Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

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NOTE
FROM THE PUBLISHER

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year Tri-Cities!! Wow, 2018 sure went by fast, and we had a lot of big changes at Market Innovations. We now have the amazing Loafer as part of our family. I wanted to thank all of our readers, advertisers, and staff for making this transition so easy. Everyone has welcomed us as the new Loafer owners. I am so honored to be able to carry on such a wonderful publication that has all the great entertainment in our area. I am so excited to see what comes our way in 2019!

I hope everyone has a wonderful Christmas and a Happy New Year!

God bless each and everyone!

Kimberly Dugger
Publisher

www.theloaferonline.com
info@theloaferonline.com

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Founder: Bill Williams
MEET THE STAFF

KATLIN BUCHANAN
OFFICE ASSISTANT
"She is Clothed in Strength and Dignity and She Laughs Without Fear of The Future" Proverbs 31:25

JACLYN LAW
OFFICE MANAGER
"Laughter is timeless, Imagination has no age, and dreams are forever" -Walt Disney

KIMBERLY DUGGER
PUBLISHER
"Behind every successful woman is a tribe of other successful women who have her back."

LORI HOWELL
ACCOUNT EXECUTIVE
"Behind every successful woman is a tribe of other successful women who have her back."

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LEONA GRACIA
SALES REPRESENTATIVE
Chef / Bartender of the Week

Do you know a chef or bartender who we should feature on the weekly Food Blog column? We want to know!

Please call 423.722.3727 or email Jlaw@marketinnovationsjc.com to nominate.
ETSU Professional Development to host Renaissance Child Winter Enrichment

JOHNSON CITY – Children in grades K-6 are invited to attend the Renaissance Child Winter Enrichment for a festival of winter fun from Wednesday-Friday, Jan. 2-4, 2019.

This three-day camp is sponsored by the Office of Professional Development in East Tennessee State University’s School of Continuing Studies and Academic Outreach.

Campers will participate in a variety of holiday arts and crafts, games and winter fun enrichment activities. The camp includes a trip to Ober Gatlinburg on Thursday to see the holiday lights and to ice skate.

Campers may be dropped off at ETSU’s Sam Wilson Hall at 8 a.m. and picked up at 5 p.m. each day. They should bring a bag lunch and drink each day and wear warm clothes for the field trip.

Registration is $135 per camper and includes the cost of the field trip.

For registration or more information, visit www.etsu.edu/professionaldevelopment or call the Office of Professional Development at 423-439-8084.
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Name: Jennings Woodrow Fleenor  
AKA “Woody”  
Branch: Army air core (European division) air transport command  
Age Joined: 17  
Rank: Sargent  
Years Served: 3 years

What made you want to serve our country? I wanted to be patriotic.

What advice would you give someone looking to go into the military? I would recommend that anyone who can follow a strict routine could make a career out of the air force.

What’s your favorite quote? God bless America

How does your military experience affect your life today? It was really good because it shaped my actions and put me on a great routine.

Were you awarded any medals or citations? I was awarded European theatre accommodation as well as the good conduct medal.

Do you recall the day your service ended? I was discharged and rode the train back home to Johnson city.

What's your favorite quote? God bless America

Was there something special you did for “good luck”? I guess I just kept faith in God.

Did you work or go back to school? I got out in April of 1946 and worked for my Dad until I got into college in the winter semester.

Tell me a funny story you experienced that could only happen in the military. In Downtown London you could go shopping in the stores and you would see the Queen. No secret service or anything like that just a normal citizen.

Is there anything you would like to add that we have not covered in this interview? I thoroughly enjoyed my entire military career. I’ve enjoyed the military clubs I’ve been a member of and I’m proud to have served my country.

Today Woody is 93 years old and he still works a full time, 40 hour a week job in Kingsport for Mickey Smith Motor Company. During his 3 years of service Woody worked in office in flight operations and scheduled pilots, co pilots, and their radio operators for there daily missions at the air dome in Bovington, England.
BLUE RIDGE PARKWAY

SHENANDOAH TO JAMES RIVER GORGE

Far to our north, just outside the small borough of Dillsburg, Pennsylvania, a series of ridges rise abruptly from the gently-rolling Piedmont. While they may not seem all that impressive, these forested hills are the starting point of the Blue Ridge Mountains. From their timid beginnings they’ll march over six hundred and fifteen miles across seven states, swelling in height and width on their way to Mount Oglethorpe, Georgia.

Virginia holds what can be argued as the most remarkable section of the Blue Ridge’s northern regions. Here the narrow ridgeline expands to become a sea of rolling peaks, some reaching elevations in excess of four thousand feet. This wilderness is protected by Shenandoah National Park in the north and the George Washington/ Jefferson National Forest to the south. It’s here you’ll find the northern terminus of the Blue Ridge Parkway, America’s favorite scenic drive.

Mile marker zero sits in Rockfish Gap at the southern terminus of Shenandoah’s famed Skyline Drive. I-64 passes through the gap as well, allowing easy access for travelers from the Richmond metro area, as well as those coming from I-81. From here the parkway follows the ridgetops for the most part until it reaches the outskirts of Roanoke. This is the last segment of the parkway we had yet to visit, mostly due to the four-hour drive from Tri-Cities. While it is possible to do this as a day trip, we would recommend making this a long weekend and staying overnight in Roanoke or Peaks of Otter. This will allow plenty of time to stop and enjoy the views from the overlooks as well as the many hiking trails.

Starting from Rockfish Gap, it’s only a short drive until travelers reach the Humpback Rocks Visitor Center and Farm Museum at Mile marker 6. Here visitors can get information on Parkway conditions up the road, which is especially important during the winter months. The adjacent museum is composed buildings the National Park Service collected and preserved when the land for the parkway was purchased. Like the Mountain Farm Museum in Cherokee, they are meant to represent a working farm one might find in the 1890’s. Throughout the summer, character actors are present to interact with visitors and showcase traditional crafts as well as farming procedures. Several thousand acres of park land surround the farm area and protect a series of spectacular rock outcroppings known as Humpback Rocks. Humpback Rocks Trail begins just across the road from the visitor center. It’s a steep one-mile climb to the top, but incredible views of the Great Valley and distant Allegheny Mountains to the west more than make it worthwhile. The trail continues further to connect with the Appalachian Trail to provide further hiking opportunities. Visitors will have the chance to hike the A.T. multiple times along this segment as it crisscrosses the parkway multiple times over the next hundred miles.

We recommend making a short side trip to Crabtree Falls, touted as one of the highest cascade waterfalls east of the Mississippi River and one of the most popular hiking destinations in the state. While not located within Blue Ridge Parkway lands, it’s only a short drive from mile marker 27 at Tye River Gap. As you turn left onto Crabtree Falls Highway (Virginia 56) you’ll pass through the small community of Montebello before descending steeply. A large parking area is located on the right after 6.3 miles. Unlike the parkway’s facilities, this parking lot requires a fee for access, so be sure to bring some cash if you plan on making the stop.

Crabtree Falls Trail is a 2.8-mile loop trail that provides access to the five cascades that make up the falls. The falls are over one thousand feet in elevation from the lowest to the highest, so expect to do some major climbing on the way up. While the waterfalls are beautiful, please follow posted warning signs and view them from a distance. The rocky surfaces are covered in a slick coating of alga and have caused many deadly falls. Those who are up for a challenge can continue to the top of the uppermost falls. Here they’ll be rewarded with a magnificent view of the valley they climbed from far below. The total distance round trip for those who make this final climb comes to 3.5 miles.

Back on the Blue Ridge Parkway, the winding road continues along the Blue Ridge crest another twenty miles before beginning a sharp descent into the James River Gorge. Otter Creek Lake provides a picturesque rest stop on the left. During the wetter months, excess water tumbles over the lake’s small dam, creating a roaring waterfall. This area makes a great stopping point for those who are traveling at a more leisurely pace, as Otter Creek Campground and several hiking trails sit just down the road. Those who prefer the comfort of the indoors can take the thirty-minute drive over to Lynchburg for a great dinner as well as a hotel if needed.

Join us next time and we’ll continue the journey, stopping by the James River, Peaks of Otter, Explore Park, and Roanoke Mountain. For information on the Blue Ridge Parkway, visit www.nps.gov/blri
Something BLUE Bridal Fair

January 5, 2019
11 AM - 3 PM

at the

General Morgan Inn & Conference Center

PHOTO BY THE MODERN HEART PHOTOGRAPHY
If you or your band are playing in the upcoming week and would like to be in The Spotlight, go online to: theloaferonline.com. Due to last minute cancellations or changes, please call the location to confirm.

**Spotlight**

- **TUESDAY - Dec. 25-**
  **MERRY CHRISTMAS!**

- **WEDNESDAY - Dec. 26-**
  Shake It Like a Caveman One Man Band, Justin Stanton and Robert Kitchens Band
  The Down Home 7:30pm
  Rusty Steele every Wednesday!
  Wild Wing Cafe (Johnson City, TN) 8pm
  Karaoke
  Holston River Brewing Company 7:30pm
  Open Bluegrass Jam
  Gypsy Circus Cider Company 6:30pm
  H.B. Beverly
  Rocks Pizza & Grill 6:30pm

- **THURSDAY - Dec. 27-**
  The Diamonds
  Blackbird Bakery 8PM

- **FRIDAY - Dec. 28-**
  Nightshift Band
  Johnson City Moose Lodge 8pm
  Sundown Band
  David Thompson's Produce
  In Jonesborough 7 PM
  JP Parson's and the American Bandwagon LIVE
  Gypsy Circus Cider Company 7pm
  Alli Epperson
  Quaker Steak and Lube (Bristol, VA) 8pm
  Southern accent band
  Sportsman Pub, Bristol TN 8pm
  Stonecreek Four Band
  Fraternal Order of Eagles 3141 8pm
  The Swing Band
  Blackbird Bakery 8pm

- **SATURDAY - Dec. 29-**
  Nightshift Band
  Johnson City Moose Lodge 8pm
  SunDown Band
  David Thompson's Produce
  In Jonesborough 7 PM
  JP Parson's and the American Bandwagon LIVE
  Gypsy Circus Cider Company 7pm
  Alli Epperson
  Quaker Steak and Lube (Bristol, VA) 8pm
  Southern accent band
  Sportsman Pub, Bristol TN 8pm
  Stonecreek Four Band
  Fraternal Order of Eagles 3141 8pm
  The Swing Band
  Blackbird Bakery 8pm

- **MONDAY - Dec. 31-**
  Jerry Pierce & The Nightlife Band at the Honor Flight New Years Eve party
  Best Western
  Bangers' Ball 2019 - NYE show
  OT Sports & Social 8:30pm
  New Years Eve Party w/ Pacer and the Sundowners
  Kingsport Moose Lodge #972 8:30pm
  New Year's Eve Blues Blast!
  Holiday Inn Bristol 9pm
  NYE: FrazierBand & JP Parsons
  The Down Home 9pm
  Donnie & The Dry Heavers w/ Sam Collie
  Model City Tap House 9pm
  Indighost Styrofoam Turtles and House Cat New Years Party
  The Hideaway 10pm
  New Years Eve with Southern Rebellion
  Wild Wing Cafe (Johnson City, TN) 10pm

**For show time & more details, visit theloaferonline.com**
Karaoke

TUESDAY
Karaoke w/ Crossroads & Josh Blevins at Dawg House Tavern
Karaoke at Zachary’s Steakhouse
Family Night Karaoke at C.J.’s Sports Bar - Kingsport
Karaoke at Numan’s - Johnson City
Karaoke w/ Absolute Entertainment at Woodstone Deli - Kingsport

WEDNESDAY
Karaoke w/ Southern Sounds Karaoke at American Legion 8pm
Karaoke at C.J.’s Sports Bar
Turn the Page Karaoke at VFW Post 2108 – Johnson City

THURSDAY
Karaoke w/ Absolute Entertainment at Macado’s – Kingsport
Karaoke at Zachary’s Steakhouse
Michael’s Krazy Karaoke at Stateline Bar & Grill
Karaoke at C.J.’s Sports Bar
Karaoke w/ DJ Marquez Top Shelf Entertainment at Wild Wings Café JC
Karaoke at Numan’s - Johnson City
Karaoke w/ Absolute Entertainment at New Beginnings - Johnson City
Karaoke at Jiggy Rays Pizzeria
Karaoke at Wild Wing Cafe Johnson City

FRIDAY
Karaoke w/ Southern Sounds Karaoke at Sportsman’s Bar & Grill 9pm
Karaoke w/ Shane Rouse at Bear’s Bar
Karaoke at Kingsport Moose Lodge
Karaoke w/ Reverb Karaoke at The Cottage 8:30pm
Turn the Page Karaoke at VFW Post 2108 – Johnson City
Karaoke w/ Absolute Entertainment at Woodstone Deli - Kingsport
Karaoke w/ Toddzilla at Sportsman’s Pub
Karaoke at Elizabethton VFW
Karaoke w/ DJ Marquez & Top Shelf Entertainment at Holiday Inn (Exit 7) – Bristol, VA
Karaoke at Numan’s – Johnson City

SATURDAY
Karaoke w/ Toddzilla at Sportsman’s Pub
Karaoke at Kingsport Moose Lodge
Turn the Page Karaoke at VFW Post 2108 – Johnson City
Karaoke w/ Absolute Entertainment at Macado’s – Kingsport
Karaoke at Numan’s – Johnson City
Karaoke w/ Tony & Rod at C.J’s Sports Bar
College Football SATURDAYS w/ DJ Paul Gallo AND Post Game Karaoke!

SUNDAY
Karaoke w/ Absolute Entertainment at Woodstone Deli - Kingsport

Trivia

TUESDAY
Wild Wing Café JC- Trivia Tuesdays w/Challenge Entertainment 8:30pm
Johnson City Brewing Company- Trivia Tuesdays 7pm
Aubrey’s Johnson City- Trivia Night 7pm

WEDNESDAY
Tipton Street Pub- Trivia Wednesdays 9pm
Aubrey’s Bristol- Trivia Night 7pm
Johnson City Moose Lodge 1831- DJ Trivia 7pm

THURSDAY
Holy Taco & Cantina Trivia Night 9pm
JRH Brewing - Trivia Night 7pm

MONDAY
Barley Waters- Trivia Night 7pm
Yee-Haw Brewing- Trivia Mondays 7pm

Cryptogram: "It's very easy to forgive others their mistakes, it takes more gut and gumption to forgive them for having witnessed your own."

DropQuote: "The nobility of a human being is strictly independent of that of his convictions."
### THINGS TO DO

**Tuesday - December 25th**
- Christmas Star Wars
- Bunkhouse Stampede - Johnson City Community Theatre 7:30pm
- Southern States Wrestling Christmas Night Star Wars - Model City Event Center 7:30pm

**Wednesday - December 26th**
- FiA Free Women's Fitness Wednesdays - Founders Park 5:30am
- Erwin Tinsel Trail - The Gathering Place Park 8am
- Fern Valley Farm KIDS SANTA CAMP - Fern Valley Farm 9am
- The Santaland Diaries - Barter Theatre 2pm
- Classic Movie Corner: It's a Wonderful Life - Bristol Public Library 5:30pm
- Wine & Food Pairing - Wonderland Lounge/Bar N Grill 7pm
- Musical Bingo! - Model City Tap House 7pm
- FiA Free Women's Fitness Thurs. Evening - Founders Park 7pm
- Freshly Brewed Comedy December - The Willow Tree Coffeehouse and Music Room 7pm
- 2018: A Year in Review - Gypsy Circus Cider Company 7pm

**Thursday - December 27th**
- F3 free men's bootcamp - Founders Park 6am
- Erwin Tinsel Trail - The Gathering Place Park 8am
- Fern Valley Farm KIDS SANTA CAMP - Fern Valley Farm 9am
- The Santaland Diaries - Barter Theatre 2pm
- A Time Of Giving In Downtown Johnson City - Southern Craft BBQ 2pm
- Elf: The Musical - Barter Theatre 7:30pm

**Friday - December 28th**
- Erwin Tinsel Trail - The Gathering Place Park 8am
- Fern Valley Farm KIDS SANTA CAMP - Fern Valley Farm 9am
- Elf: The Musical - Barter Theatre 8pm

**Saturday - December 29th**
- F3 free men's bootcamp - Founders Park 6am
- FiA Free Women's Fitness Saturdays - Founders Park 7:15am
- Erwin Tinsel Trail - The Gathering Place Park 8am
- Fern Valley Farm KIDS SANTA CAMP - Fern Valley Farm 9am
- New Year's Pixie Ball - Pixie Suite Girls' Spa 5pm
- Elf: The Musical - Barter Theatre 8pm
- The Santaland Diaries - Barter Theatre 8pm

**Sunday - December 30th**
- Erwin Tinsel Trail - The Gathering Place Park 8am
- The Santaland Diaries - Barter Theatre 3pm
- Crafty Sunday with Perfectly Unhinged - Gypsy Circus Cider Company 3pm

**Monday - December 31st**
- FiA Free Women's Fitness Mondays - Founders Park 5:30am
How many versions of The Grinch do we need? At least three in my opinion. That's exactly what we now have with the new release "Dr. Seuss' The Grinch". The film, based on the 1957 Dr. Seuss book, was preceded by the 1966 animated cartoon shown on CBS, and the 2000 live-action film starring Jim Carrey in the title role. To add to the Grinch fun, we now have a CGI 3D version for 2018. Most all of us are familiar with the tale of the human-like creatures called Whos living in the town of Whoville. The Whos are a joyous and happy people, much to the annoyance of one green fellow who resides on top of Mount Crumpit: the Grinch (voiced by Benedict Cumberbatch). The Grinch lives on the mountain with his only friend, his loyal dog Max, who has to deal with all his eccentricities. The film begins with the Whos preparing for their favorite time of year, Christmas. The Whos preparations annoy the Grinch even more than usual, as he despises the season of good cheer, due to sad childhood memories related to the holiday. Despite his disdain for the holiday, he and Max must head to town to get food due to bare cupboards. While the Grinch heads to town, we meet Cindy Lou Who (Cameron Seely), who lives with her twin brothers and overworked single mom. There is a side story of Cindy Lou sending a letter to Santa to ask for help for her mom, but upon encountering the Grinch while he is in town, is told she needs to meet him face-to-face to make her request, so she and her friends plot to trap Santa when he visits her home. After the Grinch returns home he sets in motion a plan to steal Christmas from the Whos, to help relieve his distress. In the version not only does he have Max to help, but he recruits a very plump reindeer he names Fred to help with his Christmas Eve thievery. On Christmas Eve, Max and the Grinch, minus Fred, who left with his family before the mission, head to Whoville on their quest to steal every present and decoration from the town. While in Whoville, instead of Santa, the Grinch falls into Cindy Lou's trap, and thanks to some advice from the wise 6-year-old, the Grinch's bitter hear begins to melt, but he still carries on his mission. Once the Grinch and Max have emptied the town of any sigh of Christmas, the green one feels accomplished, until something unexpected happens. Despite their devastating loss, the Whos still gather in the town square to sing a joyous song. Upon hearing the Whos still singing after their loss, the Grinch's heart triples in size, and his newfound joy leads him to take Christmas back to Whoville, with the help of Max and the surprise reappearance of Fred. The Grinch apologizes to the Whos and his actions lead Cindy Lou to invite him and Max to Christmas dinner. This version of The Grinch is just different enough from the other versions to make a perfect companion piece in what I will dub The Grinch trilogy. Cumberbatch proves to be a perfect voice for the green one, and further proves the actor is both formidable in the live-action and animated modes. This film can be enjoyed by both kids and adults, with witty dialogue and fast pacing. The 3D effects are impressive, and I suggest you see this film while it plays in theaters for the full effect. I have always loved the story presented by Dr. Seuss of redemption presented via a creature so vile, there appears no way he can turn good. During the conclusion of the film The Grinch makes a toast during the Christmas dinner as follows: "To kindness and love, the things we need most." Happy Holidays from Pop Life! (Rated PG)
Dark of the McCloud

As 2018 comes to a close, I’d like to wrap up the year with one final look at a pair of blurays from Warner Archive. One film is one of those movies that is so truly one of a kind nothing you could say about it could ever fully compare to the experience of watching it. The other is a cult favorite action film starring the great Rod Taylor—where he gets into a fight with a guy wielding a chainsaw. First is Robert Altman’s 1970 follow up to “M*A*S*H,” “Brewster McCloud,” and then we have cinematographer turned director Jack Cardiff’s 1968 action/heist film “Dark of the Sun.”

Whenever a director has a massive box office hit, generally speaking, Hollywood will open their arms to them and offer them the chance to make whatever they want. This is Hollywood’s version of having the keys to the kingdom. “M*A*S*H”—which itself was spawned in the wake of the success of his film what happened to Robert Altman make whatever they want. This is a kind of double feature. See you next week.

Released by MGM in December of 1970 (right on the heels of “M*A*S*H”—which came out in January of that year), “Brewster McCloud,” when stripped to the most basic elements of the story, is this. It’s a film that is set in Houston and follows a loner kid, the title character played by Bud Court—who lives in a fallout shelter deep inside the basement of the Astrodome. There’s also a mystery going around as a serial killer is on the loose in the city—whose calling card is leaving his victims covered in…well…literal bird crap.

I’ve never encountered a movie quite like “Brewster McCloud.” I spent most of the movie watching it with certain awe that there’s a time Robert Altman was able to get MGM to cut him a check to make a movie like this. The film also is a bit of a satire of other films from the time, even taking time to poke gentle fun at the Steve McQueen movie “Bullitt.” The film’s cast also features Shelly Duvall—in her feature film debut, Sally Kellerman who plays a mysterious woman who may or may not be Brewster’s guardian angel. The film’s cast is also rounded out by the great John Schuck and the great William Windom.

Warner Archive’s blu-ray of “Brewster McCloud” looks great, featuring a new 1080p transfer. The film is little heavy on the grain side, but that’s appropriate of the era, colors are good and natural looking too, the detail is sharp as well. The soundtrack is the original mono soundtrack presented as two-channel DTS-HD MA track—it’s clear and sharp. Fans of this deliciously offbeat movie should be more than pleased with how “Brewster McCloud” looks on blu-ray. This is one is highly recommended by yours truly—especially if you want a fun, funny movie that will leave you saying “What the hell did I just watch!”

Jack Cardiff was the director of photography on some of the finest movies to ever come out of England, world-renowned classics like “Black Narcissus” and “The Red Shoes.” In the late 1950s and lasting through the early ‘70s, Cardiff switched to directing. One of his films is 1968’s “Dark of the Sun,” starring Rod Taylor, Jim Brown, and Yvette Mimieux. Based upon the novel of the same name by Wilbur A. Smith, “Dark of the Sun” is an action/heist film set in the background of the Congo Crisis.

Brown and Taylor lead a mercenary unit traveling on a train with a duel mission—rescue a group of civilians before the rebels can get to them and recover a cache of diamonds. “Dark of the Sun” is one of those late ‘60s films that began to push the boundaries of violence, even by today’s standards I found my jaw dropping several times at how violent this movie is. What surprised me most about “Dark of the Sun”—a movie I had never heard of until Warner Archive kindly sent a copy of their new blu-ray to review—was how much I enjoyed it. I’d go as far to call it one of the best action films I’ve ever seen.

I’m not alone in love for this movie, it’s become a cult favorite in recent years and even has fans as wide-reaching as Martin Scorsese and Quinten Tarantino—you can easily see how this movie has influenced the latter’s work. At times this feels like the kind of movie Tarantino is always trying to make. I’m a fan of Rod Taylor’s work and he’s great in this, at one point he chases someone down a shallow river by driving a jeep right down the middle of the river.

WA’s blu-ray of “Dark of the Sun” features a new 1080p transfer that looks fantastic, clear, sharp, and with vibrant colors. It looks exactly like a film that was released in 1968 with that late ‘60s “harsh” lighting
How to live a champagne life on a high life budget

by Kathie Scalf

This time of year is always hard on the wallet and if you’re like me, this year you’re REALLY feeling the pinch. Unfortunately for my bank account, I am a woman who enjoys some of the finer things in life. Also unfortunate, I do not have the monetary assets to afford myself most of these luxuries. So over my years of growing up far less well-to-do than most, I have honed the skill of making small improvements to my life that can give it that little something “extra” and make everything else seem a little more luxe.

For starters, dressing with style doesn’t always mean buying brand new luxury clothing and sporting designer handbags. I’ve found that investing in a few good pieces that can last a lifetime can instantly make the rest of your outfit look expensive. I don’t care if you’re wearing a $7 t-shirt from Walmart, pair it with a great fitting pair of jeans and a nice watch and you can look like a million bucks. There are certain classic pieces that belong in every wardrobe and if you invest your money correctly and make sure to take care of them, you will never have to buy them again. As I previously mentioned, a great pair of quality jeans that fit perfectly. A classic men’s style timepiece, something big enough to be noticed but not big enough to eat your dinner off of. Pawn shops and online consignment stores are chock full of gently used expensive jewelry that you can get for a fraction of the cost. For ladies, the perfect LBD (Little Black Dress) - something that can take you from a job interview to a funeral to cocktails without changing clothes in between. A crisp white button down shirt. Dress shoes and one nice handbag or belt in a color that goes with everything rounds out the complete closet. Make sure to shop places like Beatty Shoes, Ross or Gabe’s first for the best deals! They get new shipments 3-6 times a week, and if you’re willing to dig, you can find a lot of great stuff there.

The luxe life doesn’t start in your closet though. Like charity, it starts at home. Your home is a direct reflection of who you are as a person. What better place to add those little touches and give the impression to all who enter that you have it all together. Start by spending a little extra money on good bedding. A comfy down comforter and 500 thread count sheets can make all the difference between “going to bed” and “OMG I’m never leaving this heaven in the morning.” Luckily you can get amazing deals on these items at Ross and TJ Maxx. Drape your beds and living room furniture with plush throws and pillows. One thing I will say to save up your money and invest in for the home-custom framing. You really can tell a difference and a lot of smaller businesses only require you to pay half up front and you can pay the rest off in time. For the kitchen, have a French Press for coffee and always have fresh spa water or sparkling water on hand. (No I don’t mean cans of La Croix.) Adding a handful of mint and berries or citrus to a pitcher of regular ol’ tap water will make your guests feel like they’re enjoying a night at the Four Seasons and costs you less than $3. In your most intimate of spaces, AKA the crapper, ensure you always have a sturdy plunger and air freshener or matches. You never want to make your guests feel embarrassed. Also, and this is my most sound advice in this article- BUY GOOD TOILET PAPER!! My dad always insisted on Charmin Ultra Strong, no matter how broke we were that week. According to him, “You’re never too poor for good sh*t tickets.” So ditch the John Wayne tissue (that’s rough and tough and don’t take crap off nobody) and treat yourself to a little something with an aloe vera finish. No need to thank me later. Also, for your own sake, get a bathtub caddy/tray. I just bought one of these from Target for $21 and it has made every night I’ve soaked in the tub since feel like a spa treatment. Mine comes complete with a cup holder for wine, a spout to hold up your favorite book or iPad and a flat space on the side for candles or chocolates. My final advice for upgrading your home, if you’re of the drinking persuasion, have a complete bar. Whether you have a designated counter space or a rolling tray or a full blown bar in your home, always keep a bottle of the 5 essentials on-hand: vodka, tequila, gin, bourbon/whiskey, and rum. Some staple mixers should always include cola, soda water/tonic, cranberry/orange juice and citrus. Also make sure you have the appropriate glassware that pairs with each beverage. It’s also a good idea to keep at least a few light beers and a bottle of red and white wine on hand (pinot noir and pinot grigio seem to be the most crowd pleasing varietals.)

These tips can give you the foundation for living a life that looks AND feels far more expensive and luxurious than it really is. And with all the extra money you’re saving you could either invest in your future, or blow on a long weekend away like me! Hey, you can’t take it with ya, so spend wisely!

xo-Kathie

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- Samuel Johnson
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The Christmas Star of Bethlehem

Part Three: What the Magi Saw

By Jesus’ time, the average person was familiar with the incredibly dark, night sky. The movement of the Sun controlled their yearly rhythms of life, and the starlight provided entertainment. Sometimes there were “hairy stars” or comets, and the flashing needles of light were called “meteors” by the Greeks, and word that means “things in the air.”

The writers of the Bible often put astronomical phenomenon in their story to enrich the message. Light, itself, is the purest form of God, just as Jesus is often referred to as “the Light.”

Phenomenon in the sky was watched by all but interpreted by just a few. In the Gospel of Matthew, chapter 2, we are told:

“In the time of King Herod after Jesus was born in Judea, Wise Men from the east came to Jerusalem asking, ‘Where is the child who has been born King of the Jews? For we have seen his star at its rising and have come to pay him homage.’”

But King Herod, whose death is a key to the Nativity story, summoned the Wise Men to ask them where he could find the “Star.” Clearly, King Herod couldn’t see it from his back porch, though he obviously looked.

Matthew 2:7: “Then Herod secretly called for the Wise Men and learned from them the exact time when the “Star” had appeared.”

But that doesn’t matter. The fact that Herod feared the birth of a Messiah to rob him of his power, sent the Wise Men to Bethlehem as his emissaries.

Matthew 2:9-10: “...they set out, and there ahead of them, went the star that they had seen at its rising, until it stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy.”

The Wise Men were warned in a dream not to return to King Herod, he was going to kill them. They left for their country after offering the baby Jesus gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh.

Those three gifts mentioned in the Bible create the symbol of three Wise Men. But there may have been a half-dozen “Magi,” along with their caravan of camels, servants and probably a harem mate or two.

A mad King Herod, betrayed by the Wise Men, made a horrible decree:

Matthew 2:16: “Herod ordered killed all the male children in and around Bethlehem who were two years old or under, according to the time that he had learned from the Wise Men.”

The story of the Nativity and the Star of Bethlehem ends here and has no other written account of the Wise Men exists.

So, what exactly did the Wise Men see? And just who are these Wise Men, or Magi, described in the Book of Matthew?

The three other Gospels—Mark, Luke and John—document Jesus’ days on Earth but are absent of any reference to the Star of Bethlehem, probably second only to the Cross as the most identifiable Christian symbol.

The Book of Luke mentions that shepherds are tending their flocks at night when visited by angels. But that tells us that it was the spring of the year, when shepherds were outside with the newborns, looking for preying wolves. Shepherds certainly weren’t outside in December, when it’s rainy and cold.

Just because no observations from the common people exists of the “Star” doesn’t mean normal villagers didn’t see it. The mystery is solved by interpreting where the planets and Moon were during the decade before Jesus’ birth in the ancient Holy Land.

A planetarium program used on any desk or laptop computer—available free on the Internet—can take the 21st Century stargazer back in time. (check out free download at Stellarium.org)

And when looking at the stars and planets in the timeframe of Jesus’ birth, there are revealed some unusual and rare planetary groupings that would turn many heads to the western twilight horizon.

Because of the laws of physics, planetary motion is predictable to the second in the sky. And with a simple computer program, the amazing story of the Star of Bethlehem begins to make sense.

First, what year do we set in our planetarium “time machine?”

The exact year of Jesus’ birth is a mystery. It certainly wasn’t “Zero.” A big clue is that King Herod had to be alive, of course. The Roman historian Josephus wrote that Herod died after and eclipse of the Moon. That date is either the lunar eclipse of March 13th 4 BC, or January 9th, 1 BC. And remember that King Herod had all boys age 2 or under slaughtered. That adds a couple of years to our date for Jesus’ birth.

So, Jesus was born in the spring between the years of 6 BC-3 BC and could have been a toddler when visited by the Wise Men.

The “time machine” planetarium program will look at the skies from 10 to 1 BC to find prime targets for the “Star of Bethlehem.” And there are plenty of starry suspects in the early evening involving the two brightest planets, Jupiter and Venus.

In fact, some of the planetary positions displayed in the skies during this timeframe are extremely rare and have yet to be repeated in night skies 2,000 years later.

Start out with the appearance of Halley’s Comet in 11 BC. Then in 7 BC, Jupiter and Venus, the two brightest planets, were grouped in Pisces, a constellation that controlled the destiny of the Hebrews.

Jupiter was associated with royalty and their affairs in business and life. Venus’ influence was a symbol of purity and fertility of life. The 12 Houses of the Zodiac, where the planets, Moon and Sun were always found, were founded by ancient stargazers to imply significant meaning to Earth.

Then, in 6 BC, for the first time in 800 years, Jupiter, Saturn and reddish Mars—a conquering warrior—were clustered near each other in Pisces, a constellation symbolic with water and life. In 5 BC, the Chinese recorded a small comet, but whether it was observed from the Shinar Plains is not known.

From 3-2 BC, the big celestial climax begins. The most amazing alignment of planets occurred that has not been repeated since.

In May 3 BC, Saturn and Mercury were in the morning sky, and Venus soon joined them in the star pattern Cancer the Crab. The close conjunction of the three planets was obviously watched by Priest-Astrologers everywhere.

In August 3 BC, Saturn and Mercury left the scene, but Jupiter was closing in on Venus in the morning sky. Months later, they dipped together below the morning horizon, only to reappear together in the evening sky.

In June 1 BC, Venus and Jupiter—simply brilliant by themselves in today’s skies—moved even closer together in the constellation of Leo the Lion, always associated with the fate of empires. The bright star of Leo, named Regulus, was nearby when a miracle seemed to happen in the western sky of early summer evenings.

Venus and Jupiter continued moving closer, which would have drawn attention from anyone looking at the twilight horizon, and then actually merged as one! The exact date was June 17th 1 BC. There would have been a spectacular, super bright “star” seen by all who looked up in the evening sky. It was probably visible daytime for those knowing where to look. But the interpreted was reserved for the Priest/Stargazers of the time.

The incredible fusing of Jupiter and Venus as one—merely an illusion as they were hundreds of millions of miles apart—would have lasted a few hours and was visible from only the ancient Plains of Shinar. Other parts of the world saw the two planets come close to each other, but not merge as one. (Such a “conjunction” of Venus and Jupiter occurred in July 2016, but the modern world took little notice).

The ancient sky show wasn’t done yet. In August of 1 BC, the evening twilight was filled with four planets—Mercury and Mars popped over the western horizon to join Venus and Jupiter. And Leo’s mighty star, Regulus, made five bright “stars” hovering over the twilight horizon.

Such a quadruple conjunction of planets in Leo is a 5,000-year event, and the Zoroastrian Priest-Astrologers of Persia would have been beyond interested in the celestial events. To them, the Hebrew prophecy of a Messiah might be happening.

And so is the story of the starry skies during the birth of the Christian savior, Jesus Christ. It’s a long, complicated story that just a few lines of the Bible treating as a passing thought.

Maybe mankind will never know exactly the true nature of the Star of Bethlehem, unless some book of hidden Biblical knowledge is discovered with all the answers.

But that doesn’t matter. The fact that God used the stars and planets He created to orchestrate a celestial sign to humans, heralding the Messiah, is the undisputed fact.

The science behind the Star of Bethlehem doesn’t matter for Christian believers. The saving grace of Jesus Christ is the message that is important to the world.

The light of this special astronomical event—the Star of Bethlehem—has a meaning for humanity that will shine forever.

Stargazer

By Mark Marquette since 1996
stargazermarq@gmail.com

www.stellarium.org
The McKinney Center is celebrating the beginning of its sixth year of arts programming through Jonesborough’s Mary B. Martin Program for the Arts with a brand new catalog of classes that offers a variety of standard courses as well as exciting new classes and workshops for art students of all ages.

The McKinney Center has built a reputation of providing the best art classes in the region, using the areas most qualified artist-teachers. The small class sizes allow for individual attention to student needs, and the variety of courses offered allows students to dive deep into one medium or explore a wide range of courses from visual arts, music, writing, ceramics, dance and more.

Programming has now grown to the point that the McKinney Center now offers its courses in a semester-style format, with the spring semester building off of classes taught in the fall.

When the McKinney Center opened its doors for the first time, it offered several courses in painting, theater, and ceramics, and served sixty-five students. Today, students growth has grown exponentially, and the program has grown with the students’ needs. Children’s art now offers classes for youngsters in the toddler years up through teen years. Adult classes have grown to include both evening and morning classes to accommodate working adults as well as retirees. Homeschool classes are part of the McKinney Center’s regular programming, and one-day workshops have grown to provide artistic and social opportunities for adults whose schedules may be too busy for a weeks-long course.

A glance inside the new catalog will show courses offered by age groups and mediums, as well as a look at the coming courses for the next semester, so students can plan classes in advance.

A new “bundling” option has been added to several course offering, providing discounts on classes that build off of each other. Currently, the “Early Bird” discount is in place, discounting every course by $10 until the cut-off date of January 12, 2019.

The spring catalog in Children’s Art includes courses in painting and drawing, sensory art, anime, pottery, ceramics, kids clay, film, writing, dance, guitar, and bucket drums.

Teen and Adult classes include hand building with clay, pottery wheel, functional pottery, printmaking, drawing, pen and ink drawing, watercolor, plein air painting, low water immersion fabric dying, mosaic pet portraits, mixed media, art journaling, book binding, creative writing, and guitar.

Workshops for teens and adults include Zentangle drawing, garden art workshops, Valentine’s Day card making, and a series of glass fusion courses that include making glass night lights, sun catchers, plates, spring vase, and plant garden stakes.

The McKinney Center’s goal is that students will be able to move through the curriculum over a number of semesters and years to improve their skills in whatever medium they prefer.

The full catalog containing course descriptions and dates is available online at www.mckinneycenter.com/spring2019 and is also available at the McKinney Center. Register for classes online at www.mckinneycenter.com/register. For more information, contact McKinney Center director Theresa Hammons at theresah@jonesboroughtn.org or call 423-753-0562.
JOHNSON CITY — Models of America’s former signature railroads will be on display during Heritage Day on Saturday, Dec. 29 at the George L. Carter Railroad Museum located on the campus of East Tennessee State University.

Today's super railroads were spawned by the consolidation of numerous smaller firms and had signature identities such as unique logos, memorable slogans and colorful paint schemes. This was particularly evident in the 1940-60 era as diesel power rapidly gained acceptance. These rails remain iconic and instantly identifiable to most enthusiast. “Santa Fe – All the Way,” “Southern Serves the South,” “Louisville & Nashville the Old Reliable” and others, resound from history even today. They disappeared as consolidation efforts accelerated in the 1960s.

“The Wabash’s slogan “Follow the Flag” has been stated as the origin of the term, ‘Fallen Flag,’” notes Geoff Stunkard, Heritage Days coordinator. “Fans of railroading also note that if the flag were removed from a locomotive, its run was complete. Many enthusiasts who were not even born yet consider that simpler time as a wonderful epoch in American railroading.”

Thanks to the efforts of the Mountain Empire Model Railroad club volunteers, some of these trains will be operating on the museum’s 24x44 foot HO scale layout. Other examples will be shown in the museum’s multiple display cases, and trains will be running on the N scale and HOn3 dioramas as well. The latter is of East Tennessee’s own fallen flag, the ET&WNC “Tweetsie” line, nationally renowned for its detailed accuracy.

Located in the Campus Center Building at ETSU, the Carter Railroad Museum is open Saturdays from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., and includes model railroad layouts, a children's activity room and ongoing programs. Heritage Day is held the last Saturday of each month. There is no admission fee, but donations are welcome.

The museum is also seeking artifacts for its displays, including the newest addition dedicated to the “Tweetsie” line, the ET&WNC, which will be open for guided tours during event days. In addition to the displays, there is a growing research library, and an oral history archive is being established as part of the museum’s programs. For more information, visit www.etsu.edu/railroad.

Members of the George L. Carter Chapter of the National Railway Historical Society and MEMRR coordinate the exhibits. For more information, visit www.memrr.org or www.glcarternrhs.com.

The Carter Railroad Museum can be identified by a flashing railroad crossing signal at the back entrance to the Campus Center Building. Visitors should enter ETSU’s campus from State of Franklin Road onto Jack Vest Drive and continue east toward 176 Ross Drive, adjacent to the flashing RR crossing sign.

For more information about Heritage Day, contact Dr. Fred Alsop at 423-439-6838 or alsopf@etsu.edu. For disability accommodations, call the ETSU Office of Disability Services at 423-439-8346.

Remember the ‘Fallen Flags’ at Carter Railroad Museum Heritage Day
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