

# POWER Connect!

## Muscle Shoals Chapter

Fall 2023 Issue



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### SEASON'S GREETINGS

Message from our President

By the time you are reading this message, only a few weeks will be left in 2023 and a new year will be upon us.

TVA celebrated its 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary in May, and our chapter commemorated the event, by working in conjunction with the TVA Services Shop, in building beds for children within the Muscle Shoals area who did not have a bed. In coordination with Sleep in Heavenly Peace, nine of our chapter members and several TVA employees built 40 beds in a little over two hours setting a record for the local organization.

In addition, to the 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary community outreach, the chapter secured over \$90,000 in grant funds from BVI to assist several projects within the surrounding counties. The annual garden seed program was the largest event backed by a \$35,000 grant.

We currently have four holiday projects planned for 2023. We will be working with the TVA Power Services Shop to support an Angel Tree project aided by a \$10,000 grant from BVI. A \$5,000 grant will be provided to Colbert County Caring to assist with their endeavor to care for local residents. Also, we will be providing holiday gifts to clients of Scope 310 and Help Our Veterans, with grants of \$2,000 and \$3,000 respectively.

Sadly, our chapter lost some good friends over the course of 2023, individuals who will be greatly missed.

Please plan to attend our final chapter meeting of 2023 on Wednesday, December 13, at 10:00 a.m. The meeting will be held at the TVACCU located on Wilson Dam Road. For those who are able, please use the parking lot at Tri-Cities Church of Christ, so the credit union members will have available parking spaces.



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Alyssa will once again be our musical entertainment and representatives from TVA’s Retirement Services and Benefits and Wellbeing will be our guest speakers providing us with updates to recent changes.

It has been a privilege to serve as your chapter president for another year and the support and encouragement I have received from you are greatly appreciated.

Wishing all a blessed Christmas and prosperous New Year for 2024. Stay safe.

Tim

## Inside This Issue

- 1 Message from President
- 2 Upcoming Events/Advertisers
- 3 Board Members
- 3 Charity Golf Tournament
- 4 Meal Barrel Project
- 7 Apply for Scholarship NOW
- 8 Endowed Scholarship Fund
- 8 Valley Wide Meeting
- 9 TVARA Activities 2023
- 10 Shingles can be Serious!
- 10 Scholarship Winners Honored
- 11 Chapter Members Recognized
- 11 Ninety Year Old’s Perspective
- 13 Help! We Need Your Help!

## Upcoming Events

Wednesday, December 13, 2023, 10:00 a.m.  
Benefits Update and Christmas Medley by Alyssa  
Free Lunch and Door Prizes  
Wilson Dam Road TVA Community Credit Union

Wednesday, March 13, 2024, 10:00 a.m.  
Program to be announced  
Free Lunch and Door Prizes  
Wilson Dam Road TVA Community Credit Union

Tuesday, June 18, 2024, 10:00 a.m.  
Annual Picnic and Health Fair  
Program: Health, Fitness, & More  
Great Door Prizes (thousands of dollars)  
Florence/Lauderdale Coliseum

Wednesday, September 11, 2024, 10:00 a.m.  
Program to be announced  
Free Lunch and Door Prizes  
Wilson Dam Road TVA Community Credit Union

Special Thanks to non-advertising  
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## Our Advertisers

*Our advertisers are contributing to our Muscle Shoals Chapter TVARA Endowment by advertising in our newsletter and at the Annual Picnic. When considering any of the services offered, please think first of our advertisers!*

<b>TVA Community Credit Union</b>	<b>Alabama Health Guidance</b>
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<b>Welltower Pegasus Tenant</b>	<b>Cottage of the Shoals</b>
<b>Cigna Healthspring</b>	<b>Edward Jones (Drew Malone)</b>

## Meet your Muscle Shoals TVARA Board Members

President, Tim Cornelius

Vice President, Debbie Norton

Treasurer, Joan Marsh

Secretary, Carol Sherer

TVARA Picnic Manager, Henry Long

Hospitality, MJ Ligon

Scholarship Program, John Ingwersen

Newsletter: John Ingwersen, Jim Harris

Board Members: John Blackwell, Cameron Kay, Jim Green, Bill Baggett,  
Greg & Anita Vandiver

Problems with benefits, pharmacy? Contact TVA Service Center 888-275-8094.

Comments/Recommendations/Articles for Newsletter? Send to [jlmgwersen@gmail.com](mailto:jlmgwersen@gmail.com).

## Muscle Shoals TVARA & BVI Sponsor Golf Tournament

By Jim Harris

TVARA and BVI were Eagle Level Sponsors for the Florence AL Civitan Club golf tournament held September 22, 2023, at the Robert Trent Jones Golf Trail at the Shoals. Numerous TVA retirees played in the tournament, many for the second or third year.

With the generous support of TVARA BVI and the 30 other sponsors Florence Civitan raised over \$14,000 making it their most successful golf fundraiser ever. Another positive aspect is that 100% of these proceeds will be donated to local charities.

As the Eagle Level Sponsor, TVARA got a limited number of complimentary slots.



With 4 of the slots, we were able to sponsor 4 members of the Deshler High School Golf Team to play in the tournament.



Eli Warren, Colton Frederick, Landon Sockwell, Ben Clouch

Kelli Frederick, the Deshler Golf Coach, was very appreciative because the team had an upcoming high school tournament at the same RTJ course as the Civitan tournament. This was a wonderful opportunity for the team members to golf with players of all levels in addition to the free practice round!

James Gray, President of the Florence Civitan, said it was only with the generous support of TVARA BVI and the other sponsors that they were able to provide over \$14,000 to our local community.

This was a wonderful opportunity for TVARA and BVI to help our local community. Not only the monetary support but helping one of our local schools only gives more positive exposure to TVARA BVI.

## **Volunteering for the Meal Barrel Project on September 14, 2023**

**by John Blackwell**

### **What is the Meal Barrel Project?**

The Meal Barrel Project works to end hunger by offering hunger relief programs which immediately feed people in need. The Meal Barrel Project provides fresh fruit, vegetables, canned goods, bread and hygiene kits for people in need. The Meal Barrel Project currently serves anywhere from 329 to 500 families on a weekly basis and additional qualifying members of Colbert County. This project is the largest food project in the state of Alabama.



Long lines of cars lining up for food

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If you are ever in the area around Helen Keller Hospital on a Wednesday afternoon, you may have noticed the long lines of cars around the old National Guard Armory. These are folks that are in need of food who have lined up at the drive through food pantry to receive a box of food provided by the Meal Barrel Project Food Pantry. Elderly or disabled people stop at the open bay door where a volunteer places a box of food into their vehicle.

The folks in these cars work, but minimum wage is not enough to make ends meet. The Food Barrel project provides a week's amount of food to these folks who often have no other source of help them.

### **How was the TVARA involved?**

TVARA was involved with the employees of the Power Service Shop. Specifically, the TVARA provided volunteers and financial support. The TVA family came together to help on this worthwhile project.

### **What did TVARA volunteers do on September 14, 2023?**

To serve this many folks takes a lot of labor. The TVA family brought a significant work force of volunteers. The volunteers helped to assemble boxes of food. The boxes contained a variety of food – frozen hamburger and hamburger patties, canned fruits and vegetables, bags of rice, pasta, fresh fruit, snack foods and numerous other items. In addition, they organized for the next week's distribution.

Shown below, TVA employees and TVA retirees happily at work filling boxes.





**Which members of TVARA volunteered?**

Tim Cornelius, Joan Marsh, Darwin Bridges, Cheryl Azbell, Margaret Goodloe, Cindy Jones, Henry Long, and Mike Wilson.



Power Service Shop employees who volunteered to help.

**How did TVARA provide financial support?**

The chapter presented a check from the Muscle Shoals TVARA chapter to the Director of the Meal Barrel project in the amount of \$10,000. BVI provided the funding to the chapter.

**How does the Food Barrel Project fund their operation?**

The Food Barrel Project depends on donations and grant funds, including money from the Colbert County Community Development Committee, which disburses Tennessee Valley Authority in-lieu-of-tax funds



Joan Marsh, Treasurer Muscle Shoals Chapter TVARA, presenting check \$10,000.00 to Penny Freeman, Director Meal Barrel Project

**Perhaps you are asking how can I become a volunteer for this type of project?**

First of all, attend the quarterly meeting of the Muscle Shoals TVARA Chapter. Watch the Muscle Shoals Chapter of the TVARA Facebook page for announcements. Also check your email for announcements.

**Apply NOW for UNA Scholarships – including the TVA Retirees Endowment**

- The application process began on November 1, 2023.
- The Deadline for submission is March 1, 2024.
- Visit [Our Opportunities - University of North Alabama Scholarships \(academicworks.com\)](https://academicworks.com) for information on how to apply for our scholarship and others.
- Scroll down to “TVA Retirees Endowed Scholarship” (page 9) to learn more about our scholarship and how you may receive special consideration if you have a family member who is a paid member of Muscle Shoals Chapter of TVARA.

**Come join a community filled with fun activities, and outings while making new friends.**

Bernard "Bernie" Community Dog

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## Endowed Scholarship - Your Support Needed!

*We have several businesses and charities who have been supporting our endowed scholarship by providing financial support through the purchase of ads for our newsletter and booths at our Annual Health Fair/Picnic. We thank them for their generous support, and hope that each of our members will look at their advertisements in this, and future newsletters, and support them as they support us.*

As of October 31, 2023, our scholarship endowment totaled \$92,053. We need your support to push on toward a \$100,000 endowment.

The endowment for 2023-2024 support two scholarships. These awards exceed \$1,500 each. The scholarship award gives preference to relatives of active (paid) Muscle Shoals TVARA members. In addition, your TVARA Board has approved an award of \$200 for the winning essay.

Please make our endowed scholarship a priority for your charitable giving. Donations are tax-deductible. If you would like to donate, go to: <https://www.una.edu/give/tva-scholarship.html>. You may also donate by check. Make your check payable to Muscle Shoals Chapter, TVARA/UNA Endowed Scholarship and mail it to:

UNA Foundation Office (Attn: Endowed Scholarships)  
Box 5113  
Florence, AL 35632-0001

### **Points from the TVARA Board of Directors meeting November 16, 2023.**

TVA Updates- Liberty Phillips- TVA Consultant.

- TVA appreciates the support of the retirees for the 90<sup>th</sup> Anniversary events. More of the 90<sup>th</sup> Anniversary coins are available.
- TVA remains in strong financial health because of the diverse power system. Since 2014 TVA has invested nearly \$9.2 B in capacity expansion.
- TVA has lower power rates that 75% of other power distributors.
- To celebrate the Tennessee Valley region and [TVA's 90th anniversary](#), TVA Historian Pat and Social Media Specialist Ashley are taking an epic road trip, visiting TVA generation facilities, employees, local landmarks and attractions across seven states that make where we live and work a great place to be.
- Follow their adventure on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#) starting July 19. We'll also be posting a recap on this page every week.
- During the Combined Federal Campaign this year TVA is promoting volunteer service. The Meal Barrell





project recently conducted by the Muscle Shoals Chapter is an example of such projects.

TVA Retirement System Update-Mark Meigs, Executive Secretary, TVA Retirement System.

- There are only about 422 employees in the TVA original defined pension plan.
- The TVA Retirement System has assets of about \$8.1B. The System should be fully funded by 2036.
- The COLA for the retirees for 2024 is expected to be approved at 4.44% compared to Social Security at 3.2%

TVARA Activities- Jo Anne Lavender- Valley Wide President

- TVA is partnering with Cal Ripken, retired professional baseball player, and his family to promote STEM. 27 STEM centers will be created and located in underserved communities throughout the TVA's seven-state region. A grant of \$1.1 million from TVA is funding the new centers. The first of these centers was opened at the Boys and Girls Club of north Mississippi in the southeastern section of Tupelo. Retiree volunteers are being solicited to work at these centers. To volunteer contact Trina Gallman, 865-755-8280 or tigallman@tva. Gov.
- Chapters are encouraged to use a communication tool titled Constant Contact in communicating with chapter retirees. Terri Welty or Jean Bryson in the Valley Wide office.
- The discussion the nomination of election of officers for the December 2023 meeting.

Penny Walker- TVARA Volunteer Coordinator, discussed volunteer projects.

- BVI has initiated a new method of approving projects for funding. Projects for more than \$15,000 will need BVI Board approval. If chapters need help on developing material for project approval Penny is available.
- Upgrade of TVARA web site. BVI is paying for the expense in upgrading the web site.

### **TVARA ACTIVITIES DURING PAST YEAR 2022-23**

CONTRIBUTED BY BVI:

ANGEL TREE	\$10,000
BEST ROBOTICS	\$15,000
CIVITAN GOLF TOURNAMENT	\$ 5,000
GARDEN SEED PROGRAM	\$35,000
MEAL BARREL PROJECT	\$10,000
SCOPE 310	\$ 1,000
SLEEP IN HEAVENLY PEACE	\$ 5,000
VETERAN'S ASSISTANCE	\$ 3,000

**TOTAL** **\$84,000**

In addition, through our advertising program in this newsletter and the picnic, we raised \$6,750 for our Muscle Shoals Chapter TVARA/UNA Scholarship Endowment with which we are funding two scholarships this year for deserving students who are also relatives of our Chapter.

Joan Marsh

# SHINGLES CAN BE A SERIOUS CONDITION

by Debbie Norton

If you had chickenpox as a child, like most of us, you probably already carry the shingles virus. It is estimated that 1/3 of Americans will contract it in their lifetime. It consists of a painful rash and can develop long-term complications. Vaccines have been available for decades; however, earlier ones were only 70% effective. Newer vaccines introduced in the last few years are more than 90% effective.

I can tell you from experience the virus is no picnic. I took the early vaccine in 2013. However, more than 8 years later, the virus consumed me and I was sick all through the Christmas/New Year holidays. It started with a burning sensation on the top of my head. My first thought was "brain tumor." I checked online, entered my symptoms, and "shingles" immediately popped up. This was a relief considering the alternative. It was Saturday night so I waited until Monday morning to call my family physician. After carefully checking my head, which showed no signs of rash or blisters, he told me to wait 2 days to allow them to develop, which they did. I returned to his office and was given 3 prescriptions for pain and to prevent spreading. The doctor said it would take at least 6 weeks to go away. The blisters were extremely painful and washing my hair was almost impossible. As predicted, my strength and appetite returned in 4-6 weeks, the rash and blisters healed in 6-8 weeks, but a sensation of pressure on the left side of my head remained for about 9 months. I was told the nerve endings have to reknit after being damaged by shingles.

My doctor recommended I take the new shingles vaccine the following year, which I gladly did. According to him, many patients experience recurring cases years later. Over the last 2 years, I have met a number of people who have had shingles 2 or more times.

Another TVA retiree and good friend was suffering with shingles last summer. Unfortunately, he had a couple of serious underlying medical conditions and the shingles virus zapped his strength and appetite. He passed away a few weeks later.

I encourage all of you to consider taking the shingles vaccine after discussing with your physician. For most, there is no cost. It can be combined with other vaccines, such as flu and covid, and might save you from experiencing this terrible virus.

## Honoring our 2023-2024 Scholarship Winners

In our September Chapter meeting we recognized our scholarship winners for this academic year. They pictured below with their mother and grandparents from left to right:

Photo at right (left to right):  
Leon and Pam Smith (grandparents),  
Abigail and Mollie Smith (winners),  
Ashley Smith (mother).  
Mollie Smith also won the best essay  
award (as did her sister last year).



## **Muscle Shoals Chapter TVARA Members Recognized**

Congratulations to members of our Chapter who were recognized at the BVI Banquet for Volunteer Service Hours through BVI. Left to right, Judy Allen, Coordinator of BVI for the Shoals, Tim Cornelius (500 hours), Carol Sherrer (1,500 hours), and Joan Marsh (500 hours).



### **A NINETY YEAR OLD'S PERSPECTIVE ON LIFE**

To celebrate growing older:

1. Life is not fair, but it is still good.
2. When in doubt, just take the next small step.
3. Life is too short to waste time hating someone.
4. Your job won't take care of you when you are sick. Your friends and parents will. Stay In touch.
5. Pay off your credit cards every month.
6. Cry with someone. It is more healing than crying alone.
7. It is OK to get angry with God. He can take it.
8. You don't have to win every argument. Agree to disagree.
9. Save for retirement starting with your first paycheck.

10. When it comes to chocolate, resistance is futile.
11. Make peace with your past so it won't screw up the present.
12. It's OK to let your children see you cry.
13. Don't compare your life to others. You have no idea what their journey is all about.
14. If a relationship has to be secret, you should not be in it.
15. Everything can change in the blink of an eye, but don't worry. God never blinks.
16. Take a deep breath. It calms the mind.
17. Get rid of anything that isn't useful, beautiful, or joyful.
18. Whatever doesn't kill you really does make you stronger.
19. It is never too late to have a happy childhood. The second one is up to you and no one else.
20. When it comes to going after what you love in life don't take no for an answer.
21. Burn the candles, use the nice sheets, wear the fancy lingerie. Don't save it for a special occasion. Today is special.
22. Over prepare, then go with the flow.
23. Be eccentric now. Don't wait for old age to wear purple.
24. No one is in charge of your happiness but you.
25. Frame every so-called disaster with these words: "In five years, will this matter?"
26. Always choose life.
27. Forgive everyone everything.
28. What other people think of you is none of your business.
29. Time heals almost everything. Give time, time.
30. However good or bad a situation is, it will change.
31. Don't take yourself too seriously.
32. Believe in miracles.
33. God loves you because of who God is, not because of anything you did or did not do.
34. Don't audit life. Show up and make the most of it now.
35. Growing old beats the alternative – dying young.
36. Your children get only one childhood.
37. All that really matters in the end is that you loved.
38. Get outside every day. Miracles are waiting everywhere.
39. If we all threw our problems in a pile and saw everyone else's, we would grab ours back.
40. Envy is a waste of time. You already have all you need.

## **Help! We Need Your Help!**

Do you enjoy writing or photography? We're working to make this newsletter the best; and your talents are needed. If you would like to occasionally write an article on your experiences, or on a TVA person who deserves recognition, please let me know; and I will schedule your article for a future newsletter. Do you enjoy photography? We could use a designated photographer to get pictures at our various events. We have been somewhat haphazard at this, and would like to get better. Call John Ingwersen at 256-757-5325; or email him at [jlingwersen@gmail.com](mailto:jlingwersen@gmail.com).



## **Suggestions?**

We want your feedback, comments, and suggestions. Let us know what you would like for TVARA programs, for our newsletter, and/or ways we can improve, in any way, our service to you.