

# TVARA NEWS

The TVA Retirees Association

The Tennessee Valley Authority Retirees Association | 400 West Summit Hill Drive WT 8C-K | Knoxville, TN 37902 | [www.mytvra.org](http://www.mytvra.org) | 865-632-3318

## TVA Retirement System Posts Positive Gains

By JUSTIN VINEYARD  
Senior Retirement Consultant,  
TVA Retirement System

The TVA Retirement System reports that as of the calendar year ending Dec. 31, investments earned more than 9 percent for 2020.

Continuing the positive investment performance of 2019, assets rose to \$8.5 billion.

The annualized investment performance over the past three-, five-, and 10-year periods has been 7.2, 9.1, and 7.7 percent, respectively.

### Brown 7th TVARS Director

The TVARS Board of Directors held a special called meeting Nov. 16, 2020, virtually via WebEx and unanimously voted to elect Marilyn Brown as its Seventh Director for the term that runs through Oct. 31, 2021. She attended her first board meeting in December.

Brown retired in 2018 from Johnsonville Fossil Plant as Senior Instrument Foreman with 27 years of service. Retirees are welcome to contact her by email at [7thdirector@gmail.com](mailto:7thdirector@gmail.com) or by phone at 731-333-2510.

The TVARS Board would like to thank all of the TVA retirees who applied for the position. There were many strong candidates, and the board appreciates all those who were willing to serve and the time and effort they demonstrated by applying and interviewing for the position.

### Bank of New York Mellon

To get a reprint of your 1099-R tax form or to update your personal information, visit [bnym.accessmyretirement.com](http://bnym.accessmyretirement.com) or call BNYM toll-free at 1-844-545-1256.

## Valleywide President Views Troubled Times

By VICKIE ELLIS, TVARA Valleywide President

I am frequently asked, "What's it like to be the TVARA Valleywide President during a pandemic?"

Frankly, it's a bit odd. And I hope I will be the only president of TVARA during a pandemic. But, even in the past pandemic year, some things have not changed.

I am happy to report that we are still a strong and important organization. Members contact TVARA on a weekly basis (by phone or email), seeking

assistance with benefits or retirement questions. We refer them to the proper TVA staff.

External organizations continue to contact us requesting information, retiree speakers for their organization, or retirees they might interview for a school project.

Despite not being able to hold in-person meetings, our chapter presidents and officers continue to be

*Continued on page 3*

## My COVID-19 Experience ...

By LES & DONNA BAYS

*(EDITOR'S NOTE – When Les Bays had his wife, Donna, read the first draft of this article, he says she felt she had to add her comments to show her point of view on his terrifying experience with COVID-19. As he says, life was not pleasant for her, either, while he was isolated and ill in a hotel room 2,500 miles away from her and their home in Kingsport, Tenn. Her comments are included in color in this version of his story.)*

I was looking forward to my second deployment through Bicentennial Volunteers Inc.'s National Emergency Assistance group to work with FEMA Public Assistance on the Oregon Wildfires.

I flew out on Monday, Dec. 7. I knew I was going to need to quarantine in my hotel for 72 hours, staying away from other FEMA workers, so I went ahead and bought some groceries. After quarantine, I picked up my FEMA phone and equipment on Thursday, then on Friday took a COVID-19 rapid test outside the FEMA Salem Joint Field Office. I tested negative.

Good news, I remember thinking, although I didn't expect any different result, since I had been wearing my mask anytime I was outside my rental car or hotel room.

*(I think I was more excited about Oregon than Les was. I love running*

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(formerly OneExchange) toll-free

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**Retirement Services Information**

Call the Bank of New York Mellon

toll-free at 1-877-876-4975

The TVA Retirees Association is the official organization of all TVA retirees. It was organized to serve the varied interests of TVA and its retirees and their beneficiaries, and to help keep them informed of TVA developments affecting their interests. It has been recognized by TVA as the responsible representative of retirees in conveying retiree views.

# TVA NEWS & NOTES

The following news items were submitted to TVARA News by TVA's Internal Communications department:

## TVA Facing Challenge on Public-Power Model

TVA is preparing to defend both the Tennessee Valley public-power model and the fairness of the longstanding policy against “wheeling” power into the TVA service area in the event a local power company chooses to switch to another electric supplier.

Four of TVA's 153 local power companies have filed a complaint and petition with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) in an attempt to force TVA to “wheel” power from suppliers outside the Valley to the LPCs. TVA is opposing such an order because it would result in higher costs to TVA's remaining customers and violate longstanding laws established by the U.S. Congress.

“This case comes down to two central points,” says Jeff Lyash, TVA President/Chief Executive Officer. “Can FERC force TVA to make it easier for LPCs to buy power from other suppliers? And is the cost-shifting that would occur really in the public interest? In both cases, the answer is no.

“Our integrated model has served the Valley well for nearly 90 years and is as relevant today as it was when TVA was formed.”

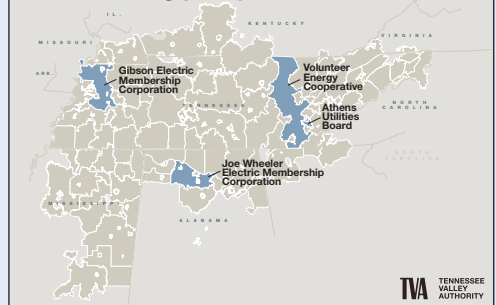
The TVA Board has a longtime policy on the use of TVA's transmission system that ensures equitable sharing of costs across all of its customers. Some LPCs have challenged this policy in the past, and a new challenge came on Jan. 11 as four LPCs filed at FERC. These customers are asking FERC to require TVA to allow them to use its transmission system to deliver power purchased from other suppliers.

### About Wheeling

The electricity TVA generates is transmitted, or “wheeled,” over TVA transmission lines to LPCs that distribute the power to local residents, businesses, and industries. Under the original TVA Act, TVA received congressionally approved taxpayer funding for electric-system projects. In 1959, however, Congress amended the TVA Act to enable TVA to self-finance power-system projects instead of using taxpayer funding.

At that time, neighboring utilities were concerned that TVA would expand to serve their customers. In exchange for the ability to self-finance, Congress restricted TVA's ability to sell

### Local power companies challenging TVA wheeling policy at FERC



electricity outside its then-existing service area. This boundary became known as “the Fence,” and, with limited exceptions, TVA cannot sell power outside the Fence.

In 1992, Congress amended the Federal Power Act to give FERC broad authority to order wheeling. Congress recognized, however, that ordering TVA to wheel electricity from other suppliers to serve customers inside the Fence would not be fair, because the Fence prevents TVA from seeking new customers outside the Fence to offset lost loads.

Under TVA's rate structure, its customers share the fixed costs of the electric-power system that serves them. As a result, the departure of any TVA customers would require each of the remaining customers to shoulder a higher percentage of those costs. This would impede TVA's ability to keep rates low in accordance with its mandate under the TVA Act.

To protect TVA customers from unfair cost-shifting, Congress enacted the Anti-Cherry-picking Amendment to the Federal Power Act. This amendment prohibits FERC from requiring TVA to wheel power from other suppliers to serve LPCs inside the Fence (“cherry-picking” TVA's customers).

When it is asked to wheel power inside the Fence, TVA must consider the impact on its customers and stakeholders, and whether granting the request would align with its mission. Consistent with TVA Board policy, TVA declines such requests as being counter to the intentions of Congress both in the TVA Act and the Federal Power Act.

TVA's decision not to wheel power for others to supply LPC load does not prevent an LPC from terminating its wholesale power contract with TVA and choosing a new supplier. TVA's

policy simply prohibits a supplier from using the TVA transmission system to serve a departing LPC. To do otherwise would unfairly burden remaining LPCs and their ratepayers.

### About the FERC Petition

The four LPCs who filed the petition — Athens Utilities Board, Gibson EMC, Joe Wheeler EMC, and Volunteer Energy Cooperative — want to use the TVA transmission system in a way they believe would benefit them. But that also is in a way that would in fact result in higher shared costs for the rest of TVA's customers.

That is fundamentally unfair, and it goes against the foundation of public power.

These LPCs represent an extreme minority of TVA's customers. More than 90 percent of TVA's LPC customers are committed to long-term 20-year partnerships with TVA — partnerships in which the benefits and related costs are shared. There is strong evidence that the public-power model works, and it works for the benefit of all 10 million people TVA serves.

TVA's Office of the General Counsel is assessing the FERC filing and is prepared to respond. TVA says it is well-positioned to defend its policy on wheeling in support of its mission of service.

## 2,700-mile TVA fiber blitz modernizing Valley grid

TVA is stretching 2,700 miles of high-speed fiber across the Tennessee Valley in an effort to build a modernized electric grid. The \$300-million investment is enhancing transmission capability and security through the integration of emerging technologies.

Aaron Melda, Senior Vice President, TVA Transmission & Power Supply, says the elaborate fiber network is positioning the Valley as a hub for large manufacturers and job producers, whose operations hinge upon automation, robotic assembly, and sustained power quality.

"We want to make every electron flowing through our transmission lines counts," Melda says. "This project is going to increase our remote switching capability. This new system will give us the ability to predict versus react, which will help us prevent transmission failures and load-not-



served conditions. That's an immediate cost benefit for our customers and stakeholders."

In addition to maintaining system reliability and bolstering the region's economic-development potential, TVA's fiber efforts are creating information superhighways that are now helping local power companies and third-party providers connect homes and businesses to high-speed internet.

According to Senior Program Manager for Strategic Fiber Shane Beasley, all new fiber-line paths are being re-analyzed to current National Electric Safety Code reliability and loading standards. Structural upgrades are being implemented where required.

"As a design team, we made a conscious decision from the beginning to bring all impacted lines up to current design code," Beasley says. "An effort of this magnitude needs to meet the most current engineering standards, and a side benefit to that is increased system reliability and a reduced maintenance burden in the future."

As of December 2020, TVA linemen had strung more than 700 miles of new 144-strand fiber cable and had replaced a slew of wooden power poles with galvanized transmission structures. Making up 12 line crews and two helicopter teams, these linemen are capitalizing on favorable opportunities for planned work outages.

### Valleywide President Views Troubled Times...continued from page 1

dedicated to their membership and to provide support and assistance where needed. Some chapters are using or looking into using Zoom or Webex calls to hold membership meetings during this time of no in-person gatherings.

Our officers faithfully commit their time to serve our membership.

As Valleywide officers and staff, we are committed to serving our membership through maintaining our newsletter, financials, membership, volunteer projects, and general administrative duties.

With the assistance of TVA and Bicentennial Volunteers Inc., this past year we made contributions to those

in need throughout the Tennessee Valley. We donated funds to more than 40 food banks, food pantries, and organizations that are providing support during the pandemic.

We continue to work with TVA organizations on issues of significance to our members, including TVA Retirement Services, Benefits Staff, Human Resources, Communications, and others. We continue to have a robust Healthcare Committee that works diligently throughout the year to seek changes and enhancements to our benefits.

This newsletter remains a great communication tool to reach our membership. Members continually make suggestions, write articles, and give us feedback.

Dues renewals are strong for this year, and we are grateful for your continued membership in TVARA.

I also am truly grateful for everyone who has worked this year to keep TVARA a great organization for our members. This has been an unbelievably stressful and painful year for retirees and their families. As we turn to spring, I am encouraged that we may slowly get our lives back to normal. That would mean our organization can get back to our in-person meetings, luncheons, picnics and volunteer projects.

And I can see what it is like to be a non-pandemic president!

Stay well and stay safe.



# Chapters carrying on in face of obstacles

## 430-plus Wheelchair Ramps & Counting; Uniting Helpers with Those Who Need Help

By TOM SWANSON, President, TVARA Chattanooga Chapter

Years ago, Chattanooga-area TVA retirees and other members of the Oak Street Baptist Church congregation began providing wheelchair ramps to their neighbors as part of the church's ministry.

Over time, volunteers from other churches joined in the effort, and the church began to support another Chattanooga volunteer group involved in similar activities and receiving funding for materials from United Cerebral Palsy (UCP) of Middle Tennessee.

As word got out and requests grew, the two groups went their separate ways. The church-based group became known as Neighborhood Helpers Volunteer Ministry (NHVM) and filed for recognition with the IRS as an all-volunteer interdenominational Christian ministry, with funding from UCP.

In 2014 UCP experienced a grant delay from the state of Tennessee, resulting in a temporary loss of funding to NHVM. So the group turned to the churches for support, while the TVA retirees in NHVM reached out to the TVARA Chattanooga Chapter for support. The chapter in turn requested funding from Bicentennial Volunteers Inc., and, soon after, the group was up and running again.

Today, handicap ramps are funded by UCP of Middle Tennessee, TVARA/BVI, and the Orange Grove Center, a nonprofit providing support services for individuals with disabilities in Hamilton County, Tenn.

In addition, Oak Street Baptist, Stuart Heights Baptist, and Dallas Bay Baptist provide financial and other support as needed, such as providing recipients with a Bible with their name and the NHVM logo engraved on the cover.

The volunteers primarily build handicap ramps but in special circumstances make minor home repairs. They have

completed more than 430 wheelchair ramps and more than 70 small home repairs.

The wheelchair ramps allow disabled individuals and their families to be more mobile and independent. For example, one ramp allowed an older man to go to dialysis three times a week with help only from his wife. Before the ramp, two

other family members had to leave work twice a day three times a week to get him in and out of the house. The installation of a ramp relieved a large burden on the family.

Over the years, there have been challenges. In the beginning, it was not unusual for a ramp to take days to build onsite. Soon the group realized the most efficient way to construct a ramp was to build deck modules — usually 4x10-foot sections — in a controlled environment under a roof, with chop saws, benches, and such, and then transport the sections to the site by trailer.

Now, most ramps are completed onsite in two days — the first day involving the setting of posts and letting the concrete set, the second day including attaching the deck sections to the poles, building deck sections onsite as needed, and attaching the railings.

Another challenge was the FIRE. In April of 2018, NHVM experienced a fire at the build-site shed, and many of the tools along with the shed were destroyed. After receiving local media attention in the newspaper and on TV, the community came together and provided money and manpower to build a larger and better shed and replace the destroyed tools.

And then came the pandemic, which presented several complications including stay-at-home orders, material shortages, delivery delays, and increased cost. In spite of these challenges, during 2020 the group built 43 ramps (more than 2,000 feet of them), requiring more than 2,900



Working on a wheelchair ramp that was unusually difficult because of its height are, from left, Chattanooga TVARA Chapter member Richard Smith, Vijay Desai, Earl McCuiston, and Chuck Young.



Wheelchair-ramp work crew on project before COVID-19 includes, from left, Lloyd Carroll, Chattanooga TVARA Chapter members Stanley Coffman, Bob Olston, and Richard Smith, Terry Emery, and Chattanooga TVARA Chapter member David Womack.

workhours, and completed an additional 12 nonramp projects.

With all that production, one would think the group was an army, but NHVM has an email list of around 125, and only about 30 participate on a regular basis. A third of them are TVA retirees, and one is a TVA employee who, when on night shift, can volunteer during the day.

The NHVM volunteers have developed an outstanding reputation within the community for being able to help the disabled — so much so that referrals now come not only from word of mouth and churches as in the past, but also from social workers and local hospitals' home-health programs. In some cases, rehab centers will not release patients until a ramp has been constructed.

So what's the attraction for this group of volunteers? They

say it's the great satisfaction of helping others. They enjoy building wheelchair ramps that allow the disabled to have a higher quality of life, to be more mobile, to have an emergency exit if needed, and generally to feel better about what they can do in spite of their handicap.

As the team puts it, helping others is one way to show the love of Christ through their efforts.

Additional information can be found at [NHVM.org](http://NHVM.org) and on Facebook – Neighborhood Helpers Volunteer Helpers.

TVA retirees who would like to participate or who desire to start a group to build ramps in other areas of the TVA region are invited to contact NHVM at [nhvmhr@gmail.com](mailto:nhvmhr@gmail.com) and request more information or provide a phone number to begin a conversation on the process and procedures developed to build ramps quickly with minimal time onsite.

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## Staying Together Virtually During Pandemic Days

By **JO ANNE LAVENDER**, President, Knoxville TVARA Chapter

The Knoxville TVARA Chapter is planning its third straight virtual meeting on Webex March 18, as the COVID-19 pandemic continues.

We held virtual meetings in September and December to stay in touch and to provide interesting information and speakers.

Other activities in which chapter members have participated over the past year (wearing masks and socially distancing) include the following:

- We completed our chapter's project near Knoxville of creating the Solway Veteran's Memorial, which is now open to the public during the daylight hours. We also held outdoor press conferences to publicize the memorial.
- We contributed benches to Legacy Parks and attended outside dedications. Legacy Parks is an East Tennessee nonprofit organization working to ensure that our community enjoys exceptional recreational opportunities, natural beauty, and open spaces, and that these assets exist for generations to come.
- We participated in Wreaths Across America, laying Christmas wreaths at graves in the Knoxville National Veterans Cemetery.
- We, like the other 18 TVARA chapters, were able to donate \$10,000 to food banks and \$2,000 to a local nonprofit helping underserved youth. We contributed \$500 to a local nonprofit serving the homeless population.

## Retiree Chapters Connect, Serve

By **CHARLES PERRY**, TVARA Paradise Chapter

### Pandemic – or not!

As previous TVARA chapter officers have always done, current chapter officers continue to stay in contact with retirees and their families and TVARA.

Whether it's TVARA updates of quarterly meetings or to encourage retirees to check on other retirees, these officers — with chapter members' support — need their efforts to be appreciated and recognized.

Through the support of TVARA people and with great support from Bicentennial Volunteers Inc. and TVA, these 19 chapters coordinate Food Pantry donations and community work projects and more.

Success is a joint effort. Having spent years working together as TVA employees, retirees still try to be there for each other and support our communities. It would be great to contact past and present chapter officers and thank them for their continued dedication for serving.

As for our present activities at Paradise Chapter, when we know and are able to do so, we try to do the following:

1. Encouraging retirees and families with important information through meetings or with contact information in case of the death of retiree or beneficiary.
2. Thoughtful emails on retirees and families with major health problems and sometimes posting obituaries.
3. Mailing "Thinking of You," "Get Well," and "Sympathy" cards to retirees and families.





# VIEJOS CAMINANDO

(OLD FOLKS WALKING\*)

# EL CAMINO DE SANTIAGO

By RUBEN HERNANDEZ

\*...AND, OKAY, ALSO HOBBLING A LOT AND RIDING A LITTLE

My wife, Arlene, and I had been hiking with the Knoxville Happy Hikers group for about seven years and for some reason figured we could do this 484-mile pilgrimage from the Spanish/French border to Santiago de Compostela in Spain's Western Province of Galicia.

It would take about 40 days, averaging about 12 miles per day, no problem. And in the process we could experience the culture, people, wines, and food of northern Spain, without gaining any weight!

By reading lots of online blogs, we realized that since we would have to carry everything on our backs, we would only take the bare minimum. That would include only two changes of clothes, zipoff hiking pants, rain pants, ponchos (so our backpacks would also be protected), and lightweight fleece-and-down jackets for the cooler weather we would encounter.

We also would take sleeping bags, as we were planning on staying mostly in hostels.

Our backpacks weighed in at 20 pounds, with two bottles of water.

Although we thought we were in pretty good shape because we hiked regularly, we "trained" with our loaded backpacks by hiking on our local trails and once did a 10-mile hike with the packs in the Smokies.

So the day arrived, and there we were, ready to start our hike in St. Jean Pied de Port on the French side of the Pyrenees.

There are many routes of the Camino, but we had chosen the most popular one. Before hitting the trail, we had to obtain "credentials"



Trying out our backpacks in our backyard

we would need to get stamped each day to prove we actually had hit all of the trail. We were shocked at how many other "pilgrims" also were getting their credentials that day.

The first stage of the Camino, a 15-mile hike up and over the Pyrenees, is supposed to be the most difficult segment of the whole trail. We decided to break it up with a stop at a hostel about five miles into the hike.

That was a good plan, as the trail was very steep. Also, this provided an opportunity to meet some of our fellow hikers, many of whom we would

continue to see throughout the trip.

We found out the following: A number our new friends were doing the Camino for the second or third time; there were a number of single women hiking alone; some were doing the Camino just for adventure (like us); some were raising







Guarding the trail to Orisson – we walked right around them. No bull!!



Orisson, our first hostel



Finally, the peak — all downhill to Roncesvalles in the distance

money for a cause; and others had deeper reasons such as middleagers “finding” themselves.

The next day we really seriously got going, continuing over the Pyrenees 10 steep miles to our next stop. The scenery was spectacular, but it was so windy it was often hard to stand up.

We arrived at Roncesvalles in midafternoon and were able to get a nice room for four that we shared with a couple of Canadian women. We would continue to socialize with these two throughout our journey.

Our hostel was Convento Colegiata, a recently renovated place that was nice and was being run by volunteers from Holland. There was a restaurant across the plaza that was very good, where we joined other pilgrims for dinner.

After the first few days, we fell into a routine. We were up and on the trail every day by about 8 a.m. Breakfast was always juice, bread, butter, jam, and tea. We would hike about three miles and have tea and a snack at a cafe. There were usually small villages every three miles or so, or just a roadside stand set up for pilgrims.

Then we would hike two or three more hours, stop for lunch, then tackle a long stretch to our next hostel, hoping to arrive by 3 or 4 p.m. Knowing there would be a cold Radler (beer with lemon or grapefruit) waiting up ahead motivated us the last few miles.

We averaged about 12 miles a day, with 17 miles our longest.

After a shower and washing that day’s clothes, we would head to a bar to cool off with other pilgrims.

The first sizable city we came to was Pamplona, famous for the running of the bulls. The hostel there was in a very ornate old church and accommodated several hundred pilgrims.

In hostels, bunks are assigned as you arrive, men and women mixed together. One essential is ear plugs, to shut out the chorus of snoring.

We spent a half a day exploring Pamplona before heading out again.

Special memorable events that happen along the Camino Pilgrimage are referred to

*Continued on next page*



Pamplona, overlooking the new part of the city from the old walls of the historic city where we stayed



Arlene at a morning's cafe stop



Radler time in Pamplona



Relaxing with some of our new friends in Zubiri after a long day



as “Camino Moments.” Some of our Camino Moments included the following:

We had heard people talking about an upcoming wine fountain at a winery in the Riojas wine region. We made a stop there for a refreshment when we came to it.



Arlene pouring wine into water jug on the trail — a sip only, please!

As we were walking up a steep hill into the village of Azueta, we saw an old man sitting on a bench, greeting pilgrims by stamping his fist into his hand. No one seemed to understand what he was saying. Since I speak Spanish, we learned that he had his own personal stamp and wanted to stamp our credentials. We and a couple of other pilgrims followed him through the narrow winding streets to his home, where he was very proud to stamp our credentials with his name, Pablito Sanz. He was 85 years old.



Women’s paintings renovating plaza in Belorado

One day while we were walking in a rather remote area, we came upon an older couple sitting under a tree performing on an accordion and violin. This was such a nice break and energized us to keep going.

From Belorado we walked about five miles and then rode a bus to

Burgos, where we were 36 percent of the way to Santiago de Compostela. By now, our walking was continuing to be challenged by various aches and pains.

We stayed a couple of nights in Burgos in order to visit this major city, to rest, and for Arlene to visit a doctor. She started taking prescribed medications to reduce inflammation in her foot and we did our resting, but we still had to walk to get around town.

We toured Burgos Cathedral while in town. It was impressive but an intensive walking/standing activity.



Churros and dark chocolate on a cold morning — goood!

We had planned to walk 13 miles to the next stop after Burgos, but Arlene’s foot was hurting too much, so we stopped after eight miles. The next morning, her foot was worse, and we could not go on.



Our balcony was handy for drying clothes and enjoying the sunshine.

It was Sunday, and the buses were not running, but the owner of our auberge was kind enough to find someone to give us a ride back to Burgos, where we hopped on a bus to our next destination,

Carrion de los Condes, 53 miles from Burgos, where we were able to get accommodations at a convent where we could stay for several days.

There was nothing notable to visit in this town, so Arlene would be forced to rest her foot. Another guest at the convent was also recovering from tendinitis. The nun was prepared for folks like us — she had ice packs in her freezer.

Our accommodations at Carrion de los Condes were very nice. It is a working convent that has many older nuns living there. We stayed there three nights and met other pilgrims who were resting there just like we were.



Blessing of pilgrims at the local mass — a routine ceremony in most towns

We attended a pilgrim mass in town and dined in the local restaurants.

We also had another Camino Moment when we met Sister Adita, one of the sisters at the convent who was involved in the visitor checking-in process.

While I was talking with her, Sister Adita asked where I had learned Spanish, and I told her I had been raised in Cuba. Turns out she was born in Cuba and lived in the



Sister Adita and I bid each other farewell on Oct. 7, 2019.



same neighborhood as my grandmother.

I told her I had come to Miami in 1961, and she said she did, as well.

I could not believe all of these coincidences, and then there were more.

She told me she had been a sister at one of the camps the Catholic church opened in Miami to host the unaccompanied children arriving from Cuba. I asked which camp, and she said Camp Matecumbe — the same camp where my brother and sister lived in August 1961. Amazing!

We continued a combination of walking and busing the next couple of days and had another Camino Moment.

We were walking, and Arlene was limping very badly, when a Canadian couple came up behind us. The woman was riding a bike and insisted that Arlene take it. She said she had rented it to help with painful blisters that now had healed.

We agreed to meet at the first bar in the next town about five miles ahead, so we could return the bike. Arlene went on ahead on the bike, and the couple and I walked on.

But when the three of us arrived at the bar, Arlene was nowhere to be found.

What had happened was this particular town and bar were not directly on the road, so Arlene had ridden on to the next town, another two miles ahead. But then we got lucky.

One of our traveling acquaintances (Ann from Belgium) came by, and I asked her to let Arlene know we were waiting for her if she saw her. She did, and Arlene showed up just in time to return the bike to her kind Canadian friend and for us



Stained glass in Leon's cathedral. Most often, it would take hundreds of years to finish these buildings. Many towns had their own cathedral.

to catch the bus to Leon, another beautiful city.

At Leon, we were about 60 percent of the way to Santiago. Arlene's foot was not better, and I proposed quitting our adventure. Arlene did not want to quit, and we went to another clinic and got an injection for inflammation and more pain relievers.

We did a lot of touristy things and stayed there two nights. The highlight was attending a free organ concert at the Santa Maria de Leon Cathedral. It was a beautiful setting at night, with the lights outside the cathedral highlighting all the stained glass.



Passage of Honor, where a knight defeated 300 jousting challengers in 30 hours in 1434

From hostel Tio Pepe in Villar de Mazarife, we walked about nine miles to Hospital del Orbigo, site of one of the longest and best-preserved medieval bridges (13th century) in Europe and site of the passage of honor where a jousting tournament took place in 1434. After lunch, we caught a bus to Astorga, our next stop.

Arlene's foot was still a problem after Leon, but manageable with alternate doses of Ibuprofen and Tylenol.

Every day while walking we would join and chat with people along the way. Then we or they would move on and after a while be joined by someone else.



Saint James

The opening of most conversations was "Buen

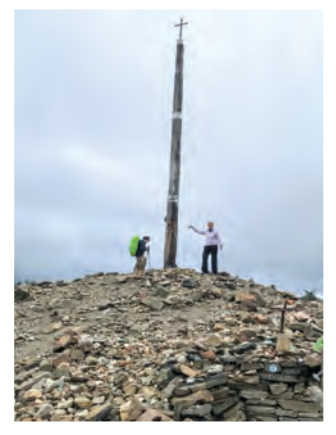
*Continued on next page*



Arlene is taking the photograph of her lady friends — Ann from Belgium in red — after they had a snack at the bar (loaner bike in front).



Gaudi Museum

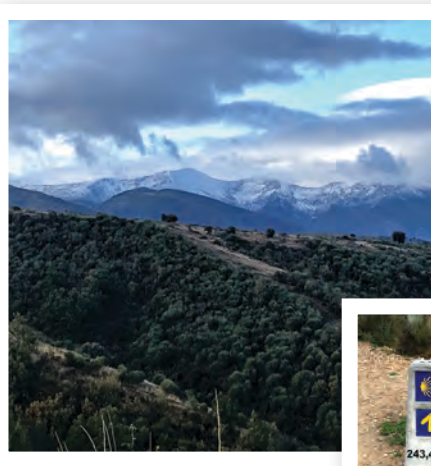


Cruz de Ferro, elevation 4,500 feet





Castle of the Templar Knights in Ponferrada



Mountain snow near Acebo



Scallop-shell design at rest area just after Triacastela



Typical Camino Markers that guided our walk

Camino, where are you from?" There was an amazing collection of people of all ages (mostly 50-plus), and most spoke some English, including a guy from Alaska who was hiking alone on the trail after leaving Leon and limping, also.

He was a physical therapist and said we should be putting heat on our feet rather than ice.

A day later we were in Astorga, a beautiful town with a nice cathedral and the Episcopal Palace designed by Gaudi as the Bishop's residence. We stayed at the Gaudi Hotel, which had a bathtub where Arlene could soak her foot in hot water.

She could hardly walk to dinner, but a miracle came overnight. When Arlene got out of bed the next morning, her foot did not hurt and was never a problem again!

After Astorga, the terrain changed dramatically to more mountainous and increasingly more scenic. The weather became much cooler, and we usually started the day wearing our jackets.

We now were in Galicia, a rainy area. Up to now, we had only had a few showers. It was rainy as we climbed up hills for the next couple of days, with the peak elevation of about 5,000 feet. There is a landmark of the Camino near this peak, the Cruz de Ferro, an old iron cross where it is a tradition for pilgrims to deposit a rock they brought from home. We deposited our rocks from Knoxville. Some of the rocks left there had messages or pictures on them.

We stayed in the mountaintop village of Acebo, and the surrounding peaks were covered in snow in the morning.

For the next couple of days, we were in a very beautiful part of the Camino, walking mostly downhill and through a picturesque valley with bright green fields and with cows wearing cow bells adding music to our walk.

There were many small villages with cafes and hostels. In the town of Ponferrada, we visited a very well-preserved castle from the Knights of Templar. We randomly met up with friends we had met before and continued to make new friends every day.

There were no longer hordes of pilgrims, but more than we expected. There are always people joining and leaving the Camino, as many pilgrims do it in sections from one year to the next.

Fortunately, we did not endure any more sore tendons, feet, or knees. But we did have quite a bit of rain and much cooler weather. We were now wearing our fleece under our down jackets and gloves and hats. We were glad we had carried the rain pants and ponchos during the first four weeks of hot/dry weather.

The scenery changed with our climb up the mountains.



Green fields, cows missing!



Hostel in Linares



We stopped in the town of Herrerias and stayed at a lovely pension before what was described as one of the steepest and most demanding stretches of the Camino. Adding to that, it was pouring rain as we started the five-mile, steep climb, some of which was up a creek bed and over many rocks as the water rushed down. We had been looking forward to beautiful views but only saw fog and clouds.

There was an inn with a nice restaurant at the top of the climb (O'Cebreiro), and we dried off and warmed up with a hearty bowl of "Caldo Gallego," a soup typical of the Galician region.

It was still pouring as we continued our trek, but now we were going downhill and on a dirt road for another few miles to our hostel for the night. Everyone arriving there was soaked, and there were articles of clothing of every variety strung all over the heaters and walkways of the hostel. We fortunately had brought bungee cords which we used as clotheslines stretched from our bedposts. However, most of our things did not dry out in the humid rooms.

Rain continued most of the next day as we walked to Sarria, another major city on the Camino.

One reward at the completion of the Camino is the certificate of completion, the Compostela, which is obtained in Santiago de Compostela upon presenting the completed credentials with the required stamps. To get this certificate, a pilgrim needs to provide proof of walking the last 100 kilometers of



Cathedral Santiago de Compostela

the Camino, not the whole thing, before arriving in Santiago.

Sarria is just a bit more than 100 kilometers from the end of the road and is a starting point for many pilgrims who are only doing this last section. Therefore, there were many more pilgrims walking along the Camino at this point.

We were now only about five days away from the end of our pilgrimage, most of which would be in steady rain. We stepped up the pace, doing 14 or 15 miles a day the last few days. We were beginning to feel sad that our adventure was coming to an end. The last day was a short walk, and we arrived in Santiago by noon.

There were no fireworks or crowds cheering us on, just a stream of other pilgrims looking for the cathedral in the center of the historic city. It was raining, so instead of stopping for photos in front of the cathedral, we went straight to the Pilgrim Office for our Compostela.

We had about a 30-minute wait until it was our turn. The officers briefly looked over the stamps and gave us our certificates. We then went to a cafe for a bowl of hot Caldo Gallego.

*(Ruben Hernandez retired in 2000 as Vice President of Resource Stewardship in the Resource Group. During his 28 years with TVA, he also served the Resource Group as Vice President of Engineering Services and of Land Management, and in the Engineering Design, Hydro, Fossil, and Nuclear organizations.)*

## Significance of the Camino de Santiago

Follows the route St. James followed as he preached in northern Spain. His body is buried in the cathedral of Santiago. It has been an important pilgrimage since the Middle Ages, when pilgrims were seeking healing from disease, wars, and other problems.

The French Route of the Camino we walked is 483.7 miles; of which we walked about 400 miles, since we used public transportation for the rest of the way, due to the sore foot. It took us 39 days to complete.

**Symbolism:** Most pilgrims attach a large scallop shell to their backpack, commemorating the story that St. James's coffin was covered with scallops when it was recovered after the boat carrying it to Santiago sank.

Movie "The Way," 2010, starring Martin Sheen and directed by his son Emilio Estevez, is a good representation of the journey, as well as showing authentic scenery.

The guidebook almost everyone uses is "A Pilgrim's Guide to the Camino de Santiago," by John Brierley. It is updated annually.

A total of 327,342 pilgrims completed the Camino in 2019, although most only walked the last sections, especially from Sarria. People we met represented the following countries:

- South Korea (by far the largest group of walkers)
- United States, Canada, Australia, Great Britain, Ireland
- Norway, Sweden, Finland, Netherlands
- Spain, France, Portugal, Italy, Germany, Belgium
- Malaysia, Taiwan, Indonesia, China, Japan
- Iran, Israel, South Africa
- Romania, Hungary, Latvia, Czech Republic

(South Korea had a popular reality-TV show featuring the Camino de Santiago, which explains why so many of its people want to walk it.)

**My Covid Experience...continued from page 1**

and hiking our beautiful Appalachian Mountains, so the thought of exploring the trails of Mount Hood and Crater Lake and hiking through redwoods was thrilling! The plan was for me to fly out for a couple of weeks each month of his deployment beginning in mid-January. Things did not go according to plan.)

I soon was assigned a couple of FEMA Applicants for assistance — a city and a school district. I read all available background info on them and set up an Exploratory Call to be made on Wednesday, Dec. 16.

Unfortunately, on Tuesday night I got a bad headache and began running a fever of 101.5. I reached my BVI contacts and let them know I planned to go to the nearest emergency room on Wednesday and would likely need to change the Exploratory Call. My Task Force Lead told me to go on to the ER and that she would participate in the call in my place.

The ER gave me a blood test for COVID-19 and flu, then X-rayed my lungs. Hours passed until they came and told me I was positive for COVID, but that my lungs looked “okay.” I imagined the doctor’s fingers in the air making imaginary quotation marks, as he said the word “okay.”

Not “excellent,” nor “good,” nor “clear,” but “okay.”

Because he indicated with this new medical term “okay” that they didn’t see signs of pneumonia, he would not be admitting me to the hospital. I got instructions to self-quarantine for a minimum of 10 days, with at least three days at the end of those 10 (or more) with no symptoms. I told him at least two or three times I was a diabetic (words that will usually get me a round of antibiotics in Tennessee), but he prescribed nothing except Acetaminophen and/or Ibuprofen for the fever and headaches.

(That was one shocking and scary phone call. Shocking because we thought we had been taking all the precautions, and scary because of so many stories of folks our age with similar medical challenges losing the battle against COVID. I was scared, but at the same time relieved since his lungs looked okay. I thought that as long as his lungs stayed clear, Les would be fine.)

I returned to the hotel and informed the local BVI folks, then the fatigue hit me. The fatigue, fever (99 to 101.9 F), nausea, and headache remained with me for 15 days, except for a fever spike to 102.9 that prompted me to go

back to the ER about a week after the first visit there.

Again, the X-ray looked “okay,” but a blood test revealed I was potassium-deficient. They gave me a one-liter plastic jug of ice water with “Salem Memorial Hospital” on it. I was directed to drink two or three of those jugs full of water and/or Gatorade daily. They coached me to take the Acetaminophen and Ibuprofen, alternating doses every four hours for my fever and headaches.

(Les should have capitalized the FATIGUE, the FEVER, the NAUSEA, the HEADACHE!! He was so weak he could barely move. He was so weak that he didn’t have the mental, emotional, or physical strength to even take a Tylenol. Once I realized this, I called him every four hours around the clock to make sure he took his medicine. I would stay on the phone with him until I heard the bottle rattle and heard him swallow. I knew if I didn’t wait, he would just pass out again. Daily, we discussed whether I should fly out to take care of him. He wanted me to come, and I wanted to go, but he unselfishly — and I selfishly — thought the risk was too great. The only thing worse than his having COVID in Oregon was both of us having COVID in Oregon.)



Les and Donna Bays

Back to the hotel bed for more and more days of those symptoms and others. Often I was sleeping 21-22 hours a day due to the extreme fatigue. I admit I missed a few of those doses I should have been

taking, due to the fatigue, isolation, and misery I was feeling. My Task Force Lead and other BVI folks brought me Gatorade, Tylenol, Advil, and bananas and other foods, including the best solution considering my fatigue and another unmentioned symptom, lactose-free Slim-Fast! I had no appetite, so most days, other than meds and water, all I would eat was usually one small thing, and one Slim-Fast became my daily meal. I told my Task Force Lead several times that she and the others truly kept me alive with the things left outside my hotel-room door.

My wife arrived about day 13 or so. She got a different hotel room and rental car to reduce her risk. She double-masked for 15 minutes or so, and while I was in the shower changed my bed sheets, something I had not had the energy to do.

(After nearly two weeks of his suffering and not showing any signs of improvement, I said that was enough and flew out to help him. I cannot express enough how much I appreciate his co-workers and the hotel staff for

*Continued on page 16*





# 117th Congress Takes on Changes, Challenges

By JUSTIN MAIERHOFER, TVA Vice President, Government Relations



JUSTIN MAIERHOFER

With Democrats taking control of the White House, retaining their majority in the U.S. House of Representatives, and achieving parity with Republicans in the U.S. Senate, change is in the wind in Washington.

The 117th Congress will include 60 new representatives and nine new senators, including four new representatives and four new senators in the TVA delegation.

In Tennessee, retired Republican Sen. Lamar Alexander was succeeded by Sen. Bill Hagerty (R). Hagerty was Tennessee's Commissioner of Economic & Community Development under Gov. Bill Haslam and also served as U.S. ambassador to Japan in the Trump Administration. In the House, retired Rep. Phil Roe (R) was succeeded by Rep. Diana Harshbarger (R) to represent the 1st District.

From Georgia, the TVA delegation has two new House members — Rep. Andrew Clyde (R), succeeding Doug Collins (R) in the 9th District, and Rep. Marjorie Taylor Greene (R), succeeding Tom Graves (R) in the 14th District.

On the Senate side, both of Georgia's Senate seats were assumed by newcomers. In runoff elections on Jan. 5, Sen. Jon Ossoff (D) defeated incumbent David Perdue (R), and Sen. Raphael Warnock (D) unseated incumbent Kelly Loeffler (R).

In North Carolina, Madison Cawthorn (R) won the 11th District, filling the seat vacated by Rep. Mark Meadows (R), after he resigned in March 2020 to become White House Chief of Staff.

In Alabama, former Ole Miss and Auburn University head football coach Tommy Tuberville (R) defeated incumbent Doug Jones (D), while the rest of our Alabama delegation and the entirety of our congressional delegations from Mississippi and Kentucky remain the same.

Democrats and Republicans now have 50 seats each in the Senate (the two independent senators, Angus King of Maine and Bernie Sanders of Vermont, caucus with the Democrats), and Vice President Kamala Harris (D) will cast any tie-breaking votes.

## TVA Board nominees

Two new TVA Board members were confirmed by the Senate before Christmas — Brian Noland, President of East Tennessee State University, and former Tennessee House

of Representatives Speaker Beth Harwell. Two additional nominees from the previous administration will likely be withdrawn and replaced with other nominees by the new administration.

Also, the terms of two current Board members expire in May. So the new administration likely will have the opportunity to appoint four new TVA directors this year.

## The Biden Administration

On his first day in office, President Biden issued 15 executive orders and two executive actions. Many more have followed in the days since. These orders and actions address issues that include climate, COVID-19, diversity and inclusion, and the regulatory process.

While these actions have emphasized the administration's early focus on the pandemic, they also suggest that climate will be a central long-term theme. So far, the President has taken actions to rejoin the Paris Agreement, regulate methane emissions, and set new fuel-economy standards.

Over the next four years, we expect the administration to place considerable attention on renewables, carbon-neutral energy technologies, electric transportation and charging infrastructure, environmental justice, and the social cost of greenhouse gases.

TVA Government Relations has worked over the past several months with the Biden presidential-transition team as it conducted agency reviews and began staffing the new administration. With change expected for many legislative and executive initiatives in coming years, our Washington Office team will continue to work closely with the TVA delegation, members of Congress, and the new administration on these and other matters as we share the TVA story.

## Supporting the Public-Power Model

On Jan. 11, four local power companies served by TVA filed a complaint and petition at the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, asking FERC to compel TVA to wheel power purchased from other suppliers. (See related story on page 2.)

These LPCs have previously made this request to TVA, and TVA denied those requests in accordance with the TVA Board's longstanding policy on wheeling power. This policy is consistent with the anti-cherry-picking amendment to

*Continued on page 15*

# In Memoriam

Nov. 1, 2020 - Jan. 31, 2021

TVA Retirement Management received notifications of the deaths of the following retirees for the period November 1, 2020 through January 31, 2021, as well as other previously unreported deaths. They are listed with the date of death (and date of retirement). To report the death of a retiree, call the TVA Retirement System toll-free at 1-800-824-3870.

**Abell, Jerry L.,**  
11/29/2020 (10/27/2000)

**Anderson, Lonnie L.,**  
11/23/2020 (12/18/2010)

**Babb, Malcolm C.,**  
10/24/2020, (5/11/1985)

**Baggett, Brent S.,**  
01/20/2021 (12/12/2012)

**Bales, Ronald W.,**  
12/26/2020 (10/1/2009)

**Bardet, Edward P.,**  
11/11/2020 (7/8/1989)

**Baubach, Michael M.,**  
12/29/2020 (2/8/2014)

**Bosson, Hugh S., Jr.,**  
11/14/2020 (6/3/1992)

**Brinker, Daniel H.,**  
12/19/2020 (1/4/2010)

**Campbell, Donald W.,**  
1/1/2021 (1/4/1986)

**Campbell, Paul R.,**  
12/28/2020 (11/13/1993)

**Cassels, Vernon Scott,**  
11/22/2020 (8/18/2020)

**Clemmons, Walter J., Jr.,**  
01/17/2021 08/14/2001)

**Colburn, Ronald J.,**  
12/8/2020 (6/2/2003)

**Cook, Carrol R.,**  
12/18/2020 (9/27/1997)

**Cummings, Kenneth N.,**  
11/23/2020 (7/13/2002)

**Davis, Gary N.,**  
01/16/2021 (09/23/1996)

**Denayer, Lawrence Alfred,**  
12/19/2020 (6/19/2010)

**Dunavant, Hershel R.,**  
12/14/2020 (1/3/1998)

**Eady, Donald R.,**  
1/4/2021 (2/8/2000)

**Ebel, George K.,**  
01/10/2021 (01/29/2000)

**Echerd, John C.,**  
10/27/2020 (1/1/1988)

**Emery, George W., Jr.,**  
11/22/2020 (1/4/1988)

**Fletcher, Robert P.,**  
01/09/2021 (08/06/1986)

**Frederickson, Robert B.,**  
11/6/2020 (6/21/1999)

**Galyon, Frederick A.,**  
10/24/2020 (10/1/1988)

**Green, John T., Jr.,**  
01/23/2021 (10/01/1988)

**Goodman, Phyllis C.,**  
12/2/2020 (8/3/1988)

**Griffin, Alfred L.,**  
10/8/2020 (10/1/1996)

**Grubbs, Alfred F.,**  
12/11/2020 (8/21/2004)

**Halfacre, Dearl A.,**  
12/13/2020 (7/30/1988)

**Hall, Joyce S.,**  
11/21/2020 (8/4/2007)

**Hardin, Clay H.,**  
11/11/2020 (1/6/2007)

**Hardin, Dennis M., Sr.,**  
11/12/2020 (10/25/2012)

**Hardy, James E.,**  
11/30/2020 (1/3/2004)

**Haynes, Elizabeth F.,**  
1/15/2021 (11/13/1982)

**Herndon, James B., Jr.,**  
12/14/2020 (10/1/2014)

**Higgins, Charles D.,**  
12/6/2020 (7/17/2010)

**Hudson, Danny K.,**  
11/17/2020 (8/13/2011)

**Ivey, Philip H.,**  
12/20/2020 (11/25/2006)

**Jansen, Patrick R.,**  
12/8/2020 (8/16/2008)

**Johnson, James C.,**  
1/14/2021 (8/15/1998)

**Jones, Billie G.,**  
12/18/2020 (1/29/1983)

**Jordan, Sam, Jr.,**  
12/13/2020 (1/1/1993)

**Kimbrough, James C., Jr.,**  
1/3/2021 (8/20/1988)

**Kimsey, Larry L.,**  
11/11/2020 (10/17/1994)

**Knowles, Joseph E.,**  
12/27/2020 (12/30/2000)

**Lee, Thomas D.,**  
12/16/2020 (7/2/2011)

**Lee, Thomas R.,**  
11/18/2020 (8/29/1998)

**Logan, James R., Jr.,**  
1/16/2021 (4/7/2006)

**Looney, Steven,**  
1/14/2021 (10/3/2001)

**Loy, Samuel J., Jr.,**  
1/16/2021 (3/22/1992)

**McDaniel, Jerry L.,**  
10/26/2020 (5/2/2005)

**McDermott, Theodore F.,**  
11/21/2020 (1/3/2009)

**McGee, Donald G.,**  
11/16/2020 (10/23/2007)

**McGhee, Rubye E.,**  
12/28/2020 (6/18/1990)

**McLeod, William E.,**  
1/13/2021 (10/17/1994)

**Middleton, Billy D.,**  
11/24/2020 (4/22/2005)

**Minch, Michael O.,**  
12/1/2020 (3/7/2001)

**Morgan, James A.,**  
10/30/2020 (7/2/1999)

**Morrow, Thomas J.,**  
01/24/2021 (01/01/1993)

**Nestasia, Anthony F.,**  
12/5/2020 (1/16/1988)

**Oatsvall, Jessie C.,**  
12/24/2020 (10/17/1994)

**Patterson, Johnny G.,**  
01/15/2021 (4/2/2010)

**Peebles, H. Wayne,**  
12/23/2020 (10/13/1998)

**Pemberton, Margaret B.,**  
11/21/2020 (11/15/1974)

**Phipps, Robert Steven,**  
11/27/2020 (12/31/2009)

**Poole, Willard G.,**  
12/15/2020 (5/1/199)

**Powers, Gerald W.,**  
10/23/2020 (12/31/2011)

**Priest, Curtis W.,**  
11/30/2020 (7/5/2003)

**Prueitt, Joseph R.,**  
12/9/2020 (10/8/2011)

**Putman, Jimmy R.,**  
12/7/2020 (10/17/1994)

**Raby, Billy G.,**  
12/27/2020 (5/17/1981)

**Ramsey, Willie R.,**  
12/30/2020 (6/7/1992)

**Raulston, James R.,**  
11/17/2020 (7/8/2000)

**Raulston, Robert W.,**  
11/11/2020 (10/2/1999)

**Reyes, Jose R.,**  
01/21/2021 (6/21/2012)

**Sanders, Joyce H.,**  
1/15/2021 (9/27/1997)

**Shankle, Joseph A.,**  
01/18/2021 (06/01/2001)

**Sharp, Danny E.,**  
01/13/2021 (5/6/2013)

**Sharp, Roy G.,**  
12/13/2020 (7/1/1990)

**Smith, Elmer G.,**  
12/5/2020 (2/3/2001)

**Terry, Raymond S.,**  
10/21/2020 (8/9/2003)

**Thomas, Lyle E.,**  
11/23/2020 (7/30/1988)

**Thompson, Fredrick R.,**  
11/24/2020 (4/2/1991)

**Torbett, Linda Y.,**  
12/17/2020 (3/3/2007)

**Taylor, Garfield J., Jr.,**  
12/31/2020 (11/27/1999)

**Troutman, Glenn E., Jr.,**  
11/7/2020 (9/27/1997)

**Turner, Willis L.,**  
10/9/2020 (6/18/1996)

**Vanderheyden, Carl R.,**  
11/4/2020 (8/2/1988)

**Vincent, Bruce E.,**  
10/28/2020 (2/23/2010)

**Walker, Danny T.,**  
10/30/2020 (1/3/2000)

**Wallis, Cletus B.,**  
12/31/2020 (12/28/2002)

**Wassum, Richard L.,**  
11/9/2020 (10/18/1992)

**Watt, David W.,**  
11/15/2020 (10/1/2016)

**Webb, James E., Jr.,**  
12/28/2020 (1/6/2007)

**Wells, Phillip W.,**  
1/21/2021 (10/2/2006)

**West, Billy R.,**  
10/28/2020 (12/30/1998)

**White, Patrick B., III,**  
12/3/2020 (11/6/1999)

**Williams, Michael P.,**  
11/7/2020 (8/11/2011)

**Willingham, Eva K.,**  
11/12/2020 (6/2/2014)

**Willis, Beulah Mae,**  
12/10/2020 (3/12/1983)

**Winkelman, Edward A.,**  
12/10/2020 (12/17/1994)



# Upcoming March 2021 Chapter Meetings

## JOHNSONVILLE

March 11, 2021, 10 a.m.

Country & Western Steakhouse, Camden, Tenn.

- Discuss minutes from the last few TVARA Board meetings
  - Discuss going forward with picnic scheduled for last September
  - Election of officers if needed
- Mickey Blackburn, President  
931-209-1352/[mickeyblackburn@gmail.com](mailto:mickeyblackburn@gmail.com)

## KNOXVILLE

March 18, 2021, 10 a.m.

Virtual Meeting on Webex

Information will be sent to members on how to join meeting

- D.C. Update: Justin Maierhofer, TVA Vice President, Government Relations
  - Retirement System Update
  - Defensive Driving presentation by Tennessee Highway Patrol
- Jo Anne Lavender, President  
865-300-8272/[jlavender@tds.net](mailto:jlavender@tds.net)

## MISSISSIPPI

March 9, 2020, 10:30 a.m.

Tupelo TVA Customer Service Center  
3197 Brooks Road, Belden, Miss.

- Program TBD
- Sherry Garrett, President  
662-963-3519/[garrett7481@bellsouth.net](mailto:garrett7481@bellsouth.net)

These chapters have CANCELED their March 2021 meetings due to the COVID-19 virus:

## BROWNS FERRY

David Matherly, President  
256-777-2175/[dcmathery@gmail.com](mailto:dcmathery@gmail.com)

## CHATTANOOGA

Tom Swanson, President  
423-344-6892/[twswanson@comcast.net](mailto:twswanson@comcast.net)

## CLEVELAND

John Austin, President  
423-472-2720/[austintnutfan@charter.net](mailto:austintnutfan@charter.net)

## GALLATIN

Ronnie "Blue" Monday, President  
615-325-9473/[ronniemonday@att.net](mailto:ronniemonday@att.net)

## HUNTSVILLE

Daniel A. Simmons, President  
256-509-9781/[dasimmon@bellsouth.net](mailto:dasimmon@bellsouth.net)

## JACKSON

Alan Campbell, President  
731-988-8814/[abcjax@eplus.net](mailto:abcjax@eplus.net)

## KINGSTON

Marcus C. Melton Jr., President  
865-388-3919/[mcmelton@nxs.net](mailto:mcmelton@nxs.net)

## MEMPHIS

David L. Teuton, President  
901-212-3822/[davidteuton@yahoo.com](mailto:davidteuton@yahoo.com)

## MUSCLE SHOALS

Timothy "Tim" Cornelius, President  
256-757-5220/[timwcornelius1@gmail.com](mailto:timwcornelius1@gmail.com)

## NASHVILLE

Jeff E. Gammons, President  
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## NORTHEAST ALABAMA

Larry A. Hancock, President  
256-437-8220/[lah35772@gmail.com](mailto:lah35772@gmail.com)

## PADUCAH AREA

Ken Dickerson, President  
270-442-9539/[kenneth.dickerson@comcast.net](mailto:kenneth.dickerson@comcast.net)

## PARADISE

Patricia E. "Pat" Cobb, President  
270-338-6667/[pecobb1942@att.net](mailto:pecobb1942@att.net)

## UPPER EAST TENNESSEE

Leslie P. "Les" Bays, President  
423-782-8458/[Lpbays1@yahoo.com](mailto:Lpbays1@yahoo.com)

## WATTS BAR

Kathleen Garrison, President  
423-365-9048/[eddiekathleen@bellsouth.net](mailto:eddiekathleen@bellsouth.net)

## WESTERN AREA

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Please visit the TVARA website at [mytvara.org](http://mytvara.org) and hover your mouse over the tab "Local Chapters" to find your chapter. Click on your chapter to view meeting details and announcements.

### 117th Congress Takes on Changes, Challenges...continued from page 13

the Federal Power Act and is a foundational element of the public-power model.

The arguments advanced by the four LPCs may support their interests, but they do so at the expense of TVA's other customers, especially TVA's

long-term partners. If successful, their petition would fundamentally undermine the economics of the Tennessee Valley public-power model.

TVA has assembled resources to address the filing, and we are well-prepared to defend TVA's position.

As you all know well, TVA was "built for the people," with a mission to make life better for the people of the Tennessee Valley. This has been TVA's service commitment since 1933, and we still are proud to share the success and the strength of the public-power model in Washington today.

## Has Your Contact Information Changed?

Did you recently change your email address or phone number? If so, go to [mytvara.org/your-current-membership-information/](http://mytvara.org/your-current-membership-information/) and correct the appropriate data. If you have changed your home address recently, notify the TVA Retirement System in writing. Also, you can change your home address through the Bank of New York Mellon website: [bnym.accessmyretirement.com](http://bnym.accessmyretirement.com).



**My Covid Experience...continued from page 12**

doing what they could to help him. His room was packed with food and care packages from others. He wasn't able to eat the vast majority of it, but their kindness was a lifeline for him. I cleaned up his room, changed his bed and bath linens, helped him to the shower, and started feeding him his medicine. After a couple of days, he began feeling better. I knew he had made the turn when he laughed at something I said. He was coming back!

After over two weeks of all the symptoms, they began to go away one at a time. After day 15, my symptoms were gone, other than milder fatigue and shortness of breath. With the headache and fever having been gone for three days, Donna and I flew home on Saturday, Jan. 2.

I made an appointment with my personal physician for the following Wednesday. After X-rays showing a lot of opacities in my lungs, and finding that my saturated-blood-oxygen levels were low (in the 90-94 range), my doctor sent me to the ER, hoping they could send me home with oxygen.

The ER gave me more bloodwork. One test result, called "D dimer," was high, indicating I might have blood clots. They sent me through a CT scan and didn't see any clots in my lungs, thankfully. They gave me 10 days of antibiotics for my pneumonia and sent me home. My personal physician called in some additional steroids I would take via a nebulizer.

At the date of this writing, I still am short of breath and still have low saturated-oxygen levels. I plan to take the COVID vaccine as soon as category 1C is called in my county, if my physician gives me the go-ahead. I have symptoms consistent with

"long-haul COVID," aka "post-COVID syndrome."

*(He was so sick, but it could have been so very much worse. I am thankful he has a good chance of making a complete recovery. What I have learned from this experience is that isolation is never a good thing and that human contact is a powerful medicine. I wish I had gone to him sooner.)*

I am truly grateful for the kindness shown by the BVI folks, both in the field and in the home office. They are much like a family. The many lasting friendships made with BVI are a tremendous bonus, all the while performing work with FEMA for those Applicants who have suffered during these disasters. I also wish to thank many friends and family who called, sent up prayers, and still continue to call to check on me. It means a lot that you care.

I felt and have wished the Salem hospital could have done more for me, but my case fell in a place where their "guidelines would not allow" them to give me antibiotics, steroids, oxygen, etc. With that, I'll just say, I'm not "bitter." Do you see those imaginary quotation marks around that word "bitter"? Sorry, but that liter jug they gave me with the hospital's name on it WILL be used for target practice when

the ranges open again, to help me reach closure.

I beg you, please take COVID-19 seriously. I've known five people personally, a first cousin and four TVA retiree friends, who have died from its complications. I recently became aware of one especially sad case in which a TVA retiree and his wife died from COVID just three days apart.

I didn't know those folks personally, but one has to feel for their family.

Take care of yourself ...

*(... and hold those you love tight!)*

It's not a hoax!

*(Les Bays says he had the privilege of working at John Sevier Fossil Plant his whole career, until the facility was closed. He served as an officer of the Engineering Association and a Director on the TVA Retirement System Board. He is now the Upper East Tennessee TVARA Chapter President and a retiree who occasionally gets to help perform the good work of BVI/NEA. Donna Bays is retired from Eastman Chemical Co. They both are tired of having cruises canceled due to COVID-19, but now totally understand why that was and is necessary.)*