



No. 288
February 2017



Old Huntsville

HISTORY AND STORIES OF THE TENNESSEE VALLEY

The Little Lion of Big Spring Park



Also in this issue: **Women and Telephones**

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The Little Lion of Big Spring Park

by Margaret Anne Goldsmith

Cover Photo by Mike Maples

The Little Lion of Big Spring Park had been in the park for as long as I could remember when I rode him as a child during the 1940s. I lived with my father and grandparents at the Russel Erskine Hotel. The Big Spring Park was my back yard. The Little Lion was really a Big Lion then because for me it was an arduous climb to mount and ride on his back which I did for hours. I don't remember where my rides took me, likely to the edge of my two-to-four year old world.

The Little Lion lived in the Park just off Spragins Street next to the old spring pump house. During those days the whole town got their water from the Big Spring. That was before Huntsville started growing and needing a larger water source, the Tennessee River. Across Spragins Street was the Ice House where peo-

ple bought large blocks of ice. While I was riding the Little Lion I would watch the Ice Man hitch up his mule next to the Ice House and fill his wagon with blocks of ice. He would then travel around town and deliver ice to those folks who had real ice boxes cooled with ice. We had an electric refrigerator, but I wished we had had a real Ice Box, the kind made of wood that stood on legs like our footed bathtub.

If I looked down Canal Street I could see the spring branch. It would eventually make its way to Pinhook Creek and the river. Spragins Street extended south, up Big Spring Hill to become Oak Avenue where I would often walk with my nurse, Cora Barley. Sometimes we would walk past Saint Bartley's Baptist Church and Womack's Grocery and on down the street to visit with Mrs. Copper, the lady Cora lived with when she wasn't taking care of me.

On Saturday afternoons we would walk down Oak Avenue and turn left at Saint Bartley's to go to the old Carnegie Library for Story Hour which took place in the basement where the children's books were kept and Miss. Frances was the librarian. Spragins Street stretched north to Clinton Street where the First Baptist Church stood diagonally across the street from the Russel Erskine Hotel. Clinton Street going west was

"Remember back when we were kids and every time it was below zero outside they closed the schools? Me neither."

Neil Keith, Huntsville



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a narrow shaded street with lovely Victorian houses on either side. Clinton going east was our downtown commercial district.

So that was the Little Lion's neighborhood, and mine. My father, who had been born in 1909, told me that he could remember the Little Lion when he was a boy. He used to ride him also. In fact, all the children around town had been riding him for almost a half century before I was born.

As a child I remember that on Sunday afternoons after church, parents would bring their children to the Big Spring to feed the gold fish and ducks, ride the Little Lion, climb on the rock bluff. We would slide on pieces of cardboard down the hill behind Cotton Row where a number of cotton brokers had their offices. Cotton Row faced the Courthouse on the west side of the Square.

As the years went by, I grew up, married and moved to New Orleans and lost track of what happened to the Little Lion. I was later told that during

the 1960s when the Park was "modernized," that the Little Lion was taken off his stand and moved to another location in the Park.

During the early 1990s I began to return to Huntsville more often to assist my father in our family business, I. Schiffman & Co. I wondered what had become of the Little Lion. During one of my visits I met Dick Curtis who was working for Channel 19.

Among his duties at Channel 19 was to make short features on interesting sights around town that would be aired in the early evening. I suggested he make one about my old friend, the Little Lion of Big Spring Park.

Dick and I agreed to meet at the Big Spring Park. When we did, the Little Lion was nowhere to be found. I told Dick that I would try and find out what had happened to him. The following day I began calling around town.

I was in luck when I called the City Planning Department and found someone who re-

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Margaret Anne 1995

membered that the Little Lion had been moved to the City Greenhouse. He had been abused by skateboarders, torn from his moorings and thrown into the water under the bluff. The city gardeners had rescued him and taken him to the Greenhouse where he had remained.

I phoned Dick and we met shortly thereafter at the Greenhouse where we found the Little Lion resting peacefully under some green plants. Upon seeing him, I was shocked that he had grown so much smaller - or maybe it was because I had grown bigger. Dick asked me to get on the Little Lion's back and I did; however, I had to get on my knees to do so. I began to pat the Little Lion just like old times. It was then that Dick asked me what I used to say to

the Little Lion. I closed my eyes and responded, "Giddy Up." I think the Little Lion heard me because with my eyes closed it really felt like he was galloping around just like he used to do.

Around the time I found the Little Lion, the City was planning a renovation of the east end of Big Spring Park. When I learned that was about to happen, I went to the City Planning Department to check if the Little Lion was included in the renovation plan. To my disappointment, he wasn't in the plan because there were no funds to restore him.

When I returned to New Orleans I took the bull by the horns and wrote the Mayor, the President of the Historic Huntsville Foundation, the director of Constitution Hall Village and various other organization directors who I thought would be interested in bringing the Little Lion back to the park.

I mentioned a date that I would be returning to Huntsville and suggested we all meet then at Mayor Steve Hettinger's office. Subsequently the Mayor planned a meeting for everyone to whom I had written. Several months later when I returned to Huntsville and went to the meeting I was surprised and delighted to see everyone I had invited sitting around the Mayor's round table along with representatives from the City Planning Department.

I then learned that after my invitation had arrived, the Historic Huntsville Foundation Board met and approved a contribution of two thousand dollars to have the Little Lion sand blasted, repainted and re-installed in the park. Everyone quickly approved the restoration and the Planning Department added the Little Lion's return to their plan for the park renovation. I was thrilled, my

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dream was about to come true.

Next was to find out the history of the Little Lion. The Huntsville Times wrote several articles asking if anyone knew anything about how he came to live in the park. Huntsvillians were invited to send in pictures of their photographs when they were children ridding the Little Lion. Shortly thereafter two full pages in the Times were devoted to photographs of the Little Lion and the children who rode him.

Strange as it may seem, I had never had my picture taken on the Little Lion as a child. Since I rode him almost every day, unlike the other children who only rode him occasionally, the adults around me didn't think it was anything special to photograph.

Sometime after the articles and photographs were printed in the paper, an elderly lady came forward to say that it was her father, Mr. J. E. Hummel who had a cast iron factory who had given the Little Lion to the park. She provided the time frame that it had hap-

pened and work began. The City records were researched and it was revealed that indeed Mr. Hummel had given the Little Lion to the park, and was quoted to have said at the time that the Little Lion was "A gift to the park as long as children play in the park."

Fast forward, the Little Lion was refurbished. On the appointed day Dick Curtis with his camera, and I met a group from the City Greenhouse and the Little Lion at the park. The Little Lion was unloaded from the city truck and placed on a pallet. He was then lifted above the heads of the Greenhouse folks like the king of the park that he is and carried to a spot just under the bluff overlooking the spring. There he was royally installed with a great deal of fanfare.

A plaque was later placed

"The indirect cause of this accident was a little guy in a small car with a big mouth."

Seen on accident report

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Margaret Anne Goldsmith with her daughter Bobbie Wyso

just beneath his head with the inscription that appears at the beginning of this article stating that he was given to the park for "As long as children play in the park." Also noted on the plaque is that the Historic Huntsville Foundation had restored and refurbished him.

The date on the plaque also notes that this historic event occurred on August 7, 1995, ninety-five years after the Little Lion had first come to live in the park. The Historic Huntsville Foundation honored the Little Lion's return to the park by having tee shirts made with

a picture of the Little Lion on the front that they sold at Harrison Brothers, their store on the Square.

My daughter Bobbie Hanaw (now Wyso) was with me that day and we both got on the Little Lion and had our picture taken together. It was very special indeed to share that experience with my daughter, an experience I will never forget.

Since that momentous occasion, Bobbie and my other two children, John Hanaw and Laurie Lev have married and had children of their own, my ten grandchildren. Of course my

children and my grandchildren have heard my story of the Little Lion and have had their pictures taken riding on his back.

I might add that the Little Lion knows they are my children and grandchildren be-

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cause when any one of them rides he looks at me, winks and smiles.

Some years ago I asked my partner Mike Maples, whose hobby is photography, to take a portrait picture for me of the Little Lion to hang in the I. Schiffman Building. Mike made a special effort to find the best time of the day to do so, the early morning when the sun is just coming up and for a brief moment shines a golden light on the Little Lion.


The portrait picture Mike made for me is the one on the front cover of this issue of Old Huntsville Magazine. The Little Lion looks absolutely regal in his portrait, don't you think? I visited him a few days ago and showed him the article and his picture. He was quite pleased and thanked me for writing this article and sharing "our" story with you, the Huntsville community.

Today, 2017, the Little Lion of Big Spring Park continues to charm children of all ages as he lies on his royal throne overlooking the Spring, providing rides for all the children who come to see him.

I suggest our readers visit the Big Spring next summer on a Sunday afternoon around four and bring your children or grandchildren and your friends. The drummers are gathered at the drumming circle, there are families picnicking and children playing. It pleases the Little Lion, the King of the Park, as he watches children of every race and culture playing together.

This is exactly what Mr. Hummel had wanted and will continue to be so for the years to come, that is, "As long as children play in the park."






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Children of the 1930s and 1940s - The Last Ones

by Rudy V. Strickland

Born in the 1930s and early 1940s, we exist as a very special age group. We are the "last ones." We are the last, climbing out of the Depression who can remember the winds of war and the war itself with fathers and uncles going off to fight. We are the last to remember ration books for everything from sugar to shoes to stoves. We saved tin foil and poured fat into tin cans. We saw cars up on blocks because tires weren't available. My mother delivered milk in a horse drawn cart.

We are the last to hear Roosevelt's radio assurances and to see gold stars in the front windows of our grieving neighbors. We can remember the parades on August 15th, VJ Day.

We saw the "boys" home from the war build their Cape Cod style houses, pouring the cellar, tar papering it over and living there until they could afford the time and money to build it out.

We are the last who spent childhood without television; instead imagining what we heard on the radio. As we all like to brag, with no TV, we spent our childhood "playing outside until the street lights came on." We did play outside and we did play on our own. There was no little league.

The lack of television in our early years meant, for most of us, that we had little real understanding of what the world was like. Our Saturday afternoons, if at the movies, gave us newsreels of the war and the

holocaust sandwiched in between westerns and cartoons. Newspapers and magazines were written for adults. We are the last who had to find out for ourselves.

As we grew up, the country was exploding with growth. The G.I. Bill gave returning veterans the means to get an education and spurred colleges to grow. VA loans fanned a housing boom. Pent-up demand coupled with new installments payment plans put factories to work. New highways would bring jobs and mobility. The veterans joined civic clubs and became active in politics.

In the late 40s and early 50s the country seemed to lie in the embrace of brisk but quiet order as it gave birth to its new



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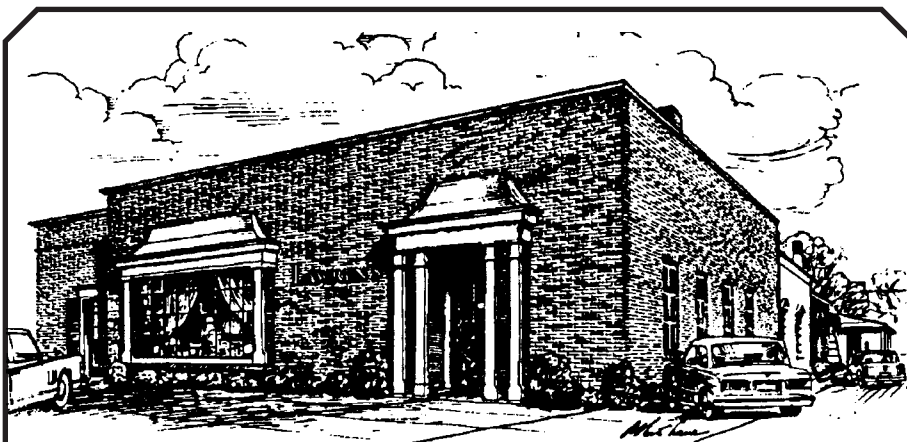
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middle class. Our parents understandably became absorbed with their own new lives. They were free from the confines of the Depression and the War. They threw themselves into exploring opportunities they had never imagined.

We weren't neglected but we weren't today's all-consuming family focus. They were glad we played by ourselves until the street lights came on. They were busy discovering the post-war world.

Most of us had no life plan, but with the unexpected virtue of ignorance and an economic rising tide we simply stepped into the world and went to find out. We entered a world of overflowing plenty and opportunity; a world where we were welcomed. Based on our naive belief that there was more where this came from, we shaped life as we went.

We enjoyed a luxury; we felt secure in our future. Of course, just as today, not all Americans shared in this experience. Depression poverty was deep rooted. Polio was still acrippler. The Korean War was a dark presage in the early 1950s and by mid-decade school children were ducking under desks. China became Red China. Eisenhower sent the first "advisors" to Vietnam. Castro set up camp in Cuba and Khrushchev came to power.

We are the last to experience an interlude when there were no existential threats to our homeland. We came of age in

the late 1940s and early 1950s. The war was over and the cold war, terrorism, climate change, technological upheaval and perpetual economic insecurity had yet to haunt life with insistent unease.

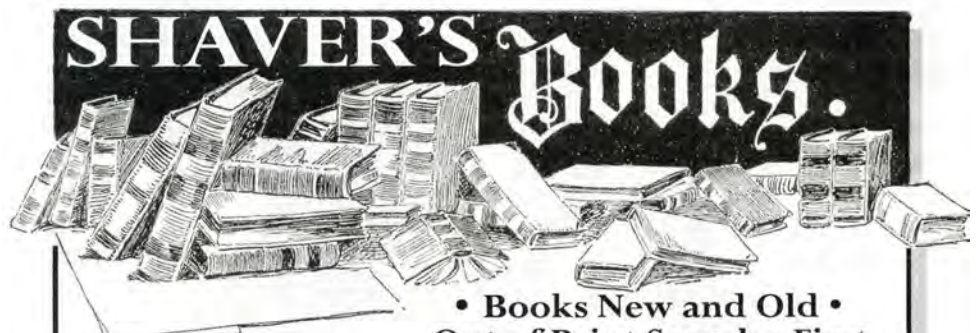
Only we can remember both a time of apocalyptic war and a time when our world was secure and full of bright promise and plenty. We experienced both. We grew up at the best possible time, a time when the world was getting better, not worse.

We did not have it easy. Our wages were low, we did without, we lived within our means, we worked hard to get a job and harder still to keep it. Things that today are considered necessities, we considered unreachable luxuries.

We made things last. We fixed, rather than replaced. We had values and did not take for granted that "Somebody will take care of us". We cared for ourselves and we also cared for others.

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His Life Saved by a Hangman's Rope

by Chuck Bobo

The life of Starling Scruggs, a Blount County, AL, soldier in the Civil War, was saved by a broken hangman's rope.

Starling served with the Confederate 26th-50th Alabama Infantry Division in the war and was at Corinth, MS, when he received word from home that one of his sisters had been raped by two men. He went absent without leave (AWOL) from his unit and rode home on a "borrowed" horse. He shot the two rapists and began to ride back to his unit.

He was caught by Confederate forces before he made it back to his unit, was given a summary courts martial on the spot and convicted of desertion. He was mounted on his horse. A rope with a hangman's knot was tied around his neck and thrown over the limb of a tree. The horse was slapped and when he jumped the rope broke, saving Scruggs' life.

It was decided that the broken rope proved Scruggs' innocence and he was allowed to return to his unit at Corinth. He fought the remainder of the Civil War with the 26th-50th. When he returned to Blount County, the sheriff told Starling that he had a warrant for his arrest, but would ignore it if Starling left the county and did not return.

Starling moved to the Camargo community in Lincoln County, TN, a few miles southwest of Fayetteville. Scars on his neck from the hangman's rope were with him the rest of his life. He always hid his scars.

He married Mary Mullins, settled there and raised a large family.

Starling was one of my great grandfathers. There is a story that he fought in the "Battle Above the Clouds" in Tennessee against my Yankee great grandfather Arvi Joseph Bobo who later settled in Madison County. But, that will be the subject of another article.

"I really think that tossing and turning at night should be considered exercise."

Jenny Burwell, Athens



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by *Patty Trigg*

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Yes, you are experiencing the magic of music as performed by a master of sound that was my dad, Bill Trigg. He could weave a pulse that brought on a spontaneous reaction the minute his fingers touched the strings of the big bull bass. This spontaneity was elicited by listening to the deep mellow sound that only a big bull bass fiddle can produce.

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Bill Trigg, better known at a young age as "Billy," fell in love at the tender age of twelve. The family farm was just outside of town, Fayetteville, Tennessee, and the mode of trans-

portation was foot, horseback or wagon. On a trip to town with his Grandpa to get the week's supplies for the farm, Billy was bowled over. This was not frilly lace, long curly hair, twinkling eyes, dimpled cheeks, sweet smells and coy looks from a young lady. No, this was from the sound of music traveling easily on the air from the general store.

Several men had gathered and had begun to play their favorite tunes. Bill recalled that the usual compliment of instruments were present, "the guitar, a banjo, the fiddle, most likely a mandolin and possibly a dobro but most assuredly a big bull bass fiddle." He added, "It was magic!" You could hear the essence of the young voice of Billy as Bill continued, "Pure and simple, love at first sight."

Mr. Hiram Higgins, Sr., who owned and operated the Higgins Funeral Home in Fayetteville, played the big bull bass and played it well. Billy was mesmerized by this amazing instrument and the sound that it made. "This sound, this instrument, touched my soul, this was my future." Bill said, "This became my passion."

From that moment forward Billy spent his free time listening and learning every-

thing he could about the big bull bass fiddle. Mr. Higgins taught Billy how to play and would let him come to the funeral home during quiet times to practice.

After chores and family obligations Billy headed for town

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Ron Eyestone, Madison

and practiced as often as possible. Billy was a natural, he picked it up fast and it wasn't long before he was sitting in on a few tunes. When Mr. Higgins was busy attending to funeral details, Billy was asked to sit in for the full session.

At some point Billy realized that he would have to purchase his own big bull bass fiddle. This was during the heart of the Depression and saving the money and purchasing a bass fiddle was not going to be an easy task.

Like all young folks, especially teenagers, it's necessary to keep secrets from the adults if you have a mind set to do something. Billy was no different. After tending to and plowing the family fields, Billy would take the mule and go to the surrounding farms and hire out his services for \$.50 a day. The bass he wanted was from Germany and would have to be shipped. It was top of the line and would cost \$300.00.

This was a major purchase in the 30s and like many of the

other farming families what was grown in the family garden or raised on the farm sustained a family, as there was no tangible money to speak of. Miss Eunice, Billy's mother and a single widowed Mom, was a school teacher. Instead of being paid in cash for teaching, Miss Eunice was paid in what was called a "chit." This note represented earnings from her teaching job and was taken to the general store and used to offset for necessities that could not be grown or provided by the farm.

Billy was six years old when he lost his Father. Bill Sr.'s job as an engineer required that he and his family live in Indiana. A fire broke out at their neighbors and smoke detectors had not been developed at this time and Bill Trigg Sr. died from smoke inhalation. Miss Eunice returned home to her family in Fayetteville with her small family of one daughter, Patricia, three and her son Billy. Billy was now the other man of the house and helped

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his Grandpa with the chores.

Bill recalls accompanying his Grandpa to town to help with a load of corn fresh from the field. The money from the sale of the corn was taken to and deposited in the local bank. The next morning the banks closed. This was dark day for a lot of families across America.

Bill says he remembers everyone emptying their pockets and purses on the kitchen table. This was all the cash they had. Money was not something you wasted. It was a family decision as to how every penny was to be spent. "Waste not want not" was definitely the rule of the house.

The following year Billy's Grandpa took sick and passed away. Billy was thirteen and was now the man of the house and carried a lot of responsibility. Granny ruled the house and even though Billy was the apple of her eye these were tough times and being tough meant keeping a roof over their heads and food on the table. You can only imagine the emotional roller coaster ride that was experienced by the members of the Trigg family when a big wood box arrived that was six feet tall, three feet wide and two feet deep. It was addressed to Billy Trigg and it had come all the way from Germany.

The moment of reckoning had arrived. The thrill of the arrival of his bass overpowered his fear of his Granny and his mother's reaction to his purchase. By all accounts, it was explosive. "What were you thinking?", "Have you lost your mind?", "What will the neighbors say?", "I can't believe you wasted your hard-earned money on that piece of wood!" and on and on.

Granny had the final say and no one could get to the point faster than Granny. She stated briskly, "You are not bringing that 'thing' in my house!" Then to add insult to injury she finished with, "It can darn well stay in the barn." And there it was sent to stay.

It wasn't long after this somewhat long and intense day that Billy got his first paying job playing the big bull bass with a local group, the Ham Eaters. Billy brought home more in that one night than the family earned in a month. Granny gracefully ate crow and ordered Billy to immediately bring that "stick of wood" in the house for protection.

"Why does toilet paper need any advertising? Who is not buying toilet paper?"
Jean McIntosh, Huntsville



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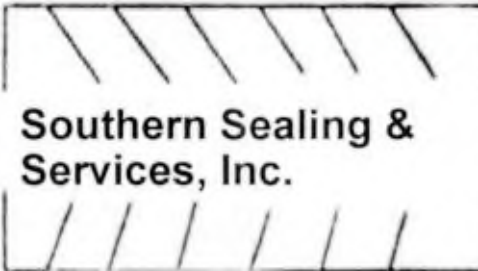
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Around Alabama - 1923

Sheriff Makes his First Raid

Sheriff Chas. D. Lane made his first raid last night when he, assisted by Deputies Yeatman and Watson, destroyed a still in the Northern part of the county, three miles west of Elkwood. The raid was made about two o'clock this morning and about two thousand gallons of moonshine had been poured out. There were no arrests made but the Sheriff says he thinks they were a little too early as it was evident that a run would soon have been made.

This was the Sheriff's first experience in the raiding of stills and when asked what kind of still it was he said he did not know as it was the first one he had ever seen.

Insane Fear of Ku Klux is Cause of Shooting - Birmingham

Under a delusion, according to his wife, that he was being pursued by the Ku Klux Klan, Earl Brandel shot and possibly fatally wounded Frank Radic, hotel man, in a crowded restaurant last night. As he fired the shot Brandel yelled, "I got that Klux," police stated. When placed under arrest, Brandel told the police, "They're getting everybody but they'll not get me!"

High Heels on Floors

According to Huntsville construction experts, the cost of upkeep on floors in homes and apartments has more than doubled during the last 10 years as a result of women wearing high heels. The heels are so narrow at the base, the experts say that they actually dig into the hard wood. This compels closer scraping when the floors are refinished and consequently the wood lasts only half as long.

Chops off his own Finger

Fearing infection in a finger which his cat had bitten, Theodore Jones, of Arab, chopped off the finger with a hatchet. He is expected to live. He's keeping his cat.

Get a Good Night's Sleep

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Heard On the Street

by **Cathey Carney**



So many people called to guess the Photo of the Month for January. It was none other than **Lynda Hall**, our County Tax Collector. She obviously has many friends and many who knew her when she was just a little tyke. But the first caller was **Ann Hancock** of Huntsville, who recognized that photo right away. Ann is retired with 4 children, 4 grand kids and 1 great grandchild so she stays very busy with her family. Congratulations to Ann.

My beautiful Mom, **Annelie Owens**, passed away in her sleep on Jan. 11, at Redstone Village. She was 96, a German medical doctor, and what a life she had. My husband **Tom** was writing a book about her life in Germany during the war years, but sadly he passed away before he could write the book. I feel like there's a huge

hole in my heart that will take a long time to heal. There's a real void without her here. All I can do now is to hope to see her again, but until that time I feel her hugs every day.

Wanted to send a special hello to friends **Ibis** and **Steve East** in Florida - they were in Huntsville years ago but sure do love the warm Florida air.

Reverend Louis Giardino was only 67 when he passed away the day after Christmas. He was the pastor of Good Shepherd Catholic Church in Huntsville and was loved by many parishioners. He is survived by nephew **J. R. Griffith (Nicoli)** and their two children, and his niece **Elizabeth Griffith** and her two children. He was a gentle spiritual man and will be so missed.

It's amazing how fast Huntsville is growing. There's construction all around Governors West and South Parkway, as well as downtown and parts of North Huntsville. Remember that even though it's a bit harder to get to those businesses that are in the construction area, please make the effort to do business with them because they need us!

I heard lately that in the Dallas airport there are many therapy dogs that are walking around with their owners, letting people pet them. They are there to help with anxiety and stressful times when passengers might be upset about delays or worried in general. How can you be upset after petting a dozen sweet dogs? I think every

airport should offer this service.

Mary Harris called us to say that her husband **Ben Harris** will have a birthday on Feb. 8. Not just any birthday - he will be turning 104 years old. She wants to wish him a day full of love, and told us he rode his Harley Davidson motorcycle until he was 98! One of the best couples ever, so much love.

I tried something the other day and it was pretty good. I drink Green tea and sometimes it just needs a little more flavor so I added apple cider once, then raspberry juice, then just some sweet lemonade. Tried a bunch of different flavors and it was good.

Hello to **Scotty Brier** of Knoxville. He probably has one of the largest collections of the Old Huntsville magazines since it started in 1989. He loves Huntsville and loves the history here. We need you to send some good memories Scotty!

Someone asked me recently what happened to the **4-sided clock** that used to be on top of the old courthouse in downtown Huntsville. It was the courthouse taken down in the mid 60s and the columns, or many of them, are

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 boy loves life on a nearby mountain and loves to play with trains.



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located in the Botanical Gardens. But what happened to the clock? If anyone knows contact me at oldhuntsville@knology.net and I'll let everyone know!

I read a tip the other day that I wanted to pass along to you. It was from a health magazine and said to NEVER exercise hard when you're very angry about something. This would apply to a gym workout or an extra long run. A large international study found that anger plus heavy physical exertion more than triples the risk for having a heart attack within an hour.

It's always a thrill to welcome a new grandchild into the world, but what about 3 at one time? Congratulations to **Laura Jo** and **George Hamilton**, grandparents. Here's what she says: "The first of the triplets arrived on the winter solstice (21 December) in Birmingham to older daughter **Lucy** and husband **SIL Chris Daniel**. The babies are **Frances** (laid back), **Laura** (high maintenance like her mother and grandmother), and **Will** also laid back. They each weighed about 4 pounds at birth, and are now above 5 pounds. They go through some 30 diapers a day, and the caretakers are rather sleep deprived."

"Daughter **Lucy** was on bed rest for 14 weeks and was terribly bored. I suggested that she should save up that boredom, as she was not going to be bored for the first 5 years (it's really the first 25 years, but she'll figure that out). Lucy is a

pediatric pharmacist at Children's Hospital and **Chris** is a criminal defense attorney."

Southerland's Station Toy Store is a landmark in Huntsville. They were located off Governors down from Huntsville Hospital before all the street work began, then they relocated to 2362 Whitesburg Drive So. near the Bob Wallace intersection when the owner, **Dick Metzger**, retired and his family **Nikki** and **Lowell Skidmore** took it over. They are now closing the doors for good after 58 years in business, and are selling everything **by the end of February**. There will be large discounts on everything except the model trains. Who doesn't remember taking their kids/grandkids there at Christmas time and seeing the model trains set up and the Christmas wonderland offering buttons to push and all sorts of train sounds? Go see them.

A beloved and well-known resident of Huntsville passed away on Jan. 11. **Martha Moore Bryant** was 100 years old when she died at home. She has a very large family who will miss her dearly. She loved history and was part of so many local organizations such as the Twickenham Town Chapter of the DAR. Martha Bryant will be the subject for a separate story, in Old Huntsville for sure. Her six children surviving her are **Olivia Crump; Sara Batson, Hall Blake Bryant, Jr. (Susan); Nancy Bryant; Ann Myers (Rodney)** all of Huntsville and **Jackie Higgins**

(**Thomas**) of Vail, CO. She leaves 18 grandchildren, 24 great grandchildren and many nieces and nephews. She's watching us from above, with so much love.

There are so many activities in Huntsville, it's just finding them that's difficult. One I saw online recently is the **Huntsville Symphony Orchestra Free Family Concert**. The date for this event is February 4, Saturday, and gets started at 9:30 am with family activities such as face painting, instrument petting zoo, musical chairs etc. The concert starts at 11 am. in the Mark C. Smith Concert Hall at the VBC.

John E. Carson is helping to set up a chapter of Pets for Vets, an organization that finds dogs for Veterans who are suffering from PTSD or depression and just need a companion to spend life with. It's a great cause and there will be more in the news soon.

Love to **Malcolm Miller** who recently moved to the **Tut Fann Veterans Home** - he is the regular writer for Old Huntsville and is going to try to find more stories among the Vets that live in the home. I was so impressed when I visited recently - the home is super clean, organized, safe and the people who work there are so kind to the Vets. We hear so much negativity regarding Veterans Homes but I think Tut Fann is one of the best!

If you still have your mom and dad, give them a special hug, you'll always remember it.

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- 1/2 lb. bacon
- 3 c. red cabbage, raw, chopped
- 3 c. sweet onion, chopped
- 2 lg. green peppers, chopped
- Cooked rice of your choice

In a large frying pan cook the bacon to very crisp. Drain bacon on paper towels and reserve half the bacon grease. While pan is still hot add all veggies and cook over medium/high heat for about 15 minutes, stirring. Season with salt, pepper and garlic powder. When veggies are done, spoon over hot rice on a plate and serve.

Bacon Butter

- 2 slices bacon, cooked
- 1 stick softened butter

Cook the bacon in a skillet; drain and chop. Mix the butter with the drippings and bacon.

Cheesy Bacon Popcorn

- 4 c. hot popcorn
- 1 T. bacon drippings
- 3 T. crumbled cooked bacon
- 1/4 c. each grated Parmesan and Cheddar cheeses

In a large bowl pour the popcorn (hot). Drizzle drippings and crumbled cooked bacon and stir. Quickly add the cheese and stir well, serve.

PB & B

- White bread
- Peanut butter
- Banana
- Maple Syrup
- Cooked bacon
- Butter

Take two slices of the bread and spread peanut butter, sliced banana and 2 tablespoons Maple syrup. Add the

cooked bacon, fry in a buttered pan til browned and delicious.

Bacon Sauerkraut

- 8 oz. diced Canadian bacon
- 1 chopped onion
- 2 T. olive oil
- 3/4 c. beer
- 3/4 c. water
- 1 lb. rinsed drained sauerkraut

Cook the bacon and onion in the olive oil for about 10 minutes. Pour into large saucepan. Add beer and water, then pour in the sauerkraut. Let simmer for 20 minutes.

Bacon-Wrapped Scallops

Wrap bacon around scallops; secure with toothpicks. Broil, turning until crisp, 5 to 6 minutes.

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- One Pint Cole Slaw
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Bacon Pizza

Top a round of pizzadough with tomato sauce, shredded mozzarella, thinly sliced onion, crumbled cooked bacon and salt. Bake at 500 degrees for 10 minutes. Drizzle with just a little olive oil.

Bacon Bites

1/4 c. diced ham
1/4 c. crumbled cooked bacon
8 refrigerated biscuit dough rounds

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Mix the ham and bacon in a small bowl. Place a tablespoon on each raw dough round and fold over to crimp. bake for 15 minutes.

Bacon Fried Rice

1/2 c. chopped, cooked bacon
1/2 c. chopped scallions
4 c. cooked rice
3 beaten eggs
1 t. sesame oil
1 t. fresh ginger, grated

In a large skillet heat the bacon, scallions, and rice til hot. Add the eggs, oil and ginger and stir-fry until the eggs are set.

Hot Bacon Crab Dip

8 oz. cream cheese
8 oz. crabmeat
1 c. crumbled cooked bacon
1/2 c. mayonnaise
3 scallions, chopped
juice of one lemon
breadcrumbs

Mix the cream cheese and crabmeat. Add the bacon, mayonnaise, scallions and lemon juice. Spread in a baking dish, top with breadcrumbs. Bake at 350 degrees for 30 minutes and the dip is bubbly.

Bacon Vinaigrette

4 slices chopped bacon
3 T. red wine vinegar
1 T. whole-grain mustard

Cook the bacon in a skillet til crispy, drain and crumble. Whisk the red wine vinegar and mustard into the hot drippings; add salt, pepper and bacon.

Spinach Bacon Salad

Baby spinach
Fresh mushrooms, sliced
Sliced Red onion

Arrange the spinach, mushrooms and onion on a plate, drizzle with the warm bacon Vinaigrette (above).



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Women and Telephones

by Ted Roberts



Women are different from men. I sometimes think it's this knowledge that has bonded me to the same one for almost sixty years. See, I understand these significant differences. For example, unlike my lovely wife I could never have a telephone conversation with a friend about a skirt at T. J. Maxx for twenty minutes and all the while stir, season and chop with a razor-sharp knife, onions into a skillet full of curried chicken. I guarantee you, there's not a male in the state of Alabama that has three hands - and that's only the first requirement. And all due to the mobile phone.

Secondly, the coordination of brain and mouth that produces a logically sequential flow of sounds from the mouth and simultaneously a second task is unique to the female sex, especially as she strides between stove and kitchen counter with a sword that King Arthur would envy. I'm worried the phone is going to fall out of my wife's slippery hands into the curry - my supper. A dish that has

"There are two types of people. Those who divide people into groups, and those who don't."

Genie McCoy, Huntsville

never in culinary history been served over a mobile phone.

Then there's the clothes topic. What male is creative enough to come up with roughly 3,000 words about a couple of yards of green cloth? James Joyce, a man of well known verbosity when it came to saying a lot about a little, would surrender after five minutes. And all the while the chicken is sizzling, the faucet is going all out to rinse used pots, and even the dishwasher is contributing its own thump thump. It's a jungle of conversation, noises and scents. I'm waiting for a mini van of clowns to roll into the kitchen and disgorge its wildly-painted passengers. A man would flee. (The cat, no fool, has flown to the upstairs bedroom.) Yet, they continue talking about that two yards of green cloth. Or anything else that a vulgar mind can imagine.

What multi-tasking skill. Women! If, when she's taking out the garbage, I ask this same talented wife to bring in my tennis racket

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so I can rewrap the handle, you know what I'll get back? "YOU THINK I HAVE FOUR HANDS??" Sure I do. I've seen her in action.

All this parallel social and housekeeping activity would have been impossible years ago when the telephone was a stationary device far removed from the kitchen. Oh, I guess you could polish the stand it stood on as you discussed whatever women discuss. Or if it was affixed to the wall, you could paint that section of the wall as you endlessly conversed about this or that. If you were really good, you could knit a sweater. Or even do something vulgar.

I'd like to meet the inventor of the mobile phone. I

think like Sir Isaac Newton, who stumbled onto the power of steam when all he was after was a cup of tea - had no idea that he had turned the world upside down. The phone that magically moves from room to room certainly turned our used-to-be peaceful home upside down. It was one thing to talk - sitting on the sofa while the chicken was burning, the tub was overflowing and young Joey was grilling toasted cheese over an open flame on the gas stove. "Uh, Barbara, I gotta get off the phone."

Today, there's no conversation limiters. Women, you know, are conversationally addicted more than

men. I've got a wife - a typical representation of her gender - who can wear out a mobile phone in a couple of weeks. And given this proclivity to exchange worlds with others of her gender, I make a prediction; one day soon, via the miracle of modern-day electronics, there'll be no hand-held device. You'll just stir the chicken, paint the den, do your aerobics, and TALK. You'll only have to select your victim.

Of course, it's practically feasible now.

**"To all parents -
Never let your daughter
take a purse to church large
enough to hold a kitten."**

Janie Bennett, Huntsville



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News from 1911

Fight is said to be Caused by Insult

J. S. Clay, a well known merchant, and Frank Randall, a clerk in a clothing store, engaged in a sensational duel with pistols at the front door of Clay's resident on Adams Street. Randall is being seen by his doctor and probably fatally wounded - a pistol ball having passed through his head and tearing away a large portion of his right cheek. Clay received two wounds, one in the shoulder and the other bullet striking him in the mouth, shattering his teeth and almost cutting his tongue in two. He will recover. Randall went to Clay's residence and demanded an explanation of an alleged insult to Miss Maude Ledford, the fiancee of Randall. Clay was arrested and held in bail of \$2,000 awaiting the outcome of Randall's injuries.

The Death of Col. Cyrus F. Sugg

This community was shocked when it read in Sunday's issue of the Daily Times that Col. Cyrus Sugg had dropped dead at his home on West Clinton Street. In the death of this splendid man Huntsville, in fact the whole state, has lost one of its foremost citizens and a business man and financier of recognized ability. Sugg was an honest man, a good man, and was known for his square dealings with his fellow man and a business sagacity that was appreciated by all. His death is a distinct blow to our beautiful city but lessons we learned from his progressive efforts will aid in future growth. To the good wife, who is bowed in sorrow, we extend heartfelt sympathy.

Huntsville Family Loses Little Girl

The funeral of little 5 year old daughter of Mr. and Mrs. W. H. Bell, of the Huntsville Wholesale Nurseries, was held yesterday and interment made in Maple Hill Cemetery. Services were conducted by Rev. Carey Gamble of the Episcopal Church. Death was the result of pneumonia and was the second death in the Bell family in the past few months.

Says His Friends Drugged his Liquor

W. F. Canterbury claims to be here from Memphis, came here yesterday and registered at the men's boarding house on East Clinton Street. He complained to the police that he had been robbed of \$200. He claimed that he went out early in the evening with a party of friends and alleges knock-



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out drops were administered to him. When he awoke, he found himself in his room at the boarding house and his roll of money missing.

Bloodhounds trailed the supposed robbers from the boarding house to the railroad yards and it is thought the thieves have gone to Atlanta.

No Whiskey to be Sold

Mayor R. Earle Smith stated today that no whiskey shall be sold in Huntsville while he is Mayor.

He stated that a few bottles may occasionally change hands but that there will be no general or even restricted sale, and that the law shall be enforced as it appears on the statute books.

For Sale - genuine O.I.C. brood hogs and pigs, just the thing for quick money and best meat producers. Address Bruce Moring, Ryland, Al or phone 522 Ring 2.

For Your Home

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For Rent - The Alberta Taylor residence on McClung Street. The house is handsomely furnished and possession can be given at once.

Located in a wonderful quiet area close to town. Rent is reasonable - apply to Mrs. E. E. Ezell.

"No matter how much cats fight, there always seem to be plenty of kittens."
Abraham Lincoln

Bridge Almost Finished

West Holmes Street concrete bridge is nearing completion. Its opening to public travel has already relieved the West Clinton Street congestion.

Arrested

Deputy Sheriff N. I. Pierce late yesterday arrested Ike Lee of Dallas Village on a charge of an assault with a knife.

Death of Cousin

Mrs. E. Y. Miller of West Clinton Street was notified yesterday of the death of her cousin, J. W. Gills at Dyersburg, Tn.

to which place she goes tonight and will come into possession of \$5K in cash left to her by her cousin in his will. Her cousin was only 45 years old and was suffering with an incurable illness.

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turn to the experts

The Red Monogram Nightgown or "I'll Never Tell"

by Judy Chandler Smith

I turn onto Governors Drive on May 2006 at 10:35 p.m. running to drop two notes off at the Post Office that I have just written. One note is to a friend and the other is with a graduation check for a special person, who will graduate from the University of Alabama day after tomorrow and I want his mother to get it in time to take it to Tuscaloosa.

I am about half way to the Post Office when I realize I have run out of the house with my red monogrammed nightgown, robe and fuzzy slippers with just the car keys. I didn't even have my driver's license or wallet, but no matter, it's just a quick trip and M.D. and Maggie (my four pound black poodle) are sleeping and surely they would not miss me in the short time that it will take to zip down Governors Drive, downtown and finally left on Clinton Avenue, past the Coca Cola company once owned by the Chambers, and now owned by the generous Robert and Elizabeth Wilkerson. I still have a picture of my Girl Scout Troup 8, taking a special tour of the plant. My special request after each of my eight children was born was, "May I have a Coca Cola now?"

In the postal drop goes my notes, mission completed. I'm on my way home.

While stopped at the stoplight at Clinton and Monroe, I notice a fire truck coming towards me down Clinton. It stops briefly, then turns to my left down Monroe Avenue in the direction of the bus station and comes to a stop at the intersection on Holmes, just behind the Coca Cola Company. Being the inquisitive type person that I am, I decided to follow the fire truck. Seeing it stop behind the Coca Cola plant, I am thinking the plant may be on fire. I must call Bob Wilkerson to tell him what's happening. The phone book I always carry in the

"If you're parked illegally, avoid a ticket by leaving your car running and your wipers turned on to maximum speed."

Bailey Jones, Huntsville

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car is there and I try looking up the number. As I was stopped near the fire truck and looking up the number, I noticed a BODY lying in the road, an ambulance and a police car along with the fire truck... and there I was in my red monogrammed night gown, robe and fuzzy slippers and no I.D. I pulled into the Trailways Bus Station to get a better view of the situation. At least the Coca Cola plant was not on fire.

Picking up the cell phone, I decided to call M.D. just in case something happened, he would know where I was. It seemed to ring once and then said "no service." My heart stopped. I finally got the phone to ring, but after four times, I got the answering machine. Then I called son Brent who said, "Get the hell out of there, you could be in great danger. They may think you had something to do with a shooting or something. You might even get shot!"

At that moment, I noticed a police officer noticing me (he may have thought I was a witness or something) and I decided that was a very good time to slowly drive away so as not to arouse suspicion. At that moment, without I.D. of any sort, I could just see me being interrogated by the police and maybe even someone from the media arriving and there I am, with nothing on by my red monogrammed nightgown, robe and fuzzy slippers. So, I very slowly drove home so as not to be stopped for any reason.

After arriving home, I had something to eat, stayed up for a while to calm down and finally slipped into bed around 1:00 a.m. The next morning when M.D. and I were having breakfast he mentioned that someone called the house last night but when he saw I was out of bed, he assumed I was up walking Maggie and I'd answer the phone, so he didn't answer it. He also said he could not understand why I looked so tired. He said, "When I saw you last night in your red monogrammed nightgown, robe and fuzzy slippers and you were writing a couple of notes for me to take to the office to mail, I thought you came to bed right after that. You didn't do anything or go anywhere, I don't understand how you could be so tired?"

I just smiled and said to myself in my red monogrammed nightgown, robe and slippers, "I'll never tell."

"Last night, as I lay in bed looking at the pretty stars, I thought, 'What happened to my ceiling?'"
Jeremy Strong, Gurley



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LIFE'S CHANGES

by Malcolm W. Miller

Years ago when I was a young married man with three small children my mother-in-law had been put into a home in Tuscaloosa. I went there to visit her and I could not believe the deplorable situation she was living in. She begged me to bring her home and I did, however that changed my life as well as my family's life for quite sometime until she improved and was able to take care of herself. I never knew whether it was a good thing to bring her home or not, however I did what I felt was right. I don't know what mark it may have left on my three small children, who are now grown, however I sincerely hope it was not significant.

In the early 1900s Madison County had what was called a "Poorhouse" and I have written about that previously. When I was a small child and in my early teens we would walk by the poorhouse. At that time it was at the end of Hermitage Street at the edge of the mountain. I believe this "Poorhouse" was operated by the county, however I am not certain. The people that operated the "Poorhouse" took care of people in the area that did not have families to care for

them. They took care of the sane as well as the not so sane and they occasionally cared for children that did not have homes. If a doctor was required at any time he was many times not paid. Other counties and towns in Alabama also had similar homes for the poor as did other states.

I remember talking with others about the building. It was warmed by stoves as most homes were at that time. Those stoves kept the poor house comfortably warm during the winter months. Summer months in Huntsville were hot with very little ways to cool the rooms.

This poorhouse was finally closed in the late 1930s, and the families of its residents were forced to take care of their own elderly. Of course this poorhouse was operated way before there was government assistance and welfare. The majority of families at that time ended up taking care of family members that were not able to care for themselves and this put a burden on many hard working families.

At that time, but remember that was years ago, I was not very fond of homes for the elderly. Especially after seeing

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Sammy Betts, age 8

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how my mother-in-law was treated and after seeing some of my friends in these homes. In the past I have written articles about homes for the elderly. I have visited them and I have written about the people in them. One time several years back I wrote about several patients in Big Spring Manor. As I visited and took notes to write my short stories I hoped that I would not live my last years in a home of this type. As I was interviewing the people in Big Spring Manor my intentions were to keep the visits short and then I found myself there way past time talking to some of the sweetest, kindest people I have ever talked to. They filled me with knowledge from the past and I found all to be very interesting. One sweet little frail lady said she did not see her children often although they lived close by. She said "I guess they are just too busy to come by today." Those "too busy" words do bother me at times. As her chin started to quiver she said to me, "Mister, it gets awfully lonesome here, thank you for your visit."

As I walked down the hallway, an older lady confined to a wheelchair called to me and asked me if her son Hugh would be here today. I asked the nursing assistant who the lady was referring to. She said it was the lady's son, who had only been there once, to her knowledge, since he had admitted her over a year ago. I said to myself, "No, my dear lady, Hugh won't be here today, not tomorrow, maybe not ever."

Some of the people I have seen in these homes have been abandoned by their loved ones they still love dearly and are only waiting for day when they will meet some of their loved ones in heaven. Sometimes death comes more from a broken heart of losing a life partner, a child, or other loved ones or being forgotten by one, than from a physical ailment. I have known those whose body gives out from heartbreak.

"When people see my litter box they always say, 'Oh, do you have a cat?' Just once I want to say, 'No, it's for company..'"

Glenda Huffstetler, Huntsville

The news of Debbie Reynolds and her daughter Carrie Fisher this week very much prove this theory. Debbie died of a broken heart the day after Carrie passed.

Now please don't get me wrong. Nursing homes

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and Assisted Living Homes are a way of life for the majority of people in our modern day society. Let me make one thing perfectly clear, I am certainly not knocking nursing homes; they, like the poorhouse, are a necessity in our society and are certainly much nicer than anything of the past. We could not survive without them and their tireless workers.

The old poorhouse has long been a thing of the past, however the practice of abandoning the elderly is just as prevalent today as it was in the past. The many nursing homes today are clean and neat and most employees have a genuine love and concern for the residents living in them.

Not all the patients in these nursing homes and assisted living have been abandoned by their families. Family members and friends visit daily bringing cheer, doing laundry, bringing gifts, flowers, goodies and their time that is precious to the resident. For many various reasons family members cannot possibly care for their loved ones at home. Also the loved ones may not be safe at home due to frequent falls, unable to control medications, etc.

In March of 2016 I stayed in a Rehab Nursing facility, Valley View, for a month and I was treated with great care. The place was very clean and nice and the nurses and aids gave excellent care. They also have a great therapy group. I spent another three weeks in the same home in November. Many of the attendants I talked to told me they loved the residents and couldn't work there and see all the suffering and lonesome if they didn't love their work and the residents. They have activities there and volunteers come in and entertain on occasion.

My brother, Paul, the one I have told you about before who was a prisoner of war for three years, lived in "Tut" Fann Veteran's Home for quite some time before he passed. He had great care there. The place was clean and neat and they had many activities for the residents.

We all know now that with all the assisted living places and the great nursing homes nearby that we will not have to spend the remainder of our time in the "Poorhouse" of the 1930s.

I am now currently 89-1/2 years young and all of my life has been full of great and wonderful things including my three children and all of my friends and relatives.

Now I must tell all of the readers of my columns that I moved after Christmas to "Tut" Fann, the same veterans' home where my brother Paul was. I have been on the waiting list for almost

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a year. When I first made application I was 152 on the list, it took around ten or eleven months to become number one and move in. My contact with them to date has been excellent. I am looking forward to excellent care there during the last part of my life. I am looking forward to all friends and relatives that are able to come by the Veterans' Home.

There are four veterans' homes in Alabama. They are the Bill Nichols State Veterans Home in Alexander City which opened in 1989; the Floyd E. "Tut" Fann State Veterans Home in Huntsville; the William F. Green State Veterans Home in Bay Minette (both opened in July 1995); and the Colonel Robert L. Howard State Veterans Home that opened in Pell City in November of 2012. As you can see I have learned a lot this week.

I am looking forward to being able to visit with the other residents at Tut Fann and bringing something different to their existence as they will to mine.

I am a people person, full of jokes and my mind is full of songs from the past. I no longer play the guitar, but I remember words of songs from World War II and words of songs from the 30s and 40s. If you can make others smile just a bit, their smile will brighten my life and the lives of others nearby. I am hoping to make many new friends and visit with family and old friends.

"The more I know about women, the more I love my truck."

Jack Berry, Hartselle

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How Buckhorn High School was Named

by Bobby Fears

They came from the north and east across the mountain through Tennessee down an old Indian trail into North Alabama seeking their dreams. Some settled in what is now New Market, Alabama. The land was fertile, a good source of water, plenty of wild game and timber. Some moved on south and settled at the Big Spring area which is now Huntsville.

As more people came, New Market soon became the largest town in Madison County. The farmers cut out and maintained a road from New Market to Huntsville. If a farmer had a team of mules and wagon and the crops were laid, he could haul gravel from Lawler's Branch for three days or the farm hands could work on the road for five days. This would pay their taxes for a year.

In 1936, Madison County Commission took over the road work. The first commissioner was Joe Quick who was the Commissioner from 1936 to 1960. The road to Huntsville was an all-day trip; people would leave home at daylight and return at sunset. The old road was called "the road to Huntsville." Later the road became known as New Market Pike and now we know the road as Winchester Road.

There were places built along the road where people could stop and rest. Four miles south of New Market where Maysville road joins Winchester road a tavern was built. My guess is it was McCrary's because it was built on their land. At one time, General Andrew Jackson stopped overnight at this tavern. He left the next day to fight the Indians.

I grew up in Deposit, and I remember the story being told that a buck deer rammed the door of the tavern in 1857. Some men sought out to kill the deer. A deer was killed, but, of course, it may not have been the same deer since the area had so many deer. The antlers were cut off, and given to the man who ran the tavern. The antlers were hung on the wall of the tavern and from that day on, the place was called Buckhorn. To this day, the area is still Buckhorn.

In 1887, the NC & STL Railroad

Company bought the right-of-way from the State of Tennessee to build a railroad from Winchester, Tennessee to Hobbs Island, south of Huntsville at the Tennessee River. The railroad company constructed depots along the tracks. The depots were built at Huntland and Elora, Tennessee; Plevna, New Market, and Bell Factory, Alabama. Deposit was a switching station where the railroad workers lived.

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People started to ride the train, then automobiles came along and the old tavern had to close. It was later converted into a four room house.

When I was in the fifth grade at Riverton School, a family moved into the old tavern. They were the Warren family, John T., his wife and two sons, Thomas and Shannon. The two boys were about my age; we became best buddies. We played together, we chopped and picked cotton. We would spend the night at one another's house.


When I was 12 years old, my daddy bought me an old shotgun. In 1957 my brother Joe carried my gun to the Warren's to go hunting. When Joe came home, he had left my gun at the Warren's. That night the old tavern (house) went up in flames and my gun was lost in the fire.

In 1955, the County Board of Education talked about building a new school to consolidate Riverton and New Market schools. They had chosen the name Bob Jones High, a name I did not like. Shannon, Carl Hale and I went to see Roy Swaim, a member of the Board of Education, about the name of the school.


Mr. Roy ran a store on Meridian Street next to A&M College. Mr. Roy was a good friend of my family.

I told Mr. Roy the history about Buckhorn the best I could remember. I asked Mr. Roy if he could get the name changed to Buckhorn. He said the Board was going to meet on Tuesday and he would see what he could do. The next time I saw Mr. Roy, he said the Board was going to build two new schools. The first school would be named Buckhorn and the next school would be named Bob Jones.

It's amazing how one kid can change the lives of so many people who ever walked through the doors of Buckhorn and Bob Jones High Schools.



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THE ART OF THUMBING RIDES IN 1960

by M.D. Smith, IV



After high school I went to college at the University of Virginia. My roommate from boarding high school in Helena was from Virginia and Charlottesville was his home town. He and I were both in Premed. His father was a Dean of Longwood College, and Scotty wanted to be a neuro-surgeon.

I grew up helping my father doctor on all my and little sisters' cuts and wounds and he had said he always wanted to be a doctor (but he was in broadcasting), and I wanted to be a doctor also. I thought "M.D. Smith, M.D." would be cool as well.

Later I transferred to the University of Alabama to major

in Radio & TV and spent my working career in that business because I found out how many years it would take to be a doctor and saw how hard it would be. Scotty did become a brain surgeon.

But UVA was an all male school in the 60s and surrounded by at least seven all girls schools in parts of Virginia. Being on Mr. Jefferson's "Grounds" (not campus), all the "Virginia Gentlemen" were expected to wear a coat and tie and we all did. That was a big help when time came to thumb a ride out of town.

I had a car in another county in the town of Waynesboro, because freshmen could not have a car at all in the city or county. So we paid a gas station in Waynesboro to let me stash my car in a rear gravel area behind the station till I needed it on weekends. Only had my spinner hubcaps stolen once and I kept them in the trunk after that.

Sometimes Scotty my roommate was with me, other times another guy in the dorms and often I was by myself, but I was going out of town almost every single weekend. When young excitable boys from UVA got with young girls from their school, what a party it was.

Some of the more interesting rides I had to Waynesboro on a Saturday morning and return trips, late on a Saturday

or Sunday night I recall vividly. Sometimes we stayed overnight in a motel or slept in the car. Remember, a young man with a coat and tie in Charlottesville got rides easily.

There was the traveling Bible salesman who picked us up one morning. After he stopped and we ran over to the car, he said, "Hop in." Both of us dropped our smiles when we could see front and back seats appeared to be full and we were backing up. "No, no," he said, "come on and get in, plenty of room if you boys will just squeeze together." So my buddy got in as the 4th person in the front seat and I got in as the 5th person in the back seat.

We were terribly cramped for the 25 minute trip and he lectured to all of us on the Bible and tried to sell us copies. Nobody said much of anything because we needed the ride and hitching in the middle of nowhere was much harder. Awfully glad to get out when we reached the Standard Oil gas station where my car was waiting.

Finishing dates at 10 pm in nearby Lynchburg, Harrisonburg, Roanoke, Staunton or Sweet Briar was a good drive back to Waynesboro, and often quite late trying to thumb back to UVA at midnight or after. On a few occasions we had to catch the 2:30 am train back to town, and walk the 3 miles back to the

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dorm from the train station, not the best way to return.

So rarely was a night ride turned down when one of the very few cars that passed by us, actually stopped to our "thumbs in the air."

One night was such an occasion, when a lone car after a long time of NO cars, stopped and picked me up when I was by myself. I had learned from my very early days of saying the wrong thing to a driver about Harry Truman and found myself dumped out between towns and had a hard time hitching another ride, to keep my opinions to myself and do the best to agree, or just a "uh-huh" for answers. This man seemed nice and pleasant enough and I was smiling to myself for catching a good ride. Less than halfway home, he asked me what I thought about homosexuals.

NOW, I realize what that soft voice and nice smile was about AND I knew I better be dog-gone careful about what I said or I'd be in the middle of nowhere at 1:00 am trying to hitch another ride. "Think fast, M.D.," I kept telling myself. So I allowed as how my view was that I understood different people had different lifestyles and that was OK, but it was not mine.

I beat around the bush and kept changing the subject and he seemed OK with that, but would return to the topic. I didn't want to offend him and lose my ride, but I sure did not want to encourage him. What a fence to straddle.

As we neared Charlottesville, and Mr. Jefferson's Grounds was even nearer than downtown, he asked me if I didn't want to ride on into town with him and spend the night in a cozy hotel room instead of the cold dorms. I was not tempted at all and told him I had a lot of studying to do. He got even more persistent about me staying with him and as we approached the intersection of the road leading to the dorms, I said quite firmly, "Here is where I have to get out, NOW."

If he hadn't stopped I didn't

**"Envy is a waste of time.
Be happy with what
you've got, not what you
think you need."**

Pat Lutz, Huntsville

know what I would do or say, but he did stop and told me that I had a very "open" mind and he didn't find many people around that did. As I thanked him for the ride, I knew at that moment I'd have a story to tell my friends for many years to come. And now, 56 years later, I am still telling it.

I didn't stop thumbing rides, feeling I had learned how to "Walk The Line" as Johnny Cash would sing.

On my Honeymoon trip a few years later, our thumbs almost got me and my bride in some trouble, but that's another story.



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Pioneer Homes

by Marion Gibson, Huntsville



During the thirties we farmed and lived on the farm owned by my grandfather. Of the several homes on the farm one was referred to as "Great-grandmother's cottage". It was of Civil War vintage and had

several add-ons. The original structure was a one-room log cabin with a stone chimney and an open fireplace. The window openings had wooden shutters and no glass.

The interior had bare unpainted planks that later were covered with newspaper. The add-ons were a bedroom and a kitchen with a stove pipe through the roof.

An unusual feature of the home resulted from pioneer living. All farms had a flock of free ranging chickens that were not kept inside a fence, but inside a chicken house. They were shut up each night to protect them from predators and let out each day to forage for themselves. Their favorite food was seeds, insects, greenery and that favorite, table scraps.

This plentiful source from the kitchen led them to consistently hang around the house

where they made a nuisance of themselves. The basic problem were the chicken droppings left in and around Great-grandmother's yard.

What to do? Use that pioneer appliance, the brush broom, made from appropriate small bushes tied together to make a heavy broom for yard use. This could then be used to sweep the offending material away from house and yard.

In time this continuous sweeping prevented grass from growing in the yard and wind and weather produced the "Famous Doughnut Shaped Depression" around Pioneer Homes.

"Money will buy you a fine dog, but only kindness will make him wag his tail."
Cathy Self, Huntsville

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PET TIPS FROM ANGEL

Basic Rules for Cats who have a House to Run



TRAINING. Begin people-training early and you will have a smooth-running household. Humans need to know basic rules. They can be taught if you start early and are always consistent.

DOORS. Do not allow closed doors in any room. To get a door opened, stand on hind legs and hammer with forepaws. Once a door is open, it is not necessary to use it. After you have ordered an outside door opened, stand halfway in and halfway out and think about several things. This is particularly important during cold weather, rain, snow and mosquito season.

CHAIRS & RUGS. If you have a hairball and must throw up, get into an antique chair quickly. Or, if there is an old oriental rug, so much the better. Shag is especially good.

GUESTS. Quickly determine which guest hates cats the most. Sit on that human's lap. If you can arrange to have tuna or liver on your breath, so much the better.

For sitting on laps or rubbing against trousers, select a fabric color which contrasts well with your fur. For example: white-furred cats go next to black wool clothing (what else with basic black?).

For guests who gush, "Oh, how darling, I just love kitties," be ready with aloof disdain; apply claws to stockings or use a quick nip on the ankle. Always manage to escape if

one of the guests tries to grab you for a cuddle.

When walking among dishes on the dinner table, with guests present, be prepared to look surprised and hurt when scolded. The idea is to convey, "But you always allow me on the table when company isn't here."

WORK. If one of your humans is sewing or writing and another is idle, stay with the busy one. This is called helping, or otherwise known as hampering.

PLAY. It is very important. Get enough sleep in the daytime so you are fresh for playing catch mouse, or King-of-the-Hill on your human's bed between 2 am and 4 am.

RULES FOR HAMPERING

1. When supervising cooking, sit behind the left heel of the the cook. You cannot be seen and thereby stand a better chance of being stepped on, then picked up and consoled.

2. For book readers, get in close under the chin, between the human's eyes and the book, unless you can lie across the book itself.

3. For knitting projects, curl up quietly onto the lap of the knitter and pretend to nap. Occasionally reach out and slap the knitting needles sharply. This can cause dropped stitches or split yarn. The knitter may try to distract you with a scrap ball of yarn. Ignore it. Remember, the aim is to hamper work.

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*From the Desk of
Tom Carney*

When Fantasy Became Reality

by Tom Carney

"A man is on top of the Russel Erskine hotel and he's going to jump off the roof!"

Within minutes all the citizens of downtown had heard the news. Eagerly, almost morbidly, they rushed to the scene of the impending tragedy. The street in front of the hotel became a mass of swirling humanity as crowds jostled for a better look. The year was 1942.

"Someone said he works at the Huntsville Arsenal and he just got a letter from his wife saying that she was leaving him."

This news, by some unidentified source, was quickly consumed and spread to the four winds by the crowds who were now grasping at every morsel of new information.

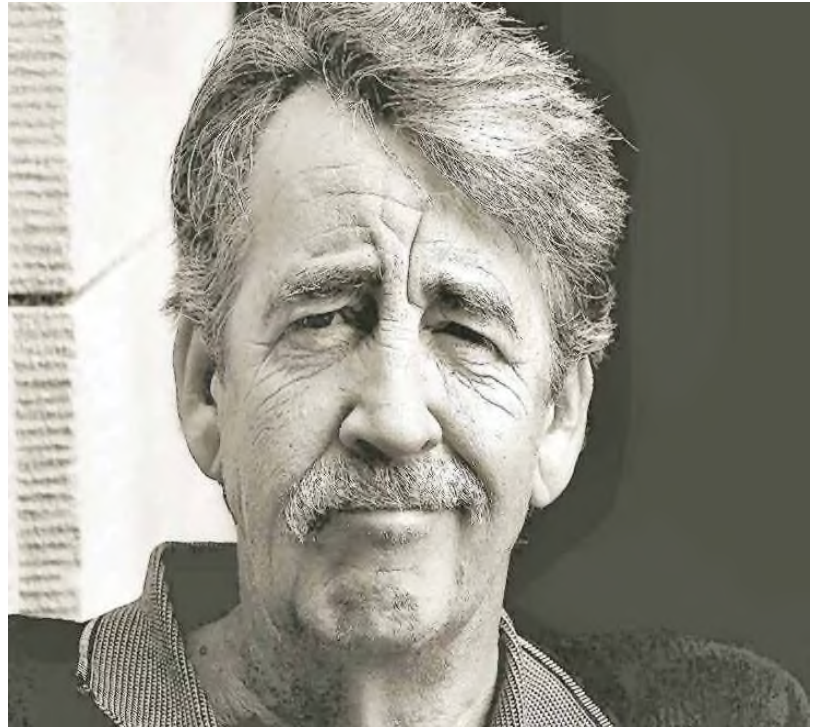
Suddenly the still night air was rent by the screeching sounds of police cars arriving on the scene. Emerging from their cars the policemen began pushing the crowds back with night sticks, trying to establish some sense of order.

"Be careful. He's got a gun!" yelled some voice from out of the darkness.

The crowd ran scurrying for cover as the policemen quickly ducked behind the safety of their automobiles.

"Nobody can be exactly like me. Sometimes even I have trouble doing it."

Tallalulah Bankhead



When a few minutes had passed with no shots being fired, the crowd, now emboldened by the latest developments, began surging forward. The crowd numbered in the hundreds and was growing larger by the minute.

While the police were frantically working to regain control, the sounds of a woman screaming emerged above the noise of the mob. The crowd had inadvertently pushed her into a store front window, breaking the glass, and now she was running hysterically down the street with blood streaming down her face and arms.

Before the police could reach her, another woman began screaming. This woman had



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been knocked down by the crowd jostling for a better look.

Sensing that something had to be done, and quickly, the brave men of the Huntsville Police Department drew their pistols and resolutely began making their way to the front entrance of the hotel where the unseen deranged man lay in wait.

There was no hesitation in the purposeful stride of our brave policemen on that cold day back in 1942. This was their town and this was their job. Someone had to take charge and they were the only ones to do it.

Cautiously, with their guns drawn, they took the elevator to the top floor. The men were silent, probably thinking of their loved ones and of the danger that lay ahead.

History does not record the name of the first brave soul to exit onto the roof, ready to do battle with the fiend lurking in the shadows.

History does not even record the name of the man, who after receiving the dear John letter, tried to commit suicide.

For, you see ... it never happened. Some person, who understandably later chose to remain silent, started the rumor and within minutes the whole town was caught up in a frenzied state of anticipation. Every rumor became fact and every fantasy became reality.

And the good people of Huntsville became the unwitting victims.

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Cultivating a Spirit of Thanksgiving

by Faith Sutherlin Blackhurst,
Mormon Insights



During a two-month internship in Brazil, I had difficulty developing feelings of gratitude for the very things that made my experience so amazing.

As I stood under the pathetic, lukewarm trickle of the shower, struggling to rid my hair of the last of the fruity shampoo suds, I was struck with something. Sure, it was cold. Sure, I missed Mexican food, pizza that always came with cheese on it (whether you asked for it or not), driving in traffic that didn't look like a mass evacuation of the city, and understanding people the first time they spoke. Of course I missed my friends and my family, movies without English subtitles, and being able to leave home without drawing out an extensive plan on a paper map.

But if I hadn't experienced all of that, I also wouldn't have experienced Brazil. I wouldn't have gone on cable cars to the peaks of mountains, eaten

dragon fruit and jaboticaba (a fruit that grows straight on the trunk of the tree!), had tiny marmosets walking alongside me, or spent hours in bumper-to-bumper traffic with my husband and I making the weirdest noises we could to keep ourselves entertained. I wouldn't have seen graffiti artists paint, eaten rice and beans every day, or been able to work with archival researchers at a Brazilian university, all while slowly but surely improving my Portuguese.

And my internship wasn't even over yet. There was still plenty of time to experience more of Brazil, make more memories. What possible reason did I have for feeling sorry for myself?

Unfortunately, the reason is this — human nature. As English author Aldous Huxley once wrote, "Most human beings have an almost infinite capacity for taking things for granted." I confess that I often see this reflected in my own behavior, and although I know that I am sabotaging my own happiness, it is difficult for me to change my perspective. If you can identify at all with me (and with the rest of the human population for that matter), you may need some extra help to develop an attitude of gratitude. So now can you

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"The power of accurate observation is commonly called cynicism by those who have not got it."

George Bernard Shaw

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give yourself a you-need-to-be-grateful kick in the pants, you ask?

Slow down and take a moment to cultivate a spirit of thanksgiving. It's that simple. As President Thomas S. Monson explains in his talk "The Divine Gift of Gratitude," "Regardless of our circumstances, each of us has much for which to be grateful if we will but pause and contemplate our blessings." Make a list of blessings, thank someone for their friendship or service, or look back on past difficulties that have been overcome. We all have something to be thankful for.

But President Monson points out that we can't stop there. "A grateful heart, then," he explains, "comes through expressing gratitude to our Heavenly Father for His blessings and to those

around us for all that they bring into our lives. This requires conscious effort—at least until we have truly learned and cultivated an attitude of gratitude."

We must continue this practice of expressing gratitude daily, even moment-by-moment, so that we become truly grateful people who look for blessings in times of trial, tender mercies in crisis, and angels amid crowds. Let us seek to cultivate this attitude of gratitude in our lives, that we may always see the light in the darkness.

Find the original article here:

<http://mormoninsights.byu.edu/cultivating-a-spirit-of-thanksgiving/>



Help your Liver!



Feel sluggish in the morning?

Try this. Upon arising, place your hands a little above your waist, just below the ribs.

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NEWS FROM 1911

City Council Meets Last night - from 1911 Newspaper

Several important items were discussed last night as a full membership was present.

- An ordinance to prevent the use of screen or colored glass in the fronts of soft drink stands was adopted. A violation of the ordinance carries with it not less than \$10 nor more than \$100.

- The matter of employing a milk and meat inspector was referred to a committee composed of Adams, Oldfield and Wall.

- Several bids were received for the rental of the city's south half of the unused part of Maple Hill Cemetery. The city's rental on same was placed at \$80.

- A number of protests were read from property owners against the assessment for paving on Madison Street. The protests were filed but the assessments were sustained.

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John Purdy
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Sarah Chappell

Homeless in a Cemetery

by Carolyn Jones, San Francisco

Sometimes hope is a subtle thing, or sometimes it nudges you insistently and demands a belly rub.

That's what happened with Roza Katovitch and a black-and-white cat named Miss Tuxedo. Both were homeless, forlorn souls who crossed paths in the unlikelyst of places - a gravesite in Colma - and somehow, saved each other.

"I'd come here, sometimes 6, 7 hours a day, and just sit. If you're quiet, you'd be amazed at the things you see. God's whole creation - skunks, raccoons, moles, birds ... and cats," Katovitch said this week as she sat at the simple, immaculately-tended grave of her fiancé at the Serbian Cemetery in Colma. "One of them was Miss Tuxedo. I think she's the reason I'm still here."

For Katovitch, 56, the story starts in 2000, when her boyfriend of 22 years, Rich, died of a heart aneurysm while the pair was curled up on their couch in San Mateo watching a movie. Her father died three days later. The shock and grief sent Katovitch into a tailspin of depression and health ailments that prevented her from returning to her job as a union electrician.

Then, about two years ago, she lost her apartment on Mariner's Island in San Mateo when the building was sold. With no family nearby, she ended up sleeping at a series of cheap motels on the Peninsula, her depression only deepening and hope slipping away.

She spent most days at Rich's gravesite at the Serbian Cemetery in Colma, tending to flowers she'd planted there, talking and singing to him, sometimes crying, but mostly just gazing at the sea of marble Orthodox crosses. Katovitch is a lifelong member of the Orthodox Church and Rich had converted not long after the two met in the late 1970s.

Like most cemeteries in Colma, the Serbian Cemetery has feral cats who hunt the gophers and other rodents. Katovitch knew most of them by sight and, without giving them much thought, had named a few: Doobie, Piggy, Bonnie Baby, Miss Tuxedo.

"I don't know why but Miss Tuxedo started following me around," Katovitch said. "She wouldn't let me touch her for the

longest time. Slowly I'd get her tail. Then I got her head. One day she let me scratch her ears, and that was it. From that moment on, she wouldn't leave me alone."

"I'd be fixing a vase for Rich and she'd be pushing her head under my hands," she said. "It was like she was saying, 'No, no, love me!'" Suddenly I had a purpose. I don't know why, but this cat loved me."

Seeing Miss Tuxedo every day relieved some of Katovitch's isolation and took her mind off her grief. When Miss Tuxedo needed a cancerous spot on her nose removed, Katovitch took her to the vet - with the bill paid by a friend the pair had made at the cemetery.

Victoria Lewis of San Francisco, who works for a film production company, was at the Serbian Cemetery one day scouting for filming locations when she noticed the tall, sandy-haired woman who sat for hours in the otherwise deserted graveyard.

"I thought, 'Who is this woman with the cat? It was like something out of 'Harold and Maude,'" Lewis said. "I got to know them, and I'll be honest, I'd never seen such love between a person and an animal. Roza just has such a big heart."

Caring for Miss Tuxedo helped jolt Katovitch from her depression, enough to apply for affordable housing. Last year she won a unit at a complex in San Mateo, and she moved in December.

Her roommate? Miss Tuxedo. "I got permission to bring her," Katovitch said. "My doctor said my life depended on it. I guess it does."


Katovitch, soft spoken with a shy smile, still has bad days. She worries about the other cats at the cemetery, and still weeps when she thinks about Rich, a cable technician whom she described as the most guileless, forgiving person she's known.

Lewis visits Katovitch and Miss Tuxedo often, and is heartened at how content and healthy they both seem after so many years of struggle.

"These two homeless creatures found comfort in each other," she said. "It really gives you hope."

"I almost had a psychic girlfriend, but she left me before we met."

Billy Brown, Athens



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Why We Do What We Do

by Jerry Lankford and John E. Carson



Stepping up to the microphone at a recent fundraiser for Pets for Vets, Honor Guard Commander Jerry Lankford wanted to share a story with the audience that had gathered in the pavilion of Southside Park in South Huntsville.

Following entertainment provided by Patsy Trigg (of the song "Grandma Got Run Over by a Reindeer") and singer/entertainer Marilyn Green, the Honor Guard of American Legion Post 237 in Huntsville, Alabama had fired a 21-gun salute to the fallen victims of PTSD/TBI veteran suicide, an average of 22 veterans a day, a figure that has become to all too familiar.

Clearing his throat, Commander Lankford began his story...

"We had just returned to the Post after a long drive to a remote cemetery on a cold and rainy winter day. I sat at the end of the bar and ordered a coffee to warm me up, shak-

ing off the chill and running my hand through wet hair."

"Nasty weather today," one of the patrons at the bar said, "I really respect what you guys do."

Before I could thank him for the comment, the man sitting next to him spoke up; "Well, I think you guys are a bunch of fools," he said.

"And why is that," I asked, holding back my anger at his comment.

"You drive miles to get here, miles to get there, stand in the rain and snow or bake in the sun and get no compensation for your time and trouble; a bunch of fools I think," the heckler repeated.

"Mister," I said, "I'll tell you why we do what we do; Not long ago we were out on a rainy day to lay a veteran to rest, the sky had cleared just in time for the service and the gun salute. We folded the flag and presented to the man's widow, a young woman with a little six-year-old girl sitting next to her. After collecting three of the spent shells, I presented those to the lady who sat with tear-filled eyes; one for

Honor, one for Duty, one for Country."

"Our work done, we formed up and marched half-time to the van to stow our weapons and head back to the Post. While we were still gathered at the back of the van, the young girl approached us, her mother standing back away. The girl gestured to us, one by one, to bend down so she could whisper something to us. Right there I had all the reward I'll ever need and it is something money can't buy."

"Choking up a little at the memory, I stopped to clear my throat. The heckler gave me a snide look and asked what the little girl could have said that would be worth so much. I told him."

"She said, 'Thank you for burying my daddy.'"


"Well, avoiding my eyes that man got up and left without a word and we have never seen him since."

"The other man at the bar wiped tears from his own eyes and thanked me again."

"And that is why we do what we do."

"Life is not a fairy tale. If you lose your shoe at midnight, you've probably had too much to drink."

Fran Black, Arab



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Silent Night

by Jennifer Jonas



Annelie was a little late coming to my music therapy group because she had been getting her hair done at the salon downstairs in the nursing home. When she arrived, the caregiver wheeled her into the room and set her in the back, a little outside the circle. I finished the song I had been singing and wondered to myself if I should go over to Annelie. Her eyes were closed and her head was down. She looked tired and I didn't know if she would even respond to the music, but I decided to give it a try.

I walked over to her wheelchair, knelt down so that my gaze was eye level with hers and began singing. Annelie was born in Germany, so I have found that singing her favorite German songs made the strongest, most positive impact on her. Today I chose to sing "Stille Nacht," (Silent Night) even though it was January.

As I sang "Stille Nacht, heilige Nacht, alles schlaft, einsam wacht" Annelie raised her head and then she opened her eyes and looked at me. The familiar tune reached her ears and produced a smile. With the little amount of energy Annelie had, she sang along with me for the rest of the song. I felt a warmth creep into my heart from the look on Annelie's face. Her eyes said "Thank you! Thank you for leaving the circle and coming over to me to sing a song I love."

Two days later I got a call from the activity director at the nursing home. She called to say Annelie passed away. She also told me that she informed Annelie's children about how I had sung to her in German and how Annelie smiled and sang along. I'm sure it touched their hearts to know that their mother experienced moments of happiness before she died.

After I said goodbye to the activity director, I came to a realization. I must never question myself or wonder "should I bother to try?" If I had not taken the opportunity to sing to Annelie during that last music circle, then I would not have been given another one.

Let us not miss the opportunities that we are given; opportunities to brighten up someone else's life, be it through singing a favorite song or through simply holding a hand or offering a heartfelt smile.

*Jennifer Jonas is a Music Therapist Accredited who sings for residents in retirement homes, and works with children also. She wrote this story about my Mom, Annelie Owens, who passed away on Jan. 11, 2017 at age 96.
Cathey Carney*

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Dale Wittschen - a Miracle Man

by John E. Carson

As most news stories with a positive note seem to do, the thirty second spot on a former New Hope, Alabama resident and patron of the Huntsville-Madison Senior Center's Wood Shop and Creative Writing Class left out most of the good parts of Dale Wittschen's story.

Aired on Thursday, December 22nd of 2016 at 9 pm, the news story centered on Dale's book, "A Wish for Christmas", published just weeks before; the title ironically reflecting Dale's last wish before passing away this past summer. That December 22nd Creative Writing Class had been dedicated to Dale for his help and encouragement during the early days of my teaching there and was titled, "We Need A little Christmas".

Though often in great pain and in spite of his difficulty walking, Dale never let his physical problems keep him from smiling, giving and encouraging the instructor or the

students.

During an interview the day after her first Christmas in 24 years without him, an emotional Claire Wittschen filled in a lot of the blanks left by the brief segment of the program on WZDX News in Huntsville, Alabama.

Presented with several copies of the book she helped write, Claire talked with me about her husband, describing him as a "Miracle Man" who never gave up despite heart trouble, two hip replacements and two other major surgeries; any of which could have killed him due to a blood disorder known as Thrombocytopenia - an extremely low platelet count that kept his blood from clotting.

After walking to the ambulance that transported him to his last operation, Dale passed away during surgery due to a brain hemorrhage. Until that moment he had always beaten the odds against him.

Turning to more cheerful topics, I asked about Dale's younger days and Claire brightened as she answered my questions.

Active in several clubs during his High School days, especially Government, Dale was a physically fit young man when he attended Clemson University, working on his Engineering degree and participating in the ROTC. This led him to enlist in the Army - serving eight full years and obtaining an E6 status as a Staff Sergeant before being medically and Honorably discharged with a heart condition brought on by complications from a bout with strep throat.

Dale went on to earn a Master's Degree in Engineering from UAH and worked and



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taught at Redstone Arsenal, participating in the Star Wars and Space Shuttle programs. He also worked for Boeing. In addition, he tutored math for elementary students at New Hope and Owens Crossroads Elementary schools, Holy Family Church in Huntsville, Holy Spirit Church and Owens Crossroads Middle School.

Always ready to lend a hand, Dale was the first to respond when anyone needed help. For at least five years he worked in the wood shop of the Senior Center, making toys for children and charities and other gifts he crafted by hand. His choice of woodworking sent his doctor into shock as working with saws and sharp objects was exactly the wrong thing for someone with his condition. But that was Dale.

Describing him in his younger days, Claire talked about his playing baseball with the neighborhood kids. A natural athlete, Dale would often call his hits, pointing like the great Babe Ruth, with the

certainty that was where the ball would go. And it always did.

Dale and Claire met at a Singles Group meeting at the Holy Spirit Catholic Church. Though Claire noticed him, she was not yet ready to become involved in another relationship after becoming single with three children of her own. Dale had two sons from a previous marriage himself.

Watching as Claire hugged her friends in greeting, Dale approached her and said, "Can I get one of those?" To which Claire replied, "I don't know you well enough." But Dale, though always respectful, was persistent and after being turned down several times when he asked Claire for a date, he called her one day to announce that it was his turn to hold the rotating meeting of the group and gave her the time and location. When she arrived, Claire asked why she was the only person there. Dale responded that he thought the two of them

should have dinner and talk. And as Claire attested, his plan had worked; he had gotten his date and they stayed together until his passing.

Highly intelligent, compassionate and persistent, Dale Wittschen was a big man with a big heart and is greatly missed by all who knew him. A Veteran and everyday hero, he was a dad, a husband, a friend to those in need and a great loss for the whole community.

But back to the news; it is not that they did not report on a highlight of Dale's life that night - it's just that they did not have time to put in all the good parts of the story- but as Dale consistently told Claire through all their trials and tribulations, "It will be alright."

You can find Dale's Book "A Wish for Christmas" on Amazon.com along with the anthology dedicated to him; "Senior Moments".

Both are released by CBA Publishing.

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Decisions in Life

by Hugh Michaels

After graduating from Jackson County High School in Scottsboro, AL and completing four years in the United States Air Force, it was time for a decision to be made on what to do for the rest of my life. Decision Time!!

I decided to take advantage of Uncle Sam's offer, G.I. Bill. This was a great decision. I finished college from Jacksonville State Teacher's College in three years. Decision Time again!!

What shall I do? After being encouraged by my brother-in-law, "Red" Fossett, who taught school for 33 years, I decided to give school teaching a try. Wrong decision!

Two years and six weeks later I realized that school teaching was not for me.

School teachers need help when they first begin to teach. My brother-in-law provided me with all of the help I needed. He was my tutor and my best friend. I tried my very best to teach those kids things that were meaningful. I wanted to be someone whom these kids could remember as one who cared for them. The good Lord was looking over me. I realized that I did not want to teach for the rest of my life. It was not my "cup of tea".

It was time for another decision to be made. I decided to try Civil Service. Great decision!

I worked for the Army Missile Command at Redstone Arsenal during the period from 1957-1989. My job was negotiating contracts with private industry and MICOM. My job title was Contracting Officer. It was a very stressful job but it offered me an opportunity to

provide my family with good living conditions. I was very successful as an employee of MICOM. I am very proud of the decision I made to work for my country. The experience of teaching school helped me in later years.

Some of the things that happened to me while teaching school could make a good book. The students were great. They taught me more than I taught them.

I will never forget one student who almost drove me "batty". He was constantly disrupting class. I tried every possible solution to solve my problem. I finally decided to try something different. I decided to talk to him after classes were dismissed. We stayed after class and I suggested that he bring his Dad to the next P.T.A. meeting.

He did bring his Dad to the meeting. I attempted to explain to him some of the things his son was doing or not doing. I told

the Dad that we were studying about the Declaration of Independence - we were studying who signed the document. I told the parent that his son had failed to tell me who signed the Declaration. The Dad became furious and grabbed his son by the neck and said, "Hey - did you sign it? If you signed it - please tell the teacher, we have got to get along with these people!"

On another occasion I pleaded with the student and requested that he just sit in his desk, no more interrupting the class and prove to me that he was capable of behaving. He was waiting till he reached the age of 16 and he would drop out (he did drop out).

The student did make a change for the good. He sat at his desk and acted as if he was finally going to be a decent pupil. I wrote on the blackboard the first test of the six weeks. One of the questions was, trace the imaginary trip we made to



Clover

Hello, the Ark named me Clover. The doggie doctor said I was a Beagle mix born in May 2015. A kind young man found me on a busy highway. I was really scared and did not know where I was going to find food, water or shelter. Thankfully, he brought me to the Ark. Guess what? They

have great food, lots of love, provide you with your own bed, healthy treats, and take you on long walks. I am very thankful to the Ark but I did not enjoy the trip to the doggie doctor. My short coat has three colors, white, black and brown. I am a very sweet little girl and have a good figure at 31 lbs. I wish for a loving family that will keep me safe for my lifetime. When you come to the Ark, ask to see Clover. That's me.

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South America. The student wrote and wrote; he remained after class and kept writing. I could hardly wait till I got home to grade his paper. I thought that I had performed a miracle. This is what he wrote. "I did not know the class went to South America. It must have been a day when I wasn't in school. I have always wanted to go. The next time you go please let me know."

This young man was not a bad kid - he was just full of mischief.

I learned lots about how to overcome pupil problems. Good students make good teachers - good teachers make good students.

The penalty for bad behavior was either standing in the corner or paddling. This student tried all of them. The paddle I used had inscribed on it - "Board of Education".

One of the problems I had while teaching was my composure. I would get "tickled" at something a student would do or say. On one occasion a student almost knocked a world globe off my desk. When I asked him why he did it, he replied, "A fly lit on Egypt and knocked it off."

Teaching school could be rewarding. In 2015 a group of my former students invited me to a class reunion. I went to the "get together" and was very proud that I did go. Many of the students told me how they cared for me. They told me how I had made a good impression on them. Several had named their children after me. All this made me feel good.

I truly tried very hard to make a good teacher. I realized how important school teachers could be to a person who is trying to be a success in life. Thank God for good teachers.

Every person has decisions to make during their lifetime, some good - some bad.

I made a decision and that was not to teach school for the rest of my life. It was not something that fit my personality.

The good Lord knew better. Decisions - decisions.

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