's director of policy analysis.

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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Jeremiah 29:11

11 For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the Lord, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end.



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Historically Speaking

Flatwater Tales Storytelling Festival

By Ray Smith - Oak Ridge City Historian

Kay Brookshire brings us the details of the upcoming Flatwater Tales Storytelling Festival.

Anne Shimojima's family kept a secret from her, though she's not sure why. She discovered it about 20 years ago when she started work on a family history project, planning to collect old family photos and learn more about her ancestral home.

When she learned the secret, the Japanese American storyteller decided to take her family's story beyond a family history project. A storyteller who has collected humorous and thoughtful folk tales from Japan and other countries, she created the story of her family that has become her signature piece. In it, she introduces audiences to her grandparents, who immigrated to the United States from Japan, before describing what they and their children encountered here.

Her inspiring story, "Looking Like the Enemy: An American WWII Story," will be presented during the Flatwater Tales Storytelling Festival on June 6 and 7 in Oak Ridge.

"It is the story of my family coming to the United States from Japan and their experience during World War II, where they were incarcerated with over 125,000 other Japanese Americans, two-thirds of them American citizens, behind barbed wire, for the crime of looking like the enemy," Shimojima explains in a YouTube video about her appearance here.

In her story, she shares photos of her five family members – her grandparents and three of their adult children – who were incarcerated, as well as pictures from the National Archives of the camps. Her father, who was working in Hawaii at the time, avoided the forced move to the camps.

Shimojima grew up in a three-flat apartment building on Chicago's north side with three generations of family living upstairs and downstairs from her, her parents and her on the middle floor. Her grandmother, who lived downstairs, never talked about that experience and had died before Shimojima started researching her family history.

"My family never talked about it. By far, most Japanese American families never talked about it. I'm not sure if it was because it was too traumatic, or they were trying to put a difficult past behind them, or there was a sense of shame, because they had literally been in prison. But for what?" she related in an interview.

Much later, one survivor remained from her family's experience in the camps, a 91-year-old "very good-natured auntie" who was ready to talk with Shimojima about her experiences.

Thanks to sponsors, Shimojima will offer a free presentation of "Looking Like the Enemy" at 3 p.m. Friday, June 6, at the American Museum of Science and Energy, 115 E. Main St., Oak Ridge. Sponsors are AMSE, Flatwater Tales, and the Oak Ridge Heritage and Preservation Association.

After that, the Flatwater Tales Storytelling Festival offers audiences opportunities to hear the festival's three storytellers perform different stories at each event June 6 and 7. Shows will be at 7 p.m. Friday, June 6, and at 10 a.m., 2 p.m., and 7 p.m. Saturday, June 7, at the Historic Grove Theater, 123 Randolph Road, Oak Ridge.

Tickets may be purchased online at <https://events.humanitix.com/2025-flatwater-ales-storytelling-festival/tickets> or at the Flatwater Tales web site, <https://flatwatertales.com>, or in person with cash or check at Calamity's Coffee, 219 Jackson Square, Oak Ridge. In-

dividual tickets for each of the four shows in which all three storytellers will perform are \$15 for each show. One ticket for all four shows is \$45, for only the cost of three tickets.

Shimojima, who is appearing for the first time here, will join two favorite storytellers from past festivals, each telling different stories at all four events at the Grove on June 6 and 7.

The Rev. Robert B. Jones Sr., an inspirational storyteller who celebrates history, humor and the power of American Roots music, returns to the festival for the second time by popular request. Rev. Jones will headline the 7 p.m. June 6 performance with his story, "The History of America through Music." He will also present "Crazy in Alabama," a musical medley of soulful stories about life at Grandma's, accompanied by his rhythm and blues guitar, at 2 p.m. Saturday, June 7.

Bil Lepp, a festival crowd favorite, is an award-winning West Virginia storyteller, author, recording artist, and History Channel host, who spins humorous, family-friendly tall tales and stories. An occasional host of NPR's internationally syndicated "Mountain Stage," Lepp has been described as "a side-splittingly funny man" and as telling "tales that will tickle your funny bone." At the 7 p.m. show on Saturday, June 7, Lepp will present "Halfdollar Hijinx," hilarious tales of Bil and his childhood friend Skeeter.

Lepp will also present a free show, "Taste of the Tales," at 10 a.m. Friday, June 6, at the Oak Ridge Senior Center, 1405 Oak Ridge Turnpike, for ages 18 and up, as a gift from Flatwater Tales and the City of Oak Ridge.

Shimojima, a professional storyteller for more than 40 years, will headline the 10 a.m. show on Saturday, June 7, with her "Sakura Tales: Stories from Japan."

An elementary school media specialist, Shimojima took a master's level storytelling course that had her telling stories to children in the school's library. She loved the experience.

"A traditional librarian uses storytelling to bring children and books together," Shimojima related. "From the moment I first told a story to my students, I was hooked, because of their reaction." Before that, she read books to introduce children to authors and illustrators.

"The difference, when I put a book down and look into their eyes, there is nothing between you and the kids. It would be like they were hungry for stories. They would be staring at me. And I could tell they did not see me. I could tell they were looking at the images in their minds.

"It was the most wonderful thing," she said. "I loved storytelling, and I brought it into the curriculum whenever I could."

Shimojima and a friend soon drove 12 hours from Chicago to Jonesborough, Tenn., to attend the International Storytelling Festival there. Then she took part in Chicago's Wild Onion Storytelling Festival for several years. And more recently, she has returned to Jonesborough,



Anne Shimojima (Courtesy of Anne Shimojima)



Bil Lepp (Courtesy of Bil Lepp)



Robert B. Jones (Courtesy of Robert Jones)

where she has been storyteller-in-residence at the International Storytelling Center three times, most recently in 2024.

Her story resulting from her family history search eventually brought her closer to family she had lost touch with in Japan. Invited by the government of Japan to present her family story in 2019 at three Tokyo high schools, government officials offered to take her to her ancestral home of Matsumoto, home of her father's mother before she immigrated to the U.S.

"At that point, we had lost all ties to Japan," she said. Her older relatives had died, and she and other third generation Japanese American relatives didn't speak Japanese. Her father's mother's last name was Ito, similar to Smith here, making it difficult to research.

Historically Speaking

Flatwater Tales Storytelling Festival

By Ray Smith - Oak Ridge City Historian

She still had an address of her father’s cousin in Matsumoto from 40 years before, went there with an interpreter and a guide, and connected with the cousin’s widow, still in the same house, and her two sons. With family names and addresses from them, she was delighted to find the Shimojimo family registry going back to about 1800.

“How lucky I was, just for the trip, but the chance to feel much closer with my Japanese history,” Shimojima said.

Her source for Japanese folk tales and those from other countries was not her family but section 391.2, the folklore section in libraries.



Anne Shimojima’s grandparents, Seitaro and Shikiye Shimojima, were among her family members sent to incarceration camps for Japanese Americans during World War II. The photo was taken around 1913. (Courtesy of Anne Shimojima)

“One of the interesting things about reading stories from all over is that you find different versions of basically the same story from all over the world. That really suggests to us that we are all the same underneath, that we do have all the same loves and hates and journey on the quest,” Shimojima said. “Even though we are from all over the world, we really are members of the human race.

In 2022, she received the Order of the Rising Sun, Silver Rays award, conferred by the Emperor of Japan, for her family story and for promoting Japanese culture in the U.S. through her folk tales. She was presented with the award at the home of the Japanese Consul-General in Chicago.

Her CD, “Sakura Tales: Stories from Japan,” received a Storytelling World Resource Honor Award in 2019. She received the Circle of Excellence ORACLE Award in 2024 from the National Storytelling Network, given to those recognized by their peers as master storytellers.

Shimojima has told her family’s story about 170 times since 2007. “I’m a librarian. I keep records,” she noted. The first time was at a storytelling festival with a theme of social justice near her home. One later presentation was particularly memorable.

“Years ago I was in Washington, D.C. There was an exhibit at the Smithsonian American Art Museum of artifacts and objects created by people in camps – wood carvings, paintings, textiles, little bird pins, necklaces out of seashells,” she recalled. “Halfway through the story, a man in the back, who looked like he was Japanese American, started to weep. And he wept through the end of the story. After that, he told me ‘My family was in the same camp (in Utah) as your family.’”

Her storytelling has brought her to schools, festivals, libraries, museums, senior communities, and conferences, wherever people gather to hear a good story. Soon, it will bring her to Oak Ridge.

“It is a great privilege to do this work,” Shimojima related.

Oak Ridge Driving Tour

As a special, free feature of the festival, Oak Ridge City Historian Ray Smith will again offer the Historic Tour of Oak Ridge for both visitors here for the festival and residents from 12:30-2:45 p.m. Friday, June 6, starting at the Historic Grove Theater. Participants are asked to register for the event at the online ticket site.

The tour will include a visit to John Hendrix’s grave and stops at The Alexander Guest House lobby, the Oak Ridge International Friendship Bell, the Secret City Commemorative Walk, and the Scarboro Community Center. The self-driving guided tour will feature Jackson Square and the east portion of the Oak Ridge Historic District.

For more information, see the website, <https://flatwatertales.com>. The Flatwater Tales Storytelling Festival, which originated in 2018, is led by community volunteers, including volunteers from the three Rotary Clubs in Oak Ridge.

Sponsors of the Flatwater Tales Storytelling Festival include CNS-Y-12 as the presenting sponsor, and Pinnacle Financial Partners, Explore Oak Ridge, and the Breakfast, Noon and Sunset Rotary Clubs in Oak Ridge.

Thanks, Kay, the Flatwater Tales Storytelling Festival is now a well-established annual event for Oak Ridge. People come from all around to enjoy top-quality storytelling.



Anne Shimojima’s grandparents, Shikiye and Seitaro Shimojima, are pictured here with their oldest daughter Mary, the aunt Anne interviewed about family in the incarceration camps for Japanese Americans in World War II. The photo was taken around 1914-1915. (Courtesy of Anne Shimojima)



Seitaro Shimojima, Anne Shimojima’s grandfather, is shown in 1918 or 1919 with two of his four children, George, Anne’s father, and Mary, the aunt who revealed her family’s secret. (Courtesy of Anne Shimojima)



John Chapter 12



Melvin Howard

(John 12:1-8) The Anointing at Bethany (Mt. 26:6-13; Mk. 14:3-9): It was now the week before Christ’s death. Jesus returned to Bethany where he recently had raised Lazarus from the dead. For a discussion of this anointing event, see Matthew’s account.

(John 12:12-19) The Triumphal Entry (Mt. 21:1-11; Mk. 11:1-11; Lk. 19:29-44): read Matthew’s account.

(John 12:20-22) Gentile Interest in Christ: Through the Old Testament principally is

concerned with the development of the Hebrew nation in view of the coming Messiah through that lineage, God always loved and had a redemptive interest in the Gentiles (all non-Hebrews). The promise to Abraham was that through his seed “all nations of the earth” would be blessed (Gen. 22:17-18). The Old Testament Scriptures are replete with pledges of Gentile access to salvation (Isa. 2:2-4). There would be, however, a time lapse plan on entrance into the kingdom of Christ (Rom. 1:16).

Preliminary to the Passover celebration, there was a Jewish migration up to the holy city. On this occasion, among the stream of pilgrims there were “Greeks” as well. The term is generic for any citizen of the Greek-speaking world and is the equivalent of “Gentile.” Gentiles could incorporate themselves into the family of Judaism by converting formally to the Jews’ religion via circumcision (Acts 16:3). These were called proselytes (Acts 2:10). Or they might renounce paganism and loosely associate with the Hebrews; such were called “God-fearers” (Acts 10:2; 17:4). The Greeks approached Philip saying, “Sir, we would like to see Jesus.” Philip conveyed the message to Andrew; then both of these approached the Lord with the request. Surprisingly, Jesus does not directly respond. He understands that even the disciples do not yet comprehend the plan of incremental entrance into the kingdom---in spite of their earlier instruction (Mt. 10:5-6). This was not the time for an interview with Gentiles.

(John 12:23-36) The hour has arrived: The Lord’s response to Philip and Andrew was indirect: “The hour is come, that the Son of Man should be glorified.” The divine “clock” was ticking loudly. His death was literally but hours away, and there were so many things they did not yet understand. The apostles themselves were about to pass through a series of events that would strain their faith beyond anything they ever imagined. It was not the time for a discussion of other levels of theological interest.

By means of a farming illustration, Christ pointed out that a grain of wheat must die before it can produce fruit. He was to be the fulfillment of that prophetic death. He cautions about the coming test they would face. If they loved their own lives more than truth, they would lose everything; if they “hated” their lives (an idiom suggesting they must be willing to sacrifice their lives for the cause if necessary), life eternal would be their reward (v. 25). Those who wish to serve him must be willing to follow him. Such a one, God himself would honor.

Again the Lord had a wave of anguish, a perfectly understandable aspect of his human emotions. He confessed: “My soul is troubled.” He was not afraid to share his feelings with the disciples. “Troubled” signifies “stressed, agitated.” The latter portion of verse twenty-seven is subject to two possibilities. The sense could be a request: “I don’t know what to say! O Father, save me from this hour!” Or it might be: “Should I ask the Father to save me from this hour? No, because this is the reason for which I entered this world. Father, glorify your name.” Was it a temporary moment of weakness (as in Gethsemane) or a statement of full confidence? Either view is possible with no disrespect to the Lord.

God then spoke from heaven: “I have glorified it; and I will glorify it again.” This was the third and final audible acknowledgement from the Father during the ministry of Christ (Mt. 3:17; 17:5). This incident was somewhat analogous to that when Saul was confronted by Christ on the road to Damascus: a thunderous sound was heard, but not all understood what was said (v. 29; Acts 9:7; 22:9). Jesus declared it was a “voice,” but the message was not for his sake, it was for theirs, those who understood---namely those who were sincere disciples (v. 30).

The Lord then uttered this remarkable statement: “Now is a judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out” (v. 31). Several points are worthy of reflection: (a) In some sense, Satan is the “prince of this world.” The world population has surrendered to him through sin. His diabolical day’s, however, are numbered. (b) With the impending death and resurrection of Christ, the beginning of the end will have been initiated. Jesus continued: “If I be lifted up....” The term “if” in this text does not express doubt. It can be employed with the meaning “since” or “when” (3:14; 1 Jn. 3:2). “Lifted up” depicts the manner of his death by crucifixion (3:14; 8:28). He will “draw” people to himself by his teaching (see 6:44-45). “All men” does not affirm universalism, but the potential that embraces all---“whosoever will.”

The crowd suggested that their perception of the Messiah, according to the Old Testament, was that he would live forever (Ezek. 37:25; Dan. 7:14). They probably did not fully understand what he meant by “lifted up,” but they seemed to sense it indicated a termination of some kind. The Lord did not respond to their question. It was too late for debating. He simply emphasized that “the light” would be with them for only a “little while.” They were encouraged to “walk” (pursue) his light while yet available. If they remained I “darkness,” such would lead them to a destination they could not yet imagine. At this point, Christ left them and concealed himself from the crowds.

(John 12:37-43) Blind Eyes, Hardened Hearts: With a plaintive note, John observed that even though the Lord has done so many signs in their presence (21:25), they continued disbelieving his claims of being the Messiah, God’s Son. Actually, this stubborn unbelief was foretold by Isaiah seven centuries earlier. They were spiritually blind because they had hardened their hearts to the truth. In making his point, John has combined prophetic statements from Isaiah 53:1 and 6:10---obviously being totally unfamiliar with the modernistic theory that two different writers produced these quotations. They are even connected by the term “again” (v. 39).

Moreover, John affirms that Isaiah (6:10) saw Christ’s glory and spoke of him (v. 41). Many of these people had reached a point where they just “could not believe” (v. 39). When one rejects the truth long enough, he may develop a spiritual cardiosclerosis that is incurable! Nevertheless, “many of the rulers” believed on him, but for fear of the Pharisees they would not openly acknowledge it. But it was more than fear; they loved the glory of men more than that of God. Christianity is a matter of conviction, not convenience. Some rulers (like Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathaea), however, were of a different caliber.

(John 12:44-50) Believe in Me or Stand in Judgment: Christ emphasized, as he had done so much before, that to believe on him was to believe on the Father; the two are theologically inseparable. You can’t take one of them without the other (v. 44-45). The people must decide whether they will live in darkness or light; he is the source of that light. Those who hear his word and reject it will not be judged now; his present mission is to save. But his word will judge the rebels in the “last day” (v. 48). The word he spoke reflected the Father’s will; to reject one is to reject both.

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