

TVARA NEWS

The TVA Retirees Association

The Tennessee Valley Authority Retirees Association | 400 West Summit Hill Drive WT 8C-K | Knoxville, TN 37902 | www.mytvara.org | 865-632-3318

TVARS reports assets for Year-End 2023

By COURTNEY HAMMONTREE
Lead Benefits Consultant,
TVA Retirement Operations

Following the weaker financial-market conditions from 2022, economic uncertainty persisted at the beginning of the 2023 calendar year. Fortunately, with the help of a strong fourth quarter, financial markets for 2023 greatly outperformed expectations laid out earlier in the year.

Maintaining a well-diversified portfolio, the TVA Retirement System was able to benefit from stronger-than-expected performance in 2023 across various asset classes. The December year-end value of \$8.5 billion is above the September value of \$8.1 billion.

Looking ahead into 2024, the TVARS is well-positioned following the September 2023 approved allocation changes that reduced portfolio risk, while maintaining the same expected return. TVARS continues to have confidence that current and future benefits are secure, and that the plan will be fully funded over time.

Bank of New York Mellon

To get a reprint of your 1099-R tax form or to access your monthly direct-deposit statements online, visit tvars.com/retirees, click on the BNY Mellon link, and log in or create your account. On the BNY Mellon website, you can also update your address, as well as finding tax withholding and direct-deposit information. For assistance, call BNY Mellon toll-free at 844-545-1256.

If you have any other retirement-related questions, email tvars@tva.gov or call 800-824-3870, toll-free.

As Winter Weather Wanes, Looking Forward to Spring

By JO ANNE LAVENDER, TVARA Valleywide President



JO ANNE LAVENDER

I hope you have enjoyed the winter season, in spite of its days of deep snow and bitter cold, maybe.

There were a lot of good times, too. Many of us had an opportunity to enjoy the holidays with family and friends. Most TVARA chapters were able to gather in December for some great get-togethers and meals.

Many chapters contributed to their communities during this time. See the article on pages 6 and 7 of this issue about these chapter activities, which were done through the generosity of our BVI partners.

Of course, a most notable event this winter was the very cold, snowy, icy weather in January. We hope you and your families were able to stay safe and warm. Where I live, we couldn't get out of our neighborhood for nine days due to 10 inches of snow and many snow- and ice-covered roads between us and the nearest main roads.

However, we had power and food and were safe and warm. I thank TVA for giving us retirees the People First Solutions Center to call if and when we were impacted by the storm and its aftermath and needed help.

TVA met two record power demands in January. That was after TVA spent millions of dollars weatherizing its

power facilities when some of them were unable to come online in the face of December 2022's Winter Storm Elliott.

TVA also added 1,500 megawatts of generation in the past year. That made a difference on days like Wednesday, Jan. 17, the coldest morning of the month, with an average low temperature of 4 degrees across the Tennessee Valley.

We, TVARA, sent out a message to all of you to conserve energy wherever it was safe to do so, in the morning hours that day, by taking such measures as postponing laundry and using the oven later in the day. TVA said residential customers used 800 MW fewer than expected, thanks to the voluntary conservation efforts that morning.

What we did mattered.

Jeff Lyash, TVA President/Chief Executive Officer, gave the following report of performance that week:

- He said TVA met a preliminary all-time, record peak demand of approximately 34,524 MW, beating its previous record from August 2007 by more than 1,000 MW. This exceeded the peak during Winter Storm Elliott by nearly 1,100 MW.
- On Sunday, Jan. 21, another

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Notify the TVA Retirement System by email or phone.

Fidelity 401(k) Plan

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BNY Mellon Payments

Phone: 844-545-1256, toll-free

Online: tvars.com/retirees, click on BNY Mellon link.

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Notify BNY Mellon by using the back of any BNY Mellon statement. The address-change form also can be found online at tvars.com/retirees.

Medical and Drug Coverage

Call Blue Cross Blue Shield (medical)

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Call Express Scripts (drug)

toll-free at 800-935-6203

Or call People First Solution Center

toll-free at 888-275-8094

Over 65? Call Via Benefits

(formerly OneExchange) toll-free at 866-322-2824

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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 Communications:

TVA initiating dam-safety study

Multiyear safety studies underway at Blue Ridge and Chatuge dams aim to evaluate the aging structures to ensure they remain safe and reliable for years to come.

Both dams have served the region reliably for more than 80 years, safely delivering flood control, navigation, power generation, water supply, recreation, and water quality. Blue Ridge Dam was acquired by TVA in 1939 after nine years in operation. Chatuge Dam was completed by TVA in 1942.

Residents and visitors around Chatuge in Hayesville, N.C., have noticed drilling equipment at that site. Similar equipment was expected to arrive at Blue Ridge in February. Both safety studies are expected to last until 2026 and should not impact dam operations while being completed.

Meanwhile, TVA has several ways for residents to obtain information about the work at the dams. A website with detailed information is available at tva.com/rdms, and residents can sign up there to receive email updates on either or both studies.

According to dam experts, the construction of Blue Ridge Dam makes it vulnerable to a very strong earthquake. In addition to studying seismic vulnerability, dam-safety experts also are evaluating deterioration of the spillway at the 92-year-old structure. The safety study will determine appropriate measures to address those concerns.

The primary focus of the study at Chatuge Dam is evaluating the condition of the spillway. There, the concrete slab has deteriorated over the years, so if the spillway is used for an extended period of time — such as to manage an extreme

rainfall or flooding event — the water flowing over it could damage part of the concrete chute.

“TVA maintains a foundational commitment to safety, and we need to ensure the safe, long-term operation of these dams for another 80-plus years,” TVA General Manager of Dam Safety Jennifer Dodd says. “The dam-safety industry has seen standards and best practices evolve significantly over the last decade. Considering recent lessons learned through dam-safety incidents in other parts of the country, we’re taking a proactive approach here at Chatuge and Blue Ridge by conducting comprehensive assessments of the dams and spillways, so we can minimize any potential safety risks to surrounding communities and those downstream.”

Beyond structural focus, TVA’s dam-safety assessments also include thorough consideration of nuanced potential impacts on multiple surrounding communities. Serious consideration must be given to potential loss of life and property risk for all communities, particularly those downstream. The assessments also consider the potential economic and recreation impacts, particularly for those communities on reservoirs.

When completed, the studies will determine how to best remediate existing vulnerabilities to increase dam safety. During the studies, TVA will engage the public and proactively seek community input related to any proposed actions, as required under the National Environmental Policy Act.

Ancient murrelet seen for first time in Tennessee

An ancient murrelet was seen bobbing on Chickamauga Reservoir one day this past November, and birders flocked to the site.

“For it to be in the Southeast is noteworthy,” says Jason Mitchell, former TVA Zoologist and current IT Senior Program Manager. “It’s certainly a record for Tennessee.”

The ancient murrelet is a seabird that normally lives far out in the North Pacific.

So far out, in fact, that most birders never glimpse it.



Blue Ridge Dam

"If you went out west and were serious about finding it, you'd have to line up a pelagic (relating to the open sea) trip 30 to 40 miles offshore," Mitchell says.

But on Chickamauga, birders could enjoy up-close views of this creature, which looks like a mix between a penguin and a duck — although it's not closely related to either. It's a member of the auk family — the puffin's cousin.

It's famous for its long-distance open-ocean migrations across the Pacific, from Alaska and Canada to Russia, Japan, and China — and back — each year.



Chickamauga's ancient murrelet, strange visitor from another part of this planet

But it's never been known to migrate all the way to the Southeast. It's even rare to see this bird in Western or Northern states.

Excited biologists report each sighting when it happens. Lake Michigan had one in 2009, Idaho in 2021.

And now, Chickamauga Reservoir in 2023.

For days, the ancient murrelet floated and paddled to shore, ducking to glide below the surface again and again for mouthfuls of fish.

And then, one day, it was gone.

It's anyone's guess if or when the murrelet may be seen again.

BVI volunteers prepare to reopen visitor centers

By **MARKA SMITH**, Program Manager, BVI Volunteers & Visitor Centers

TVA has four visitor centers, each of which is staffed by volunteers from Bicentennial Volunteers Inc.

These centers are located at Fontana Dam, Kentucky Dam, Norris Dam, and Raccoon Mountain Pumped-Storage Plant.

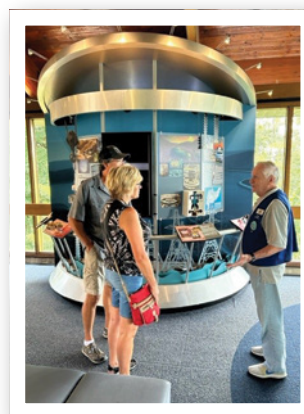
In 2023, BVI volunteers contributed 21,400 hours of their time to operate the centers. These volunteers welcomed 127,163 visitors from all over the world.

Visitors came from Australia, Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Colombia, Czech Republic, Denmark, England, France, Germany, Greece, Guatemala, Haiti, Hungary, India, Indonesia,

Ireland, Israel, Japan, Manchester (UK), Mexico, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nottingham (UK), Philippines, Poland, Puerto Rico, Republic of Korea, Singapore, Slovenia, Sussex (UK), Sweden, Switzerland, Ukraine, Vietnam, and Channel Islands/Wales (UK).

All four visitor centers will open on April 6 this year.

Norris and Raccoon Mountain have local volunteers who work daily shifts. Fontana and Kentucky have one- or



BVI volunteer Jan Jensen (right) with two visitors at Raccoon Mountain

two-week shifts. Anyone interested in volunteering at one of the centers should go to the BVI website at mybvi.org and click on "Get Involved" on the home page.

You will be contacted and informed of all the details related to volunteering.

BVI reimburses its volunteers for meals and mileage. BVI will

provide those who work at Fontana with a two-bedroom, two-bath cabin. Volunteers working at Kentucky Dam must have an RV, and a campsite is provided.

Quilts cover tremendous amount of appreciation for service to our country

By **LIBERTY PHILLIPS**, Consultant, Employee Communications (Retiree), TVA External Relations



Flanked by Knoxville TVARA Chapter members and veterans Mike Rutherford (left) and Neal Lavender, quilter Marsha Reep presents Quilt of Valor to 95-year-old Elmo Blevins.

A mother of a soldier had a dream. Catherine Roberts dreamed she saw a soldier sitting on the edge of a bed, sad and depressed. Later in her dream, she saw the same soldier, but this time he looked happy and full of life.

The difference? He was wrapped in a quilt.

This dream prompted her to start Quilts of Valor, a nonprofit organization that has provided more than 370,000 handmade quilts to military veterans since its beginning in 2003.

Ross Elmo Blevins, a 95-year-old TVA retiree

and a veteran both of World War II and the Korean War, was awarded a Quilt of Valor at the Knoxville TVARA Chapter's holiday luncheon Dec. 12.

"I made this quilt for Elmo, and these quilts are not to be hung on the wall," says Quilts of Valor quilter Marsha Reep. "They are supposed to be used.

"They are supposed to provide comfort to the veteran in thanks for their service."

Blevins's quilt is red, white, and blue and

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Streamline HRA reimbursements with Via Benefits

By **SANDIE SMITH**, TVA Benefits Consultant, Total Rewards

If you are receiving Health Reimbursement Arrangement funding from TVA through Via Benefits, did you know you may be able to streamline the process? Here are some ways to do it:

- **Set up direct deposit** — Direct deposit is a convenient feature that allows Via Benefits to deposit reimbursements from your HRA funding account into a checking or savings account, rather than mailing you a paper check. This is the fastest and safest way to receive your reimbursement. You can set up this feature through your online Via Benefits account at my.viabenefits.com/funds or through the Via Benefits Account mobile app. If you need assistance setting up direct deposit, or if you would prefer to complete a paper direct-deposit-authorization form, call Via Benefits toll-free at 844-620-5725.
- **Automate your premium reimbursement** — Automatic premium reimbursement enables you to be reimbursed for premium payments without submitting a reimbursement request each month. This feature is available for most Medicare insurance policies when you are enrolled through Via Benefits. For more information, sign into your account at my.viabenefits.com/tva, or call Via Benefits toll-free at 844-620-5725.
- **Go paperless** — Register for electronic-statement delivery and notifications at my.viabenefits.com/funds. Once signed into your online account, you also can check your current funding balance and see the status of reimbursement requests. The Via Benefits mobile app and online tools offer fast, secure ways to manage your reimbursement and reduce the paperwork involved.

If you have any questions about these features or about your HRA account, call Via Benefits toll-free at 844-620-5725 (TTY: 711), Monday-Friday 8 a.m.-7 p.m. ET.

Protecting your HSA assets, loved ones

Designating a beneficiary for your Health Savings Account protects your assets and protects your loved ones.

What is a beneficiary?

A beneficiary is a person or legal entity that has been designated to receive the proceeds from your HSA in the event of death. A beneficiary can be one or more individuals (spouse, children, relatives, or friends) or organizations, such as a trust or charity. You can designate the following two types of beneficiaries:

1. Primary beneficiaries are first to receive the designated asset upon your death. If you name

more than one primary beneficiary, each will share the benefit equally, unless you indicate specific percentages totaling 100 percent that are to be paid.

2. Secondary (contingent) beneficiaries receive the asset if there are no surviving primary beneficiaries upon your death. Multiple contingent beneficiaries will share the benefit equally, unless you indicate specific percentages totaling 100 percent that are to be paid.

You can designate a beneficiary to receive your HSA assets in the event of your death. If you name your spouse as beneficiary, he or she can elect to treat the HSA as his or her own. In such case, your spouse will not owe taxes or penalties provided when they use the HSA for IRS-qualified medical expenses. If you designate a non-spouse beneficiary, he or she must take a distribution of the funds. A non-spouse beneficiary will have to pay income tax on the amount received but will not have to pay a penalty tax. Beneficiary designations generally can be made through the Member Website. However, if you are married, live in a community-property state, and designate a non-spouse primary beneficiary, you must submit a beneficiary form with the notarized consent of your spouse.

Why it's important to designate beneficiary

One of the most neglected areas of retirement planning is beneficiary designation. Having a designated beneficiary in place at the time of your death means assets of your HSA can be distributed according to the designation. If you die without having a valid beneficiary designation, your HSA will be distributed to your estate.

Review beneficiary designations

By periodically reviewing your beneficiary designations for your HSA, you can rest assured your assets will be distributed according to your wishes. It also is recommended to keep up-to-date copies of your beneficiary-designation forms.

Circumstances for which review is recommended

If you experience a major life event such as a birth, marriage, dissolution of marriage or domestic partnership, or death in the family, you need to update your estate plan. Consult with your legal adviser when you update your estate plan to determine whether your HSA beneficiary designations also need to be updated. You will receive a beneficiary-verification notice.

Designating beneficiary through HSA Bank

Designate a beneficiary or update your current beneficiary in the Member Website. You'll be asked to provide information about your chosen beneficiary, including his or her Social Security number and birthdate.



Energy Secretary's Visit to TVA Site a Highlight



By JESSICA HOGLE, TVA Vice President, Federal Affairs

A highlight of the last few months for TVA's Federal Affairs team was U.S. Secretary of Energy Jennifer Granholm's visit to the Clinch River Nuclear Site in December. This visit showed the importance of new nuclear technologies for our nation's energy security and for a clean-energy future. Read more below!

"Because of the partnerships that are happening, because of the leadership at TVA, because of the expertise in the region, you've got all of the components to make this a success."

Secretary Granholm talked about how crucial TVA's development of SMRs is to larger goals aimed at increasing nuclear power's role across the nation.

Secretary Granholm Comes to Clinch River Nuclear Site

On Dec. 5, TVA was honored to host U.S. Secretary of Energy Jennifer Granholm at its Clinch River Site. The Clinch River facility is where TVA is in the early stages of potentially building a Small Modular Reactor, or SMR.



TVA President/Chief Executive Officer Jeff Lyash listens while Energy Secretary Granholm talks about the potential of TVA's SMR development, saying TVA "has all the components to make this a success."

This first-of-its-kind technology has the potential to provide safe, reliable, carbon-free energy.

Secretary Granholm was very complimentary of TVA efforts, saying, "TVA is leading on small modular reactors with this site. Everybody's looking to TVA to make sure that this can actually happen."

Senator Supports Browns Ferry Nuclear Plant

On Jan. 11, U.S. Sen. Tommy Tuberville (R-AL) gave a speech on the Senate floor on the importance of nuclear power. With three units, Browns Ferry is TVA's largest generating asset. It was nice to see his recognition of the contribution of our terrific employees at the plant.

Here is an excerpt of his remarks:

"I'm also proud that Alabama is America's fifth-largest producer of nuclear energy. We have two nuclear plants and five nuclear reactors."

"The Tennessee Valley Authority operates Browns Ferry in Athens, Ala., which is TVA's largest nuclear plant. The plant produces one-fifth of the TVA's energy, which covers a lot of the South. It directly supports 1,500 jobs and powers more than 2 million homes."

Cross-Country Bike Ride Serving Good Purpose

This month is March, and like a lot of you, I am welcoming the coming of Spring and the return of daylight saving time. But this March 1 is a special date for me — the first day in my transition from the ranks of my fellow TVA employees to the ranks of my new fellow TVA retirees.

And what better way to celebrate my retirement than to travel to San Diego and join 10 accomplished cyclists from around the United States and Europe in an epic trip across America to help a wonderful cause. If all goes well, although I am a novice, I will spend 45 days cycling across the Adventure Cycling Association's Southern Tier, arriving in St. Augustine, Fla., April 15.

So, although the rocking chair on my porch looked very attractive for the next couple of months or so,

I wanted to do something mentally and physically challenging. And I wanted it also to be in the spirit TVA had taught me over the past 17 years — carrying out a mission of service.



Clockwise from top left, Michael Hynes, son Riley, Victoria, son Michael, breeding service dog Lucy, daughter Kayleigh, former service dog Pickles

My wife, Victoria, and I for some time have been volunteers for Retrieving Independence, a Nashville-based nonprofit that breeds, trains, and places service dogs with people who are living with physical, mental, or emotional disabilities. Through that time, we have seen firsthand how much these service dogs have done to enhance the everyday lives of their recipients.

So, targeting something and someone to serve was not a challenge. I couldn't think of any one group of people more deserving to serve than those who

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TVARA Chapters Spread Holiday Cheer

TVARA chapters helped spread holiday cheer within their region by providing some much-needed assistance to local nonprofits. Among those chapters were the following:

The Gallatin Chapter, with a grant from Bicentennial Volunteers Inc., provided \$5,000 to the Hands of Hope Food Pantry in Portland, Tenn.

The pantry, established in 2020 at the onset of the pandemic, is set up like a grocery store in which clients can shop for food and hygiene items. Grocery items range from meats and vegetables to dairy products and canned goods.

All members of the pantry staff are volunteers, and it is operated strictly on donations.

These volunteers bag the items and transport them to customers' vehicles, providing an "old-fashioned" store experience to help make each client feel special.



Gallatin Chapter President Blue Monday (fourth from left), presents check to Gallatin High School 4-H Club sponsors and students.

The chapter also presented the Gallatin High School 4-H Club with a check for \$5,000 to be used toward travel expenses for competition in San Antonio. The Gallatin High group beat all other 4-H clubs in Tennessee to be the state's representative at the annual competition.

Chapter members for decades have been supporting Sumner County 4-H clubs in a variety of ways, ranging from teaching boating safety to judging recycle-craft competitions and manning a booth at the Reality Store in public schools. The Reality Store is a place where students can learn how to make a budget for a pretend family, how to pay monthly bills, and how to save. BVI graciously provided a grant to assist the school in this endeavor.

The Muscle Shoals Chapter supported three events during the holiday season.

In conjunction with the TVA Power Service Shops, the chapter donated \$10,000 toward a local Angel Tree Project. Chapter members and TVA employees purchased gifts and winter clothing for more than 40 children in the surrounding counties, then wrapped the presents and delivered to families.

The \$10,000 was a grant provided by BVI.

Also, working with the Power Service Shops and the Tusculumbia Chapter of American Legion, the chapter prepared gift bags for veterans in Colbert, Franklin, and Lauderdale counties. More than 215 veterans received a gift bag containing toiletries, snacks, crossword-puzzle books, and other miscellaneous items.

A grant of \$3,000 provided by BVI was used to assist with this project.

Chapter members also hosted a holiday party for Scope 310 clients; each client receiving a gift bag with toiletries, snacks, and a gift card. Special guests for the event were Santa and Mrs. Claus.



Muscle Shoals Chapter members and spouses preparing holiday gift bags for local veterans included, from left, Anita Vandiver, Greg Vandiver, Jim Green, Bill Baggett, Carol Shearer, Bob Atwell, Elba Lue Blackwell, and John Blackwell.

A grant of \$2,000 from BVI was provided to assist with this project.

SCOPE is an acronym for Shoals Committee On Programs & Employment, and Scope 310 is a residential program in Florence providing daycare for adults with intellectual and developmental challenges.

The Nashville Chapter supported Community Child Care Services Inc. of Hendersonville, Tenn., in its annual Breakfast with Santa event. The chapter donated \$10,000 to the event from a BVI grant.

The center provides a safe, nurturing, and academic environment to children, regardless of a family's economic level. More than 65 percent of the families are on state childcare vouchers, and 58 percent of the families are below the federal poverty level.



Vickie Folsom (third from left) was among fellow Nashville Chapter members supporting the Community Child Care Services Breakfast with Santa.

The event provides children an opportunity to meet Santa, have their picture made with him, and participate in holiday activities. It also is a venue for a Foster Families Assistance Network toy drive. More than 450 individuals participated in this year's festivities.

Before the holiday season, the **Johnsonville/Cumberland Chapter** provided help to three local organizations.

The Humphrey County American Legion was given funding toward the repair of its roof. The organization is housed in a 137-year-old building needing repairs. A grant of \$5,000 from BVI was presented to the American Legion to help with its fundraising effort.

The American Legion of Waverly, Tenn., was given \$2,500 to assist with its ongoing project to help local veterans. The organization provides homeless veterans with hotel rooms, while finding them permanent housing. It also provides meals for veterans and helps veterans' widows in time of need. BVI provided the grant for this endeavor.



Johnsonville/Cumberland Chapter President Mickey Blackburn presents a check to the Torrey Johnson Senior Citizens Center

The chapter donated \$2,500 to the Torrey Johnson Senior Citizens Center in Waverly, to help with the purchase of new appliances needed for the group's Meals on Wheels ministry.

The center provides hundreds of meals each week to the less-fortunate in the community, and the appliances being used were old and no longer reliable. With a grant from BVI, the chapter was able to provide much-needed assistance toward the purchase of a new refrigerator, freezer, and stove.

Lastly, the **Knoxville Chapter** sponsored two events during the month of December.

In partnership with TVA and BVI, it assisted with the East Tennessee United Veterans Council's veterans breakfast program. A total contribution of \$10,000 was made, \$5,000 of which was designated to support the program. The other \$5,000 was designated to support a "Salute to Tennessee's Fallen" display.

Representatives of TVA, BVI, and the Knoxville Chapter had the pleasure of serving food and eating with the veterans on Dec. 2.

A "Salute to Tennessee's Fallen" was on display at the breakfast. Honoring Tennessee's fallen military personnel, it is available, upon request, for display at churches, schools, public events, and around the region and state.

"TVA is honored to partner with BVI and the Knoxville chapter of TVARA to support the United Veterans Council in its mission to help connect local veterans through its veterans breakfast program," Bryan Johnson, TVA Community Relations Specialist, says. "Also, as a part of this partnership, we were able to donate funds to 'Salute to Tennessee's Fallen' — a mobile memorial that can be displayed at different venues and helps to honor those who paid the ultimate sacrifice in military service since 9/11."

The chapter's Volunteer Coordinator, Reny McClain Lee, says, "Our donation provided seed money for the Veterans Council to expand its free breakfast program to include surrounding counties, as well as to fill in areas of need for the 11 free, monthly breakfasts it is already providing."

The chapter and TVA employees volunteered to help clear land for the future Angora Frog Farm Park on Dec. 5.

Certified TVA employees cut trees and cleared large debris. Other volunteers cleaned up the debris and undergrowth. The park is scheduled to be completed in April 2024 and will be a one-mile walking park with storyboards and playground equipment. With BVI and TVA funding totaling \$6,425, the chapter provided a picnic table and park benches.



From left are Don Smith, Vietnam Veterans of America President; Chris Albrecht, United Veterans Council of East Tennessee President; Robert Buswell, Knox County Veterans & Senior Services Director; Bryan Johnson, TVA Community Relations Specialist; Patti Sweetland and husband, Sammy, TVARA Knoxville Chapter President; Reny McClain Lee, TVARA Knoxville Chapter Volunteer Coordinator; Sherry Fooshee, Bicentennial Volunteers Inc. Business Support Rep; and Bert Robinson, TVA Government & Community Relations Director.

Quilt covers huge amount of appreciation...continued from page 3

features an eagle in flight.

Reny McClain Lee, who managed the quilt project for the Knoxville chapter, says, "Elmo has attended some of our chapter meetings, and I got to know him. I am so grateful for his service. We need to honor our veterans while we have them, and I thought this would be a great way to do that."

The numbers of WWII and Korean War Veterans are declining, and because of this, they get priority to receive a quilt, Blevins was told.

"I served for six years, and I appreciate

all the honors I've received," he says.

"When I was in the service, I got to do a lot of different things, but one that was really memorable was working in security regularly carrying messages to General MacArthur's office."

After his discharge, Blevins attended Middle Tennessee State University and got his bachelor's degree in engineering and physics.

He then began a career in the nuclear field, doing research in a graphite reactor.

"I started at Oak Ridge National Laboratory, working at a nuclear graphite plant, and I

also worked at Y-12," Blevins says.

He later joined TVA and worked 14½ years as a Project Control Engineer in construction of major projects including those at Huntsville, Bellefonte, Sequoyah, Columbia, and the Twin Towers in Knoxville.

In addition to organizing the Quilt of Valor presentation, McClain Lee and the Knoxville chapter partnered with Bicentennial Volunteers Inc. and TVA to award a \$10,000 donation to the United Veterans Council of East Tennessee. See more about this in the article above.



Pig ears, cold beers among many attractions in traveling through Bulgaria, Romania

By CHARLES VAN BEKE

Our Overseas Adventure Travels excursion through Bulgaria and Romania far, far exceeded our expectations in regard to history, culture, food, architecture, and, of course, the people. And all those experiences were enhanced by our wonderful guides, Bogdan for two-plus weeks, and Gabriel for one week.

If your budget is stretched too far, you should move to either of these countries, especially Bulgaria, where the cost of living is half that of the United States. I'm talking about clean, clean modern cities, forested mountains, farmlands, and white, sandy beaches on the Black Sea.

Our trip started in Sofia, the capital of Bulgaria. First impressions were clean streets, boulevards, and parks. Enter a crosswalk, and traffic comes to an immediate halt. Pedestrians obey traffic signals. Oh, and lots of electric scooters everywhere.

The Central Park Hotel faced, why not, the central park and the National Palace of Culture. The thoroughfare in front of the hotel becomes purely pedestrian a short distance away, with restaurants, cafes, shops, and boutiques. Very pleasant, especially the cold local beer in the 100-plus-degree weather. The end of the pedestrian mall leads into the historic center of the city, so we were very well located to explore on foot.

The first evening, my wife, Sherry, and I ate dinner with another couple — D.C.-area wine connoisseurs — at a fine restaurant with an extensive menu. Those who know me would not be surprised that I chose the most off-the-wall appetizer on the menu — grilled pig ears with a delicious yogurt side. While tasty, pig ears are pure fat.



Sherry and Charles Van Beke, in front of the Palace of Parliament at Piata Constitutiei (Constitution Square) in Bucharest, Romania

The local wine was excellent. In addition, I had the very best grilled red peppers ever, with fried cheese.

Civilization on the site of Sofia goes back some 4,000 years. First there were the Thracians, who were attracted by the hot mineral springs. Then the Roman city of Serdica, whose ruins are now the subject of extensive archeological excavation.

We spent a day wandering around these ruins and the old city center. Many interesting sites including a park of socialist-era sculptures. Significant buildings — including beautiful churches and mosques, from medieval, Ottoman, and monarchical eras — are found throughout the historical center. During the communist era, many of

the Roman ruins were paved over, you know, out with the old to make way for the new socialist/communist society.

Throughout our trip we visited painted churches. The first was Rila Monastery, about two hours from Sofia. This is quite an extensive complex in a forested area. On that day the place was full of visitors, because the son of the last Bulgarian monarch was visiting.

Simeon II, the son of King Boris III, actually served as monarch of Bulgaria from age 6 through 9 (1943-46), upon the poisoning death



St. George's Greek Orthodox Church, Bucharest, Romania

of his father, shortly after dad's visiting with Hitler. Boris and Adolf had violent disagreements, and the king refused to send Bulgarian troops to fight in the Soviet Union or to send Bulgarian Jews to German concentration camps.

Now, about painted churches. When these churches were first established, the general population was illiterate, so the Bible stories were painted on the walls and ceilings. They are beautifully done and are quite detailed. I never really tired of visiting these places, especially with our guide, Bogdan, who could "read" them. I loved the artistry

Upon leaving Sofia we drove a couple of hours to Plovdiv, the cultural capital of Bulgaria, where we took a walking tour. Plovdiv is Europe's oldest continuously occupied city. Roman ruins, medieval cobbled streets — no high heels, please — and Ottoman homes. The Roman amphitheater is exceptionally well-preserved and is used today for concerts and plays.

Continuing from Plovdiv, we journeyed to Veliko Tarnovo and the Byzantine Tsarevets Fortress. The former seat of the medieval tsars, it has the preserved remains of 100 houses, 18 churches, the royal palace, and more. Of course, we also visited the shops of woodcarvers, coppersmiths, leather tanners, potters, and all the other traditional crafts. And yes, we did purchase their wares without regard to where we might fit them in our home. Oh well, a "problem" for later. (Note — we did find display places for all!)

Another highlight was a home-hosted dinner in rural Arbanassi. The resident mom and dad were in their early 40s, and both spoke passable English. The 10-year-old son spoke better English than we do and slipped back and forth between English and Bulgarian (with his parents), without missing a beat.



Peles Castle in Sinaia, Romania, was built by King Carol I. Its construction began in 1873 and was completed in 1914.

While called Peles Castle, it is actually a palace. Generally, castles are fortifications, while palaces are, well, palaces, like this one — 160 rooms, sprawling gardens, sculptured terraces. It has been the birthplace of generations of Romanian Royalty.

Okay, okay, I know you are all waiting to hear about "Dracula's Castle." Sorry, folks, it's all mythology, even though many, many Halloween-garbed revelers converge there every year. The actual name is Bran Castle, and there was no Count Dracula. In his novel, Bram Stoker cobbled together various pieces of Romanian folklore to create Count Dracula. In 1920 Bran Castle became the favorite home of Queen Marie of Romania, whose husband, King Ferdinand, preferred to live at Peles Palace.

Romania is home to many castles, which were, remember, fortifications built to protect important trade routes and commercial centers.

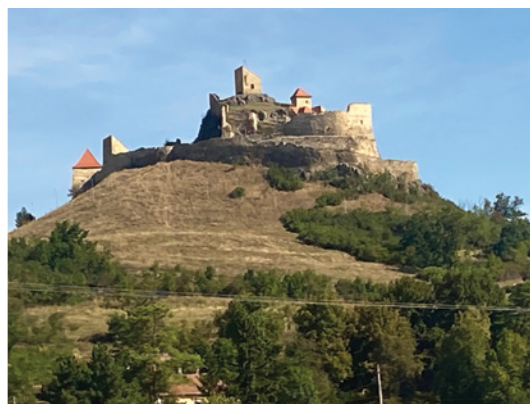
Back to Brasov, a really, really nice place to visit. One of the central features of Brasov is the Black Church, one of the largest gothic cathedrals in Europe. Is it black because of fire many centuries ago or from soot during the Industrialization Age? Take your choice. More recent research favors soot.

Anyway, it is absolutely beautiful and boasts a 4,000-pipe organ, as well as several smaller ones. We attended an hour-long concert where cameras focused on the organist and her hands and feet. Because the organ is so large, the stops were manipulated by an assistant.

Before leaving Brasov, we drove out to a small village to experience a bit of farm life. While there, we prepared our own



Bran Castle in Romania, a former royal residence and alleged inspiration for Count Dracula, was built by the Saxons in 1377.



Rupea Fortress is situated on a 120-meter-high basalt cliff, overlooking the town of Rupea, Romania.

Continued on next page



Just a small sampling of the delicious food we enjoyed throughout our journey (the fried pig ears are on the right)

lunch from fresh-picked vegetables and meat. Needless to say, we were excellent cooks, and our meal, with the help of the young farmer's mother, was very good, as was the local wine.

On our way we visited Rupea Fortress, an imposing medieval citadel built by the Saxons in the 14th century to protect this then-important trading route. While there are many, Romania, especially Transylvania, is home to almost countless citadels, castles, fortified churches, and Rupea is among the best preserved.

Also enroute to Sighisoara, we stopped at Viscri, another well-preserved and active Saxon-era village, where we toured by foot and horse-drawn wagon (a very jolting ride over cobbled streets). There we saw a fortified church from the Saxon Period, then visited with a blacksmith and an acclaimed jam-maker while in Viscri. Happily, we sampled — actually as much as we wanted on homemade bread — 10 of her jams.

Another delightful city is Sighisoara, which is deeply embedded in Saxon, Hungarian, and Romanian history. The historic center is well-preserved and is yet another UNESCO World Heritage site. Dating back to the 1100s, it was a fortified town and important commercial center for centuries.

While in Sighisoara, we took some day trips to meet with locals, including a fascinating gypsy family with whom we also enjoyed dinner. Clara, the mother, is 28, with a 13-year-old son and 9-year-old daughter. We spoke of life in a patriarchal gypsy family, her two or three marriages, domestic violence, the caste system, and her plans for her and her daughter's lives. The plans did not include her son, who is considered an adult and already a full member of the male-dominated society.

Clara speaks perfect, self-taught English and talked about how she is a first-time high-school student. Each morning, she leaves home dressed as a

gypsy but changes clothes at school. Upon graduation, she said she plans to leave her community and move with her daughter to Austria for a new life. Because of her activities and her being a feminist, the elders and those fully embedded in the community warned their daughters to stay away from her.

The next morning, we set off for another medieval town with a fortified church. Biertan was an important medieval Saxon village. Then to Malancrav village to meet with a carpet-weaver, one of whose carpets Sherry now steps on every morning as she gets out of bed.

Yup, she couldn't resist. So now we walk around the house on handmade carpets from China, Tibet, Turkey, Tunisia, and Romania. All of our carpets give us such fond memories.

Do you have any idea of the vastness of a salt mine? We certainly didn't. Think immense, huge, cavernous. Got it? Even an amusement park with a Ferris wheel in this mine, Salina Turda, which goes back to Roman times.

Walk about a half mile underground to the shaft itself. You can then go down sets of salt-encrusted steps or take an elevator. We did both, as we moved from level to level. At the bottom was a lake, where you could paddle or row around. This place is not only a tourist attraction but a retreat for local families to escape the summer heat.



Salt-encrusted stairs

Onward to the city of Sibiu, important to Romanian history but also important today as a transportation, commercial, and cultural center. This is a city in which most of us would be living quite comfortably. It has also been designated as a cultural capital of Europe. The old town is also known as the "City with Eyes," because of the shape of the attic or upper-story windows.

While we were there, an international film festival was in progress, part of the annual Sibiu International Theatre Festival of Performing Arts. Oh, and don't miss the very extensive farmers market.

From Sibiu, another day trip, this time to visit Corvin Castle, the largest medieval castle in Transylvania. The entrances to the castle are one of its most interesting architectural and defensive aspects. They are at the base of the guard towers.



Clara was one of the locals we had the pleasure of meeting in Signisoara.

You enter into walkways from which defenders could shoot arrows, dump burning oil, and whatever. In essence, if the outer door was breached, invaders would be trapped in this room, while trying to breach the inner door.

On day 16 of our journey, we made it back to the Romanian capital, Bucharest, a large vibrant city but one whose pre-communist history was largely wiped out by the Ceausescu regime. Ceausescu was a brutal megalomaniac, and the Romanian people suffered badly during his quarter-century dictatorship.

Pretty much the entire historic district was leveled to make room for his grandiose plans. To pay for them, he starved the people by exporting their agricultural production and basically everything else. The end of the regime came in December 1989 amid violent demonstrations after his police fired on protesting crowds. He and his wife fled, were captured a day or so later, were quickly tried by military tribunal and executed by firing squad the same day, Dec. 25, 1989.

At the end of our group's stay in Bucharest, most folks went home, but five of us stayed for another week, exploring rural Northern Romania and even crossing into Ukraine for an hour or so.

We flew from Bucharest to Iasi on the northeastern border with Moldova. Iasi has a long history and is the cultural center of this region — Romania's first university, more than 100 Orthodox churches, and five public universities. Its population of about 275,000 includes some 60,000 university students.

Over many past centuries, Iasi was also home to a very large Jewish community, up to 50 percent of its population and more than 100 synagogues. This is a beautiful walking city.

If you come to Romania, you should spend at least one day wandering around Iasi, enjoying its architecture and the fabulous interiors of its churches. Many started out as Catholic but converted to Orthodox as a result of the Reformation.

Over the next several days, we traveled northwest toward Ukraine, spending nights in rural-village guest houses, where we ate and were vibrantly entertained with folk songs and dances.

Among those folks we visited was a fellow who makes traditional leather vests and jackets from skins right from shepherds. He also makes traditional costumes to order for heritage troupes across Eastern Europe.

We walked up into a high meadow to talk with a shepherd as he milked his goats and sheep.

Not to be overlooked was a trip on a narrow-gauge railroad



The church and one of the brightly colored tombstones found at the Merry Cemetery in Sapanta, Romania



that formerly hauled lumber out of the abundant forests in the area.

One of the most interesting sites was the Merry Cemetery — yes, a cemetery, with a painted church. The grave markers were about 5 feet high and made of wood, each painted in bright colors depicting the deceased at his or her trade, such as a weaver woman at her loom, a farmer on his tractor, a shepherd with his sheep. The front side gave a name and a bit of biography. The back side showed how they died, for example a woman being hit by a car. The most gruesome showed a man being shot in the back of his head then decapitated. That one was from the WWII era.

I had never thought much about the art of painted eggs. Well, now I do. We visited a local museum with thousands of them, each painted by the same woman. The museum is run by her granddaughter. The artwork is very, very detailed and colorful. We were tempted to purchase one or two, but they were expensive and fragile, so we were afraid of breaking them on our trip home. I regret not trying, but at least I have many, many photos of them.



A sampling of the intricately painted eggs

After the painted-egg museum, we spent an hour or so wandering around the beautiful grounds and buildings of the Wooden Monastery. The setting was gorgeous and peaceful, even the cemetery of and monument to those who died in the nearby communist prison.

Next stop, for only an hour or so, was our crossing into Ukraine. Not to worry, we were far from the combat area. Many of those in the small town crossed over the local river to work or shop in Romania, so the bridge had a steady stream

Continued on page 16

Springtime Dawning in Valley's Various Venues

Make a new promise to make more of each new morning. Let your passions flower. There is no better time than now to nurture the Tennessee Valley's nature and culture. Encourage heritage protection, celebrate local communities, support grassroots conservation ...

By **MARK ENGLER & JULIE GRAHAM**, Explore Tennessee River Valley

Winter's chill is waning, and a welcome verdant spirit is stirring on a balmy season's breeze. Spring is a time to follow your zeal wherever it flows.

This year, go ahead and accept nature's invitation to live fuller and love more, for this great Tennessee Valley river basin is as lovable and livable as anywhere in America.

Powering Communities' Flowering

TVA delivers Power to the People in the truest sense — to the cities, towns, and countrysides. Raise awareness for appreciating regional culture, from past to present to future — join in and celebrate the communities TVA has helped sustain.

- Calendar year 2024 has been officially designated as "The Year of Alabama Birding." On March 9, Oakville Indian Mounds Education Center in Danville is hosting the **Oakville Feather Fest** birding fiesta to celebrate all things avian-related.
- Join in the convivial joy of Celtic culture at Jonesborough's **St. Paddy's Festival** (March 16). Tennessee's oldest town promises an overflowing pot of golden luck and Irish charm. Shamrock hues, Gaelic motifs, and Emerald Isle-style merrymaking — your friends will be green with envy when they hear how much fun you had!
- Set on the legendary Nolichucky River, the three-day (April 12-14) **NoliFest** in Erwin, Tenn., features demos, vendors, food, drink, and thrilling river races. NoliFest supports valuable conservation initiatives by American Whitewater and the River Management Society.
- Looking for a food festival with an unmistakable Southern flavor? Look no further than the **Lodge Cornbread Festival** (April 27-28) in South Pittsburg, Tenn. For the past quarter-century, cornbread-recipe-concocting experts have been competing in a cookoff sponsored by Lodge Cast Iron and Bush Beans.
- Every year, tractor enthusiasts from across the South parade into Northeast Tennessee for the **Appalachian Antique Farm Show** (April 25-28) in the Johnson City suburb of Gray. Hosted by the Tri-State Antique Power



Association, this ag-heritage-celebration event brings together collectors of antique farm equipment and buffs of rural-life history.

- In Tennessee's scenic southeast corner, the **Polk County Ramp Tramp Festival** (April 26-27) goes back to 1958, but knowledge and use of the plant that everyone's celebrating likely are rooted in the earliest germinations of Appalachian Scots-Irish mountain culture, to say nothing of the indigenous peoples before them. Stop in at the 4-H Club's Camp McCroy community-event hall and enjoy bluegrass music, gospel-singing, crafts, vendor booths, and a delicious traditional meal made with wild mountain ramps, fried eggs, streak o' lean pork belly, fried potatoes, white beans, and cornbread.
- The **Iris Festival**, sponsored by Northeast Tennessee's Greene County Partnership, is a vibrant and colorful celebration held on May 18-19 in Downtown Greeneville. Established in 1994, this major community event features a juried arts/crafts festival, offering a wide array of local and regional talent.



Fisheries Festivals — Appreciating Appalachia's Cold-Water Angling

Trout festivals April 24 in Blue Ridge, Ga., and May 4 in Tellico Plains, Tenn., are wonderful opportunities to celebrate history-steeped Southern mountain towns embracing trout-focused tourism and cold-water fish-habitat conservation.



Annual Spring Cleaning

There's no overestimating how important grassroots-conservation efforts are to making the Tennessee River Valley a better place to live and visit and thoroughly enjoy. Connecting with nature and communities by joining in river cleanup, a weed wrangle, or a trail day is a rewarding and constructive way to feed a passion for conserving the beauty of the Valley.

Mark your calendar for one of these Tennessee River Valley events:

Mar 16 — **Irish Road Bowling** — Rugby, Tenn.: Join in and learn the skill of Irish Road Bowling on Historic Rugby's 2024 season opening day.

Mar 21-23 — **Big Ears Festival** — Knoxville, Tenn.: International celebration of music with multiple venues.

Mar 23: 5 — **Five-County Norris Lake Cleanup** — Norris Lake: Annual event to do a shoreline cleanup.

Mar 21-23 — **Johnson City, Tenn., Jazz Festival** — Celebrating the All-American genre, Big Band to Jazz Fusion.

Apr 20-21 — **Rossini International Street Festival** — Knoxville, Tenn.: Celebrate the global impact on the music, food, art, and culture of East Tennessee.

Apr 20-27 — **World's Largest Fish Fry** — Paris, Tenn.: Serving up more than 12,500 pounds of fish.

Apr 26-28 — **Dogwoods Art Festival** — Knoxville, Tenn.: Art fair and music transform World's Fair Park.

May 10 — **Discover Life in America** — Raccoon Valley Laurel Point, Chattanooga, Tenn.: Night blitz for insects.

May 11 — **Discover Life in America** — Raccoon Valley Laurel Point, Chattanooga, Tenn.: Birds, flora and fauna search.

May 16-19 — **Tennessee Motorcycles & Music Revival** — Hurricane Mills, Tenn.: Annual event at the Loretta Lynn Ranch.

May 18 — **Tennessee Mountain Laurel Festival** — Wartburg, Tenn.: Music, BBQ, and the Obed Wild and River draped in blooming bursts of color.

May 24 — **Hiawassee Pro Rodeo** — Hiawassee, Ga.: World-class contestants from all over the United States and Canada.

May 25-26 — **Blairsville Spring Arts, Crafts & Music Festival** — Blairsville, Ga.: Two-day event with demonstrations, regional crafts, and music.

As Winter Weather Wanes...continued from page 1

record was set. TVA's system performed incredibly well through record-breaking weekend peak demands of 34,284 MW.

- And, from Jan. 15 through Jan. 21, TVA met a weekly record of 4,790 GWh, which is more than 3 percent over its previous record from January 2010.

So, now we are looking forward to Spring!

Check out many opportunities for Spring activities listed in this issue. First, look at the page with the March chapter meetings to find the meeting in your area. This is such a great time to get together with friends and colleagues.

There is also an article listing numerous spring festivals and events throughout the Valley.

And there are other enjoyable articles such as the following: Retiree Charles Van Beke describes his trip to Bulgaria and Romania, and recently retired Michael Hynes reports on a bicycle trip across America he is making for a worthy charitable organization.

We hope you find these and other articles in this newsletter interesting and informative. There are many updates about some of TVA's projects. There is information about benefits. There is information on how you can sign up to volunteer at TVA's visitor centers. And more.

Whatever you find yourself doing this Spring, we wish you health and happiness!

Cross-Country Bike Ride Serving Good Purpose...continued from page 5

have served me (and you) — U.S. military veterans. In particular, that would be those veterans who are seeking the therapeutic support of a service dog to help them deal with the stress and anxiety resulting from their service.

Victoria and I have been working with Retrieving Independence to create a dedicated fund for U.S. service personnel who are seeking the benefits of Retrieving Independence and their service dogs. (We have a dog, Lucy, who is also a service dog, in that she was chosen as a breeding dog for Retrieving Independence because of her very mild temperament.)

In the meantime, your support of my journey can help provide the placement of fully trained service dogs with veterans suffering from post-traumatic stress and anxiety, offsetting as much as

possible of the financial cost to them. If you are interested in doing so, please use this link: retrievingindependence.kindful.com/?campaign=1285124

Finally, you can track the progress of my journey on Instagram and Facebook. Please leave me a note, as it will serve as wind at my back: Instagram — Hynes3033 and Facebook — facebook.com/profile.php?id=61555920660306.

I look forward to reacquainting with you or meeting you for the first time at future TVA retiree and volunteer events. Thank you for your interest and support, with special thanks to all our veterans.

(Michael Hynes retired this month as Director of Rate Design & Administration, Financial Services, in Nashville, after 17 years with TVA.)

In Memoriam

Oct. 30, 2023 - Jan. 28, 2024

TVA Retirement Management received notifications of the deaths of the following retirees for the period Oct. 30, 2023, through Jan. 28, 2024, 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 800-824-3870.

Adams, Samuel R.,
12/28/2023(10/17/1994)
Aho, Douglas D.,
11/4/2023(10/19/1991)
Ainsworth, Howard S.,
1/3/2024(4/2/2000)
Alexander, Farish G.,
1/13/2024(5/5/1987)
Alexander, Mansears, Jr.,
1/16/2024(8/4/2007)
Allen, James Carl,
11/17/2023(8/28/2012)
Amick, Steven F.,
12/8/2023(2/3/2007)
Anderson, Juanita,
1/22/2024(10/1/1996)
Anderton, Wade L.,
9/27/2023(10/17/1994)
Arnold, Lindel R.,
1/19/2024(7/4/2003)
Arp, Charles B., Jr.,
12/18/2023(2/15/1997)
Atkins, Lawrence G.,
11/7/2023(11/1/1990)
Averitte, Romie D.,
11/5/2023(9/11/1999)
Baumann, James R.,
2/16/2023(8/3/1988)
Beeler, Barbara Jean,
1/20/2024(1/22/2000)
Bleiler, William R.,
11/23/2023(3/22/2003)
Bonine, Charles, Jr.,
1/21/2024(7/16/1988)
Bowden, Patricia T.,
1/2/2024(8/2/1988)
Briley, William O.,
12/17/2023(7/8/1988)
Brown, James E.,
9/15/2023(4/19/1983)
Brown, Myra P.,
10/17/2023(1/4/1999)
Brown, Richard S., Jr.,
1/13/2024(10/1/1996)
Bryant, Ralph E.,
1/6/2024(1/3/1987)
Buckner, Patricia L.,
10/24/2023(3/3/1989)
Butram, Bobby S.,
11/13/2023(4/19/1986)
Carmichael, Thomas G.,
11/12/2023(10/31/1990)
Carpenter, Robert G.,
10/31/2023(1/3/2000)
Chavis, William S.,
1/2/2024(1/11/1986)
Cheatham, Billy L.,
12/18/2023(1/5/1999)
Chism, Joan H.,
10/10/2023(1/10/1981)
Clayton, Charles, Jr.,
12/30/2023(2/1/2001)
Cole, Earl E.,
11/6/2023(4/15/1990)
Cooper, James R.,
11/1/2023(5/29/2004)
Crain, Edward B.,
11/8/2023(1/26/2005)
Crow, Randell L.,
9/17/2023(1/11/1994)
Crowell, Kirk K.,
12/26/2023(10/20/2022)

Davis, Marion R.,
12/26/2023(4/11/1996)
Deangelo, Mary E.,
1/17/2024(9/24/1988)
Demars, Suzanne,
12/28/2023(11/3/2007)
Dunn, Paul T.,
12/19/2023(5/10/1986)
Faulkner, Hal C.,
12/10/2023(10/1/1988)
Finch, Leonard A.,
12/11/2023(12/28/2002)
Folden, John D.,
12/4/2023(1/7/2006)
Frazier, Alva W.,
12/31/2023(1/1/1993)
Freese, Charles W.,
11/24/2023(8/8/1991)
Garner, James L.,
11/8/2023(10/1/1988)
George, Danny F.,
12/25/2023(12/22/1999)
Griffith, Connie D.,
11/23/2023(9/27/1997)
Griffith, Joseph D.,
12/29/2023(10/1/1996)
Guettner, Raymond H.,
11/18/2023(9/27/1997)
Guthrie, James F.,
12/30/2023(5/1/1990)
Guthrie, Jerry D.,
1/6/2024(1/7/2006)
Gwinn, Martha J.,
12/20/2023(8/16/1988)
Hafley, David C.,
12/4/2023(11/14/1994)
Hale, Sarah A.,
1/5/2024(9/4/1993)
Hall, Frederick G.,
11/25/2023(11/28/1981)
Hall, Lou A.,
10/26/2023(12/17/1994)
Hall, Robert F.,
1/10/2024(10/29/1991)
Hansard, Jeanette F.,
11/22/2023(1/12/1991)
Harmon, Joanne G.,
1/19/2024(12/31/1994)
Hasting, Kenneth A.,
10/31/2023(4/21/1990)
Hawkins, Charles E.,
11/22/2023(6/7/2008)
Hice, Jack G., Sr.,
12/28/2023(12/12/2002)
Hickman, Timothy R.,
10/24/2023(1/3/2002)
Hicks, Sherry L.,
11/26/2023(10/3/2009)
Hires, Richard A.,
11/14/2023(10/1/1996)
Hogg, George V.,
1/19/2024(9/24/1988)
Honeycutt, Edward H., Jr.,
1/17/2024(4/14/1990)
Hoodenpyl, G. Randall,
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Hornbeak, Patricia A.,
10/6/2023(6/16/1988)
Howard, Lewis E.,
12/14/2023(2/13/1999)
Hudson, C. Glenn,
12/1/2023(5/3/1994)

Hughes, David N.,
10/13/2023(8/16/1988)
Inglish, Maureen A.,
12/3/2023(3/16/1995)
Ingram, Dennis B.,
12/9/2023(11/16/1991)
Ison, James I.,
10/28/2023(12/31/1994)
Jack, Albert J.,
11/20/2023(5/5/1998)
Jacobs, Earl L.,
11/13/2023(10/17/1994)
Johnson, George W.,
12/26/2023(4/10/1999)
Johnson, William K.,
12/20/2023(1/3/2009)
Jones, Helen J.,
11/7/2023(9/27/1997)
Kidd, Thomas E.,
12/18/2023(9/3/1988)
Kilgore, Herman L., Jr.,
11/15/2023(10/1/2008)
Kinnane, Ralph E., Jr.,
11/3/2023(11/4/1994)
Lane, Johnny B.,
11/22/2023(12/3/1994)
Lasley, Chrystal E.,
12/6/2023(10/1/1996)
Lawson, Ronald M.,
12/22/2023(10/1/2014)
Layne, Connie M.,
11/8/2023(6/7/2008)
Lee, Betty S.,
1/4/2024(8/12/1989)
Lee, Larry L.,
11/7/2023(6/9/2008)
Lemay, Oscar F.,
1/3/2024(9/8/1999)
Lenoir, Shawn M.,
12/29/2023(6/26/1991)
Leslie, Gene E.,
1/17/2024(12/30/2000)
Light, Bobby C.,
10/25/2023(5/2/2001)
Lindsey, James W.,
10/30/2023(10/1/1996)
Little, Jimmy S.,
11/5/2023(5/1/1993)
Longshore, James D.,
12/14/2023(4/4/1998)
Lynn, Charles W.,
11/29/2023(3/25/2003)
Maney, Larry P.A.,
12/10/2023(10/17/1994)
Mansell, Woodroe,
10/12/2023(7/8/2006)
Marchbanks, Eleanora W.,
12/8/2023(11/19/1985)
Martin, David J.,
12/30/2023(9/27/1997)
McCauley, Cleophus R.,
11/18/2023(3/23/1991)
McClure, Robert W.,
11/17/2023(8/8/1998)
McCulloch, James H.,
11/16/2023(10/23/2001)
McGuire, Richard L.,
10/27/2023(6/9/1992)
McLain, Douglas P.,
12/25/2023(4/29/1995)
McNew, Doris J.,
11/29/2023(5/22/1999)

Meadows, Johnny M.,
1/5/2024(9/21/2004)
Mier, Charles,
11/9/2023(7/30/1988)
Miles, Calvin B.,
11/11/2023(8/2/1988)
Miller, Nicholas F.,
12/21/2023(1/6/2007)
Millican, Charles E., Jr.,
1/7/2024(7/13/2002)
Monday, James H.,
11/11/2023(9/1/1995)
Moore, Daryl G.,
12/18/2023(10/8/2011)
Moore, James, Jr.,
1/8/2024(11/5/2005)
Morgan, Gerald W.,
12/12/2023(12/10/1994)
Nail, Allison D.,
11/29/2023(11/2/1999)
Nichols, David E.,
12/31/2023(5/1/1998)
Painter, Ralph E.,
11/5/2023(1/3/1987)
Parker, Horace W.,
1/9/2024(6/2/2002)
Payne, Betty K.,
11/15/2023(5/3/2003)
Peters, J. Elbert,
12/28/2023(3/31/1986)
Petway, Ronald W.,
11/21/2023(4/5/2005)
Potter, Junior L.,
12/3/2023(9/27/1997)
Pruett, Howard T.,
1/23/2024(8/6/1990)
Purcell, Arthur, Jr.,
12/13/2023(12/27/1993)
Qualls, Charles C., Sr.,
11/14/2023(3/22/1992)
Raines, Terry W.,
12/8/2023(11/2/2011)
Ray, Dennis H.,
12/23/2023(5/16/2005)
Reid, Joseph, Jr.,
11/7/2023(10/1/2019)
Riley, Forrest T.,
1/20/2024(9/14/2009)
Risner, Alvin D.,
11/13/2023(1/24/2005)
Roberts, Wallace H.,
12/7/2023(9/29/1990)
Robinette, Wayne O.,
11/11/2023(9/27/1997)
Robinson, Thomas E.,
11/9/2023(7/4/1990)
Rogers, Thomas Earl,
11/13/2023(10/17/1994)
Rowan, Robert A.,
12/16/2023(8/2/1988)
Rucker, Rubye L.,
12/3/2023(6/8/2000)
Sauer, Curtis B., Jr.,
11/13/2023(2/25/1980)
Schreiner, Frank O.,
1/6/2024(3/23/1993)
Scott, Fletcher C.,
11/27/2023(1/4/1987)
Shepherd, Paul L.,
11/7/2023(11/19/1994)
Sims, Kenneth E.,
10/31/2023(10/17/1994)

Smith, Charles L., Jr.,
12/23/2023(1/2/2010)
Smith, Harold W.,
1/14/2024(8/7/1986)
Smith, James D.,
11/28/2023(10/1/1986)
Snipes, Daisy A.,
1/6/2024(9/22/2012)
Stalcup, S. Berry, Jr.,
1/2/2024(4/5/2003)
Stanford, Douglas H.,
12/7/2023(11/15/1991)
Stewart, Ronnie E.,
12/22/2023(12/30/2000)
Stooksbury, Larry E.,
11/10/2023(7/6/2000)
Tarbox, Roger D.,
12/26/2023(6/30/2001)
Terry, George R.,
12/11/2023(12/20/2008)
Tilson, David W.,
10/25/2023(5/5/1998)
Trapp, Carlos L.,
11/7/2023(10/17/1994)
Tucker, Irvin Ray,
1/2/2024(10/17/1994)
Turner, Loretta P.,
12/21/2023(10/17/1994)
Underwood, W. Eddie,
11/13/2023(6/25/1994)
Van Allen, Roy R.,
11/5/2023(9/29/1984)
Vaughan, Robert E., Jr.,
11/25/2023(1/7/2006)
Walker, John T.,
10/10/2023(2/13/1988)
Walker, Melvin D.,
1/4/2024(6/8/1991)
Walker, Norman C., Jr.,
11/19/2023(11/2/2003)
Wall, William L.,
10/17/2023(7/13/1995)
Wallace, John L.,
11/6/2023(1/9/1989)
Wasylow, William F.,
1/4/2024(10/5/2013)
Watson, Darrell E.,
11/18/2023(3/18/1987)
Wayland, Arthur E.,
11/3/2023(6/4/1985)
West, Ardeth H.,
10/23/2023(2/12/2000)
White, Joseph D.,
10/27/2023(1/1/1993)
Williams, George W.,
11/14/2023(10/17/1994)
Williams, Joe D.,
11/28/2023(10/17/1994)
Williams, Ray,
11/9/2023(7/5/1992)
Young, Tammy E.,
12/30/2023(4/23/2016)
Zeiss, Charles A.,
1/8/2024(10/2/1990)

Upcoming March 2024 Chapter Meetings

BROWNS FERRY

March 12, 2024, Noon

Catfish Cabin, Athens, Ala.

- Program/Speaker: TBD
- David C. Matherly Jr., President
256-777-2175/dcmatherly@gmail.com

CHATTANOOGA

March 19, 2024, 10 a.m.

*Brainerd United Methodist Church,
Fellowship Hall, covered entrance on left.
4315 Brainerd Road*

- 10 a.m. — Coffee & Donuts
 - 10:30 a.m. — Program: TVARS Update, Mark Meigs, Executive Secretary, TVARS Board
- Tom Swanson, President
423-344-6892/twswanson@comcast.net

CLEVELAND

March 8, 2024, 10 a.m.

*Hopewell Church of God, Fellowship Hall,
5765 Eureka Road*

- Guest Speaker: Representative from TVA
Cleveland Regional Office
- John Austin, President
423-472-2720/austintnutfan@charter.net

GALLATIN

March 13, 2024, 11 a.m.-2 p.m.

*Gallatin Public Library,
123 E. Main St.*

- Guest Speaker: Gallatin Police Capt. Carl McCoy
- Ronnie “Blue” Monday, President
615-481-8469/oemorgan@comcast.net

Getting in touch with TVARA

Here is contact information for the TVA Retirees Association and its officers:

TVARA 865-632-3318

Jo Anne Lavender, TVARA President
jlavender@tds.net/865-300-8272

**Vickie Ellis,
TVARA Immediate Past President**
vlellis@aol.com/865-805-1512

Les Bays, TVARA Vice President
Lpbays1@yahoo.com/423-782-8458

Kathryn Davis, TVARA Secretary
krdavis3@yahoo.com/615-361-9954

Lisa Overly, TVARA Treasurer
lloverly@hotmail.com/865-567-7911

Penny Walker, TVARA Volunteer Coordinator
pennywalker06@comcast.net/423-413-7137

HUNTSVILLE

March 14, 2024, 10 a.m.

*First Baptist Church, East Entrance,
Door Code 53158, Parlor Meeting Room,
600 Governors Drive*

- Guest Speaker: TBD
- Daniel A. Simmons, President
256-509-9781/dasimmon@bellsouth.net

JACKSON

March 13, 2024, 9:30 a.m.

*Southwest Electric Membership Corp.,
1590 Highway 70E*

- Guest Speakers: Liberty Phillips, Consultant, Employee Communications (Retiree), External Relations; Jennifer Johnson, BVI Program Mgr.
- Alan Campbell, President
731-988-8814/abcjax@eplus.net

JOHNSONVILLE/CUMBERLAND

March 14, 2024, 10 a.m.

*Country & Western Steakhouse,
Hwy 641 North, Camden, Tenn.*

- Guest Speakers: Liberty Phillips, Consultant, Employee Communications (Retiree), External Relations; Jennifer Johnson, BVI Program Mgr.
 - Socializing at 10 a.m. and meeting at 11 a.m.
 - Door prizes will be given
 - Remember to bring a nonperishable food product for the Helping Hands project
- Mickey Blackburn, President
931-209-1352/mwblackb56@gmail.com

KNOXVILLE

March 7, 2024, 1:30-3:30 p.m.

Fellowship Church, 8000 Middlebrook Pike

- Program/Speaker: TBD
- Ron Riberich, President
865-679-1565/rjriberich@comcast.net

MEMPHIS

March 12, 2024, 11 a.m.

Cocina Mexicana Restaurant, 2945 Millbranch Road

- Guest Speakers: Gabe Franceschi, Director, TVA Government & Community Relations; Liberty Phillips, Consultant, Employee Communications (Retiree), External Relations; Jennifer Johnson, BVI Program Manager
- Steve Coleman, President
901-237-0214/stevencoleman66@gmail.com

MISSISSIPPI

March 12, 2024, 10:30 a.m.

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

- Guest Speaker: TBD
- Judy J. Bright, President
662-791-9779/brightjudy@gmail.com

MUSCLE SHOALS

March 13, 2024, 10 a.m.

*TVA Community Credit Union,
1405 S. Wilson Dam Road*

- Program/Speaker: TBD
- Timothy “Tim” Cornelius, President
256-483-5917/timwcornelius1@gmail.com

NASHVILLE

March 14, 2024, 10 a.m.

*Victory Baptist Church,
1777 Tate Lane, Mount Juliet, Tenn.*

- Guest Speaker: Chris Smith, Community Relations Manager, TVA North Region
- Jeff Gammons, President
931-729-9974/y2kunderthehill@gmail.com

NORTHEAST ALABAMA

March 12, 2024, 11 a.m.

*Western Sizzlin
1130 Highway 28, Jasper, Tenn.*

- Program/Speaker: TBD
- Larry A. Hancock, President
256-437-8220/lah35772@gmail.com

PADUCAH AREA

March 19, 2024, 10 a.m.

Pizza Inn, 1001 Joe Clifton Drive

- Guest Speaker: TVA Retirement Services Representative.
- Ken Dickerson, President
270-442-9539/kenneth.dickerson@comcast.net

PARADISE

March 12, 2024, 10:30 a.m.

*Catfish Dock, 2003 W. Everly Brothers Blvd.,
Powderly, Ky.*

- Program/Speaker: TBD
- Vernon R. Perry, President
270-543-4707/vrperry76@gmail.com

UPPER EAST TENNESSEE

March 19, 2024, 11 a.m.

*Golden Corral, 2995 W. Andrew Johnson Hwy.,
Morristown, Tenn*

- Program: Retirement System update
- Door prizes
- Please pay for lunch on the way in and plan to leave a tip on the table
- Meeting plans will be posted via email and Facebook

Les Bays, President,
423-782-8458/Lpbays1@yahoo.com

WESTERN AREA

March 20, 2024, 10:30 a.m.

Lake Barkley State Resort Park, Meeting Room

- Program/Speaker: TBD
- K. Renee Turnbow, President
270-205-5277/kturnbow@gmail.com

Please visit the TVARA website at mytvvara.org and hover your mouse over the tab “Chapters” to find your chapter. Click on your chapter to view meeting details and announcements.



The Tennessee Valley Authority
Retirees Association
400 West Summit Hill Drive WT 8C-K
Knoxville, TN 37902

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PERMIT NO. 1

Save the Date!

Retiree Appreciation Luncheon
September 13, 2024

and

Bull Run Legacy Event
March 21, 2024

RSVP by March 1:
[BIT.LY/BULL-RUN-LEGACY](https://bit.ly/bull-run-legacy)

Who We Are

| TVA Retirees By Class | Number |
|-----------------------|--------|
| Retirees | 18,109 |
| Beneficiaries | 3,290 |
| Civil Service | 433 |
| Deferred | 619 |

| How Young We Are | Number |
|------------------------------|---------------|
| Under 60 | 833 |
| 60-69 | 5,408 |
| 70-79 | 8,794 |
| 80-89 | 2,649 |
| 90 and Above | 425 |
| Total Retirees By Age | 18,109 |

| Where We Live | Number |
|---------------------------|---------------|
| AL | 3,425 |
| GA | 774 |
| KY | 1,049 |
| MS | 274 |
| NC | 182 |
| TN | 11,018 |
| VA | 88 |
| Other Countries | 4 |
| Other States | 1,295 |
| Total TVA Retirees | 18,109 |

These numbers are unofficial as of 01/22/2024. Retirement Services has the official numbers. Retirement numbers adjusted for death notifications received after 01/22/2024.

Bulgaria and Romania...continued from page 11

of women carrying baskets of food. During the off season for tourists, Bogdan, our original guide, packed up his car with supplies and took them to Ukraine. Indelibly etched into his memory are the faces and eyes of those suffering in war, he told us. One family he befriended on his first trip was killed by the time he made his second trip.

Onward to our last city, Cluj-Napoca, in Transylvania, where we spent two nights. But on the way, there was Dej.

In Dej's square, in front of a very large, well-cared-for synagogue, is a large sculpture of a Jewish family — mom, dad, child, baby — trudging along, obviously in distress. Next stop for them was Auschwitz.

In a city with many monuments to its historical figures, this one stood out to me. After WWII, most of Dej's

remaining Jewish population was "sold" to Israel. The cost of each exit visa depended on how much your skills were needed in Israel. For example, doctors and engineers fetched a much higher price than everyday folks.

Cluj-Napoca is the historic capital of Transylvania. Today, it is the second-most populous city in Romania and one of the most important academic, cultural, and business centers of the country.

And it features really good ice cream to enjoy while relaxing on one of the large city squares. I will leave it — and us — there. Until our next trip — to Spain and Portugal this spring. Bye.

(After 22 years of service, Charles Van Beke retired from TVA in 1988 as Assistant General Counsel-Complex Litigation. Sherry Van Beke retired from TVA in 2002 after 30 years of service in the Office of the General Counsel.)