



**Ronald Cantrell Nelson**  
**June 8, 1934-November 23, 2021**  
**Board Member, Emeritus**

Ron Nelson passed away just before Thanksgiving, and I had the honor of delivering his eulogy at the funeral service. Ron was a member of Lafayette's Board of Directors for 33 years, and has Emeritus status. In late summer of 2003, right in the middle of a \$3 million expansion, a tragic accident away from work, took the life of Lafayette's then Executive Director. The entire project, as well as the hopes of 75 developmental disabled adults on the waiting list, hoping to have a job, \$3 million of public funds, and perhaps the future of Lafayette — fell to Ron, who already was volunteering his professional skills for the project. Once again

sacrificing his personal home projects and time away from his wife Jo Ann, to whom he was devoted, Ron went to work full-time on the project --for free-- and brought the expansion project to completion, under cost and on schedule. I came aboard January 9, 2004, and I saw and spoke with Ron every day until we finished the expansion and cut the ribbon in June. Got a lot of professional advice, and personal counsel, which helped me tremendously. Ron's son Mike worked at Lafayette (he just retired), the workshop was a key part of his life, so Ron made it a key part of his life as well.

Later on, after I mentioned that the expansion took away the picnic space for our employees, Ron designed and drew up himself detailed plans to excavate the hillside in front of the workshop for a 300 sq. ft. custom picnic area patio. Ron showed the plans to Mark Bussen who said, "I would like to build this for Lafayette", and became the sponsor. A few months later it came to be. Today we have a plaque at the site that reads, "Nelson's Landing at Bussen Patio". 15 years later, that patio has not sunk or moved one-quarter of an inch. Why? It has a solid foundation.

Ron was from Alabama, and a proud Auburn engineer. Engineers use their education, experience and skills to design, plan, and build things --- **for others**. They leave a **foundation** for things that the next generation --- and the one after that, and even maybe the one after that — will see, use, and enjoy, and become part of their life as well.

Ron helped build a **foundation** that launched Lafayette to become the **largest, single, full-time employer of adults** with developmental disabilities in the State of Missouri. I will always miss Ron, am indebted to Ron, as is Lafayette.

You know, these days you hear the question a lot, "What do you think happens to you when you die?" But should not the question be, "**What did you make happen when you lived?**"

Thank you Ron, God Bless, and Rest in Peace. You earned it.




**Rob Libera**  
 CEO & Executive Director  
[rlibera@lafayetteindustries.com](mailto:rlibera@lafayetteindustries.com)

**Mission:** The mission of Lafayette Industries is to provide employment opportunities to persons with developmental disabilities and to persons with other disabilities who are 18 years or older.

**Goals:** • To provide a meaningful and productive work experience to persons who are disabled • To maintain a safe and pleasant work environment • To teach and to train persons with disabilities to acquire better work habits • To enhance self-worth and dignity through employment • To provide high-quality business service through packaging, light assembly and commercial mailings • To operate the center in a professional, fiscally responsible manner • To provide fair wages and good benefits

## HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO OUR JANUARY FOLKS!



### NORTH

Kalvin	Ervin	1
Emmanuel	Lowe	4
Bertrian	Thomas	7
Jessie	Carpenter	9
Telly	Mays	11
Briana	Beasley	15
Eddie	Brown	18
Duvunier	Gear	19
Dalana	Graves	19
Homer	Wells	20
Terry	Stevenson	26
Dawn	Kirkendall	30
Marina	Raskin	30

### WEST

Allison	Branham	3	David	Reardon	14
Craig	Conrad	4	Joseph	Hagan	14
Matt	Marien	5	Robin	Owen	17
Julie	Wefel	5	Bob	Thoele	18
Mary	Klevorn	7	Brian	Dunn	27
Mary	Boyle	9	Arthur	McCarver	29
Laura	Meyer	9	Hamid	Tariq	29
Deborah	Walker	9	Sam	Biondo	31
Stacey	Elster	10	Brendan	Sonnabend	31
Julie	Aufdenspring	14			

### WEST – CAUGHT BEING.....

#### RESPECTFUL – NOVEMBER 2021



**Above – left to right:** Ian Bagley, Carl Berger-  
United Healthcare, David Kendall

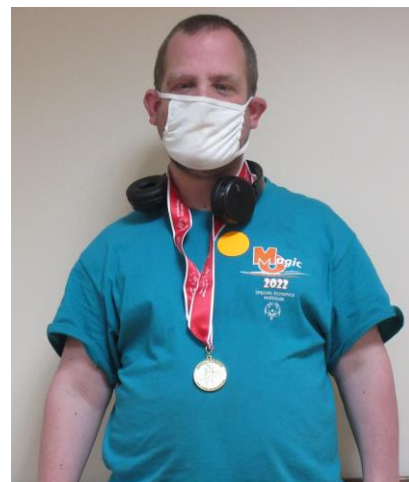
#### SAFE – NOVEMBER 2021



**Above – left to right:** Michael Branca, Carl Berger-  
United Healthcare, Debbie Draper



Chris Brock brought around some little items for the upcoming holidays for the Staff. As you can see, he has his presentation down. He certainly has the decorations down for the part. Thanks, Chris, and we love that smile!



## **ROBBIE GREGG – BOWLING GOLD MEDALIST HEADED TO ORLANDO NATIONALS**

By The Editor

Interviewer: In the first picture, what is happening and how did you feel?

Robbie: First picture is when I got selected to go to the camp for Team Missouri. I was at the Ball Park Village, and the head of the Special Olympics called. Her name is Susan Schaeffer.

Interviewer: Were you part of a team that went to state from the St. Louis area, or were the individuals picked from different cities that made up the Missouri team to the nationals? Can you tell me the names of your teammates, and where they were from?

Robbie: The Missouri Team was from different areas of the state. I can't remember all the names of my teammates, but they were from Jefferson City, Cape Girardeau, some from St. Louis and some from Kansas City. There were 16 athletes just for bowling, 132 athletes for Team Missouri.

Interviewer: What was your bowling average per game?

Robbie: My average was 190 per game, and the team's average was 160's, 170's and 180's.

Interviewer: What was the ceremony like when your team got their gold medals?

Robbie: For bowling and state, it was pretty good. Our team finally gets to go to the nationals in Orlando in June. Everyone on my team got gold and silver medals.

Interviewer: Are you ready for the nationals?

Robbie: I am ready for the nationals, and I hope to bring home some gold medals. Don't forget the opening ceremonies is on June 5<sup>th</sup> at 10:00 a.m., St. Louis time, on ESPN. Be sure to watch!!

**GOOD LUCK IN  
ORLANDO, ROBBIE!**





**Far left:** Ken McLuen - new retiree, Grace - his niece, Stephanie - his sister, Rob Libera, CEO and Executive Director

**Immediate left:** Ken McLuen's last van ride home

## **KENNY MCLUEN'S LAST DAY OF WORK AT WEST**

Monday, December 13<sup>th</sup>, was a momentous day for one of our employees at Lafayette West. 45 years ago the doors of Lafayette West had opened as a business, and one of its first employees was Ken McLuen. His father, Bob, and his mother, Ethel, were one of three couples who were the original founders of the Lafayette Industries. They had put up their own money to rent the space that the first 16 employees called their own workspace. Several groups in West County were looking to establish a workshop for adults with developmental disabilities, as opportunities out in the corporate world were limited. 45 years later that “young” man was still hard at work. However, now he felt like he had earned his retirement. He was ready to take a well-earned rest, and Monday, December 13<sup>th</sup>, was his last day as an official employee. He chose one of his favorite Free Lunches, and so we dined on hamburgers and cheeseburgers from Callier's. His co-workers made a retirement card for him, and his sister, Stephanie, and his niece, Grace, came over to celebrate with him. Then at the end of the day, he rode the van home just like he always did. His fellow van riders knew he wouldn't be back to Lafayette again to work. Ken, you were always faithful, and you represented our beginnings, and you represented what a life-time worker looks like: here every day, ready to work. We wish you well in your retirement, and to Ethel and her family: we owe a debt of gratitude to you that can only be appreciated, but never repaid.



## **SAFETY THOUGHTS FOR JANUARY 2022**

by Tom Heitert (The Safety Guru)

### **CHECK, CHECK AGAIN, MOVE**

My father-in-law was an outstanding man. While the Business Manager at The Purina Research Farm, he also loved using his hands for all types of projects. He was a fair carpenter who made a determined effort to teach yours truly a few tricks of the trade. One really stuck with me after all these years. That is “measure twice; cut once”. Let us take this idea and apply it to moving vehicles.

Moving vehicles inside the plant and outside require a fair amount of caution. The two plants of Lafayette Industries have in place numerous safeguards to protect our beloved employees. Numerous rules regarding warehouse access, for instance, mitigates dangers inherent in its operation. A chain stretches across the mouth of the warehouse when the forklift is in operation. Only specified employees can enter at any other time. The forklift itself is rarely used ON the shop floor during regular operating hours. We regulate the speed floor jacks carrying loads can travel down an aisle. BUT ----- A shout-out to all you operators out there. Check twice, then move. The types of injuries resulting from these vehicles can be serious, even catastrophic. Check twice, then move.

We should also make this application at home. It is incredibly sad when you hear of an adult backing their car or truck over a small child in the driveway. Backing out of parking spaces can be treacherous for the pedestrians passing by. Check twice, then move.

The riding lawn tractor, the sled on a snowy hill, the boat on the water: all present possibilities for unsuspecting people to be harmed. One more time, shall we? Look twice, then move.

**SAFETY IS NO ACCIDENT**

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**MORE LATER!**



Above – left to right: Allison Hanners, Angela Gentile, Casey Florent, Pam Gardner and Rob Libera

### **MAYOR MIKE CLEMENT DECLARES TUESDAY, 12/21/2021 LAFAYETTE INDUSTRIES WEST**

Gentile were at the Alderman meeting on Monday, 12/20/2021, representing Lafayette, along with Rob Libera, where they presented their proclamation. Mayor Clement should be a familiar face to a lot of our employees. He used to come over every time that we had an art class to lend a helping hand. He would also attend our program of the art program and glee club program at the end of the year. He has always been a big support. Thanks to our four lovely ladies (sorry, Rob!) for helping make the presentation. We decided to have one picture without the masks, but they went right back on as soon as we got done taking the picture. Congratulations to Lafayette West!

### **ST. CLEMENT KNIGHTS OF COUNCIL #13604**

#### **TOOTSIE ROLL CHECK PRESENTATION**



Immediate left, left to right: Becky Stillwell of Lafayette Industries and Dan O'Rourke of St. Clement Knights Council #13604

On Thursday, December 9<sup>th</sup>, the St. Clement Knights Council #13604 presented the checks for the proceeds of the Tootsie Roll Drive to both Academy of St. Louis and Lafayette Industries. St. Clement has been our long-time partner, and they have always been a constant for us, even through the pandemic. Thanks so much to the St. Clement Knights for their generosity and support.

### **IT IS TAX PREPARATION TIME! BUT...**

By Dick Kallemeier



The IRS and AARP, our support groups, have not issued final rules for taxpayer / tax preparer contact in the COVID environment. We hope to begin preparing tax returns the week of February 14<sup>th</sup>. As soon as possible we will notify you that appointments are available and begin scheduling.

The IRS tax intake/quality review form 13614-C must be completed prior to the tax session. In addition to the basic tax information, demographic information is also needed along with permission forms to allow the IRS to share data with AARP. The intake form, tax preparation guide and demographic data explanation are available by email when you make an appointment.

The new tax rates and increased standard deduction have eliminated many taxpayers from itemizing but just in case remember to bring all income forms (W2, 1099R, Social Security, SSI Letter, Interest, Dividends, Capital Gains), adjustments to income (IRA contribution, student loan interest, advance child tax credit, health care credits, tuition payments, etc.), Real Estate Tax receipts, rent receipts, proof of medical insurance and premium expenses (forms 1095A or B), and if you itemize (mortgage interest, charity gifts, medical expenses including mileage). Also needed for each person listed on the tax return is a photo ID, Social Security card, proof of age, direct deposit account numbers, a copy of last year's tax return (2019) and if a victim of tax fraud your IRS ID PIN. Don't forget if you are single and made a charitable contribution up to \$300 that is now deductible (\$600 for married filing jointly).

**CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE**



## **IT IS TAX PREPARATION TIME! BUT... (Continued):**

Many Lafayette workers owe no tax, but may be eligible for the Earned Income Tax Credit and possibly the Missouri Property Tax Credit (Circuit Breaker). A review of the employee's income, disability status and housing rental expense determines eligibility for the Property Tax Credit. Tax returns will be completed on the IRS computer tax preparation system and efiled with the IRS. Federal income, state income and property tax credit (if applicable) forms are completed as one package.

## **ARTISTIC FRIEND'S CLUB VISITS WEST**



On December 22<sup>nd</sup> three wonderful members of the Artistic Friends Club came for their yearly visit. This group have been making holiday ornaments and cookies, and then bringing them to us since 2009. We appreciate that they show up every year, and we never know what their creative minds will come up with by way of ornaments. This year's crop of grinning "snow" people was the best one yet that they have done. Thank you, Artistic Friends Club, for yet another wonderful addition to our terrific collection from you. Our employees look forward to your visits.

## **IN-HOUSE HOLIDAY PARTIES**

This year because of the spread of the Omicron variant of Covid-19, Lafayette had a tough decision to make about how to celebrate the holidays. In the end, they decided the safest thing for everyone was to have the celebrations in-house at both locations. West had their celebration on the 22<sup>nd</sup>, and North had their celebration on the 23<sup>rd</sup>. Both had a special Free Lunch, added a little music in the background, a few people made an open spot a dance floor, and you had a party. It was a way for folks to celebrate safely with those they work with every day. North got some pictures from their in-house celebration, but West didn't take any, as the photographer was busy helping serve the lunches. We think that someone took some pictures, and if we get any, then we will post them next month. We will post North's pictures that they took at the celebration on the next page. Thanks, everyone, for making a special time for everybody. Next year let's hope that we'll be able to return to a more normal celebration.



## NORTH'S IN-HOUSE HOLIDAY CELEBRATION



Anita Hightower and Robert McCoy



Christine Sanders and Jerome Binder



Folks Celebrate Holidays by dancing!!



Laird Simpson in foreground



John Hope and Roxanna Robinson



India Stewart and Cory Verges



James Campbell



Donald Jackson



Jason Doss



Demitri Jamison and Kadie Gallo



Darrius Roberts

## JANUARY 2022

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
						1 New Year's Day –  Happy 2022!!
2	3 <u>Both Workshops are open!!</u>	4	5	6	7	8 K of C Dance – St. Clare of Assisi School Cafeteria - 7:00 – 10:00p – Welcome in the New Year!!
9	10 PAY DAY	11	12	13	14	15
16	17 Martin Luther King Holiday – <u>Both Workshops are open!!</u>	18	19 6:00p – Board of Directors meeting	20 North Free Lunch	21	22
23	24	25 PAY DAY	26	27 West Free Lunch	28	29
30	31					