

# The Next Stage

VOLUME 25, ISSUE 4

Newsletter of The Huntsville Division Alumni Association

NOVEMBER 19, 2020

## **Next Board Mtg:**

(2nd Thu each quarter)  
(TBD) Jan, Apr, Jul,  
Oct 2021.

Another Zoom  
Meeting, OR...

**2:30 pm** Faith  
Presbyterian Church,  
SE corner of  
Whitesburg/Airport.

## **Dates to Remember:**

### **2020**

-Sat, 12/5, 11 a.m.:  
Virtual Christmas  
Party!! w/live music!

### **2021**

-Regular events will  
be decided as each  
event approaches its  
"normal" time frame.  
You will be kept  
informed.

Specific details will be  
provided closer to the  
date of the event.

*Would be great to  
see everyone...  
when we can!*

## **Join Us For A VIRTUAL Christmas Party!!!**



Most venues where we *could* hold a Christmas party are no longer allowing such gatherings, to comply with CV19 mandates. But, thanks to the creativity and persistence of Cecil Stokes and the Board, plans are underway for a *Virtual Gathering!*

Reserve some time for a Virtual Christmas party on Saturday, 12/5, with a tentative time of 11 a.m. (Time is tentative to not

conflict with football games of major local interest, and those times are not yet known.) We'll keep you posted through the HDAA Facebook page, or the HDAA Info List via email, with specific help in linking to the Zoom meeting through your computer or phone. Specific details will be provided as they are confirmed.

You can enjoy a DIY Christmas feast in the comfort of your own home, as you enjoy "getting together" in today's high-tech venue of a Zoom-type meeting. It will be the next-best thing to being together.

**Live streaming music will be provided by your own Thiokol family members:** Detailed plans are now under way by accomplished musicians Benny Pitsinger, Lisa Duncan Williams, Philip Franklin, and Jamie Neidert. They say there are probably others who should be included if they make their interest known. They also mention the technology we plan to use is not what they would have for a professional performance, but we assured them that having such entertainment by members of our own Thiokol Family -- our old friends -- would more than compensate for any loss in audio or video quality. *Special thanks to the musicians for volunteering their time!*

*Don't miss out on this exciting event...a First for many of us!*

## **Monthly:**

All of these events may resume when the state-wide lockdown is lifted by Governor Ivey.

**1st Wed:** Ladies Luncheon @ Gibson's S Mem Pkwy.

**2nd Tue:** Breakfast gathering with Bill Russell and others.

**3rd Wed:** Lunch @ Logan's/Balmoral Dr.

***All of these events are on hold until further notice.***

## **Northrop Grumman's GEM 63 Rocket Motors Propel Launch of United Launch Alliance's Atlas V**

Three of Northrop Grumman Corporation's 63-inch-diameter Graphite Epoxy Motors (GEM 63) rocket boosters were used for the first time 11/13/20 to help successfully launch and deploy the National Reconnaissance Office launch 101 (NROL-101) on the Atlas V launch vehicle. Each motor contributes 371,500 pounds of additional maximum thrust, and up to five GEM 63 motors can support a single Atlas V launch.



Northrop Grumman has been supplying rocket propulsion to ULA and its heritage companies for a variety of launch vehicles since 1964. The GEM family of strap-on motors started in the early 1980s with the GEM 40, which supported 132 Delta II launches with 1,003 motors. Then followed with the GEM 46, which flew 63 motors on seven successful missions on the Delta II Heavy launches, and the GEM 60, which retired in August 2019 with 86 motors flown over 26 Delta IV launches. The GEM family has recently expanded with the development of the GEM 63XL variation to support ULA's Vulcan Centaur launch vehicle.

(Source: [news.northropgrumman.com/news/releases](https://news.northropgrumman.com/news/releases), 13 Nov 2020)

## THIOKOL GREENWAY PROJECT

One of the objectives of the HDAA is to preserve the good image of the organization and foster the spirit that we found to be valuable during its 47-year history (1949 – 1996) of the Huntsville Division. HDAA board members have been working for several years to establish a Thiokol Greenway near the plant site and then develop a marker for that portion of the greenway. This includes a sign and two benches mounted on a concrete pad. The Thiokol Greenway is part of an 8-mile section of city greenway construction being completed at Hays Farm in southwest Huntsville near the arsenal boundary. In turn, this is part of a 44-mile phase of citywide trail/greenway construction. So, this is a part of a bigger effort to promote health and recreation in the Huntsville area and is very much in keeping with our objectives in the HDAA bylaws.

Haysland Road Phase 2 is open. This 2-mile roadway provides a new parallel road to ease congestion on Memorial Parkway as provides direct access to Grissom HS and Redstone Arsenal. It includes a 12 ft wide multiuse path through approximately 250 acres of preserved open space.

This effort is proceeding well, as you can tell from the below photos.



**Thiokol plaque/benches have been installed.**

R: Glenn Webb telling HSV City installation crew about TC/HD



L: Jeff Jones and wife, Catherine were walking the greenway and stopped to admire the new Thiokol sign and benches.



A lot of interest has been generated from folks who want to donate to this project. If interested in donating, a check may be sent to HDAA, P.O. Box 4185, Huntsville, AL 35815-4185, with a notation in the memo line of Thiokol Greenway. Charlie Thomas, HDAA Treasurer/Membership Chair will post the donations. Any monies received above the total cost of the initial project will go toward eventual landscaping around the entire area, to generate shade for respite from hot summer sun, etc., to be completed spring of 2021.

*Thanks, HDAA for helping preserve TC/HD history!*

## HAPPY THANKSGIVING TO ALL!

*Gratitude bestows reverence, allowing us to encounter everyday epiphanies, those transcendent moments of awe that change forever how we experience life and the world.*

-John Milton

## Friends In The News...



Tom Bryant is a member of the Huntsville Photographic Society. For over a decade the Huntsville Museum of Art has held a showcase of their work. It is a juried selection of about 50 pieces for display in the museum. Tom had a piece selected for this year. The 2020 Members' Showcase is on display until November 29.

The theme of this year's exhibit is "Anticipation." Being an old rocket person, Tom likes fireworks and also photographing them, but has found they are not so interesting to someone who did not hear the boom and smell the smoke and see the whole display. Having some human interest in them makes them much more popular. The top photo above (Paint the Sky with Color, featured in the 9/1/20 newsletter) is a composite image made from a fireworks display at Guntersville Lake with the light reflecting in the lake combined with a model rocket simulated launch. It is a whimsical image because it would be very dangerous to do this for real, because the "fuse" is just a piece of rope and the fire is an electric candle and the sparks were drawn in with Photoshop. Tom says, "I should have added, 'Don't try this at home!'" to the photo. *Congratulations on such outstanding creativity, Tom!*

**MY MIND IS  
LIKE MY  
INTERNET BROWSER**  
19 TABS OPEN  
3 OF THEM ARE FROZEN &  
**I HAVE NO IDEA WHERE  
THE MUSIC IS COMING FROM**



## SLATE OF OFFICERS AND BOARD NOMINATED FOR 2021

(Highlighted names only to be voted upon at the annual Christmas Business Meeting.)

**President**  
**Vice President**  
**Secretary**  
**Treasurer/Membership**

**Gerald Roberts**  
**Tom Bryant**  
**Cecil Stokes**  
**Charlie Thomas**

Directors: ('21) John DeHaye  
 Patti Wilson

Directors: ('22) Bill Barnes  
 Jim Gasaway  
 Paul McFall

Directors ('23): **Ron Clements**  
**Glenn Webb**  
**Sam Zeman**

Ex Officio: (Vacant)/Historian  
 Cecil Stokes/WebMaster

*Retiring from Board: Harold Whitesides! All others agreed to serve again.  
 To Harold and all who agreed to serve again...again...and again...  
 THANKS for serving HDAA with your time and efforts!*

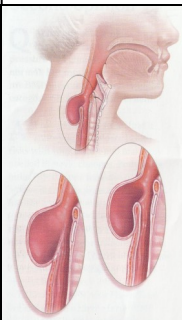
Thanks to the Nominating Committee for doing such a great job! It's difficult to recruit new Board members, since no one wants to commit at this point in our lives, and our group is getting smaller.

We can elect additional directors (board members) at the Virtual Christmas Gathering; and, anyone else willing to serve should let that be known prior to the 12/5 Virtual party. For those who might be interested in serving, Contact a Board Member. Surviving spouses of former HD employees are just as much members as their late spouses were (and, thus, can hold office). We all appreciate your willingness to serve.

Anyone interested/willing to serve as VP (future President), Secretary, or Treasurer should let a current Board Member know. The meetings are only four times a year at 2:30 p.m., and are seldom longer than one hour! Why not consider serving? Nothing feels better than serving others. Come join us! You just might be glad you did.

HDAA's Bylaws allow mail-in ballots): "Ballots may be included with invitations to the annual meeting and will be counted at the annual meeting." (snailmail: HDAA, P.O. Box 4185, Huntsville, AL 35815-4185; or email a board member so your vote may be tallied at the 12/5 Virtual meeting. And, since our group is so small, we don't imagine we'll have to have a recount! Don't believe that's Ever occurred. And, as you may recall, most of our voting is done with a verbal Aye or Nay.

*It's hoped you'll plan on joining us for this historic HDAA Virtual Christmas Party!*



### Zenker's Diverticulum

As we age, we often begin to notice changes in our bodies that may be affecting our every-day lives. Zenker's diverticulum (ZD) is a small pouch that can form at the back of your throat. It most frequently occurs in men over 70, but can happen to anyone.

ZD is thought to develop when the swallowing reflex becomes uncoordinated, usually due to thickening of certain throat muscles. Thickening

is part of various age-related changes. It increases pressure, potentially causing gradual ballooning of tissue at a weak point in the esophagus.

If you have intermittent difficulty with swallowing, coughing after swallowing, changes in your voice, tasting of foods/drinks hours after eating/drinking, throat irritation, or a gurgling noise in your throat, you might see your primary physician or ENT specialist to see if you might have ZD.

It can be remedied with one of two minimally invasive approaches: Rigid endoscope incision (general anesthesia) or flexible endoscope incision (often no general anesthesia). It may require a 1-2 day hospital stay. But, might be worth fixing the continual discomfort of trouble swallowing.

The above, left diagram shows the ZD pouch before surgery (right oval) and after surgery (left oval).

*(Excerpt from Mayo Clinic Health Letter, November 2020)*

### WHAT TO TELL MYSELF WHEN I'M FEELING DISCOURAGED

1. This is **tough**. But so am I.
2. I may not be able to control this situation. But I am **in charge** of how I respond.
3. I haven't figured this out...yet.
4. This challenge **is here to teach me** something.
5. All I need to do is take it **one step at a time**. **Breathe**. And do the next **right thing**.

*Thanks for submitting, Nancy Webb.  
 We ALL need encouragement as we face today's  
 challenging world! Good to know He is in control.*

When I was a boy of 14, my father was so ignorant I could hardly stand to be around him. But when I got to be 21, I was astonished at how much the old man had learned in seven years!

- Mark Twain

# The Next Stage

The Huntsville Division Alumni Association  
P.O. Box 4185  
Huntsville, AL 35815-4185

Place  
Stamp  
Here

REMINDER: \$12 DUES FOR 2020 WERE DUE 1/1/20.

*IF YOU HAVEN'T ALREADY SUBMITTED, PLEASE  
CONSIDER DOING SO SOON. THANKS!*



*Many blessings to  
you and yours  
throughout this  
holiday season.*

*Stay well, stay  
safe.*

*Do not be afraid,  
for you are never  
alone...He is  
always with you!  
Open your heart  
to Him.*

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NOVEMBER 19, 2020

The Next Stage is the quarterly newsletter publication of the Huntsville Division Alumni Association, Inc. Distribution: approximately 100. Editor: Patti Wilson. Its address is POB 4185; Huntsville, AL; 35815-4185.

The 2020 HDAA Board consists of : President/Tom Bryant, VP/Gerald Roberts, Secretary/Cecil Stokes, Treasurer/Membership/Charlie Thomas. Directors: (20) Ron Clements, (20) Glenn Webb, (20) Harold Whitesides, (20) Sam Zeman; (21) John DeHaye, (21) Patti Wilson; (22) Bill Barnes, (22) Jim Gasaway, (22) Paul McFall.

Ex-officio members of the Board are: Historian (position vacant), and Cecil Stokes/WebMaster.

Contact Cecil for details about the HDAA website/FaceBook Page and how to view more photos in color!

*Don't forget to tune  
in for our Virtual  
Christmas event 12/5,  
11 a.m.!*



## In Fond Memory...

We join the families in mourning the loss of family, friends and prior coworkers:  
**James "Ben" Davis, Jr.:** Worked on the Pilot Lines, then Control Lab 1958-early 1960s.

**Joe Reed Gatlin:** Worked in Shipping and Receiving from the mid-1950s until the late 1980s.

**Jeanne Hightower:** Wife of Jim, who was Section Chief of the Research Section, Research and Development.

**Edgar Donald Royston:** TC/HD's resident Statistician in R&D

**James "Jim" Tucker:** Worked in Shipping and Receiving mid-1950s until the doors of the TC/HD closed in 1996.

**Raymond C. Watson, Jr.:** Known by Many Thiokol employees, Ray was Director of Southeastern Institute of Technology, where many took graduate courses and some even taught at SIT.

*They will be sorely missed by us all, since they truly touched our lives.  
Reach out to our Thiokol family members who may be suffering some way.  
This has been a difficult year for all of us, especially those who've lost loved ones.  
Reach out and let someone dear to you know you're thinking of them.*

*Time is too slow for those who wait, too swift for those who fear, too long for  
those who grieve, too short for those who rejoice.*

*But, for those who love, time is eternity.*

**-Henry Van Dyke**

*As we express our gratitude, we must never forget that the highest  
appreciation is not to utter words, but to live by them.*

**-John Fitzgerald Kennedy**