

# The Next Stage

VOLUME 30, ISSUE 4

Newsletter of The Huntsville Division Alumni Association

NOVEMBER 17, 2025



## Next Board Mtg:

(2nd Thu each quarter)  
Jan 8, Apr 9, Jul 9,  
Oct 8, 2026.

## 2:00 pm (Note!)

Faith Presbyterian  
Church, SE corner of  
Whitesburg/Airport,  
5003 Whitesburg Dr.

## Dates to Remember:

### 2025

Sat. 12/6: Christmas  
Party...Mag Trace  
Magnolia Rm.  
Social Hr: 11 a.m.  
Lunch: ~12 p.m.  
Entertainment—  
Mackie Bethay,  
Pianist + Sing-  
Along! Join Us!

### 2026

Spring Breakfast: TBD  
Summer Picnic: TBD  
Fall Breakfast: TBD  
Christmas Party: TBD

Details provided  
closer to date of  
event!

Contact Jim Gasaway  
if interested in  
attending this event!

**3rd Wed: No  
regular lunch this  
month**, due to  
Engineering  
Luncheon on  
December 10. See  
you at the  
Engineering Lunch!

*Good food, Great  
folks!*

**NOT JUST FOR  
ENGINEERS....ALL  
WELCOME,  
LADIES, TOO!**

## *Christmas Is Coming To Magnolia Trace.....*



...and, we'd like to invite you to our annual, festive Christmas Party meeting to be held on Saturday, December 6, 2025, in the Act III Lounge, lower level of Magnolia Trace, 1 Clubhouse Avenue, Huntsville. Plan to arrive at ~11:00 a.m., with lunch being served ~12:00 Noon. The delicious plated meal (no buffet) will consist of: salad/dressing, chicken and assorted sides, a scrumptious chef-selected dessert, and selected beverages. (Precise details not available at press time. Am certain it will be another great meal by MT! They're always delicious...) 🍌

Your committee, Ron Clements/Jan Kranert have kept the cost to \$20 per person, thanks to Great negotiating skills. Thanks to you both for a job well done!

Paid reservations should be **Received** by Friday, 28 November so proper planning/preparation can be done. Mail checks to HDAA, P.O. Box 267; Trinity, AL; 35673-0003. Email Mark Locker at marklocker75@yahoo.com to confirm reservations for a more swift response for food prep. (We are not certain our short-staffed **USPS** can get the mail out as quickly as when they were fully staffed.)

Entertainment will be provided by Mackie Bethay, pianist, and a sing-along. Renowned for her talented performances!

## **ENGINEERING LUNCHEON!**

The engineering luncheon is Tentatively scheduled for Wednesday, December 10, 11:00 a.m. at Logan's on Balmoral Drive in Huntsville.

If you plan on coming, please RSVP to Jim Gasaway by Text/256-566-9522, or email to djgas@att.net by Friday, December 5 so Logan's has ample time to prepare for the luncheon.

*Hope we'll see you there!*

**Come early to get a  
seat by the cozy  
fireplace.**

**We hope to see you at  
all the festivities your  
Board members have  
been planning for you!**



## Home-Cooked Breakfast By The Thiokol Family Huge Success!

Unfortunately, everyone was having such a great time eating/visiting, there were no photos taken! Sorry for that, but attendees were as follows:

Tom & Carole Bryant, Mark & Rhonda Locker, Richard Morgan, Betty Willis & Billy Martin, Gerald Roberts, Cecil & Cathy Stokes, Glenn & Patty Webb, Ray & Lorra Zimmerman.

Mark indicated the camaraderie was great and there was plenty of delicious food for all.

We are having to find another location since Trinity UMC has reassigned another church group to the Mission Wing location. (New tentative location will be for lunch at Logan's on Balmoral Drive, Huntsville. Since they don't open until 11:00, it would be lunch, not breakfast. No confirmation on Logan's just yet.) If you can think of another, better option that might hold our normal-sized group, please don't hesitate to let a Board member know.

*We promise to take photos next time...honest!*

## A Few Alaska Photos...



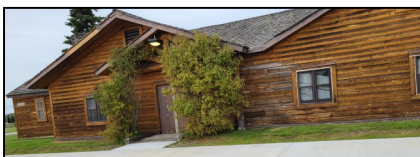
A wonderful excursion via bush-pilot to Taku Glacier and Lodge. Had fresh caught salmon (no black bear this trip), black baked beans, slaw, and the Best molasses cookies you've ever tasted. Highly recommend this excursion if you cruise to Alaska!

Alaska Headquarters Command, Dad's office, right.



L: Duplex where we lived!

R: Teen Club where I was secretary for 4 years....and, so it started, @ 13!



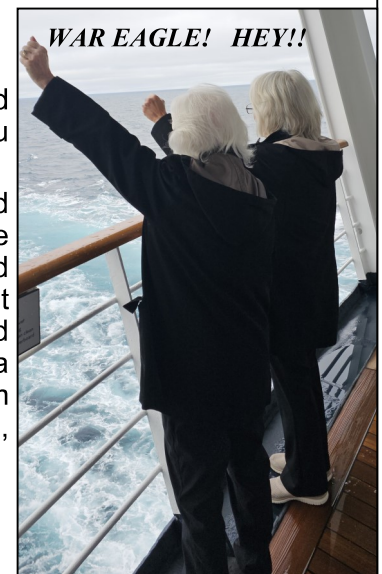
## Friends In The News....

*Pardon a brief story by Editor:* My sister and I recently took a cruise to Alaska, to fulfill a request in Don's notes to executor: a burial at sea of his ashes on a favorite cruise. Holland America was our cruise line of choice, by far, a cut above most others (from our humble perspective!), and it didn't fail us this time. My sister and I Always laugh a lot and have a great time whenever we're together, and this trip was no exception. Even though it was a comedy of errors from the very first segment on the airline, when our plane blew an engine compressor on take off! You may have seen it on the 48 evening news August 29, 2025. Definitely frightening, but no one was hurt. However, it messed up every flight thereafter. We did finally manage to get to AK and have a wonderful time exploring Elmendorf AFB, where we had lived 1959-63, when our dad was stationed there. Our home is STILL there, STILL being lived in, as well as the Teen Center that I enjoyed while living there — the humble beginning of a life-long secretarial career, beginning at 13! Have the mimeograph notes to prove it.... A long-time friend who goes to AK almost every summer to show his family how magnificent AK is was our personal tour guide. And, WOW! How Anchorage has changed and grown since '63! It's all still as magnificent as ever.

All of this to let you know that Holland America did an outstanding job with the burial at sea. I provided all of the biodegradable urn, etc. for Don's ashes. HAL supplied exceptional service in keeping the event private (no small feat!), personal, and providing a certificate at the end of the event, noting the specific longitude/latitude, body of water, time where Don was "thrown over-board" (no better way to say it!). Fresh-cut stems were provided to bounce atop the aft wake, so we could see where "Don" was. It was Right Up Don's alley as an engineer, and a very memorable service...and one I'd highly recommend if you are so inclined.

The HAL shipboard officers didn't quite understand why the Loud "WAR EAGLE! HEY!!" at the very end, so we had to explain. They got a kick out of it, as I'm certain Don would have, as well!

*Yep...my sister and I are two peas in a pod!*





## SLATE OF OFFICERS AND BOARD NOMINATED FOR 2026

(Highlighted names only to be voted upon at the annual Christmas Business Meeting; others are carry-overs.)

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

**Terry Dillard**  
**Dr. Jamie Neidert**  
**Cecil Stokes**  
**Mark Locker**

**Directors ('26):** **Paul Fisher**  
**Gerald Roberts**  
**Patti Wilson**  
**Ray Zimmerman**

**Directors (27):** **Gerald Roberts**  
**Patti Wilson**  
**Ray Zimmerman**

**Directors ('28):** **Gerald Roberts**  
**Patti Wilson**  
**Ray Zimmerman**

Ex Officio: Historian (effort of many!)  
 Cecil Stokes/WebMaster

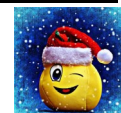
*Retiring from Board: Tom Bryant, Ron Clements, Jan Kranert, Herman Miskelly, Gerald Roberts. **Thanks for serving with the Board!***

*TBD Nominations may be accepted from the floor at the Christmas meeting.*

**A Special THANKS to all who volunteer to serve on the Board. And, to those who have served repeatedly....Bless Your Hearts. We appreciate you all!**

Thanks to the Nominating Committee (Terry Dillard, Chairperson) for doing such a great job! It's getting more and more difficult to recruit new members to the Board. We can elect additional directors (Board members) at the annual Christmas meeting; and, anyone else willing to serve should let that be known prior to the 12/6 party by contacting 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 would appreciate your willingness to serve. Besides, it's fun!

*It's hoped you'll join us for this festive, important Christmas Party!*



## Northrop Grumman Collaborates on AI-Designed Spacecraft Propulsion Element



*A new physics AI model, built by Northrop Grumman and Luminary Cloud with support from NVIDIA, could dramatically speed design of components and, one day, entire spacecraft. (Photo Credit: Northrop Grumman)*

"Physics AI is the next level of complexity in AI and Through the ground-breaking collaboration with Luminary Cloud, Northrop Grumman continues to leverage NVIDIA's expertise to accelerate development of AI in our advanced systems.

"It is something special to help Northrop Grumman supercharge innovation on complex spacecraft system design with NVIDIA technology," said Tim Costa, Director of Accelerated Computing at NVIDIA. "Northrop Grumman has demonstrated the power of NVIDIA's accelerated computing by using Luminary Cloud's Physics AI platform to build and deploy a model for rapid thruster nozzle design optimization. "Northrop Grumman is bringing this technology to

our design engineers to dramatically speed up hardware development," said Han Park, vice president, artificial intelligence integration, Northrop Grumman Space Systems. "Using AI to make something small, like a spacecraft thruster, puts us on a path to do much bigger things, like using AI to design larger components or even an entire spacecraft."

Using Luminary Cloud's Physics AI platform, with help from NVIDIA's Computer Aided Engineering product team, Northrop Grumman will leverage its decades of experience in propulsion physics to build an AI foundation model capable of designing a higher-performing spacecraft thruster nozzle.

Northrop Grumman, Luminary Cloud and NVIDIA continue to push the boundaries of innovation and lay the foundation for breakthroughs in space, from optimizing propulsion systems to developing next-generation spacecraft. By embracing AI-driven solutions, Northrop Grumman remains at the forefront of delivering transformative technologies for missions of tomorrow.

*(Excerpt: <https://www.northropgrumman.com/what-we-do/space>, dated October 10, 2025)*

***Somewhere, something incredible  
 Is waiting to be known.***

**-Carl Sagan**

# The Next Stage

The Huntsville Division Alumni Association  
P.O. Box 267; Trinity, AL; 35673-0003

Place  
Stamp  
Here

**REMINDER: \$12 DUES FOR 2025 WERE DUE 1/1/25.**

**IF YOU HAVEN'T ALREADY SUBMITTED, PLEASE CONSIDER  
DOING SO WITH YOUR CHRISTMAS PARTY RESERVATIONS.  
THANKS! DUES FOR 2026 DUE 1/1/26.**



*Thanksgiving—11/27  
Pearl Harbor Day—12/7  
Winter Begins 12/21  
Christmas—12/25  
Hanukkah begins @  
sundown—12/14*

*Every new day is a gift  
from God...be grateful!*

*Fill your season with His  
unending love.*

*ALL bow before Him.*



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NOVEMBER 17, 2025

The Next Stage is the quarterly newsletter publication of the Huntsville Division Alumni Association, Inc. Distribution: approximately 70. Began with ~350 30years ago. Editor: Patti Wilson. Its address is HDAA, POB 267; Trinity, AL 35673-0003.

**The 2025 HDAA Board consists of:**  
President/Wayne McCain, VP/Terry Dillard, Secretary/Cecil Stokes, Treasurer-Membership/Mark Locker. Directors: (25) Bill Barnes, Tom Bryant, Ron Clements, Jim Gasaway, Jan Kranert, Mark Locker, Hermann Miskelly, Gerald Roberts, Patti Wilson; (26) Bill Barnes, Tom Bryant, Ron Clements, Jim Gasaway, Jan Kranert, Hermann Miskelly, Ray Zimmerman, Mark Locker; (27) Bill Barnes, Ron Clements, Jim Gasaway, Mark Locker, Ray Zimmerman.

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

Contact Cecil for details about the HDAA FB page and other sites to view more photos in color!

**See you at Magnolia Trace 12/6/25, at 11 a.m., lunch at ~12 Noon! Entertainment by Mackie Bethay, pianist!**

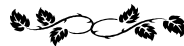
**Merry Christmas!!**

## In Fond Memory...

We join the families in mourning the loss of family, friends and prior coworkers:

**Herbert Morgan "Junior" Cothren:** Who worked in Propellant Mfg.

**John Edward Grider:** Who worked in the Project Office with Foots McCauley.



They will be sorely missed by us all, since they truly touched our lives.

If you know of others who should be remembered, please let us know.

Many folks may suffer challenges in some way during the holidays, so reach out to someone you think may be suffering, and let them know they are never alone.

Your contact may be Just the light that brightens their day this holiday season.

*It will brighten your day as well!*

*We don't know how strong we are until strong is the only choice.*

*Growth starts where comfort ends.*

*Embrace change. True success can be defined by your ability to adapt to changing circumstances.*

*You can't go back and change the beginning. But, you can start where you are and change the ending.*

-C. S. Lewis