

The Juniper Sun



Welcome to Our World—Sunday Supplement

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What's In Store

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In A Quarry

Inside Scoop on Juniper Rock Quarry featured in *The Timid Terrorist*

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Focus on Black Solomon

Once, he was known as Andre. Why the name change?



One of the chief landmarks in Juniper, the Juniper Opera House and Performing Arts Center, this restored building now hosts both community plays, performances and concerts, as well as touring companies.

JUNIPER LITERATI: NOW ACCEPTING NEW MEMBERS!

As author Dann Hazel finishes the next novel in the Juniper Ascending series, entitled *Yard Sale*, he requests a few book lovers to act as pre-release readers in the Juniper Literati, part of the “booklovers elite,” as they like to call themselves in Juniper. These individuals will (a) read a finished manuscript; (b) submit comments about the manuscript; (c) post a review on Amazon once the book is launched. Contact Dann at dann@dannhazel.com.

3-2-1: Blast-Off! A Community Effort Begins

Ingrid Cloud

When the good folks of *The Juniper Sun* asked if I would be interested in composing a “welcome piece” for the inaugural issue of The Sunday Supplement, I jumped at the chance. I don’t think they asked because I have any special journalistic skills. I don’t now, and I never have. But I *have* been what many people here would call a “fixture” in the city of Juniper. You see, I retired from teaching in the Juniper County Public Schools (high school level), then worked as an adjunct for Juniper College. I taught perhaps the most popular course anyone could offer: Human Sexuality.

But enough about me. In what promises to be a truly collaborative project among interested “Juniperians,” we are launching, with this issue, a newspaper supplement which focuses on the human interest stories of our beloved city. I *would* call what we’re doing an exploration of the “Juniper Universe,” but I don’t want to get in trouble with Marvel Comics. The Marvel Universe, remember?) Besides, the professionals at *The Juniper Sun* have a slogan that I like: “Welcome to Our World.” So why muddy the waters, right?

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“Blast-Off, continued from page 1

With each issue, we’ll introduce you to our amazing citizens, our most notorious villains, our checkered history, and even an occasional historical event that shook us in our shoes. In this issue, for example, the focus is on a small chapel hidden in a wooded area on the Juniper College Campus—with some history that few people know about—the Juniper Rock Quarry, and even a profile on Andre Fast, aka Black Solomon, who became something of a controversial character in Juniper.

A great big welcome to you all! And THANKS for dropping by!



Finding Ourselves in a Quarry: The Old Juniper Rock Quarry

Jon Wren

Despite my detachment from my paternal grandparents who owned the old Wren Farm, there was a pastime I really enjoyed when my parents visited their sprawling farmhouse and acreage. According to family history, the quarry located in the national forest, not too far from a modest waterfall, went into operation in the 1940s. My grandparents allowed contractors to process granite gravel for a fee. It was a way to supplement their income in a life typified by sharecropping, the drudgery of farming, and odd-and-end jobs.

The quarry was active for almost a decade. Then, finally, it was abandoned upon the discovery of larger granite deposits in easier-to-access locations. However, its rather sudden abandonment meant that not much was done by way of cleaning up the site. Over the years, the huge holes and crevasses left behind were filled with rainwater. Though I never could find any official reports, I remember my grandparents once telling my brothers and me that we should stay away from that “dangerous quarry pond” because two “young ‘uns” drowned there over the years because “they never learned how to listen.” Consequently, I’m rather skeptical of the veracity of that statement.

As a gay child with an overactive imagination, my fantasies ran rampant with scenarios of possible romantic encounters at the quarry pond. Once, I think I experienced an actual hallucination where I imagined my swimming coach, injured on the rocks there, and I’m his only source of rescue. A fictionalization of this episode occurs in *The Timid Terrorist*, I believe.

But the most mystifying and mysterious characteristic of the quarry? A number of divers attempted to explore the pond. Not one of them reported that they could reach the bottom. As an older man, I’m still fascinated by that fact.



When hate trumps mercy. And forgiveness forever fails. A clean kill.
The only option left.
The Timid Terrorist by Dann Hazel.
 E-book and paperback on Amazon now.
 Available on Amazon now.

The Original Press
Unique Perspectives. A Diversity of Voices.

The Little Church on Campus

Frank Witherspoon, Ph.D. President, Juniper College

Recently, I entered my second decade as president of Juniper College. It is a calling I do not take lightly, one full of responsibility to our students, their parents, and our community.

Over the years,



The miniature chapel on the Juniper College campus has quite the history behind it.

quite a few people have asked about the well-kept little chapel that’s situated in the center of the campus. I have only recently begun to explore our historical archives to see if I could uncover its history.

Though I didn’t find a copious amount of information about the chapel, I was able to patch together a snapshot of how it began and the purposes it has served over the years.

There is no mention of the chapel when the College opened in the early 1800s as a seminary for males studying to become Lutheran ministers.

“Little Church” continues on page 3

“Little Church” con’t from page 2

However, by 1830, there is evidence that a small structure began to take shape in a dense, wooded area in the dead center of the campus. That wooded area, though not as lush today, still exists in a smaller patch between a classroom building and a men’s dorm. And that’s where the chapel still stands.

Logically, the chapel saw much use when the College functioned as a seminary. Mandatory Wednesday chapel services were held there—keep in mind, the College had only a small percentage of the enrollment it enjoys today—and apparently, it was used to host the occasional wedding.

Then, in the late 1800s, when the College became affiliated with The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), it also became co-ed. And while weekly chapel services were still required until the mid-twentieth century, a much larger chapel was required. The Board of Trustees approved the construction of this new chapel in 1914.

Since then, the chapel has primarily served as a private or semi-private sanctuary for prayer and introspection. Small groups sometimes gathered for Bible study sessions, and individuals facing difficult exams or personal issues might use it as a place of prayer. There is a short paragraph in one short article in the alumni journal that tells the story of an older female custodian who took it upon herself to keep the chapel in good condition.

As the College was forced to adopt a dual secular and religious mission to entice a more diverse student body, the chapel became less and less popular—except as the location for an occasional “beer bash” by revelers from a variety of fraternities.

The chapel is still on the “rounds sheet” for both custodial and maintenance staff to attend. Though few students, I suspect, even know of its existence, an occasional person

shows up to pray or meditate. And since the College values the individual student as well as the student body, we intend to keep this resource available as long as there are students who value it.

A Prequel to the Juniper Ascending Thriller Series.

“Cycling to Juniper.”

Available now. On Amazon.



Focus on...

Andre Fast AKA Black Solomon:

A Juniper Legend

When Andre Fast arrived in Juniper, the city wasn’t ready. He was the only child of a city cop and a school teacher, “imports” from Washington, DC, the location of a government intent on eliminating “separate but equal” laws known as Jim Crow. And Andre Fast? Well, he was the first Black student to integrate the public schools of Juniper.

If we could have located Andre for this article, he would have told us how he made only a few friends his first year of middle school. White friends, in fact, because there were no other Black students enrolled at Juniper Junior High School. He and his friends suffered a lot of verbal abuse. Racist epithets. Even an occasional spitball in class. Once, he was spit on by a member of the Klan during a Christmas parade.

But Andre persevered. He graduated from Juniper High School as an Honors student. He enrolled in Juniper College on a full scholarship from the Air Force. When he finished his undergraduate degree, he served as an officer in the Air Force for almost three decades.

Then, he retired. But not in the traditional sense. He reinvented himself by becoming an ordained minister. But Andre, never one to set small goals, did settle on a single congregation. He aspired to have a national following.

That dream resulted in a televangelist empire and a personality called “Black Solomon.”

“As his fame grew, he adapted his message to appease the alt-right,” according to Jon Wren, Andre’s best friend until he “came out” to Andre in college. “Remember, it was the early seventies, in a small city in the South. While many people were hearing more and more about gay rights, they shrugged and dismissed the news they saw on TV. After all, they didn’t feel they knew anyone who was gay anyway. What did gay have to do with their lives? I think, largely, that’s the way Andre felt, too. He’d just never thought about it until I acknowledged my sexual orientation to him. He wasn’t ready for it. And he was hardly the only one during this period of time who wasn’t ready.”

The Timid Terrorist explores more of Jon’s and Andre’s turbulent friendship.