

The Man Behind The Curtain

In 2012, three longtime friends from the Hinton High School Class of 1967 got together and decided to do something to “give back” to the County and Town that had looked after them. Jackie Holt and Cotty Farley held the initial discussion, and then shortly after, talked Jimmy Noel into joining them. Their goal was to gather folks together and perform Projects to help improve Hinton and Summers County. They met with City & County officials, Board of Education members, School Principals & teachers, Business leaders, and long-time residents. The topic of conversation was to determine the needs of the community, to discuss fund-raising ideas, and to develop a plan for success. Everyone that they met with, asked the same question. Where is the money going to go? It was determined to house any funds that were garnered, with the Hinton Area Foundation. That way, true accountability could be given to all spending.

Now, what was going to be the name of the organization? At first, “The HHS Class of 1967 – Making a Difference” was chosen. Then it became apparent that this was going to be bigger than just one Class. Finally, it was agreed that “Classes of Hinton High School – Making A Difference” would be the name. Soon after, it was nicknamed MAD (Making A Difference). All of the Projects of MAD (27 to date as of this writing) are chronicled on the MAD website, under “Our Projects”, How did MAD document their fund-raising and spending? The three founders agreed to establish a website and show full disclosure of all of MAD’s happenings. That way, there would be no questions about financial matters. So, who was going to run the website? None of the three founders had any website experience. It was voted (2-1) that Jimmy Noel would attempt to set up and run the website. Jimmy consulted with several people, schooled in that arena. One of who was Pat Farrell (HHS Class of 1966). Pat had some website experience and was extremely helpful. So, away they went.... The website was established (hhsamad.org) and documentation was now live for all to see.

Toward the early fall of 2015, Jimmy had a conversation with David “Richie” Richardson, (HHS Class of 1965). Richie had some extensive knowledge of computers and technology from his career in the U.S. Navy. Richie agreed to help Jimmy run the website. Fast forward.... The website has grown into an encyclopedia of information about Summers County, WV. Endless late night and early morning hours were spent compiling this information. It seemed that the information about the rich history of Summers County was pouring in and just needed to be digitally recorded.

Information about the history of Bluestone Dam and Reservoir, Bobcats Hall of Fame, Lilly Bridge demolition, all of our County’s proud military participants are listed(that have been available to record), literally thousands of historic pictures of people places and things are recorded. Hinton was a huge railroad community and there are many historic pics of the C&O Railway Co. in our County. There’s music links, government links, and much more to be found on the website. Every Hinton High School yearbook, from 1912 was gathered, scanned, and digitized on the website.

One of the important items on the website is the “Our Passed Classmates” section. Every known/verified deceased member of every graduating Class from HHS is listed. If obituaries are available, their name is listed in blue. One can click on that name and their obit will pop up. Fred Long, (HHS Class of 1966) and Lisa Ellison Bragg (HHS Class of 1977) have been instrumental in obtaining newspaper clippings of numerous pre 1970 obituaries. This section has been handled by Richie Richardson and is monitored daily by Richie.

Richie has retrieved tons of great pics from the great folks in Summers County, through Facebook for website posting. To date, over 38,000 visits have been made to the MAD website. He has chosen to stay in the background and is the real “operator” of the website. His efforts are genuinely appreciated. Jimmy calls him “The Man Behind The Curtain”. Thank you, Richie Richardson, for all of the hard work you’ve done and continue to do to make the MAD website a wonderful place to visit!

And now you know the rest....of the story.