



No. 240

February 2013



# Old Huntsville

HISTORY AND STORIES OF THE TENNESSEE VALLEY



## Love Across the Miles

It was one of the most remarkable love stories to ever come out of North Alabama.

Separated by thousands of miles, a husband sought to recreate a life he might once again share with his wife. It affected the lives of tens of thousands of people and changed Alabama's history forever.

*Also in this issue:* Long Distance Valentine

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# Love Across the Miles

Josephine Low was born in 1826, the only daughter of a very wealthy banking family in Bavaria, Germany. Her family was part of the aristocratic society that controlled Bavaria at the time and she grew up in a life of culture and refinement. As she grew into a beautiful young lady, she was undoubtedly courted by the sons and nephews of her family's affluent friends. Much to her family's consternation however, she rejected their advances and married instead, in 1846, John Cullman, the poor son of a school teacher.

It was one of the most remarkable love stories to ever come out of North Alabama. Separated by thousands of miles, a husband sought to recreate a life he might once again share with his wife. It affected the lives of tens of thousands of people and changed Alabama's history forever.

John Cullman, also of Bavaria, though lacking the social pedigree and fortune of his

wife, was still a remarkable man. He had left home for college at the age of thirteen where he obtained a degree in civil engineering. In his early twenties he opened an export firm in Bavaria and became an agent for a company named Krupp, which specialized at the time in manufacturing ordinary tableware such as spoons and forks.

Krupp had developed a process where they could manufacture these items at a fraction the cost of their competitors and still deliver a superior product. Cullman was quick to see the potential and soon obtained the rights to sell and export the products into the United States. The fact that he knew nothing about the United States did not intimidate him.

Sitting in his office every day he wrote hundreds of letters to potential customers touting the new tableware and enclosing samples. Slowly he began getting orders and, as his business grew, he added other products such as watches and pistols. He quickly earned a reputation for being fair and prompt in his business dealings and within a few short years was on his way to becoming a very wealthy man.

For John and Josephine, it was the happiest time of their lives. They had the best of both worlds; the aristocracy of her parents and their friends, and the simple pleasure of sitting in a beer hall laughing with factory workers. Undoubtedly her



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**"But, .... what is it good for?"**

**IBM Engineer in 1968, commenting on the microchip**



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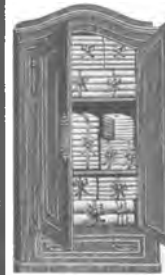
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parents were appalled at some of their son-in-law's friends and social habits.

Despite their happiness, the summer of 1848 brought changes that would affect their lives forever. Social revolutions were sweeping Europe and in Bavaria, a state where the aristocracy controlled everything, workers were demanding major changes. John sided with the workers and became thoroughly involved in their attempts to overthrow the monarchy.

The attempt failed and in the process John lost his fortune and was forced to go into hiding. It was probably only through the intervention of Josephine's family, and their extensive ties to the monarchy, that he was saved from lengthy imprisonment.

John, now penniless and a social pariah, was forced to start all over again. For Josephine, it must have been even harder. Raised in a culture of elegance where she counted the royalty and wealthy as dear friends, she was constantly besieged to take sides - her heritage or her husband's. Josephine refused to do either.

In the next few years John struggled to rebuild his wealth and probably would have succeeded if not for another abortive revolution. Once again he chose the side of the working class and when it failed he was penniless, once again. This time even his wife's family could not protect him and he was forced to flee.

John, Josephine and their three children settled in London where fortunately his wife's wealth enabled them to live in a comfortable manner. But it was a time of extreme homesickness for Josephine. She missed her family and the mountains of Bavaria. She missed the life style she had once known, but she was torn because she could not leave her husband.

A decision was made for her, however, when she received word of her father's death. Her mother, who had always been in bad health, begged her to return home. Josephine was torn in her loyalties but finally, with John understanding her pain, she reluctantly agreed to return to Bavaria to take care of her mother. "It will only be for a short time,"



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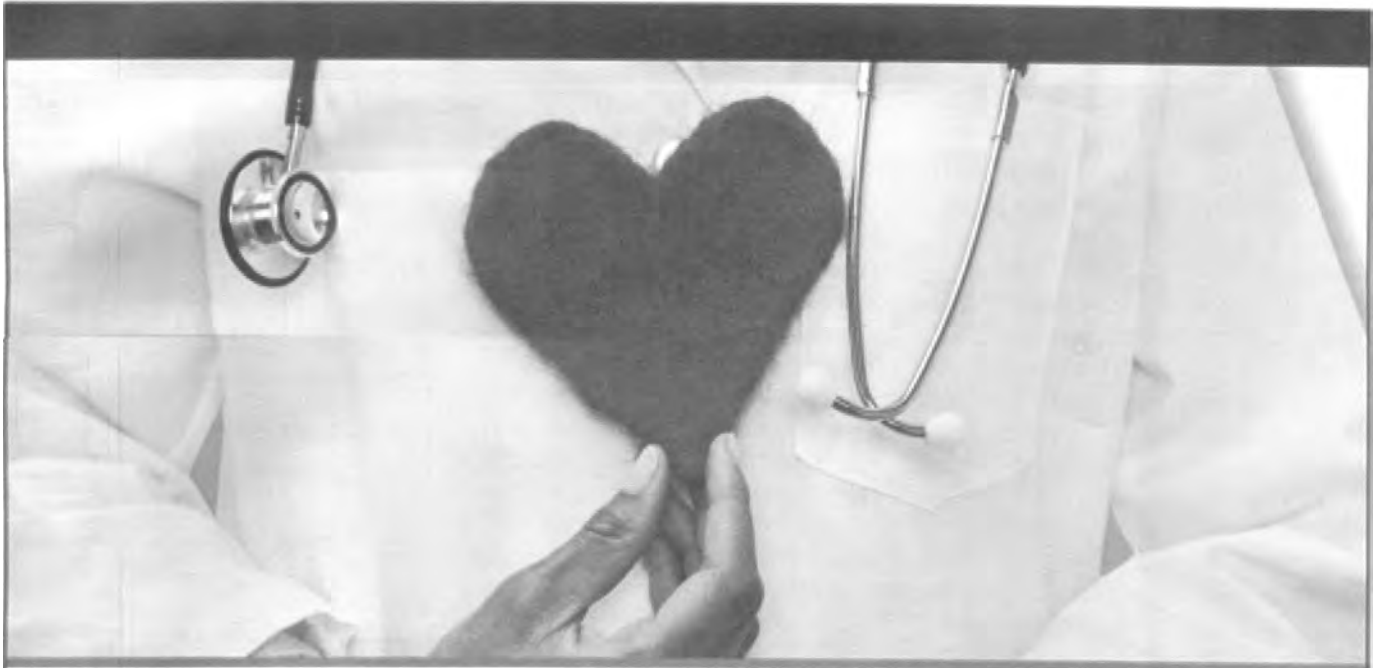


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they told one another, "and we will be together again.

Days turned into weeks, and then months and years. Letters crossed the continent weekly *keeping* each other informed and pledging undying love. Every letter talked of "... when we are finally together again."

In 1866, with Josephine still taking care of her mother, John made the decision to come to America. He knew, with the political climate in Germany as it was, he would never be able to return there.

After settling in Cincinnati, where he studied law and was admitted to the bar, he began to visit various German communities looking for a place where he and Josephine could settle. Much to his dismay he found the communities fragmented and the German culture and language being quickly discarded for American ways. In his heart he knew Josephine would never be happy in a community that bore no resemblance to her beloved Bavaria.

Slowly, an idea began to form in his mind. If he could not find the perfect German community, he would create one. With this thought in mind he began visiting different parts of the country looking for the ideal location. Some places were ruled out because of poor soil or flat terrain, others because of Indian problems or poor transportation.

During one of his travels, in 1871, he met former Alabama Governor Patton who urged him to visit Florence, Alabama. John was immediately captivated with the Tennessee Valley. There was good soil and, probably more important, the rolling hills reminded him of Germany. He decided to name his new colony St. Florian. Unfortunately, St. Florian never got off the drawing board. The people, possibly remembering the German troops who had fought for the north and occupied the

Tennessee valley, refused to sell any land to "a foreigner."

Refusing to give up, John next turned his attention to the Louisville and Nashville Railroad which had just completed a line between Nashville and Montgomery and was interested in attracting settlements along the route. Together with Louis Fink, the land agent for the railroad, John began exploring the route. At about the halfway point between Huntsville and the present day city of Birmingham, along the western end of Brindley Mountain, he found the perfect location. He immediately agreed to purchase 350,000 acres on both sides of the railroad at one dollar per acre. The railroad, perhaps in an attempt to bolster John's image, also awarded him the honorary title of Colonel.

For the first time in years John was ecstatic. In his mind he could already envision a thriving German community

such as the one he had fled years earlier, and more importantly, a place he and Josephine could call home. A constant stream of letters crossed the ocean, each one detailing the dreams and plans of a young couple in love determined to be together once again.

John returned to Cincinnati where he began to make plans

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for the new settlement. He traveled constantly, speaking before groups of German immigrants and pushing his vision of a new German city in Alabama. Perhaps in anticipation of the family's reunion, Josephine agreed to let their oldest son join John in America. Unfortunately the son tragically died within a short time after arriving.

The death seemed to make the distance between Bavaria and Alabama even greater. Letters still traveled back and forth every week and they still contained the same endearments as before, but there was something different now. For the first time there were hints from Josephine that she could never be happy in America.

John, refusing to give up on his dream, began working even harder. In April of 1873 he accompanied the first five families to settle in the new community. The new settlers got off the train and carried their belongings about seven miles to the present site of Cullman. The land chosen for the new community was wild and untamed with no roads or any signs of habitation.

The settlers, probably expecting something different, must have gazed at John Cullman with astonishment as he led them through thick groves of woods while explaining, "This is where the main street will be ... all the streets will be a hundred feet wide .... and over there is where the church will be

.... and of course we will have a beer hall."

John's dreams were infectious and by the end of the first year the fledgling community had grown to over fifty families. Slowly, word of the new German community of Cullman began to spread and within a few years there were tens of thousands of new immigrants. As the population continued to grow, John founded other cities in the vicinity such as Bangor, Berlin and Bremen.

By the late 1870s the area had become well known throughout the country and in Europe as "Little Germany." A stranger visiting the city would have had a difficult time believing he was in Alabama. Almost everyone spoke German, there was a German newspaper, school lessons and even the church sermons were in German. There were beer halls where thirsty patrons met to gossip and drink the local beer while stuffing themselves on German sausages and sauerkraut. The landscape was breathtaking with its rolling hills, thick forests and lush greenery.

Strangely, although John detested the aristocracy in his native Germany, he became the ultimate autocrat in America. He never ran for public office, but handpicked everyone that did. He decided who should live where and even, in many cases, chose the businesses the new settlers engaged in.

John and Josephine continued to write one another continually. When John built a new 12 room home he had photos taken so that Josephine could see every detail of the mansion he had created for her. No segment was too

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trivial for the couple to write about. John wrote asking her opinion about street names and Josephine wrote back suggesting the streets be temporarily numbered until such a time when they could be renamed after prominent local Germans.

As the city of Cullman began to prosper John talked his oldest son, Otto, into joining him, undoubtedly hoping that Josephine would follow. Otto threw himself into his father's work and was probably as responsible as anyone for the early success of the city. Sadly, he died of typhoid fever in 1884 at the age of twenty-nine.

John realized that Otto's death spelled the end of any hope that Josephine might join him in America. Nevertheless, John was determined to keep trying. Two years later, in 1886, John learned that the political climate in Germany had changed and he no longer had to fear prosecution if he returned. He immediately began making plans to visit Germany - and his beloved Josephine.

**Sometimes the road less traveled is less traveled for a good reason.**

There are no records of the visit but we can imagine what must have happened. John would have traveled by train to New York where he boarded a ship for Germany, probably to Bremerhaven. From there he would take another train for the trip to Bavaria. Finally, after almost a month of traveling he would have met his wife for the first time in almost thirty years.

They had been young at heart when they last saw one another, but now the years had caught up with them. Shocks of gray hair adorned their heads. Their faces were creased with the worries of a lifetime, the grief of losing two sons, and they walked with the feebleness that came with advancing years.

They must have laughed, and maybe cried, as they talked about the years they had been separated. Sometimes one of them would say something about the future and they would both grow silent. Without ever really talking about it, they had made their decision.

Despite all of John Cullman's efforts to reproduce Germany in Alabama, in his heart he had become an American. He could never be happy living any other place and Josephine

could never leave Bavaria.

John Cullman returned to Cullman, Alabama where he died in 1895. In his will he directed that all his assets be sold and the money sent to his beloved wife in Bavaria.



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# A Grandmother's Recipe for Washing Clothes

*From 1890 Magazine*

1. Build a fire in backyard to heat kettle of rain water.
2. Set tubs so smoke won't blow in eyes if wind is pert.
3. Shave one hole cake of lie soap in boilin' water.
4. Sort things, make 3 piles; 1 pile white, 1 pile colored, 1 pile work britches and rags.
5. To make starch, stir flour in cool water to smooth, then thin down with boilin' water.
6. Take white things, rub dirty spots on board, scrub hard, and then boil. Rub colored, don't boil, just rinch and starch.
7. Take things out of kettle with broomstick handle, then rinch, and starch.
8. Hang old rags on fence.
9. Spread tea towels on grass.
10. Pore rinch water in flower bed.
11. Scrub porch with hot soapy water.
12. Turn tubs upside down.
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# AN ARMY MAN MEETS HIS WAR BRIDE

*When Chuck Owens first laid eyes on her, he was smitten. When she first met him, she thought he was funny and loved how he seemed to always be in charge. This is the story of their initial meeting, and what happened after that.*

"In October of 1942 I graduated as Second Lieutenant and was assigned to the 78th Infantry Division. From there I was assigned to the 903rd Field Artillery Battalion.

Our big day came in October 1944, when we all loaded up and set sail as part of a convoy across the Atlantic to Europe. My task was to contact the civilian population in the town of Hoeselt, Belgium with a view to seek shelter for all the personnel of the 903rd Field Artillery Battalion. There were about 500 of us. I remember the friendliness of the people and

their helpfulness in finding lodging for us.

When the war ended in 1945, there was much celebrating, as there was more idle time and routine training and guard duty didn't quite fill the gap.

In March of 1946 I was assigned to the 778th Ordnance Company, stationed in Berlin under the command of the Headquarters, Berlin District. Duty in Berlin was like no other duty experienced previously.

Of course with the war being over there was a terrific let down, or relaxation, as far as discipline was concerned. At the time we were using US Script (American substitute for money) and it was used just as our regular currency in day to day transactions, i.e.: PX, Class VI, supplies, etc.



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Some Germans had untold amounts of this money, derived from sales of items of value purchased by members of the American military and Department of Army Civilians. The script money came in the same denominations as our regular currency. It also had a distinctive color such as blue, pink and green. On occasion and without notice, the command would issue a different color script. It would appear without notice and be issued, or exchanged, to the military personnel.

Of course, the Germans holding all the useless script would take a great loss. The Command had to take this action to curtail the ever-growing black marketing that was going on.

The social whirl continued in Berlin and two of my friends were American officers who each married a Department of Army Civilian. By this time we had many female DAC's in Berlin.

During May 1946, I met Annelie. I saw her at some of our social functions usually escorted by some American officer. At the time I initially thought that she was a DAC. She spoke English very well and seemed to fit in with all the other American personnel. She was really a good-looking gal and appealed to me no end. I later learned that she was a young German medical doctor working for the American Medical Unit, in Berlin.

We got to know each other better and it wasn't long before we were going out and dating quite regularly. Annelie was a Berliner and it was a pleasure to go around with her visiting all the landmarks that were famous before the war. I met her family, including her mother and two brothers - both of whom had served in the German Army. Annelie had a wonderful family and it was a pleasure to visit with them.

We continued our relationship through 1946 and very much enjoyed each other's company. I talked to Annelie about coming back to the U.S. with me but

she was reluctant to leave Berlin and her family. Other friends of hers and her family seemed not opposed to her coming to the States but I knew that her mother would miss her.

Finally she agreed and accepted my proposal for marriage in the U.S. This was not an easy issue. There was lots of paper work involved to arrange for her passage to the United States. The necessary paperwork was finalized and approved, and I left Berlin in March 1947, confident that we had taken care of all the necessary details for Annelie's journey.

Annelie arrived in the United States on Memorial Day, May 30, 1947 and thought that all the flags lining the street were a special welcome for her. My mother was delighted with her and loved her no end.

We were married June 8, 1947, at St. Brigid's Church, Ridge-wood, Brooklyn, New York.

We proudly celebrated our Fiftieth Anniversary on June 8, 1997."

This is the story of how my Mom and Dad met, Dad passed away Valentines Day, in 2009. Mom lives in Huntsville and has great memories of those days.

Cathey Carney

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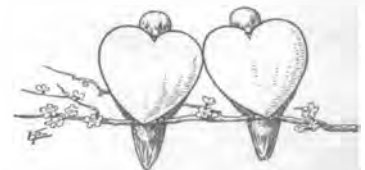
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# Neighborhood News - 1875

## Man Hangs Himself

A man named Montgomery, a respected citizen we are told, residing near Courtland, Al. who purchased some years ago the Garth plantation, last Wednesday hanged himself in his barn near his residence. It is thought that money embarrassment led the unfortunate man to commit the rash deed.

He was found dead before the body had become cold. His father had been written some days previous and reached Courtland a couple of hours after the unfortunate act occurred. The deceased leaves a wife and children.

## For Sale

I will sell, for two thirds cash, with the balance on the first of July, to the highest bidder in front of the Court House door in the City of Huntsville on Monday, March 1, 1875 the property situated on the west side of Madison Street, in South Huntsville, consisting of a good dwelling house, two small grocery houses, kitchen and well house, all in good order.

The lot fronts 80 feet on Whitesburg Pike and runs back 230 feet. There are nice shade and fruit trees on the place, and a well of good water. A bargain can be had, as a sale must be made. Wesley Townsend

## New Store on Holmes St.

It is encouraging to see signs of improvement in the city. Mr. E. S. Johnson is now excavating and will soon commence the erection of a large brick store on the corner of Jefferson and Holmes Streets.

**"If you see a bomb technician running, follow him."**

**From Military Manual**

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## The Horror of Hydrophobia

William Ellis of Huntsville died yesterday under an attack of hydrophobia. He was bitten last summer by a coach dog as he was trying to muzzle him. The police killed the dog under the supposition that it was mad, and in spite of Ellis' wishes. Ellis' wife was bitten at the same time and she burned her wound with caustic, but her husband paid no attention to his hurt. It healed up and gave him no more trouble until last Monday. Then he went to a ball and on his way home fell in the street in a fit. He was attacked with spasms which extended over his entire body. In his home he screamed and yelled and seemed to be in the greatest agony. He thought that someone was going to murder his wife and children, and when any one approached him he tried his best to strike him. Dr. A. G. Clopton, says that Ellis sprang from his bed and drove one of

the physicians from the room. Three doctors applied electric batteries to Ellis' body but he did not improve under them.

His convulsions continued until yesterday morning and then he died. He eagerly drank four glasses of water just before his death.

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# Long Distance Valentine

by M. D. Smith IV

My Valentine of over 50 years and I met under the most unlikely of circumstances. My family had just moved to Huntsville in 1958, but I remained in Birmingham at a boarding school until June of 1959 and in the fall went to the University of Virginia in Charlottesville.

The summer of 1959 found me doing part time radio station work at WAAY as a record librarian, traffic and billing clerk and some announcing. I was trying to meet girls in Huntsville, but without any connections from school or other friends, it was difficult.

Off to Virginia in September of 1959 and with the help of my room mate Scotty, we made weekend trips to girl's schools nearby, since the UVA was an all men's university. By Christmas vacation that year I had dated quite a number of girls, but not many with whom I even wanted a second date. I was home for the holidays in Huntsville, and went to Birmingham to stay with my grandparents and attend a Sigma fraternity dance party.

On that Saturday night before Christmas, I just happened to meet a friend from another school that I casually knew. His name was Mickey and he had his cousin from Huntsville visiting and brought her to the dance. Her name was Judy Chandler. I had a girl with me, but I did make a mental note about this very cute little blonde package with a big smile that was a tad over 5 feet tall and weighed less than 90 pounds.

When I returned to Huntsville, I called for Judy and her mother said Judy was working

at Rose Jewelry doing Christmas wrapping for the holidays and was not home. I promptly got in my '57 Ford Fairlane (three-on-the-tree stick shift) and drove downtown to Rose Jewelry. To say Judy was surprised is an understatement, but she was pleased I went to the trouble to look her up. When she was able to take a break we walked over to Tom Dark's drug store where she treated ME to a coke and cheese crackers. She said she assumed since I was a poor radio guy I might not be able to afford the snack.

Her million dollar smile gave me a joy just to see and from such a long distance meeting, I was glad I now knew someone in my new home that I wanted to date more often.

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Holiday break was over and I was back at UVA, writing to Judy on a regular basis. I sent her a very special Valentine card on February 14th of 1960. We continued our non-exclusive relationship while she was attending the University of Alabama and both of us writing letters that grew more and more personal. I worked out of town much of the summer of '60. We dated later in the summer and enjoyed movies at Woody's and the Whitesburg Drive-in Theatres as well as the Lyric downtown. In the fall it was back to Virginia for me.

So it's October and I am wondering about a date for our big homecoming weekend and I convinced Judy AND her parents, to let her fly Southern Airways from Birmingham (close to Tuscaloosa) to Charlottesville and stay with a family that provided a "house mother" for young ladies while they were visiting.

I have a photo of her at the airport in a plaid check dress and a button hat leaving after a wonderful weekend. Judy loved

flying so much, she applied for an airline stewardess job and got an offer from Eastern Airlines.

We wrote more as I was deciding that fall to transfer to the University of Alabama. Instead of being a doctor, I wanted to go into the family business of Broadcasting and UVA didn't have a school for that. The University of Alabama had a big Radio & TV department. Well, that Christmas with me knowing I was going to be with my long distance Valentine starting in January of '61, our relationship really heated up.

After a few months in Tuscaloosa together, I proposed to the love of my life. One afternoon, a bit after our second Valentine's Day and on June 8, 1961, we were married. We lived in the student apartments until I graduated in 1963 and moved to Huntsville with our first son, age 3 months at the time.

We have had 8 children and now have 8 grandchildren. My long distance Valentine has been a lot closer for all the years since then.

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## Old Household Brevities

-To clean brass, rub the tarnished or rusted brass, by means of a cloth or sponge, with diluted acid, such as the sulfuric, or even with strong vinegar. Afterwards, wash it with hot water, to remove the acid, and finish with dry whitening.

-Every person who lives in a house should spend fifteen minutes once every month in going over every part with a teaspoonful of oil and a feather, and give all the hinges, locks and latches a touch. It will save an incredible amount of scraping, banging, jarring, squeaking, harsh grating, dismal creaking, and other diverse and several noises, which result from the want of a little oil.

-With marble fireplaces and tables, never wash them with soap suds. The potash of the soap decomposes the carbonate of lime, and in time destroys the polish.

To secure the paint around

door knobs when cleaning, place a piece of pasteboard with a hole cut to encircle them, and a slit to slip on.

-Gilt frames, if cleaned, are soon worn and spoiled. To prevent this, preserve by applying a transparent varnish.

Lemon seeds, if planted and treated as house plants, will make pretty little shrubs. The leaves can then be used for flavoring. Tie a few in a cloth and drop in apple sauce when boiling and nearly done. It is a cheap essence.

-The reason why cabbage emits such a disagreeable smell when boiling is because the process dissolves the essential oil. The water should be changed when the cabbage is half-boiled, and

it will thus acquire a greater sweetness.

-To beat the whites of eggs quickly, put in a pinch of salt. The cooler the eggs the quicker they will froth. Salt cools and also freshens them.

-To prevent griddle cakes



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from sticking, rub salt over the griddle with a piece of bread before greasing.

-Equal parts of ammonia and spirits of turpentine will take paint out of clothing, no matter how dry or hard it may be. Saturate the spot two or three times and then wash out in soap-suds.

-Take out machine oil by rubbing with a little lard or butter and wash in warm water and soap, or, simply rub first with a little soap and wash out in cold water.

-To remove ink stains from clothing, dip the spots in pure melted tallow; wash out the tallow and the ink will come out. If articles are rubbed out in cold water while the stain is fresh, the stain will often be entirely removed.

-To take grease out of silks, woollens, paper, floors, &c., grate thick over the spot French (or common will do) chalk, cover with brown paper, set on it a hot flatiron, and let it remain until cool; repeat if necessary. The iron must not be so hot as to burn paper or cloth.

-To stiffen linen cuffs and collars, add a small piece of white wax and one tea-spoon brandy to a pint of fine starching. In ironing, if the iron sticks, soap the bottom of it.

-To render pencil marks indelible, take well-skimmed milk, and dilute with an equal bulk of water. Wash the pencil marks, whether writing or drawing, with this liquid, using a soft flat camel-hair brush, and avoid all rubbing. Place upon a flat board to dry.

-To wash silk with great success, spread it on a table, and then rub it with a sponge dipped in a mixture of equal parts of soft soap, brandy and cane molasses. Rinse it thoroughly in three successive portions of water, and iron it before quite dry.

-To prevent colors fading, dip new calico, pocket-handkerchiefs, &c., in salt water.

-To restore the gloss commonly observed on newly purchased collars and shirt bosoms, add a spoonful of gum-arabic wash to a pint of the starch as usually made for this purpose. Two ounces of clear gum-arabic may be dissolved in a pint of water, and after standing overnight, may be racked off, and kept in a bottle ready for use.

### VALUABLE HINTS TO AUTOMOBILISTS

from a 1906 publication

- Obey the rules of the road.
- Remember that your rate of speed should never exceed the legal rate.
- Keep a level head and don't get excited.
- Don't argue with drivers of express and truck wagons or other heavy bodies found in the public thoroughfares, as the drivers of these powerful vehicles generally operate on the theory that might is right.
- Don't expect women and children to get out of your way. Remember women and children don't know how to avoid danger.
- Remember that while the automobile is flexible, powerful, and easily controlled, you may make a slip.
- Don't drink, as nine-tenths of the accidents occur to automobiles driven by intoxicated chauffeurs.

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# Heard On the Street

by *Cathey Carney*



We have a winner for the Photo of the Month for January - and it is **Annette Cruse** of Huntsville, who guessed that the cute little kids in the picture were **Gay Money** and her brother **Trice Hinds**. Annette worked with Trice many years ago at MLCOM on the Arsenal, in Publications. She knew Gay and Trice back in the 70s. Congratulations to Annette!

**Katherine Sellers** just had a birthday in late December so Happy Birthday to you!

**Mr. A. J. Casey** of Satellite Beach, FL recently came for a visit to Huntsville, to see his grand kids and great-grandchildren. If you remember, Mr. Casey's daughter was **Liz Waggett**, who passed away much too early of pancreatic cancer. Liz's husband **Joe Waggett** acted as host along with Mr. Casey's grandsons **Chris** and **David Waggett**. Mr. Casey is just a sweetheart and even though it's not easy for him to travel, he wanted to do it anyway to see folks he loved in the Huntsville area. I think the world of you, Mr. Casey, and it was so good to see you while you were here!

We wanted to send out a special greeting to **Leonard Monk**. He lives in New Market with his wife **Anne**. He is a proud veteran who served in the Army for 25 years, and he is now undergoing chemotherapy for the 3rd time in the last 7 years. His daughter **Tanya Peters** loves him so much and tells him that his friends & family will be there on good and bad days. We all want to send love and encouragement to Mr. Monk and we know that he can fight this, there are many people pulling for him who think the world of him.

It was with sorrow that many people found out that **John Thompson** had passed away. He was husband to **Glenda** and father to sons **Ed**, **Alan** and **Andrew Thompson**, as well as daughter **Jennifer Thompson Mathews**. He was a good friend to many and only 79 years old. We send our deepest condolences to his family including daughters-in-law and son-in-

law, as well as 8 grandchildren and 4 great grandchildren.

Recently there were 3 Huntsville attorneys selected to participate in the Alabama Bar's Leadership Forum. Statewide there were only 30 selected so it's great that 3 came from our area. One of them is **John Allen Brinkley**, an associate of the law firm Brinkley & Chestnut here in Huntsville, and a good friend. The other 2 attorneys selected from here were **Jeremiah Hodges** and **Joshua White**. Congratulations to you!

Those lovebirds, realtors **John Richard** and wife **Peggy**, just celebrated their 52nd. wedding anniversary by going back to Gatlinburg. They spent their honeymoon there in 1960 and have been back yearly ever since!

It was great to recently meet **Jack Byrne** and his sweet wife **Chris**. They are fascinated by the Monte Sano Hotel and have many pictures, facts and collectibles from the beautiful hotel that was on top of the mountain years ago. They have retired in Pulaski but come to Huntsville to visit quite often and join friends at Mullins Restaurant to

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## Photo of The Month

The first person to correctly identify the youngster below wins a full one-year subscription to "Old Huntsville" magazine.

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Hint: This well-known little guy works magic with flower arrangements.



swap tales. They wanted to send a special hello to their friend **Jim Vann** who is known to be a terrific storyteller about the old days in Huntsville. Can't wait to meet him!

Interesting to read recently in "Natural Awakenings" that a medical anthropologist **Sydney Ross Singer** states that wearing bras could cause breast cancer. He writes that bras create a pressure band between the breast and lymph nodes, causing inflammation and swelling and causing the lymph to back up, restricting the body's natural detoxification system. It's definitely controversial but research agrees with him, to be safe it's recommended to avoid bras with wire and go without at home! I'm all for that!

One thing I love to do on the weekends is go **Lowe Mill** off Seminole Drive and check out the artists who have their studios open and work right in front of you. There's always a crowd there and recently while there I met **Jerry Brown**, who's in Studio 305 at the Mill and does incredible work. If you haven't been to Lowe Mill yet you're missing out - it's like you've been transported to another city! It's great the way Huntsville has such an amazing arts community. If you're hungry while at the Mill, try the **Happy Tummy** - the name says it all!

Just met a sweet guy named **Roger Blevins** who has the coolest car! It is a 1973 Datsun 240Z that is sort of a deep gold color,

so pretty! I just love the old cars - many cars these days all look alike but there were some real beauties back in the day.

You can find places in Huntsville with service that goes from great to terrible, but one place I always have good service is at **Haley's Flooring**. I had some work done for my home and worked with a lady named **Jenny Hedges** who always has a smile on her face and is always ready to treat you like you're the only customer she has. It definitely keeps me going back there!

I have to give you one of my most outstanding ideas, and I do have several of them. I'm sure many ladies, like myself, have several pairs of boots for the cold weather. They're usually pretty difficult to store. But I found those pants/skirt hangers that have two clips on them. I take one boot and at the top attach one of the clips, take the other boot and attach the other clip. So you hold up your hanger and it has two boots, toes point same way, and just hang it in your closet! This way you can see your boots at a glance and they're out of the way!

Vinyl records are coming back! It was so good recently to browse around **Vertical House Records** in Lowe Mill and remember all the great performers of old - you can even buy record players again!

We're so proud of our friend **Faith Sutherlin** of Woodstock, GA who has been attending

BYU in Utah as an Honor student. Faith has elected to serve on an LDS mission this March and has been assigned to Chile Rancagua Mission. She is the daughter of **Felicia Sutherlin** and granddaughter of **Cheryl Tribble** of Woodstock, GA. We all wish her a safe and successful journey as she will be in Chile for 18 months. Good luck to you and we'll miss you, Faith!

Stay warm, watch over your neighbors and have a wonderful warm **Valentine's Day** - maybe surprise someone you haven't talked to in a while with a funny Valentine!

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# RECIPES

## Sweetheart Treats from Steph

All recipes from Stephanie Troup

### Decadent Chocolate Truffles

2 lbs. semi-sweet chocolate chips

1 quart heavy cream

1/4 lb. butter, room temp

Heat chocolate and cream in a double-boiler or in the microwave, til the chocolate is melted. If using microwave just heat a little up at a time at intervals of 30 seconds. Whisk in butter until well blended and smooth. Refrigerate overnight.

Scoop small balls with a melon baller and roll balls in unsweetened cocoa, toasted coconut, finely chopped pecans, etc.,

### Sweetheart Cookies

3/4 c. butter

1/2 c. sugar

1 egg yolk  
1-1/2 c. plain flour  
Raspberry or strawberry preserves  
Confectioners sugar (for dusting)

Cream butter & sugar, add egg yolk and beat well. Stir in flour by hand and kneed dough for 2-3 minutes on a lightly floured surface (until thoroughly combined). Roll into 1" balls and place on cookie sheet 2" apart. Used finger to make a "well" in center of ball and add preserves. Bake at 350 degrees for 13-15 minutes. Dust with confectioners sugar.

### Peanutly Love Cookies

1 c. sugar

1 c. packed brown sugar

1 c. butter

1 c. creamy peanut butter

2 eggs

1/4 c. milk

2 t. vanilla extract

3-1/2 c. sifted flour

2 t. baking soda

1 t. salt

2 10-oz. pkgs. Hershey's Kisses

Cream sugars, butter and peanut butter. Beat in eggs, milk and vanilla. Sift together the flour, soda and salt; stir into egg mixture. Shape dough into balls. Roll in sugar. Place on ungreased cookie sheets and bake 375 for 10-12 minutes. Remove from oven and place a chocolate kiss in center of each cookie immediately. Cool.

### Just Got Dumped Cake

1 can cherry pie filling

1 can crushed pineapple, drained (juice reserved)

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1 box yellow cake mix  
1 stick butter

Dump cherry filling on bottom of greased square or rectangle pan, dump drained pineapple on top, dump dry cake mix on top of that, dribble pineapple juice over top, dot butter pieces all over.

Place in 400 degree oven until brown and bubbly. Serve warm with whipped cream and/or ice cream or just by itself!

### Hannah's Mini Almond Cupcakes

1-1/4 c. plain flour  
1/2 t. baking powder  
1/2 t. baking soda  
1/4 t. salt  
1 stick butter, unsalted, room temp  
3/4 c. plus 1 T. sugar  
1/2 c. almond paste, room temps  
2 large eggs  
1/2 t. vanilla extract  
1/2 t. almond extract  
1/2 c. buttermilk

Preheat oven to 325 degrees. Line mini-cupcake tin with paper liners. Spray the paper liners with non-stick butter spray.

Sift flour, baking powder, baking soda and salt into a medium bowl, set aside. In a large bowl use an electric mixer on medium speed and beat the butter, sugar and almond paste until smoothly blended, about 1 minute.

Scrape the sides of the bowl

as needed. Add the eggs one at a time, mixing until each is blended into the batter.

Add the vanilla and almond extracts and beat for 2 minutes til batter is smooth. On low speed, add flour mixture and buttermilk until batter looks smooth. Fill each paper liner with a slightly rounded table-spoon of batter.

Bake until tops feel firm and toothpick inserted in the middle comes out clean. Cool cupcakes on wire rack. When cool, frost with the recipe below:

#### Frosting:

2 sticks unsalted butter, room temps  
6 - 8 c. powdered sugar  
1/2 c. milk  
1/2 t. almond extract

Mix the butter until smooth and creamy with an electric mixer. Add 4 cups of sugar and the milk and almond on low speed. Mix til combined.

Add two more cups of sugar on low speed and mix til light and fluffy. If needed, add more of the powdered sugar. Frost cupcakes and wait for the raves from your family! Makes 48 !

### Lovers Cosmo Martini

2 oz. vodka  
2 oz. Triple Sec or Contreau  
4 oz. cranberry juice  
Juice of 1/2 lime

Add all ingredients to a cocktail shaker filled with ice. Shake and strain into a martini glass. Garnish with a lime twist.




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# HOUSEHOLD TIPS FROM LIZ

-Stale tobacco smoke is the worst lingering smell - to get rid of it just put a few teaspoonfuls of ammonia in a large bowl of water and set it in the room. The room will smell fresh in the morning.

-To make rice beautifully white and keep the grains separated when boiled, add a teaspoon of lemon juice to every quart of water in which it has cooked. You will not notice the lemon flavor in the rice.

-If you've run out of ideas on decorating children's birthday cakes, try this. Take a few animal crackers and dip them in frosting, either several different colors or all the same color. Stick them around the edge of the cake.

-Tired of that dry, itchy winter skin? Use your old leftover suntan oil in the shower and smell good at the same time! Just soap down as usual, rinse, then pour some of the oil on a wash rag and spread over your back, arms and legs.

-Remember to throw those wood ashes into the garden or around trees and shrubs to keep the soil sweet.

-When trying to stretch whipping cream by adding the white of an egg do not whip together. Beat the cream and egg separately and combine when ready to serve. The cream will be of a much better consistency.

-When you finally find something that you have been looking all over the house for, put it back in the first spot you thought it might be in. That's probably where it really belongs.

-A very effective makeup remover is Crisco. Just massage it onto your skin and wipe off with a tissue. Use Olive Oil as a moisturizer.

-To keep your cookies moist, put half an apple or a slice of fresh bread in your cookie jar.

-For a fun toy for your cat, crumple up a piece of aluminum foil and throw it. Cats love that scratchy sound.

-For those women who like the sheer look, match your bra to the color of your skin, not the color of the blouse.

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*(Ad from 1907 Huntsville Newspaper)*





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# The Second Time Around

by Tommy Towery

I was in the 10th grade at Lee High School in 1961 and although I had started dating, the idea of marriage was the farthest thing from my mind. Even though she was only 14 at the time, I don't think the girl I was dating felt that same way. Back then teenage girls thought differently than boys did. They seemed to possess the dream of falling in love, getting married, having two children (a boy and a girl) and living happily ever after. Like most of my male friends, I had a different view of that notion. Unlike today, divorce was not as common in those days, but my parents divorced when I was eight years old, and it had an adverse effect on me. I was not going to marry until I was sure of what I was getting into.

I don't know if it was the Lyric or the Martin Theatre in 1961, but one of those downtown picture shows (as we called them) featured a new

movie with Debbie Reynolds, Steve Forrest, and Andy Griffith called "The Second Time Around." I thoroughly enjoyed it for the sometimes slap-stick comedy it was intended, and never gave a second thought, at the time, to the concept behind the plot. I'm not even sure I was aware that the movie's title referred to a second marriage.

Unlike many of my Lee High classmates, I did not marry the girl I went steady with in high school. There were some major issues in our relationship and we broke up my senior year. I moved to Memphis to attend college and while there I met and married someone else. After graduation my wife and I enjoyed and endured 20 years of military life. One of the downsides was that my position required me to do extensive travel and I was

gone from 120 days to six months a year for almost the entire 20 years. I think we both became accustomed to that. When I retired from the Air Force in 1988 we took our daughter (we did not have the boy) and moved back

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to Memphis to begin the next chapter in our lives. For the next six years we tried to adjust our routines to civilian life and me not being gone so often. In the end we found it was not the travel that came between us, it was having to live together for 365 days a year - it did not work for us. We were divorced in 1994 after 26 years of marriage.

Needless to say, it was a shock to my system. It was the most painful and depressing era I ever endured and I felt my world had ended. Our daughter was a senior in high school at the time, and a member of her school's chorus. Her choir teacher, Teresa, knew me from choir trips I chaperoned to Florida and Canada, and from the times I had helped her with computer problems since I was

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a computer nerd working at the local university. She was aware of the divorce and was extremely supportive in comforting my daughter and being a shoulder to cry on through those dark days.

Now, my ex-wife had also been very active in choir activities, and was a very good friend of Teresa. Keeping that in mind, I was extremely shocked when Teresa called me soon after the divorce was final and said she had someone she wanted me to meet. It turns out that Teresa just worked as a teacher to earn money. She felt her real life's calling was to be a match-maker. Another girl in the choir had parents who were also newly divorced and Teresa just knew that the girl's mother and I were a perfect match for each other. This seemed to happen almost before the ink on my divorce papers was dry and I was not mentally ready to get involved with anyone yet, and I told Teresa so. That did not deter her.

In the meantime, I found out that my high school sweetheart was also divorced and, remembering the fun times we had together 30 years earlier (and ignoring the bad times), I thought we might give it another try. It was fun for a while, but it did not take long to realize that the same issues that broke us up in high school had not changed and, no matter how great a storybook ending it would make, a rekindling of that romance would still not work. In this case, if it didn't work the first time, there was no way it would work the sec-

ond time. There still would be no happy-ever-after ending for us. Even knowing I was involved in the long distant dating, Teresa constantly kept contacting me to see if I was ready to meet the perfect match she had selected.

Finally, in an attempt to get her off my back, I agreed to meet up with Sue, the other divorcee. It seems that all along Teresa had also been just as enthusiastic in trying to steer Sue to me as she was me to Sue. And, also like me, Sue was just as reluctant to attend a get-together since she had just ended a 25-year marriage herself. She had been hurt so

badly by her own divorce, she was uncertain about the idea of ever getting involved with anyone again.

Teresa wanted each of us to think that the other never knew she was planning this match, so she planned a "surprise" chance meeting at an overnight church lock-in with her church choir. Both Sue's daughter and my own would be there. Sue had to work the next day so she stopped in for an hour just to check me out I suppose and for me to see her. I was immediately interested in getting to know her better, and I must have received her approval as well.

**"Mom says love is the most important thing in the world, but Alabama football is pretty good too."**

**Greg, age 9**



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Having passed the first contact test, another accidental get-together was arranged by Teresa. I was asked to come over to work on her computer one night and Teresa privately suggested to Sue that she should just happen to show up at the same time with a homemade apple pie. Her match-making talents must have supported Teresa's idea that a way to a man's heart was through his stomach, especially with a homemade apple pie. Well, Sue showed up with the pie at the scheduled time, but my daughter had gotten sick at the last minute and I had to cancel my visit that night. Never one to give up on a plan, Teresa rescheduled the meeting for the next week and Sue had to bake a second apple pie to accidentally drop in with.

The night of the accidental encounter Sue and I visited and talked and the next week I called and asked her for a date to see "Grease" at a local playhouse. The week after that I took her to a Frankie Vallie concert, and soon we started going out together almost every weekend. Sue worked at a hospital and had to get up at 4:30 every morning so our dating was a little like being back in high school. I had to get her home by 10 p.m. every night.

Even though both of our daughters were in college, Sue's younger daughter lived with her, and mine lived with me so we made no serious plans for a future together. Sue's older daughter had moved to Iowa before she met me. Without going into details, we ended up dating for seven years, with Sue continuing to live with her daughter and me with mine. We both agreed that it would be unfair to them for us to get married and force the merging of the two families at the time. In the meantime we got to know each other much better. I found Sue enjoyed sports as much as I did and we enjoyed season tickets to football and basketball games. She also supported my writing hobby much more than my ex-wife had.

We also started going to church together, something I had abandoned when I married my first wife. Finally I had found someone who shared my inter-

est in travel and someone who saw a trip as an adventure and not just a way to get to a destination.

Seven years after Teresa introduced us, we had taken part in four weddings in a year - Sue's oldest daughter, her youngest daughter, my daughter, and finally our own. Knowing that none of the children could afford to take time from their work and make the trip back to Memphis, we elected to elope to Hilton Head Island and were married on the beach at sunset. Only our friends from Denver knew about the wedding and showed up to be our best man and bride's maid.

Today I am happy to admit that Teresa was right, and I am grateful that she persisted in trying to get Sue and me together. She is



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**Mark Twain**

my perfect match. We have now spent 12 years as husband and wife, and have cherished every moment of it. We look forward to as many more years as God will allow us. We have found that there are definite advantages of second marriages. Both of us had established professional careers and did not have the money problems of our first marriages. We both have our degrees and there are no student loans or running up credit card debts to pay for car repairs or home emergencies. Instead of having to save to buy new furniture, we had to give away or sell the excess of combining our two households. The children are grown and on their own, so the problems of staying home with sick kids or trying to find baby sitters is not an issue. We seem to both put forth an extra effort to enjoy our lives and to appreciate each other in ways that sometimes get overlooked or taken for granted by those who have never gone through a divorce. We take long walks in the evening and sit at the morning table and enjoy our coffee and sharing the daily newspaper. We go to movies in the afternoons and still have a date night every Friday.

Two years ago we both retired and now we get to be together all the time, and enjoy that tremendously. Our travel adventures have taken us on a trans-Atlantic cruise to England and a cruise to the Hawaiian Islands. We get to enjoy the seven grandchildren of our combined marriage.

Now back to 1961 and "The Second Time Around." After all these years, I finally understand and believe the concept of the underlying story behind the slap-stick comedy. I accept its message with my whole being. Love IS better the second time around. Frank Sinatra had a hit song with the theme from the movie. His words echo the feelings I have for Sue and our marriage.

*"Who can say what brought us to this  
miracle we've found?  
There are those who'll bet,  
Love comes but once, and yet  
I'm oh, so glad we met the second time  
around."*

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- 1/2 t. cayenne pepper
- 1 head cabbage chopped

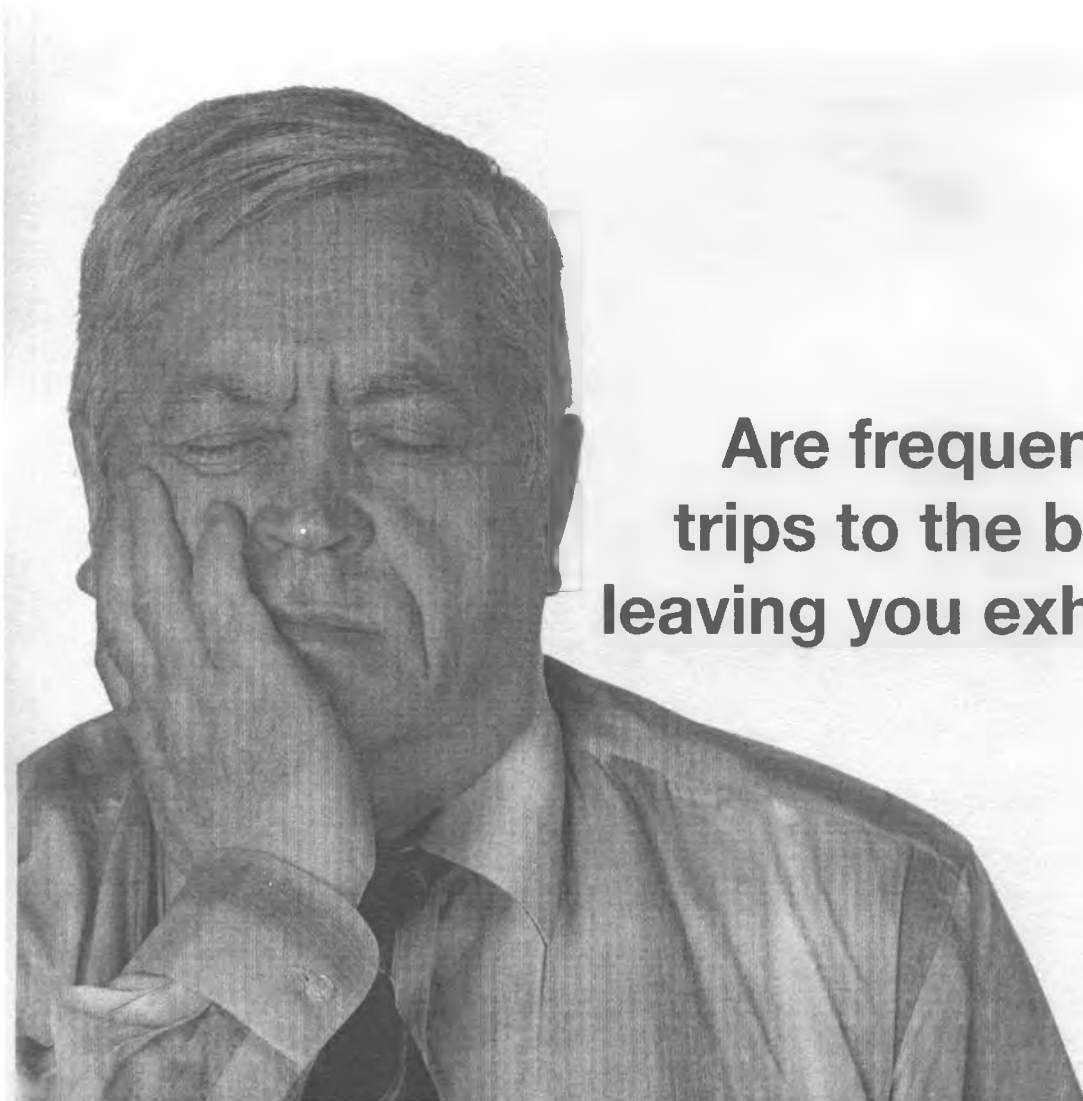
Cook noodles just til firm-tender. Saute onion in butter and garlic powder, then add cabbage and cook til tender. Add noodles and toss gently. Add salt & pepper to taste.

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# LOVE IN 1999

by Malcolm W. Miller

Lois and I were introduced by a friend at a Christmas party one week before Christmas 1999 and we had our first date Christmas night.

Two months later, we went to Mr. C's on Valentines Day, 2000 for dinner and wine and I sang the following song to her that I had written just for her:

*"When just a child each Christmas was a  
magic time for me,  
Though often disappointed when I looked  
under the tree.  
Through life I have learned that clouds are  
followed by the bright sunshine,  
I found this true on Christmas night 1999.  
Words cannot express the thrill I get  
when you smile at me,  
And when you say you love me  
I wonder how can this be.  
But you have showed me in so many ways  
that let me know you are mine.  
We found true love on Christmas night 1999.  
The future looks so bright for us in the new  
millennium,  
We don't know what it holds for us  
as it has just begun.  
One thing I know for certain will continue  
for all time,  
Are the memories made together on  
Christmas 1999."*

Since that night we were totally inseparable. I mentioned to her that a couple I knew had married in Las Vegas and all of a sudden she had me making plane reservations. Five months after Christmas 1999 we married in Las Vegas, May 25, 2000. Things were romantic there, Elvis was on every comer wanting to marry us, but we chose the Clerk in the Court House.

We flew over Hoover Dam while we were there and landed at the Grand Canyon where we toured and had lunch. Since then we have lived through a heart attack (Malcolm), crushed arms and elbows (Lois) and a house fire (both of us). These things have just made our relationship even stronger.

This May 25 we will have been married thirteen years and we are hoping for many more years together.

"My wife made me join a bridge club, I jump off next Tuesday."

Rodney Dangerfield

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# How I Met Cathy

by Mike Self

Cathy and I met on a blind date. Six months later, when we got married, our minister shared with us that it was his experience that he had actually performed more marriage ceremonies for couples who had met on a blind date than through any other means of meeting. What made our marriage more interesting than most was how and when we announced our engagement.

I was 21 and attending University of Alabama in Huntsville, and Cathy was a senior at Huntsville High when we met. We met in February, got engaged in June and had planned to get married the following summer. Well, sort of. After getting engaged we told my parents and all of our friends and everyone was excited. Somehow, as the summer wore on though, we never quite got around to telling her parents. Cathy was only 18 and had just finished high school, and was waiting for the right time to tell her parents. At the end of the summer, my rowing coach

shared with me that he could get me a job teaching high school science and coaching high school crew in Orlando. I had enough credits to graduate from college, so I jumped at the chance to move to Orlando. I took the job.

This was in 1970 and a year before Walt Disney World was scheduled to open..

Our dilemma now was how/when to get married. I was not interested in waiting a year, but her parents did not know she was 'engaged'. So, we did the smart thing, we walked into her family den on Tuesday afternoon and informed her parents we were getting married on Thursday, so I could be at work in Orlando on Monday morning. I won't share all the exciting moments of that particular day, but suffice it to say we

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did not get married on Thursday. We waited two weeks! I had to be in Orlando for a two week in-service for teachers, prior to the kids coming to school. So we decided to use those two weeks to plan a wedding and set up a house in Orlando.

During those two weeks, Cathy and her mom made her dress, planned the ceremony, and made arrangements for the wedding reception. I made arrangements with the church and pastor, and worked with my parents to plan for the rehearsal dinner. I came back home for our Labor Day wedding and everything was ready. Well, sort of.

We were scheduled to have our ceremony at 10:00 on Saturday morning. It rained that morning and our flowers were late. Cathy's dad was about to walk her down the isle when the flowers arrived. He told them they could take the flowers on back. They tried to slip them in anyway and he convinced them to leave. They did. I had made arrangements for a photographer friend of mine to take all the pictures. After he got to the church he realized he had forgotten his film. We have no wedding pictures.

I had hidden my car at a friend of the family's house so my buddies couldn't mess it up, only to find out as we tried to leave that my friend of the family had blocked up all the tires and we couldn't leave anyway, until I got out and removed them with lots of good-natured 'help' from everyone at the reception,

My favorite part though was pulling up to the Hyatt Regency in Atlanta. At the

time it was the swankiest hotel in Atlanta and I had reservations. We pulled up to the front door and I was planning on springing for valet parking. They took one look at my 1963 yellow Ford Fairlane pulling a homemade yellow and red trailer and asked us to drive ourselves around to the back of the hotel and park ourselves.

The rest is history: We have been married 42 years, been blessed with two great sons, many friends. We have retired with plans of travel and will continue to enjoy each other's company for another 42 years, once we figure out how to deal with the fact that men are from Mars and women are from Venus.

Like most couples, we have learned that we can be having the same conversation with each other, using the same exact words and neither one of us has a clue what the other one is talking about. We have a lot of fun trying to figure that one out!

Our real secret to our happy marriage though is that while we might go to bed angry with each other, we promised ourselves way-back-when that we would never go to sleep angry and we never have.

Have a Happy Valentines!  
Mike and Cathy Self

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# THE OLD DALLAS MILL YMCA

by John Pruett

There is a message written in chalk on the old wood wall by the front door: "Please don't tear me down! Please, for God's sake!"

Futile words.

Every day now, the stacks of brick and rotting lumber grow higher and the kegs of rusty nails grow fuller as workmen strip away the old wooden skeleton of what was once one of Huntsville's showpiece athletic facilities.

Soon the old Dallas YMCA will be gone, victimized by the ravages of time, and the big parking lot out behind Jackson Way Baptist Church will seem strangely naked.

But if old buildings could talk, surely this one would have some stories to tell before the last board comes down...

Built in the early years of this century, the structure was designed as a health and recreation center for employees of the old Dallas Manufacturing Company, once one of Huntsville's largest cotton mills.

The Dallas Village Mill workers and their families used it in a variety of ways. Its basketball gymnasium was one of the best in north Alabama. Downstairs in the basement, there were two lanes for bowling, a steam room and shower facilities.

On Friday and Saturday nights, they dropped a screen from the ceiling of the gym and showed movies for a dime.

For the kids of Dallas, it

was "the place to go." For some of them, it was the only place to go.

Although the "Y" was built by the mill for its mill people, its directors had a sort of lend-lease arrangement with the old Rison School.

"As I recall, it was available to us two days a week," said Cecil Fain, the Principal at Rison in those days. "For years, that's where we played our home basketball games, both boys and girls. It was a fine building back in those days, a wonderful place to play ball."

"I remember a lot of good men who were connected with the Dallas Y in one way or another - G. H. Milligan, who was the President of the mill. And W. R. Rison and Harry Rhett's father. And Oscar Goldsmith, Milton Lannier, W. L. Denham ... and, of course, W. P. Fanning, who was one of the most noble men I've ever known."

W. P. Fanning was one of the Dallas YMCA's early secretaries, meaning he ran the place. He had help from a succession of physical directors, including Carl Fudge, Bill Jobe, Andy Boyd

(who later moved across town as director of the West Huntsville YMCA) and Hub Myhand.

Not long after Myhand came to Dallas in the late 1920s, Fanning took a job with the Board of Education and went on to teach diversified education for many years in Madison County. When Fanning left, Myhand took charge of the Dallas YMCA and held the job for 22 years until the mill closed in 1949.

After Dallas mill was shut down, Huntsville businessman Louis Lee bought the YMCA building. It was subsequently sold to the Veterans

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of Foreign Wars and was later purchased by the Fifth Street Baptist Church, which is now known as Jackson Way Baptist Church.

The church used the building as a recreation center up until a few months ago, when the old "Y" was condemned as being unsafe.

"We had some good times in that old building," remembered Myhand, who now lives in retirement on Andrew Jackson Way. "Some good basketball players have shot many a basket in there, I'll tell you that."

From the time he came to Dallas Village until 1935, Myhand was the coach of a series of excellent basketball teams. His players included Newt McGinnis, Ed Herrin, E. D. Stone, Houston Goodson, Cowboy Fitch, Beauton Fisher, Jennings and Woodrow Chisom, Jim Tom Gentry, Jody Gray, Jimmy Webb, Jim Tabor and Walter Fisk ... a stout group of athletes by any yardstick, most of them mini-legends in the Dallas area.

"We won four city championships and two state championships," Myhand said. "Both times in the state, we played a team called the Birmingham Preds. One of those championship games was played at Montgomery and the other was played at Dallas."

Myhand remembers that Dallas used to play several touring professional teams, including the House of David, Olson's Terrible Swedes and the old New York Celtics - and several college teams, too.

"We had pretty good luck against most of them," he said. "We'd play Cumberland College, Florence State, Jacksonville, St. Bernard ...

I remember once when we played Cumberland at our gym. They had us 10 or 12 points at the half, but in the second half we let McGinnis shoot long shots and he beat 'em by hitting about 10 in a row. Best long shooter I ever saw."

"Yep, those were good

days. We have a lot of memories from the Dallas YMCA."

And so do a lot of others - more

than 60 years of memories, in fact.

But soon, memories will be all that is left.

*Editor's note:*

*This column was originally published in The Huntsville Times on July 3, 1977, by John Pruett*



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## HERMIT FOUND DEAD IN LIMESTONE CAVE

*From the Decatur Daily,  
December 21, 1916*

Alone he lived, alone he died — did Limestone county's man of mystery, whose charred body was found in the ruins of his cave home, east of Athens on the Nick Davis Road. The recluse was called John Hunt, when he went to Athens a quarter of a century ago and bought 25 acres of land near Athens.

He dug his home, rather than built it. Into the earth he bored and excavated a large room, over which he built a roof and called it home. In later years he added two more rooms, both underground. Hunt claims his grandfather settled Huntsville and from the family name that city received its name.

His pathetic death last week, under mysterious circumstances, brought to light the weird story of the hermit's life. Hunt had been a Federal Army man during the Civil War and he received a pension from the government. Together with the money he received from selling a few farm products, he eked out a meagre existence.

One of the strange features of the her-

mit's life, now being related by Athens people, is the fact that Hunt never sold a chicken, though he raised hundreds in the woods about his home. On the other hand, he treated them much as he would a human being. At noon he frequently rang a big bell to call them to be fed.

The fowls would jump upon his shoulders and he made pets of all of them.

"They are too near and dear to me to be sold," he explained to curious visitors, who visited his dugout by the hundreds.

The recluse treated all people with civility, but never claimed their friendship. When he first moved to Limestone, the section in which he settled had few people in it. Later it built up, but he continued to keep himself withdrawn from human companionship.

Recently, negroes passing by the hut found only the smoking embers left. A hurried investigation was made and in the ashes the body was found. It was buried by the people of the neighborhood in the Athens cemetery.

It is declared that Hunt willed his strange house to Limestone county.





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# MY MOM, THE AVON LADY

by Lisa White

My mother, Emma "Jean" Avery Swafford, was born on October 1, 1926 in Tunica, Mississippi to James (Jim) and Myrtle Avery and big sister Annie Ruth. This small family moved to Maysville, Alabama around 1930 to start a new life after losing everything they owned in a house fire.

Jim worked for the County and Myrtle owned a store. Jean attended Central School and it's been said more than once that she was the prettiest girl there at the time. Jean fell in love at the age of 15 and married Norman Swafford on October 27, 1942 in Tupelo, Mississippi four days after he was inducted into the Army and 26 days after she turned 16. Norman left shortly after for Northern France.

Emma Jean stayed in Maysville waiting on Norman to come home on leave. It was told that their oldest son was conceived when Norman was given a pass that belonged to one of his best friends, Morland Tipton, so he could see his pretty young wife.

Nine months later Emma Jean suffered through a horrible breech delivery - her parents were even asked by the doctor if you could choose, which one would you want us to save? Emma Jean finally gave birth on April 3, 1944 to Chuck who weighed over 11 pounds and was referred to as "little soldier." He was relatively healthy except for broken bones in both arms.

**"I'm not a paranoid, deranged millionaire. Dammit, I'm a billionaire."**

**Howard Hughes**

You would have thought that giving birth to an 11 pound breech baby would mean Chuck was an only child but this was not the case. Two years later Emma Jean gave birth to Dennis. Five years after that he was followed by Janice and ten years after that Lisa was born. The following year Emma Jean started selling Avon.

Avon was not only a job for Emma Jean - it was her life. She won many awards for her sales - usually ranking in the top three in her district.

During her Avon career she never missed sending in an order. Even in 1974 when she was in a terrible car accident (she was hit by a drunk driver) while out selling Avon. The accident was followed six weeks later by the devastating April 3 tornadoes, one of which destroyed the Swafford home. Most of the people Emma Jean sold Avon to were not only her customers, but her friends. To some of the older customers, Emma Jean was the only visitor they had. They looked forward to seeing her every two weeks.

She carried pictures in her wallet of many of her customers' children and grandchildren, right beside pictures of her own family. Some of

her customers knew that she had been complaining with chest pains and pain in her left arm for a few weeks while family members had no idea.

Emma Jean sacked her last Avon order on January 22, 2006. She was found dead the following morning.

She carried the title of "The Avon Lady" for 43 years and was married to the love of her life for 63 years. Norman was so devastated by Emma Jean's death that he died just 89 days later.



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# “It Made Him Cry”

“Yes, indeed, we have some queer incidents happen to us while we run these trains,” said the engineer. “I was running along one afternoon pretty lively when I approached a little village where the track cuts through the streets. I slacked up a bit, but was still making good speed when suddenly, about twenty rods ahead of me, a little girl, not more than three years old, toddled onto the track.”

“There was no way to save her. It was impossible to stop or even slack much in that distance, as my train was heavy and the grade descending. In ten seconds, it would have been all over, and after reversing and

applying my brake, I squeezed my eyes shut. I didn’t want to see any more.”

“As we slowed, my fireman stuck his head out the window to see what I’d stopped for, when he laughed and shouted to me, ‘Jim, look here!’”

“I looked and there was this big Newfoundland dog holding that little girl in his mouth, just walking leisurely as you please toward the house where she evidently belonged. She was kicking and crying so I knew she wasn’t hurt, and the dog had saved her.

My fireman kept on laughing - he thought it was funny as could be, but I started to cry. I just couldn’t help it. I have a little girl of my own at home.”

*From 1879 Newspaper*



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# Tweetie's Pet Tips

OK, it's only because my owner is bigger than me ... more cat tips.

## Tweetie



### \* Honk That Horn!

Even if you keep your cats inside, it is a good idea to honk your horn or slap the hood of your car each and every time you get ready to leave. The residual heat that car engines radiate will attract cats trying to keep warm during the winter months. It is very common for cats to climb up into the engines and then are badly injured or killed when the unsuspecting human starts the car.

### \* Warm, Dry Shelter

If you must keep your cat outside, or you manage a feral colony, now is the time to create suitable shelters for your cats. Although some people think cats won't use an outdoor shelter, I know that a cat will find and defend a place that is warm and dry during the cold winter months.

Shelters with small round openings - those just big enough for a cat to fit into - will attract them more quickly. This gives them security that nothing larger than themselves can come into the shelter; it will be easier to defend when they are inside, and the small opening will help keep the wind and precipitation out. Be sure to have some means of changing the bedding; such as some sort of trap door, or a removable top.

### \* String Warning

Cats love string, but they can have severe troubles with it. Never let your cat play with a small fine string or thread unless you can supervise them. The natural bristles on a cat's tongue can catch a string, or yarn and force the cat to swallow it. This could be disastrous if a cat plays with sewing thread, or knitting

yarn because they could swallow unlimited yards of thread. At the very best, they will eventually throw up the indigestible portion of string; at the very worst, the thread could create lower intestinal blockages.

### \* Caution in the Laundry Room

If you leave the doors to your washer or dryer open periodically, be sure to check inside before you turn the machine on. Kitties love to explore dark hiding places and they might be inside. More than once, I have found one of my cats curled up in one of the machines taking a nap.

### \* Antifreeze Warning

Not all pet owners know that antifreeze is a deadly poison to pets. What is frustrating, is that antifreeze smells and tastes good to most pets. Take extra precautions when working with antifreeze: collect it in a bucket to prevent it from running down the gutter. Mop up any spills immediately. Keep your pets con-

tained while working with anti-freeze to prevent any accidental ingestion.

### \* Best Bedding Material

Cloth and newspaper are not the best answer for bedding in your cat's outdoor shelter, as they can get wet & freeze. Cedar chips are not good either. Hay or straw is the recommended bedding material for outdoor cats.



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# From the Desk of Tom Carney

## A New Dress

In 1935, sixty-five percent of the cotton farmers in Madison County were sharecroppers. These people, immersed in poverty, became part of the forgotten history of our land. In an effort to understand what it was really like, I talked to three elderly people, two women and one man, who had lived as tenant farmers. The following is a composite of all their stories.

Under the hot broiling sun, scorching everything its rays came in contact with, a wizened old man, with skin burnt like aged leather, labored tirelessly between the cotton rows. In the next row, his wife, wearing an odd apparel that had lost any resemblance of a dress years ago and bleached white by thousands of scrubblings with strong acrid lye soap, knelt on lacerated knees and desperately plucked at the ripened bolls.

Sunup to sundown; 200 pounds at 1/2 cent per pound. Pay the man at the store for the sack of flour you bought yesterday. That takes all the money but you can buy again on credit tomorrow. Go home and rub liniment on your tired aching muscles and try to forget they will be sore again tomorrow.

There is no other choice for you. This is your only way to earn a living in the

bleak existence that nature has so cruelly bestowed upon you.

For most, there was no hope of escaping the vicious cycle of tenant farming. Bound by debts to the land owner and untrained for other types of work, all they could expect was a pair of cheap shoes for the children to wear to school, or maybe a few store-bought groceries to supplement their standard diet of beans, fat-back and corn bread.

In another few weeks the rains would begin, and following that would come the



cold, frigid blast of winter, spreading its gloom on the now exhausted fields. Young boys and old men alike would pace the floor like caged animals, pausing every so often to stare out the windows of the drafty, broken down hovels they called home, and curse the fate that made them slaves to unseen

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cotton moguls a thousand miles away.

Keep the fire going, ration what meager food there is and wait for the frozen ground to thaw. Walk down to the store. Maybe they will let you add some tobacco and a bag of flour to the long overdue bill. Stop and talk to Lem Wilbanks over on the next farm. His daughter is expecting any day and her husband is up North in Chicago, trying to find a job. Talk and kill time and wait. Wait for the warm showers of spring that will thaw the frozen earth and bind you to another year of servitude.

"Maybe next year," they would say, year after year, "Maybe next year will be better."

Spring jumps out suddenly across the barren land. The sopping red clay is now dry to the touch, waiting to embrace the seeds of a brand new cotton crop. It will be a new beginning, the start of new dreams. Tonight you will sleep the slumber of a conquering warrior, for tomorrow you will prove your manhood.

You stand and look at the fields thru the early morning twilight, daring and challenging the gods up above to anoint you, let you pay off your debts and maybe have enough left to buy your wife a new dress.

But as you pick up the hoe and begin trudging silently

toward the dismal fields, a truth begins gnawing at you, deep inside. And no matter how hard you try to suppress the thought, it keeps coming back, and coming back, until it envelopes you in its overwhelming reality. And then, with your body shaking in convulsions, you hold your head in your hands and cry like a baby.

This year won't be any better and there won't be a new dress.

Cotton will still be "King"

in Madison County. . . . But not for the people working in the fields.

Almost sixty years later, when the man talked about not being able to buy his wife a new dress, his eyes began blinking, and in an effort to hide the tears, he pulled out an old worn handkerchief and loudly pretended to blow his nose. After struggling to regain his composure, the man refused to discuss anything having to do with share-cropping.

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# "I'm Leaving You!"

From 1890 Huntsville newspaper

The other day a man and woman came to a sudden halt on Clinton Street, and the woman dropped a basket she was carrying and called out, "I will, I will, I will not live with you another day!"

"You'll leave me, will you?" he calmly asked.

"Yes, I will."

"When?"

"Now, right off, this minute!" she yelled.

"You'll go away?"

"Yes, Sir!"

"I wouldn't do that if I were you," he calmly stated.

"But I will, and I defy you to prevent me. I have suffered at your hands as long as I can to put up with it."

"Oh, I shan't try to stop you," he quietly replied. "I shall simply report to the police that my wife has mysteriously disappeared. They will then want your description, and I shall give it. You wear number 9 shoes, you have an extra large mouth, you walk stiff in your knees, your nose turns up at the end, hair the color of brick terra cotta, the newest in fashion, eyes rather on the squint, you can't cook, your voice partakes of ....."

"Wretch! You wouldn't dare do that!" she screamed.

"I certainly will, and the description will go into all the papers." They glared at each other for a minute like cats.

Then he continued to walk up the street. She looked up and down the street, then gritted her teeth together, picked up her basket and followed on after.

He had what they call the "goods" on her.

**"I would be unstoppable, if I could just get started."**

**Sam Keith**

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# OUR STORY

by Leo Larkin

He was dressed in his tux, playing his violin in a trio of classical musicians in the doorway of Parisian's department store. They were playing their last piece as I walked up; dressed in my jeans and checkered shirt, as he likes to tell it.

Billy Joe Cooley, editor of the Huntsville News, was part of the small audience and invited all to join him at Piccadilly Cafeteria. I went along and I can't remember who else went besides this fellow who fiddled. Billy Joe and I carried on a lively conversation while this fiddler was strangely quiet. I told a hair-raising tale of my Kentucky kinfolks. (And here was this quiet man taking all this in.)

Later that summer, my son Shane Adkins and I arrived at the Gazebo Concerts at

Big Spring Park to play in the program. Here was the quiet man, without his tux and fiddle, operating the sound system. Humbly, almost shyly, he asked me what I needed in the way of sound.

The next year I arrived at the Big Spring Park with Shane to perform and here was this quiet guy named Bob Larkin again. No longer strangers, we conversed a little more freely. Shane and I performed, and Bob's intention of inviting me to join him and the staff/performers for supper was lost in my selling albums and tapes and conversing with friends and fans. Always a gentleman, he wouldn't intrude.

Later, we accidentally met in the mall and he asked me for a date. I couldn't go at that particular time and he said, "How about January 6th?" which was three weeks down the road. We were to go to the Redstone

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Arsenal Commanding General's New Year reception, and then to a movie and dinner. I thought, "What will we talk about all that time?"

I dressed to the nines, we attended the reception for ten minutes, met the General, then left; returning to my home where I changed into my jeans. (It was four degrees outside.) We saw "Dances with Wolves" and went to dinner at Red Lobster. I found that we had plenty to talk about.

On a second date, he took me to a chamber music concert. Upon arriving, Billy Joe Cooley greeted us with, "Well, are you guys courting 'heavy' now?" I nearly went through the floor with embarrassment. After the date, Bob asked me, "Well, are we courting 'heavy' or not?" Then he told me he wanted to be serious but didn't want to get his hopes up. I spent 30 minutes telling him why I couldn't commit to a relationship.

On our next date he asked me to marry him and literally put me into a state of shock. (He hadn't even held my hand.) I said, "What do you want with me, I'm a country girl and you're sophisticated." I told him that I would pray about it. It threw me into such a state of mind that I lost my car in four parking lots that week. Two of them were small.

Bob's character was revealed when he included himself in everything I was doing, especially hospital visitations. Through a vision, Jesus revealed to me that this was the person he had for me. I accepted his proposal in a Valentine and then it was his turn to go

into shock. I had spent many days seeking God's will with praying and fasting on Lake Guntersville and always had a desire to be married there.

We were married April 6th on the lake, I had a real country girl wedding. My son Shane, along with Carl Williams, furnished guitar music for the ceremony. I came down the winding brick pathway to Mother Maybell's "You Are My Flower." Bob then serenaded me, playing "You Light Up My Life," accompanied by Shane. (They had told me they were going to play "Frankie and Johnny.") Shane gave me away.

The dogwoods were blooming, and the red buds were still hanging on, just for us. It was a warm day, with a breeze, and the first weekend in nine weeks that it hadn't rained. The ducks were quacking, birds sweetly singing, and woodpeckers hammering noisily.

All was accompanied by the water lapping on the shore. My minister said it was like being in a storybook. Shane said it was a smash! We have so far celebrated 21 years of marriage and are living happily ever after!

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## I Remember Downtown

by Margene Hudson

I remember when...

Banking was not so complicated and a lot of fun.

Forty years ago, who ever heard of a financial statement, disclosure statement or RE-SPA?

Downtown banking was not only for your financial needs, it was your social life also. All of the local happenings and a little gossip could be gotten when making a deposit or cashing a check.

Being Treasurer of my local high school class was very exciting for me.

The Henderson Bank was the one I chose to open a checking account for my class. The building was located in the Struve Building on the east side of Washington Street. The building burned and I really got upset, because we had worked so hard for the funds to take a class trip. Little did I know that the bank's records were all kept in a safe and fire-proof vault.

What a fun time we had working downtown. After ob-

taining a job with First National Bank (now First Alabama Bank), we could go shopping on our lunch hour or before we caught the bus for home at Dunnivant's store. We would buy shoes at Uptain's Shoe Store, clothes at Dunnivant's, where Ma Venable was in charge of alterations; and no one dared to go to church without a hat from the Bonnet Box.

If you were looking for bargains there was Dobson's basement. My first curtains came from there for that tiny apartment on Pratt Avenue. Zesto had the best milkshakes in town along with the foot long hot dogs.

For a night on the town, a movie could be a big choice: The Lyric, The Grand, or the Elks. We later had the Center but we would have to ride the bus to get there.

Everything you needed to buy could be purchased downtown within a six-block area. I bought my first electrical appliance, an iron, from Mr. Larkin's Firestone store on the South Side of the Square.

At lunch time we would go for ice cream at City Drug Store owned by Mr. Tom Dark. We could also stroll past the telephone switchboard located on the South Side of the Square, upstairs. With no air conditioning, they kept the windows open in the summertime. This was great for finding out what was really going on in the city.

We also liked to visit the Farmer's Market in the summertime. It was lo-

cated behind the First National Bank (now First Alabama Bank). The farmers selling the produce were either related to some of us or they were customers of the bank.

The Chairman of the Board of First National Bank, Mr. M.B. Spragins, owned the ice plant where he kept watermelons in the ice house. The plant was located where the Huntsville Utilities building is now. After closing the bank in the afternoon, he would decide that he wanted watermelon. He would send down and get them and we cut and ate, on the front steps of the bank, all the watermelon we wanted. People passing by were invited to join us.

There were no strangers in town; we knew everyone. Mr. Spragins also liked to have

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picnics so when we closed the bank on Wednesday or Saturday afternoon, off we would go for fishing or a picnic.

In the 1960's things began to really change for downtown and the banking industry. The revitalization of Redstone Arsenal changed our working lifestyle and social life forever. People came in droves looking for work. We did not have branch banking then so our work loads became more hectic.

The Redstone PX always created a show for strangers. In making their deposits or picking up their change order, they brought along jeeps with armed Military Police. They would station themselves across the front of the bank with rifles drawn. A couple of them would come in the bank with their rifles drawn. The kids loved it!

One of the things I remember most were the parades before the local football games. Each school had a home coming parade with floats and a home coming Queen. There was a lot of competition to have the best parade float. Each was decorated by the students themselves. The floats were very impressive and the bands were just great.

The Christmas parade was always at night and only a couple of weeks before Christmas. The pretty majorettes strutted with bells on their shoes, white earmuffs and lighted batons. We all looked forward to Santa Claus and knew when he was coming because Alabama A&M's band was always in front of him, a long time tradition. It was always cold. Your teeth would chatter and

your hands and feet would be numb. The hot chocolate afterwards made it all worthwhile.

One of the things that brings back such happy memories was the Sesquicentennial held in Big Spring Park. All the townspeople participated in the play that was held every night. Some famous acting careers were established during this week long celebration.

Mrs. Ethel DeArmond was one of the volunteers who did so much work to put this play on. Each day at noon we had a parade. The three banks had a float called the "Silver Dollies". We took turns wearing our long dresses and riding the float. What fun!

Memory is the function of the brain that lets us store up happy thoughts and events in our lives, like we store mementos in a trunk, that when unlocked brings a smile to our faces

and sometimes a tear or two. But mercifully this same brain function lets us forget the unpleasant times and disappointments.

I remember when...

*Margene Hudson,  
Vice President of  
First Alabama Bank*

(First published in "Old Huntsville" magazine in 1991)



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2. *The Sword of Bushwhacker Johnston - back in stock!* edited by Charles Rice \$20
3. *Historic Huntsville: (2002 edition)* by Elise Hopkins Stephens \$18 (new price)
4. *Growing up in the Rocket City: A Baby Boomer's Guide* (over 200 Photos/illustrations) by Tommy Towery \$15
5. *1861 Civil War Map of Huntsville* (with historic points of interest) \$4.95
6. *Remembering Margaret Mitchell* by Huntsvillian Lucille Thompson Love \$18
7. *True Tales of Old Madison County - back in stock -* by Pat Jones \$7.95
8. *Huntsville Entertains - History & Recipes* by Historic Huntsville Foundation \$12
9. *When Spirits Walk - Ghosts of Madison County - (back in stock)* by Jacque Reeves \$16.95
10. *Lost Writings of Howard Weeden* by Fisk & Riley \$20.00