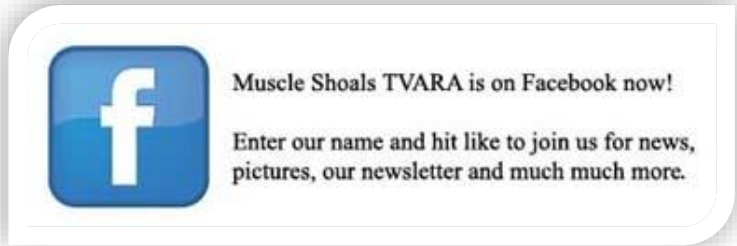


POWER Connect!

Muscle Shoals Chapter
Summer 2020 Issue



Message from our President

It's been an interesting few months to say the least. I hope all of you are doing OK with the situation we are dealing with.

Due to current guidance to address large gatherings, the TVA Retiree Picnic in Chattanooga, the BVI Banquet, and our September Chapter Meeting have all been cancelled. We hope to continue our meetings in December, if things work out.

Even during these trying times, our chapter has continued to support our community. BVI gave our chapter \$10,000.00 to distribute to local food banks. TVA is donating \$2,000.00 to a local charity in honor of TVA retirees.

We will keep you informed of future plans for Muscle Shoals Chapter activities.

Everyone stay safe.

NOW OPEN

TVA Community Credit Union

NOW OPEN

CLOVERDALE ROAD BRANCH
2815 Cloverdale Road
Florence, AL 35633
(256) 792-3408

ATM

Drive Thru

www.tvaccu.com
(888) 274-2128
(256) 386-3000
M-F 8:30am-5:00pm

Branch Manager
Tammie Aday

Head Teller
Leah Newton

Tellers
Amberlee Carter
Brandt Holland

Tim Cornelius

Inside This Issue

- 1 Quarterly Meeting
- 2 Upcoming Events/Advertisers
- 3 Board Members
- 3 Scholarship Winners
- 4 Endowed Scholarship
- 5 What Did You Do? Pandemic
- 8 Valleywide Meeting
- 8 Food Bank
- 9 TVA Retirees Honored
- 9 BEST Robotics Marches On
- 10 Fishing for Big Catfish
- 12 Winning Essay
- 14 Help Needed/Suggestions

Due to cancellation of our Annual Picnic and Health Fair, advertisers have not renewed with us for this year. Therefore, no advertisements will appear in this issue of our newsletter. Advertisers will be given an opportunity to renew for the rest of the year by the time of our next meeting. In the meantime, please thank our advertisers for supporting our scholarships and patronize our local merchants.

Special Thanks to non-advertising Supporters

TVA Power Service Shops

Upcoming Events

Wednesday, September 9, 10:00 a.m.
Meeting Cancelled

Wednesday, December 9, 10:00 a.m.
Program to be Announced
Free Lunch and Door Prizes
Wilson Dam Road TVA Community Credit Union

Wednesday, March 10, 2021, 10:00 a.m.
Program to be Announced
Free Lunch and Door Prizes
Wilson Dam Road TVA Community Credit Union

Tuesday, June 15, 2021, 9:30 a.m.
Annual Picnic and Health Fair
Program: Health, Fitness, & More
Great Door Prizes (thousands of dollars)
Florence/Lauderdale Coliseum

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!

TVA Community Credit Union First Community Medicare Supplement

North Alabama Medical Center Helen Keller Hospital

Merrill Lynch Blue Cross Blue Shield TN

Edward Jones Viva

Blue Cross Blue Shield AL Delta Dental

Brentwood Retirement Comm. Cottage Senior Living

Home Instead Listerhill Credit Union

The Foot Bar Alabama Health Guidance

Big Brothers/Big Sisters Eldercare

CASA Civitan International

Tennessee Valley Arts Assoc. UNA Continuing Ed

United Cerebral Palsy

Meet your Muscle Shoals TVARA Board Members

President, Tim Cornelius

Vice President, Vacant

Treasurer, Joan Marsh

Secretary, Carol Sherer

TVARA Picnic Manager, Henry Long

Hospitality, MJ Ligon

Scholarship Program, John Ingwersen

Newsletter: John Ingwersen, Janice Berry

Board Members: John Blackwell, Cameron Kay, Jim Green, Bill Baggett

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

Comments/Recommendations/Articles for Newsletter? Send to jtingwersen@gmail.com.

Meet our 2020-2021 Scholarship Winners

Stacy Putman

Muscle Shoals TVARA/UNA Endowed Scholarship Winner

Hey everyone! My name is Stacey Putman, and I am more than appreciative to have received this scholarship. I am a youth leader at Faith Church, where we work hands-on in students' lives to help them grow in their faith and in to wonderful young adults. I have been a CNA at Helen Keller Hospital for 5 years, and I am currently in the nursing program at UNA. One of the main reasons I want to be a nurse is so that I can reach the children and families that do not have access to medical care by going on medical missions. I want to further my education to be a Nurse Practitioner, specialized in pediatrics. With that degree, I would love to one day be able to open a free health clinic for children. Thank you for this investment in my career.



Lauren Willis

Muscle Shoals TVARA/UNA Endowed Scholarship & Essay
Winner

Lauren Willis is a senior at the University of North Alabama and our first repeat scholarship winner AND repeat Essay Winner! Her winning essay is printed at the end of this newsletter. She attended Muscle Shoals High School and graduated with honors. Lauren is pursuing a major in psychology, with a minor in family studies. She works at UNA Collier Library and is also part of several organizations on campus. Lauren is a member of Zeta Tau Alpha Fraternity and is the community service chair of the National Society of Leadership and Success.



Shown to right is Lauren with her grandfather Wayne Willis, who worked 10 years in construction and 18 years as a maintenance electrician.

Your Support Needed!

We have several businesses and charities who are 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 these businesses and charities as they support us.

As of July 31, our scholarship endowment totaled \$65,331.25. In the three-month period from May 1 through July 31, we had one contribution: Joan Marsh.

The endowment for 2020-2021 is supporting two scholarships. These awards will exceed \$1,100 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. The Essay Award has been provided by mail this year, due to meeting cancellation.

Please make our endowed scholarship a priority for your charitable giving. Donations are tax deductible. 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

Hey Grampa/Gramma – What did you do during the great pandemic of 2020?

So what did some of our members do during the pandemic? You might want to save this for future generations because this is history!

Billy Baggett

This Covid pandemic summertime has given me more time to:

1. Cut the grass.
2. Work in the barn and garage.
3. Plant a tomato garden.
4. Fetch groceries, supplies, as directed—yes, I wear a mask!
5. Cut the grass.
6. Fly an airplane some and work in the hanger.
7. Visit with family and grandkids. Social distance does not work very well with grandkids—thankfully!
8. Gather tomatoes.
9. Eat, sleep and—did I mention "cut the grass"?

Joan Marsh

AFTER FIVE MONTHS I HAVE RUN OUT OF PROJECTS—AT LEAST THOSE I WANT TO DO!

I started out making masks for my granddaughter, who works at Huntsville Hospital because they were running short of these. Since I had not sewn for a while, it was a new learning curve.





Friends had given me an adult coloring book, so I was intent on staying in the lines!

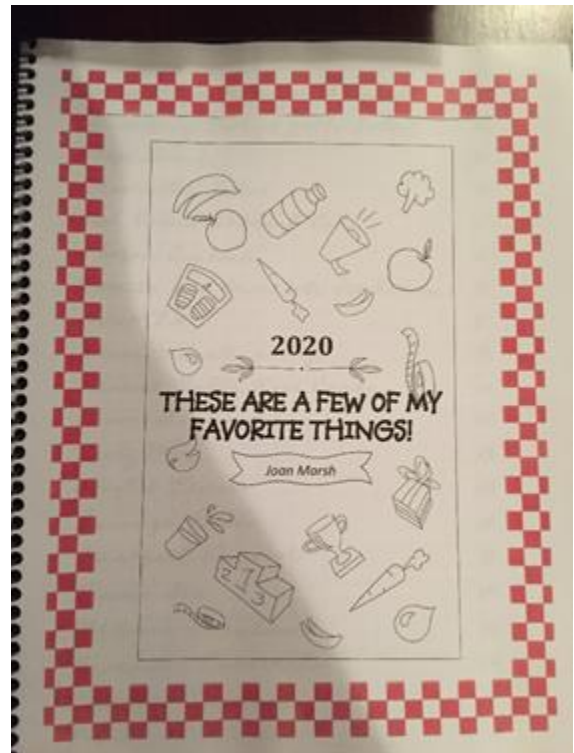
Someone left me a gift of bubble gum in the mailbox, so I blew bubbles! It is like riding a bike. You never forget!





I brought out my art supplies, and painted a picture.

I made a cookbook for my grandchildren of recipes of favorite things they like for me to cook when they visit.



I spent time researching and writing checks for organizations that provide food for those in need during this pandemic. BVI graciously provided \$15,000, which was distributed from our chapter to ten different organizations.





Last, but not least, I did get to spend time with my first great-grandchild, who was born in December.

John Ingwersen

When this all started, we were beginning our gardening season; and since I am always pressed for time with too many other activities, I hardly noticed missing other events, as we put our gardens into the best condition they have been in in about ten years. The produce rolled in, and harvesting, processing, and maintaining was constant busyness. Then, as the garden work eased up, I found that I was working on projects that had not even been on my list at the beginning of the year—from cleaning out and putting back into operation the west pond (had been out for a couple of years due to dogs) and totally reworking all our decks. I also delved into stocks finding there were really some great buys out there in March. As summer moves on, I think it is time for a vaccine and time to get back to normal—getting tired of conference calls that don't really work very well and socially distanced meetings trying to understand the masked man (or woman)!

So, everyone stay safe, and think about an article for our December newsletter. Hey! There is something to do until we have a vaccine!

TVARA VALLEY WIDE MEETING August 6, 2020

The Valley Wide meeting of the TVARA Board was held via conference call on August 6, 2020. The following reports were made during the meeting:

1. **TVA Update**—Susan Lauver, Director, TVA Media Relations and Marketing, reported that the TVARA picnic has been cancelled—as is the BVI banquet that normally precedes the picnic. TVA will not be funding the retiree's picnic. They are offering each of the Chapters the opportunity to name a local, non-profit organization to receive \$2,000 from TVA for their work involving the pandemic. Each Chapter's information needs to be in hand before September 1.

2. **TVA Proposals to MLGW and Support of the Memphis Community—Gary H. Harris, Vice-President, Industrial Marketing and Services**, reported on the activities involving the consideration of Memphis to withdraw from TVA. He said their locally-produced evaluation showed potential savings of 122 million dollars, if they were to withdraw. TVA reviewed the study, and fed back errors in their analysis which showed an additional 261 million dollars of costs not identified. Further, for the Memphis area, additional TVA support of 712 million dollars in current benefits was identified. This, along with future potential benefits of 1.3 billion dollars, are at stake and are not identified in the local study.
3. **TVA Benefits Update**—Jerry Landon, Program Manager, Healthcare Plans, and Joe Galardi, Director, TVA Benefits and Wellbeing, reported that the next newsletter, due out in September, will focus on benefits for 2021 and the Open Enrollment period this fall. (Note that John Blackwell, of Muscle Shoals Chapter, will be providing workshops to assist Chapter members—more information in Chapter Newsletter).
4. **TVA Retirement System Update**—Mark Meigs, Executive Secretary, TVA Retirement System, and Justin Vineyard, Sr., Retirement Consultant, TVA Retirement, reported on the Retirement System status. The staff are working from home, but periodically pick up mail and are monitoring email and telephone call-ins to assist retirees as needed. Through June, the retirement system was at 7.7 Billion dollars, up 1.7% for the year. Through July, the value had moved up to 8.1 Billion dollars, for a 5.9% year-to-date gain. They also reported that the Board's 7th Director position has 43 applicants and is moving toward final selection.
5. **TVARA Health Care Committee Update**—Tom Swanson, Chair of the TVARA Health Care Committee, reported that the new system has been in place for some time now, and members need to look at their coverage, as there may now be lower cost alternatives for comparable coverage. He cautioned everyone to be sure to have a new policy in hand before cancelling the old one. More information will be coming in the September TVARA Newsletter.

Food Bank Support During Pandemic (More)

By Joan Marsh

IN JUNE, BVI PROVIDED AN ADDITIONAL \$5,000 FOR DISTRIBUTION TO FOOD BANKS IN THE SHOALS AREA.

We selected four agencies that were initially closed when the pandemic started.

These included the following:

The Chapel, Sheffield, provides a home-cooked meal three times a week to the homeless. The following is a note received from The Chapel:

I wanted to say Thank You from the bottom of our hearts for the check you sent to our ministry. This will go a long way to help care for and feed the homeless and less fortunate in our Sheffield community. You have been such a blessing to us. Our prayer is that God will continue to bless you all and bless your kind hearts.

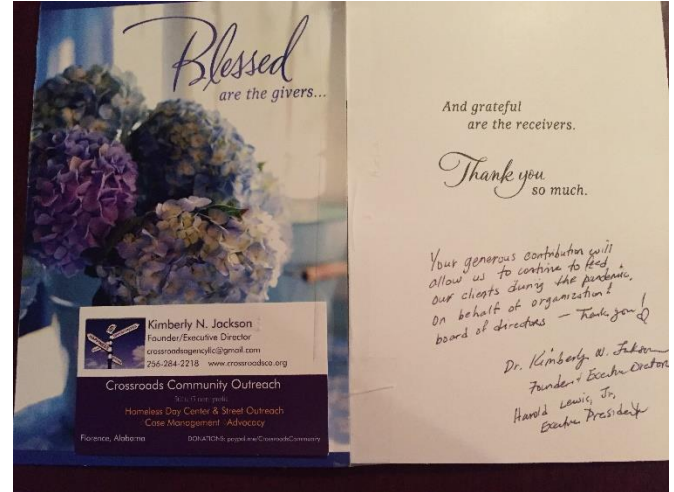
*For Him
Bonnie Stokes & your friends at The Chapel*

The Help Center, Florence, which typically feeds 40-60 families on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays.

Crossroads Community Outreach, Florence, which feeds 30-35 homeless per day, and about 30 households per week from their pantry.

Salvation Army, area wide in the Shoals, which gave out 75 bags of food last month. Normally, in a month, they give away 20-30 bags of food.

Thanks, BVI, for helping us be generous in our area!



TVA Local Contribution in honor of Retirees

The Shoals Dream Center provides more than 7,000 pounds of food for those in need, and also operates thrift stores, to raise money for their program. The stores have been closed since the inception of Covid-19, thus causing a shortage of funds. Our chapter gave The Dream Center \$1,000 in May—mostly for their food program.

We have recommended that the TVA contribution of \$2,000 (see “Valley Wide Meeting” article above) go to the Dream Center’s after-school program. The program was designed by the Board of Education, using certified teachers, and also University of North Alabama interns. Children are picked up from school and brought to the Shoals Dream Center for tutoring. Following their sessions, the children are picked up by family. Most of the children have problems in school. The Dream Center meets with the children on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays, for 3 hours each day. Some of the children who have not made good grades, have improved to making A’s and B’s.

BEST Robotics Marches On!

Hi everyone,

Greetings from our BEST hub! We pray that you are all doing well! ❤️ Please feel free to forward this to anyone who might be interested in being a Volunteer for BEST Robotics this year! Once a volunteer registers for our hub NW Alabama, he/she will receive updates and training opportunities.

We are planning to do things a little differently this year. We will have Kick-off on September 26th! We plan to have Game Day (maybe multiple game days) around November 21st. Our main concern right now is getting teams, teachers, and volunteers trained. So, PLEASE REGISTER at <https://registry.bestrobotics.org> and also encourage others to register. This will ensure that volunteers are trained (online) and updated!

Please register soon! This will allow time to get organized. And it will ensure that we have all the help we need for the area high schoolers who are preparing to compete. There will be no large groups this year, due to Covid! It is entirely possible that you can help us tremendously from the comfort and safety of your home.

Please register so that you will be updated and can be learning about our plans for 2020.

FISHING FOR BIG CATFISH ON WILSON LAKE

By John Blackwell

My favorite fishing hole is on Wilson Lake, near the dam. The waters near the dam can reach 100 feet deep or deeper. My favorite way of fishing for the big catfish earlier in my life was cork fishing, but at this stage, I enjoy jugging. In these deep waters, I have caught catfish weighing in excess of eighty pounds.

Before we go any further, I need to point out that fishing for big catfish is risky business, as the big cats fight back. They could pull you in, and even break your wrist. However, these risks can be minimized with the proper equipment. Let's get started by discussing the equipment. I use a heavy-duty rod, with a line counter reel. A line counter reel helps you position your bait more precisely. Having a good fishing hole is important, but placing the bait at the right depth is equally important. A line counter reel takes the guess work out of where you are fishing. For line, use a 20 pound or greater and a 9/0 stainless steel hook with a number 4 swivel in the eye of the hook to reduce line twisting. The big cats really roll when hooked. Then, I tie a 24-inch leader to the swivel in the eye of the hook and then up to another swivel. Then, above the second swivel, I use an egg sinker. Above the sinker, I use a large in-line cork. These larger corks allow you to see them better and will keep floating with large bait.

Other equipment needed is a knife, and a gaff. I use a stainless-steel steak knife to cut the bait fish. This type of knife does not have a dangerous point, as some filet knives, and is safer to be kept loose in the boat. I use a homemade gaff that has a handle that will allow the gaff to swivel. The reason for the swivel handle is that large catfish can not only take a tremendous amount of effort to land, but they can twist and break your wrist. My gaff is made out of 3/8-inch stainless steel and is about 18 inches long. Gaffing is a way of controlling a large fish, but more importantly, it reduces injuries to the catfish and ensures a healthy release.



Tyler Hayes, John Blackwell, and William Hayes. A 50 pound blue catfish caught on July 25, 2020 on Wilson Lake.

The question of fishing is not a matter of life or death—it's more important than that.

Now let's consider the bait. Wilson Lake has an abundance of skip jack and bream. To catch the skip jack, I use a silver spoon that is retrieved very fast. To prepare the skip jack for bait, you will need to remove the scales and then cut out the filets. I cut each filet into two pieces. When I have baited the hook, I put it into a bucket and spray the skip jack with garlic. Another method, that will show the world that you are serious about catching big cats, is to use the whole skip jack. However; you will need a special tool. Take a flat tip screwdriver that is about 18 inches long, and cut a notch in the tip. Now you have the special tool. Take the skip jack, about 12 inches long, and cut off about two inches of the tail. What you will need to do is to run the hook through the center of skip jack from his mouth out his tail. This can be done by first taking your hook and putting it in the notch of the screwdriver. You will need to hold the line tight to keep the hook in the notch. Now, take the skip jack in one hand, and then with the screwdriver and hook, push them down into the mouth of skip jack and out the tail. Let the curve of the hook come just outside the tail. However; most often, I use bream as bait. I really enjoy catching them with a cane pole and crickets around the banks. I would also state that catching the bait tends to make the younger fishermen more content to wait for the big boys.

To use the bream as bait, cut the bream to make it bleed, and then hook in the tail. Concerning the bait, from my review of articles written and discussions with cat fishermen, skip jack is the best bait.

Next, determine the depth at which you wish to fish. I try to have my bait positioned at a level just above the fish, because catfish like to go up to take their bait. This is where your line counter reel pays off. If you don't have a line counter reel, just measure off the amount of line. A suggestion for measuring: measure one foot of line from your reel, and mark the position on your rod. Then, all you have to do is pull out the line until you have reached the desired depth.

To set the cork at the right depth, I tie an overhand knot, and then tie a small piece of lighter weight line in the over hand knot to keep the knot from coming untied when you catch a fish.

Now comes the part where you need to be patient. When you get a hit, let the cork go down for a while before you start reeling in. Another reason for being patient is that you want to be sure you have a big fish and not just a little fish playing with the bait.

As I have gotten older, the sun is almost too much, and I usually go "jugging". My jugs are made from large swimming noodles. I cut the noodles to a length of 12 inches. I use a 90-pound test line through the center of the jug, and then tie a 100-pound line to the end to mount the hook and sinker. The reason for the larger line is that catfish have sharp teeth and can cut the line. I use a soldering iron to burn my initials in each jug and the length of the line. I recommend that you do not use blue noodles because they are almost invisible on the water. I prefer orange or yellow. You can really see them from a distance. On the lake, I use jugs from 40 to 100 feet. I do not have too many 100', because it takes too long to rewind by hand. A word of caution: When you have a fish, slowly and steadily wind the line around the jug, being careful not to get your finger wrapped in the line. The fish may pull the jug out of your hands but, don't worry. Simply retrieve it, and rewind again. As the fish gets near the boat, have the gaff ready to gaff the fish in the lower lip. For most fish, I prefer to not put them in the boat, but to remove the hook, and turn them loose. My reason for releasing is that fishing for large catfish is big business in the Shoals, and the greater the number of big fish there are, the better.

I hope this has been helpful for making you some good memories. Good Luck!

Winning Essay for 2020 By Lauren Willis

The interwoven history of my hometown, the Shoals area, and the Tennessee Valley Authority is expansive. The federal government acquired land in Muscle Shoals and intended to build a hydroelectric dam that would generate electricity to manufacture explosives for World War One. Woodrow Wilson authorized the dam and construction began in 1918 but the war ended before it was finished. There was debate over how to utilize Wilson Dam and its purpose would not be realized until years later. The Great Depression caused the Shoals area to be one of the most disadvantaged regions in the south. Franklin Roosevelt was elected president and started implementing legislation that would help stabilize the economy and provide jobs. On May 18, 1933 Roosevelt signed the Tennessee Valley Authority Act, which was a part of his New Deal program. This act had several ambitious projects that would benefit the Tennessee Valley like flood control and agricultural development. Additionally, the hydroelectric dam offered affordable electricity to the area which had previously had none. TVA changed the way that people in this area lived and eventually affected surrounding areas.



Fast forward to our community today and you see economic development and continuing support from TVA. The impact is seen by individuals, families, businesses, and corporations. Industry is always attracted to areas with low cost of living and abundant, affordable electrical power. In the broader community, citizens of our area have opportunities for jobs and careers not only with TVA but with the many businesses brought here due to the impact of TVA. The University of North Alabama has also been largely affected by the success of TVA, so much so that UNA might not have been able to prosper and expand without the influence of TVA. It is difficult for me to envision this area without TVA because of the way it drastically altered the area in which I live and continues to affect me today.

When I was little, I knew my grandfather as a kind and gentle man. I also knew that he was important. I would visit my grandparents' house on the Tennessee River and my grandmother would explain how the dam at "Gaddy's" work was in charge of the water in the river and the lights in all the houses. My grandfather, Wayne Willis, worked for TVA construction for 10 years and worked 18 years as a maintenance electrician. His employment at TVA allowed him to provide for his family. He was able to give my father and uncle more opportunities by helping them through school. My uncle currently works at Browns Ferry Nuclear Plant. My family has benefited from the many employment opportunities TVA creates.

I would love the opportunity to use this scholarship to positively impact the Shoals with my degree in a helping profession in the same way that TVA has influenced the quality of life in our area.

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.



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.