

Board to set 2006 Reunion dates



BUGLE QUARTERLY

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Bicycling Across Georgia, a "400 Mile Rolling Party"

by **Winston Elston,**
Class of 74

As most of you know, the Bicycle Ride Across Georgia (BRAG) has become an essential part of my summers since I first participated in 1985.

It is an opportunity to get away from many of life's aggravations and to exchange them for a more enjoyable set of aggravations. Those of you who recall the live coverage of the O.J. Simpson low-speed chase ten years ago may envy those of us who knew nothing of the related events for several days afterward.

BRAG is a four-hundred mile rolling party: a time to see old friends, to meet new friends, and to remember fondly those whom we will not see again in this mortal orb.

Last year's event took the riders from Toccoa to Tybee Island, from the Blue Ridge Escarpment to the Atlantic Ocean.

Along the way we saw farms and fallow fields, towns and pretty little villages with white clapboard churches (most of our rest stops), livestock of almost every type (nuts! no reindeer!), swamps, prairies, marshes, and Ty Cobb's final resting place.

There were amazingly few mishaps this year (the saddest I saw was a young lady who took a spill less than twelve miles from the finish, tripped by the second set of spur railroad tracks in less than thirty yards. I am very cautious around

spur tracks, for reasons known to most of you).

The BRAG security detail commented that this was the safest BRAG they could remember, and the quietest. Well, we'll have to take care of that last detail this year.

In years past, we've included events such as a Guinness Record attempt for the world's biggest kazoo



WINSTON ELSTON (Class of '74)...is pictured aboard his Rans Tailwind recumbent, a bike he can pedal great distances without his feet or rear going to sleep.

band (I'm not making this up, you know!), a panoramic photo shoot, and other such tomfoolery. Regular features include a talent show, a sock hop, street dances, and the like.

My start on this traveling night shelter was the bus ride from Tybee

to Toccoa (parked my vehicle in Tybee for flexibility on my trip home). It was surprisingly long (nearly 7:00 PM arriving at the Bible College where the ride began).

On-campus supper was altogether forgettable, and I managed to find a stretch of air-conditioned corridor space ("gym-camping") for my sleeping arrangements (every night that week, and I didn't even have to wrestle for an outlet for the CPAP). All of our campsites were at high school campuses last year, except for the night in Toccoa.

The disadvantage to the gym-floor option is that one is at the mercy of the early-risers and those who have untreated sleep apnea; on the other hand, I've heard some logs sawn in tents, too, and one morning on the BRAG many years ago when we stayed the night at Calloway Gardens, some guy in the next tent started wailing on a harmonica at 0200 hours.

Weather this year was as nice as I remember it ever being, though I tried each day to beat the worst of the afternoon heat, more successfully some days than others. The first two

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50th Year Reunion Contacts

1956

Tom Hayward
proaudiog@aol.com
714 Omaha Drive
Norcross, GA 30093
770-923-1127

1957

Tom Faires
Tomfares@aol.com
287 Serene Hls.
Hattiesburg, MS 39402
601-288-7844

mornings were overcast and drizzly, perfect for long-distance endurance events. It rained most evenings, sometimes heavily, but never on me while I was riding.

We had rest stops set up generally every ten to twelve miles with water and sports drinks, cookies and fruit. Although a breakfast was available (for a fee) at camp each morning, I opted for the pancake breakfast at each day's first rest stop, and had the "Veggie Lady" lunch (again, for a fee, usually at the third or fourth stop).

One fellow had a rather raucous sound system on his bike (honest! a small car-type battery, an inverter, an eighty-watt amp and speakers, and if that wasn't enough, he had an electronic keyboard rigged across his handlebars!)

For suppers I generally went into town and patronized the local eateries, or grazed on the wares of the school fund-raisers.

As always, luggage and gear was transported on tractor-trailers from one overnight site to the next, and BRAG people were very cooperative in transporting my relatively delicate CPAP machine (good friends from my first BRAG, the Lardins, took it one day).

The route was well-marked (even the day that Winter Construction paved over the route markings: wow! hundred degree heat and three-hundred degree asphalt! it doesn't get better than that, or actually, it does). Overnight stops were in Elberton, Thomson, Waynesboro (two nights), Metter, and South Effingham County High School.

How Many Bicycled?

Over 1,800 participated last year. Just about every type of person you can imagine from young families with kids in bike trailers (in 2000, a lady carried her pet goat!) to out-of-shape middle aged folks to "hammer-heads" to senior citizens and every gradation in between.

I especially admire the "Dream Team," a group of disadvantaged inner-city kids who are teamed with adult mentors for the week, plus several training rides leading up to the event. They are provided a better-than-decent bike, a helmet, and all fees are covered, including incidental transportation and meals. If I understand the concept, they get to keep the bikes if they finish the entire distance of the ride. These are great kids, highly motivated and they

usually become very skillful riders.

Bikes ranged from the venerable classic Raleighs and Peugeot and Schwinn to the latest titanium-and carbon-fiber fantasies. I saw several Bachtettas, a radical recumbent design with 650c (don't worry about that; it means approximately 26-inch) wheels front and rear, and several 'bents of the big-rear-wheel small-front-wheel configuration in an astounding array of wheelbases and steering arrangements. Mine was the only Rans Tailwind recumbent I saw.

BRAG is an event where you can get away from the routine and into a more comfortable mode of life.

It's an event where you may not remember everybody's name, but they always remember yours.

It's an event where you can regain perspective.

It's an event where you can pick up the newspaper and not feel that you have to read the distressing parts (I'm down to the comics, the crossword puzzle, and the bridge column).

Not everybody who rides BRAG becomes a BRAG rider in the sense that it is part of their identity (I was heart-broken when an injury kept me out of the 2001 ride!).

I encourage all of you who are able to look into BRAG, or your home-state's family-oriented cross-state bike ride. It is a great way to spend a week's vacation.

The BRAG Spring tune-up is scheduled for the weekend of April 15-17 in Madison, GA.

This will be followed by the main event, BRAG 2005, June 11-18. We'll be biking from Columbus, GA to Jekyll Island.

The final Fall event is slated for October 7 through 9.

I hope to see some or all of you in the near future and wish you the best.

Winston Elston, Class of '74

"Whhhhaazzuupppp Dudes"

Odds and Ends from Here and There

Marshall Cranford, '54, reports that his wife Frances has been diagnosed with Lou Gehrig Disease. Frances and Marshall are both resolute supporters of CMAAA and our prayers are needed for her recovery.

Winston Elston, Class of '74, got his Mom home from the rehab center in March, and she seems to be on the way to a complete recovery from her recent fall.

SILVER TAPS

Gayle Preston Geron Sr., Class of '39

Gayle Preston Geron Sr. died on July 7, 2004, at Summerford Nursing Home in Falkville, AL just South of Decatur. He was born on Dec. 6, 1920, in Huntsville to Gayle Figures Geron and Mary Murray Geron. He attended Huntsville High School before graduating from CMA where he was on the tennis team. He attended Vanderbilt University in Nashville, where he was a member of Beta Theta Pi Fraternity and played on the tennis team.

During World War II he served in the navy as a pilot and flight instructor. After the war, he returned to Vanderbilt where he met and married Sarah Marilyn Morrison, to whom he was happily married for nearly 57 years.

For 35 years he was a sales representative for Roberts, Johnson and Rand branch of International Shoe Company. During this time, he lived first in Huntsville, then Birmingham, and finally Decatur. In addition to calling on stores in north Alabama, northwest Georgia and southeast Tennessee, he was a partner in Gay-Mar Shoe Store in Decatur and Family Footwear and The Shoe Peddler in Huntsville.

In Huntsville, he was a member of First Methodist Church where he was a charter member and first president of the "Need-Us" Sunday school class which still meets, and served as counselor for the Junior High Methodist Youth Fellowship. He was also a member of the Acme Club, a civic club for young men, and played on the "Hog Meadow" tennis team. In Birmingham, he was a member of Canterbury Methodist Church and the John Williamson (later John Wesley) Sunday school class.

In Decatur he served on the official board of Central United Methodist Church, belonged to the Lovett Sunday school class and taught the seventh grade Sunday school class. He was a longtime member of Gideons International and Decatur East Camp, until ill health necessitated his retirement.

For 20 years he was a member of NORALA Holiday Rambler RV Club and enjoyed traveling across the lower USA, Canada and Alaska in a camper. He was active for 40 years in the Alabama Camp Farthest Out and served a three year term as president. In 1976, he joined Trinity Chapel (now New Song Family). There he was a deacon and later an elder. He was sponsor and coach of the Junior Bible Quiz team, and with his wife taught the Young Married Couples class.

Mr. Geron was an avid gardener and enjoyed woodworking, especially making

SILVER TAPS

furniture in a home workshop. He was a devoted husband, father and grandfather.

He is survived by his wife, Marilyn M. Geron; two daughters, Celeste Geron Shibata of Cowan, Tenn. and son-in-law John Shibata, and Mary Elaine Geron Norman of Alpharetta, Ga.; one son, Gayle Preston Geron Jr. of Decatur; four grandchildren, Sarah Elizabeth Askew, David Benjamin Askew, Ashley Elaine Norman and Meredith Grace Norman; a sister, Cora Geron Sibley of Sheffield; and 11 nieces and nephews.

Eldon Bracton Thoma II, Class of '41

"Jack" Thoma, age 82, of Tullahoma, TN, died August 30, 2004 in Tullahoma. He was the son of Eldon Bracton Thoma and Lily Gibbs Thoma.

He attended the Georgia Institute of Technology and joined the Army in WWII. He was in the infantry and fought in the Vosges Mountains in France. He also served as Major General of Brussels, Belgium.



Jack Thoma

After the war, Jack founded the 30th Quartermaster Company in Tullahoma and served in the United States Reserves as a Lieutenant Colonel. He remained active in the military for more than 30 years.

In 1946, he began working in the family insurance agency as a partner with his father. He was recognized in his profession as Insuror of the year in 1987 and was a past president of the Insurors.

He was active in both the community and his church. Jack served as chairman, president or director of various organizations including the Tullahoma School Board, The Tullahoma Educational Foundation for Excellence, The Tullahoma Industrial Board, The Tullahoma Rotary Club, The Tullahoma Chapter of the Red Cross, the Middle Tennessee Council of the Girl Scouts of America, the Tullahoma Chapter of the American Red Cross, the Tullahoma Chamber of Commerce, John Holland Scholarship Foundation, the Board of Directors of Arnold's Furniture and the Board of Directors of First National Bank of Tullahoma. Jack was a member of Trinity Lutheran Church where he served on the Church Council and the

Board of Trustees for the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America Foundation.

He is survived by his wife of fifty-six years, Margaret Busch Hinkle and his four children and their wives: Eldon Bractor Thoma, IV and Kim; Margaret Florence Thoma Blackwood and Lanny; Sarah Elizabeth Thoma; James Carson Thoma; Emily Anne Thoma; Busch Hinkle Thoma, II; and Jack Emerson Thoma. He leaves two step-grandchildren; Jathew and Andrea Perry and godson Richard Crouch.

Robroy Doak Fisher, Class of '42

Robroy D. Fisher died Dec. 23 at St. Dominic Memorial Hospital, Jackson, MS.

Burial was in Greenville Cemetery, Greenville, MS. He was 79 years old.

After graduating CMA and Mississippi State University where he was a member of Sigma Alpha Epsilon fraternity, he served in the U.S. Navy during WWII in the Pacific. He returned to farm in Jonestown with his father and brother Pete and later owned and operated Marathon Plantation on Lake Washington near Glen Allan.

Mr. Fisher served and was honored in a number of civic and community roles, including appointment by Gov. Ronnie Musgrove to chair the state Water Resources Committee, serving as president of Delta Council, the Association of Mississippi Agricultural Organization and the Mississippi Association of Conservation Districts.

He was named State Conservationist of the Year by the Mississippi Wildlife Federation and received a Lifetime Conservation Achievement Award from the Nature Conservancy in Mississippi.

He was a member of St. James Episcopal Church where he served on the Vestry as junior and senior warden.

Survivors include his wife, Georgie Younger Fisher of Greenville; daughter,

CMAAA Treasurer's Report

As of March 15, 2005

US BANK Balances

Certificate of Deposit: \$32,236.30

Checking Account: \$15,453.74

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Becky Moon, CMAAA Treasurer

Robbie Fisher of Jackson, MS; son and daughter-in-law, George and Beth Fisher of Columbia, SC; sister, Pauline F. Handrahan of Birmingham, AL; two grandchildren, Doak and Hadley Fisher of Columbia, S.C.; sisters-in-law, Jewell Graeber of Marks, MS and Lucy Fisher of Indianola; five nieces; four nephews; and numerous great-nieces, great nephews and other relatives.

Marion P. Tinsley Jr., Class of '45

Marion Perry Tinsley Jr., age 76, died Sept. 25, 2004 at his residence in Russellville, AL.

According to his brother, Ellis Tinsley, Class of '52, he attended his last CMA Reunion in 2002.

Marion was a Buick and GMC dealer from 1949 to 1991 in Russellville.

He is survived by his wife of 50 years, Mary Jane Highsmith Tinsley, of Russellville; daughters, Laura Tinsley Scott of Bentonville, AR, Faith Tinsley Deaton and husband Rex, of Southaven, MS, Marian Tinsley Colmer and husband Jonathan, of Brandon, MS, Perri Tinsley Bowman and husband Tom of Columbia, TN; brother, Dr. Ellis Allen Tinsley Sr. and wife, Betty of Wrightsville Beach, NC; sister, Harriett Tinsley Sauls and husband, Dr. Larry J. Sauls of Pensacola, FL; two grandsons and three grand-daughters; plus several nieces and nephews.

continued on next page

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Columbia, TN 38401-3156

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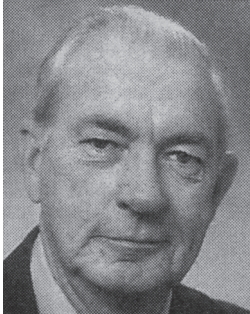
J. Sheffield Clarke III, Class of '48

J. Sheffield Clarke III, died February 12, 2005.

He was a true gentleman and a true American hero with a most gracious and charming personality.

He entered CMA 1945 and was drum major for the band. He

dropped out of Vanderbilt because he did not want to show his father his grades, and joined the Army. His unit was among the first U.S. troops



J. Sheffield Clark

committed to battle in Korea, July 5, 1950.

Sheff's outfit, the 63rd Field Artillery, went into combat the next day, and for 9 days of heavy fighting delayed the North Korean advance. His unit was overrun by infiltrators coming in from the rear. He was one of only 12 survivors in his battery.

The following is Sheff's remembrance of his Korean ordeal in delaying the North Korean advance.

"It was the frantic hit-and-run tactics and the running war south. We were short on ammo and supplies. Tiger tanks (Russian T-34s) were our nightmare and we had no ammo for our rocket launchers (anti-tank weapons). At one time, our field artillery unit was 2,000 yards ahead of the 3rd Infantry we were supposed to be supporting. Infiltrators were picking us off dressed up like old Korean women with pistols held on real old Korean women to get past our outposts. They posed as

refugees moving south away from the fighting. Our position was overrun by these infiltrators. The attack was so swift that our machine gunners were killed and our own machine guns turned against us. They captured our 105s, then captured a trainload of ammo for them. There were only twelve of us left out of my battery by the time we got back to Taejon."

After serving four years in the Army, he joined Sheffield Clark & Company, which his grandfather established in 1897, continuing to work there to the end.

His professionalism, energetic, creative and innovative attitude earned him the titles of "best salesman" and the "knife man of the South".

He served as president of The Old Guard, an honorary organization of the Southern Wholesale Hardware Association in 1989.

He conceived the idea of the Old Ironside 5-gallon galvanized gasoline can.

Sheff was a member of the Kerbela Shriners and a former Lt. Commander of the Shrine Legion of Honor in Knoxville and a member of Hiram Lodge #7 F.&A.M.

He was a member of the First Presbyterian Church of Franklin, first Families of TN, Sons of Confederate Veterans, Sons of the American Revolution and Sons of the Revolution.

Survivors include his wife, Faye Martin Clark; daughters, Julie Clark and Melissa "Dee" Gay; step children Damon "Lisa" Cook and Danette "Billy" Godwin; sisters, Anna Lou "Jeffrey" Platt and Jane Mills; and four grandchildren.

Sheffield was buried at Mt. Olivet Cemetery in Nashville, off Lebanon Pike.

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