



ATTORNEYS

Best law firms for women

Baker Donelson, Husch Blackwell make top 100 list from Women Inc.

P2

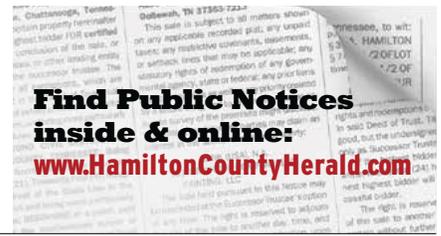


REAL ESTATE

Realtors party for good cause

Women's Council of Realtors aids charity with fall fundraiser.

P14



Find Public Notices inside & online:

www.HamiltonCountyHerald.com

Volume 106 | No. 42

Single Copy 50¢

CHATTANOOGA, HAMILTON COUNTY, TENNESSEE

October 18–24, 2019

HAMILTON COUNTY HERALD



50 YEARS AGO

What was going on in Chattanooga in 1969?

Friday, Oct. 17:

The Chattanooga Boys Choir has been selected to commemorate in ceremonial song this year's traditional lighting of the National Christmas Tree by President Nixon. Nationally acclaimed for its excellence, the Chattanooga Boys' Choir will be joined by the U.S. Marine Band as the only musical units highlighting America's Christmas Pageant of Peace.

The Hamilton County School Board has approved preliminary sketches of an addition to Lookout Valley Junior High School that would provide it with a senior high program. The plans must be approved first by the state department of education, and the County Council has asked to review the addition before bids are accepted. The estimate cost is \$350,000.

Sixteen persons appearing before the Hamilton County Legislative Delegation meeting at Interstate Auditorium Thursday night voiced desires to elect the school boards, county and city, by popular vote. Carl Levi, commander of American Legion Post 14

See 50 YEARS AGO, page 16

INSIDE

■ FINANCIAL FOCUS P10

■ REAL ESTATE P13

Annalisa's ghost awaits in infamous Read House room

Take a step back in time, explore the paranormal

By David Laprad

Shiba Gorman didn't believe in things that went bump in the night – until she and her husband stayed in Room 311 at The Read House hotel.

Infamous for a grisly murder that allegedly took place within its walls in 1929, Room 311 is said to be one of the most haunted hotel rooms in the U.S. There is no documentation of the killing – or at least no one is said to have scoured the city's 90-year-old jail records or newspaper archives to find it – but that hasn't stopped the rumor of an otherworldly guest in the room from persisting through the years.

The lack of evidence also has not stopped the staff at The Read House from telling the story of the murder and extended stay of a San Francisco woman named Annalisa Netherly to would-be ghost hunters, thrill-seekers, the mildly curious and skeptics.

Even the hotel's general manager, Ken Merkel, is happy to spin the eerie tale.

"There are several versions of

See **READ HOUSE**, page 11

Photo illustration by Leigh Singleton | Hamilton County Herald
Photo by David Laprad | Hamilton County Herald

FREE Daily Wine tasting



PARIS winery of CHATTANOOGA

6940 Lee Hwy. Suite#103 Chattanooga
Just south of Shallowford Rd.

Tues.-Thur. 10-6:00 pm
Fri. & Sat. 10-7:00 pm
Sundays 12:00-6 pm

Bring in this ad for 5 dollars off on a purchase of \$15.00 or more.





At left: Firefighter Paige Anderson, Training Chief William Andrews and firefighters Henry Frick and Emily Bell at the Chattanooga Fire Academy's graduation Oct. 10 at Clear Creek Church of Christ. The plaque is a class gift to the department. It's made of wood from a downtown Chattanooga building built in the 1800s.

Above: The newest graduates of the Chattanooga Fire Academy are a diverse group of men and women who are eager to serve and protect the citizens of Chattanooga.

Chattanooga Fire Academy graduates 23

A class of 23 cadets have made it through the Chattanooga Fire Academy's six-month program to become the newest members of the Chattanooga Fire Department.

"These firefighters are the future of our agency," says Lindsay Rogers, CFP representative. "They completed EMT training and mastered a number of other skills, like vehicle extrication, how to save a downed or injured firefighter, and how to

save themselves if they become trapped or disoriented while fighting a fire. We're proud of them."

The class contains the highest percentage of women graduating from a CFP Fire Academy. The group includes Paige Anderson, Emily Bell and Myrrhande Haskett.

Haskett played professional women's basketball in Mexico, Romania and Morocco, where her team won a championship.

She then retired and joined the fire department.

Another recruit, Samuel Seamster, was a football star at Ooltewah High School. He went on to play football at Middle Tennessee State University and in the NFL.

Seamster played for the Dolphins, Saints, Bills, Cowboys and Jaguars as a cornerback and defensive back before retiring and joining the fire department.

Military veterans in the class include Thomas Clark (Army), Tyler Hansen (Marines), Joshua Smelser (Army National Guard) and Austin Mays (Air Force).

A set of twins also graduated with this class. Matthew and Michael Miller own a local farm and responded to wildfires across the country as part of a wild land firefighter crew.

Several of the graduates are carrying on a family legacy

by following in their fathers' footsteps.

Austin Mays' dad was a senior firefighter with CFD. Jarrad Peace's father is a retired CFD captain who served the city from 1987-2017.

Both retired firefighters were present at the graduation Oct. 10 at Clear Creek Church of Christ.

Source: CFD

READ HOUSE From page 1

the story, but in the one we have accepted, Annalisa was, shall we say, getting around. Her husband took exception to her behavior and ended her life in the bathtub," he says.

Merkel's polite wording avoids a gruesome detail: As the story goes, Annalisa's husband didn't just pull a Norman Bates on his wife while she was bathing; he cut off her head.

Since then, guests have reported a variety of paranormal activity in the room. From unexplained noises and flickering lights to running water and shadowy figures, there's no shortage of stories about strange things happening in the room – or people who have come to believe the ghost of Annalisa indeed haunts its confines.

Tripp Gorman and his wife were not among the believers earlier this month as they drove from their home in Atlanta to Chattanooga, where they had reservations to be the first guests to stay in Room 311 since owner Avocet Hospitality Group had completed a \$28 million renovation of the hotel in October 2018.

But despite being a skeptic, Shiba Gorman enjoys visiting man-made haunted houses and had always entertained



Photo by David Laprad

There are no modern amenities in Read House's Room 311. Management says Annalisa likes it that way.

the notion that she could be wrong about the supernatural. So, when her husband received an email from The Read House inviting past guests to stay in Room 311, he signed them up.

"I've never believed in ghosts, but a small voice in the back of my head has always said, 'Maybe they do exist,'" Shiba explains. "So, I wanted to stay somewhere haunted so I could confirm whether such

things are real."

The Gormans had taken ghost tours in Savannah, Georgia, and Charleston, South Carolina, but those shallow waters had not prepared them for the immersive experience Shiba said she endured the night of their stay in Room 311.

The Room 311 experience begins outside the three-room suite after a short walk down a narrow, carpeted hallway

that creepily calls to mind the film, "The Shining." Although every other door along the way sports a fresh coat of paint and an electronic card reader, the entrance to Room 311 looks like it hasn't been refurbished since the current version of the hotel opened in 1872.

The door's light gray frame is marred with scuffs, the doorknob lacks polish and the manual lock requires guests to

use a physical key – like visitors to the hotel in 1929 would have done. The idea, Merkel acknowledges, is to impart the room with a sense of history before guests step inside.

After entering Room 311, visitors might feel like they have been transported to a hotel room in the early 20th century. From the cheesy fleur-de-lis wallpaper to the vintage furniture and decor to the antique rotary phone and crystal doorknobs, every detail evokes a sense of having stepped back in time.

Just like the entrance, the entire suite lacks the spit and polish of every other inch of The Read House. No attempt was made to purchase nicely kept pieces; rather, everything has a lived-in look, down to the distressed hardwood floors. Even the lining under the shade of a table lamp is peeling.

"This is our version of what we believe the room could have looked like when Annalisa arrived," Merkel says. "We want it to look and feel like something from the twenties and thirties."

To preserve the ambience, Room 311 lacks the amenities of every other guest room in the hotel. There is no television, refrigerator, electronic safe,



PUBLIC AUCTIONS
ALWAYS FREE TO REGISTER & BID
1300+ Lots Every Month! | www.SoldonCompass.com

GOV. EQUIPMENT & AUTO / 2-DAY EVENT

WEDNESDAY OCT 30 9:00 AM ET LIVE-WEBCAST
THURSDAY OCT 31 10:00 AM ET ONLINE ONLY
FLEET VEHICLES • COMMERCIAL TRUCKS
FORKLIFTS • HEAVY EQUIPMENT • MORE



BOOKING CONSIGNMENTS for November Auctions
CALL TODAY TO SAVE YOUR SPACE!
CONSIGNMENT SLOTS ARE FILLING UP FAST!

VEHICLES • TRUCKS • COMMERCIAL TRUCKS • MOTORCYCLES • BOATS
ATVs • RVs • TOOLS & EQUIPMENT • FIREARMS & HUNTING GEAR
HOME & OFFICE FURNITURE • ESTATE PROPERTY & ASSETS • BUSINESS ASSETS

www.SoldonCompass.com

See Catalogs Online or call 423-702-6180



Photo courtesy of The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum
Coming to the Chattanooga Public Library in December, "Americans and the Holocaust" examines the forces that shaped Americans' responses to Nazism during the 1930s and 1940s.

Downtown library to host U.S. Holocaust Memorial

The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum and the American Library Association have selected the Chattanooga Public Library to be one of 50 libraries nationwide to host a new traveling exhibition titled "Americans and the Holocaust."

The touring library exhibition is based on the special exhibition of the same name at the museum in Washington, D.C., and examines the motives, pressures and fears that

shaped Americans' responses to Nazism, war and genocide in Europe during the 1930s and 1940s.

More than 250 libraries applied for the 50 spots. Chattanooga's library was selected through a peer-reviewed application process that considered community demographics, library outreach plans and the availability of other Holocaust-related educational opportunities in the library's region.

The Chattanooga Public Library will host the exhibition from December 2020-February 2021.

As the only library in Tennessee selected, it will be the closest opportunity for many to see "Americans and the Holocaust," including residents and schools of nearby metro areas in Alabama, Georgia and North Carolina.

Information: ushmm.org/americans-ala

Source: Chattanooga Public Library

READ HOUSE From page 11

hair dryer or Keurig machine with complementary coffees and teas.

There is, however, a shoeshine kit and some old hangars in the bedroom closet and an ancient AM radio in the living room. But guests are going to have to make their own entertainment, Merkel says, because the radio doesn't work.

"The room was restored to make Annalisa comfortable – not today's hotel guest," Merkel quips. "The more we can make her comfortable, the more likely she will not disrupt our guests."

The Gormans came ready to make up for the lack of electronics. Not only did they have their smartphones, Shiba had packed a Wyze video camera for capturing every moment on video. After setting up the device in the bedroom, she began exploring their surroundings.

One of the first details she noticed were the bars outside the two bedroom windows. Installed during the recent renovation, the bars are similar

to those used to detain another of Room 311's famous guests – Al Capone.

Room 311 is also known for housing Capone while he was traveling through Chattanooga on his way to his federal trial in Chicago for tax evasion. Avocet installed rebar on the windows so guests could see what the view from the room looked like during that time, as well. "It's been said Annalisa was not a fan of Capone's cigar smoke," Merkel offers.

In the bathroom, Shiba found an old vanity, a pink claw foot tub and an original pull-chain toilet. Unlike the radio, the toilet worked.

The Gormans were grateful for this but already feeling unsettled. Even Tripp, a dyed-in-the-wool skeptic, said the room felt "creepy."

While their emotional unease might have set them on edge, it hadn't turned them into believers. Even Shiba, who was looking wide-eyed for evidence of ghosts, didn't think twice when she felt something briefly grab her wrist while she was in the bedroom.



Photograph provided
Shiba Gorman says she felt something grab her wrist. Later, a bruise emerged.

And when the lights in the hall outside their room flickered as they made their way to the elevator to go to dinner, they wrote it off as a coincidence.

Then, while eating at Bridgeman's Chophouse on

See **READ HOUSE**, page 23

Newsmakers

HHM CPAs management team grows



Klisch

HHM Certified Public Accountants has hired two additional partners in its Chattanooga office.

John Klisch will be a technical partner in HHM's accounting and

assurance department. He'll support the department by providing financial, accounting and auditing expertise with respect to midsized and growth-oriented companies in various industries.

For over 30 years, Klisch has helped clients with mergers and acquisitions, regulatory requirements, complex technical issues and corporate governance best practices.



McCallum

Also joining the firm's leadership is Stuart McCallum, who will serve as a partner in the management advisory services department.

McCallum will provide businesses with due diligence support, transaction

closing support and financial modeling.

Before joining HHM, McCallum was the retail dealership advisory lead for one of the country's largest accounting firms. Most recently, he was the vice president of investment banking for a boutique investment bank, where he provided sell-side advisory services to high value dealerships and clients in the technology industry.

McCallum has traveled nationally to speak on automotive and management advisory service topics, and his work has been featured in numerous publications.



Share your success

Have you recently added to your staff? Had your achievements recognized by your peers? Received a promotion? Share it!

Readers are invited to submit Newsmaker items to dlaprad@hamiltoncountyherald.com.

READ HOUSE From page 12

the ground floor, Tripp noticed a large and seemingly fresh bruise on his wife's wrist. It didn't faze him. "I thought maybe she'd bumped her arm into something," he explains.

But the bruise stopped Shiba midchew. "I don't bruise easily," she says.

By the time they returned to the room, Shiba was on full alert. Before turning in, she flipped on every light in the suite and checked her Wyze cam to make sure it was recording. Gripping her smartphone, she then settled into bed next to her already snoring husband and mentally readied herself for a sleepless night.

Haunted Chattanooga

Chattanooga is known for more than its tourist attractions, trails and lakes. Stories abound about hauntings beneath the city in Underground Chattanooga, and in addition to visiting the Tennessee Aquarium, residents and visitors can take a ghost tour to hear even more tales about the long-dead spirits that supposedly dwell in the city.

After spanning nearly the entire life span of Chattanooga, The Read House has inspired a few ghost stories. Built to replace the Crutchfield House, which had burned to the ground, the hotel opened in 1872 and has been serving guests ever since. Over the years, it's housed presidents,

celebrities and – if the stories are to be believed – a few of the city's phantoms.

"There was a duel in the lobby at one point, and several other people have expired in the hotel," Merkel says, his wording still genteel. "A lot of the stories revolve around bumps in the night, the feeling of something being in the room and running water."

After Avocet purchased The Read House in 2016, the company undertook a sweeping renovation of the site. As plans to transform the hotel into a luxurious, Roaring Twenties-style destination were taking shape, locals asked the new owners about their plans for Room 311.

Avocet presented its answer during a party late last year to introduce the renovated suite to Chattanooga. To everyone's surprise, more than 500 people showed up to sip wine and see the purportedly haunted space. The huge turnout convinced them to begin giving tours.

A year later, 30 to 50 people a day still show up for the free excursions, which the hotel conducts daily between noon and 2 p.m. (There are no tours on Thursdays in October so the staff can prepare the room for that evening's guests.)

While conducting the tours, the hotel's bell staff add their own stories to the history of what happened in Room 311 and what people have seen and heard there.



Photograph provided

WTCl-PBS has installed a new tower, antenna (pictured) and transmitter. Viewers who receive local channels using an antenna will need to rescan their TV.

WTCl sports new tower, transmitter, antenna

WTCl-PBS, the Tennessee Valley's PBS station, is one of hundreds of television stations across the country that have changed their over-the-air broadcast frequencies as part of the FCC-mandated Spectrum repack.

As a part of this process, WTCl has installed a new tower, antenna and transmitter. The new tower is taller and replaces the one installed in 1969, while the new transmitter is three times as efficient, says Bryan Fuqua, interim president and CEO.

"This will result in a savings for our nonprofit PBS station and will provide a stronger signal for our viewers as we begin our 50th year of service to the community," Fuqua adds.

WTCl viewers who receive their local channels using an antenna will need to

rescan their TV to ensure it recognizes the new frequency. Cable and satellite subscribers do not need to rescan.

To rescan, viewers will need to find the "auto tune," "program" or "rescan" selection in the setup menu of their TV or converter box remote control.

Viewers experiencing connection issues are encouraged to point their antenna toward the Falling Water area. Visit www.wtcltv.org/rescan or call 423 702-7815 for additional help.

WTCl reaches a 35-county region and serves over 440,000 households with programming, events and educational outreach. Scheduling, programming and membership information is available at wtclTV.org.

Source: WTCl

Guest services manager Jared Nelson says the staff has reported seeing the pull-chain on the toilet swing, while visitors have told him they heard the pipes in the walls rattling.

Although Nelson has never heard the pipes make noise – which he admits could be attributed to their normal function – he says he has seen the door on the davenport cabinet in the living room slowly open. "We think that's Annalisa's way of telling us to get out," he adds.

While Nelson enjoys telling these and other stories, he's especially fond of relating his experience with flickering lights in the room.

"When I started working here in 2015, I thought the story about the hotel being

haunted was a running joke, so I went along with it.

"Once, a grandmother and her two grandchildren were staying in Room 311. Since the grandkids were close to my age, I told them they were staying in a haunted room.

"One night, as I was delivering food, the lights in the room start flickering. I thought the girls were messing with me. But when I asked the grandmother where they were, and she said they were at the pool."

When Nelson stepped out of the room, the lights stopped flickering. He later related the incident to his boss, who asked if he smoked. When Nelson said he did, his boss said, "Someone died in that room, and the ghost hates men who smoke."

"I'm not a smoker anymore," Nelson says.

A night to remember

As Shiba was lying in bed, she went over the stories she'd heard about Room 311. Her mind had plenty of room to roam, as the suite was quiet – except for her husband's snoring. She'd even unplugged the alarm clock in the bedroom because it emitted a slight white noise, and she wanted to hear everything that happened.

Eventually, she started feeling like someone was in the room with her and Tripp. Telling herself the stories she'd heard were getting to her, she tried to rest.

She couldn't. Unnerved by the notion of a spectral visitor,



Photograph provided

Air racing is coming to Wings Over North Georgia next year

JLC announces air racing series beginning in N. Georgia

The Federal Aviation Authority has cleared JLC AirShow Management to organize and host an AirShow Racing Series.

Air racing has been conducted in a variety of ways over the past several decades. The ARS utilizes two racing lanes with 10 40-foot inflatable pylons spaced approximately 600 feet apart to define the three-dimensional track.

With a pace plane in the lead, a pair of competing air-

craft will approach the 4,000-foot long course, descending below 75 feet to navigate the slalom layout. At the end of the first run, the aircraft will turn 180 degrees to re-center over the race line for a second slalom pass.

The planes will then reverse course one more time for the final sprint to the finish line located at the center of the crowd line.

ARS will consist of two classes of racing: Super Sport

and Extreme Sport. Racers in the Super Sport class will reach speeds of 160 knots. Extreme Sports competitors will push speeds closer to 200 knots.

Each race day, eight aircraft will compete in each of the classes. The first heats will include four separate races for the Super Sport and four more for the Extreme Sport groups.

The winners of these races will then return for another round of elimination racing in heat two. The final heat for the

day will include the finalists for each class.

JLC AirShow Management spent two years developing, testing and evaluating its racing attraction to complete the federal certification requirements, the company says in a news release.

The projected 2021 racing series will include multiple air show race site venues. Points will accumulate during the series to decide the two division champions.

The first race will take place during the Wings Over North Georgia air show in Rome, Georgia, in October 2020.

Competitors will be selected and invited by the ARS leadership based on air show certifications and experience.

Contact JLC AirShow Management at JLCAirshows@att.net or (706) 291-0030 to inquire about sponsorship opportunities.

Source: JLC AirShow Management

READ HOUSE From page 23

Shiba began to see and hear things – lights flickering, water running and movement in the corners of her eyes. When she would turn to look, there would be nothing there.

Then, she says, the bed moved.

“It felt like someone was tapping it, or like someone was sitting on it and moving around,” she explains. In the video Shiba took with her phone, the bed does appear to move slightly. She then rouses her husband and asks him if he feels it, too. Seconds after mumbling no, he’s snoring again.

While the bed was still moving, Shiba says, one of her legs suddenly felt numb and heavy. Startled, she sat up and shook her husband again. At this point, she notes, something brushed the back of her neck.

“It gave me the creepy crawlies,” she says. “Even though I had to use the restroom, I waited until my husband woke up to go with me.”

In the morning, a well-rested Tripp tried to discredit the evidence his wife said she’d

For more information

www.thereadhousehotel.com

To book a tour:

407 536-2735

captured on video. The shadows, he said, were her iPhone adjusting to the different levels of light in the room, and the water she’d heard running was a guest in another room turning on their faucet.

Convinced she’d touched the veil between worlds, Shiba was not dissuaded. Then, while she and her husband were packing to leave, something nudged Tripp’s skepticism.

“The door on the cabinet in the living room was completely open. I thought Shiba had opened it to take a picture, so I closed it,” he says. “Then, when I went back five minutes later, the drawer above it was fully open.”

Tripp immediately asked Shiba if she was playing a trick on him. When she said she wasn’t, he asked her again. When she insisted she wasn’t, he asked her four more times.

“We’ve been married 10 years, and I could tell she was



Photograph by David Laprad

This is what Room 311 looked like when notorious gangster Al Capone stayed there while en route to trial in Chicago.

telling me the truth,” Tripp says.

His next suspect was the staff of The Read House. Thinking they had rigged the cabinet with a pneumatic device, he pulled out the drawer and looked, but all he saw was wood.

“I started shaking visibly,” he admits. “All I wanted to do was get out of that room.”

As the couple checked out, a frazzled Shiba confesses to being a newfound believer in the

paranormal. “I would normally make fun of people like me, but I know what happened and I was terrified. I’ll never stay in that room again.”

Having recovered from his encounter with the drawer, Tripp says he’s less skeptical than before. “Something opened it.”

Merkel doesn’t say whether he’s a believer or a skeptic. But he does add one more story to

the annals of Room 311.

“A service dog in room 316 started barking and growling at the door last night. When the people who were staying in the room looked in the hall, the lights flickered,” he says. “For the rest of the night, the dog stayed in the bed.”

Then again, he says, a colleague of his spent the night in Room 311 before the renovation and slept like a log.