

We're Family Park Newsletter

Dedicated to the family of James & Amanda Dennison Issue 17, July 2008

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We look forward to your presence at our next Family Reunion – July 26 & 27, 2008

Grandma

Written by Janice Balo (1-2-1)

*Grandmother used to always say
We'll be the bride of Christ some day
But when I die, don't weep for me
'cause so much happier, I shall be.*

*I'll not be weak and sick no more
I'll be resting peaceably on the other shore
I lived for God the best I could
And obeyed his word the way I should.*

*I knew that I was one of his sheep
I belong to God, I am his to keep
He is my husband and I his bride
Now, I'm in Heaven by his side.*

*So tenderly he reached out his hand to me
So quickly I took it, 'twas meant to be
His love was all that I could see
Leaving this world doesn't bother me.*

*I pondered many things as I sat in my chair
Of how wonderful things would be up there
Not so much of golden streets and crystal streams
But to be with Jesus was my dreams.*

*No longer this race now will I have to run
For Jesus did speak and he said, "Well done,
Now come and live forever with me
And we'll be together for eternity."*

*I love him, I adore him, my life I give
Not that I'll die, but yet shall I live.*

(In memory of Ozenna Prince)

Jon Belmont Dennison Jr. (2-6-3-3)

Jon and Donna's newborn arrived. Like all C-section babies, his head is beautiful, like the rest of him. Doting Grandparents! (Gene & Helen)

Brandon L. Dennison (2-3-3-3) married his long time sweetheart **Lara** on February 29, 2008. They held their reception at the We're Family Park on March 8th. Lara is a very welcomed addition to the family. Brandon is a grandson of Bryon & Jessie; Larry & Kim's son. (February 29th). Does that mean an anniversary present is required every 4 years? Way to go Brandon!!!)

Brandon & Lara



Christina & Scott

Christina M. L. Dennison (2-2-4-3) married Scott Inman on May 24, 2008 at Friendship Baptist Church in Cincinnati, Ohio. It was a luau themed wedding, so there was much fun to be had by all. They are happily residing in Cincinnati, until Scott can convince Christina to move to Kentucky.

Karen Durand



What Singing Means to Me

written by Karen Mowery Durand (July / 2007)

I am the 12th of 13 kids of James Vaughn and Wilma Virginia Dennison Shaver. They always took us to church. I can remember singing on Sundays from the time I was old enough to talk. My sisters (Wilma, Reta, Anita) and I sang all the time. We even sang while using the outside toilet. We formed a group that we called "The Shaver Sisters," and we were kept very busy throughout the years singing in churches and just about anywhere we were invited to sing. It seemed we were traveling and singing every weekend.

I gave my heart to the Lord when I was about 9 years old. Even though I was that young, I felt Him tugging at my heart and knew He was preparing me to live a lifetime of service for Him. But I was also young and dreamy. Shortly after high school, I met Jim Mowery. We got married 4 months later on Feb. 14, 1976.

Our first son, James Andrew III was born 1-½ years later on July 31, 1977. On Nov. 9, 1978 we had Nathan Vaughn and then Douglas Clayton came along Nov. 1, 1979. I made my home and family my life.

Things began to change when the boys all started school and they didn't need my personal attention as much. At this time my sisters and I were so busy with our individual family responsibilities that we hardly ever sang together. Daddy became sick with a type of leukemia. And then Jim and I began to have problems as my world started falling apart. I only felt close to the Lord on the rare occasions that my sisters got together to sing.

Daddy died in January of 1986. Jim and I separated in September that same year, and our divorce was final in February 1987. However, Jim and I made an effort at trying to get our family problems straightened out and get back together. Unfortunately, there had been too many deep-seated hurts to overcome, but I became pregnant before separating again. Our boys mainly stayed with Jim. I was seven months pregnant with Caleb and feeling very much alone when I met a man that was friendly, thoughtful, and very good-looking. He talked me into marrying him a mere 4 weeks after Caleb was born. I could call it being naïve, desperate, or postpartum depression, but whatever it was, it was a bad choice. He turned out to be violent. After only eight months into the marriage, I attempted to leave him. In a fit of anger he stabbed me approximately 27 times.

A few days before I was injured, the Lord woke me up with the complete words and tune to a song. I had never written a song before. He was telling me through music that **He** was my best friend. His simple message was that He would be there for me. I got up and wrote down the song, and hid it in my dresser drawer. During my whole ordeal afterwards, I remembered the words He gave me, but they were very much overshadowed by pain, questioning, my appearance, and maybe never being able to sing again. I knew the Lord was with me for He had spared my life. But if He didn't want me to sing again, why did He put a song into my heart?

Within 4 months I was working in a nursing home. I did my best for Caleb, but he cried a lot and did not want me out of his sight. I was still a mess and just as lonely, scared, and paranoid as ever. One night I knelt by my bed and I prayed, "Lord, I don't care if I don't wake up in the morning, I'm so tired and lonesome. I'm missing my older boys and I don't know how to discipline Caleb. He needs someone besides me." With that prayer on my lips, I went to sleep. Caleb's smiling face woke me. I pondered about what had come over him.

I finally went to church that Sunday. Every song was just for me. I felt alive for the first time in a long time. I went to the altar where all my tears seemed to cleanse my heart and mind. I told the Lord, "Whatever it is that you have left for me to do here, I'm ready to do it now." At work that afternoon, a minister asked for help with the service. A co-worker said, "Karen can sing." So with some encouragement from them and a nudge from the Lord, I sang a couple of songs for the residents and their families. By the end of the service I had future bookings. Through my second chance at singing for the Lord, I met people who became close friends and who helped me with Caleb.

On Christmas Eve, 2005, I married my best buddy, Butch Durand. I continue to work and I enjoy singing ever chance I get. I am still a CNA, and every day I care for the elderly in their homes. I try to live each day helping them and others by showing them that someone cares. I can now see how much God cared for me by putting me back together with a deeper faith than ever. My goal in life is to be a living example that the Lord picks up the broken pieces of our lives that we turn over to Him, and transforms them into something wonderful.

Every day I sing a new song and I have written several of them. Music is my gift and a natural way that I praise and worship the Lord. It is in sharing my love of singing that others can get a glimpse of what the Lord means to me and hopefully will be touched by His grace in the process. I'm proud to be "The Lord's" child that is able to lift Him up in song.

Thanksgiving Day Race

written by Christina Dennison

When most people think of Thanksgiving Day they think of eating a lot, watching football, and hanging out with their family. The last thing that is on their mind is exercise, but that is exactly what my last Thanksgiving Day had in store for me.

When my sister Sarah mentioned that she was going to run a 10K race on Thanksgiving Day, I thought she was crazy. She would have a day off work and a perfect excuse to do nothing but relax in the presence of food, but instead she decided to run 6.4 miles! She said that she did not want to do the event by herself, so she was going to ask around to see if one of her friends would be willing to participate with her. Being the good sister I am, I encouraged her and said that if she couldn't find anybody, I would go. (Mind you, I did not want to go, but thought I'd make myself at least appear selfless in the process.) Wouldn't you know, she couldn't find anyone?

I found myself waking up with my alarm on Thanksgiving (not something I was planning on) and getting dressed to face the weather. Needless to say, I didn't have the best attitude, but I did put on a good face for my sister as we drove downtown to start the long trek. (I was able to console myself with the thought that there would be free food at the end of it all.)

I started warming up to the idea of running as we put on our numbers and got in line to start. I had redirected my attention on the three positives of the morning. First on my list was that I was wearing comfortable running shoes. Then Sarah is always ripe for conversation to divert my attention from what I was doing. To round out my attitude adjustment, I was wearing my Ipod to keep me company. After the gun sounded, we were on our way. It felt good to be doing this with so many other people. We saw families and participants as young as 5 and some that looked like they were 95! There was such a sense of community, and it felt good to get out of the house and enjoy God's creation.

By the end of the race, I decided that I want to start this tradition with my family when I have one. My attitude had totally changed. I learned that before I judge something I have never done, I need to appreciate the life, health, and family that God has given. The next time someone presents me with an opportunity to share some quality time in doing something new, I will embrace it with arms open wide.

So, I will be running in the race again this fall. Care to join me?



Christina & Sarah



Garywayne

Letter From the Editor

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One of the hardest things that I do on a regular basis is work on my writing skills. The process of putting my thoughts down on paper makes me feel dumb. I often cannot figure out the words in my own handwriting. I am a very poor speller and equally bad at grammar. It is only the end product that keeps me going.

Knowing my weaknesses and other people's strengths encourages me to ask for help when my focus is on blessing others. If I would let pride get in the way of keeping my literary skills in secret, I would not be in the process of writing a book or there might not be a regular newsletter. To all of you that have a story to tell but have been afraid to speak up, please take the step of faith and get in contact with me. The newsletter needs your support, the family needs to know you have a sense of belonging, and you need to know what an impact you can have when you take the spotlight off of yourself and seek to bless others.

Two Tapered Points of Interest

by Donald Dennison as told to Garywayne



Many years ago I shared a Boy Scout experience with my son Josh. Everyone was asked to bring a stone to the Camp for one of the activities. It turned out that we participated in building an obelisk. It was a stone Memorial that tapered up to a point, which signified that we had been there and that we belonged. The symbolic reality of that experience really hit home for me. Though I may not remember everything that happened during that retreat, if I returned to that camp, I could easily find the rock that I had placed there in concrete. Just thinking about it makes me feel that I am a part of the camp's history. A moment of my life is captured in a stone fixture while a sense of belonging is embedded in my mind.

The simple truth is that the We're Family Park belongs to the whole family. Uncle Clifford wanted a concrete way for people to be able to take hold of that reality. Building an obelisk is my way of accepting that challenge. There is a special look on the faces of those who have handed over their carefully chosen, uniquely formed rock to me. They know that the rock they are able to see and touch is a reminder that they are connected to this family in a visible way.

There are two obelisks – one as a reminder to the living of our blessings of belonging to something greater than ourselves, and the other as a memorial for loved ones who are no longer with us. I have set a stone for my dad (Byron) as well as for my brother Larry. When I visit their gravesites, memories of them are surrounded by death. However, as I touch their memorial stones at the park, it is as though their memories are surrounded by life. Even just seeing the obelisks in the distance generates positive feelings of family, childhood, and my place in the world. It reminds me of when I return to Perkins Fork and slip back to the time when things seemed simple. Seeing a pile of stones in our park setting my not generate warm fuzzy feelings for everyone, but it will not generate anything unless you participate.

Many unclaimed stones have already been set in place, just waiting to be personalized with an engraving tool. At some point in the near future there needs to occur a sense of completion of the project, so if you want a particular type or look of rock of your choosing, bring it with you to the reunion this year.



Proverbs 31:10 describes **Jessie Marie Boggs Dennison**

“Who can find a virtuous woman? For her price is far above rubies.” This is what Jessie was to her family and friends. Jessie Marie Boggs Dennison, 78, of Gassaway passed away May 26, 2008, at her home. She was born February 14, 1930, in Clay County, a daughter of the late Henry Clay and Marie Ball Boggs. She was a retired cook for the Braxton County Board of Education and a member of the Church Of Christ, Gassaway.

In addition to her parents, she was also preceded in death by husband, Byron Dale Dennison; son, Larry Michael Dennison, two brothers, and one sister. She is survived by children, Carolyn Dennison of Cowen; Dale and wife, Sharon, of Exchange, Rickie and wife, Sherie, of Sedro Wolley, Wash., Jeffery and wife, Kay, and Douglas and wife, Lisa, both of Clem, Donald and wife, Sarah, of Martinsburg, Bradley and wife, Mary, of Clem, Rodney of Gassaway, and daughter-in-law, Kim Dennison of Gassaway. She is also survived by brothers: Richard Boggs of Clay and Henry Boggs of Grantsville; sisters: Geraldine Dennison and Mary Stewart, both of Ohio, Wanita Mollohan of Clay County, Annamae Dawson of Weston and Martha Deems of Clay County. She had 27 grandchildren and 14 great-grandchildren.

Her service was held on Saturday, May 31, at Richard M. Roach Funeral Home, Gassaway, with Danny Lambey and Gene Miller officiating. Burial followed in the Jacob Shaver Memorial Cemetery, Exchange.



Debra Fincham (1-2-3-3) I graduated from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill with a B.A. in Peace, War, and Defense. I'm hoping to volunteer with the Red Cross, Disaster Services, while going to grad school for a Master's degree in Humanitarian Services Administration. I did actually take a much-needed break - 3 whole weeks! - between my semester in Washington, DC and graduation.

Debra's proud mom Elaine



Imogene Mae Shaver Hawkins, 77, of Sutton, WV went to be with the Lord on Saturday, March 15th, 2008, after a long illness. She was born May 16th, 1930 in Riffle, WV., daughter of the late Thurman Scott Shaver and Lena Pearl Dennison Shaver. Imogene was a lifelong Christian and a member of Shaver's Fork Community Church.

Surviving: **Husband** -- Roy R Hawkins of Exchange Rd., Sutton, WV.

Daughters -- Janet R. Wine and husband Terry, and Ruth A. Cogar and husband Tim. **Sons** -- Roy L. and wife Alice, John W. and wife Elizabeth (Libby), James E. and wife Lisa, and David S. Hawkins. **Sisters** -- Ina June Knight, Elizabeth Porter, Patricia Moore, and Janet Oliver.

Brothers -- Vinten and Fountain Shaver. Imogene is also survived by 16 grandchildren & 6 great grandchildren. She was buried in the Shaver Cemetery.

(From Marge Kinser) When I was a very young girl, we took our annual vacation to West Virginia in Dad's 1927 Chevy touring car, parked the car 'over the hill' and walked to Grandma and Grandpa's house. This was very tiring, boring, hot, etc., etc. But after we finally got settled in their house for the week, my sister and I would always go 'down to Aunt Lena's to play with all those kids. Our special ones, of course, were Imogene and Ina June. We were in the same age bracket. I don't remember anything specific, but these were our cousins that we only got to see once a year. Imogene will be missed.

(From Estle Gough) I remember Imogene as being the 'prettiest girl' and always a hard worker.

(From Brenda Holmes) My Aunt Imogene was a very unique lady, strong yet gentle, loving but not affectionate. From the time I was a teen till my dad got sick with cancer and couldn't work on the road anymore I would call her for recipes. She never failed to talk me through a recipe. Mom went with dad on the road so that left me in charge. I did most of the cooking and I couldn't call Mom when I didn't know how to cook or can something. We didn't have the luxury of unlimited long distance then. Long distance calls cost a fortune then.

One day I noticed that she never said, "I love you". I decided that I was gonna tell her I loved her until she said she loved me too. I always knew that she loved me but I wanted to hear it. When she started saying it back to me I was thrilled. For years I always said, "I love you" before we would hang up and she would answer with "Love you too". Then one day about three years ago she said it first and you could have knock me over with a feather - at the time I never dreamed that she would tell me first. From then on we took turns saying I love you first to each other.

In the last few years we talked on the phone a lot after 11:00 pm. We had some very good conversations on those late night calls. I think those are my fondest memories of my Aunt Imogene.

I am pleased to introduce a new feature to the newsletter. After Jason Maloney let it be known that he would be willing to contribute some time toward the newsletter if I would find him a spot, that is what I did. It didn't take long talking to Jason to discover what a talented young man we have our midst.

Many of the details of the back-and-forth interaction of putting Jason's education to the test need to be worked out, but with your feedback, your computer related questions have a chance to be answered. I hope that you will get to know and appreciate him in the next few newsletters. The following is a brief description Jason wrote about himself:

I am the only son of the recently departed Shirley Raye (Dennison) Maloney of the Tilford branch. I developed an interest in computers and technology early in my life. In my senior year of high school I volunteered as a computer lab tech, which led to a summer job working with the network administrator. The work consisted mostly of tearing down and rebuilding the computer labs, and managing and maintaining the computer systems.

Garywayne asked if I would be willing to assist in providing a service and by doing so help contribute to the family newsletter, and I am happy to do so. If you have a computer/technology question or problem that you haven't been able to find an answer/solution for, send it to me and I'll take a stab at it.

Until other arrangements are made, e-mail me your comments or questions to Garywayne.ohio@gmail.com



2008 Graduate - Jason Maloney: After high school I enrolled into the University of Cincinnati's Raymond Walters College where I received my Associate's Degree in Computer Support Technology (Magna Cum Laude). Once I earned my Associate's Degree I transferred to the University of Cincinnati's College of Applied Science where I (just) earned my Bachelor's of Science Degree in Information Technology (Magna Cum Laude). Following graduation, I accepted a position with Hewlett Packard.



Shirley Raye (Dennison) Maloney

written by Gene Dennison

And then there were five. Our little sister, the youngest of the Tilford Dennison clan died on March 15, 2008 at Mercy Hospital Mount Airy in Cincinnati, Ohio. She had been on dialysis for kidney failure for more than six years and suffered from other medical ailments, as well. We knew she was under some constant pain and suffering, but she always had a smile and a good word for everyone. She leaves a hole in all our lives and we will miss her, but will always remember.

Shirley was born on June 29, 1941, in Perkins Fork, only months before World War II was to begin and our lives disrupted by the events that followed. She went to Scotts Fork School and Gassaway High School before eventually graduating at Coolville High School in June of 1961. She was active in the drama club and other school activities. Upon graduation, she went to Cincinnati to work for her sister, Evalee, in the printing business. Soon after arriving, she met Bruce Maloney who was home from the service. They were married on July 17, 1965.

She and husband, Bruce, have one child, Jason. He was born on October 17, 1984 when Shirley was 43 years old. Jason, who is now a young man, will be graduating from the University of Cincinnati in June of this year (2008). Over the past several years when we would be talking to Shirley about general things and Jason's name came up, her face would light up and her spirit was elevated. She and Bruce were and are very proud of him. And they should be. It took them 19 years to have him but the result was worth the wait.

We won't say goodbye to our sister, only "til we meet again", but we will miss her.

(Memories of Shirley Maloney by Dale Inman) Aunt Shirley lived with us during her senior year of high school in Coolville, Ohio. She loved to snuggle. She was always close to us, not so much in distance, but in love and staying involved with my family.

One of the most embarrassing times my sister, Gail, and I had was when Aunt Shirley bought us our first bra. She was SO excited! She had us put them on and model them for her and my mom. Gail and I were both extremely shy and modest and we almost died of embarrassment! I know my face probably mirrored Gail's, and her face was pretty rosy! That was one of Aunt Shirley's favorite memories, because even years later she would talk about how she bought the first bras for us.

I remember riding a Greyhound bus to Cincinnati with Gail. We had never gone anywhere by ourselves before, so it was quite an adventure for two shy country girls. We had stayed overnight with Aunt Shirley, and the next morning we were to take the bus downtown to the Convention Center. We mistakenly got off the bus before we should have, and since we had never been in a big city before, it was just a little scary for us. Being afraid to ask someone where we needed to go, we must have been a sight – trudging along the street with our suitcases. I guess I was the braver of the two of us, for finally I got up the nerve to ask someone where the Center was located. We were just a block or two from it, so we felt pretty proud that we had almost made it unassisted.

I moved to Edgewood, Kentucky, in 1981 for a new job, but I was a frequent visitor at Aunt Shirley's. We did lots of things together and even took a jazzercise class one time. I don't remember if we got any benefit from the class, but we sure had fun!

Aunt Shirley had a heart of gold. I know she is watching out for me. I miss her terribly, even though she is in a far better place, and one day I'll see her again in Heaven.

Dennis Max Malin (April 12, 1952 – March 24, 2008)

written by Debbie Malin Vance



Dennis loved his grandchildren very much. They were one of the best things in his life. He also loved making things grow in the garden, fishing, and watching the Cincinnati Reds and Bengals play ball. He was a loyal fan of both. Dennis was a good companion for me this past year and a half, since the loss of my husband, Ralph. Dennis had a quick sense of humor – dry, but funny. He was very easy to please and loved by those who knew him. Although he was rough around the edges, he was a meek and caring person. He appreciated the small things in life.

He spent time reading the Bible at night. In thinking about some of our conversations, I believe he knew he would never grow to be an old man. I wish I could have had him here to keep me company a while longer, but I believe he was ready to meet Jesus. I will miss his presence very much, except maybe for his bad habits. I wish I could still have my best friend here to continue to help fill the empty hours.

Dennis and I had planned a trip to Seattle, Washington to visit our cousin, Rickie Dennison, in July of this year (2008). He was really looking forward to it and told me it would be a “once in a lifetime trip.” My youngest brother, Kevin, will escort me on my trip to the northwest, but I believe that Dennis will be with us in spirit.

It was Dennis's wish to be buried in West Virginia. Therefore, after a small service here in Ohio, we transported his body to Braxton County, West Virginia for the official one. The service took place in the chapel located on the property of We're Family Park. It was a structure that he helped to build. He was buried in the Jacob Shaver Memorial Cemetery.

Linda Dianne Dennison Wallace

(Taken from "Carry Me Back" page 50)

I am Linda Dianne, daughter of Marlin Burnell and Geraldine Boggs Dennison. I can remember every year when we were preparing to visit Grandma and Grandpa at reunion time. I always loved that time of year. Grandma Lucy always had so many flowers. I love flowers, so I always asked her what they were and she would give me a snip to bring home.

Grandpa Tilford would always take us to church sings, as he called them. We got to go along to listen to them practice. I also recall when they lived in Perkins Fork, back in a hollow. Grandpa had a billy goat. He sure was a mean animal. He was always chasing us around in the yard. I remember one time he chased my brother, Martin and me up into the woodshed. After he left we were still afraid to come down. While we were sitting there one of my other brothers, Garywayne, came out of the house and started walking toward us. We started laughing so hard that we were not able to tell him that the goat was coming up behind him. All of a sudden, POW . . . Grandma chased that goat all over the yard with a broom.

There were always things to do at Grandma's. We all got to try to milk the cows, pick papaws, fetch water from the well, bring in the eggs, and try to play the piano. Grandpa, on reunion day, would load my aunts and uncles and all the grandchildren in his big truck and we would all go to the homecoming. I sure do have a lot of good memories of homecomings.

<p>Calli Jayne Long (10-2-3-1-1) Feb.6, 2008 8:19am 5 lbs 1 oz 17 inches long Parents: Derek and Jennifer Long Grandmother: Nannette Rexroad Great Grandparents: Robert and Janice Shaver</p>		<p>Gabriella Faith Jarrell (5-3-5-1-1)</p> <p>Here is the picture we were missing from issue 16. She is Imogene's great-granddaughter.</p>	
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Watch for more about the memorial walk and garden in the next issue.