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# Hoover Historical Log

*The Official Newsletter of the Hoover Historical Society*



## Kelly Kazek

Just a Weird News Reporter, Reporting Weird News  
AUTHOR | SOUTHERN HUMORIST | LONG-SUFFERING WIFE OF BIGFOOT ENTHUSIAST



*Just a weird news reporter reporting  
weird news...*

If you like Southern humor and Alabama oddities, you're in for a treat with the next guest at our March 17<sup>th</sup> General Meeting!

Kelly Kazek is the unofficial Weird News Reporter of Alabama. She writes humor columns and stories about odd roadside attractions and quirky history for *AL.com*, Alabama's largest media presence. She also writes about the south for *It's a Southern Thing* and her blog, *KellyKazek.com*. Her latest book is a collection of humorous essays called *Not Quite Right: Mostly True Tales of a Weird News Reporter*.  
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### Save the Date!

#### Meetings

**March 17, 2020**

General Meeting  
featuring Kelly  
Kazek (shown  
above) 1:30 PM HPL

#### Spring Tea

**April 19, 2020**

Open House at the  
Hoover-Randle  
Home on Tyler  
Road, 2-4 PM

#### Spring Trip

**May 14, 2020**

The Legacy  
Museum in  
Montgomery; see  
Page 4 for details

## Spring Tea!

The Hoover Historical Society  
invites you to our  
Spring Membership Tea

Sunday April 19<sup>th</sup>,  
2020

2 to 4 PM  
Hoover-Randle House  
2255 Tyler Road  
Hoover, Alabama  
35226

(no charge for Tea or parking!)





Piknmera, Spanish Fort, 16' long dental tools (pic & mirror) near the practice of dentist Barry Booth; Bamahenge, foam replica made by artist Mark Cline in Elberta



## An excerpt from Kelly Kayzek...

### Continued from Page 1

She lives in Huntsville, Alabama, with her husband, known to readers as 'Sweetums.' They travel Alabama's back roads together, seeking out quirky history for her blog at KellyKazek.com. Kelly writes:

"In my job, I wander around the south writing about any weirdness I might stumble across along the roadside. As you can imagine, the south is the gift that keeps on giving—in a good way!

We southerners hate hiding our otherness. We like to put it right out on the front porch where anyone can enjoy it, even if it's an old toilet with petunias planted in it.

So I wrote a book about how I parlayed my penchant for turning down dirt roads in search of World's Largest Things and Stonehenge replicas into a job as a Weird News Reporter. *Not Quite Right: Most True Tales of a Weird News Reporter* (Solomon & George Publishers, \$15) that includes talks about growing up in the south and my life as a menopausal newlywed, interspersed with stories of some of the oddities I've come across in my job." Kelly will speak to us on March 17<sup>th</sup> at the Hoover Public Library in the Shakespeare-Fitzgerald Room at 1:30 PM.

## National Defense Education Act - 1958 Part 4

U.S. Representative from Alabama Carl Elliott's greatest achievement was co-authoring with Sen. Lister Hill, the National Defense Education Act, signed into law September 2, 1958 by President Dwight D. Eisenhower. 2018 marked the 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of its passage.

While still in college, Carl Elliott met with President Franklin Roosevelt to discuss the prospects of federal funding for education. After 10 years of attempting to bring his legislation to the floor, the Soviet Union's launching of Sputnik October 4, 1957 sparked the attention of Congress, and the law was passed. This landmark legislation provided low-interest loans for college and graduate school for low-income students, without restrictions of gender, race or nationality. There was a strong emphasis on Math, Science and Foreign Languages.

More than 30 million students nationwide have obtained loans under NDEA legislation.

*Congressman Carl A. Elliott served from Jan. 1949 to Jan. 1965*



*"I dedicated my public life to insuring that the sons and daughters of the working men and women of this nation would have the opportunity to achieve the highest level of education commensurate with their ability, unfettered by economic, racial or other artificial barriers."*

## *Who we are and what we do—from our president...*

The Hoover Historical Society celebrated its 30-year history just last year. I thought it would be a good time to talk about who we are and what we do. The society was started by Vadie Honea with a group of dedicated volunteers back in 1989. History is important because it reminds us of mistakes we made, and it recognizes all the good things that happened.

A major purpose for founding the organization was to preserve and protect Hoover's historical documents and artifacts. We have an archive at the Hoover Public Safety Center on Valleydale Road. Here we have documents, maps, artifacts, newspapers, periodicals, yearbooks, and genealogical records of Hoover families. This archive is open to the public. Carolyn Kolar is our archivist who can assist in arranging your visit. The e-mail address is [info@hooverhistoricalsociety.org](mailto:info@hooverhistoricalsociety.org).

The second major purpose for the society is to educate and spread the knowledge of Hoover's history. We do that in many ways. We arrange historical tours of Hoover for seniors, church groups, and anyone else interested in the city's history. In addition to the tours, we offer a presentation on the history of Hoover to any organization or group in Hoover. We also sponsor day trips to other historic locations

locally and throughout Alabama. On May 14, we are scheduled to go on our Spring Trip to the Legacy Museum and Memorial in Montgomery, which is open to the public. Your group can arrange a trip or presentation by contacting Jim Langley at [jl091649@yahoo.com](mailto:jl091649@yahoo.com). We also have a hardbound book on the history of Hoover, which can be purchased for \$10. The society also places historical markers at important historical areas of Hoover.

At our general meeting every other month, we present a program of historical interest, open to the public. We have had a variety of interesting presentations ranging from the Goat Man to the Ross Bridge culvert, Birmingham's Train Terminal, Aldridge Gardens, and a WWI nurse. These meetings, and other information, are featured in our newsletters, on our Facebook page, and Website. Contact Debbie Burtnett at our e-mail address to find out about the newsletter.

We support the Hoover community. We provide three scholarships to Hoover senior high students. One academic scholarship, donated by Carlo and Dianne Joseph, goes to a Hoover High School student. Another academic scholarship goes to a student at Spain Park High School.

***Continued on Page 4***

*Left to right: At the Stinson Ole Place, a docent teaches about pioneer life; a historical marker for the Shades Crest district; and patron Carlo Joseph with one of our scholarship winners.*







*A memorial to lynching victims*

*Read the book, see the movie,  
& join us on our Spring Trip!*

There is a connection between the recently released movie, *Just Mercy*, and Montgomery's Legacy Museum. That connection is Bryan Stevenson, an attorney and founder of the Equal Justice Initiative (EJI), "a legal practice dedicated to defending the poor, wrongly condemned and those trapped in the furthest reaches of our criminal justice system." Stevenson began defending death-row inmates in Alabama 30+ years ago and one of his first cases was that of Walter McMillian, a man sentenced to die for a crime he didn't commit in Monroeville, AL. Pete Earley, an investigative journalist, told that story first in his 1995 book *Circumstantial Evidence: Death, Life, and Justice in a Southern Town*, and again in 2014 with Stevenson's book, *Just Mercy*. It's impossible to read either book without thinking of Harper Lee's theme in *To Kill A Mockingbird*. Like Stevenson's practice of law, the museum relies on "both emotion and a precise accumulation of evidence" to tell the story of lynching in America.

Our Society will visit The Legacy Museum in Montgomery on May 14<sup>th</sup>. The museum opened in April of 2018 and traces the history of African-Americans' enslavement, lynching, segregation, and racial bias.

We regret the passing of  
our friend and member,  
Nina Cranor in February.



*Who we are and what we do...from Page 3*

This scholarship and a Skilled Trades Scholarship for a student attending a trade school are sponsored by Signature Homes.

As a member of our Society, you can participate in many community events like Moss Rock Festival, Hoover Day, decorate a holiday tree at the Hoover Randle house, help Santa at the log cabin, have a workday at a historical area like Lovers Leap, help with the Spring Tea at a historical home or be part of a Speakers Bureau, giving presentations.

In 1997, an 1840s-era log cabin was moved from Shelby County, log by log, by the society and the city of Hoover. It was reassembled on a lot behind Bluff Park Elementary School. This cabin, known as the Stinson Ole Place, became the Folklore Center. For the past 20+ years, elementary school students from the Hoover area have come to the Folklore Center to learn how people lived in the area in the mid-1800s. They learn from knowledgeable docents and craft persons how everyday life was in the cabin, how pioneers crafted quilts, how they tended beehives, played games and about toys, made clay pots, about dulcimers, and how to wash clothes outside by hand. We would like to expand this program to seniors and church groups. Let us know if you're interested.

We are also advocating for preserving important historical sites. These include saving the old part of the 1923 Bluff Park Elementary School, saving the old Bluff Park Mineral Springs, saving buildings like the first city hall and Hoover's Employer's Life Insurance building, the Hoover-Randle house, and making repairs, and improvements to historic Ross Bridge culvert, Lovers Leap, and Brock's Gap. In the years ahead, we expect great things to happen in Hoover. We can envision our new archives in a historic old house, Stinson's Ole Place as the centerpiece to a Hoover Information Center, the Folklore Center being by church groups, artists and others for their programs, helping people find their genealogical roots, and programs for newcomers to acquaint them with Hoover's history. All of these may not happen, but you first must visualize it before it comes a reality!

*Jim Langley*

## How you can honor a veteran

How can you honor a veteran? A VA website offers 45 ways to honor a veteran including attending Veterans' events, interviewing a vet about his/her service and really listen, display a flag at your home, ask a vet what song takes him back to his time in the military, visit the grave of a veteran, and so on. Here in Hoover, AL, we have a unique way to honor veterans.

Mark Davis, (US Navy, Vietnam Era Veteran and Hoover Veterans Committee), had been thinking that he "needed to do something" for veterans. He developed the idea for *Vettes4Vets* in 2008 to use Corvettes to raise money for Veterans.

His first fundraiser was a car show at Veterans Park in 2008, raising \$2,300. Later that year, through a Corvette club, Mark was able to drive his 1988 Corvette at Talladega. He had such a blast, he thought, "Maybe I can rent the track to raise money for Veterans." This activity evolved into using Talladega's racetrack as a place to safely experience racing for a fee in your own car—and the *Vettes4Vets* was founded. After 12 years, this non-profit has raised \$450,000, all of which goes to veterans' groups. In 2014, the idea for an arbor honoring veterans at Aldridge Gardens was conceived. Working with former Mayor Gary Ivey and Allen Pate, along with the City Council's monetary support, the arbor was built and dedicated in 2016.

Now, the *Vettes4Vets* have another way to honor veterans who have been killed in action or died while serving in the War on Terror following 9/11—the Alabama Fallen Warriors Project at Veterans Park.

As part of the project, the City has approved enlarging the Veterans Park memorial to include columns on which the names of the fallen in the War on Terror will be engraved on a large dog tag for those KIA. Deaths by non-hostile events will be honored on a separate column. Each cylindrical column will stand 10' of which 3' will be underground. The columns will stand in soldier-like formation. A flag centered in the memorial will cast a shadow on each column as the sun moves throughout the day.

Currently, there are 224 soldiers to honor. Davis is working with the mayor, city council, and engineering department and speaking to civic organizations to raise funds for the project. Parents of the soldier decide whether the bust will be placed in their community or at the Veterans Park Memorial. Certainly individuals may contribute to the fund. Plans are to dedicate the memorial on the 20th anniversary of 9-11 in 2021 or on *Celebrate!* Hoover Day in 2022. More information is available at

**Alabama Fallen Warriors Project**



*Pam Thompson and Mark Davis with photo of Ryan Winslow*



*Bust of J. T. Simms Jr. was recently completed*



## HOOVER HISTORICAL SOCIETY Membership Form

Make checks payable to Hoover Historical Society  
P.O. Box 360233 Hoover, AL 35236-0233  
Archive/Office 205-739-7316

### Types of Memberships

Individual	\$10
Couple	\$20
Sustaining	\$50
Patron	\$100
Corporate	\$150

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

BUSINESS: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

CITY: \_\_\_\_\_ STATE: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

E-MAIL: \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE: (Home) \_\_\_\_\_ (Cell): \_\_\_\_\_

Interests:    Publicity \_\_\_\_\_ Archives \_\_\_\_\_ Speakers' Bureau \_\_\_\_\_ Research \_\_\_\_\_ Newsletter \_\_\_\_\_

Other Interests & Skills: \_\_\_\_\_

*The Hoover Historical Society*

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[Recipient]



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