



No. 295

September 2017



# Old Huntsville

HISTORY AND STORIES OF THE TENNESSEE VALLEY

## The Perfect Crime



As they passed the narrow, dark alley next to the Martin Theater on Washington Street, Lucy slowed the car to a crawl while the men jumped out. It took only seconds to jimmy the back door and make their way to the jewelry store's front showroom where the safe was.

As Boyer began examining the safe, Renfro started scooping up rings, watches, necklaces and anything else that was in the showcases.

That's when the alarm went off.

*Also in this issue:* **A Small Southern Town**

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*Domie Lewter*  
*Mac Lewter*



# The Perfect Crime

by Tom Carney

"We're going to rob both places in the same night. We'll take J.C. Penney's first and Lorch's Jewelry store next. I think we can do both in a couple of hours and walk away with maybe \$60 or \$70 thousand."

Cotton Renfro listened incredulously as the older dark-haired man described his plan to burglarize the stores. Renfro had been discharged from the Army several months earlier, in the spring of 1966, and had moved to Huntsville in hopes of finding a job. Almost immediately he had met Lucy Buckner, a tall, striking brunette who was several years older than him.

After a brief but furious courtship they moved into a rooming house together on Walker Avenue. Renfro had broached the subject of marriage several times but was rebuffed by Lucy with the comment, "Wait until you get a job

and make some real money."

Renfro's job was a bitter subject. Despite weeks of fruitless searching he had been forced to take a job with a janitorial service, cleaning offices at night. After paying rent and buying food and gas, there was little left for entertainment or the luxuries that Lucy craved.

One of the few friends they had was D.J. Boyer, an older man who had drifted to Huntsville at about the same time they had arrived. He also lived at the rooming house and had helped Renfro get a job with the janitorial service where he too worked.

Despite the age difference, the young couple and Boyer quickly became fast friends. Oftentimes when the two men got off from work at two in the morning, the trio would sit up until dawn drinking beer and telling stories.

One night Boyer mentioned having spent time in the penitentiary. Lucy was fascinated, wanting to hear all about it and know exactly what he had done. Reluctant at first, Boyer described how he had been caught "cracking a safe." A night watchman had seen him and set off the alarm. When he ran out, the police were waiting for him.

The beer seemed to lubricate Boyer's memory, and with little coaxing, he talked about other jobs in which he had stolen thousands of dollars. One job, he recalled, netted him almost

**"I've had bad luck with both my wives. The first one left me and the second one didn't."**

**Jim Davison, Athens**



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\$20,000. He had gone to Mexico and lived the high life until the money ran out and he was forced to go "back to work".

He got caught on the next job when an accomplice attracted the police's attention by acting suspiciously. Lucy was fascinated, asking dozens of questions and wanting to know every detail. The obvious question was why Boyer was working as a janitor and when was he going to do another "job."

Boyer explained there was lot more to it than just cracking a safe. "You need people to work with you can trust and you need to pick the right place and have a plan for anything that might go wrong."

Over the next several weeks Lucy continued questioning Boyer. It was obvious to both men that she was enthralled by the idea of sudden wealth. Finally, late one night when the three were having a beer, she proposed what had been in the back of everyone's mind. "Let's do it! Let's make one big score and kiss this hick town goodbye."

Renfro had played with the

idea, but he also felt anxious about what would happen if they were caught. He began making excuses and when Lucy kept badgering him, he finally said no - refusing to have any part of it.

Several more weeks passed and Renfro began to believe that Lucy had forgotten about the idea. One evening when it was time to go to work, he went to Boyer's room to see if he wanted a ride. Boyer begged off, saying he was not feeling well and was going to take the night off. Renfro thought nothing of it and went on to work.

That night when Renfro returned home, Lucy and Boyer were waiting for him. One look at Lucy's face told the story. They had been out casing places to rob. When Renfro started to protest, Lucy cut him off saying, "Just listen to the plan first."

Boyer had been watching two places, J.C. Penney's and Lorch's Jewelry Store, for months. Penney's, he explained, had an armored truck hired to pick the money up every day except for Saturdays

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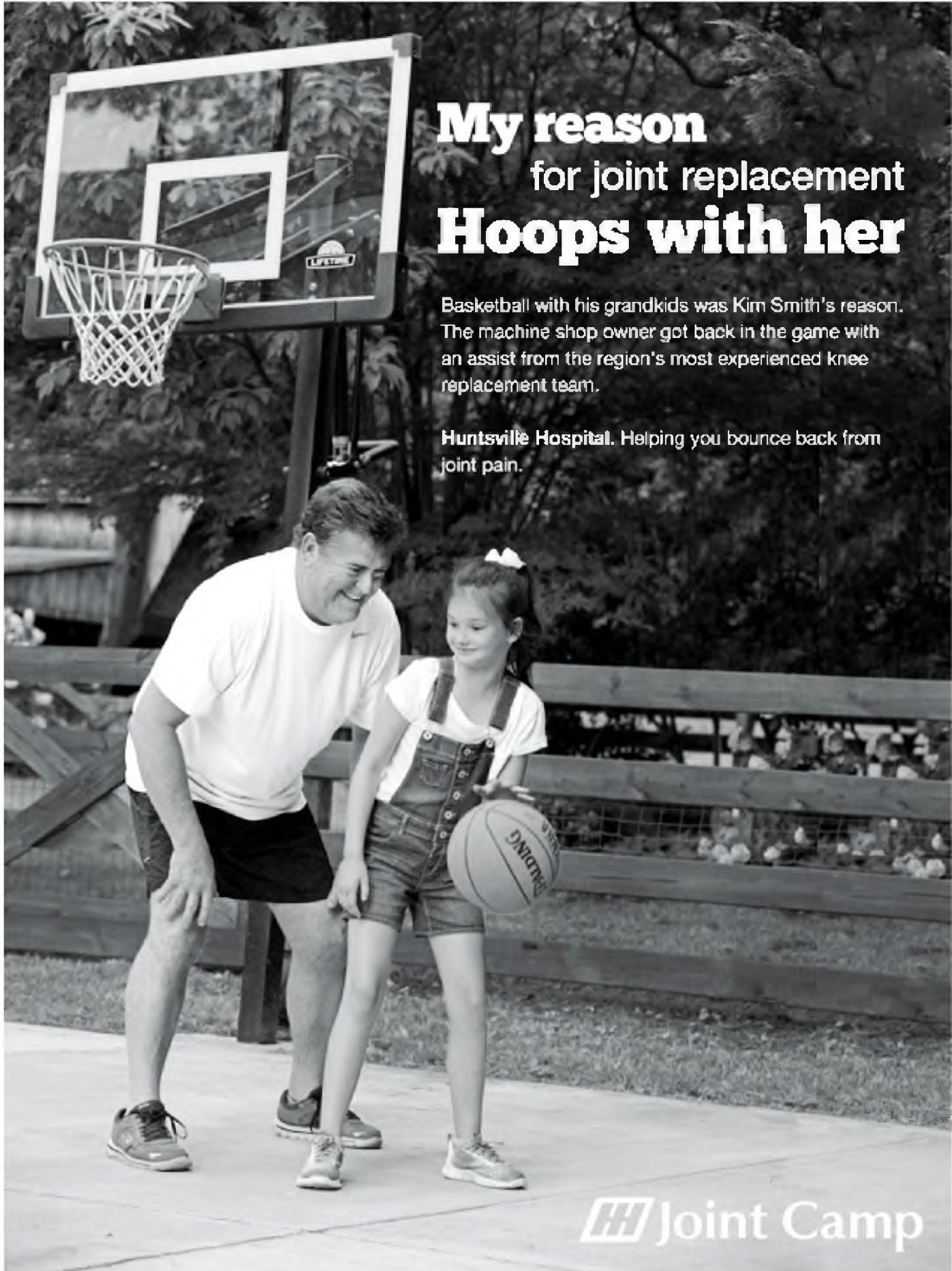
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and Sundays. That meant that the receipts for Friday night, Saturday and Sunday stayed in the store safe until the following Monday, when all three days' receipts would be picked up.

His idea was to rob the place about ten o'clock on a Sunday night and then, if everything went well, go downtown and do Lorch's the same night. He explained that with the new courthouse construction going on, most downtown businesses were hurting. Lorch's, however, had increased their stock drastically and were running sales every week. They were doing a record business.

He guessed the police would never expect to be hit with two crimes like that on the same night. If they waited before robbing Lorch's, however, the heat from the law might make it impossible.

As Renfro tried to make excuses, pointing out things that could go wrong, Boyer and Lucy seemed to have an answer for everything; it was apparent they had been planning the double theft for some time. Finally, having run out of excuses, Renfro just said no, he was not interested.

Lucy had assumed he would say that. Looking at Renfro sternly she told him that she was in whether he was part of it or not, and he had better make up his mind. Letting his heart override his reason, Renfro reluctantly agreed to join the duo in what they hoped would be Huntsville's next unsolved crime wave.

Popping another beer, Boyer began to explain the plan in de-

tail. Robbing the places would not be that hard; getting away with it would be the challenge. The police would be everywhere questioning people and looking for clues. They would be looking for several men, probably from out of town. They would also be questioning people about strangers and cars that might have looked odd or out of place.

Laying several sheets of paper on the table, Boyer picked up the stub of a pencil and began to describe what he had in mind. By the time the sun began peeking over Monte Sano the next morning, the plans had been laid, with all three very knowledgeable about each of their jobs.

The next day Lucy was dispatched to rent a "safe house" on 6th. Avenue, under a fictitious name. She told the land-

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lord that her husband was in the Army and due back from Europe in 6 months, which explained why she lived by herself without having to work. Next she went to Winn Dixie, where she stocked up on several weeks of food and supplies.

That same evening Renfro went to work, and after sprinkling whiskey liberally over his clothes, pretended to be drunk and picked an argument with his supervisor. The supervisor, after smelling the whiskey, fired Renfro on the spot, telling him to pick up his check the following morning. Boyer had explained that if Renfro left his job without getting his last check, the police would be suspicious. He had also guessed that by getting fired, Renfro would not have to wait for it. This turned out to be true.

The next day Renfro told the landlady at the rooming house that he and Lucy were moving back to Memphis where her family still lived. After packing their belongings into the car, Lucy dropped Renfro off at the park and went on to the safe house they had rented. That evening, after darkness had

settled in, Renfro slipped into the back door.

The following week Boyer quit his job as well, asking that his check be mailed to Birmingham in care of general delivery. That night he, too, moved into the safe house. From all outward appearances, both Renfro and Boyer had simply disappeared from Huntsville. They were betting the police would never look for someone who was not in Huntsville at the time of the burglaries.

The next three weeks were full of boredom, with both men confined to the house except for brief forays late at night to check out traffic patterns around Penney's and Lorch's. The only amusement was provided by the landlord, who was very obviously attracted to his new lady tenant. A knock on the door would send both men scurrying to hide in the

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bedroom, leaving Lucy to fight off the landlord's amorous advances.

Besides dealing with the landlord, Lucy had other tasks just as important. She purchased a blonde wig at a thrift shop and had two bowling shirts made, emblazoned with the logo "Decatur Bowling League." After scouring the "For Sale" ads in the newspaper she purchased another car from an individual using another fictitious name and dressed in the blonde wig.

Finally, after weeks of preparation and waiting, the day arrived. That afternoon, adorned in the blonde wig and carrying two suitcases, Lucy rented a room at the Russel Erskine Hotel. The hotel was located only a few blocks from Lorch's Jewelry store and part of Boyer's plan was to get off the street and in a safe place as soon as possible after the heist. He figured a young woman's room in Huntsville's finest hotel was about as safe a place as you could get.

Next, they parked one of the cars in front of the Pin Palace Bowling Alley, a short distance from J.C. Penney's, where they planned to switch cars just in case someone spotted them.

That evening, just minutes

before closing time, Lucy entered the store and went directly to the sporting goods department. Renfro and Boyer followed a short distance behind her.

The store was already practically empty of customers, with all the lights being turned off, and the sales clerks rushing to get finished up so they could go home. When Lucy asked a clerk in the sporting goods department about a shotgun for her husband's birthday, his frustration at having to deal with a last-minute customer was very obvious.

"Please," she begged, "it won't take just a minute and I don't know which one to buy." As if to emphasize her helplessness, she dropped her purse on the floor, exposing ample cleavage in her attempt to retrieve it.

The clerk, trained to believe a customer is always right, reluctantly escorted her to the gun cabinets.

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tion was diverted, Renfro and Boyer dropped to their knees and scampered into a tent that had been set up as part of a camping display. After closing the flaps, they silently waited for the store to finish closing. A few minutes later they heard Lucy's voice thanking the sales clerk and promising to come back the next day. Minutes later the store grew quiet and the lights dimmed completely.

Exactly an hour and a half later the men emerged from the tent, and after satisfying themselves that they were alone in the store, sprang into action. Renfro grabbed two shopping carts and rushed to the kitchen department where he helped himself to two pairs of rubber gloves before continuing to the bedding section where he loaded the carts up with as many goose down comforters as they would hold. Passing by the sporting goods department, he picked out two bowling ball

bags.

He then joined Boyer in the tool department where they, after pulling on the gloves, began helping themselves to extension cords, drills, drill bits, crowbars and flashlights. Both men burst out laughing when they noticed a display that read "J.C. Penney's has Every Tool for Every Job!"

Minutes later the men were in the office where the safe was located. While Boyer assembled the drill, Renfro began covering the safe in layers of comforters to deaden the sound, leaving only a small tent-like cavity underneath for Boyer to work in.

Seconds seemed like hours and minutes seemed like days as Boyer patiently worked on the safe. At one point they had to stop while Renfro went after fresh drill bits. Then the flashlight began flickering off, causing another delay until they could get another one.

Suddenly the safe was open, revealing tall stacks of currency along with piles of checks, all stacked in neat rows. Ignoring the checks, the men hurriedly crammed the currency into the bowling ball bags. Just as they were finishing, they heard noises coming from the ceiling. Turning the flashlights off, they cautiously made their way to where the sounds were coming from.

Seconds later, they saw a ceiling tile lifted and disappear into the darkness. Almost immediately a head appeared out of the ceiling with a voice telling someone to "bring the rope."

Someone else was trying to rob the same store!

Ignoring the would-be robbers, Renfro and Boyer rushed to the main door. They had placed an electric drill there earlier and it only took a minute to drill through the lock and open the door. Aiming the

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flashlight at the bowling alley, they flashed it for a brief second. Minutes later Lucy pulled up in the car.

While the men changed into the bowling shirts, Lucy drove to the nearby bowling alley where they ditched the car on the far edge of the parking lot. Boyer knew that the first few minutes were the most critical. If there was a silent alarm, or if someone had spotted the car, the police would be there in mere minutes. He also knew there was a bowling convention going on that night and by dressing as bowlers no one would pay any attention to them.

Five minutes passed, then ten, then fifteen. At the end of twenty minutes they got into the other car they had parked there earlier and with Lucy driving, headed downtown to the courthouse square where Lorch's was located.

As they passed the narrow alley next to the Martin Theater on Washington Street, Lucy slowed the car to a crawl while the men jumped out. It took only seconds to jimmy the back door and make their way to the front showroom where the safe was. As Boyer began examining the safe, Renfro started scooping up rings, watches, necklaces and anything else that was in the showcases.

Suddenly both men froze. An alarm was sounding somewhere! Grabbing the bowling bag containing the jewelry the men rushed out the same way they had entered. The original plan had been for Lucy to wait down the street, about where G.W. Jones Co. was located, and when she saw the signal,

pick the men up.

Boyer flashed the light once and after not seeing any headlights, the men crossed the street on the courthouse side and began walking towards where Lucy was supposed to be.

Just as they got to the plywood barricades that had been erected during the courthouse construction, Lucy pulled up. Unfortunately, at the same time a patrol car, with its lights off, began inching down the street toward them.

Thinking fast, Renfro grabbed the bowling ball bags, stuffed with cash and jewelry, and tossed them over the barricade on the courthouse side. With no loot, the police would have no reason to bother them.

Almost comically, the police car slowly continued toward



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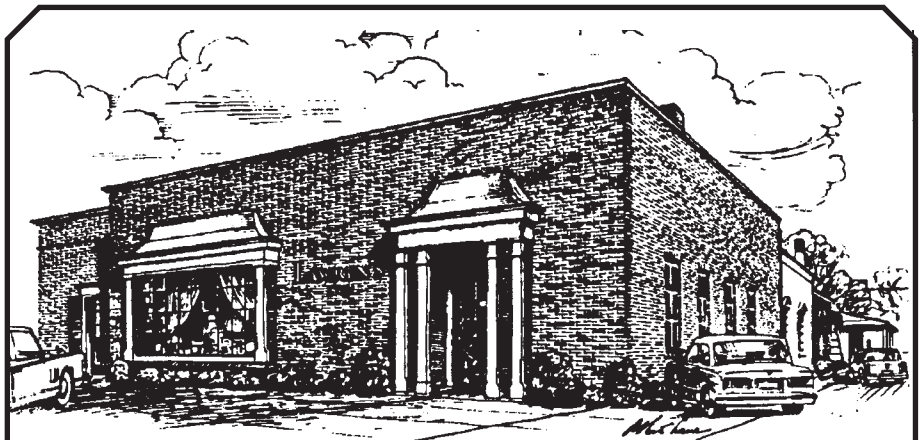
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**Neil Keith**



them before finally turning its headlights on. The officer, after giving the "bowlers" a once over, tipped his hat and sped off.

A quick conference decided it was too dangerous and might attract attention to try to retrieve the bags in the darkness, so they decided to go ahead with the original plan and return in the morning at first light. Lucy drove the short distance to the Russel Erskine and checked into the room she had reserved. About twenty minutes later the men slipped into her room.

All three were ecstatic about having pulled off the perfect crime. Lucy called room service and cajoled a bellboy into fetching a bottle of Chivas Regal to celebrate with. Each one had his and her private dreams that were about to be realized. Lucy wanted to live in New York and Boyer was already dreaming of a life in Mexico again.

For Renfro, it was a bittersweet moment. He had only agreed to be a part of the plan in the hopes of keeping Lucy, but he was beginning to realize she would never belong to just one man.

Early the next morning at the first break of dawn the bleary-eyed and hung-over burglars left the hotel to go retrieve their loot. As soon as they turned the corner onto Jefferson Street, they came to an abrupt stop.

The whole courthouse square was a furious beehive of activity. The wooden barricades had been torn down, revealing deep holes in the ground, with concrete trucks lined up and down the block waiting in turn to pour their loads of concrete into the courthouse footings.

The bowling bags, containing approximately \$40,000 in cash and jewels, were now buried under tons of fresh concrete on the northwest side of the square..

All three of the hapless burglars left Huntsville shortly afterwards. Boyer was arrested in Kentucky in the 1970s for auto theft and spent more time in the

penitentiary. While there he told several other prisoners of his failed burglary in Huntsville. They in turn told a news reporter. After a brief spate of publicity the story was again forgotten. He is supposed to have died in Tucson, Arizona sometime in the 1990s.

Lucy and Renfro left Huntsville and moved to Birmingham where he found a job with a construction crew. He arrived home from work one day and discov-

ered Lucy had moved out, taking all her belongings. She was never heard from again.

Cotton Renfro lives somewhere in Florida where he recently retired after thirty-two years in the swimming pool business. He claims not to think about the botched burglary job very often, although he does admit to a certain distaste for the new Huntsville courthouse.



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- If you bump into an Old Geezer on the sidewalk he will usually be the one to apologize.

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- Old Geezers are respectful of police.

- Old Geezers hold the door for the next person and always, when walking, make certain the lady is on the inside for protection.

- Old Geezers get embarrassed if someone curses in front of women and children and they don't like any filth on TV or in movies or in emails.

- They seldom brag unless it's about their grandchildren.

- It's the Old Geezers who know our great country is protected, not by politicians, but by the young men and women in the military serving their country.

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## A TRIBUTE TO MY DADDY

by Harry Sprague Dill, Jr.

My Daddy, Harry Sprague Dill, Sr. was born on August 17, 1899 in the state of Tennessee. He lived most of his life in Huntsville, Alabama and died there on May 8, 1955. He was a hard worker and loved his family who consisted of his wife Edna M. Dreger and his four children, Harry Sprague Dill, Jr., Emily Jean Dill, Alice Dill and Brice Dill.

Arthur Dill and Mabel Dill were Daddy's mother and father. They had three sons; Charles, Harry (my daddy) and James, and a daughter Elizabeth who was the youngest. They were all living in Chattanooga, Tennessee. According to my youngest sister, Alice, their house burned up with all of their possessions in it so they all moved back to Huntsville into the big old two story house with Daddy's Aunt Carrie Figures. She was Isaiah Dill's daughter.

The house was big and I remember although I was very young that there was no plumbing or electricity in it; they used kerosene lamps.

There was a well on the back porch for water. There were small fireplaces that had grates for coal. The house was dark

**"Best way to get rid of those bad kitchen odors - always eat out."**

**Phyllis Diller**

and the outside wood was weathered. Daddy had some cages in the back yard where he kept white mice. He loved all sorts of animals.

Daddy was still living in his Aunt Carrie Figures old wooden frame unpainted house on the corner of Lincoln and Clinton Streets. He used to sit on the fence by the Jewish Synagogue on the Clinton Avenue side and when my mother walked by on her way to town he would talk with her. That is how they came to know each other. They started dating and eventually got married. They married in Ardmore, Tennessee and then moved to Atlanta, Georgia where I was born. Then we moved to Birmingham and lived there a while and finally came back to Huntsville, and that is where we lived for a short time in Aunt Carrie's house.

We moved to Beirne Avenue NE and my oldest sister, Jean was born there. I was too young to remember anything about Beirne Avenue though. Then we moved to Sheffield, Madison and Decatur. We always had to move where Daddy's work was. He was a plasterer and a cement finisher. Before he got married he was a soldier at the time of WWI. He was stationed at Fort Monroe, Virginia.

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My youngest sister Alice told me some things Daddy told her that I didn't know. Here is what she wrote me:

"Dear Harry Jr.,

I guess you know that Daddy helped build the dams for TVA. I think the last one he worked on was at Oak Ridge near Tullahoma, Tenn. Also he told me only a little about when he was in the Army during WWI, when he was stationed in Norfolk, Virginia. He told me about catching oysters and eating them raw on the beach. He also told me about them learning to fire a cannon when it backfired and killed the soldiers who were in the back. Luckily he was at the side and did not get hurt. He said that they were about to be sent overseas when the war was over."

I knew about Daddy working on the TVA Dams and that he was in the Army during WWI, but I didn't know about the cannon backfiring or him eating oysters raw.

Well Mrs. Figures died and Daddy inherited a little mon-

ey. It was enough to make the down payment on the rock house that was on Toll Gate Road on Cedar Mountain. It had 13 acres of land with it. Daddy paid a small monthly payment on it for many years. The man who he paid the payments to wrote him a receipt each month on a small scrap of paper.

When Daddy finally got it paid in full and asked the man for a deed the man told him it wasn't paid for.

Daddy went back home and got a cigar box where he had put all those scraps of paper receipts the man had given him over the years and showed them to the man, so he got the deed to the house and land finally.

He bought some milk goats and I helped him fence in most of the 13 acres. It was all grown up with underbrush and in time the goats cleared it out really well for they ate the leaves and bark and killed the young trees.

The Great Depression was in full swing but Daddy had big

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plans for those 13 acres on little Cedar Mountain.

We lived in the rock house for several years making the best of things we had around us. Daddy got chickens and we had eggs to eat. He bought some milk goats and we had milk and meat to eat. He got small jobs plastering houses that needed patching up. We picked blackberries and wild plums and ate hickory nuts.

When Daddy was able, he got an abstract of the house and the 13 acres of land, he had the 13 acres surveyed and had a subdivision made, making lots of different sizes and two roads in the subdivision; one was Dill Avenue and one Dreger Avenue. He had a plat made of everything. The rock house had two large lots. All the other lots he planned to sell. I helped cut the trees out of Dill Avenue but we left Dreger Avenue alone which was nearest to the rock house for the time being.

Daddy sold a few of his lots for a lot price and he gave me one on which I built my house. I bought the one next to it also. I think he gave my two sisters a lot each too. But Daddy got sick and died before he could sell many of the lots. My mother sold the rest of them at a better price. The lots were in a beautiful location and many fine houses have been built there and today it looks entirely different.

Daddy had diabetes and heart trouble and had lost a lot of weight. The doctor he went to at first thought his teeth were poisoning him so he had him pull out all his teeth. By the time another doctor found out he had diabetes it was well advanced. My mother gave him insulin shots and he was on a diet, but they didn't do much good.

One day he was putting in a patch of plaster in an upstairs apartment across the street from the grocery store at Five Points. I wasn't helping him that day. He had to mix the plaster and carry buckets of it up a long flight of stairs to the apartment, when he had a heart attack.

He had to go to the Huntsville Hospital and stayed there for a few weeks until one night the hospital called us and told us we should come to see Daddy as they thought he wouldn't make it through the night. We all rushed to the hospital and I told Daddy that he wasn't going to die - my heart was breaking. He passed away on May 8th, 1955. I was just devastated. He is buried in Maple Hill Cemetery.

Daddy accomplished a great deal in his lifetime with the help of a kind and loving God.

I am so proud to be his son and grateful and thankful to have had him as my Daddy!!!

He's in the arms of God in a much better place now.

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- One of the most entertaining of the "oldest inhabitants" of Decatur, Ala. is Capt. J. M. Todd, now 88 years of age, who steam boated on the Tennessee river from 1832 to 1875.

- Mr. W. W. Wilson brought a 15 month-old pig and a bale of cotton to Huntsville to the market today. Each weighed in at 450 pounds. The cotton brought \$19.05 and the pig, \$22.50. Mr. Wilson says the cotton cost him twice as much to raise and market as did the pig.

- Capt. Jos. Glover closed a trade Tuesday with Mrs. J. P. Williams of Scottsboro by which he becomes the purchaser of the Boyd place next door to Capt. Reeves in Guntersville. The dwelling, together with a large yard and garden, were sold at nine hundred dollars.

- An Athens boy who experienced great difficulty in swallowing had an operation performed on his throat which brought to light a very large pearl. It is thought he swallowed it while eating an oyster.

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**Bertha: "My memory is getting so bad."**

**Mary: "How bad is it?"**

**Bertha: "How bad is what?"**

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# Heard On the Street

by **Cathey Carney**



We had several subscription winners in August. **Jerry Johnston** was the first out of town caller to find the tiny apple I hid on page 48. Jerry lives in Tennessee. He grew up in Huntsville but left here in the 1970s. **Mary Baker** has 8 kids, now does a lot of baby sitting and said she stopped counting at 30 grand and great grand-kids - she was the first local caller to find the apple. Then the person who recognized our August Photo of the Month was **David Crews**. He correctly guessed the little guy as **Billy Lenox**, uber-talented website designer for many companies as well as this one. David told us he was born in Huntsville Hospital when it was a little brick building on the corner of Governors Drive and Madison Avenue! Congratulations to all our winners!

It was with much sadness that I found that **Phyllis Rader** had passed away in mid-July. Her

husband **John Rader** worked at Hewlett-Packard for many years as Service Manager, and he and Phyllis were just each other's loves. They were the best couple, John passed away many years ago. Surviving Phyllis are her daughter **Renay Nunn (David)**; brother **Thomas Banner (Lois Ann)** and nieces and nephews. Phyllis was a funny, sweet and loving lady who will be forever missed.

**Trade Day Around the Square** will be happening again this Month on **Sep. 9** - from 8am to 4pm. It's all around the courthouse square and there's plenty of parking. All FREE! Take a break from the football games and get a little exercise! This is put on by the Lion's club and you know you always find something to buy! Also remember this is the one time of year that the **Golden K Kiwanis** make available the older, back copies of "Old Huntsville" magazine that they've stored in their warehouse, for a donation. Mark your Calendar!

I was at **Lewters Hardware** recently looking for a good drain cleaner and **Johnny Brewer** showed me an all-natural powder that you mix with water and pour into the toilet, sink etc. I tried some and it worked SO Well. I loved that it wasn't full of chemicals too. The name of it is Zep Drain Cleaner and they had it in stock when I was there last.

**Johnny Johnston** has written many stories for Old Huntsville magazine and recently downsized to a smaller home. It's just harder to take care of a larger home & yard when you get older,

just a fact of life. But Johnny was the honoree for his 80th birthday party that took place in the community room at his new place and it was packed! Great food, lots of family and friends really helped Johnny celebrate his 80th.

We were so sorry to hear that **Russ Letson** recently lost his brother **Jackie Dolan Letson**, at the young age of 68. Jackie lived in Hazel Green and was a US Army Veteran who received the Purple Heart during the Vietnam War. He then began a career with the Kroger Corporation that spanned over 40 years. He is survived by his wife **Katie** and their children **Jamie Letson, Kristy Seamons** and **Tracy Pennington**; three brothers, **Russ Letson, Donald Letson** and **Bobby Letson**. He leaves 14 grandchildren, 7 great grandchildren and many extended family members. We send our deepest sympathy to the family.

My Mom was **Annelie Owens** and spent the last 12 years of her life at Redstone Village. She loved every day when we would come by and spend afternoons with her, but in the last months she was calling for her Mama and brother in Germany who had been gone for many years. Mom would

## 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 baby is an artist at Lowe Mill who is known for painting maps on people, using their bodies as his canvas.



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have been 97 this September. She passed away this past January, and we miss her everyday. Give your mom an extra big hug if you are with her, one day you won't be able to.

A special hello to **Kathryn Frank** of Louisville, KY who grew up in Huntsville and still loves the people here. Come visit!

So many are getting calls now from scammers or people looking for money. It's irritating and time-wasting and you end up hanging up on them anyway. I started doing something years ago that works for me. Everyone has caller ID now on their phones. If you get a call look at the number on your caller ID. If you don't recognize the number, **DON'T ANSWER**. If it's an important call from someone who needs you, they'll leave a message and you can call them back - so simple. You'll be amazed at the time you've saved as well as the aggravation. Just think - if the majority of people did that how frustrating it would be for the callers trying to waste your time.

Being a caregiver for someone with Alzheimers, Parkinsons or Dementia can be draining in so many ways, the caregivers need help too! There's an excellent workshop that is taking place Sep. 12 at the First Baptist Church on Governors at 5:30pm - 8:30pm. **Dr. Elizabeth Hall** and **Dr. Willie Brunetti** will be the presenters, hosted by the Huntsville Asso. for Pastoral Care. You will gain some very valuable information. Call **256.883.6539** for pricing and details. Registration includes supper

and info to take.

Another sweet lady who lived at Redstone Village passed away Aug. 7. **Laverne Robertson Owen** was 86 and loved all kinds of music, including **Elvis Presley**. She is survived by sons **Mark S. Owen** and **Ray C. Owen, Jr.**; as well as daughter **Deborah Owen Nore**, three grandchildren and four great-grandchildren. She raised an amazing family who will never forget her.

Well, **Malcolm Miller** had the party of a decade. For his 90th birthday party at **Floyd "Tut" Fann Veterans Home**, he filled the community room with hundreds of his friends & family, of all ages. His family provided BBQ and fixings and drinks and there was even live music with fiddle-player **Willard Whitaker**, guitarist and nephew **Doug Miller**, **Danny Miller**, **David Miller** and award winning songwriter **Jim McBride**. There were SO many people taking pictures and videos, a huge cake and the party went longer than expected. What a great memory for so many. Happy Birthday to Malcolm on your first 90 years!

I know many of us feed birds and outside critters, but I made the mistake of "adopting" two orphan raccoons who were eating birdseed I was putting out. Pretty soon I was feeding them cat food and red grapes, which they loved. They were really cute and would wait for me every morning, looking into my back porch. But then when there's no food the little guys got a little insistent

and pushed in the screen trying to get in. So I convinced them to move elsewhere and even tho I miss those little faces everyday, I sure don't want them to depend on me for food. They were coming out during the day, which was dangerous for them too. Lesson learned, with a heavy heart.

So to see if you've read this all the way through this, I will hide a tiny picture of a **baby raccoon** somewhere in the pages of this magazine. I will start taking calls for the tiny coon on Sep. 15 - NO EARLIER. This one will be nearly impossible for you to find - I've already lost it! However you can call to guess the Photo of the Month at any time.

Working in a hospital can be very busy and often stressful. But there is one man in **St. Thomas West Hospital** in Nashville who makes it fun. He's been sweeping floors and keeping all clean for the past 37 years at the hospital. **Freddie Wiggins** realizes the emotional impact of losing family members or watching them in pain, so if someone walks by he will shake hands with them, give a hug or just make them smile. He asks people how they are and really listens, gives High 5s to kids and oftentimes breaks into song (he's got a great voice). He was recently interviewed by **Lester Holt on NBC Nightly News** and is just an amazing, caring man. Thank you for what you do, Freddie.

Have a calm & aggravation-free September and remember to always be watchful of your surroundings and stay safe.

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# RECIPES

## Classic Delectables

### Sweet Dixie Cake

- 4 eggs
- 1/2 pint heavy cream
- 1-1/2 c. sugar
- 1-1/2 c. self-rising flour
- 1 t. vanilla extract
- Powdered sugar

Break the eggs into a bowl and beat til light and foamy - 5 minutes. Add cream, beat another 5 minutes. Pour in sugar, beat well. Blend in flour and extract. Pour in a greased tubular or Bundt pan and bake at 350 degrees for 50 minutes, or in two 8" pans for 30 minutes. Dust with powdered sugar.

### Tea Time Tassies

**Pastry:**

- 1-3-oz. cream cheese softened

- 1/2 c. butter
- 1 c. plain flour
- 1 T. sugar

**Filling:**

- 1 c. pecans, chopped fine
- 3/4 c. brown sugar
- 1 T. vanilla
- Dash Salt
- 1 egg

Use miniature cupcake tins. Roll out the pastry and place in tins. Drop filling into lined tins. Bake at 375 degrees for 25 minutes.

### Chess Pie

- Pastry for a 9-inch pie
- 4 eggs
- 1-1/2 c. sugar
- 1/2 c. butter, softened
- 2 T. yellow cornmeal

- 2 T. heavy cream
- 2 T. lemon juice
- 2 t. vanilla extract
- Dash salt

Preheat oven to 325 degrees. Prepare your pastry or thaw one out. Beat eggs, sugar and butter for 3 minutes in medium bowl on high speed. Beat in the remaining ingredients, your mixture will look curdled. Pour into pie plate, lined with pastry. Bake for one hour or until set, cool for 15 minutes. Refrigerate til chilled.

### Melt-in-Your-Mouth Balls

- 2 sticks butter, softened
- 5 T. powdered sugar
- 2 c. plain flour
- 2 t. vanilla extract
- 1 c. chopped pecans

Mix all ingredients in order listed. Roll into balls about the

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size of large marbles. Bake at 325 degrees for about 25 minutes. Check to make sure bottoms don't brown. While still hot, roll in a bowl of powdered sugar, set on waxed paper to cool. Store in airtight container. So good!

### Chocolate Cafe au Lait

1/2 c. heavy cream  
 2 T. sugar  
 1 t. vanilla extract  
 1 oz. German sweet chocolate, grated (1/4 c.)  
 2 c. hot brewed coffee  
 Pieces of milk chocolate, lace candy or chocolate curls

In a small mixer bowl beat whipping cream, sugar and vanilla with an electric mixer on low speed til soft peaks form. Fold in the grated sweet chocolate.

Pour the hot brewed coffee into 4 coffee cups. Spoon a fourth of the whipped cream mixture over the coffee in each cup. Top with chocolate curls and serve at once. This looks beautiful if served in tall glass coffee cups with a red cherry added on each for color.

### Apricot Balls

Wash and run thru food chopper one pound of dried apricots. Add 2 cups sugar, juice of one orange and a little grated orange

peel. Cook and stir 12-15 minutes.

Cool and add one cup chopped pecans. Roll into balls, then dip and roll in powdered sugar.

### Rich & Creamy Fudge

18 oz. semi-sweet chocolate chips  
 1 14-oz. can sweetened condensed milk  
 Dash salt  
 1 c. chopped walnuts or pecans  
 1-1/2 t. vanilla or almond extract

In a heavy saucepan over low heat melt the chips with the condensed milk and salt. Remove from the heat, stir in nuts and extract.

Spread evenly into wax paper lined 8 or 9" square pan. Chill for 2 hours or until firm. Turn fudge onto cutting board; peel off paper and cut into squares with very sharp knife. Store loosely covered at room temperature.

### Hot Spicy Cranberry Juice

4 c. cranberry juice  
 1/4 c. orange juice  
 3 whole cloves  
 Honey to taste

Combine above in saucepan and simmer for 10 minutes. Remove cloves and pour into mugs, add cinnamon sticks to stir.

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# See You Tomorrow

by Pat Furr



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

"Let's go blackberry picking," announced Jewel bouncing from foot to foot with her sun bleached braids keeping in step. She was the more adventurous of the two and full of ideas. The girls took off for the woods where they could find the most berries. Granted they ate more of the woodsy treat than they picked but both had enough in their pail for cobbler, when a black snake slithered from the undergrowth.

The girls screamed and ran for home. Both girls were out of breath when they reached the crossroads where their families' farms joined. Elizabeth said it was getting late and their mothers might be worried. She could tell it was near supper because the setting sun threw a ghostly haze through the pines and underlying brush. In second grade they did a pinky-ring promise and crossed their hearts never to say good-bye so the two best friends did their usual departure by throwing their arms around each other saying, "See you tomorrow".

Swinging her pail, Elizabeth dilly-dallied down the driveway. It was nearly a quarter of a mile from the crossroad and like the road it

was hardly more than a dirt path. She was a tall girl for her eight years. She would soon be nine and was excited about her birthday. Jewel was helping to plan a party and make invitations.

She was clever and Elizabeth liked having a clever friend. Both girls made straight A's on their report cards and would be in fourth grade when school started in the fall. Humming as she walked, Elizabeth's mind wandered between her birthday and summer plans with Jewel.

When the katydids began to chatter their nightly song she was jolted from her day dreaming and remembered milking time. She picked up her pace and hurried toward the barn. When her brother, eighteen year old Loren, left home to fight in the war someone needed to help feed the livestock. Elizabeth was asked to help pick

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up the slack. Work was no stranger to her. She had been helping plant and weed the garden every summer since turning four. But milking Bessie, the family cow, was a new experience and she would need to milk her twice a day. At first it was a difficult task getting the right grip so milk would squirt into the bucket but Bessie was patient and the two got along fine.

Every day before evening milking Elizabeth helped in the kitchen. While her mother and two older sisters prepared the evening meal Elizabeth's job was to set the table and carry water in from the outside well for cleaning the cooking pots.

When summer ended Elizabeth and Jewel looked forward to seeing their classmates. They had tired of summer games and were anxious to go back to school. On the first day their shoes shined from black polish and they wore new print dresses made by their mothers.

Their teacher gave an eager

welcome as the children noisily settled into their desk. She explained this was the year they would learn geography and discuss current events. Her plan was to talk as little as possible about the Great War in Europe because some of the children had brothers fighting there. After the class recited the Pledge of Allegiance she counted eight boys, six girls and added one new girl to her roster.

The warm September led into a cool October. The class would have a Halloween party and bob for apples. They talked nonstop about "Trick or Treat" and at which house they would be given popcorn balls or store bought candy. On the first Friday in October Elizabeth and Jewel walked home from school holding hands, laughing, as Jewel recited how she would

talk her younger sister into letting her use her grandmother's old costume jewelry hidden in her grandfather's discolored tobacco can.

Jewel said Elizabeth could wear some too if she decided to be an Indian princess instead of a cowgirl. The girls were still laughing and planning how they would talk Jewel's sister out of the old can when they parted at the crossroad with their usual big hug and, "See you tomorrow."

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

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ing up with fever. Mrs. Carter was alarmed and sent for the doctor. By the time the doctor arrived with his medicine bag Mary's skin was blue. She was smothering from a lack of oxygen.

The doctor recognized the symptoms when he saw Mary's empty eyes and dark spots on her cheeks. He ordered everyone out of the room. "She has the Spanish Flu." He knew because people in Madison County had been dying since the end of September. Even several doctors had come down with the flu.

He stiffened as he told Mr. Carter there were no antibiotics. He looked at Mrs. Carter and said there was nothing he could do but offer advice. He rested his hand on her shoulder and said he was sorry. Within the hour a bloody froth gushed from Mary's mouth and she expired. By night fall Elizabeth's sister, Jane, complained of a stomach ache. She did not live to see morning.

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

She looked around the room but could not remember what she was doing.

Jewel Grayson's father stepped up on the Carter porch and gave a loud knock at the front door. When Mrs. Carter invited him in he told her he had come to let them know there would be no school or church services until further notice because of the flu. She lowered her eyes as she told him she lost both of her girls to the flu the day before. He shook his head finding it difficult to believe what she said.

He started to speak but stumbled, finding no comforting words. His eyes misted over.

He could only say, "I'm so sorry Faye. I know the community is doing everything possible to prevent spreading the illness. Entire families in Big Cove are sick. There are no more caskets to be found, not even in Huntsville." He stared away from her, his thoughts somewhere else, maybe on his family. She offered him coffee. He shook his head and explained, "There's no time this morning. I have got to get home and feed the livestock. Jewel had

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a stomach ache last night. Her mother did not get much sleep. I will need to take over so she can rest."

He did not tell her he was tired also from being up with Jewel throughout the night or that he did not feel good. Elizabeth started into the room but backed out when she heard her mother say she hoped Jewel did not have the flu. Her eyes went wide; she was scared for her friend.

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

she worked silently beside her mother scrubbing everything in the house.

On Sunday morning few people were up when the Grayson's five year old son came to tell the Carter's his father was bad sick. Grief was evident in the little boy's eyes when he said his sister, Jewel, had died. His mother would not leave his father's bedside. She sent him to ask if Mr. Carter would come and help feed the animals. Mr. Carter said he would be along directly.

When the boy left he lit the wood stove to knock the autumn's damp chill out of the house then left for the Graysons.

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

Jewel and Elizabeth are

imaginary girls. But for a moment, let your mind walk into 1918 when the Spanish flu came to Madison County. Because of the catastrophic pandemic, family plots at church grave sights and Maple Hill Cemetery filled up with loved ones. Many lives changed economically when the family provider died. People changed emotionally and socially forever.

Statistics showed 20-50 million people died from the flu, up to five times as in the Great War. It can be mind boggling when considering how the Spanish Flu of 1918 must have changed the entire world.

**"If I won the award for laziness, I would have to send someone to pick it up for me."**

*Pumpkin the cat*



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# In the Slough

by John Michael Hampton

The waters of the Tennessee River surrounded me, as I landed under the surface. Was this the end, I thought, and was I about to die?

The summer I turned eight, in 1983, I was allowed to bring a friend of the family with me as my grandparents hit the road for summer vacation. I lived with my grandparents in Nashville at the time, but we always traveled to Aunt Sue's house on the Tennessee River in Limestone County, Alabama. The friend traveling with me on that hot July day was David, one of my best friends from school.

After lunch, all my cousins grabbed the floating chairs and other swimming toys and headed to the slough from the river that was less than a block from the house. The backwaters from the river was about five feet deep at the place where we were playing in the water, and were a good ten degrees cooler than the air that day.

Seeing a floating lounge chair in the water, I believed that if I jumped from the bank, I would be held up by the lounge chair and not fall in the water. At the time, I did not know how to swim, or even float.

Well, I landed on the lounge chair and it flipped, sending me under the water. I went under and hit the bottom, bobbing up to the surface, only to go under the surface again. I knew that if something did not happen quickly, this is where I would probably die.

It was at this time that I felt someone grab me, and pull me to the surface. It was my friend David, who then pulled me to the bank so that I could be checked.

My grandparents checked me, and found out that I was okay, except for the fact that I was coughing from the amount of river water that I had swallowed. I was told to stay on the bank for a while, until I felt well enough to play in the water again.

Later that afternoon, I took David aside and thanked him for saving my life. He said, "I saw you go under, and I immediately jumped in to rescue you!" He was always like that, thinking of oth-

ers and helping them.

Many years have passed. Aunt Sue is no longer alive and my grandparents have also passed on. Now, the old home along the Tennessee River sits quiet and empty. But, every time I go to that area and stand next to the slough, I can still hear the voices of children playing and having fun in that murky water, and feel the joy of being a kid without a care in the world, and having friends that are there for you in the good times and the bad. I remember being in the slough, on a day that a friend saved my life, and for me, time stands still for just a moment.

*Woody Anderson*



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# TIPS FROM EARLENE

\* To keep yourself from snacking at night, brush your teeth, turn off the kitchen light and tell yourself the kitchen is closed.

\* When you're upset about something, ask yourself, "Does it REALLY matter?" If it does, express your feelings to the right person, if not, drop it and move on.

\* If you drink wine regularly you may be eroding the enamel on your teeth. Brush twice a day and see your dentist if you par-take often.

\* Tired of reading depressing news in the paper? Turn on your computer and go to the following URL (address or location): [www.positivepress.com](http://www.positivepress.com)

\* To break a cold as soon as you get the first symptoms, abstain from food for a day and a half, go to bed in a warm room, wrap well and drink plenty of hot liquids.

\* Cooked spinach is delicious with a hint of nutmeg and garlic.

\* To get ahead at the office, demonstrate a winning attitude, pride and self-confidence. Managers encourage and support employees who exhibit these qualities.

\* A good way to cure insomnia is eating two or three raw onions before retiring at night.

\* Protein deposits can form on the surface of contact lenses if you don't clean them regularly. If you develop an allergy to the deposits, you may have to stop wearing them for as little as 3 months or as long as forever.

\* A baldness treatment is ineffective if it's not nimoxidil or finasteride, the only two drugs scientists agree reverse hair loss effectively, according to 'Vitality' magazine. Also be suspicious if a company says its product is a secret formula. A product wouldn't be a secret if it really worked.

\* Limit the number of files in your office. It's easier and faster to look through one file with 20 pieces of paper than 10 files with 2 pieces of paper in each.

\* Patients with coronary heart disease have a better chance of long-term survival if they believe their family and friends will help them do daily

tasks, such as taking medications and bathing, etc.

\* Starting your meal with a low-fat soup or salad will help fill you up.

\* Melted butter is not a good substitute for softened butter when the recipe calls for a creaming step. Let the butter soften and then cream the ingredients well. Melted butter makes soggy cakes.




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# Events In Huntsville's History

By Thomas Hutchens, Courtesy of Special Collections, Huntsville Public Library



**May 13, 1967- The Huntsville Times-** A Lee High School student, Hans Hoelzer, captured three special awards and a second place categorical honor in the 18th International Science Fair at San Francisco Friday. Hoelzer, who won multiple honors at the North Alabama Regional Science Fair here recently, was given awards by the American Institution of Mining, Metallurgical, and Petroleum Engineers; National Aeronautics and Space Administration and the U. S. Air Force in the field of aerophysics. In addition, Hoelzer was named winner of a second place wish award - \$100 certificate or that amount in scientific equipment of his own choice. Other North Alabama winners included Johnny A. Waters of the Lawrence County High School in Moulton.

**May 13, 1942- The Huntsville Times-** Officers of the Inner-Club Defense Council were re-elected at a dinner meeting held last night at the Service Club, and six new members were added to the executive committee of the group. Kenneth Thomas was chosen chairman for the combined USO and Service Club drive, which will begin here soon, and Mrs. Reese T. Amis, was chosen co-chairman. The council was formed May 2 last year, and its principal work has been equipping and maintenance of the Service Club and its activities. W. B. Whitfield was re-elected chairman, Mrs. Reuben Chapman, co-chairman and Claude Pipes, secretary. Members added to the executive committee were Mrs. J. F. Chambers, Mrs. Amis, Mrs. Fannie Dickson, Mrs. J. D. Thornton, Mrs.

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*Dr. Wayne Dyer*

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Carlisle Davis and Mrs. Walter Laxson Sr. The committee will hold a dinner meeting each second Tuesday in the month, it was decided. The meal last night was prepared and served by Mrs. B. A. Stockton. The meeting was divided into three parts; the first being the meal, the second a review of the activities of the committee and the third, plans made for further use and development of the Service Club. Other members of the committee attending were Philip Wind, George Mahoney, Mrs. Forrest Fleming, the Rev. Flynn G. Humphreys, and the director of the Service Club, Miss Hazel Robinson.

**1942 - Firemen Called when "Uncle Billy" Forgets His Keys-** "Uncle Billy" Russell, clerk in the sheriff's office, is going to get a name as a "publicity hound," if he doesn't stop doing things like this: Yesterday, in all the flurry of court, he forgot or misplaced his keys to the sheriffs office, locking himself outside. They were able to get in a window and unlock the door for Uncle Billy, who says hereafter he'll keep his keys on his person no matter what.

**May 13, 1917- The Huntsville Daily Times-** General endorsement has come to The Daily Times in its position to have the pool rooms closed in Huntsville. Backing up this idea we have information that one prominent citizen is ready to spend \$500 if necessary to secure this needed relief for our community. As we said the other day now's no time for such nuisances in a decent community. It's time for everybody to go to work and do their part in this crisis both for the restoration of peace and the making of adequate food supplies. You can't do it in pool rooms, hang out joints and rotten soft drink stands. It's up to the

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town council to do something quick.

**1917 - Announcement-**

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**1917 - City Bakery -** Our 15 cent Loaf the best on the Market- City Bakery- Jos. J. Hackworth, Proprietor.

**May 13, 1886- The Huntsville Daily Mercury-** On Saturday next at the Opera House Prof. A. C. Norris and Miss Blanche Emmet will give a novel entertainment in which 25 highly trained dogs will be the center of attraction. Miss Blanche extends a special invitation to ladies of our city to come and bring the children with them to see for themselves what patience and kindness will do with the brute portion of the animal kingdom. There will be a matinee at 3:30 in the afternoon and a performance at night at 7:30. admission 25 cents. Children under 12 will be admitted for 15 cents.

**Ira H. Scholle, Baker Confectioner and Candy Maker,** McGee Block, Jefferson St., has just fitted up an elegant Ice Cream and Cake

parlor for the summer. Call at his establishment and you will be more than pleased.

**May 13, 1858- The Southern Advocate-** Houses Wanted-George W. Sumner, House Builder, corner of Gates and Henry Streets, opposite J. W. Clay's residence, Huntsville, Ala. All kinds of work, plain or decorative, executed with neatness and dispatch.

Those who are desirous of having houses built or repaired, of any description, cheap, and in a neat and substantial manner, either in the city or vicinity, can be accommodated by giving me a call and leaving orders. Plans, Elevations, Sections, Details and Specifications drawn and furnished at short notice.

**1858 - Wanted-**We wish to hire, for the balance of the year, or by the month, two or three good Brick moulders. For good ones a good price will be given. Also, three or four common laborers - George W. Sumner.



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# A SMALL SOUTHERN TOWN

by Jan Neighbors

You asked me what I remember most about the small southern town I grew up in. Well here is what I remember. I lived at the foot of Monte Sano Mountain, just a mile or two from downtown. It was in walking distance of Goodson's Dime Store, Zesto's for a dip dog or soft serve ice cream with outdoor seating like Paris, close to Woody's drive-in and not too far from Channel 19 for Saturday wrestling. Summertime not only meant a nice selection of stores including Dunnivant's (one of the city's nicest clothing stores with a neat tube system for sending your invoice to the office to process your sale) but two theaters where you could spend a magical afternoon for a thirty five cent ticket and buy popcorn and a drink for about that price.

During the summer you could also go to an older movie for 6 RC cola tops and sometimes a local band might play music before the show, a real treat. You could eat at Krystal's or Sno-White's on the square and get the best square hamburgers. Other stores included Belk Hudson's, Grant's, Woolworth's, Dollar Store, Mangle's, Tom Dark's pharmacy with great ice cream where you sat at old fashioned wooden round tables and matching chairs. There was J.C. Penney's, Singer Sewing Machine, RITZ cafe, a shoe store, Butler's, on the corner near the First United Methodist Church, Hill's jewelry store and Rose's jewelry.

I remember elevator operators and two levels of doors in the old elevators. I remember clerks who helped you and acted happy to serve you if needed help in making your selections. Not far away from downtown was another shopping center called Heart of Huntsville with Sears as an anchor store.

There was a German restaurant there and World Bazaar full of many different items from far away. There was a library

when I was young downtown and the children's room was in the basement, and a very kind older lady named Bessie Russell worked there when she wasn't teaching second grade at East Clinton School. She was also my sister's second grade teacher. I didn't get her. I had Mrs. Matlock but Mrs. Russell made a big impression in my life and I later worked with her at the library on Fountain Circle, actually she suggested I apply for a job since I spent many hours doing research in the Heritage Room doing family research.

There were another set of stores in the northwest part of downtown where people of color shopped and they had their own theater. I don't know much about that part of town and not sure when it faded away, guessing in the middle or late 1960s.

Of course churches were downtown for both white and black families, some of the town's oldest and most respected. Many good days were spent in downtown Huntsville, at the public library and in the shops at Five Points. It is where I learned about spending my allowance, buying my school clothes and being fed and entertained. My aunt and mother got their hair done in downtown



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I remember a book store run by a Miss Sanders. My Aunt Mary shopped the nicer small dress shops, the Mary Shop was one I remember by name. Rutenburg's was in Heart of Huntsville and they had some of the nicest clothes for ladies and some professional sales clerks.

My family attended two Methodist churches, the first was Esther's Chapel on Wells Avenue and later we joined Holmes Street Methodist since they were larger and had more programs for children. Names I clearly remember were Rev. Bill Friday, Rev. George Rice, Rev. Williams, Rev. Pendegrass and Rev. Pete Furio. I know there were many others but those stuck in my head. We met many good people and several lived on our street, Wellman Avenue, even the minister's home was on the corner by the park. On our block the Ratliff family and the Fisks also attended Holmes Street Church.

I remember the park well. I got hit in the head by teenagers playing with a metal boomerang, they don't always come back. That was six stitches in my head and I remember my mother making me take a bath before going to the Emergency room because I was dirty and bloody. She was a clean lady and it was a long ride to the Fox Army Hospital that day. I remember neighbors coming over and all the excitement, you would have thought it was a big deal, and I guess I thought it was with the sight of blood, especially being mine.

Sometimes the city paid for a teenager to supervise children playing at the park and most of the time my parents didn't let us go there without supervision but we had talked them into letting us go that day. I was six and my sister eight and I am sure she takes credit for saving my life by showing the teen-age boys where we lived two blocks away, I think they carried me since I was bleeding, I may have been slightly dizzy. Maybe she decided to be a nurse that day not sure but she had a wonderful career being a nurse and director of nursing at one of the largest Junior Colleges in Alabama.

I remember picnics on the mountain. Cars parked around the mountain for young couples courting. I remember people poorer than us going door to door asking for old clothes and things you didn't need anymore. I remember visiting



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### 2017 MAPLE HILL CEMETERY STROLL

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**GRAND STROLL - 1:45 PM**

**THIS IS A FREE EVENT BUT DONATIONS ARE ENTHUSIASTICALLY ACCEPTED - ALL MONIES RECEIVED ARE USED FOR REPAIRS & RESTORATIONS TO THE CEMETERY.**

Maple Hill Cemetery, circa 1822, listed on the National Registry of Historic Places is the oldest continuously in use cemetery in the State of Alabama. As of 2014, there were 80,000 known graves in the cemetery. There are individuals representing all walks of life in this unique ledger of Huntsville with veterans of all wars buried in the cemetery. However, the greatest single number of interments occurred in 1918 as a result of the influenza epidemic.

Since the 1980's we have been celebrating our community's heritage and history in one of Huntsville's most beautiful autumn venues. The Maple Hill Cemetery Stroll is currently the largest character-driven cemetery stroll in the country. Over 75 costumed actors portray in first person historical characters important to this area. This "living history" part of the stroll makes it so much more entertaining. Additionally, traditional music, special exhibits, a student scavenger hunt, and an antique auto show augments this family friendly event.

Come Early to Watch the GRAND STROLL of characters as they promenade down the main avenue of the cemetery and move to their assigned grave sites where storytelling will begin at 2 pm. This is a wonderful way to view all the characters and start this year's Stroll!

The Stroll will conclude with the playing of "TAPS" at 4:30 on the main avenue.

Maple Hill Cemetery Stroll is free to the public but donations are enthusiastically accepted as this is the way we can continue making the repairs and restorations.

*Maple Hill Cemetery is located approximately 0.75 miles east of Huntsville's downtown square at 203 Maple Hill Drive off of California Street. Shuttles will run from the downtown Square from 1-5 p.m. ••• and local parking is also available.*

*Rain date for the Stroll will be Sunday, October 22 from 2:00 - 4:30p.m.*



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an older lady telling my sister and I if we could catch one of her cats we could have them. I bet she grinned watching us try. Kept us busy a little while. Needless to say we never owned one of her cats. I remember having a Chihuahua named Blonde. She only laid on the bed when we weren't home. Dogs slept in their own beds in the 1960s.

I remember when I started second grade we couldn't attend the first day of school due to State Troopers being at the door. I fondly remember John Anthony B. who went by "Tony" in elementary school being the first black child in East Clinton. He was in Mrs. Russell's class and I know they remained friends even after he graduated high school. She had very fond memories of him when we talked.

Of course the world changed and we got an indoor Mall at University Drive with J.C. Penney's and Loveman's being the two major anchor stores. Parkway Place Mall was our outdoor mall with a theater and at one time a super slide where you could ride it for fifty cents on a burlap bag. Sometimes they had carnival rides in the parking lot for a week or two before the fair, I am guessing. University Drive came to be known for its restaurants for fancy dining. Family meals were often at Mullins and Gibsons BBQ.

Huntsville built a Civic Center so we didn't have concerts at Joe Davis Stadium any more and have to stop or delay for rainy weather. We had the Armory on West Holmes for some events.

Of course man walked on the moon and space exploration put Huntsville on the map and attracted many scientists and engineers to Huntsville. It was once a mill town full of factory workers. Communities were built around Lincoln Mills, Dallas and Merrimack. From stories I hear those were some good old days where neighbors knew one another and the mill developed a community spirit. My father was career Army of the World War II generation but I had many friends and neighbors who were engineers and worked on the Arsenal supporting space exploration.

Most of my high school friends at Huntsville were from engineering families with a father with a degree and often a mother also. In my day moms stayed home, tended the children, cleaned the house, cooked and hung out the laundry. Color TV's, clothes dryers and microwaves were not either invented or rarely owned until I was

older. In the 60s only a few TV shows were in color but we were thrilled when we got our first color TV even for those few shows.

I miss that small town but am proud of the way Huntsville has grown. I believe compared to many Southern cities we have more dignity and changed with grace and character, thanks to our residents. I am proud to call Huntsville my current and native home.



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# Northeast Alabama State Fair

by Scott Nixon



I can still feel that crisp fall wind on my face as I walked toward the gate. Dad and mom always brought up the rear as I walked so fast to get there. As a child, I didn't consider the fact that they had the money to get in! The excitement was just unbearable. The fair at that time was on the land where Madison Square Mall is now. Close enough anyway.

I remember some of the rides. The scrambler, the swings and well, the rest I was scared to ride! I did love the duck pond though! Ha! Ha! I was eight years old or close to that age anyway. I never knew that someday the fair would become some of the best days of my life. Amazing experiences waited for the little kid I was.

I picked the guitar up when I was fourteen years old. I was amazed by guitars. I found something I loved. I always played in the garage. I would listen to my favorite songs and learn their music by just listening. Music was really something I started in the side of my moms family, "the Ledbetter's" and my dads family, "the Nixon's." I am proud of that.

I had played for two years when a friend heard me. He said, "You have got to try out for the State Fair Talent Show!" He said, "My mom and my aunt Tiny" are Jaycees."

I was nervous and could not sing that well. I tried out anyway and got in the show! I didn't care if they did that out of sympathy. I practiced and practiced every single day.

It was Monday, Labor Day weekend and I walked in the gate with my six string in my hands. It was crisp Fall weather and the smell of corn dogs and hamburgers filled the air. I saw the gazebo where the show would be. I was shy around two or three people but not in front of a crowd.

My thinking was "if only one person likes me, that's enough for me." I didn't place in the show that night. I grinned ear to ear though. You see, I finally got on that ride I was afraid of as a little boy.

I just never knew that ride was a stage. For one night in my life, I felt like a star. I'm smiling as I write this. For one more time, I feel like a star in my memory...

About four years ago, I drove to Airport Road. The gazebo was still there. I am forty-six years old now and that talent show happened in 1986.

I walked around and thought about the sixteen year old boy, who, for one night lived his dream. I sat down on the steps. A tear ran down my cheek. Time goes so fast. For a minute, I was sixteen again. I smelled the corn dogs and hamburgers. I then opened my eyes and thought, "Some day another teenager will feel that way."

A memory that will never be replaced or taken, a memory I see in my dreams to this day.

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### Veteran gets by with help from service dog, others

By Skip Vaughn,  
Redstone Rocket  
editor  
skip.vaughn@  
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Life was full of promise. The two 18-year-old Navy seamen had just finished Commissary school in San Diego and were assigned together in 1970 to serve as field cooks for the Marines attached to a light guided missile cruiser off the coast of Cambodia.

They were walking in San Diego the night before their deployment when one turned

to his friend John E. Carson - who has heard all the "Tonight Show" jokes - and said, "I've had a premonition. I don't think I'll be coming home."

Carson still remembers that conversation. He came home but his friend didn't.

Besides the conversation, Carson just remembers getting medically discharged from the Navy and going to an airport in uniform where people were calling him "Baby killer" and spitting on him.

He sank into depression and fought the symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder for years. He had a brain injury. He succumbed to alcoholism before kicking that habit and becoming a workaholic instead. Carson re-

covered through the support of his family, friends, counseling and finding relief from writing and photography. And there is the support of his service dog, Mr. Freckles.

"Mind if I smoke?" Carson asked while taking a seat in the American Legion Post 237 on Drake Avenue. He's wearing his uniform as a member of the post's Honor Guard and he also serves as the 13-member detail's photographer. His photographs of the Honor Guard members and his poems are displayed on the walls.

"I can't tell you much about it (what happened to him in the war) because most of my memories have been blown to hell," Carson said. "One thing hasn't been affected. That is the bonds that I have with my family, my friends."

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"But it's hard because most of my precious memories have been lost. It hurts my family and my friends."

Writing and photography helps ease the pain. A lifelong avid writer - he can trace his blood lines to F. Scott Fitzgerald - he has written 10 books, eight of which of have been published. Six were handled by a company and two were self-published.

He also teaches creative writing at the Senior Center. And for the last two years, he has been writing articles for the Old Huntsville Magazine. Carson, accompanied by his service dog, talks with groups about his efforts with Pets for Vets, which unites dogs with returning Soldiers.

"I'm fortunate, I've been blessed," he said. "Now I'm back in uniform, doing something important. Helping people like I've been helped."

Whenever he goes out on Honor Guard, he thinks of his friend and the rest of the 58,479 who didn't come home from the Vietnam War.

Carson, 66, from Minneapolis, Minnesota, was the eighth of 10 children. His family was poor and his parents battled alcoholism and each other. He joined the Navy in 1969 before finishing high school. At 17 and a half, he signed up after his fiancée broke up with him. "I was torn between going into the ministry," he said. "When my girlfriend broke up with me I decided to join the Navy."

He knew he would probably end up going to war, and he did. He was patriotic and he had family members who had served in World War II and Korea. After six months of training in San Diego, he too went to war.

This is an excerpt from his poem titled "An I. O. U. to the Veterans of the USA": "I. O. U. for my home, The one you left to defend, I. O. U. for my family, Thank you for leaving yours my friend."

Carson returned home to his native Minnesota. He retired in 2006 after working 34 years as supervisor/manager for a super-market chain in Minnesota. He moved from St. Cloud to Huntsville about nine years ago.

He and his wife of 44 years, Marlene, have two daughters; Christine Brown of Huntsville and Anna Talyn Carson of At-

lanta, and four grandchildren. Besides the American Legion, Carson also belongs to the Elks Club.

Carson shared his thoughts on this nation's commemoration of 50 years since the Vietnam War.

"It's about time," he said. "Unfortunately of the 22 veterans a day who commit suicide in this country, approximately one in every 65 minutes, about 50 percent are Vietnam veterans."

Editor's note: This is the 127th in a series of articles about Vietnam veterans as the United States commemorates the 50th anniversary of the Vietnam War.



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# A Transplanted Yankee Tries Huntsville Gardening

by Elizabeth Wharry



The garden that was planted in the spring has yielded it's last harvest. It was the first time growing veggies here.

Working red clay is totally different from any other soil I've worked. It took about 2 years to amend the soil while keeping the weeds under control. And the fire ants! Nasty little critters! Meat tenderizer made into a paste is good for their bites.

I was really hesitant to use any kind of poison in the future veggie garden.

A friend of mine suggested using instant grits. Pour some around the fire ant nest and the worker ants will feed it to the queen. It may take a while, but it's

safer than poison.

For aphids, dish washing liquid and water in a 50/50 mix is highly effective. If you have slugs, beer in a shallow dish works quite well.

Marigolds not only add color, but our fur faced wildlife tends to avoid them.

Weeding can be a time to bond with one's family. It's also a wonderful time to step away from the electronic distractions that are so prevalent today.

Freezing and canning one's own produce is very satisfying.

Even more enjoyable is being able to serve them to family and guests.

Cheers!

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# PET TIPS FROM ANGEL

## Fear of Storms



Loud crashing. Intense flashes of light. No wonder some dogs and cats feel anxious during a storm. It's a natural reaction that many humans feel too, but we shouldn't have to watch our furry family members suffer.

Whether your cat or dog becomes clingy, hides under the nearest upholstery cushion or tears up the carpet, try these strategies to help keep them calm.

### 1) Maintain the status quo

Just like children, our furry companions tend to pick up on our emotions. If you're overly protective during a storm and cuddling them more, your dog or cat will notice and possibly feel more anxious.

Instead, behave as if nothing is wrong and your dog or cat will have more reason to keep calm and carry on as normal.

### 2) Shelter from the storm

If your dog or cat typically hides in places like under your bed or in tight, cramped spaces, encourage him to retreat to his own safe haven. This can be set up with a comfy bed and his favorite toys. Safe havens should be easily accessible whether there's a storm or not.

### 3) Comforter

Swaddling blankets often calm crying babies and can do the same for our furry friends. Purchase a pressure blanket you can wrap around your dog or cat any time they become stressed. The pressure from the blanket can provide a sense of security and protection.

### 4) Drown out the noise

Use "white noise" such as fans and humidifiers to distract from booming thunderclaps. TVs and radios tend to increase anxiety because they often deliver bad reception with lots of static during stormy weather.

### 5) Positive Reinforcement

Once your furry family member shows signs of calming down, be sure to reward them. Just as you would give them their favorite treat or toy for a trick well done, reinforce their new, calm behavior by petting and giving them a tangible reward.

you easily if need be.

### 8) Poisons

Make sure the shelter inside your home is free of dangers for pets. Many people keep pest poisons in the same basement where they may be sheltering during the storm. Unfortunately, pets are very good at finding baits and many are all too eager to eat it.

### 9) Anxiety

Many pets have storm or firework anxiety and may be prescribed medications to help them cope. It's always best to give pets a dose of the medication prior to a storm to see how he or she will react – and pets should always get trial runs of medication during periods when the veterinarian is available in case questions arise.

### Summary

Again, it is important to reassure the dog that he is fine and to not exaggerate the situation. Thunderstorms are a constant presence in most area's summers, leaving little time to desensitize a dog in between episodes. If he needs a dark room, let him have it. If he wants to lean against your leg, let him do so. If he follows you from room to room, accept his presence without overreacting. If you have successfully been using mild tranquilizers, continue treatment until reconditioning is complete.

### 6) See the Vet

If your pet has extreme reactions to storms, talk with your veterinarian. He or she will be able to offer more specific suggestions based on your pet's personality and may also prescribe anti-stress medication to calm them.

### 7) Shelter

During severe storms it may be best to take shelter in a basement or small interior room like a bathroom. Make sure pets are acquainted with – and comfortable in – that area of your house and will go there with

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*From the Desk of  
Tom Carney*

# ALMOST FAMOUS

*by Tom Carney*

It was an old dilapidated nightclub on Holmes Avenue. The air was thick with cigarette smoke and fumes of stale beer. There were only a few people sitting around the tables, bored to death, while on the small stage was an old gray-haired man trying to coax one more song out of his memory, as his gnarled fingers gently stroked the strings of a guitar.

The old man had been almost famous at one time. Years earlier he had been known as "Crying John," a name he had acquired because of his soulful renditions of the Blues. But with the new popularity of the radio, time had passed him by.

Now he was just another broken down old man, playing in clubs for whatever tips people might decide to give him.

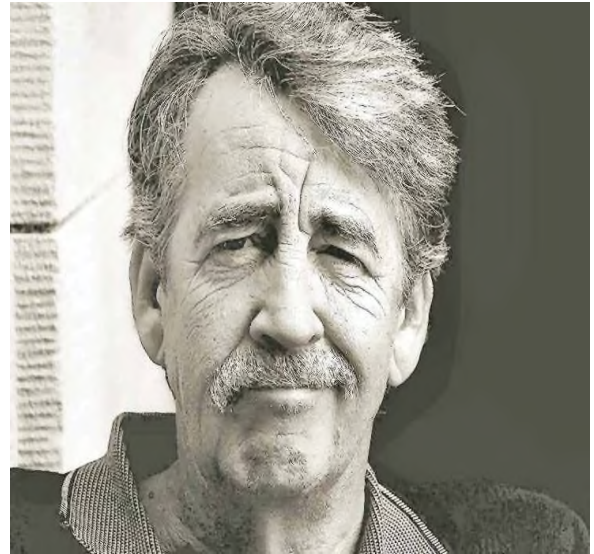
No one really noticed the stranger when he slipped in the door and pulled up a chair at a table in the back shadows of the room. He sat there for almost an hour, listening to the old man and drinking, never saying a word.

Finally, when the old man was done playing, the stranger invited him to sit at his table and have a drink. They talked in voices so low that no one else in the room could hear them. Not that anyone cared, of course. The old man had long ago become the butt of all the jokes in the bar.

When it was time for the old man to begin playing again, the stranger joined him on stage. With the old man taking the lead, the stranger hesitantly began to follow.

Slowly and awkwardly at first, they began singing the songs of the cotton fields and of the poor people. Their songs told of empty whiskey bottles, of heartbreak and of lost loves.

Two men - one, an old broken down shell of his former self, and the other, a tall young



gangly lad, together on the makeshift stage, staring into one another's eyes as they blended their voices in perfect harmony while singing the songs that most people had forgotten.

When they finished the last song the stranger told the old man it was time for him to leave. They stood there silently for a moment, and then the stranger reached out with his arms and embraced the old man.

After watching him leave, the old man paused, wiping a tear from his eye, and then slowly picked up a handbill the stranger had given him. Carefully he smoothed the paper and with a piece of old scotch tape, stuck it to the wall behind the stage.

Once more, he stood back and looked at the stranger's picture on the handbill and read the words.

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***Overheard in a Georgia waiting room***



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# The Old Bucksport School

by *Bucksport Boy,*  
*Clint Clay*

Following the marriage of Oran Adkins Clay and Vivian Dolly Walls in Jellico, Tennessee on October 30, 1926, they moved to his home community to accept teaching positions; she as teacher of grades one through three and he, grades four and up, also being named Principal of the school. Two rooms were needed for two teachers, thus a fold down partition was constructed, hinged to the ceiling, the partition could be lowered, creating two class rooms while, for community activities such as pie suppers and PTA meetings, the partition lifted. Most all activities could be carried on.

The school was an ancient structure, built of logs and designed to be a one teacher/eight grade school. It was the school my grandmother, aunts and uncles, parents and grandparents all attended. Seating was wooden benches and desks, wood planks, supported by planks, secured by nailing to the floor.

Since with both mom and dad as teachers and he as Principal, a partition was devised so that first through fourth grades were in room one and all upper grades in room two. Each room was heated by a wood burning stove in the middle of the room.

Due to the amount of space to be heated, the cracks in the floor and the lack of weather stripping, there was little or no comfort in the cold, windy winter months.

Blackboards were nailed to the wall at the head of the classroom. Outdoor privy toilets served an essential need and often children put off getting relief as it was too cold to go outside and the several yards distance to eliminate. As there was no toilet tissue - newspapers, magazines, and catalogs served a good purpose. In warmer months, leaves from nearby trees were even better - trusting a child would recognize and avoid the use of poison ivy leaves.

Water was available but had to be carried from Bucksport Spring at the bottom of a very steep hill and carried in galvanized water buckets, and available for drinking from a common dipper.

While the teacher taught first graders, grades two and three were doing work assignments, and then second grade teaching with grades one and three taking turns studying. Of course,

the teacher had to be versatile & ingenious, always on the ready to discipline, give permission for a child to go to the privy, to respond to, "can I go to the spring, the bucket is empty."

Attendance varied from day to day as a child may be kept out by a parent to assist in spring planting or fall harvesting. Some parents did not send their children to school at all. Since there were no cars in the community at that time, and the distance was great, walking was the only way to get to school, carrying books, a lunch pail, wearing heavy clothing, etc.

Had there been cars, roads were deeply rutted, muddy and impassable most of the time. Yet, there were many who became successful. I recall one who later received a PhD and was a professor in a California college, one an author, one a WWII pilot, all successful.

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# Like Father, Like Son: A Violation of Trust

by Barry Key

This is a follow-up to my experience (A VIOLATION OF TRUST) published in the July issue of OLD HUNTSVILLE. It is a similar experience of a teenager disregarding the rules that his parents established regarding driving.

Judy, my wife, and I were married November of 1960. We had our first son, Barry Jr., April 1964. We bought our first new car, a 1966 Mustang, in late 1965. Our second son, Bryan, was born May 1967.

We were living in Huntsville and I had worked for several different government contractors. In 1971 we moved to Chattanooga, Tennessee. I had taken a job with a company that designed and constructed nuclear and fossil power plants. We lived in Chattanooga until 1980 and I was transferred to Birmingham, Alabama.

Some of the significant events in people's lives that tend to affect them are; graduation from high school and college, marriage, birth of your children and when your children get their driver's licenses.

The greatest change in our lives was when our boys got their drivers licenses. It was before the birth of cell phones (and caller identification) so it was not as convenient to call

home as it is now.

In those days if the land line rang you had no idea who it was. When our boys were out at night and the phone rang, you would become anxious, your heart would speed up a little and a thousand things would run through your mind. When you answered and it was a friend just to chat, your nerves would calm, and your body would go through that sigh of relief.

When Barry Jr. turned 16 we gave him the 1966 Mustang and, several rules that went with the car. Two being, no drinking and never loan your car to anyone. One night, not long after he got his license, he and a friend Mike went skating. Around 11:00

o'clock that night the phone rang. My wife and I were asleep. The caller identified himself as a Hoover policeman. Before he could say anything else, I immediately pictured car wreck.

The policeman asked if I owned a 1966 Mustang, license plate number 58 XXXXX. I told him that I did... and now my heart was really pounding, I felt a moment of panic. The policeman wanted to know if my car was at home. I told him no, that my son was out in the car. He said the car had been involved in an accident and that it was a hit-and-run. He said I needed to come to the accident site as soon as possible, and gave me the address. He would not tell me if there were injuries, how

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\* Finally, avoid watering your lawns too often. If the soil around your lawn is still wet, it doesn't need to be watered quite yet. Allow your lawn to naturally absorb water as it needs it. When the top 2" to 3" of soil surrounding your lawn is dry, then your lawn is ready for more water.

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Maybelle Johns, Athens



many cars were involved, no information at all. He repeated that I needed to get to the accident immediately. By now my wife was awake and she could tell by my conversation that something was wrong.

We were still relatively new in the area so I had no idea where the accident location was. Mike's family were longtime residents of the Hoover area. I called Mike's father and gave him the story. He knew the location and said he would pick me up in just a few minutes. Judy wanted to go with us but I asked her to stay at home just in case Barry called or came home. At this point we expected the worst since the police refused to give us any information. We both pictured this car wreck with massive injuries and possible deaths.

When we approached the wreck we could see two police cars, a fire truck and an ambulance with their emergency

lights flashing....now I felt a deeper despondency. We pulled in behind the emergency vehicles. I jumped out of the car before it ever stopped and ran to the front where I expected to see all this devastation. There was our car sitting there just off the side of the road in a man's yard. No damage, no other cars.

One of the officers called me over to his car. There sat Mike in the back seat of the patrol car. Now I was really confused.... where was the wreck, what hit-and-run, where was Barry? Barry was sitting in the back seat of the other patrol car. Barry and Mike had gone skating, Mike had gotten bored and wanted to go somewhere else. Barry had hooked up with a girl at the skating rink and didn't want to leave, so he gave Mike the keys to his car.

When the two left our house they had stopped at a 24 hour convenience store just a couple of blocks from our subdivision.

They knew the clerk and the clerk had sold them a six pack of beer. After Mike left the skating rink he drove around for a couple of hours sipping on the beer and cruising the teenage hangouts. What Mike didn't know was Barry's gas indicator was defective and when it got to the quarter tank mark the tank was empty.

Mike had run out of gas and pulled off the side of the road. He started thumbing back to the skating rink. The man whose yard Mike pulled into called the police and told them there had been a wreck in his yard. The call then went out to all the emergency responders. One of the police cars that was responding passed Mike on the road.

When the police got to the scene of the "accident" they put two and two together. They picked Mike up and he told them the story. The police then radioed another squad car to

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pick Barry up at the skating rink and bring him to the "accident".

The police questioned the boys in separate squad cars trying to find out where they had bought the beer, plus they read them the riot act about drinking and driving. The boys did not tell them where they bought the beer. After several minutes of interrogation they let Mike and his father go. I thought they might give Mike a fine for underage drinking and DUI but they didn't. I knew Judy was still in the dark and worried about the situation. I asked Mike's father to call her when he got home to let her know everything was OK and what had happened.

I got into the back seat of the squad car that Barry was in and the officers carried us to a service station to get gas for the car. On the way to the station and back, they were still questioning where the boys got the beer. They did say they could have given Mike a ticket for underage drinking, but felt he and Barry had learned a good lesson.

I was so mad, and at the same time relieved, that I didn't say much to Barry on the way home. I did find out where they got the beer and stopped there. The same clerk was still on duty. I told him that he had sold beer to some minors and that they were involved in a wreck (yes I lied). The police would be contacting him shortly.

I knew the owner of the convenience store and found out later the clerk had closed the store that night and had not been back to work.

On the way home I kept going over in my mind exactly what punishment (just short of death) we were going to give Barry. Then it came to mind what a stupid thing I had done as a teenager and how I suffered for weeks waiting for the hammer to fall.

I retained my composure and didn't discuss punish-

ment at all.

When Barry and I got home, Judy, Barry and I had a long late night discussion as to why we had the rules that we did. I think what happened that night really sank into his head.

After Barry went to bed, Judy asked why we had not imposed some type of punishment, or even discussed punishment. I told her it was over, that we would not mention it again. I think I knew what Barry was going to go through...waiting, waiting, waiting and wondering what we were going to do. Judy said she couldn't believe that as strict as I was that we didn't at least take his car and ground him.

I had never told anyone, not even Judy, how I had disobeyed my parents and the situation could have turned into a major tragedy. I didn't tell Judy at the time why I wasn't going to punish Barry.

After she read my story, "A VIOLATION OF TRUST", she said that now she understands where I was coming from.... mental punishment in lieu of physical punishment. And mental punishment can be a lot worse.

## Time

Time is fleeting as you know

When you're young it goes so slow

I flew like the wind back then

Oh my! how long has it been?

Alas I'm old as anyone can see

Content to sip a glass of tea

Walking slow bent with a creaky knee

Now time is in a hurry, you see

When you're young it goes so slow

Time is fleeting as you know

*Brome'*



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# An Alabama Girl

by Briana Tatom Moseley,  
now living in  
Colorado Springs

**This is for all my Alabama friends who get tired of people who assume you're a hick because you're from Alabama. This one is for you...**

I had to really hustle to make my connecting flight in Dallas back to Colorado Springs yesterday.

I came on board a little out of breath, and the man in the seat next to me had to get up to let me in.

I sat down and said something like 'Whew! Just made it!' He asked me if I lived in Colorado and I said "Yes, I do, now".

He asked where I was traveling from, and I answered "Alabama". He said, "Ohhhh... AYAYLUBAY-MAAA" (that's the closest I can get to the way he pronounced it).

And I said, "No. Just Alabama. At least, that's how we pronounce it at NASA".

He looked embarrassed and didn't speak for the rest of the trip.

(You all know I don't work at NASA, but I'm a Rocket City girl and for the first time in my life, I said what I wanted to say at the time, instead of thinking later what I should have said!)

## Hearty Chicken Casserole

- 4 deboned chicken breasts, uncooked
- 4 strips bacon
- 1 can cream of mushroom soup
- 1 carton sour cream
- 1 sml. jar dried beef, chopped up

Mix soup with sour cream. Sprinkle chipped beef in bottom of casserole and cover with soup/sour cream mixture.

Wrap strip of bacon around each chicken breast and place on top over mixture. Bake uncovered for 45 minutes at 350 degrees.



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# Scuba Deere

by Jack Dyer's son

Everyone should keep an old man around, they can be surprisingly handy. Of course, I am headed down that same path myself and may be guilty of a little self-serving forethought here. Nevertheless, I have found in spite of their odd noises, peculiar odors and expired warranties, old men are well worth the trouble.

If you are considering adding an old man to your own life, you may want to brush up on your language skills before you bring him on board. I have learned that speaking fluent "oldmanese" just takes a little patience and a nearby spit-towel. Some of their phrases are easily mastered simply by their redundancy and repetition. "Whacha do thet fer" is one of the more recurrent locutions you can count on experiencing several times a day. You may have to adjust your sensitivity settings to accommodate optional add-ons such as "ya idjet, dingleberry, or bone-haid." Oh yeah, and it has been my personal experience to make certain his false teeth are well seated, otherwise you may have a disconcerting incident or two to share. I have direct knowledge on this subject as I was once startled from a sound sleep at 3:00 a.m. with the bewildering demand, "Wake up! Help me look for my teeth."

The old man I selected to keep around happened to be my father. When his wife of many decades passed away in 2011, I grew concerned about him rattling around all alone in his increasingly dilapidated house. Come to think of it, it was actually two homes that he had moved and combined on one lot. As I recall, the neighbors were thrilled that one roof came with green shingles and the other sported a beautiful shade of ocher, both of which he left unchanged for nearly twenty years - "ha, ha," they must have thought, "what delightful characters those old men are."

Old men tend to be an independent sort and it can take considerable finesse to get one exposed, roped and yanked out of his comfortable, but crumbling surroundings without breaking any bones (his or your own - old men tend to fight dirty). Being an old man's baby boy has its advantages and I employed every trick in the book; guilt, grandchildren, promises of independence and more guilt. Surprisingly, I succeeded

with minimal bruising and moved my father from his nearly sixty-year residence in Tuscaloosa County to Madison County in northern Alabama.

I purchased him a brand spanking new, thirty-three foot deluxe trailer and located it on the back of my property between a large crab apple tree and what is possibly the largest Bradford pear in the world. He brought some of his beloved Spanish moss with him and immediately decorated all the low limbs of his nearby trees. He moved in with enthusiasm and soon had modified the new trailer to have that

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"lived-in" look that only an old man can produce in less than a week. He loved his pictures and literally covered every square inch of every wall and cabinet door with paintings of Native Americans (he was descended from three Cherokee great-grandmothers), country landscapes, art collected throughout his life, pictures of animals, old portraits and about a zillion photographs.

We almost lost him on his first night. The sun was long set and he was walking for the first time from our home to his own when he stumbled over the shallow depression in the yard created while connecting his utilities to our own. I was walking right next to him and was amazed as he tumbled to the ground, but rolled and sprang right up just as he had been taught while serving as a marine in World War II.

I think he was pretty smug about the whole incident, but his youngest grandson, believed it had been a close call and announced during a testimony meeting at church that he was "thankful my grandfather had not been killed by falling in a ditch." Such was Dad's clumsy introduction to the local church members who would grow to love him as much as I did.

My edition of an old man was eighty-six years of age when he relocated "to the moon" as he liked to say. I could understand his feelings. He had lived so long in one place that he knew where everything was and could cruise the entire region on autopilot. The move was hard on him because he could never really get his bearings and after becoming lost a

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dozen times, he began voluntarily curtailing his driving more and more. This was a blessing for all our neighbors, local parking lots and several modified lawns.

During the three years we enjoyed our old man living with us, he customized three corners and all four fenders and doors of his 1995 Mercury Land yacht, while simultaneously knocking off three mirrors, running over something mysterious that punched a fist-sized hole under his seat (thus forever eliminating any adjustment capabilities), and regularly claimed that the neighbors' mailboxes were situated too close to the road (he clocked at least four that we knew of).

My father was from a generation in which work was revered. Once he gave up his automobile alteration hobby, he turned to maintaining our acreage - and he proved to be a master gardener. We had a small forest that was a little on the scruffy side and he single-handedly turned it into an attractive park. He had a gift for pulling beauty out of ugly that I witnessed time and time again during his life.

Every day, despite the fact that he was an octogenarian, he would spend hours trimming bushes, trees and shaping the land. Although we had a four-wheeler to pull our small trailers around, he never felt comfortable with it. However, when I purchased a brand new John Deere tractor, he found his true love. It took him a while to get the hang of it, but soon it was "his" tractor and anyone else had to seek his permission to use it.

In the fall of his eighty-eighth year, after spending the morning out in the forest, he came in to sit down with a group of us watching a football game. At half-time, I asked him where he had left the beat-up old trailer he had been using to haul brush. He said he had parked it out by the road. I exclaimed, "Dad, you can't leave it there. Someone might think we don't want it and take it!"

I scooted out the door, jogging through the forest and spotted the trailer safe and sound. I looked around for the tractor, so I could tow it back to the barn, but couldn't see it anywhere. I shoved the trailer into the woods and began walking back to the house. I was about halfway home, when one of our friends came running out, shouting, "The tractor's in the pond!" I had walked right by that body of water and hadn't noticed anything out of the ordinary, but I turned and jogged back to take a look-see.

At first I didn't notice it, but upon looking closer, I could just see the top of a seat breaking the water's surface. I am pretty certain that this

is the sole occasion in which my eyes actually bugged out.

Well, after employing several additional pieces of equipment, we managed to pull our newly baptized John Deere out. I winched it up onto a trailer and sheepishly towed it back to the dealer, who stunningly said it was actually fairly common to have submerged tractors in for repair - a statistic I would have never supposed.

I asked Dad what happened and it took a few seconds to get my mind around the idea of an eighty-eight year old man, seated on a tractor while flipping upside down into a pond. I then asked him why he just left it there and came in to watch the game (after changing clothes, by the way).

I then heard words that I had never heard father express before. He said he was too embarrassed to say anything and was trying to fix the situation before anyone found out. My heart melted and I never uttered a single fuss about the whole ordeal - although blatant and regular teasing pestered the poor fellow for the remainder of his life. I threatened to photograph him on the repaired tractor wearing flippers and snorkel for our 2013 Family Christmas card.

He passed away the following year. I still miss my old man.



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# Oscar Evans Dreger

by Pat Dreger

There is a story about Alvin Dreger's older brother, Oscar Evans Dreger. If you Google his name there is a website for Newton County, Arkansas and a picture of a grave with two names : Mitchell Boone and Dr. Oscar Dreger.

Oscar Evans was sent to college to become a dentist. Because he was the oldest son the family resources went for his education and the other children did not have an opportunity for college.

When he graduated, he had a practice in Town Creek. There are letters he wrote to his mother about how things were going there - how much he made each week or month - and he obviously was sending some money back home to help his parents. These letters are dated 1925.

He also practiced in New Hope. He was a quiet, strange young man with unusual religious beliefs. Some of his books are still here. He did not socialize or date or have many friends. His brother Alvin said that when his parents would play music they said he (Alvin) would jump up and down in his crib and was very happy, but Oscar was unhappy and cried.

When the war came along and Oscar Evans was drafted, he disappeared leaving a note saying "he had gone to the river to meet his maker" - a presumed suicide note. The family did not see him again although at times they would feel a "presence".

Even I would sometimes have a strange feeling of a "ghost" especially upstairs when I came to live on Holmes Avenue in the 1970s. There was a lot of speculation about what had happened to him and why, but no one really knew.

Alvin told me that one time when he went to a dentist his brother had gone to, that dentist told Alvin that Oscar Evans had been using drugs, he could tell from working on his teeth.

The government came looking for him as a draft dodger, looked at their sister Edna's house on Toll Gate. In 1976 Alvin got a call from a lady in Arkansas where Oscar Evans has been living on her property in a little shack as a poor tenant farmer under the name of Mitchell Boone.

On his death bed he had confessed to her who he was and how to contact his family. He had already passed away when Alvin got the call and he regretted not being able to see and talk to his brother before he died. He and Edna drove to Arkansas to talk to the lady, see the grave and the place their brother had lived.

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***Fun things to do after you've retired***

# Eulan Golden

by Malcolm W. Miller



When I hear Tom T. Hall sing his classic country song about "Clayton Delaney" it brings back so many memories of my own boyhood and the folks that meant so much to me then. I suppose each and every one of us has a "Clayton Delaney" in our past, at least one person, maybe more, that we looked up to and admired. The name is fictional as Tom T. Hall did not want to embarrass the family of the actual man he admired. He admired him because he was a guitar picker and because he always took time to play the guitar, sing and talk to a seven year old boy. He may have, no doubt, made a contribution to Tom T. Hall's success in the music business.

The "Clayton Delaney" in my life was Eulan Golden who was, I am certain, a very common man in the eyes of society. He did not go to college, in fact, he didn't finish

An older lady was sitting with her husband on the porch, sipping on a glass of wine. She says, "I love you so much, I don't know how I would ever live without you."

Her husband asks softly, "Is that you or the wine talking?"

She replies, "It's me ..... talking to my wine."



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high school, but back then very few finished high school. Most of us had to stay home during cotton picking season and other times when parents needed help on the farm.

One reason I admired Eulan Golden was the fact that he dared to be different. Who else would play in a ball game and then go right over and pick up a date and take her to the big summer time revival going on at church? You probably don't see anything so unusual about this, and there wouldn't be except for the fact that Eulan still had his baseball uniform on - dust, cleats and all.

As I said he dared to be different. I really feel that although Eulan has been gone from this life for some seventy odd years, he should have lived many years before, when the country was young, and a man was free to wander the mountains and streams without any restraints such as fences, posted signs or fish and game regulations.

Eulan loved nature. I have seen him sit for hours by a cool mountain spring watching honey bees winging their way back and forth to the secluded bee tree that he was determined to locate and return to cut it down while it was still early enough in the year to get the honey and still save the bees. If the land was restricted it would make it all the more challenging to Eulan.

I remember on a couple of occasions he and some other fellows timed the falling of the bee tree to the exact moment a train would be passing on the nearby rail road. Many of you probably think such a man should be punished as a

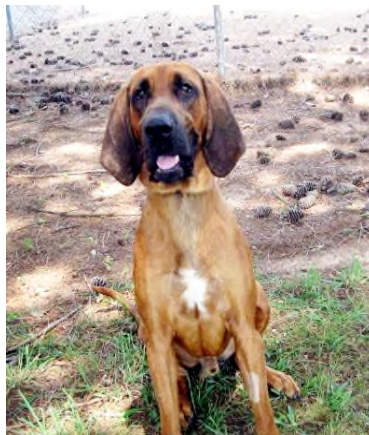
law breaker, and I am certain he should have been, but if you knew him as I did you would certainly know better. He was not a real religious man, but a good man that certainly loved the land, God and God's creatures.

You might be able to say that I became a bootlegger at the age of nine and my first and last customer was Eulan. You see, I found a bottle of whiskey in our mail box that someone had hidden there. I sold it to Eulan for a quarter.

The tall tales that he spun to me as we sat on the old Shiloh Cemetery fence were much more rewarding as the whiskey took effect than the quarter was.

Many years ago I was selected as one of six men who carried Eulan Golden to his grave, even though I was only sixteen years old. It was a very "untimely death". He was struck down by an automobile, truly a victim of a modern age where he never seemed to belong.

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