

# THE SHIPMATE

VOLUME 11 ISSUE 2

MAY 2011

It's that wonderful time of year and we are so ready to have another get-together. This time it will be our annual Summer Picnic at the Simpson's on June 29th. If you have not attended one previously, you've missed a great time. Mark your calendar now! Rudy and Alice is the host and they always make it so special. The time is 12:30 p.m. - address is 114 Monitor Road, Portsmouth - telephone number is 757-393-6631. Please bring a covered dish and a lawn chair. The Class will provide Fried chicken. The Calling Committee will call to remind you so we hope you will come. It's lots of fun and the food is great! It's always fun to get together and just catch up on what's going on in your life.

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We haven't really received much news from Classmates recently. About the most exciting news is what is going on in Cradock. Joyce Overton Jonak is cheering for the restoration of the Afton Theatre and wrote the following article entitled "We Raise Our Voices". "Remember when we used to sing: I'm an Admiral born, I'm an Admirable bred, and when I die I'll be an Admiral dead. So give a rah, rah, for Cradock, Cradock, rah, rah for Cradock, rah, rah, rah!

Well...we're not dead, and although Cradock has been close to the edge for many years, things are beginning to look brighter for her recovery.

For those who live in the area, we've been enlightened to the possibility of seeing the Afton Theater re-opened. For those reading this Shipmate and hearing this for the first time, here's what's happening:

The City of Portsmouth mandated that the long vacant "Afton" be rehabilitated or demolished. After being evaluated by structural engineers and other building consultants, it was determined that the roof is the biggest problem. The building is sound. That gives hope to those who believe the theater is worth revitalizing.

Fred Schoenfeld, owner of the Commodore Theater in downtown Portsmouth, has volunteered his services, expertise, and contact to the current owner, David Beachler, who has offered to donate the theater to a non-profit, who will own and operate it. The Commodore was in a similar state of disuse when Fred bought it. Now it is a mainstay, showing films, hosting lectures, meetings, forums, etc. He believes the Afton could do the same thing. Another long time empty theater, the Naro in Norfolk brought Colley Avenue to vibrancy after its reopening. Restaurants, shops, ice cream parlors, and other small businesses sprang up making Colley Avenue the "to go" place in Norfolk. It only takes one successful attraction to be the catalyst for revival. The Afton could be the one! Materials, at huge discounts, and many donated, are being offered. One contractor with historical interest is also on board to help. The Civil League is in favor of the project; the vision

is out there for a hometown Cradock, the way we remember it. Later we may be asked to help in some financial way. For now, just think about it. We can discuss the project in future meetings and newsletters!

Stories and related articles can be found at [www.aftontheatre.com](http://www.aftontheatre.com).

T-shirts with a picture of the original Afton Theatre are available in sizes S to 3X for \$20.00 each. Note cards (10 to a package) are available also for \$10.00.

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### News from Classmates

Pat Abernathy Spies, Atlanta GA writes to June "Thanks so much for the reunion booklet. I thoroughly enjoyed looking and trying to guess who everyone was. You were the only one I recognized. Wow! It's been a while. Wish I could have been there. Greetings and best wishes to all!

My sweet husband passed away the end of June 2009 so it's kind of lonesome around here.

Enclosed is a check for dues - sorry, didn't realize I was so far behind."

Al and Earlene Lassiter, Vienna, VA sent me an e-mail to thank the Reunion Committee on a job well done. "While the world may seem in a bit of a chaotic state and most people have their own lives to lead, we sincerely are appreciative of the reunion committee that they found time to organize such a grand reunion. It was a nice event and a great time.

Our high school years cannot be repeated and would never be the same, but during the

reunion there were moments one can savor and realize how lucky we were. We left the reunion and the Back to Cradock Day with fond feelings for our schoolmates and friends we knew 60 years ago.

Again, sincere appreciation for your commitment and selflessness. Wishing you continued good health."

Sylvia Brady Shea, Fallbrook, CA writes: "After 60 years I finally made it to my first reunion. It was so much fun, very low key, I'm just disappointed that I did not get to meet more of the classmates. But it was special that I got to sit at the table with my two best friends, Beverly Kayton Bryd and Gwen Riffle Clements. We also met the next day at Come Home to Cradock, and then went to dinner that night. It was truly a fun time being back in Cradock. It was sad to learn that so many classmates have passed away though."

JoAnn Bryant McDonough, Portsmouth, VA, wrote that it was a disappointment to miss the last reunion. "We were planning on attending but my husband became ill."

JoAnn and her husband did come to the Golden Corral in March for the luncheon. It was so good to see them there.

A Surprise Birthday Party was given by the children of Frances Anne Rowe Holland in honor of her 80th birthday. What a wonderful birthday celebration. Believe me, she was truly surprised! Anne has six children and they were all there plus a number of grandchildren.



You never know what or who may turn up in Pungo. After 61 years, Joyce Overton Jonak and Ruby Schlegler Eason meet at a Trout Unlimited picnic!



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Mary Annarino reported she has sent cards to the following Admirals:

Pat Delauri who has been in and out of the hospital a couple of times recently.

Sympathy card to Virginia Lanier Powers whose mother passed away.

Sympathy card to Betty Cummings Klise whose brother, Euree Cummings, recently died.

Get Well cards were sent to Roy Cahoon

who was in the hospital, Juanita Bowen Wood, Pat Benefield Dawley, and Whitney LeCompte, and Pat DeLauri.

Easter cards were sent to the following teachers: Mrs. Metzler, Mrs. Alford, Mrs. Yarborough, and Mr. Rose.

Please send any news items for the Shipmate to me, maerthompson@cox.net, or mail to me at 4200 Summerset Dr., Portsmouth, VA 23703, or June Dickerson, 829 Colony Manor Rd., Chesapeake, VA 23321. We truly want to hear from you and feel free to include any pictures. We look forward to hearing from you and what's going on in your life.

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We would like to welcome Sam Seay to our list of classmates. Sam is a "good old Cradock guy" who graduated after we did but fits right in and is best friends with one of our group. We won't let him flaunt his youth! Welcome, Sam!

*We could certainly slow the aging process down if it had to work its way through Congress.*  
Will Rogers

*The only thing you can't recycle is wasted time.*

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This poem was submitted by Joyce Jonak. It was written by her father, Jesse H. Overton, Sr. Many of you knew Mr. Overton.

### Springtime in Cradock

"It must be Spring," I said today  
As I watched the Winter's snow melt away,

And soften the ground where the bulbs were  
hiding,  
Awaiting their time to bring good tidings.

The crocus, the tulips and many more,  
With all the beauty they hold in store,  
Will break the ground some day or night,  
And bring to view a lovely sight.

The leaves will come so green, so tender-  
and then the flowers in all their splendor  
Of red and purple and even gold  
As we watch the mysteries of Spring unfold.

The buds on the dogwood are swelling  
And soon the flowers are seen;  
Yet they're more than lovely flowers,  
They're all part of a beautiful dream.

The birds have begun their nesting  
As they build with straw, leaves and string;  
Occasionally they stop for testing,  
And now I know it is Spring.

Wherever you go in Cradock,  
Whatever the season may be -  
There's a flower in somebody's garden,  
Or a bird in somebody's tree.

*Jesse H. Overton, Sr.*

*The pursuit of happiness is the chase of a  
lifetime! It's never too late to become what  
you might have been.*

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Until our next issue I hope you have a great  
summer. Stay well and don't forget the date  
of the picnic - June 29th at the Simpsons, at  
12:30. See you there!

Mae Thompson

# Saving the AFTON

CIRCA 1937

