Bits and Pieces When you don’t have earth shattering news for the front page, you just go with the flow and add bits and pieces.

I would like to open 2019 with a hearty (as in: warm, affectionate, genuine, sincere, wholehearted) THANK YOU to our group of reporters who make the News ‘N’ views happen each quarter. Without you, we would not have a newsletter. Some of our reporters are “career” reporters like Jacque Stricker who has been with the News for 16 years, while others are “newbies” like Bobbie Clarke who just started reporting in 2018. We are always sad when we say farewell – and this year is no exception. We are saying good bye (adieu, adiós, arrivederci) to reporters Judd Mowery and Robert Gardner. Thank you for your contribution and best of luck on your adventures.

The goal of the News ‘N’ Views is to keep our retirees’ in touch with each other. Our reporters try to contact each retiree once a year. We encourage each of you to share your news as it happens. You can submit news directly to the editor using the address on the back page – and don’t forget to send pictures!

Several of you have noticed that this edition of the News is 2 weeks late being published. Thank you for the flexibility. I have been spending lots of time in Louisville, KY at the bedside of a dear friend and needed the extra time.

Are you looking for a part-time job – one with an unlimited expense account and lots of travel? Well, this probably is not the job for you! But if you enjoy calling and talking to a few retirees each quarter, please give me a call (731-431-0165)

As we begin 2019 let us lift up in prayer our church – our local congregations, our pastors and leaders, and especially our General Conference as it convenes latter this month.
From the Mail bag

Mary Douglas (Brentwood, TN) has moved to the Heritage at Brentwood, a senior living community. She is enjoying the activities they offer and getting to know the residents.

Nathaniel & Shirley Williams (Bethel Springs, TN) write: We are all doing well. Shirley keeps busy as the pastor of New Bethel U.M.C. in McNairy Co. I assist her with the very busy food pantry that our church sponsors. Last fall, Shirley, our youth choir, and the congregation were invited to the Gallatin First UMC to hold a one night revival. Our daughter, Sheila Williams, serves as the associate Pastor there. We had a wonderful worship experience, and a large crowd welcomed us warmly. We are looking forward to doing some traveling if we ever decide to truly retire. So many ideas – so little time! My mother, Callie "TC" Williams, passed away this spring. She was 98 years old. She was a well-known layperson in the Memphis Conference having served on many boards and committees. We miss her so much.

Bill & Barbara Harris (Bartlett, TN): We have been busy with all the things of the ‘class of retirees.’ I have been privileged to serve the Hampton Memorial U.M.C. since my formal retirement. Barbara and I are in our 11th year at Hampton and enjoy staying active in ministry. Some may know from my last report that Barbara was stricken with Transverse Myelitis in 2013. This illness paralyzed her left side from her waist to her foot. She has received extensive physical therapy including hydro-therapy.
Having a care giver four days each week gives me time to serve the church, but often times she accompanies me. She has a scooter, power chair and walker to assist her getting around. Although she is limited in some things, she stays active with the ladies at church, Garden Club and other activities. In fact, she is looking to help people in assisted living facilities [in Memphis] that use walkers, to decorate the walkers with ribbon, bows, and floral picks that represent each season of the year. Instead of being handicapped and staying home, she is out daily for some activity, even if only for a meal. She is a blessing to so many and I’m so blessed to be her husband. Well, I think by now you know what I’m doing. The same as all ministers serving the Lord and His people as best I can. My health is good and I am blest to be able to serve the Lord, His church and my beautiful wife. We are not able to travel, due to Barbara’s health. However, our plans are to make a quick trial run to Jackson to see three of our children and families soon. For Thanksgiving Barbara and I celebrated at the Millington Navy Base and enjoy lunch with 28 members of our family. They served a great meal with turkey, ham, roast beef and all the trimmings at a very reasonable price. For Christmas we had brunch at the Hotel Peabody. The food and atmosphere are always very enjoyable. Since all our children have their families and traditions for Christmas, we get together before or after Christmas with most of them. With grandchildren and great-grandchildren it’s hard to coordinate everyone’s schedule, especially at Christmas. We hope all is well with our retirees. Let’s all join our thoughts and prayers for the 2019 General Conference delegates. May God be honored and pleased with the decision made for the United Methodist Church’s “Way Forward.”

Deborah and Harry Mathewson (Munford, TN): Both Harry and Deborah enjoy traveling. In 2018 they made their epic east coast adventure. Although time did not allow touring of the entire east coast they did take a chunk out of the mid-section from Virginia Beach, touring Montpelier, the home of James and Dolly Madison; Kitty Hawk, North Carolina, the site of the Wright brothers famous 12 second flight; and Shankstown, Pennsylvania the home of another flight memorial – the 9/11 Flight 93 Memorial. I can’t wait to hear about their 2019 travel plans.

Cecil & Tharon Kirk (Cane Ridge, TN): After vacations in Florida and the Smokies, we made a road trip to New York City and Long Island with 40 master gardeners from Jackson to see the beautiful gardens in the New York area. In October our youngest son, Andrew, was married in Mooresville, NC, where he is the youth minister at Williamson Chapel UMC. Our new daughter-in-law has two daughters about the same age as our two granddaughters in Nashville. Later in October we were off to Austin, TX for a nephew’s wedding. We are glad to be home and enjoying family gatherings here.

Gene & Joyce Rollins (Milan, TN): Gene and Joyce have traveled to almost all 50 states and several foreign countries. They toured Washington D.C. twice but have never been able to see inside the White House – until last year. After being on the waiting list for nine months, they received their invitation. To avoid the heavy traffic, they traveled by taxi to the White House. After passing through several security check points they entered the White House. A tour guide met them and took them to the East Room. This room has been the scene of receptions, concerts, weddings, and press conferences. The bodies of Abraham Lincoln and John F. Kennedy laid in state there after their assassinations. The next
stop was to the Green Room. Thomas Jefferson hosted dinners in this room. James Madison turned the room into a formal parlor. Joyce’s favorite room was the Blue Room. It is an elegant oval reception room. Grover Cleveland, the only U.S. president to have a White House wedding, married Frances Folsom there in 1886. They also toured the Library which houses over 2700 books relating to American life, the State Dining Room which can seat 140 for dinner, and the Oval Office.

Margaret Simmons (Jackson, TN): Margaret writes that she is 95 years young and has been blessed with great health. She enjoys driving almost daily to see her 102 year old sister who lives in Medina. She also enjoys visiting her three children who live in Nashville, TN, Texas, and Ohio. She no longer flies – airports are too large and exhausting. Her children come and drive her to their homes for visits.

Our love and heartfelt sympathies are extended to Harold and Jacque Stricker in the death of their son. Please know that you are being lifted up in prayer all across the conference and beyond.

Prayers are also requested for Russell Gallimore who had a hip replacement recently, Harrell Nation who had a heart valve replacement, and Kathy Russom who has been hospitalized with an infection. As you read The News ‘N’ Views you will see other prayer requests and praises. I encourage you to write notes of encouragement. You can obtain the current addresses by calling the Conference Office at (731) 664-8480.

Reporter Glenn Hill

Al Doyle (Franklin, TN): I enjoyed a brief conversation with Brother Al Doyle. He said he was in fair shape. He enjoyed the holidays with his children and grandchildren. He is proud of his grandson who is attending the University of Sewanee at Monteagle, TN.

Paul and Carolyn Clayton (Jackson, TN): Carolyn and I remain occupied with church and social groups. Paul’s hours are often spent preparing for and “filling pulpits” for pastors who are out for illness or on leave, teaching adult Sunday School classes, participating in clergy study groups and serving in volunteer roles. We had a wonderful Advent and Christmas time with family—children and all our grandchildren, extended family and friends.

Glenn and Georgia Hill (Paris, TN): I started off the first Sunday in October with a preaching engagement at South Pleasant Grove, a church I call one of my home churches for I was a member there in the fifties and I’ve served two interim pastorates there. In November, Georgia Ann and I celebrated our 57th wedding anniversary by making a trip to Van Buren, MO where we went on our honeymoon. The Hills from far and near gathered for our annual Thanksgiving-Christmas gathering in the new activity building of South Pleasant Grove U.M.C., Hazel, KY. Georgia and I went to our
daughter’s home in Marietta, GA to share Christmas with the family. Due to heavy traffic the trip down on the Saturday prior to Christmas took eight hours instead of the usual five and a half hours. This Christmas, Martin’s Chapel took an active part in the Calloway County UMC’s Live Nativity presentation at the EXPO Center on the MSU Campus. It was a great event with over 800 persons visiting during the two evenings. Another big event in the church is the Charge Conference. Being a retiree, I can look back upon that and say, “it is good I am not in charge of that anymore.” Does anyone out there remember the days of no secretary and you had to make 4 copies of each report FOR THE FIVE CHURCHES YOU SERVED. Oh, and don’t forget, it was done on a typewriter, using correction fluid, carbon paper ....and you get the idea. It was a task. West Kentucky weather presented Calloway and surrounding areas with cold and frozen precipitation, sleet and freezing rain. We canceled church services on January 20 after having three inches of snow. Twenty Nineteen is off and running and we hope you are too, well, at least on the move. We are back at work and enjoy life as God presents us daily. May God bless all of you in the new year.

Reporter Deborah Morris

Thomas Yoder (Cotter, Ar): Brother Thomas was "guarding the fireplace" when I talked with him. It had snowed the previous week-end (January 19-20) in the Ozark Mountains, and I do believe he had the right idea. As our readers will remember, Thomas's lifelong friend and wife, Becky, died in February of 2018. Not only has he dealt with her loss, but also has had two back surgeries as well as the closing of his church! He is recovering slowly from his surgeries. Thomas has a home health aid that comes in five days a week to help him with tasks he cannot complete on his own. I also learned that he is a veteran having served in Vietnam, Grenada, and Desert Storm - twenty-seven years of service. A BIG THANK YOU! Please keep him in your prayers as he continues to heal, and move forward in 2019. The best to him in 2019.

Loletta Bratt (Ripley, TN): I talked with Loletta’s son and caregiver. He said that because of declining health, Loletta has had to live at the Ripley Healthcare and Rehabilitation Center. I remember in previous conversations that Mrs. Bratt told me of the many things her son did to help her in life. She is indeed blessed. Please keep Loletta in your prayers.

Kathleen Masters (Stone Mountain, GA): I caught Kathleen at home in Georgia on this phone call. She continues to work with Global Ministries, training prospective missionaries. She always seems to be on the go in her job. She will be travelling to Cambodia for more comprehensive work in the missionary field.

Reporter Jenna Garland

I spoke with Faye Garrett (Murray, KY) and she said she is doing better now and had a wonderful Thanksgiving and Christmas. Her family brought food and they were all at her house. Family is so important.
I did not hear from Dan and Aileen Leslie (Kirksey, KY) but I heard that he has retired again. His daughter sang on his last Sunday at the church he was serving. I really don’t think preachers ever really retire.

Robert and Sue McKinney (Dexter, KY) wrote: We had a great Christmas. Twenty four of our twenty six family members were here for Christmas breakfast. That was awesome! We frequently have a family dinner on Tuesday nights and we keep some of the great grandchildren two or three days a week. Most of our traveling is to the doctors, drug stores and groceries and church visitation. We just thank God that we are able to keep busy and enjoy our family and ministry at the churches where He has placed us. Happy New Year to all!

I talked with Doris and Bob Saywell (Murray, KY) and Doris said they had a good Christmas and they are doing well. Bob was honored to perform the wedding ceremony for his granddaughter, Katy Covey, in December. He was really pleased that they asked him.

Carol Craig (Evansville, IL and Hazel, KY) writes: I have kept very busy since our last newsletter. After the Retirees’ Retreat in October, my son, Dan, and I went to Lake Junaluska for the annual U.M.C. Choral Festival. I really enjoyed the music and meeting old and new friends. Thanksgiving was divided between two locations: my sister’s home in Mayfield, KY and my son’s home in Bartlett. I enjoyed playing with my granddaughter, Grace. She is now 2 ½ and talking in complete sentences. She has decided to call me “LaLa”. We enjoyed playing on the floor with building blocks. I was a little stiff and sore the next morning. December arrived with over three inches of snow. It was beautiful but did not last very long. I hosted Christmas at my home in Evansville with my son, Dan, his wife, Clare, and my granddaughter, Jennifer. Jennifer’s boyfriend joined us and my living room became the site of a marriage proposal. We were all delighted! In 2019 we will see my daughter-in-law, Erin Craig’s first book being published. I will give you more information as the publication dates gets closer.

I (Jenna Garland) had a great Christmas at my sisters with all my nieces and nephews. The little ones are such a joy. No wonder Jesus said “you must become like little children to enter the Kingdom”. They are so innocent and trusting. Hope everyone has a joyful new year. God bless us everyone.

Reporter Tom Perkins

Tom and Mary Perkins (Dyersburg, TN): I'm looking out the window at the snow, feeling warm and comfortable at my office desk. I saw five deer in my back yard this morning. I fed them when we first moved here, but came to understand they thought my garden was food for them too. I still have mixed emotions about them. I feed the squirrels and birds and finally figured out how to keep them separate. Mary is fussing. She thinks I might slip and fall on the icy back deck, saying such
encouraging things as, “You can go to the ER by yourself if you fall and break a leg.” I am doing a Facebook page called Church on the Internet. Everyone is invited to comment and do devotions.

**J. Ralph & Lee Randolph (Kingwood, TX.)** are roles models for what you can do in your eighth decade of life. He is still teaching at Lone Star College. Lee is as energetic as he is. They send their regards.

**Howard & Kathryn Russom (Finger, TN)** say they are keeping the doctors happy. Kathryn recently spent a week in the hospital and is slowly recovering. Howard is still preaching a Hickory Flat and Adamsville. He is an avid fisherman catching big catfish and strippers. I have volunteered to be a fishing partner come spring time.

**Jerome & Glenese Scales (Memphis, TN):** are so busy I couldn't exactly catch up with them. I did read some of his posts on Facebook so I know he isn't just sitting while life goes by.

**Jennifer Smith (Gates, TN):** I am continuing to work with the Exceptional Worship Ministry, which began in the Mississippi River District and is now conference wide. Exceptional Worship is geared toward special needs individuals and their families. I am currently taking care of my great niece, Caroline Cross, who was born July 8, 2018. She keeps me hopping, but is such a blessing! I have recently taken up a new hobby of sewing and am having a good time making simple items for my family and friends. I can thank Little Miss Caroline’s mother for rekindling the sewing spark. It all began with the request of a simple rag quilt for Caroline’s bed - and who can turn down a request like that?

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The GIANT in front of you is NEVER bigger than the GOD WHO LIVES IN YOU!

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**Reporter Robert Gardner**

**Jackie & Robert Gardner (Paris, TN):** recently returned from a trip to Houston, TX for the wedding of their niece. It was a fun filled trip with a festive wedding celebration of food, entertainment and family fellowship.

**Kim & Jennifer Kulow** bought a house in **Rancho Santa Margarita, California** located in southern California. They have a brother who lives in California. Part of the reason for their moving to California was because of Jennifer’s health. They regularly attend Methodist churches in the
area but have not united with one at this time. They wish to say hello to everyone and report that they are really enjoying California.

**Dan & Emily Lawrence (Adamsville, TN):** Don recently had a cardiac ablation to control an irregular rhythm and is doing better. They just celebrated their granddaughter’s 15th birthday.

**Philip and Julie Cook (Dyersburg, TN):** Philip is serving two small congregations—Center United Methodist Church and Nebo United Methodist Church. One of his churches has started an additional service featuring a live band that is drawing a good number of people in attendance. Phillip also works with four churches in a project with the Dyer County Parish in planning activities to work together to greater impact their community.

This will be my last report as a reporter. I have a lot going on at this point in time. Thanks for the opportunity to report for News & Views. A lot of the joy was in just talking with folks - many who seemed to enjoying receiving a call. Thanks again. *(Editor’s Note: Robert, thank you for being willing to answer “the call”. We enjoy having you on board as a reporter).*

**Reporter Jacque Stricker**

**Harold and Jacque Stricker (Cottage Grove, TN):** Harold and I would like to thank everyone for your prayers and cards. It is because of all the prayers and the knowledge that Dale is no longer suffering and is now with Jesus and the family members that greeted him as he entered. We were blessed to have most of our family here for Christmas (28 people and three dogs). We look forward to a new year and the blessings God has in store for us and for all who love the Lord. Harold has been busy settling our son’s estate. The estate has been keeping him out of my trees. Occasionally, I see him gazing out the window, dreaming of when he can once again have me on the tractor hoisting him up in the bucket...

I talked with **Mary Jane and Richard King (Paris, TN):** Mary Jane said she gives Rick two thumbs up. He is back home after a fall and stay in rehab. They are looking forward to warmer temperatures when they can go to Lake Junaluska again. They are also looking forward to two grand-God children that should be born within the next couple of weeks. Mary Jane said she was doing well (if our spouse is well, we usually are as well.)

**Zada Russ (Madison, TN):** said she is doing OK. She spent Christmas with her daughter, Mary. The rest of the family came and visited with her at different times through the holiday. She was able to visit with the families individually. She doesn’t have any trips planned right now. She is spending her winter days reading library books on her iPad. Zada has a new great-granddaughter born about three weeks ago, and since it has been a while since they have had a “girl” in the family, she is “special”. Zada asked for prayers for her daughter-in-law who has breast cancer.
Covie Byars (Paris, TN): is doing better now after she fell just before Christmas. One of her sons came for Christmas and brought and shared a meal with her. She is doing alright and looks through the McKenzie newspaper checking to see if her name is in the obituary column! (according to her son, Randy)

Mary Wright (and her son Ken) (Jackson, TN) reported that they “were here”. Not much has been happening there and was hoping I knew something new to share with her. I asked Mary if they did anything special at Christmas or during the holidays. Mary said “well, we did go to my daughter’s, but she lives next door.” She is such a sweet person. Mary is so thankful for Beverlyann’s work on the News ‘n Views and for all the reporters who write the articles for the newsletter.

H.B and Rosie Fields (Paris, TN) said the church is doing fine. He thought Eva was a sleepy church, but he was wrong. He said if they keep going like they are, they might need to think about a younger pastor. Fortunately, if he is unable to help, they go ahead without him. He found out that he didn’t have to be involved in everything. H.B. told me he lost a cousin about a month ago, who also happened to be a member of his church. He has been helping to sort through his cousin’s personal belongings. His brother came from Texas and together they loaded lots of items onto a semi. H.B. said he has found more muscles than he ever knew he had, and they were taking turns complaining.

Reporter Gail Gaddie

It was good to visit with other retired clergy and their spouses as we begin a new year. My Big News for this new year is that I am now keeping my great-grand child, Peter. Peter is four and a half months old. He is the first child of my grandson Ben and his wife, Adriana. Ben and Adriana are both teachers and they asked me to keep Peter when Adriana went back to work. I was/am delighted. Bill’s daughter Beth lives with me and my daughter Amy and her husband Bobby live next door, so I have good back-up when needed. I retired from working part-time at Christ UMC in the fall so keeping Peter came at a good time. I attend Christ UMC and occasionally teach the Positive Christian Singles Sunday School Class that the Rev. Shirley Lynn started years ago. There are a few class members that were in the class at that time.

I enjoyed talking to Lula Bingham who lives in a retirement community in Shreveport, Louisiana, near her daughter Betsy. Her daughter Betsy is the senior minister of St. Luke’s UMC and her son David is on the staff there. Her son, Robert, lives in Houston, Texas. Her niece Karen lives in Memphis and comes to see Lula from time to time. Lula feels fortunate that her health is good. She was glad to hear from West Tennessee and sends her love and regards to all.
Harrison and Michelle Hiram live in Jackson, TN. He serves two churches, one in Montezuma and the other, Big Springs in Hardeman County. He is a “circuit rider.” Harrison enjoys having his family in the West Tennessee area: His brother Jerry lives in Olive Branch, MS, his sister, Charlotte Mansfield, a retired UM minister, lives in Lakeland, and his sister, Glenda, lives in Lakeland as well. Harrison is looking forward to having a hip replacement at the Germantown Methodist Hospital soon.

Nancy Henderson lives in Mason, TN. She was not feeling well having dealt with blocked sinuses for several weeks. She is married to Thomas Yarbrough, who has a framing shop and is a long-time member of Mason UMC.

Barry and Selena Henson (Collierville, TN): are doing well and enjoying retirement. Barry serves Poplar Grove UMC and Drummonds UMC. Last fall Barry celebrated 50 years of ministry. Also in the fall he and Selena made a trip to Orange Beach in Alabama. At Christmas they had all their family at their home. They also traveled to Topeka, Kansas, to see the tiger cubs that were born in the zoo there. Selena especially enjoys watching endangered animals on U Tube. She saw the tiger cubs when they were born, and she wanted to see them. Poplar Grove is averaging 62 people each Sunday. In 2018 they took in 24 new members and had 5 professions of faith. It is near Millington Naval Base and has a number of retired military persons in the congregation.

Reporter Marcia Tate

I was delighted to receive a letter from George and Nell Reed (Lexington, TN). They enjoyed a wonderful Christmas at their daughter and son-in-law’s home in Jackson. All the children, grands and great grands were there making for a fun but noisy crowd. Nell has recently completed radiation treatments on her vocal cords. She says they are not going to miss the daily drives to Jackson. It is George’s turn now for a “tune up”. We hope his report is good.

Reporter Pat Calhoun

Joan Gilliland (Dyersburg, TN): Joan shared that she volunteers at the First United Methodist in Dyersburg. She enjoys her time there. The holidays were difficult for her as she lost her sister. We extend our sympathy to her for her loss. Joan has recently had surgery and is slowly recovering.
Ralph and Dene Gunter (Halls, TN): Ralph reports that their family was together for Christmas and it was nice. Their granddaughter, Elizabeth, is a nurse at the Jackson Madison County Hospital and they have a grandson living in Knoxville. Dene continues to have health problems and is bed ridden.

Fay Howard (Hornbeak, TN): At Thanksgiving, Fay was able to spend several days in Memphis with her son, Michael, Fay had a wonderful Christmas with all her children at home. Her son, David, lives with her. In December, Fay had a cardiac stress test and was having trouble with her blood presser. She is feeling much better now.

William and Janice Mullins (Murfreesboro, TN): Both Bill and Janice are enjoying good health. Bill walks 3-4 miles each day as the weather allows. Recently they attended the play, “A Cat on a Hot Tin Roof”, at the Franklin Playhouse.

Jimmy and Joanne Osborn (Henderson, TN): The Osborns have always wanted to see the northern lights. In December they traveled to Iceland but much to their dismay they did not get to see the lights. Weather conditions just did not allow for the lights to be seen. As it was winter the daylight hours were limited to sunrise at 10 AM and sunset around 3 pm. Iceland is known for its long cold winters. The capital city, Reykjavik, was awash with Christmas lights but you would be hard pressed to find a nativity scene. Their tour guide (a young 20 something) was only vaguely aware of the Biblical Christmas story. There are many beautiful Christian churches in Iceland but most are poorly attended or have been converted into museums. Asatru’, an old Norse pagan religion is the fastest growing and largest non-Christian religion.

Reporter Bobbie Clarke

Bobbie Clarke (Jackson, TN): I enjoy so much calling many of the retirees as their reporter. It is fun talking to old friends and meeting new ones. Each of you have a wonderful story to share of your ministry, your retirement, and your family. I enjoy so much talking to you. I miss my John so much and having you to talk to has filled a void.
Mary Ann Sturdivant (Cordova, TN): Mary Ann seemed to smile with laughter as she answered the phone. She enjoys being part of the choir at Christ Church.

Jim Stubbs (Collierville, TN): I enjoyed talking with Jim. He share with me his pride in his son, Johnson who is a Cornel in the US Army. His youngest son, James, recently welcomed a new granddaughter (Jim’s great grandchild).

Nancy Blankenship (Memphis, TN): Our sympathies are extended to the Blankenship family at the death of their grandson Dylan Craig. Dylan was born on April 26, 1992. Soon after his birth he developed meningitis which resulted in a profound hearing loss, seizure disorder, and learning disabilities. Despite his disabilities, Dylan lived his life to the fullest. He loved the outdoors and spent many days fishing and kayaking on local rivers and lakes. After Dylan’s birth, his grandparents, Paul and Nancy, became very active in the deaf community; learning American Sign Language and advocating for people with disabilities.