

# Family Matters

Dec 2014/Jan/Feb 2015  
Volume 5, Issue 5

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

Merry Christmas and  
Happy New Year  
from the volunteers  
at Family Matters



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## Editor's Corner

Bettie Griggs

*Christmas, Fellowship and Reunion Highlights*

## Merry Christmas!

As we prepare to celebrate the birth of Christ, open gifts and gather around our dinner tables, let's remember all we have and the importance of real family fellowship.

Speaking of fellowship, what a great time we had together at our 2014 Family Reunion. We started with a Day of Service. A group of family members and I served lunch at the Shreveport-Bossier Rescue Mission. Staff at the mission was surprised to learn that our reunion included a Day of Service.

The reunion's planning team used the "View" talk show format for the opening ceremonies program. Seated around a table, the team presented

attendees with "Swag" Bags filled with the team's Favorite Things, discussed Family Hot Topics, did a cooking demonstration of Tea Cakes (see page 2, Aunt Mary's Tea Cakes) and ended the evening with a Family Fashion Show.

The theme, Building Bridges-Connecting Generations, was on display throughout our four days together. We had fourteen family members who attended their first GJM family reunion. Connections were made, bonds formed; real fellowship.

In this issue, two siblings (Elijah Griffin and Daisy Gillyard Reed) share their memories of Christmas, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., and Black History. Elijah and Daisy grew up in different households during the fifties and sixties (see below).

(Continue on page 4)

## Family Spotlight



Elijah Griffin



Daisy Reed



Ida Thomas Oatis

Siblings, Elijah Griffin, Daisy Gillyard Reed and Ida Thomas Oatis who share the same father grew up in different households during the fifties and sixties. Elijah and Daisy shared their answers to these questions with Family Matters.

**FM: What is your earliest childhood Christmas Memory? If you received a toy, what was it?**

**Elijah:** A train and track set. How about that?

**FM: Do you remember what brand it was, and do you still have it?**

**Elijah:** It was a Lionel train. No, it was gone a long time ago.

**Daisy:** The happiness in the home, and also the neighborhood during Christmas. I remember our neighbors walking up and down our street and yelling, Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays.

(Continue on page 2)

## Upcoming Events

May 2015  
2016 Reunion Fundraiser  
Shreveport, LA

June 2015  
2016 Reunion Fundraiser  
Los Angeles, CA

Check our website and your email frequently for all the latest information on the 2016 Family Reunion

## Aunt Mary's Tea Cakes



This recipe was demonstrated at the 2014 GJM Family Reunion and can be found on page 65 of the FAVORITE RECIPES FROM THE GILLYARD, JOHNSON, MAHONEY FAMILY AND FRIENDS



## Ingredients

½ cup shortening	1 teaspoon baking powder
½ cup butter	1 tablespoon water
2 cup sugar	2 teaspoon vanilla
4 eggs	4 ½ cups flour

## Directions

Mix all ingredients, except flour. Knead in flour. Roll on a floured surface until ¼ inch thick. Cut out using a floured Mason jar lid or a large cookie cutter. Bake at 375 degrees for about 10 to 13 minutes. Make 8- 10 dozens.

## Family Spotlight (Continued from page 1)

**Daisy:** Everyone seemed happy and everyone wanted to stop and have a conversation with you during this time of year. I remember mama being so happy, cooking her fruit cakes and many other cakes and pies. My dad would always buy us a large flat box of raisins and a large stick of peppermint candy for Christmas. I am sure I got a toy for Christmas, but I have no memory of any. Seeing my family happy was the most important thing for me.

**FM: What do you remember most about Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.?**

**Elijah:** His speaking ability, and how he could motivate people to take positive action.

**Daisy:** That he was a civil rights activist and fought to end segregation. He was a great leader with much courage. I remember the Dr. King protest demonstration in Birmingham in

1963, the year I finished high school. The Birmingham Police Chief used fire hoses and police dogs on the protestors and arrested Dr. King. Dr. King didn't give up. He kept fighting for us to have our rights. I remember the most important speech he made, "I have a Dream." He marched for Blacks to have the right to vote. I also remember the day that he was assassinated. It was a very sad day for so many people of all races. I feel that it is so important that we as African Americans vote. Dr. King gave his life so that we could have that right.

**FM: What Black History fact are you most amazed by, and why?**

**Elijah:** George Washington Carver, because of his many use of the peanut. I find only one use for them.

**FM: What is that use Elijah?**

**Elijah:** To eat them.

**Daisy:** I have always been amazed by Rosa Parks who was an African American Civil Rights Activist. She refused to give up her seat on the bus to a white man, after she had worked all day. She was arrested and convicted of violating the Jim Crow segregation laws. She continued with her fight. She was a woman with much courage and willingness to fight for her rights.

**FM: Thank you Elijah, thank you Daisy for sharing your memories with us.**

**NOTE:** December 1, 2014 marked the 59<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Rosa Parks' decision to refuse to give up her seat on a crowded bus in Montgomery, Alabama to a white passenger.

Participation at our family health fairs proves that our family is becoming more and more committed to living healthier. We thank our own Dr. Gretchen for her dedication and commitment to organizing the health fairs.

Dr. Gretchen focused this year's health fair on "Let's Move." She emphasized the importance of exercise and advised attendees to check with their health care provider before starting any exercise program.

Dr. Gretchen provided a Fact Sheet, from the Division of Nutrition, Physical Activity, and Obesity of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Center for Disease Control and Prevention. From the Fact Sheet we learned that adults who are active are healthier, are less likely to develop many chronic diseases, and

have better aerobic fitness than adults who are inactive. Adults need to do two types of physical activity each week to improve health; aerobic and muscle strengthening activities.

**Aerobic Activities**

For substantial health benefits, adult need to do at least:

- 2 hours and 30 minutes each week of moderate-intensity aerobic activity or
- 1 hour and 15 minutes each week of vigorous-intensity aerobic activity, or
- an equivalent mix of moderate-and vigorous-intensity aerobic activity.

**Muscle Strengthening Activities**

Muscle strengthening should be done 2 or more days a week.



Pictured: Dr. Gretchen (top Left) and her team providing information to Vera Blake

- All major muscle groups should be worked. These are the legs, hips, back, abdomen, chest, shoulders, and arms.
- Exercise for each muscle group should be repeated 8 to 12 times per set. As exercise becomes easier, increase the weight or do another set.

Remember, check with your health care provider, and Let's Move!

**Family News**

**September**

21<sup>st</sup> In Memoriam **Dorothy Thomas**, daughter of the late Roosevelt and Tammie Thomas.

**October**

**Gretchen Gillyard Petterway** named as one of the Top Doctors for 2014 in the October issue of SB magazine. She is a pediatrician at Christus Pediatric Associates.

Local family members may also view Gretchen and her family along with her colleagues and their families in a Christmas commercial that will be aired on KTBS channel 3 during the Holiday Season.

**November**

9<sup>th</sup> In Memoriam **Madeline Henderson**, wife of Shelton Henderson and the daughter-in-law of Thelma Henderson.

**November** (continued)

29<sup>th</sup> **Ethel Davis** (daughter of the late Johnnie Davis and Leola Gilyard Davis, and granddaughter of the late Mack Gillyard) received a Doctorate Degree in the Humanities from Word of Life Bible School of Marshall, Texas.

29<sup>th</sup> **Cameron James Henry Shorter**, born to Cedric and Alicia Shorter. Alicia is the daughter of Daisy Gillyard Reed.

**Charley R Gillyard** (son of the late Chris and Lucille Gillyard) was awarded a Certificate in recognition of thirty years of service in the Government of the United States of America. The certificate was signed by Regional Commissioner Sheila Everett of the Social Security Administration.

**December**

21<sup>st</sup> **Sunshine Baptist Church**, Mansfield, Louisiana will hold their Annual Homecoming Services. Families with gifts should present them during the Family Roll Call.

Please remember to keep our family in prayer. **We Win!**

**Note:** Our next newsletter will be published May/Jun/Jul 2015 Please submit all news to Family matters at [gjmfamilyreunion@gmail.com](mailto:gjmfamilyreunion@gmail.com), by April 8, 2015.



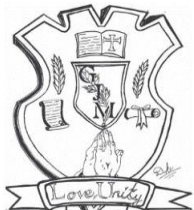
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**Family Reunions  
Mission:**

*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!**  
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When we take the time to give to others, we are truly fulfilling God's call to give and to serve those who need to experience His love. On Saturday, December 6, 2014, Velma Dumas delivered bed linen to the Shreveport-Bossier Rescue Mission. The items were donated by family members who attended Thanksgiving dinner at Velma's home. Family brought a side dish and bed linen, or donated cash for the purchase of linen, or blankets.

The Mission relies heavily on donations

to supply its operational needs and achieve its goal of helping the homeless in the community. Velma presented our donation on behalf of the GJM family, and our family's continued commitment to service.



Table filled with bed linen brought to Velma's House

**Christmas, Fellowship and Reunion Highlights (Continued from Page**

We were blessed with a hard working 2014 reunion fundraising team. The team's efforts raised \$2370.07 and we received personal donations totaling \$615.68. Collectively as a family, we donated \$1410.00 to the Greater Sunshine Baptist Church. We ended in the black with seed money for our 2016 reunion. What a blessing! We heard from many of you that it was our best reunion.

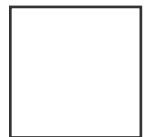
The strength of a family is the time

spent in fellowship with one another. However, our fellowship with God is first. His blessings are in the midst whenever two or three believers fellowship. That's how I see our family reunions; a fellowship of God's Blessings.

I wish you all, Merry Christmas, Happy New Year, and as always,

Enjoy Your Blessings!

*Bettie*



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