

Family Matters

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Volume 5, Issue 2

Official Newsletter of the Gillyard-Johnson-Mahoney Family Reunions
gillyard-johnson-mahoney.com

Editor's Corner

**Merry Christmas, Happy New Year
and**

What's Next by Bettie Griggs

For this Christmas, I wish you all blessings without numbers and all good things without end.

Following each family reunion, I always spend time assessing what worked and what didn't quite work. My hope is always that anything that didn't go well will not be outweighed by all of our great progress. Looking ahead to what's next for our reunions and our family's future is always my focus.

Now as we come to the end of 2013, and the start of a new year, I'm sure that many of us will spend time reflecting on the past and pondering,

what's next. I love a quote by Arnold Bennett, "The chief beauty about time is that you cannot waste it in advance. The next year, the next day, the next hour are lying ready for you..."

August 28, 2013, marked the 50th anniversary of the March on Washington. In this issue, Family Matters spotlights two of our senior family members (sister and brother). They share their memories of the civil rights movement/March on Washington, and their earliest childhood memories of Christmas. The two of them sharing their memories is a gift to all of us. It is one of my favorite Family Spotlight. I love the way they remember Christmas so differently (see below).

I was stunned to learn that Alzheimer's disease is the sixth leading

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Family Spotlight



Mattie Mahoney McDowell



Emanuel Mahoney

Movement/March on Washington, and their earliest childhood Christmas memory with Family Matters.

FM: What do you remember about the August 28, 1963 March on Washington or about the Civil Rights Movement?

Emanuel: In 1963, I was living in San Diego, so I was not involved in the movement on the ground so to speak. However I saw it all on TV.

Mattie: The Civil Rights Movement probably is history that will be unfolding for a long, long time. During my lifetime, I have been surrounded by so much negativity, abuse and other derogatory situations from a race and gender point of view, until I often wondered if my sons would reach adulthood. To me the March on Washington is of such significance that its ideas should be highlighted much more often than they are. The March renewed our spirit and encouraged us to keep the flames burning. The younger generation should learn of the strong perseverance developed by our forefathers and that the struggles and challenges will become fewer. Keep the Faith! (Continue on page 3)

Siblings, 80 year old Mattie and 78 year old Emanuel, share their memories of the Civil Rights

Upcoming Events

Jan 25, 2014
2014 Reunion Planning Team
Teleconference Meeting

March 1, 2014
Yard Sale
Shreveport, LA

Check our website and your email frequently for all the latest information on the 2014 Family Reunion

The True Meaning of Christmas

By: Brian K Walters

In today's day and time,
It's easy to lose sight,
Of the true meaning of Christmas
And one special night.

When we go shopping,
We say "How much will it cost?"
Then the true meaning of Christmas,
Somehow becomes lost.

Amidst the tinsel, glitter
And ribbons of gold,
We forget about the child,
Born on a night so cold.

The children look for Santa
In his big, red sleigh
Never thinking of the baby
Whose bed was made of hay.

In reality when we look into the night sky,
We don't see a sleigh
But a star, burning bright and high.

A faithful reminder,
Of that night so long ago,
And of the child we call Jesus,
Whose love, the world would know.



Alzheimer's disease, sometimes affectionately known as "Old Timers", is a progressive disease that destroys memory and other important mental functions. The disease causes a lack of intellectual and social skills which eventually impair everyday living. The initial symptoms are forgetfulness and mild confusion. As the disease progresses, memory loss increases, especially short term memory loss. There are problems with speaking and writing as well as thinking and reasoning. A person with Alzheimer's will begin to have trouble making decisions and performing everyday task. There may also be marked changes in personality and behavior such as depression, agitation and aggression, mood swings and delusions.

The exact cause of Alzheimer's disease is unknown. However, it is believed that a combination of genetics, lifestyle and environmental factors can contribute to developing the disease. Certain factors that increase your risk of developing Alzheimer's include increased age, family history and a history of mild memory problems or head trauma. Poor lifestyle habits have also been linked to developing the disease, such as high cholesterol, high blood pressure, poorly controlled diabetes, lack of exercise and smoking. There are a few drugs available to help to slow the progression of the disease, but there is no cure.

It is also possible to decrease cognitive changes by adapting the following healthy lifestyle choices:

- Regular exercise
- Diet low in fat and rich in fruits and vegetables and omega-3 fatty acids,
- Social engagement
- Intellectual stimulation.

If you have concerns regarding Alzheimer's for yourself or a loved one, please contact your doctor. You may find additional information from the Alzheimer's Association at www.alz.org or call 1-800-272-3900.

Family Spotlight

(Continued from page 1)

FM: What is your earliest childhood Christmas memory?

Emanuel: Some elder family members put on a Santa Claus uniform without my knowledge of course and terrorized me at the age of perhaps 4 or 5.

Mattie: Being poor and living on the farm, my early life was not easy. Christmas dinner was special to me. My mom started gathering and saving the things she needed for baking months before Christmas. Fresh eggs came from the chickens she raised. Milk came from the cows we had and butter from the milk we churned. Flavor, sugar and flour were saved over a period of time. Our meat for Christmas dinner was always goose. The goose was placed in a pen for several months before Christmas and fed lots of food so that it would grow big and get fat. I remember eating raw cake batter from the cake pan, also crumbs from the cake pan after the cake was baked. A lot of work went into getting ready to cook the Christmas dinner. Unforgettable food aromas filled the house for a long time. Then came the feast. We were thankful to be together as a family.

Family News

November 2013

8th grader, 13 year old **Keelan Jamal Oatis**, plays defensive tackle for McAdams Jr. High football team. The team won 1st place in district. McAdams Jr. High is located in Dickinson, Texas. You can see Keelan and his team by going to: <http://youtu.be/UqQ8gBZg72o>

October 2013

6th grader, **Darrell Sheppard** made 4A's out of eight of his classes for quarter, October, 2013. He attends Brittany Woods Middle School located in University City, Missouri.

Bettie Gillyard - October 17th celebrated her milestone 60th birthday. She and sister Daisy traveled to Johannesburg, Knysna and Cape Town, South Africa to mark the event.

Will Gillyard - October 1st, celebrated his milestone 60th birthday with his wife and family.

Gretchen Petterway voted by her peers as one of the top pediatricians in the Shreveport/Bossier area. List of top doctors and dentist appear in the October issue of SB Magazine, www.sbmag.net

September 2013

Winnie Gilliard passed on September 19th. Winnie was a retired educator. She participated in our skit, "My Family's Keeper, The Voices of Six Women"

August 2013

Brittany Gillyard gave birth to son, Josiah on August 12th.

May 2013

Darrell Sheppard won a \$500.00 college Savings Scholarship for his Science Project "Robot Hand"

2014 Reunion Things You Need to Know

Family Historian
bettiegillyard@aol.com

Family Reunions Mission:

To focus on the things that shape us rather than the circumstances that divide us; to strengthen and preserve family as God orders our steps. We value God's Plan, Family, Tradition, and Service.

We're on the Web!
gillyard-johnson-mahoney.com

Thursday, July 31, 2013(optional) - GJM Day of Service - You select where you will volunteer.

Friday, August 1, 2014 - Registration, Meet and Greet, Light Meal, Opening Ceremony. **Attire: Casual**

Saturday, August 2, 2014 - Morning Activities: Indoor and Outdoor Games and other Fun Activities, Light Meal. **Attire: Tee-Shirt-**

Saturday Evening Activities: Banquet

Program, Dinner Meal. **Attire: White Church Dressy - Semi-Formal**

All events for August 1st and 2nd take place at the Holiday Inn Shreveport Airport West, 5555 Financial Plaza

Sunday, August 3, 2014 - Worship Service at the Greater Sunshine Baptist Church, 2207 Lakeshore Dr., Shreveport

Colors - Burgundy  and White

Cost - Log on gillyard-johnson-mahoney.com

What's Next (Continued from Page 1)

cause of death in the United States and that more than 5 million Americans are living with the disease. Ida Oatis, our health care contributor provides us with more information on this deadly disease (page 3).

Now while drinking that Christmas Eggnog, and thinking about what's next for you, head to page 3 and finish this year off by catching up on all the

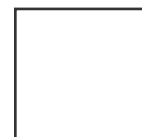
reported family news. Great things are happening in our family.

Remember, the next year, the next day, the next hour are lying ready for you!

Merry Christmas, Happy New Year!

Enjoy Your Blessings

Bettie



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