



# Roane County News

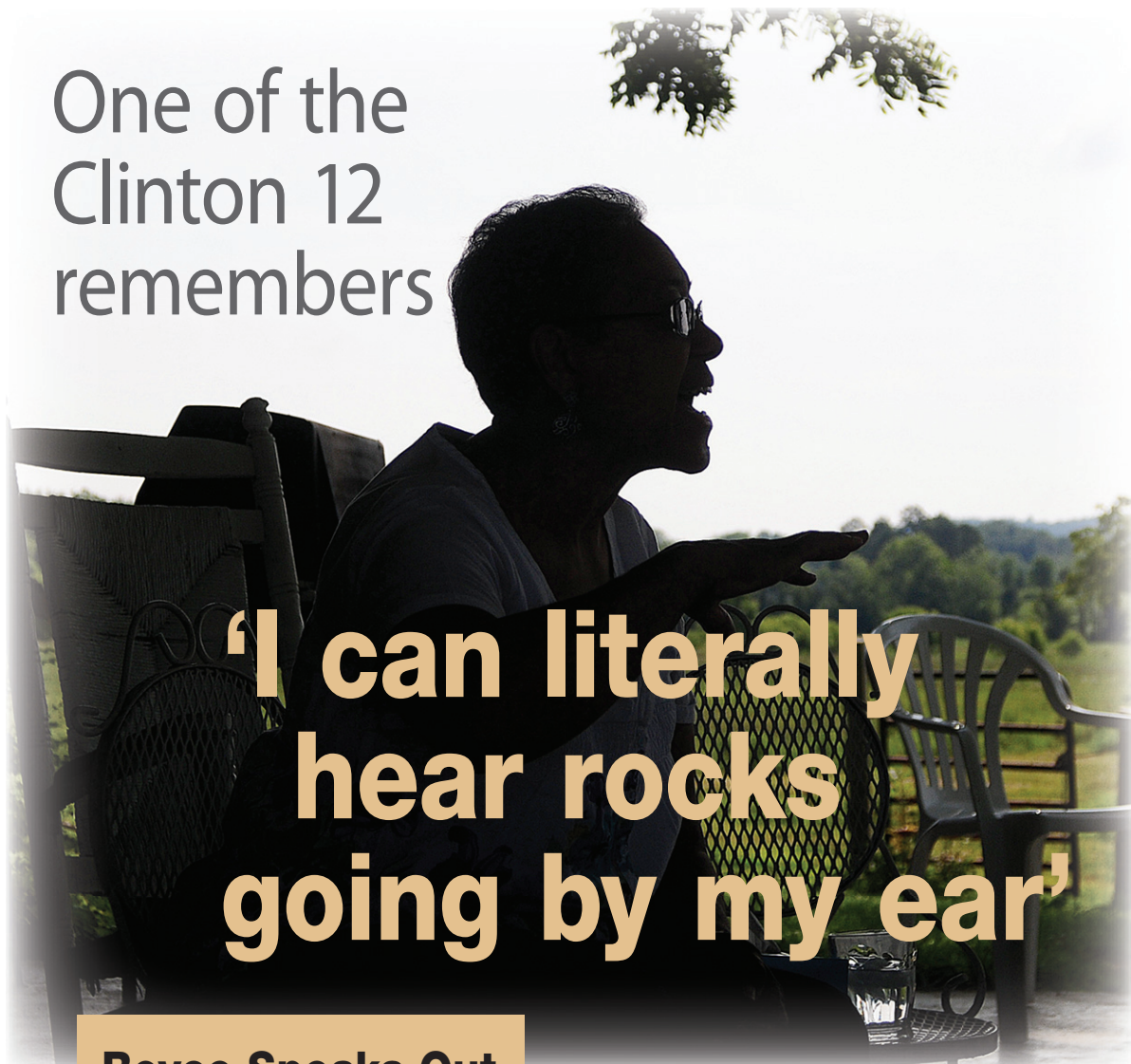
© 2009 Roane County News • www.roanecounty.com

50¢  
10 pages  
One section

Serving Harriman, Kingston, Midtown, Oliver Springs, Rockwood and Roane County, Tennessee  
Volume 56 Number 89

Monday • Tuesday  
July 27-28, 2009

## One of the Clinton 12 remembers



### 'I can literally hear rocks going by my ear'

#### Boyce Speaks Out



**The Clinton 12**  
We weren't chosen. We were all there just for an education. It was our time.

#### Her first day of school

They (the students) wanted to know everything about me.

#### John Kasper and Asa Carter

They let Kasper get his foothold. He got his foot in the door. He got his whole body in. He took over. They were sheer bigots.

#### The protests

Here you are in this little town and you have tanks going up and down the street. It made you think, I guess we really are at war.

#### The Clinton 12

Jo Ann Crozier Allen Boyce  
Maurice Soles • Anna Theresser Caswell  
Alfred Williams • Regina Turner Smith  
William R. Latham • Alonah McSwain  
Robert Thacker • Minnie Ann Dickey Jones  
Ronald Gordon "Poochie" Hayden

DAVID DOONAN/Roane Newspapers  
While visiting the Oliver Springs home of her sister, Jo Ann Crozier Allen Boyce recounts the early days of desegregation in Clinton, when she became one of what history would invariably refer to as The Clinton 12.

By JENNIFER RAYMOND  
jraymond@roanecounty.com

On Aug. 27, 1956, history was made in the small town of Clinton — history that would lay the ground work for the future.

On that day, 12 high school students said a prayer and then made the long trek down Broad Street and Foley Hill to the front of Clinton High School to become the first African American students to walk through those doors.

They were also the first black students to attend an all-white public high school in the South.

Although the integration at Little Rock Central High School in Arkansas has become more prominent in history books, Clinton was, in fact, integrated a year before Little Rock.

"We weren't chosen," said Jo Ann Crozier Allen Boyce, who was one of those 12 groundbreaking students. "We were all there just for an education. It was our time."

Boyce remembers that first day being quite calm and her white classmates being curious.

"They wanted to know everything about me," Boyce said.

By the third day though, the mood had changed.

Segregationist John Kasper rolled into town to protest the integration that had been ordered by Judge Robert L. Taylor after the ruling in the U.S. Supreme Court case of Brown vs. Board of Education. He brought his hatred and bigotry with him.

"The kids were a little more aggressive," Boyce said after Kasper began to protest.

Curiosity had turned into hate for some.

See CLINTON, Page 5

## Prosecutor will seek to revoke Houston's bond

### Irvine says Rocky has violated house arrest, monitoring conditions

By DAMON LAWRENCE  
dlawrence@roanecounty.com

Randy Rogers has made countless arguments on behalf of Rocky Houston over the last three years.

On Thursday, he argued why he should no longer have to represent Houston.

"I do not rise to toot my own horn," Rogers said. "I rise to protect myself from the scurrilous allegations made by this man who I have spent many years now trying to help."

Rogers said his desire to withdraw from the case stems from an interview Houston conducted with a TV station.

In the interview, Houston called Rogers a thief, a liar and a coward.

"And he is wrong in all three respects, but most particularly that I am a coward," Rogers said. "I cannot effectively represent this man."

Special Judge David Hayes granted his motion to withdraw.

"He is off the case," Hayes said.

As soon as Hayes uttered those words, Rogers walked out of the courtroom.

Houston's older brother, Leon, is also without an attorney. Hayes granted Leon's request to have defense attorney James Logan removed from his case.

Logan didn't object to being removed.

"Under the present circumstances there is an inability to communicate," Logan said.

"Our communication has broke down," Leon agreed.

That's just one of numerous reasons Leon gave for wanting Logan off the case.

"I feel like I have to have his testimony to prove ongoing insurance fraud, ongoing conspiracy to interfere with insurance fraud and establish motive why these people tried to kill me and my brother," Leon said.

Rocky and Leon are accused of killing Roane County Sheriff's Deputy Bill Jones and Mike Brown. Brown was out on a ride-

along with Jones when they were killed in a shootout outside of Leon's home on Barnard Narrows Road on May 11, 2006.

The state claims Rocky and Leon massacred the men with a barrage of bullets when Jones showed up to serve an outstanding warrant on Rocky.

The brothers claim they acted in self-defense after Jones and Brown pulled up shooting. All four men fired weapons in the shoot-out.

Leon was tried in July 2008, but a mistrial was declared after the jury announced it was hopelessly deadlocked.

Rocky's trial last December ended in confusion. He was found not guilty for the first-degree premeditated murder of Brown.

He was also found not guilty on several lesser charges, but former Houston judge James "Buddy" Scott ruled the verdicts on the lesser charges did not count because the jury failed to follow proper instructions.

The future of Rocky's case hinges on a decision by the Court of Criminal Appeals. The state wants to retry Rocky, but he argues a retrial would constitute double jeopardy, which is prohibited by the U.S. Constitution.

Rogers appealed to the higher court on his behalf. Hayes said the case is stayed until the appeals court makes a decision.

Leon's retrial was scheduled to start Aug. 10, but Hayes ordered a delay because special prosecutor Kenneth Irvine is having health problems.

Irvine told the court that he's been battling Bell's palsy and wouldn't be ready for trial next month.

Hayes set Nov. 2 as the new trial date.

Hayes urged Leon to get an attorney. Leon said he'd try.

"If worse comes to worst, I'll represent myself," he said.

Hayes advised him not to, but added that with or without an attorney, the case is going to trial.

See HOUSTON, Page 2

## First two county firefighters now on the job

By DAMON LAWRENCE  
dlawrence@roanecounty.com

Clarence Nelson has no way to see into the future.

That's why Nelson, the chief of the Blair Volunteer Fire Department, is keeping his comments low key about two paid firefighters joining the county payroll.

"It's a wait-and-see thing, really," Nelson said. "We'll just have to see how it works out."

The recently passed Roane County budget included funding for the firefighters.

## It's first step toward paid fire department

One day the county hopes to field a full-fledged paid department. This is apparently a step in that process.

"I've been pushing for this for a long time, so I'm looking forward to them getting started," Emergency Management Director

Howie Rose said.

The county took some property-tax money out of the rural debt service fund and added it to the urban services fund to pay for the new positions.

The county could continue to add more paid positions in the

years ahead.

Rose said the benefits of that should include decreased response times, more manpower to fight fires and lower ISO ratings — which can mean homeowners' insurance savings to county residents.

The county has five volunteer departments that fight fires and provide other emergency services in the rural areas.

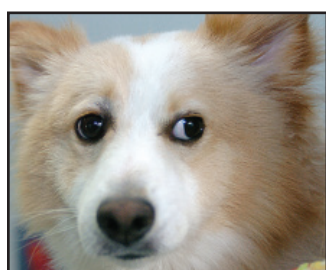
The county commission passed a resolution in June 2008 to start the county fire department.

At the time, some of the volunteer chiefs expressed displeasure with the move.

Rose said he believes the paid firefighters and volunteers will work well together.

He said the two who were hired, Josh Taylor and Matt Johnson, had been volunteers with the Midtown Volunteer Fire Department.

Rose said Taylor and Johnson will be stationed at Midtown because of its central location in the county.



Pets of the Week, Page 3

### What are this year's big games on the gridiron?

Page 6



roanecounty.com





# CLINTON

From Page 1

Boyce said before integration most blacks knew their place and were tolerated in the city.

"It was very different from that Southern living that you've been living your whole life," she added.

With Kasper fueling the hatred, crowds began to gather and stand in the street waiting for the 12 students to ascend the hill to the school.

"It's a long distance to be in the position to encounter violence," said Boyce, who remembers people yelling and screaming — and then throwing rocks and rotten tomatoes at her and her friends.

"I can literally hear rocks going by my ear," Boyce said.

What was once anxiety had escalated into terror.

"Things went from hopefulness to sheer fear," she said.

Many days, the black students left school early and were taken home in police cars.

"Learning is almost impossible at this point," Boyce said.

But she commends her teachers, who she calls phenomenal.

"They tried as much as they could to keep the environment conducive to learning," she said.

A hero of hers was her teacher, Margaret Anderson, who she said took the time to get to know the black students.

"She really took us under her wing," Boyce said. "She was a woman way before her time. She seemed to understand us more than other white people."

The principal at the time, David Brittain, also gave it his all.

"But it only takes one bad apple to show us the other rotten ones," she added.

The protests increased, and Boyce and her classmates began to notice out-of-state license plates on vehicles of people who went to Clinton to join in the protest around September 1956. At that time, another protester showed up in the form of Asa Carter.

"It stirred up that group that absolutely hated black people," she added.

If these two men hadn't made their way to Clinton, or if the local government had stepped in more than they did, Boyce said things may have been different.

"They let Kasper get his



DAVID DOONAN/Roane Newspapers  
**Jo Ann Crozier Allen Boyce weeps as she remembers the struggle and courage of her fellow Clinton 12 classmates who continued to get their education at Clinton High School after she and her family moved to Los Angeles.**

foothold. He got his foot in the door. He got his whole body in. He took over," she said. "They (Kasper and Carter) were sheer bigots."

The uproar became too much for the small Clinton police force to handle. A home guard of area men was formed.

However, it was too overwhelming for that group, as well, and state troopers came in. That also didn't appear to be enough so Gov. Frank Clement turned to the National Guard for help.

The head of the National Guard was a magnanimous creation and someone who was determined to get the situation under control, she said.

"There were some days when you knew there was goodness at work," Boyce said.

The sight of the town after the National Guard came was unforgettable.

"Here you are in this little town and you have tanks going up and down the street," Boyce said. "It made you think, I guess we really are at war."

All Boyce and the other African Americans wanted to do was go to school where their families paid

taxes and supported the schools.

"We were shipped off to a school that's almost 20 miles away because of the color of our skin," Boyce said. "We were brown. We were black."

Boyce and her family decided in December 1956 to leave Clinton for Los Angeles.

Boyce said it was really the decision of her mother, Alice Josephine Hopper Allen, who began to fear for the lives of her husband and her children.

Boyce said she didn't want to move.

"I begged. I wanted to see it through," said Boyce, who hoped she and her

white classmates might eventually become friends.

Although Boyce left, several others stayed to finish their education.

Tears stream down her face as she speaks of the courageousness of her fellow classmates.

"Most of them stayed and kept walking down that hill," she said. "They continued to be brave."

Bobby Cain, who Boyce described as the ring leader of the Clinton 12, became the first African American to graduate from a white public high school in the South.

Gail Epps Upton was the first African American woman to graduate from an integrated public high school in Tennessee.

Boyce also continued her education. She graduated from Dorsey High School and went to college to earn her nursing degree.

Now almost 70 years old, Boyce said she still doesn't understand hate.

"You struggle and wonder, why are we so hated," Boyce said of that painful time in her life.

However, Boyce believes those 12 students paved the way for other black students.

"The Clinton 12, I think were instrumental in helping a lot of kids be courageous and do what was right for them," she said.

She added that Clinton was a success story.

"The people of Clinton never closed the doors," she said.

Boyce still lives in California, but she returns every year to East Tennessee and Oliver Springs, where most of her family lives and where her mother was born.

She is also part of the Oliver Springs Historical Society, which is sharing the stories of the Clinton 12 and other African Americans.

"It's very exciting," Boyce said.

# Roane Area Reunions

*Editor's note: The Roane County News publishes reunions each Monday. Reunion notices should be submitted no later than 3 p.m. Thursday to appear in the following Monday paper.*

## COMMUNITIES

• Triangle Park Association Inc.'s second F.R. Davis Park homecoming reunion will be Sept. 4-6 at the park (formerly Triangle Park) at 957 Unaka St., Harriman. Hours will be from 9 p.m. to midnight Friday, from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. Saturday and from 1 to 6 p.m. Sunday. Call Gloria Leverett at 691-8224 for details.

• A reunion for the Elizabeth, Gobey and Oak Hill communities of Morgan County will begin at 10 a.m. Aug. 8 in Elizabeth Baptist Church fellowship hall, Morgan County. Coffee and sweet rolls will be available for early arrivals. Those attending are asked to bring a covered dish for the 1 p.m. luncheon; paper goods and beverages will be furnished. Call either Judy Griffith at 882-8865, John A. Jones at 423-346-7832, Charlene Gregg at 423-346-5419 or J.B. and Georgia Pollard at 423-346-9687 for details.

## FAMILIES

• Descendents of George Thomas and Effie Jane Wolfe Childs will gather for a reunion from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Sept. 6 at Roane County Park's shed 3. Those attending are asked to bring a covered dish for the noon meal.

• The 40th Guettner family reunion will begin at 1 p.m. Aug. 2 at Bradbury Community Center, Kingston.

## SCHOOLS

### Harriman High School

• The class of 1959 will have its 50-year reunion Sept. 25-27. Members and acquaintances from other classes are welcome to attend a social gathering at 8 p.m. Sept. 26 in Roane State Community College's student lounge and after 1 p.m. Sept. 27 at Harriman Riverfront Park; a meal is planned for 11 a.m. and is \$12 per person. Those planning to have lunch that day is asked to send money no later than Aug. 1 to Martha Harmon, 216 Westhill Drive, Lebanon, TN 37087 and specify the Sunday meal. The 1959 football team will be at the gathering.

## Weekly SUDOKU

Answer

|   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 4 | 9 | 2 | 3 | 6 | 5 | 8 | 7 |
| 2 | 6 | 7 | 4 | 5 | 8 | 9 | 3 | 1 |
| 5 | 3 | 8 | 7 | 9 | 1 | 2 | 6 | 4 |
| 6 | 7 | 2 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 8 | 1 | 9 |
| 3 | 9 | 4 | 1 | 8 | 7 | 6 | 5 | 2 |
| 8 | 1 | 5 | 9 | 6 | 2 | 7 | 4 | 3 |
| 9 | 5 | 6 | 3 | 7 | 4 | 1 | 2 | 8 |
| 4 | 8 | 1 | 6 | 2 | 9 | 3 | 7 | 5 |
| 7 | 2 | 3 | 8 | 1 | 5 | 4 | 9 | 6 |