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Volume 18

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September - October 2006

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### **PREZ SEZ**

As I sit here trying to write this newsletter article it is very hard to contain myself. We have finally been blessed with our first grandchild. Olivia Claire Adams was born at 8:00 p.m. on Saturday, August 12 in New York City. She weighed 8lb/6oz and was 19¼ inches long. As you may guess, I am now a temporary resident of New York but I will be back for our retiree meeting on September 11. We subleased an apartment in Brooklyn for six weeks and have been here since August 3. I never thought I would be a New Yorker. Things are so different here. But aren't they always different from what you are used to?

It was so hot here the first few days but it has cooled off for now. Con-Edison has really caught a lot of flack for service interruptions during the heat spell. It really makes you glad that you are retired and not having to be concerned about having enough power to meet the demands of the public. It also makes you proud to be a part of the Southern Company that has a great reputation for low-cost, reliable energy. Many thanks to all of you who helped make our company such a success. I don't think there were many places in the United States

that escaped hot weather this summer and there were many deaths attributed to the weather. Some of them no doubt were attributed to the people not being prepared but some of them were the result of the utilities not being prepared. When the utilities try to project these increased demands, no one wants to believe them but everyone wants their power when it is needed. We should all be thankful that our company has elected to keep building new generation to meet the future needs.

We will be presenting a slate of officers for the coming year at our September meeting with the election and installation in November. Thanks to all of you who have agreed to serve next year.

Don't forget that our September meeting will be at Aldridge Gardens on Lorna road. Eddie Aldridge will present our Program. After the meeting there will be an opportunity to tour the gardens. I look forward to seeing everyone at the meeting.

I hope that each of you has had a great summer.

— Kerry Adams

**Want to keep up with what's happening?  
Got a computer?**

**Visit the SCS Retiree Website**

<http://www.scsretirees.com>

### **SEPTEMBER MEETING**

Our meeting for September will be at Aldridge Gardens on Lorna Road. Eddie Aldridge will be our speaker.

To get to Aldridge Gardens from I-459, take Hwy 31 South to hwy 150 and turn left. Go about 2 miles and Aldridge Gardens will be on the right. If you cross over I 459 on Lorna Road you have gone too far.

— Kerry Adams

**IF YOU CAN SPEND A PERFECTLY USELESS  
AFTERNOON IN A PERFECTLY USELESS MANNER,  
YOU HAVE LEARNED HOW TO LIVE.**

— LIN YUTANG

### **BIRTHDAYS**

**SEPTEMBER:** 1-James Welch, 2-Jane Freeman & Nell Wetzel, 3-Linda Chastain, 4-Petter Lynch & Carol Newton, 6-Janet Usry, 8-Alfred Mikel & Jeane Rayburn, 10-Ken Gillespie & Rod Wildman, 11-Gene Kachelhofer, Bob Patrick, Bill Ponder & Alice Smith, 12-Fred Ehrensperger & Sue Hassell, 13-Carol Yeager, 15-Philip Douglas, 17-Juanita Leonard, Lanee Wildman & Mike Zyne, 19-Claradel Holcombe & Dewey Yeager, 20-Dan Riley, 26-Liz Winter, 28-Percy Mohon & Bill Thurman and 30-Martha Dorrance, Jerry Hall & Jerry Vandegrift.

**OCTOBER:** 2-Mary Alice Thurman, 6-Glenda Beason & Joe Farley, 9-Doris Douglas, 10-Bill Wright, 12-John Hall & Janice Thies, 14-Brenda Hall, 18-Billie Ewing, Nettie Hartin & Tom Morgan, 19-Bonnie Russell, 27-Bill Harrison & Grace Kyser, 28-Monroe Smith and 29-Nell Mehaffey.

— Jay Dorrance

### **OBITUARIES**

#### **In Memoriam**

**Rev. William Herb Thrasher, Sr.**, 79, of Woodstock, Alabama passed away on Tuesday, July 25, 2006. Herb retired in 1986 as a Design Specialist from SCS electrical design-substations. In addition to his 30 years of service with Southern Company Services he served 42 years as a bi-vocational Southern Baptist pastor in the Bessemer, Pleasant Grove and Bibb associations. He is survived by his wife of 58 years, Lois Walker Thrasher, Two sons, William H. Thrasher, Jr. and Capt. Paul W. Thrasher, US Navy (Ret), one daughter, Iris Thrasher Ilseman, eight grandchildren and three great grandchildren. Funeral services were held on Thursday, July 27 at Bessemer Brown Service Funeral Home.

**Thomas "Tom" Henry Steele**, 78, of Birmingham, Alabama passed away peacefully on Thursday, August 17, 2006 at the home of his daughter Brenda of Shelby County, Alabama. Tom

was a graduate of Auburn University and worked for General Electric Co. for seven years before coming to Southern Company Services, retiring in 1986 from SCS mechanical design with 28 years of service. At the time of his retirement he was a project engineer. He was a member of the SCS RETIREES and served as Finance Chairperson. Tom was preceded in death by his wife of 48 years, Anita Frances Santomena Steele who died in 2001. He is survived by five daughters; Barbie Hardy, Brenda Kelleher, Debbie Baumgartner, Donna Steele and Diane Shirley, 14 grandchildren, a twin brother, Bobby Steele, a sister, Eleanor Kremer, and a host of nieces and nephews. Tom's family received friends at the Jefferson Memorial Funeral Home on Saturday evening and a funeral service was held for him on Sunday at 2 p.m. on August 20 at the Eastminster Presbyterian Church, followed by a graveside service at Jefferson Memorial Gardens, Trussville, Alabama.

#### **Condolences**

Sincere sympathy is extended to the family of former SCS employee William Bartley Meeks who passed away on Thursday, June 15, 2006 at the age of 68. Mr. Meeks was a native of Chattanooga, Tennessee and came to Birmingham in 1971. In addition to his employment with Southern Company Services, Mr. Meeks was employed by Rust and BE&K Engineering companies. He is survived by his wife, Amelia, three children and one grandchild. Funeral services were held on Monday, June 18 at Southern Heritage Funeral Home in Pelham, Alabama. Interment followed at Gravel Hill Cemetery in Ft. Payne, Alabama.

Our heartfelt sympathy is also extended to SCS RETIREE **John Hargett** and his family in the death of John's wife of 53 years, Lillie Mae Walden Hargett, 79, who passed away on Monday, August 14, 2006. In addition to her husband she is survived by two daughters, Cheryl Ann Mason and Norma Jean Bascovsky, three grandchildren and three great-grandchildren. Funeral services were held for Mrs. Hargett on Wednesday, August 16 at Currie-Jefferson Funeral Home Chapel followed by

interment in Jefferson Memorial Gardens South, Hoover, Alabama.

— Jay Dorrance

### **TREASURER'S REPORT**

As of August 10, the income from dues is \$2166.00 and income from interest is \$132.60 for a total of \$2298.06. Expenses to date are \$146.02 for regular arrangements, \$68.94 for summer arrangements and \$50.00 for memorials, leaving a balance for the year of \$2033.64. We had two new members sign in this month, making a total of 180 paid-in members and 158 associate members.

— Henry Garrett

### **SUNSHINE REPORT**

**Mildred Hire Fleming's** husband, Attie, is now at home regaining his strength.

**Jim Rimel** remains in St. Vincent's (R. 472). His daughter said they hope to move him by the end of this week (August 14) to a rehab facility to help him regain strength. He will still be on antibiotics for awhile because of the staph infection he is fighting.

**Ed Williamson's** wife, Betty, has been diagnosed with ALS. She had an appointment with Dr. Oh at UAB in July. She is in good spirits and has lost very little strength in the last three months. Her next appointment is in six months.

**Jim Maughn's** son-in-law has also been diagnosed with ALS.

**John Carter** has just finished his fifth chemo treatment and expects to receive one to three more.

**Howard Hubbard** is being treated with epidurals for back problems.

**Bill Guthrie** will begin 35 weekdays of radiation this week at the Bruno Cancer Center.

**Martha Dorrance** is recuperating at home after breast cancer surgery, and will begin radiation treatments at Shelby Baptist soon.

**Scotty Herron** had total knee replacement in June

**Mike Zyne** is in room 176A t Mount Royal Towers. His phone number is 414-9989. He is in a wheel chair most of the time. Said his knees had given out.

— Liz Winter

### **THE SPOTLIGHT SHINES ON WILLIAM T. ECHOLS**

William (Bill) Echols was born in Detroit, Michigan but found his way to Birmingham in 1953 as a drafter trainee with Southern Natural Gas. After four years there he took jobs in Baton Rouge and Chicago before returning to Birmingham in 1962 to work for U. S. Pipe, Bray Engineering and Harbert Construction. His Southern Company employment began in 1970 in the fossil design section led by M. C. Brickell. His first assignment was related to Plant Bowen units 2 through 4. His next assignment was the modeling of Plant Miller, and upon completion of that assignment he returned to the fossil design section for work on the four units at Plant Scherer. Bill opted for one of the early retirement offers.

Bill was the first boy from Alabama to graduate from Boys Town in Nebraska. In the 1947 graduation convocation, Father Flanagan gave the seniors several guidelines that Bill has treasured throughout his life. The advice included "identify yourself with your church," "live your faith," and "be wise in your use of money." However, the best advice was "to choose your friends at church gatherings and be especially careful in selecting your lady friends." He listened carefully and met his wife of 53 years, Eloise, at church. This strong marriage has resulted in 5 sons and 2 daughters, 14 grandchildren and 5 great grandchildren. Nearly all of their family members live in the Birmingham area.

Bill is involved in two outstanding community programs. For 24 years he has been associated with the Kairos (God's special time) prison ministry. The mission of this non-profit group is "to bring Christ's love and forgiveness to all incarcerated individuals, their families and those who work with them, and to

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assist in the transition of becoming a productive citizen.” Bill has participated in twice-a-year retreats and one weekend a month visits with prisoners at Donaldson, Draper and Elmore prisons. Bill is a donor in the apheresis program. The apheresis process involves removal of whole blood from a patient or donor. The components of the whole blood are separated into plasma, platelets or leukocytes. These components are critical to the recovery of patients undergoing bone marrow or organ transplants, and chemotherapy and radiation treatments. We should all applaud Bill for his dedicated services in these two programs.

On a personal note, I am impressed through the interviews for these articles by how many of our retirees who are involved in programs dedicated to serve others. None of them has ever sought any special attention for such service.

— Charles E. Hickman

### JULY MEETING ATTENDANCE

Buddy Coggin reports that 47 members and guests attended the July meeting.

### AFTER ALL SHE'D BEEN THROUGH

Our company conducts bus tours for visitors to Atlanta. Most of the tourists, we find, are fascinated with facts about *Gone with the Wind* author Margaret Mitchell.

On a recent tour, the guide pointed out the apartment building where Mitchell lived when she wrote the famous Civil War novel. Then, as the bus continued on its route, the guide pointed out the spot where Mitchell had been struck by a car, dying a few days later at age 48.

Pondering the tragedy, one woman remarked, “How sad—after all she went through during the war!”

— Jeri Leedy  
Reader's Digest, Sept. 1992

## SCS RETIREE LEADERSHIP FOR 2006

### Officers

President	Kerry Adams 980-7185
Vice President	Dora Brandt 956-0502
Secretary	Pat Moore 979-3353
Treasurer	Henry Garrett 853-6079

### Directors

Richard Chastain	822-8971
Dan Finney	995-9703
Bill Garner	967-5978
Jackie Imbush	991-8472
Nell King	822-7562
Joe Leamon	870-5637
Jack Goertz (ex-officio)	991-7766

### Committee

#### Chairpersons

Arrangements	Buddy & Judy Coggin 785-5992
Audit	Wayne Walton 822-1875
Fellowship	
Finance	
Membership	
Newsletter	Dan & Myrna Wise 942-2336
Nominating	Jerry Sappington
Program	
Sunshine	Liz Winter 822-6142

## **DIGITIZED SPIES**

Lance Nail, Ph.D., had no need for an account with Georgia Power, because he lives in Birmingham and teaches in UAB's School of Business.

But about four years ago, Nail's name started showing up on power bills mailed to an Atlanta address. In addition, a chatty crook ran up several hundred dollars worth of charges to BellSouth Mobility, BellSouth, and PowerTel accounts opened in Nail's name. The unknown culprit was even able to rent an Atlanta apartment on the basis of Nail's good credit.

"I was lucky that an alert BellSouth Mobility representative called me to question the two new cell phone accounts opened in my name," Nail says. "I called credit reporting agencies and issued a fraud alert. After that, companies couldn't open new accounts for me without calling for a confirmation. The problems stopped then, although PowerTel still showed \$800 charged to me as bad debt until this past July."

Suffering the fate of many Americans, Nail was the victim of identity theft—the country's top-ranking consumer fraud complaint, according to the Federal Trade Commission (FTC). Identity thieves are 21st-century versions of the black-hatted scoundrels who robbed stagecoaches in the Old West. But instead of stealing the U.S. mail, they take your name. Armed with as little as your Social Security number and address, they can run up credit card bills, open new accounts, or steal tax refunds and mail. Having a "borrowed" identity has even helped some commit such crimes as drug-dealing and terrorism.

### **A Crime on the Rise**

Computers aren't a necessary component of identity theft. But the crime is a product of the computer age, in which most personal and business records and transactions are handled electronically. With simple bits of information, identity thieves can charge thousands of dollars worth of goods and services to you. They often change addresses for accounts, so that victims are unaware of charges."I

still don't know how they obtained my Social Security number," Nail says. "Since then, I've learned that a number of identity thieves work as waiters, copying names, Social Security numbers, and addresses from drivers' licenses or personal checks. My number is no longer on my license."

Identity thieves are becoming more and more brazen, according to Sanjay Singh, Ph.D., who heads the Information Systems Program in the UAB School of Business. In the mid-1990s, he was an identity-theft victim, billed for student loans he didn't incur. For a while he conducted a class exercise to show his business students how much—and how fast—personal information is available electronically.

Singh says he no longer assigns the exercise. "Now in every class, almost everyone knows someone who's been a victim of identity theft," he says. "The risks are high. Today, businesses and schools use your credit rating as a reference check. So the crime can affect everything you do, whether you're looking for a job, renting an apartment, or applying for admission to school. People have to take control of their personal identities and become vigilant about where their personal information is going."

### **Tracking Digital Thieves**

"The key is protecting your Social Security number," says Lieutenant Paul Logan, a UAB alumnus who heads the Identity Theft Unit for the Jefferson County Sheriff's Office. "We highly recommend that everyone remove Social Security numbers from their driver's licenses. Also, it's not wise to carry either your Social Security number or your health insurance card in your wallet." Logan also advises everyone to have a personal credit check run every six months. "It's well worth the money," he says. Logan, two other full-time investigators, and four detectives stay busy investigating all aspects of identity theft. "In the case of electronic fraud, for example, we trace addresses and names of Internet providers, following up when thieves order items online," he says.

## **SCS OUTSIDE**

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Jefferson County Sheriff Mike Hale formed the Identity Theft Unit in 2004 in recognition of the growing prevalence and impact of the crime. "It's probably the only nonviolent offense that traumatizes its victims almost as much as a violent offense," Logan says. "Victims spend an average of about \$1,000 of their own money and countless hours of their time to straighten out their affairs. Also, there's the embarrassment of having credit applications rejected and checks bounce. This can go on for years. "Logan says that in one case the unit worked, Jefferson County residents had stolen a Colorado woman's identity and later declared bankruptcy in her name. She discovered the identity theft when she applied for a mortgage loan and was rejected.

#### **Corporate Costs**

While identity theft is a nightmare to individuals such as Nail and Singh, it also victimizes businesses, schools, and government organizations. Carol Burt, an adjunct faculty member in the UAB Department of Computer and Information Sciences, is chief executive officer of 2AB Inc., a computer services and products business; among other services, the company provides security for business information systems and electronic commerce Web sites. Burt relies on 2AB security architects such as Sam Lumpkin, a former military intelligence officer and BellSouth computer security manager, to devise security strategies for corporate customers.

"Any company over a certain size needs security safeguards," says Lumpkin, who has designed such safeguards for many major business information systems. "They need protection from external people who want to get into their systems and internal people who might use information from the systems wrongfully."

One major component of a security system is the capacity to identify who does what—to track what a person does once he or she gets into a system. "Virtual locks are good, but you can get around them. What you need is the equivalent of cameras. You need to be able to see exactly who in the

organization accessed information that was later compromised or stolen."

Lumpkin says there's little that employees can do to safeguard electronically stored information if corporations don't take steps to protect the information. "Some companies will decide not to make their systems secure because they decide it's cheaper to deal with lawsuits and bad publicity," he says. "So as a consumer, you need to look at the track records of companies you deal with." But he adds that breaking into computer systems isn't the way most identity thieves work. "The most successful approach is social engineering. Someone calls to say they want to verify a charge and asks you for your Social Security or credit card number," Lumpkin says. "That's a problem here in the South, where everyone wants to be friendly and accommodating. So sometimes it's a case of putting up steel doors but having tissue walls." While approaches to thievery may have gotten more sophisticated in the electronic era, there's nothing new about the motivation, adds Lumpkin: "Some people will try to sell you a blind horse, even today."

— UAB Alumni Gazette  
April 2004

#### **ACTUAL NEWSPAPER HEADLINES**

Cold Wave Linked to Temperatures  
Enfields Couple Slain; Police Suspect Homicide  
Red Tape Holds Up New Bridge  
Deer Kill 17,000  
Typhoon Rips Through Cemetery; Hundreds Dead  
Man Struck by Lightning Faces Battery Charge  
New Study of Obesity Looks for Larger Test Group  
Astronaut Takes Blame for Gas in Spacecraft  
Kids Make Nutritious Snacks  
Chef Throws His Heart into Helping Feed Needy  
Arson Suspect is Held in Massachusetts Fire  
British Union Finds Dwarfs in Short Supply  
Ban on Soliciting Dead in Trotwood  
Lansing Residents Can Drop Off Trees  
Local High School Dropouts Cut in Half  
New Vaccine May Contain Rabies

Man Minus Ear Waives Hearing  
Deaf College Opens Doors to Hearing  
Air Head Fired  
Steals Clock, Faces Time  
Prosecutor Releases Probe into Undersheriff  
Old School Pillars Are Replaced by Alumni  
Bank Drive-in Window Blocked by Board  
Hospitals Are Sued by 7 Foot Doctors  
Some Pieces of Rock Hudson Sold at Auction  
— From the Internet

**IF ONLY LIFE WAS AS SIMPLE AS YOUR  
COMPUTER**

To get your daily exercise, you'd just click on  
"Run"!

Hit ESC to pause life if you need a break. When  
you're ready to carry on again just press any key!

To add/remove someone in your life, click Settings  
and Control Panel.

If life gets too noisy, just turn off the speakers!

To improve your appearance, just adjust the display  
settings.

When you lose your car keys, just click on Find!

Need "Help" with work? It'd be just a click away  
(or hit 'F1').

Auto insurance wouldn't be necessary - You'd just  
use your backup disk to recover from a crash.

And if you really messed up your life, you could  
press "Ctrl - Alt -Delete"

**AND START ALL OVER!**  
— Internet Wisdom

**A FEW GOOD BOOKS I RECOMMEND**

Desert Crossing,  
I. Rhoda Camel

School Truancy,  
Marcus Absent

I Was a Cloakroom Attendant,  
Mahatma Coate

I Lost My Balance,  
Eileen Dover and Phil Down

Mystery in the Barnyard,  
Hu Flung Dung

Positive Reinforcement,  
Wade Ago

Shhh!  
Danielle Soloud

The Philippine Post Office,  
Imelda Letter

Things to Do at a Party,  
Bob Frapples

Stop Arguing,  
Xavier Breath

Come on In!  
Doris Open

The German Bank Robbery,  
Hans Zupp

I Hate the Sun,  
Gladys Knight

Prison Security,  
Barb Dweyer

**SCS OUTSIDE**

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Irish First Aid,  
R.U. O'Kaye

My Career as a Clown,  
Abe Ozo

The World's Deadliest Joke,  
Theophilus Punoval

Here's Pus in Your Eye,  
Lance Boyle

My Life on Skid Row,  
Titus A. Drum

I Didn't Do It!  
Ivan Alibi

Why I Eat at McDonalds,  
Tommy Ayk

I Hit the Wall,  
Isadore There

The Bruce Lee Story,  
Marsha Larts

Take This Job and Shove It,  
Ike Witt

Rapunzel Rapunzel,  
Harris Long

Split Personalities,  
Jacqueline Hyde

How I Won the Marathon,  
Randy Hoelway

Songs from "South Pacific,"  
Sam and Janet Evening

— Internet communication

**SCS RETIREES**

**P.O. BOX 2625**

**BIRMINGHAM, AL 35202**

*Our next meeting will be at Aldridge  
Gardens. See details inside*