



No. 280  
JUNE 2016



# Old Huntsville

HISTORY AND STORIES OF THE TENNESSEE VALLEY



## LOVE IN THE SIXTIES

We decided to hitch a ride to the next town or gas station, but I didn't want to leave my bride or let her "hitch" alone. So both of us were on the side of a very hot 2-lane road looking for prospects for a ride.

A couple of cars pass, our thumbs stuck out, no luck.

*Also in this issue:* **Five Points Fox Rescue**

# Lewter's Hardware Store



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**A Hardware Store....  
The Way You Remember Them**

*Domie Lewter*  
*Mac Lewter*

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# Love in the Sixties

by M.D. Smith, IV

We fell in love in college. Judy was 19 and I was 20 when we got married in the First Methodist Church in Huntsville on June 8, 1961. We lived in Married Student Apartments for two years until I graduated from the University of Alabama.

But this is about honeymoons and anniversaries. Our honeymoon was a mixed bag of bliss and moments that are unforgettable. Young and married, the bliss I'll leave to your imagination. The wedding was later on in the day and after the reception we were tired and a Birmingham motel was the first stop on a driving trip in my father's new Mercury convertible. Great car.

We are in our room on the first night, under the covers (I'll leave the rest to your imagination also) and suddenly the door that joined the next

room to ours was opened by the other room occupant. We had forgotten to lock our side. That sure changed the mood for a while, apologies that were offered profusely by the other person were accepted.

Our driving goal was Ft. Lauderdale 3 days later for a airline hop to Nassau, 3 days there, and then return home in the Mercury. Next night in Ft. Walton, sun and fun and on the second day we set out for Homosassa, FL where my family took me as a kid. I wanted to show Judy the "Giant Fish Bowl" and walk under water in a glass tunnel. We stopped for gas around Tallahassee and we were not more than ten miles down the road, when steam was pouring out from under the hood and temp meter was in the red.

We discovered when the friendly Pure service guy checked the water in the radiator (they always checked your oil and water in those days) he had forgotten to put the cap back on and must have left it on top of the radiator. So it was easy to spot our trouble, out in the middle of nowhere, where there was no radiator cap in sight anywhere.

We decided to hitch a ride to the next town or gas station, but I didn't want to leave my bride or let her "hitch" alone. So both of us were on the side

**When you throw a baby up in the air, she laughs because she knows you will catch her.**

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of a very hot 2-lane road looking for prospects for a ride. A couple of cars pass, our thumbs stuck out, but no luck.

Then I saw an rusty old truck with a big tall wooden box bed and I backed away from the road. Judy stayed on the edge with her thumb out. Just as it was passing it slowed to a stop and we both saw a truck load of farm labor, all hot sweaty guys, and the passenger in the truck cab yelled out for us to hop aboard. I made some slim excuse and waved them on. That was our first "serious discussion" we had on our trip. We don't take rides from just anybody.

Finally we did hitch a ride with a friendly couple, dropped at a gas station just a few miles down the road and bought a radiator cap. Thank goodness in those days every little gas stop had parts like that. They took us back to the car with several gallons of water to fill the radiator and we were again on our way.

Uneventful night and next

day driving to airport and a 20 minute flight to Nassau. Welcome to paradise young lovers. It was our first time to be out of the states and was so neat. It was British in those days, driving on the wrong side of the road and very wonderful at the Nassau Beach Lodge. Odd name for a whale of a hotel that had hundreds of rooms.

The next afternoon after touring Nassau town, we had lunch and were in our room and under sheets about 2 pm. There was "activity" going on, when all of the sudden the door lock clicked and in walked a hotel maid to check the room for supplies. We both hollered the room was occupied and she hurriedly left. It seemed suddenly quite warm in the room, and a soothing co-ed shower

**"A bra factory was robbed of thousands of dollars. My dad said they could've prevented the robbery if they'd set a booby trap."**

**Sammy Jacobs, Athens**

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 **At Home**

sounded like just the ticket for the newlyweds.

So there we were in nice warm water in a fairly large shower in the room. We had both just gotten well soaped up and about to rinse off, when suddenly, the water just stopped running. Not a drop of hot or cold water. We just stood there looking at each other with suds head to toe.

"Let's wait a few minutes," I said. So we waited. After about 5 minutes, which seemed a lot longer, Judy said, "The soap is starting to burn me and it's getting in my eyes." I agreed and we decided to exit, put on our bathing suits and make a trip to the hotel's pool.

I imagine we looked odd and we imagined everyone was staring at the newlyweds, with soap in their hair and bodies although we did towel off some before we left the room, as we had to parade through the main lobby to get to the pool. We immediately jumped in and rinsed off in the cooling water. Judy was worried that the hotel management might be mad seeing us get in the pool all lathered up, but I assured her it was their fault for stopping the water without warning. An hour later, back in the room, the water was working again. What a memorable day that was. I think I drank a bit more Gin than I should have that night.

Forward a year later and our First Anniversary. Judy's mother had dutifully saved the top section of the wedding cake in a small cardboard box from one year earlier. At

that time, my folks were still in Birmingham, so we went to the Chandler's that night. Dinner was fine and then time for dessert and the top of the cake for "good luck" we were told. Do I need to tell you how a cake sitting in a cardboard box in a freezer for an entire year tastes? Awful is the answer, but to show our appreciation to her mother for all the good luck she was bringing to us, we both ate small portions and pretended we were so full from dinner, we just could not eat a bite more.

Fast forward another anniversary some years later when my Mother and Father were treating us to a "Return to Nassau" vacation and the Nassau Beach Lodge in a rented Piper Twin Aztec. By then, both my father and I had become pilots. So we flew the twin engine airplane to Nassau. Had a great

vacation and wonderful time there.

Judy and I celebrated our sixth anniversary and no maids to walk in on us. On the way home, we had a starter problem in Palm Beach going through Customs and were delayed six hours for a mechanic to repair the starter on one engine. By then, it's afternoon and thunderstorms are building as they always do in Florida. Never fear, I am instrument rated and can fly around these things, as I flew in a northerly direction dodging huge big storms and weaved from the Atlantic to the Gulf Coast avoiding them.

Finally Flight Service tells me there is a long line of storms in lower Alabama and we decide to land for the night in Tallahassee. I had to fly circles out in the Gulf waiting for one storm to pass over Tallahassee and then the tower told me to

**A flying saucer is what results when a nudist spills his hot coffee.**

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make a straight in approach "right now" before another storm that was coming would get to the field. The ladies in the back seat were not happy and were screaming a lot.

As we bounced and descended, lightening was flashing from the storm just passed but it was scary. I made a good approach and set down on the field. Just as we taxied to the Base Operator, the bottom fell out again and we got very wet getting in a cab that was waiting for us and getting bags.

I was drained and fell in the motel bed spread eagle and didn't get up till the next day. While in Nassau my folks bought two large 16x20 antique looking poster maps of the Bahamas and tip of Florida. My father drew the route we flew over Grand Bahama to Nassau, and the route back over Bimini to Palm Beach because we were almost always in glide range of land on our first overwater trip. Didn't need the life preservers we rented. My father also put the date under one line, 6-19-67

and framed them. I own both of them today.

That was June, 1967 and our third son Brent was born exactly 9 months later in March. Good trip! We've had a total of 8 children.

This June 8th of 2016, Judy and I will celebrate our 55th Anniversary with something a bit more calm than those others we both remember so well.



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## City News - 1875

### A Frightful Mistake

An interesting case of death from careless use of poison lately occurred. A blacksmith named Wilder, after a week of drinking, went into a drug store and called for an ounce of hydrate chloral, which was properly labeled and given him. He went home, put the entire ounce into a glass of water and drank it down with a view to having a good sleep and to recover from the effects of his drinking.

Hardly had he touched the bed where his wife lay she noticed a strange look upon his face and hastened to his side. He said, "Sally it's no use, I've made a mistake and am a dead man."

In twenty minutes from the time he took the mixture he was a corpse. Five grains of hydrate chloral is a safe dose for a person wishing sleep, but this man took an ounce, four hundred and eighty grains at once, and paid the sad penalty.

### Fingers Found

A local farmer, upon opening his chicken house recently one morning, missed two of his

birds; but then on the other side of the cage he found two fingers in the trap. They haven't been called for.

### Lost

Either at the Opera House or on the street between the Opera House and Dr. Dements residence, a Porte Monnaie containing a purse with forty dollars - three ten dollar bills, the balance in change.

The finder will be rewarded by leaving it at the Independent office.

### Business Move

Drs. Binford and Dement have moved to the office on Franklin Street, third door from the East corner of the Public Square in Huntsville.

### Strayed or Stolen

From J. B. Allison in New Hope, Ala. about six miles northeast of Vienna on the Paint Rock Road one dark brown mare mule of medium size about ten years old, saddle marks on back, rather heavy set and strong legs, a knot on each shoulder point.

This mule is the grandson's favorite and any information in regard to the whereabouts of the mule will be rewarded.

**"The patient was extremely worried and concerned about the lack of anxiety in her life."**

*Seen on patient chart*

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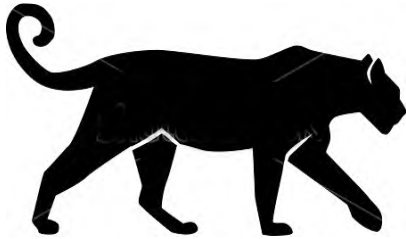
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# A SCARY ENCOUNTER

by Scott Nixon



It was 41 years ago when I had a moment that I will never forget. I was 5 years old and we lived a few blocks from the Huntsville Speedway, in south Huntsville close to Ditto Landing.

There was a path behind our house that was a shortcut to another part of our street. It went through the woods.

One day, I decided to sneak off from my Mama and I followed that trail.

About half way down the trail, I froze in my tracks. I could not breathe.

Laying there on the ground, was a giant animal with huge eyes, just looking at me.

It was staring at me and licking its paws. I was terrified. After a few seconds, I started backing up. I turned and ran as fast as I could. I finally got home safe.

Did my family believe me when I told them I saw a huge scary animal? No. Several years later, I saw a picture in a book and then I knew exactly what I had seen. It was a black panther.

To this day, I know exactly what it was I saw, and I also know that I would never walk that trail again.

A scary encounter yet a timeless, real memory for a little boy.



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# Indian Creek Bridge

by John Hughes, Athens

Imagine that it is Saturday night in 1939 or 1940. You are on Old Madison Pike heading west toward Madison. You are approaching the notorious Indian Creek Bottom. You make a 90° left turn at the top of the hill and descend several hundred yards and make a 90° right turn. You are now traveling through Indian Creek Bottom.

It is dark, very dark. The headlights on your old Plymouth do not shine all that bright. The back-up lights are worse. You recall the stories you have heard most of your life:

- Prominent Madison physician robbed at gunpoint in the Indian Creek Bottom.
- Madison Banker beaten. Loses an eye in attack by unknown assailants in the Indian Creek Bottom.
- Suicides (two or more).

Mama is asleep in the front seat beside you. The kids are asleep in the back seat. All of a sudden a wall of fire roars up in front of the car! You don't have time to think of Johnny Cash's "Burning Ring of Fire" - you are scared.

Mama wakes up and starts screaming. The kids in the back seat are screaming. You would like to scream but you can't make a sound. Then you realize the fire has almost gone out. Only a few embers remain. You can go on to Madison now.

The next day you and some friends return to the scene and find that the wall of fire was

just an old cotton plowline that had been soaked in gasoline and stretched across the road between the bridge posts. When an automobile approaching got close enough the fire would be started. The pranksters left the scene by a path through the woods up Slaughter Road.

The old bridges are gone now. The narrow 2 lane road has been replaced and a beautiful single bridge has replaced the previous two bridges. The trees and foliage that made the way so dark have also been cut back.

The stories of murder and mayhem will fade away in time. New stories will have to be invented to frighten unruly children into behaving. The old Indian Creek Bottom has been transformed. The new bridge was opened on 25 September 2015.



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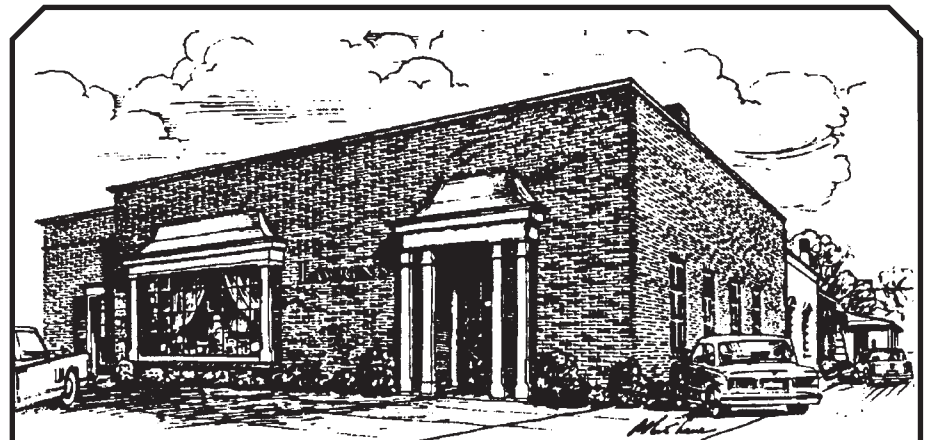
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# Household Tips from Liz

\* Raw chicken breasts are easier to cut up if you freeze them, start to thaw them out and use sharp scissors instead of a knife.

\* For a different taste in your hot tea, try using a spoonful of strawberry jelly instead of the sugar, or add a slice of lemon that has been studded with a couple of whole cloves.

\* If your kid's shoelaces always come undone, try dampening them before tying.

\* If you are going to be out and have no way to brush your teeth after eating, carry some mint tea bags with you to nibble on - they will make your breath smell sweet.

\* For a deep-cleaning mask, try stroking on some Milk of Magnesia, leave it on for 10 minutes, but avoid the eye area. Rinse with warm water.

\* A really good face moisturizer is olive oil. Beautiful Italian women have known about this for years. Just put a few drops on your fingers and rub into skin - stays soft all night long!

\* Remove paper that is glued onto wood surfaces by rubbing on some olive oil.

\* When you wake up in the middle of the night with a bad leg cramp, immediately flex foot or feet upward towards your head.

\* If your windshield wipers smear, clean the windshield and the wiper blades with rubbing alcohol.

\* Avoid storing different cakes, cookies or bread in the same container - they affect

each other and will get stale much faster.

\* Be sure and store your nuts in the fridge or freezer - oftentimes they will get rancid if stored at room temperature.

\* If you love to steam vegetables, pour the leftover liquid in the bottom of your pan into containers and freeze. That way, when you are making soup or need vegetable broth, you will have it ready.


\* If the electricity in your office makes your skirts or dresses cling, just go the bathroom and wet your hands at the sink

- rub your legs lightly with the water and you will see no more cling.

\* If your belts are all in a mess in your closet, simply buy some of the common cup hooks, screw them into the bottom of a wooden pants or coat hanger, and put your belts on the hooks.

\* If you buy ready-made ice tea in the bottles, at night it's a comforting hot tea when you just warm it up - add some lemon and honey if not already sweetened and it'll put you right to sleep.

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# Eggnog Party in Paint Rock Valley - 1864

An early landmark in upper Paint Rock Valley was Cox's Still House, on Clear Creek. Oddly enough, some innocent jollification turned sour for a group of Union soldiers at the Still House one day in 1864. About 40 of the boys in blue had retired to the secluded spot, meaning to take time out from the brutal War Between the States. The yankees quickly confiscated all the whiskey they could find, intending to make some egg nog with the milk and eggs they had stolen from local farmers.

Unfortunately, they made so much racket that some of "Bushwhacker" Johnston's Confederates heard them. The Johnny Rebs sent several of their men to slip around behind the yankees. Meanwhile, the rest of the Confederates set an ambush along the road.

Without warning, the Confeds in advance opened fire into the carousing yankees. Panic stricken, the blue coats dropped their booze and fled straight into the ambush.

When the yankees sobered up, they were faced with the double humiliation of having a hangover and being taken prisoners.

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# HIKING MONTE SANO

by Lee Cox



I moved to Huntsville in 2008. In an effort to get some exercise I regularly hiked the Land Trust trails. Most of the time alone, occasionally talking friends into going with me on what some referred to as my deceptively long and arduous hikes.

I preferred to take the Railroad Bed Trail. Roughly a mile or so from start to finish, it follows the path of a long defunct railway that took visitors up the mountain to the Hotel Monte Sano in the late 1800s.

The latter decades of the 1800s saw the rise of quite a few nasty diseases, mostly due to unsanitary conditions. Diphtheria and Yellow Fever, also called "Yellow Jack" or "Bronze John", were rampant. Huntsville locals found that after spending a few days on Monte Sano their health improved quite a bit and in some cases very dramatically. This was generally attributed to the natural mineral springs atop and

around the mountain, but it was also likely due to the cooler air and more sanitary lifestyle.

The Hotel Monte Sano was built in 1886 by the North Alabama Improvement Company. It consisted of 233 rooms with mineral spring baths and beautiful views of the Tennessee Valley. Eleven dollars per day bought a visitor a room, the spa, and three meals. The hotel registry held the names of Tennessee Valley's richest. Even some of the wealthiest citizens in the country visited the hotel looking for relaxation and regeneration.

Ironically at the time Huntsville was made up mostly of poor mill workers

and cotton field hands. Most of her citizenry could barely afford food, let alone a night there.

Because the well-to-do were not keen on walking, a railway was built from the Huntsville Depot to the hotel. Pulled by a

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**Sigmund Freud**

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Baldwin steam engine, the cars were smaller than usual due to the smaller gauge of the rails and the tight turns in the line as it tacked up the slope. The train made three runs per day for twenty-five cents a trip. At the top, passengers were ferried in a fine Taliaferro buggy to the hotel.

Due to a serious derailment, would-be passengers were frightened away from taking the coach and after some financial mismanagement the rail went into bankruptcy. There was some talk of salvaging the line, but in a spring thaw an enormous boulder fell onto the tracks, permanently ending its run.

As science progressed and sanitation became common practice, Yellow Fever, Cholera, and many other diseases were diminished if not eradicated. Vaccines more or less took away the hotels perceived raison d'être. The Hotel Monte Sano shut its doors in 1900.

All that's left of the hotel is a stone chimney in a front yard and the occasional auction of

antique hotel furnishings. And all that's left of the rail are stone trestle supports and stone embankments.

On my frequent hikes I liked to stand atop the embankments and look out over the creek beds. My mind often wandered to the men who built the rail, hauling those stones via mule wagons and stacking them for the trestles. Maybe they sat on this or that rock and ate lunch with strong but weathered, scarred, filthy hands. I could imagine them breaking their backs, working in the southern heat, the valley winter, so wealthy financiers and blue bloods could find solace in pools of mineral water.

And it was all for naught, because, as I stood there, all that was left were stones the mountain would eventually reclaim into herself.

**"You know the honeymoon's over when you start going out with the boys at night, and so does she."**

**Jimmy Rollins, Arab**

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# Growing Up with the Alabama State National Guard

by *Tillman Hill*

When World War II started the Alabama National Guard was the first group to be called into the Army. Everybody was excited the day they left. Every street had somebody that was going off with them. I don't remember the date, but I would guess it was early 1942.

I was about 10 years old, and all the boys in Dallas Village were going over to the Armory on Dallas Avenue to see them off. I told my Daddy I was going. I should have asked him if I could go instead of telling him because he said no, I could not go.

I started crying and he made me go back into the house. After everybody left, he came into the house and said that I could go. I told him I was not going over there now. That was the first and last time I sassed my Daddy. He went into the kitchen. The sink was by the window and as Daddy always shaved by the window for the sunlight he kept his leather razor strap hanging next to the sink. He got that razor strap, and boy, you ain't been beat until you've had a good beating with a razor strap! After the whipping he told me to go over to the Armory and see the boys off. So with red eyes and a burning butt I was there waving bye to the boys going to war.

I had no way of knowing that day how important a part the Armory would play in my life for the next five years.

Soon after the National Guard left they started the Alabama State Guard. Everybody wanted to do something for the war effort. The State Guard was made up mostly of men either too old or too young to join the Army. There were a lot of World War I veterans and boys too young to join the Army so they enlisted in the State Guard until they were old enough to go into service.

One man who joined the State Guard and later went into the Army was one of the two men from Madison County to win the Congressional Medal of Honor. His name was Bushy Bolden and he was a professional boxer. He was my hero even before he went into the Army.

A lot of businessmen joined the Guard. My Daddy was one of the first men to join and I went everywhere he went. Before long I became the official "mascot" for the Company. My Daddy carried me out to A&M College, where there was a tailor shop, and had an Army uniform made for me. I attended all the meetings and helped out in the supply room. Mostly I did whatever I was told to do.

When Chauncey Sparks was elected Governor, the company was sent to Montgomery to march in the inaugural parade. Of course, being the mascot, I got to tag along. We went down in an Army truck and stayed at the warehouses behind Kilby Prison. They had prisoners to help around the place and I will never forget one prisoner who had a pet crow who sat on his shoulder all the time.

It's funny what stands out in a kid's mind about a trip.

I also got to go to Dauphin Island for a two week training camp with the company.

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The evening before we left was spent loading the trucks and getting ready to leave. After spending the night at the Armory we were awakened early the next morning and driven downtown to a place on Washington Street where we ate breakfast. We were on our way about daylight and best I can remember, we got to Mobile about 1:00 AM and then continued on to Cedar Point. As there were no bridges from the mainland to Dauphin Island at the time, we finished our journey by boat.

The island at that time had a small fishing village on one end and a county training camp, complete with barracks, on the other end which was where we stayed.

Also on the island was Fort Gaines, an old Spanish fort which used to guard Mobile Bay. The fort was in ruins at the time, with old rusty cannons and cannon balls lying about. Having an old fort to run around in gave me a strong sense of being Tom Sawyer. The place was all mine!

The fort was later turned into a state park and is a big tourist attraction today.

Being on the island for two weeks was an experience that a kid like me could only dream about. The men trained all day while I stayed in the barracks and straightened up. The men did most of the work but I shined shoes and washed clothes after they left. The men paid me for doing chores and after two weeks I had made \$13.00, which was a lot of money in those days.

The State Guard met once a week to train and drill. Part of their training was learning to handle large, unruly crowds. They were called out a couple of times to work strikes and one time for a storm.

By this time I was about 12 years old and I had other fish to fry. I was working other jobs but I continued to work at the Armory. About 1946 they started to rent the Armory out for dances every week, and Frank McKinley hired me to clean up afterwards.

I had a key to the place and I would get there very early to clean up the place so I could go to school or work, depending on what time of the year it was.

In the wintertime the first thing I did was to go upstairs to Frank's office and build a fire. At this time they were selling beer at the dances and beer bottles were everywhere, and of course there was a little bit left in many of the bottles.

One morning, after I had built the fire, I started back downstairs and noticed Mac, a buddy of mine, sorting through the bottles looking for something to drink.

Mac often hung around the Armory, telling me stories and helping with the chores. He was much older than I and was also my idol. Though I supposed I knew he was an alcoholic, the meaning never really sunk in until that morning.

After watching Mac for a few minutes, I went back upstairs and stayed for a long time. It hurt very much. He was still my friend, I told myself, no matter what.

When I finally came back down, he had passed out.

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# Heard On the Street

by **Cathey Carney**



Congratulations to our Photo of the Month winner for May. **Dale Rhoades** was the first to call in and identify the little blonde as **Judy Smith**. Dale said she identified Judy because she still looks like she did 40 years ago when they both took a smocking and French hand sewing class together. Congratulations Dale!

And in regards to Judy Smith, she and **M.D. Smith IV** will celebrate their 55th wedding anniversary on June 8. So we want to send out special greetings to Judy and M.D.

Our dear friend **Mr. A. J. Casey** died May 5, at the age of 92. He lived in Satellite Beach, FL but his family was in this area. Mr. Casey was a Ret. Master Sergeant in the U.S. Air Force and a past Master Mason. He was a gentle, funny and kind man who loved his family. He is survived by son-in-law **Joe Waggett**, son **Pat Waggett**, grandsons **Chris Waggett (Stephanie)**, **David Waggett**, and **Steve Waggett (Tammy)** as well as grand and great-grandchildren who will always cherish this sweet man.

June 19th is Father's Day and so many are remembering their Dads who are no longer with us. **Rosemary Leatherwood** misses her

Dad every day, and her husband **Bill** thinks about his dad too. Rosemary and Bill are celebrating their 39th wedding anniversary June 1 and their business, Ole Dad's BBQ, will mark its 21st anniversary on June 10th.

Rosemary also wants to wish her sweet sisters happy June birthdays - **Dorothy Branche** on June 8 and **Mrs. Lynn Sunshine Green** on June 14th.

**Sam Keith** and I recently attended the official kickoff for the opening of Watsons Grand Preserve. The reception was held on the top of Drake Mountain, where a number of prime 3-5 acre lots are located for sale, offering panoramic views of the mountains and valleys of McMullen Cove. The event was hosted by **Jeff and Sonja Einfinger**.

During the Whistle Stop BBQ awards last month Huntsville Firefighter **Jimmy Tolen** was recognized during the awards presentation. Jimmy received a medallion from **Mayor Tommy Battle**. In addition he was honored by the organizers of the cook-off for his many years of work in running the temporary water supply lines

and placing teams in the proper locations. Jimmy is much loved by BBQ competitors and his friends alike.

Happy birthday May 21st to **Kathy Cotney!** Kathy and husband **Steve** lived in New Hope for many years and had so many friends here who really missed them when they moved to Missouri. We love you Kathy!

OK, because we are looking forward to so many musical events in Huntsville, I guess I'll hide a **tiny guitar** somewhere within this magazine. When you find it and call me, if you're the first caller you get a whole year's free subscription! Phone number below in the Photo block. You won't find it but good luck!

Happy Anniversary to **Ken and Diane Owens** - June 13th they will be married 46 years. Congrats to the lovebirds!

Many of the us who live in Huntsville are baby boomers and remember the good old rock and roll that we grew up with. We remember rocking out to the **Tiks, the Chasers, The Precious Few and the Continentals**, just to name a few. Well, several of these great

## Photo of The Month

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

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This toddler grew up to know a lot about Monte Sano history



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bands are coming back to Huntsville for a reunion and the last time these bands played it was to nearly a sellout crowd, with most of them up on their feet dancing! For one day only, on June 11 starting around 3 pm you can hear that great music again. It's going to be at the Elks Club at 725 Franklin St. and there will be other bands playing from the 60s, 70s and 80s. Tickets are only \$10 each. You don't want to miss this!

Congratulations to **Lee and Barbara Hockenberry** who celebrated their 64th wedding anniversary May 20. After all these years it must be working! According to Lee, he attributes their long marriage to the fact that he "does what he is told and keeps his mouth shut." But knowing them both, there's lots of love there!

Huntsville has tons of activities in the summer and one of them is the "Dog Days of Summer" from June 1st - August 30 at the Early Works Museum. Kids and adults alike really enjoy going there. Bart Williams is CEO and sends an invitation out to all who are looking for some good family fun.

Even though he passed away on April 13, we couldn't forget about **Bobby Bragg**, whom Tom wrote several Hurricane Valley stories about. Bobby was a proud WWII Vet who loved his family and friends dearly. He owned Bobby Bragg Grocery located near his home in New Market, AL. He married the love of his life, **Betty**, and was devoted to her for 69 years. He

was a farmer, store owner, fisherman, BBQ master, trainer of hunting dogs and never late to work. He held BBQ events that were attended by Mayors, Sheriffs, politicians, judges, and people from all over the U.S. He will never be forgotten. Bobby is survived by **Betty Claire Robertson Bragg**, daughters **Iva (Jim); Tina (Todd);** sisters **Evelyn Jones and Sue Stevens** as well as great-grand and grandchildren.

The **Concerts on the Dock at Lowe Mill** are better than ever and many people enjoy exploring thru the mill to watch all the artists work on and display their unique pieces during the break. And it's a free event - just bring \$2 to park and there's plenty to eat with several food trucks, the Happy Tummy and Chef Will's. So proud of all the new artists there as well as the ones who were there in the beginning. If you haven't been there yet, there are working artists who show you how they create their art; it is eclectic, creative, delightful and unique. Children and adults as well love walking through the old building that has its original floors, windows and frame from when it was a working mill. If you go once you will be hooked.

Also in June the Monday night **Concerts in the Park** will be revving up again starting June 6. It's so much fun because the music offers something for everyone; you bring your chairs,

blankets, wine, beer, kids and don't forget the pets. Keep your fingers crossed for great weather for all these outdoor events.

Our sweet Dads, husbands and brothers who have passed away are safe in our hearts, and we'll see them again one day.

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# RECIPES

## Southern Snacking

### Marinated Vegetables

- Broccoli
- Cauliflower
- Squash
- White mushrooms
- Carrots
- Red and Yellow peppers
- Sliced Sweet Onions
- 1 large bottle Kraft Zesty Italian Dressing
- 1 T. Oregano

In a large bowl break up the washed vegetables into bite-sized pieces. Shake up the bottle of Italian Dressing and pour the whole bottle over the vegetables and mix well. Sprinkle with the oregano.

You may like to add a few other vegetables of your choice. Seal and let flavors mix overnight in refrigerator, turning a couple of times. Drain and serve with toothpicks.

### Savory Ranch Mix

- Pretzels
- Pecans
- Cheerios
- Rice Chex
- Corn Chex
- Cheez-Its
- 1 env. Hidden Valley Ranch dressing (dry)
- 1/2 bottle Orville Redenbacher's popcorn buttery oil

In a large bowl, mix about two cups each of the cereals, pretzels, Cheez-Its and nuts. Pour the 1/2 bottle of oil over the mixture and stir well. Sprinkle half the dry dressing mix over the cereal mixture and stir gently with large spoon. Add remaining dressing mix and mix well. Serve immediately or store in large Ziploc bags in freezer. Keeps very well this way.

### Baked Cheese Bites

- 2 sticks butter
- 2 c. self-rising flour
- 2 c. grated sharp Cheddar cheese
- 2 c. Rice Krispies
- 1 t. cayenne pepper
- 1/2 t. garlic powder

Mix all ingredients together well - batter will be very stiff. Roll the mixture into small balls, about the size of a large whole pecan. Flatten gently. Bake on greased cookie sheet at 300 degrees for 30 minutes or so. These are good warm but they freeze very well also.

### Deviled Mushrooms

- 2 lb. mushroom caps
- 8 oz. pkg. cream cheese
- 6-1/2 oz. can deviled ham
- 2 t. garlic powder

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Mix the cream cheese, ham and garlic powder. Grease a casserole dish with butter and place mushrooms caps in. Spoon the cheese mixture into the caps and bake at 350 degrees for 20-30 minutes.

### Rolled Tortilla Bites

8 oz. pkg. cream cheese, softened

4 oz. can chopped green chiles, drained

4 oz. jar chopped pimento, drained

1/2 c. chopped ripe olives

10 6-inch flour tortillas

Salsa

In a small bowl combine the first four ingredients and mix well. Spread a heaping tablespoon on each tortilla and roll it up. Place, seam side down, on a plate. Cover and refrigerate for 2 hours. Cut each roll into 6 one inch pieces and serve with Salsa and toothpicks.

### Mini-Cheesecakes

3 8-oz pkg. cream cheese, softened

5 eggs

1 c. sugar

2 t. vanilla

Mix the above ingredients til smooth and pour into foil cupcake liners that have been

placed in the cupcake tins. Fill liners 3/4 full and bake at 325 degrees for 25 minutes.

#### Topping:

1 8-oz. carton sour cream

1/4 c. sugar

1 t. vanilla

Mix together and put 1 teaspoon of the mixture on each cupcake while hot and back in the oven for 3-5 minutes. Top with Maraschino cherries.

### Barb's Hot Shrimp Dip

1 large onion, chopped

3 cloves garlic, crushed

3 banana peppers, chopped

3 chopped jalapeno peppers

2 fresh tomatoes, chopped coarsely

2 lbs. cream cheese, cubed

1/2 lb. cooked shrimp chopped in small pieces

1 t. salt and pepper

In a large crock or stew pot add all the vegetables. Add the cheese and slowly heat til the cheese is melted, mix well.

Let simmer for a few minutes, then add the shrimp at the last minute and stir well to combine.

This dip is so good served with hot crispy tortilla chips that you have salted & warmed. Delicious and you won't have any left over!



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# See You Tomorrow

by Pat Furr

Between Monte Sano Mountain and Keel Mountain is Big Cove, a place with green pastures and newly planted corn fields bordered by native azaleas. It was 1918, a year when the woods were lush with thorny bushes hanging thick with plump blackberries. Elizabeth Carter and Jewel Grayson were best friends. Even after school let out for the summer the girls were together every day. Some days they lay in the grass with hands hooked behind their heads pointing to imaginary animals formed in the sky's cottony clouds.

"Let's go blackberry picking," announced Jewel bouncing from foot to foot with her sun bleached braids keeping in step. She was the more adventurous of the two and full of ideas. The girls took off for the woods where they could find the most berries. Granted they ate more of the woodsy treat than they picked but both had enough in their pail for cobbler, when a black snake slithered from the undergrowth. The girls screamed and ran for home. Both girls were out of breath when they reached the crossroads where their families' farms joined. Elizabeth said it was getting late and their mothers might be worried. She could tell it was near supper because the setting sun threw a ghostly haze through the pines and underlying brush. In second grade they did a pinky-ring promise and crossed their hearts never to say good-bye so the two best friends did their usual departure by throwing their arms around each other saying, "See you tomorrow".

Swinging her pail, Elizabeth dillydallied down the driveway. It was nearly a quarter of a mile from the crossroad and like the road it was hardly more than a dirt path. She was a tall girl for her eight years. She would soon be nine and was excited about her birthday. Jewel was helping to plan a party and make invitations. She was clever and Elizabeth liked having a clever friend. Both girls made straight A's on their report cards and would be in fourth grade when school started in the fall. Humming as she walked, Elizabeth's mind wandered between her birthday and summer plans with Jewel. When the katydids began to chatter their nightly

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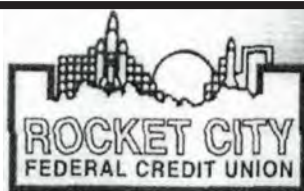
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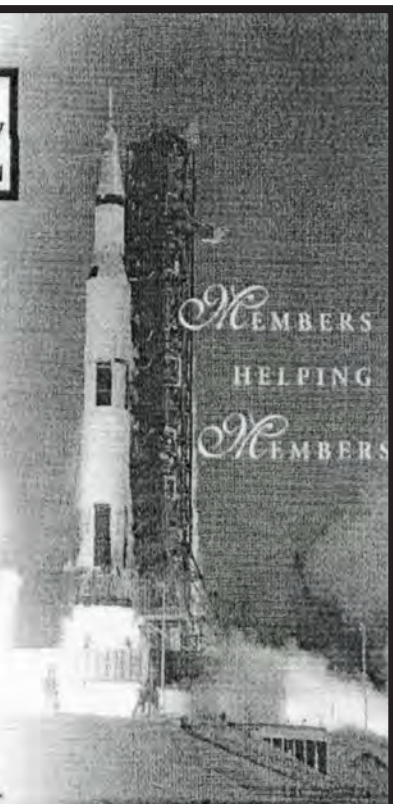
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song she was jolted from her day dreaming and remembered milking time. She picked up her pace and hurried toward the barn. When her brother, eighteen year-old Loren, left home to fight in the war someone needed to help feed the livestock. Elizabeth was asked to help pick up the slack. Work was no stranger to her. She had been helping plant and weed the garden every summer since turning four. But milking Bessie, the family cow, was a new experience and she would need to milk her twice a day. At first it was a difficult task getting the right grip so milk would squirt into the bucket but Bessie was patient and the two got along fine. Every day before evening milking Elizabeth helped in the kitchen. While her mother and two older sisters prepared the evening meal Elizabeth's job was to set the table and carry water in from the outside well for cleaning the cooking pots.

When summer ended Elizabeth and Jewel looked forward to seeing their classmates. They had tired of summer games and were anxious to go back to school. On the first day their shoes shined from black polish and they wore new print dresses made by their mothers. Their teacher gave an eager welcome as the children noisily settled into their desk. She explained this was the year they would learn geography and discuss current events. Her plan was to talk as little as possible about the Great War in Europe because some of the children had brothers fighting there. After the class recited the Pledge of Allegiance she counted eight boys, six girls and added one new girl to her roster.

The warm September led into a cool October. The class would have a Halloween party

and bob for apples. They talked nonstop about "Trick or Treat" and at which house they would be given popcorn balls or store-bought candy.

On the first Friday in October Elizabeth and Jewel walked home from school holding hands, laughing, as Jewel recited how she would talk her younger sister into letting her use her grandmother's old costume jewelry hidden in her grandfather's discolored tobacco can. Jewel said Elizabeth could wear some too if she decided to be an Indian princess instead

of a cowgirl. The girls were still laughing and planning on how they would talk Jewel's sister out of the old can when they parted at the crossroad with their usual big hug and, "See you tomorrow."

Elizabeth woke up Saturday morning and was told her sister Mary was still in bed and would not come down for breakfast. When it was past noon and Mary had not come down, Elizabeth tiptoed up the stairs and peeped into the chilly bedroom. She heard Mary groaning and ran down the stairs to tell her mother. Mrs. Carter went right away to check. Mary was burning up with fever.

*Woody Anderson*



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Mrs. Carter was alarmed and sent for the doctor. By the time the doctor arrived with his medicine bag Mary's skin was blue. She was smothering from a lack of oxygen. The doctor recognized the symptoms when he saw Mary's empty eyes and dark spots on her cheeks. He ordered everyone out of the room. "She has the Spanish Flu." He knew because people in Madison County had been dying since the end of September. Even several doctors had come down with the flu. He stiffened as he told Mr. Carter there were no antibiotics. He looked at Mrs. Carter and said there was nothing he could do but offer advice. He rested his hand on her shoulder and said he was sorry. Within the hour a bloody froth gushed from Mary's mouth and she expired. By nightfall Elizabeth's sister, Jane, complained of a stomach ache. She did not live to see morning.

As the sun began to rise Mr. Carter went out to feed the livestock. Mrs. Carter stood looking out the kitchen window; a light frost covered the barn roof. She clutched a dish towel as she silently watched her husband's hunched shoulders and unsteady steps as he made his way across the barnyard. She was exhausted and had not yet processed their tragic loss. She began to work as if blind around the kitchen picking up things and putting them down again. She looked around the room but could not remember what she was doing.

Jewel Grayson's father stepped up on the Carter porch and gave a loud knock at the front door. When Mrs. Carter invited him in he told her he had come to let them know there would be no school or church services until further notice because of the flu. She lowered her eyes as she told him she lost both of her girls to the flu the day before. He shook his head finding it difficult to believe what she said. He started to speak but stumbled, finding no comforting words. His eyes misted over. He could only say, "I'm so sorry Faye. I know the community is doing everything possible to prevent spreading the illness. Entire families in Big Cove are sick. There are no more caskets to be found, not even in Huntsville." He stared away from her, his thoughts somewhere else, maybe on his family. She offered him coffee. He shook his head and explained, "There's no time this morning. I have got to get home and feed the livestock. Jewel had a stomach ache last night. Her mother did



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not get much sleep I will need to take over so she can rest." He did not tell her he was tired also from being up with Jewel throughout the night or that he did not feel good. Elizabeth started into the room but backed out when she heard her mother say she hoped Jewel did not have the flu. Her eyes went wide; she was scared for her friend.

After Mr. Grayson left, Mrs. Carter went to the barn and told her husband he would need to find enough wood to make caskets for their girls. Her hands dropped to her side giving in to grief as she walked back to the house to prepare their bodies for burial. All morning Elizabeth worried and was afraid for her friend as she helped her mother strip Mary and Jane's bed. For the rest of the day she worked silently beside her mother scrubbing everything in the house.

On Sunday morning few people were up when the Grayson's five year-old son came to tell the Carter's his father was bad sick. Grief was evident in the little boy's eyes when he said his sister Jewel had died. His mother would not leave his father's bedside. She sent him to ask if Mr. Carter would come and help feed the animals. Mr. Carter said he would be along directly. When the boy left he lit the wood stove to knock the autumn's damp chill out of the house, then left for the Graysons.

Mrs. Carter dragged the old grey rocker - the one she rocked all her babies in - next to the stove. She pulled Elizabeth onto her lap and while she rocked her tears slid down Elizabeth's' face.

Jewel and Elizabeth are imaginary girls. But for a moment, let your mind go back into 1918 when the Spanish flu came to Madison County. Because of the catastrophic pandemic, family plots at church grave sights and Maple Hill Cemetery filled up with loved ones.

Many lives changed economically when the family provider died. People changed emotionally and socially forever. Statistics showed 20-50 million people died from the flu; two to five times as in the Great War.

It can be mind boggling when considering how the Spanish Flu of 1918 must have changed the entire world.



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### ***A Note from John Bzdell, Sr.***

I realize only a few of you know about our future plans, but Margaret Watson and I have been together a long time. We actually grew up as backyard neighbors so I have known her for her entire life. She and I "met" when she was just a few weeks old and I was only about 5 years old.

When we started dating 10 years ago, we decided that we would take things slow. We have really gone through a lot over the last 10 years. Grand kids were born, I lost my Dad and Aunt, John Jr. got married, heart/knee/gall bladder surgeries. Margaret had a bout with cancer, and recently was hospitalized for 6 days. We also have bought a 100 year old house together and lately she has started taking care of her parents, as they recover from a few health issues.

I am really a lucky man that she puts up with me and my "wonderful" sense of humor. Not many people would laugh at my jokes as long as she has or put up with me trying to scare her, putting cat food in her lunch box, and me wanting to go to every superhero movie on opening night. She is so smart, funny, beautiful and she loves my family as if they were her own. I am truly a better person for knowing her.

I am proud to let you all know that I have asked Margaret to marry me, and with the blessing from my kids, she has accepted. There aren't many more details as of yet but we will keep you all updated. You may want to all start visiting me as soon as possible, we may have to start a raffle for invitations.

# A Final Exam



These four friends were so confident that the weekend before finals, they decided to go to Dallas and party with some friends up there. They had a great time. However, after all the partying, they slept all day Sunday and didn't make it back to Austin until early Monday morning.

Rather than taking the final then, they decided to find their professor after the final and explain to him why they missed it.

They explained that they had gone to Dallas for the weekend with the plan to come back and study but, unfortunately, they had a flat tire on the way back, didn't have a spare, and couldn't get help for a long time. As a result, they missed the final.

The Professor thought it over and then agreed they could make up the final the following day. The guys were elated and relieved.

They studied that night and went in the next day at the time the professor had told them. He placed them in separate rooms and handed each of them a test booklet, and told them to begin.

They looked at the first problem, worth 5 points. It was something simple about free radical formation. "Cool," they thought at the same time, each one in his separate room. "This is going to be easy."

Each finished the problem and then turned the page. On the second page was written:

"For 95 points: Which tire was flat?"

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# Huntsville in the 1940s

by Dean G. Ratliff

When I was 3 years old, my family moved to Huntsville from Birmingham; the year was 1938. Our first residence was on Calhoun Street in downtown Huntsville, between Clinton and Randolph Streets. Our next home was on East Clinton Avenue, four and a half blocks east of East Clinton School, on the north side of the street. I still love this house with its small front porch and bay window.

It was while we lived on Calhoun that I met someone who turned out to be a lifelong friend. His name was W. F. Sanders, Jr.. My folks bought eggs and butter from his grandparents and I met him on one of our shopping excursions. We hit it off right away and continued to be friends though grammar school, high school, college and after.

There are a lot of things that I remember that don't really make a story but I will mention them anyway because it was a sign of the times. I remember Mom buying hot tamales from a lady who made them at her store around the corner from us. They were wrapped in real corn husks and I loved them. They are still about the only Mexican food I care for. All the kids were able to roller skate but me, as I was the youngest. They used to laugh at me because I couldn't do it. I never did learn how. I guess I lost a lot of confidence because of all the kidding I took. But I always remembered that when I tried to teach my kids anything, I tried to first of all instill confidence in them. Like the little ole train, I think I can, I think I can.

I guess I have saved the best Calhoun Street story for last. It involves the second time I ran away from home. But this time I took a girl with me. There was a big home on the corner of Randolph and Calhoun that's still there, that was next door to our house on Calhoun.

One summer, I think I was 4 or 5 at the time, our neighbors in the big house had kinfolk visiting from Atlanta. Among the visitors were several kids including a cute little girl my age. We were the youngest in the whole group and were somewhat ignored by the older kids. One of the ladies at the big house had sympathy for us and brought us lemonade and cookies while we were sitting in the Gazebo. Being totally unattended the girl and I began a conversation about where we were from. She was from Atlanta and was bragging about it and how grand and glorious a city it was. I responded that I was from Birmingham and that it was the Magic City, that Atlanta could never even hold a candle to it.

After several minutes of spirited arguing

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about our respective cities, she said that if she knew the way she would go to Atlanta right then because she missed it so much. I told her I felt the same way about Birmingham and furthermore I knew the way to the railroad station where we could each catch a train to our beloved cities.

Well, she wasn't about to back down and said "Let's do it." I was scared to death but I wasn't going to back down either. I knew where downtown Huntsville was and had a vague idea where the Train Depot was. You went downtown, turned right and walked a long way straight. So we lit out down Randolph toward town. The first major obstacle we encountered came about a block down the street when we encountered a curb. You see, neither one of us was allowed to cross a street by ourselves. This really wasn't even a street, but was a back alley (Figures Alley). But it still had a curb and might be classified as a street by our parents. You see, we were running away from home but we didn't want to get in trouble because we crossed a street. We sat on the curb for awhile pondering what to do. After a while the absurdity of our concern must have registered so we held hands, looked both ways and tore out.

After several more exciting street crossings, we made it to Washington Street. In those days, downtown Huntsville was a very busy and vibrant place and Washington Street was the main drag. The sidewalks were full of people going about their business and not noticing two little kids. I guess they assumed our Mothers were near by. Well, I turned right and headed towards the Depot but a couple of doors down I got distracted by the odor of chocolate coming from the Dime Store. I think it was a Kress Dime Store. There were three of these stores on Washington Street at that time, Kress, Grants and McClellans. The front doors were open since this was before air conditioning. They always put the candy counter in front so you would have to pass it on the way in and on the way out. It was nearly impossible just to pass up.

Well, the candy looked and smelled so good through the glass case that I couldn't resist. I also knew that we were going to need some food for our trek. At the time I guess I pretended that I was doing nothing wrong. I just wouldn't let myself think about it. In all the hustle and bustle going on about me, I just stood on my tip toes, reached on top of the counter and picked up two Hershey bars, one for me and one for my girl. We then stood out in front of the store and proceeded to eat the evidence. Keep in mind this was summer so you can imagine what we looked like when we were done. Our faces

and hands were covered with chocolate and the only place to wipe was on our clothes.

By this time we were getting a little thirsty. I remembered that there were some public fountains on the grounds of the Courthouse. These were provided by the Womens Christian Temperance Union WCTU and of course were for Whites only. I held my friend's hand and retreated back up Washington to Randolph.



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Here we had to cross two streets to get over to the Courthouse, but we made it. Well, just as we got across I heard the squealing of brakes. I looked out on the street and saw a Police car with two policemen both pointing at us. I was petrified. They had found out about the Hershey bars.

I grabbed my friend's hand and ran toward the Courthouse. This was the building before the one we have now, but it was similar in that it had four entrances, one on each side. We ran inside with the police in hot pursuit. They came in two different doors so I headed out another, but too late - they were just too fast and much bigger. They carried us both to the car and put us in the back seat, chocolate and all. Their first question was where did we get the candy.

I told my first conscious lie and said a man gave us some money to buy it. They looked at each other and I'm not sure if they knew I was lying or they were wondering about a man who would buy candy for a couple of kids.

I couldn't tell where they were taking us. All I could see out of the car were the tops of trees. I guess we were going to jail. They asked where we were going and I told them she was headed to Atlanta and I was going to Birmingham.

Shortly we arrived in front of my house in the midst of a whole bunch of hysterical women. Some were crying, some were mad, and a whole lot of shouting and hugging was going on. The next thing I knew, Mom had snatched me up and carried me into the house. I guess the other women were planning a lynching party. I couldn't understand that. The little girl was really the one who started it all, bragging about Atlanta the way she did.

Well, punishment time came shortly. I guess my mother was a little crazy by then because all she could think to do with me was tie me to the foot of the bed,

sitting on the floor. Dad came home for lunch and there I was, just tied to the bed. I was sure he would kill me but he just looked at me with that strange look as if he were asking where in the world had he gotten me in the first place. I received that look a number of times during my youth.

The worst part of my punishment came from within. For a number of years afterwards I was overcome with guilt for stealing the candy and then lying about it. I would wake up at night and cry to myself because I was sure I was going to Hell or at least jail. Every sermon or Sunday school lesson I was sure they were talking about me. One thing for sure, I tried not to lie or steal any more.

I distinctly remember a mother asking me if I had seen her son. I told her I wasn't sure even though I had passed him on the sidewalk not more than a minute earlier. It was about that time that I felt that I was taking this truthfulness thing a bit too far. But I continued to suffer with guilt for several more years until one day I confessed to Mom. She told me not to worry, we would just pay Kress's back for the candy the next time we went to town.

That was the biggest relief of my life.

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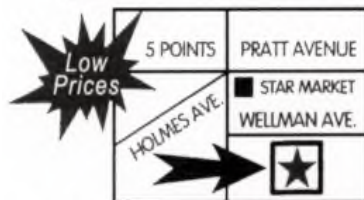
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# A Fox Rescue

by Buddy Guynes



On March 31, 2016 June Guynes and her Catahoula/Blue Heeler Jesse were enjoying their afternoon walk. Just a block from their house in their Huntsville Five Points neighborhood Jesse froze and fixed a startled stare on a

spot in a culvert about 6 feet away. June saw nothing at first, but Jesse did. Moving closer, she found 5 small, fuzzy animals; 3 struggling to move and 2 face down in water from a huge thunderstorm that was the first part of the tornado that was predicted to arrive later in the day. At first sighting June thought they were puppies, possibly a litter dropped earlier. Of the 3 who showed signs of life, one was frantically trying to scale the side of the ditch and making tiny yelping sounds. The other two were barely moving and there was no mother in sight.

She and Jesse ran back to the house to park Jesse and get help from husband Buddy. En route June saw neighbor Betty who could tell something was happening and immediately volunteered to be part of the rescue team. The 3 were able to collect the 3 survivors, wrap them up in their shirt-tails and get back to the house, still unsure of what they had rescued! The babies were settled into a box, on top of towels, covered with a baby blanket and set atop a heating pad. With a closer look, it was decided they were baby foxes, or "kits" and quite a few had been spotted in the Five Points area over the past few years. The 3 siblings huddled together, shaking vigorously from being cold and in the water. The surrogate moms decided they needed water and nourishment so they tried (with very little success) to give them water and some diluted milk with a syringe. The babies were obviously very young, undoubtedly still nursing; their eyes were barely open and they did not know how to take the liquid. Three very concerned adults were having visions of taking 2-hour shifts of doing something all night.

Meanwhile Buddy was manning the phone, calling any and all organizations whose names he could collect to get help.

Most resulted in leaving messages for a call back, some had recorded messages that confirmed they were "full" and many were unable to accept foxes, defined as "vector" animals in the state of Alabama. After the 9th phone call, they received a returned call! John Russ with Shamballa Wildlife Rescue in Grant, AL called back! Mr. Russ felt,

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by our description, that these were either red or gray foxes. They were too young for a definitive color and their ears were still folded and snouts were still mushed in. In short, they were just precious balls of fur, whimpering and nuzzling together as close as they could in the cardboard box. But he could (and better yet, would) help! This organization, a not-for-profit, is licensed by the state to accept foxes. He offered to meet us that evening to receive the kits and take them to Shamballa.

Buddy and June were on the road, box of kits in tow, in a matter of minutes. They met at a designated spot on the highway, just off the road from Shamballa because (1) it was difficult to find and (2) the storm was moving in. Upon seeing the kits, he determined that they were, indeed, red foxes, not grey (which are much more unusual to our area). He took time to talk to us about them and assured us they would be in good hands. We could feel that. We said good-bye to the babies, and John and April made it home before the weather got worse.

The Russes are god-sends. They do this because they love it. April works at a veterinarian's in Grant and John claims that Shamballa is hers - he just helps her with it. As is their custom, they name the rescues after their rescuers, so "Buddy" (the curious and sweet one) and "June" and "May" (the feisty girls) have continued to enjoy being together at Shamballa from their arrival at approximately three and a half weeks old, at which time they were determined to be healthy and clean right up to the present. April and John have sent several updates and photos and we have been able to see how much they've grown. Just one week made a huge difference and at four and a half weeks they actually looked like little foxes. On April 18 they were graduated to an enclosure outside and given exercises in hunting for their food. They have visited the vet and have received vaccinations and experienced no issues. April says that they play and fuss and act as if nothing had happened in their little lives. They will be released at 2-3 months old and the Guynes will be there to wish them "Good luck".

Obtaining a license to do this work is not simple and it certainly comes with costs. These are intelligent, generous, caring people who do this and our area is so fortunate that they are here. Shamballa's mission is three-fold: Rescue, Rehab, Release. The Guynes are amazed at how much they have learned about local wildlife. When

rescuing wildlife infants, the most important thing is to keep them warm. They should never be fed milk as it is poison to their systems (fortunately, we were not able to get any milk in them); they should not be fed if they are cold; and first thing to do is get them warm. He also told us that a mother fox would never leave her babies unless something had happened to her. The Guynes are convinced that they were just at the right place at the right time - and Jesse gets the credit!

The wildlife in North Alabama is very important to our heritage and April and John Russ are ensuring that it is a part of our lives for generations to come. You can learn more about Shamballa at [www.facebook.com/Shamballa-wildliferescue](http://www.facebook.com/Shamballa-wildliferescue).

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**Editors note - Here is an update Buddy & June recd. about the foxes:**

“Yes, the little trio of devils you brought to us are now teenagers. They are doing fantastic, all of them. June is the slowest of the group. She tries to depend on the others. Buddy who was the smallest on arrival is now the family leader and the tallest. Mae is the smallest but wildest too. Will send you a couple of updated pictures a bit later.

We would be honored of course to be mentioned in your article.

Shamballa Wildlife Rescue is a non-profit organization dedicated to the rescue of indigenous wildlife. We specialize in RVS species (Rabies Vector Species) such as raccoons, red and grey foxes and bobcats. We are one of only four active RVS licensed facilities in the State of Alabama. We are small but growing a little more



every year. With an average of about 80 rescues a year, we raise, heal, rehabilitate and most importantly release every able animal into the wild.

I do have a website but honestly, I am so busy that I have little time to keep it updated. I would rather the Facebook page

be mentioned for it is always more current.

I will send you plenty of notice of the release date. So far, I would expect the release to be around the end of June, beginning of July. It will be around the Paint Rock area unless you know a land owner who would be willing to have the foxes released on their property. By law, we are to release animals within 10 miles of their origin. If you and your wife ever decide to visit the local Cathedral Caverns caves one of these days, let us know. We are only 3 miles from the caves. You would have a chance to see the foxes too. They are pretty wild so I am not worried about human imprint. There won't be interaction with the animals but it will give you a chance to check their progress first hand.

Thank you for your trust and kind words. I look forward to have a chance to meet you and your wife.”

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# THE ICE MAN

by Walt Terry



The wagon was bright yellow, drawn by a powerful gray and white spotted dray horse. The driver was a grizzled dark magician called Hog Jaw.

The magic was in his exquisite command of the wagon, his horse, his ice; his pure crystalline world.

In the long-ago days of my growing awareness I came under the spell of Hog Jaw's magic, at first under the heavy tarpaulin that covered the wagon's bed, eating ice chips in air-conditioned splendor.

Hog Jaw was a kindly man to those who did not dispute his total command of the wagon. I certainly didn't. He called me Lil Walter Tyro, and in those days I didn't know the name had an aptness probably beyond his own undisclosed reason for dubbing me with it.

I didn't care what he called me, since I felt an honor beyond containment when he beckoned me to sit beside him on the broad wooden seat. Up there on that throne, above the horse's ponderous slow-moving flanks, Hog Jaw and I (as his eager assistant) took care of Huntsville,

Alabama's ice needs - ice to inhabit the ice boxes of the town, the boxes that made the difference between ordinary meals and feasts.

I would help him read the amounts on the signs in the windows: adjustable cardboard signs that had a rotating front and a window in which appeared "25," "50," "75," or "100" - the pounds of ice wanted by the ice-hungry summer customers. A rope-operated clanging bell beside the seat announced the approaching mobile ice emporium

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"When I was young and too blind to see,  
I was unaware that young ladies had their eyes on me.  
Now that I'm old and still can't see,  
Alas, it's they who are too blind to see."

*Brome'*

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for those tardy with their signs. Often when I was aboard he'd let me, in glorious cacophony, do the clanging. The people would come out and holler their orders if they'd neglected to fix their signs.

Then, most magical of all, the artist at work in the bed of the wagon. He'd fold the tarp out of his way and with deft flicks and jabs of his pick, reduce large smoking blocks into sizes the signs had asked them to be.

Then, the tongs - those hooked vicious-looking ice grabbers he used to transport effortlessly it seemed, chipped-out blocks to the waiting ice boxes. No one disputed that the weight he brought was any less than ordered. Hog Jaw inspired trust.

Money could be exchanged, or the cost of the ice could be added to the ice/coal bill. In those days ice and coal usually came from the same company.

Hog Jaw: magician, king of his realm, gentleman and gentle man, a true friend not to be forgotten.

It was, I think, my first experience in race relations, and I didn't even know I was having one.

An exceptional man I'll never forget.

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*The Bobby Smith Story*



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# Operating Instructions

by Houston Hodges

"Scalpel."  
"Forceps."  
"Suction."  
"Swab."

I'm going under, and (as always) I'm not sure I'm coming out on the other side. That's what the doctors call the "mortality rate" of a procedure, figuring how many people out of a hundred survive what's done to them: a mortality rate of 1% or less means that ninety-nine out of a hundred make it through, and that's pretty good. Even though this transaction ahead of me is remarkably survivable - 98 out of 100 outlive trading a tired, leaky, flawed aortic heart valve for a healthy, hearty similar portion of an involuntarily generous pig - you really don't know, when you start drifting off to narcoland, whether you'll wake up here or there, or maybe never.

I am intrigued by the fact that the only person who multitudes claim came back from death made no report whatsoever about what it was like. I trust him, and like to hear what he said. Jesus of Nazareth, reports assert, was "crucified, dead, and buried;" that's three ways of saying, "Dead, real dead, dead as a doorstep."

On his reported return, however he brought no smidgen of information about what three days dead was like.

He made a couple of sketchy and pretty general statements about the experience before the fact - "There's plenty of room where I'm going," and "Later today you and I are going to be where it's really swell," but nothing with much detail. And afterward, after his return? Zip. Zero, nada. Everything about NOW, not then, chatting with people about whether they want breakfast or whether they really love him or where they ought to go next; instructions about dampening people; nothing about Over There.

So we have to go on what he didn't say, or what we can deduce, or what we can guess, or hope.

Logic tells us it's not like here. It doesn't make sense to think it's like families, with moms and dads and kids and bicycles and grandparents, because the grandparents would like to have their grandparents there, and so on, and that would get

**"The answer to this last question will determine whether you are drunk or not. Was Mickey Mouse a cat or a dog?"**

*Overheard at a law enforcement sobriety check point*



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overly crowded very quickly. How old would people be, or would they have hair or toupees, and all their teeth? If they'd lost a lot of weight, would they be skinny, or cuddly like we remember them? That guy, Jesus, seemed to point in the same direction when he turned aside questions about the woman who was married to seven brothers in turn (even though he didn't dwell on the incredible gullibility of the final groom), and on another occasion said, "There aren't any wedding chapels there." Figures.

I, for one, don't think it's like here; nice as that is, on certain rare occasions, it's too spotty and up-and-down like, to have it happen all the time. Nor - for my wager - is it like 24/7 church, with hallelujahs all the time, rock music pounding (or Handel, either, for that matter) and little winged babies with harps singing backup doowop; as pleasant as that might be for awhile, I think it would get tiring and (frankly) boring after while.

Some who are smarter than I am picture something with less personality, more resemblance to a media animation of the solar system being born, whirling spheres and flashes and shooting stars and whizzing colored orbits - "You can be a spark in the sun of the Almighty!" goes the promo.

I don't know. Maybe. "Do your part, brighten the corner where you are, spark where you park" catches the beat, but somehow sounds like it would get old also, after a million million years or so. Maybe not.

Or... getting closer to home,..maybe sleep. I like sleep. It's one of my favorite things, just lying there dozing, and having it make the transition from here to there, on to off, awake to unconscious, gradually, bit by bit, before you know it. It's gotten so I really love that, like to think about it during the day, get to yearn for it and to get ready for the day to be over and the night-time to come, then for

**"What I don't like about office Christmas parties is having to look for a new job the next day."**

*Phyllis Diller*

the evening to end and the time for dreaming to begin. Is that really the best part of the day, maybe, the ending of it?

And would - could it be possible that leaving life is the best part of living? Slow, easy, soft, gentle... drifting off in it, floating... easy, easy, quiet, safe: there, there, there, it'll be all right.

That would be fine.

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# Facts You Need to Know

- It's bad luck to sweep out ashes or carry out trash after sunset.

- If you spill a jar of face powder, a bad quarrel with a lady friend will ensue.

- If you desire to become a good seamstress, allow a lizard to run across your hand.

- A young woman seeking a husband should stick seven needles into a lighted candle while praying to the Virgin Mary, until the wick is consumed. By doing this she can obtain the love of the man of her dreams, while rendering him impotent with other women.

- Get out of a mild depression by getting into gardening - you'll be amazed how much it helps.

- Never invite thirteen guests to dinner, or one of them will suffer very bad luck.

- If a hen is set in the light of the moon, the eggs will hatch roosters who will refuse to ever leave the hen house.

- Should a man and woman pour tea together, they will have a baby within a year.

- Check your cup of coffee in the morning. If bubbles on the surface are floating in your direction, you will soon come into a sizable amount of money you weren't expecting.

- Always plant peppers when you're good and mad at your wife, and give your gourd seeds a good cussing as you plant them or they will never grow correctly.

- If you get out of a chair and it tips over, you will NOT be getting married during the coming year.

- If you buy clothes when you're feeling fat, and they

look good on you, chances are that they'll still look good when you begin to lose weight. This works!

- If your nose is stuffy, rubbing your ears as hard as you can for a minute will often clear up the stuffiness.

- When there is to be a full moon, be extra careful and conscientious with your diet and medication during this time.

- If you have a headache, taking a deep sniff of pure peppermint oil will probably make it go away.

- Bing cherries, 4 oz. a day, is a wonderful remedy for gout.

- If you're a smoker, cuticle remover will remove nicotine stains from your hands.

- A small bag of sulfur kept in a drawer or cupboard will drive away red ants.

- Baking soda will remove mildew from small areas.

- If you have people in your acquaintance who are pulling you down, tell them goodbye.



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# PET TIPS FROM ANGEL

## Some facts & superstitions about birds and cats



Myths, superstitions, proverbs, old wives' tales and urban legends have been passed down for generations and cultures throughout the world. Most have roots going back to ancient times and many are about animals. Animals are mysterious, and their behavior has created speculation and legends. Much of it is fiction. Here are the facts.

### Birds

- *Mother birds will reject their babies if they've been touched by humans* - Most birds have a poorly developed sense of smell and won't notice a human scent.

- *Ostriches bury their heads in the sand when they're scared or threatened* - Ostriches don't bury their heads in the sand, they wouldn't be able to breathe! But they do dig holes in the dirt to use as nests for their eggs. Several times a day, an ostrich puts her head in the hole and turns the eggs.

- *Penguins fall backward when they look up at airplanes* - An experiment testing the story found that penguins are capable of maintaining their footing when watching airplanes.

### Cats

- *A cat purrs when it is happy* - Purring is generally the first sound kittens can make. They can purr by the time they are 48 hours old. While nursing, both mom and kittens can be heard to purr. But while purring is often heard at times of contentment, cats also purr when in pain and in the throes of death.

- *Cats can be fed an all tuna diet* - Many cats love the flavor and taste of tuna. Despite this love, an all tuna diet is bad for cats because high levels of magnesium can increase Feline Lower Urinary Tract Disease.

- *Cutting off a cat's whiskers causes loss of balance* - A cat's whiskers are not involved in maintaining balance, only as an aid to feel their way through their world.

- *Cats have 9 lives* - This probably goes back to ancient Egypt, where 9 was a mystical number. The god Atum-Ka had 9 lives and took the form of a feline whenever he visited the underworld, so the 9 lives became associated with the cats.

- *Cats always land safely on their feet* - Cats are naturally flexible and have an amazing ability to right their bodies. But that doesn't necessarily protect them from harm. Cats can break

their front legs and jaw when they land on their feet.

- *Cats can steal a baby's breath* - Cats are heat and comfort-seekers. Curling up next to a newborn in a crib meets both of these needs. Perhaps the origins started because cat's can smell the baby's milk and try to get a taste of the milk. If the cat presses against the face of an infant who is too young to turn away the baby's breathing may be hampered. Keep cats out of the nursery at nap time.

- *Cats need milk in their diet* - Although many cats do like milk, it is not necessary in their diet. In fact, many kittens have signs of digestive upset, such as diarrhea after drinking milk.

- *Wild cats are loners* - Feral cats are not solitary, they usually live as a group near a food source.

- *Cats are nocturnal creatures* - Cats are most active at dusk and dawn when prey abounds and the hunting is best. The construction of their eyes allows them to see well in low light. Cats only need one-sixth of the light humans do in order to decipher shapes. However, they cannot see in absolute darkness.

- *Pregnant women must give up their cats* - While toxoplasmosis is a risk for fetuses, a woman is more likely to catch it from handling raw meat or digging in the garden, than from her cats.

- *Black cats are bad luck* - There are nearly as many superstitions about black cats bringing good luck as there are about them being harbingers of bad luck.

- *Cats hate water* - While most cats hate baths, many find running water fascinating and spend time pawing at dripping faucets. The Turkish Van is nicknamed "the swimming cat" for its swimming prowess. With a bit of preparation it is easy to give a cat a bath without being scratched and mauled.

- *Reddish orange cats are almost always male* - While the statistics are high that a red/orange tabby is usually male, the female gene sometimes sneaks in and creates a somewhat unusual red/orange female.

- *If a cat is calico, then it must be a female.* - Most calico cats are female; however it is possible for a calico cat to be male, who are often sterile and not capable of reproduction.

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## From the Desk of Tom Carney

# A GOOD LIFE

Mrs. Ruth Jenkins was 98 years old when we recorded her memories. She had lived in Huntsville most of her life and had no desire to be anywhere else. This is her story:

"When Mama and Daddy moved to town (1902) I never had any idea there were so many houses and people. We lived in this little three room house."

"Mostly what I remember about it is the mud. Whenever it rained the road in front of the house would be so muddy the buggies would get stuck. My brother and I were playing in the road one day right after it rained and my feet got stuck in the mud. That mud just sucked my shoes right off my feet. Mama really got mad at me because that was the only pair of shoes I had."

"When they declared war back in 1917 or 18, I was working at the telephone office. Mr. Hughes, my manager, would listen on the phone for a minute and then rush outside to tell the crowds what was happening. That night we stayed open all night and there was a crowd in front of the office the whole time, waiting for the news."

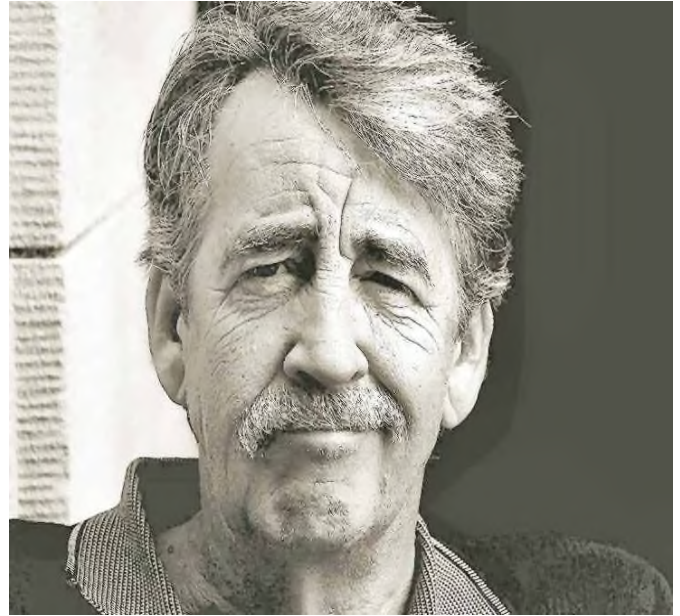
"Cecil was courting me at the time and he couldn't hardly wait to enlist. He was young and wanted adventure and wanted to defend his country. The day that him and all of his friends signed up, they were so happy. They

were scared the War would be over before they got a chance to do any fighting."

"I remember Uncle Cabe sitting on the front porch of the house that afternoon watching the young men and looking real sad. Uncle Cabe had fought in the Civil War and had lost one of his legs in a brutal attack."


"When Cecil came back from France we got married. He had gotten gassed during the war and had a lot of trouble breathing for the rest of his life. He never talked about the war or the fighting to anyone as far as I know. I remember he had terrible nightmares and would sometimes wake up in the middle of the night in a terrible fit."

"He got a job in a garage



and I kept working until I had our little girl Martha. We had a good life together. We bought a house and Cecil spent all of his spare time fixing it up. During the summer we had a large garden plot behind the house that Cecil had plowed up for me. I grew all kinds of vegetables and we had several apple trees. I made yellow curtains for the kitchen. I still have them somewhere. We gave \$700 for that house."

"When the banks crashed Cecil lost his job. He wasn't by himself, cause most of the people we knew were unemployed. He got a part-time job



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cleaning a bar after it closed at night and sometimes he could pick up a little day job."

"We kept using that plot of ground in the back of the house and that summer I planted it all in green beans. We had stewed green beans, green bean casserole and every other kind I could think of. We just about lived off those beans. I can't hardly eat green beans today without thinking of Cecil. He hated them awful, but he acted like he liked them. In those days our gardens kept us alive."

"When Roosevelt got elected, times got a little better. Cecil got this job working in a CCC camp and he was able to send home a little money. He was a foreman or something, teaching other people how to work on cars."

"The very last thing I expected to hear was when I got a visit from the preacher at our church. He brought word of Cecil being killed. It was an accident that nobody could help. He died instantly and wasn't in pain. He was a good man and a good husband. I still miss him so bad sometimes and still don't really believe that happened. I wonder how things could have been different if we had grown old together. We always talked about how many grand kids we'd be playing with."

"When the Second War started, Martha and I got a job in a defense plant helping pack ammunition. We were making good money, but there wasn't anything to spend it on. Just about everything was rationed. Martha met a young man with the blackest hair and the bluest eyes and got married about then. He was a pretty boy,

didn't want to get his hands dirty but loved to paint. He was very artistic. He was shipped out right after they got married and was killed on some island in the Pacific."

"It looked like things were changing so fast after the War was over. Everybody had money and jobs, I think that the 1950s were the best time to be alive. Everybody was happy then."

"Martha bought a television about that time. It was one of those real big box things and it had a little bitty picture screen on it. We didn't have an antennae so we took some clothes wire and ran it to a tree in the back yard. For the sake of me, I never could figure out how they could send those pictures through the air."

"Back when I was a little

girl, riding in a horse and buggy, if someone had told me that I would see men walk on the moon, and that I would be looking at little moving pictures on a small box, why I would have said they were crazy."

"When Martha got married again it was about the happiest day of my life. John is a good man and has taken good care of her. They've had their ups and downs but gave me five dear grandchildren that Cecil and I always talked about playing with when we got old."

"Do I have any regrets? No ... I've had a good life. A lot of things could have been different, but the Good Lord has blessed me."

"I hope my grandchildren can have as good a life as I have had."

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## The Life of Jackie Reed

*by the Family of Jackie Reed*

Jacqueline (Jackie) D. Reed was born in Sparta, TN and was raised as a country girl on a farm in White County. Her father was a farmer and drove a school bus for 35 years. During her junior year in high school, she worked at the city drug store. She was voted by the high school band to be a majorette and her senior year she was voted as the senior year "Cutest Girl" in the class from 400 senior students.

Following graduation from high school, she attended Tennessee Polytechnic Institute (TPI), Cookeville, TN, working in the family owned restaurant in Sparta, TN. During her sophomore year at TPI, she met Ray B. Reed, from Hartsville, TN, a junior at TPI. She moved to Nashville, TN to work, while Ray continued pursuing his education.

After Ray's graduation from TPI, he moved to Nashville to work and they were married November 25, 1955. In 1956, Ray was drafted into the Army and they moved to Philadelphia, PA for two years, where Ray was stationed at Rittenhouse Square, learning computer technology.

The first child was born in 1958, Debra (Debbie), three weeks before Ray was released from the Army and they moved to Huntsville where Ray went to work for General Electric.

She worked at Southern Associated Engineers and the second child was born in 1961, Darryl (Dee). In 1965, Ray went to work for NASA, as the Branch Chief of the Computer Lab, at Marshall Space Flight Center and Jackie worked for Teledyne Brown Engineering.

In February 28, 1966, Ray and three other NASA men traveled to Daytona, FL to see the Daytona Car Races in a private plane, and when returning to Huntsville, AL, there was a tragic accident that killed all four men in Columbus, GA.

Soon after the accident, Jackie requested to participate in an early layoff at Teledyne Brown to deal with the grief and the responsibility to raise two children (ages seven and four). Nine months later, her 18 year old brother was killed in a car accident and her religion turned into faith and trust in God.

Ray had purchased three pieces of rental property in Huntsville, on Governors Drive, which was a source of income during this time. The path of Governors Drive was chosen for an Interstate thru Huntsville, which created an issue for the State to potentially take her property.

Jackie collected 88 signatures to get her property rezoned from residential to commercial and the request was denied several times, due to the possibility of the Interstate. She made a statement "I will watch government for many years to come."

In 1968, she met Charles (Chuck) H. Bailes, second husband, and they owned several pieces of property. They owned and operated Debra's Clothesline, a dress shop, on Jordan Lane from 1970 thru 1978. In 1978, they closed the store and both were employed at United

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While at USBI, Jackie worked as a Clerk-Typist receiving many awards and was recognized for a cost savings award for her suggestion on Anti-Static Protective Bubble Wrap. She was also promoted from a Clerk-Typist to a Manufacturing Planning Assistant, responsible for budgetary tracking programs on the IBM Personal Computer.

While working at USBI, Jackie requested to be on the Huntsville Utility Board and was informed the vote did not pass. She informed Fletcher Seldon of the results and questioned why votes were taken before a meeting and he suggested she share her story with the Huntsville City Council; the rest is history!

For over 30 years, Jackie Reed has dedicated her time attending City Council and Governmental meetings monitoring budgets affecting all citizens.

Since 1988, she has run for

Mayor seven (7) times, and is registered to run in the next election in 2016. She has run for City Council six (6) times, and one (1) legislative position. A sense of pride comes to her in choosing the needs of others over her own. The fact that she has helped others is rewarding to Jackie and has earned the respect and trust from city employees and citizens.

In recognition of her dedicated service as a volunteer and community activist, she received the Rosa Parks Woman of Courage Award from the Huntsville/Madison County Branch Association (NAACP). She has also written a weekly news article, "One Woman's Opinion" for 15 years in the local newspaper, "Speakin Out News".

Jackie was recently selected to be one of several to be showcased on NBC's "Today Show", which was aired on national television on November 29,

2015. The segment was called "Loser" but was about people who never gave up. The story focused on the dedication, drive, determination and persistence of accomplishing what it is you want in life. She also has a song written about her life by Mr. George Wells, Huntsville, AL; "The Legend of Jackie Reed".

She has held a Broker's Real Estate license for over 30 years (currently inactive).

Jackie has two children that graduated from Huntsville High School and both hold college degrees. She also has two grandsons that are students in the Huntsville City School system.

Her faith in God and the strength she gains from that faith has seen her through many hard times and she remains a source of inspiration to all who know her.



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# I Remember

*by Cecil Ashburn, 2007*

I'm a Huntsville resident and not that old but I remember things that younger folks can hardly believe nowadays.

Everyone had their chores - men had theirs and women had theirs and they didn't mix, unless it was out in the cotton field.

Annie Gray's husband had about a hundred acres of cotton. When the cotton was picked and ready to be processed he would take it to the gin to get the seeds out.

But Annie liked to pick her own pure white cotton out of the bolls (hull, very sharp) and get the seeds out by hand. Then she'd take a wad of cotton and 2 paddles they called "Cards", kind of like 2 hairbrushes. These cards were about 3" by 12" and they had little combs on them, so that when you pulled the cotton wad through the cards what you got was coarse, irregular strands of cotton. Then she'd take the strands and put them on the spinning wheel that twisted the strands into thread.

Women would have quilting bees. They all saved pieces of material and clothing and cut them into patterns like stars or squares - then sew the squares into quilts. There would be a large rack hanging from the ceiling that could be pulled down when they were working, then pushed up to get it out of the way. One cold day I was visiting my grandparents, I think I was 7 or 8 at the time. Back then everyone had open fireplaces. My grandpa asked me if I wanted a boiled egg - he was boiling them over the fire. I had a piece of country ham with it - uncooked but cured in a smokehouse. Tasted really good I remember. I remember he always had a bottle of wildcat whiskey to go with it. I think I took a little sip from time to time. He

taught me how to suck eggs too - when you put a hole in the pointed end of a raw egg and sucked the whole thing out.

Killing hogs was the highlight of the year. Farmers kept "Fattening Hogs", they would force feed them all year with corn and grain until the hogs were so big they could hardly walk. A lot of them got to at least 500 pounds. My job was to kill the hog every year - the value of the hog was not so much in the pork or the rind but in the lard - that's all that was used for cooking in those days. There was no Crisco back in those days.

Some of you may remember the Southern Cottonseed Oil Company that was located near Wheeler and Church Street. You would smell it before you saw the plant - if you remember that popcorn smell as you drove near it you know what I am talking about. The plant was quite large but was torn down when the road for I565 was developed. The O'Shaughnessy brothers owned it. One of the brothers built the Kildare Mansion that is located off Oakwood Avenue and the other lived on Monte Sano. In fact it was these brothers who built the Monte Sano Hotel.



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# Scruffy, Part 3

by John E. Carson



The dog was a mixed blessing. I could no longer hang out in a fast food place until it closed - unless of course I left him to wait outside. The twenty-four hour laundromat was a possibility but I did not want to chance getting woke up by the cops.

But my new friend Scruffy had saved my life. I owed him something for that besides some fries and a bite of hamburger. I knew he needed water also, so I stood up and told him to wait here and I sacrificed a free refill on the soda when I went back inside. Ignoring the hostile looks, I filled the cup halfway with ice and halfway with the clear stuff and went back outside.

Setting the cup on the ground, I watched as he lapped up the water gratefully, replacing the lid when the cup was half empty to save it for later and sat down again to consider my options.

On the one hand, I was happy to have some company. Out on the streets you could not trust anyone. Not that I trusted anyone, anyway. Paranoia was a fact of life for someone like me and out here it was not always a bad thing to have. There were people who would kill you for your shoes.

A passing patrol car slowed slightly as the driver glanced in my direction and I felt the habitual urge to get up and leave before he could turn around and come back. Scruffy followed as I cleaned the table and found the trash receptacle, saving the cup of water as we walked to the sidewalk and headed away from the park. That was one place I did not want to go back to.

The soup kitchen on the Strip

closed at sunset and the one rule they enforced was no loitering or sleeping near the place. There was no shelter there anyway; that part of town had no Beautification Awards and hence no plants or bushes to sleep behind. They sure as heck would not feed me and a dog both.

The police patrolled behind the buildings there anyway.

A rock and a hard place; what's new? I was used to that. It was that way in the war and that way at home. It was that way in my mind too. No one came to meet me when I came home but that was okay. I wasn't worth the trouble. What did they call it Survivor's Guilt? Yeah, that was it. I

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John Purdy

Loretta Spencer

Sarah Chappell

should have died with my buddies. Who was I to come home when the ones that deserved to wouldn't? I couldn't stay in and I couldn't make it on the outside either. The nightmares wore me down. I could not get the images out of my head.

But I was a war hero; I had survived. I was a soldier - I was supposed to be strong. The Dear John letter I had gotten from my fiance while I was over there hadn't helped and seeing my comrades get cut down...

A child of two alcoholic parents who were constantly at war at home, I fell into the same pit I swore I would avoid. Too proud or ashamed to ask for help, I started drinking. Self-medicate they call it, to ease the pain and what money I had went down the hatch with it.

Not satisfied until I fell into a stupor I soon found myself in the trap of all drugs; it took more and more each time to achieve a few minutes of Nirvana. Then I would wake up after being thrown out of some bar or on a park bench in the morning and hate myself more for what I had become.

We were wandering aimlessly now; the dog staying at my side while I trudged along the sidewalk holding the cup of water with the now melted ice and headed along the dark street to the Industrial Park and the trees that stood just across from the chain link fence around it.

It wasn't real late at night yet and I was wary; watching for signs of the gangs and the police simultaneously. Scruffy stayed at my side, turning his head from side to side as he picked up on my nervousness. I had stayed away from the alleys downtown and the hobo camps for a couple of reasons; for one, I did not feel like being around anyone, especially the bums and the other reason were the punks that had at-

tacked me.

I had heard the scuttlebutt on the street that homeless people were being attacked and even murdered by gangs; one in particular. Young teens that would pick a target set a look-out and then would swoop in for the kill. Then, when and if the police showed up, they would scatter - melting into doorways, or stuffing their hands into pockets, walk under the street lights as if they were clueless about what had occurred.

They were as bad as the enemy we had faced overseas and as cold as any terrorist ever

encountered.

For the city's part they tried meekly to make a show of caring about the homeless people but a show was all it was. They preferred to act shocked, especially at election time - oh, that couldn't happen here!

Now we were safely hidden in the trees. I knew the dog was thirsty and finding a fallen branch of good size to sit on I set the now warm water on the ground and let him drink, reaching into my left-hand pocket for the small flask and the last of its slow burn.

Tomorrow I would have to find some money.

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# This is Your Life

by Hugh Michaels

Dr. Charles Freeman and his wife Paula, of Hillwood Baptist Church in Huntsville, AL were treated to the surprise of their life on March 21, 2016. They were treated to Hillwood's version of the old T.V. program called "This Is Your Life".

Charles and Paula had no idea that the program would be in their honor. They were shocked and pleasantly surprised.

The visitors were placed in the gymnasium: a microphone was placed there. The visitors gave a short talk about themselves or mentioned something that happened years ago. Charles and Paula were able to identify many of the guests, but not all. It was heart warming to see the expression on their faces as the guests came forward.

This program happens once a year and has been happening for over 20 years.

The program was well planned. It began with the senior adult choir singing "Shoutin' Time". Rev. Dana Workman, Music Minister and Associate Pastor, was pivotal in making the event such a success.

Entertainment was provided by the children and grandchildren of the Freeman's. Keri Anconetani and David Freeman, children of the Freeman's, sang a beautiful rendition of "We Will Remember". The grandchildren ages 1-6 sang "Jesus Loves Me", and they received a standing ovation. They were great, Keri was instrumental in making it all a success, she was very helpful in contacting the guests.

Dr. Freeman has been the pastor of Hillwood for 29 years. He has done a fantastic job. Hillwood is now a beacon of the community.

The idea for such a function was created by Hugh Michaels, a Deacon in the church. Hugh loves the church and looks forward to honoring some worthy individual

each year. This is an annual program. A large crowd attended. Food was furnished by members of the church. The meal was fantastic.

Dr. Freeman and Paula will remember this event for the rest of their lives. Those church members in attendance will also remember this program. It was truly a time of love and compassion.

A beautiful plaque was presented to the Freeman's at the conclusion of the event. The plaque contained words which showed appreciation for their dedicated efforts in support of Hillwood

Baptist Church. Gifts from the audience and members of the family were given to the Freemans which showed appreciation for being such a pillar in the church.

Dr. Charles Freeman is an avid Alabama football fan. He was surprised when a football player came forward, Joe Demos, a former offensive lineman in attendance. Several "Roll Tide" chants were heard from the audience.

The audience departed the church as the beautiful old hymn "Amazing Grace" rang out. It was truly a time worth remembering.






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## "Arty"

Hello, the Ark named me Arty. I came to the Ark with my brother Allie and my sister Asia. A kind lady found us in her yard and asked the Ark to please help us. I am 8 weeks old. My coat is silver and so are my nose and eyes! My sister and brother are solid black. Don't you just love this time of year? Spring and summer bring new life. Trees have new green leaves; vibrant colors of flowers dot the landscape, life begins for baby birds and furry critters of the wild, and so much more to admire during these seasons. Oops, I almost forgot about the new puppies and kittens born that are just toss-a-ways like my siblings and me. Please be a responsible pet owner and have your pets spayed or neutered. It is the right thing for you to do. If you come to the Ark, ask to see Arty. That's me.

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# Below Freezing

by Linda McAllister

January 23, 1963 was beautiful and unseasonably warm. I had just finished my first semester exams as a freshman at William Carey College in Hattiesburg, Ms. My fiance, Dudley, was a sophomore and the two of us planned to head back home to Huntsville during the semester break. But, he had a part-time job as Music Director at a little church in Picayune, MS so we would not head north until after the Wednesday night choir rehearsal. Our best plan was to head to New Orleans for the day after I checked out of my dorm room. What a great reward for surviving my first ever college exam week.

We loved New Orleans and would often slip away with fellow students to that exotic city. On this spring-like January day we walked the streets, ate Beignets, watched street artists and enjoyed delicious seafood. But by early afternoon, we noticed the weather was suddenly becoming very chilly. By mid-afternoon when we left to make the one-hour drive to Picayune, the temperatures had dropped dramatically and it was quite cold. It was January, but this was still a rapid and drastic switch in temperature.

Much to our surprise, when we arrived at the little church in Picayune, the pastor informed us that all Wednesday night activities were cancelled due to the unusually cold weather and dire predictions.

This news was a double-edged sword for us. Whereas we were delighted that Dudley was relieved of responsibilities so we could begin our 8 hour drive to Huntsville early, we knew we faced a problem! No, the drive well into the night hours on two-laned roads was not the problem. This was our usual pattern for trips back and forth from Hattiesburg to Huntsville. The real

problem was Dudley's little 1960 Corvair did not have a heater. Yes, you heard correctly. Foolish youngsters we were - but in the mild south Mississippi weather, a car heater was not our concern. Tonight might be an exception.

Soon after we left Picayune we realized that we were indeed very cold. We stopped at Dudley's off-campus apartment when we passed through Hattiesburg and picked up extra coats, blankets and sweat shirts. I even had a sack of dirty clothes in the car and eventually dug out some flannel pajamas to pull on over my clothes. You will laugh now - but this proper young lady was embarrassed to think that my fiance would see me in pajamas. It seemed very inappropriate and yet today we strangely see young people wearing pajamas to the movie or the mall!

We continued our journey and the temperatures continued to drop. The car's engine generated no heat. Ice began to form on the



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**Murphy told Quinn that his wife was driving him to drink. Quinn thinks Murphy's very lucky because his own wife makes him walk.**

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inside windshield.

Our layers of clothes failed to keep us warm. My nose was running and frozen on my face. Our thermos of coffee offered only temporary relief to sooth our chilled bodies.

We were becoming worried. My vivid imagination strangely recalled Jack London's story, "To Build a Fire". You know the story. The man lost in the snowy woods with his dog eventually dies in the frigid environment. Just remembering this story from high school caused my anxiety level to escalate.

Late into the night our problems worsened. The car was not running well. Perhaps it did not like the cold temperatures any more than we did. The engine would die. Dudley would lift the hood, tinker with it a bit and then we would go another few miles. Eventually, however, on a back road near Cullman the car died and Dudley's best efforts could not revive it.

I remember being cold and scared. We had no idea how cold it was but we knew that we could not risk freezing to death in the car. So, we got out and braved the bitter cold to walk to a nearby farmhouse. When we knocked on the door, lights came on but the reluctant residents would not let strangers inside. They did, however, yell from behind closed doors to refer us to a nearby gas station.

Apparently, the family owners had spent the night in this little country gas station to keep their water running all night so

it would not freeze. These good folks did let us come in and gave us warm coffee as we huddled around a gas heater to thaw. Several families were sleeping on the floor on opposite sides of the check-out counter. The men paraded in and out the building checking on gas pumps and water lines outside.

Everyone was kind and friendly although they must have had questions and suspicions about this foolish young couple traveling in the middle of this cold night without a heater in their car.

At daybreak, we asked to use a phone thinking we could call Dudley's uncle in Cullman to come rescue us. But - there were no phones in this rural area. Imagine that!

Eventually, Dudley and the nice men at the station got the car started and we were able to finish our cold drive to Huntsville in the morning light. When we arrived home in mid-morning, our parents were mortified to hear of our risky trip.

But imagine our surprise to learn that it was a record-breaking day in

Huntsville with temperatures of three degrees below zero. Perhaps my concern of freezing to death on a dark country road was not too far-fetched!

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## Ocie Sparkman

by Malcolm Miller

There were several remarkable characters in downtown Huntsville's heyday during the nineteen forties and fifties, some that stand out in my mind still today. One of these individuals was a crippled man named Ocie Sparkman. He was a kind and gentle man who was always cheerful and had a big smile on his face.

The first time I ever remember seeing Ocie was around nineteen forty-three or four. They were having a type of Pentecostal revival in a house on Bob Wade Lane and I, along with some of my buddies, were hanging around outside a window trying to talk to the girls who seemed to always find seats by windows so they could talk to the boys. The people in the church were standing up singing and shouting inside and while Ocie was standing a small child crawled up on the bench under him and went to sleep. Finally, when the singing ended Ocie started to sit down and when he would touch the child he would raise back up, this went on for several times until he finally sat down and the kid yelled. Ocie moved very quickly for a crippled man and jumped straight up, I always remember this sight as it was hilarious.

After I was discharged from the Navy after World War II, I came back home and got a job at the General Shoe Factory. Since I had been the ship's barber while in the Navy, I started working part time as a barber; first at the South Side Barber Shop just off the Square next door to the fire hall, (incidentally the only fire station

in town at that time). Later on I moved to the Roosevelt Barber Shop on the west side of the Square in a basement located below the cotton buyers' offices. This is where I really got to know Ocie Sparkman. He made his daily rounds to all the businesses with a large basket on one arm selling apples and chewing gum. It got to where I always looked forward to seeing Ocie, carefully descending the stairs into the shop. As I have said previously, Ocie was very crippled and how he carried that heavy basket full of apples and chewing gum all day I will never know.

The owner of the Roosevelt Barber Shop at that time was a man named Guy Spencer and he loved to joke and pull pranks on everyone. I know this because he used a large safety pin to fasten the chair cloth around the customers and I could not count the times I was stuck by that big old pin. When Ocie would come in the shop Guy would buy either an apple or a pack of gum from him and then try to give it back to him. This would upset Ocie to no end, however Guy Spencer continued this ritual with him each time he came in the barber shop, reenacting the same ritual many times.

Finally Ocie's luck ran out, he had been hobbling around the streets of Huntsville for years until finally he was hit by a car and spent a long time in Huntsville Hospital. Finally when he was able to move around some they sat him up a chair in the lobby of the hospital where he could sell his apples and chewing gum in a comfortable place.

The last time I saw Ocie Sparkman I was eating breakfast at the Big Spring Cafe on Governors Drive and Ocie was there. We talked about old times a while then he asked me if I would drive him home. He lived just across Governor's Drive and he could hardly walk. I told him that I would be glad to drive him home.

I really don't know a lot about Ocie's family or whether he lived alone - I only know that little frail crippled man made an impression on me that has lasted all through the years.

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# Civil War Shell Causes Excitement in New Hope

From 1891 Huntsville Newspaper



From a very reliable source, a Mercury reporter was informed that on last Saturday at a point in the vicinity of New Hope, but on the Marshall County side of the river, an explosion occurred that has recalled the war and nearly scared the life out of an honest old gent.

It seems that the old man was burning logs for the purpose of clearing up a large piece of land in order to plant a good-sized garden. He had set fire to a brush pile which ignited a large dead tree. Suddenly a most terrific explosion occurred, one that was heard for miles, and the old tree was slivered and scattered to the winds. The old man who was a hundred yards distant took his departure immediately without troubling himself with an investigation.

A party who finally visited the spot where the tree once stood and made an investigation, found from the surroundings every evidence that the explo-

sion was that of a bombshell that had been imbedded in the tree during the war. It is known that there was a good deal of firing from cannon loaded with shell at this point during the war, a point that commanded the river.

The tree was a very old Oak and was thought to be at least a hundred years old at the time of it's demise.

The circumstances can admit of two theories, one that the shell became imbedded in the tree by being fired from a cannon and failed to explode.

The other that it had been left in the hollow, if there was any in the tree, as a sort of keepsake, hoping at some future day that it would get in its work. The first theory, however, is the most probable.

The report was heard far into Madison County and occasioned considerable wonder. It is said the old man will burn no more brush in that neighborhood.

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