



MONTEAGLE SUNDAY SCHOOL ASSEMBLY

• A CHAUTAUQUA EST. 1882 •

PO Box 307
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From the General Manager We are Richly Blessed

I saw a social media post about moving our clocks back on November 1. The author suggested another hour of 2020 was too much, perhaps moving our clocks ahead four months would put 2020 well behind us. While this is tempting and perhaps much needed, there are many things for which we can be thankful this year.

Our Health. While we have Assembly families who have contracted COVID-19, to the best of our knowledge, we have not lost anyone. We were able to come together for a much different season without an outbreak, even though surrounding counties were spiking in cases.

Our Family. The time we have been able to spend with our extended family has been precious; the time with our core family has been meaningful. In many ways, 2020 caused us to hit the pause button on the entire outside world and allowed us to focus on quality time with those closest to us.

Our Natural Environment. For those of us who have been able to spend extra time in Monteagle thanks to remote learning and remote work, we have been able to enjoy all the natural beauty of the

Assembly and our surrounding area on the plateau.

Our Faith. It seems like being told you cannot do something makes you want it more. This was evident last season by the clamor for church on the Mall. Beginning with our Fourth of July candlelight service through the last Sunday of the season, there was a sense that a modicum of normalcy had returned to our lives.

Our Assembly Family. This year, more than in the past, our Assembly family has leaned toward each other for support not confined by the perimeter fence or the eight-week season.

Our Resolve. All for which we give thanks, gives us the resolve to persevere through a tough year and plan for a 2021 summer that will contain all the elements of a normal MSSA season, delivered in a healthy and safe manner.

*In thanksgiving,
Scott Parrish*



IN THIS ISSUE

| | |
|--------------------------|---|
| From the General Manager | 1 |
| Does Alexa . . . ? | 2 |
| Quick Bites | 2 |
| MSSA Mission | 2 |
| New Member | 3 |
| Housing Questions | 4 |
| Don't Forget | 4 |
| Safety First | 4 |
| ARC Deadlines | 4 |

The Monteagle Sunday School

Assembly was organized by Charter issued by the State of Tennessee on October 4, 1882 for the purpose of: *"... the advancement of science, literary attainment, Sunday School interests, and the promotion of the broadest popular culture in the interest of Christianity without regard to sect or denomination."*

The Mission of the Monteagle Sunday School Assembly is to be a welcoming community of Christian faith where people gather to engage in spiritual growth and renewal, lifelong inquiry and learning, recreational and cultural enrichment, while being good stewards of our natural resources and our Assembly heritage.

Does Alexa Have All the Answers?

We received an Alexa last Christmas, and I imagined entering a new world where all I need to do is ask and wait to receive. If you have this or a similar device, you know there's a little more to it. There are smart light bulbs, smart speakers, and well, many things that are smarter than me if my ability to make them work is any measure of comparative intelligence. Alexa has replies for most any question you can ask, although there are articles about the questions you *should not* ask Alexa (calculating Pi and whether she works for the CIA, among others.)

But, in spite of all the questions that can be answered, she would make a dreadful presenter for a Chautauqua platform. She doesn't seem to love what she does; she doesn't have a burning desire to learn more; she doesn't hold up her end of a good conversation; and she has a poor sense of humor.

As preparations continue for the 2021 platform, I wish that Alexa could provide more definite answers about our future regarding COVID-19, or even if it will rain on the 4th of July. But this I know: there is a 139th platform that will be prepared and presented. The grounds will be ready, platform and



youth staff hired and trained, a 'hopeful' schedule and 'Plan B' are in progress. Nimble and flexible are the watch words.

The past two years as platform superintendent have led me to conclude that the platform is greater than the sum of its parts. Those who participate, listen, learn, play, and ponder are what breathe life into the schedule. An art workshop needs people wanting inspiration and to learn technique. Performers are energized by the response of the audience. A lecturer wants to share her/his field of expertise with thoughtful listeners. Youngsters arrive Monday and can't wait to make new friends for their week in this magical place. The participants are the magic; joy, inclusion, and contentment can't be scheduled, but they are always present, and next summer will be no different. It is why generations have returned and shared the Montegale Sunday School Assembly with others.

All good wishes for a delightful Thanksgiving -- whether you compare the cranberry sauce via Zoom or enjoy a second piece of pie with a few special people. If you need any recipes, just ask Alexa.

Ruth S. Cobb,
Platform Superintendent

QUICK BITES

NOW ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS FOR 2021 YOUTH STAFF

Apply Online Here or
[MSSA1882.org/Our Staff](https://MSSA1882.org/OurStaff)

Lawn trimmings are collected on Wednesdays.

The possession or use of alcohol or controlled substances on public grounds, in public places, or at public functions on the Assembly grounds is prohibited and subjects the offender to disciplinary action by the Board of Trustees.



By means of trees, wildlife could be conserved, pollution decreased and the beauty of our landscapes enhanced. This is the way, or at least one of the ways, to spiritual, moral, and cultural regeneration. -- E.F. Schumacher

Jennifer Mathews Smith
Chair, Reforestation Committee

New Member Spotlight:

Melinda Haines

As a fairly new cottage owner – and one who hasn't been on the mountain as much lately as she'd like – Melinda loved it when someone said to her recently, "I haven't seen you here in a while." That spoke volumes to her about the Assembly community and made her feel at home.

If you haven't met Melinda yet, you might be wondering which cottage is hers. Think of the dark green cottage, Blue Moon's Haven, owned by the Dixon family for 51 years. Melinda was thrilled to purchase Cottage 87 in 2018, and its name is now Shady Grove.

A self-proclaimed army brat, Melinda traveled all over the world with her family as her father was moved from place to place. She spent her freshman year in college at Longwood College in Farmville, Va., then the next two at a university in Bangkok, where her dad was stationed. Upon his retirement, Melinda ended up moving to Memphis, where she took classes at the Memphis Art Academy. She continued studying art at MTSU and still goes to art workshops.

Melinda and her late husband Hank often talked about buying a cottage in the Assembly. They were frequent renters, staying at Everbright for two weeks for many summers. They also stayed at the Edgeworth Inn upon occasion. At one point, they had a home in Clifftops, and Melinda still owns a house in Sewanee near Green's View. Hank was a writer; he had been the editor of a newspaper in Arkansas, and he enjoyed the Sewanee School of Letters, a summer master's program in fine arts at the University.

Hank passed away in 2016, and their daughter Jesse is now 40 years old, but Melinda still recalls a favorite Monteagle memory. When Jesse was in 7th grade,

she participated in a children's literature workshop that summer. The workshop was run by Crescent Dragonwagon, spouse of platform speaker Ned Shank, who was an architect specializing in Victorian architecture. Melinda remembers how much Jesse loved the class, writing stories and short essays. Jesse and her husband now live in Sewanee and have two children: Hank (almost 6) and new baby Ellie (7 months). Jesse is a grant writer for nonprofit organizations, and her husband is a pediatric nurse practitioner.

Melinda laughs about her eventual move to Murfreesboro, where she lives now. She and her family had moved there presumably to get away from a big city. Back then, Murfreesboro was only 35,000 people, but today there are over 100,000 (so much for the small town!). She is happy to have her Sewanee and Monteagle homes as an escape – although MSSA is mostly for the summer since it's not winterized.

When Melinda purchased her cottage, she knew very few people in the Assembly – the Roberts, the Van Zandts, and Cecil Coleman, who was a neighbor in Murfreesboro. But she quickly started meeting new people through painting classes, Sunday worship, and Mah Jongg Monday. Life circumstances have prevented her from being on the mountain as much as she would like, but she does come to Sewanee every Thursday night to help with remote learning on Fridays for little Hank, who is at Sewanee Elementary.

Melinda was somewhat of an entrepreneur: not only is she an artist – she loves to paint – but she also owned a business of renting vintage china for weddings and special events. (She has about 250 place settings if anyone is interested in buying a few!) At one point, she staged homes. She worked in corporate sales for The



Melinda Haines and Billy Robertson

Write Impression, a gift and stationery store in Murfreesboro. She has promised her family to not start another business, telling them to just slap her if she even suggests one!

Her partner, Billy Robertson, has been in on all the plans for the cottage from day one. He has wrapped, packed, carried, and moved furniture along with Melinda's collection of folk art. He's a good handyman too! When they can relax at the cottage, they love visiting with their neighbors and just sitting on the screened porch, reading and listening to little Hank playing in the cottage. His favorite part of the house is a little hideaway spot in the attic.

We concluded with a few quick questions:

Favorite flavor of ice cream? Rum Raisin

Pet Peeve? Gossip

Favorite place you've lived? Martin, TN, located in northwest Tennessee. She lived there from 4th to 8th grade. Her dad was in Vietnam at the time. Melinda loved life in the small town, where she was safe to explore and ride bikes with her friends wherever they wanted to go. Being in Monteagle reminds her of those days.

HOUSING QUESTIONS?

ASK RHONDA!

Should you have concerns that your cottage has not rented to your satisfaction during the season or off-season, contact the housing office to discuss your options. If you are willing to consider offering your cottage for 3-day rentals, negotiate or prorate rentals, or if you have questions about your rentals, call Rhonda.

The housing office can also help if you want to rent a golf cart during the season. The housing number is (931) 924-9000.

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*Don't
Forget!*

REMINDER

**Don't forget to turn in
the Membership
Update Form!**

**The form can be found on
the MSSA website at the
bottom of the page on the
Member Resource tab.**

ARC PROJECT SUBMISSION DEADLINES

Planning a renovation project? The Architectural Review Committee will accept projects for review and recommendation to the Board of Trust for approval four times per year. Questions about possible projects, the process, and necessary requirements should be referred to the General Manager. Projects submitted by the following dates will be reviewed and presented at the board meeting following the submission.

January 15 February 28

June 10 July 31 September 30

The ARC is available throughout the year to advise members on their project planning prior to submission of a request. Not sure if you need ARC approval? Check with the General Manager first.

SAFETY FIRST

The MSSA security team is at your service. If you have any emergency --medical or otherwise-- call 911, but our seasoned team is here to help for non-emergency situations. If you have a safety issue or see suspicious activity anywhere on the grounds or at the Point, don't hesitate to call (931) 607-8615 after 5 pm or call the office during business hours. There are no silly concerns--it's better to call and quell your fears than to let something go because you are afraid of a false alarm.

Consider putting the security number by your home phone and/or plugging it into your cell phones.

Kids got cell phones? Plug the security number in those too.

Together we'll keep MSSA the safe haven it is!