



No. 304
June 2018



Old Huntsville

HISTORY AND STORIES OF THE TENNESSEE VALLEY

Love on the Guntersville Bridge



Also in this issue: **The Rock House on Toll Gate Road**

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Love on Guntersville Bridge

by Belinda Talley

Picture above - Belinda's mother and dad, getting married on the bridge

Front page picture, Belinda and her husband Tom, getting married on the bridge

"I'd grow my own food if I could just find bacon seeds."

Brandon Owens, bacon-lover

Did you marry a baby? Evidence backs up the personality differences between the oldest child vs. the baby of the family. The first-born child is typically a protective, take-charge, domineering and cautious achiever. Most of the time the last born or baby of the family will tend to be fun-loving, care-free and want to be the focus of attention.

Close to a year apart, he was born in 1912 and she in 1913. The oldest of eleven, Buna Ovella Maddux, desired to be strong and set a good example for her younger siblings. Thomas Edward German didn't have the pressure that's put on the oldest child. He was more the happy-go-lucky type, the youngest of four and the baby of the family.

Three miles south of town, past several crop fields and down a dirt road, was the old home place of Tom. He didn't know Buna even though their farm was just up the road. Her family lived in a better area, only because their farm was closer to town.

A church picnic, dinner-on-the-ground church type, was the first time he saw her. Tom was 19 when he spotted her sitting on a pretty handmade quilt. He knew then and there he'd do whatever it took to win her approval. Later he would find out that all those kids sitting with Buna were her brothers and sisters. Tom was immediately smitten by her beauty and grace. Buna on the other



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hand was busy chasing after all of her younger siblings to give much thought about him.

Communication in the late 1920's was tricky but Tom was determined. He sent word that he would come calling on Thursday about sundown. Buna wanted everything to be perfect...but, with ten younger children in their five-room house, she knew it would be quite a challenge. Back toward the corner, in the floor of the front room, was a huge heap of black-eyed peas that were drying for seasonal storage. The process required the bean pods be beaten and stirred daily. When the hull was dry, the peas inside would begin to rattle. Eventually the peas would separate from the hull and fall out. Those peas were not a part of what Buna had envisioned for her date with Tom but, she had no way of telling him not to come.

The smaller children had completed their daily chores and Buna didn't waste any time recruiting them to help. You should have heard the rattling as those black-eyed peas went to flying! It was a sight to see...all of the sifting, shelling and shaking to sort out that mountain-peak pile of peas.

The sun began to set and Tom showed up, as promised. There they sat, in the front room...where many little eyes were secretly watching, not a black-eyed in the bunch. Tom and Buna dated on-and-off for several years. The big day eventually came and he asked her to marry him. She said yes, and plans were underway.

Buna's mother and father were quite relieved. They wondered if any of the kids would ever leave! You see, she was the oldest and the very first to leave home and she was 27!

Buna, like every bride, wanted to have a beautiful wedding, but with very little money, it would be difficult. She looked and searched, to no avail. Tom was aggravated and blurted out, "Well, why don't we just get married on Guntersville Bridge?"

Tom had never before seen the look on her face. Buna had a twinkle in her eye as ideas began to saturate her mind, then came the "ah-ha" moment. Buna had always loved being outdoors and around all of God's beautiful creation. The birds were singing, the Tennessee River was slowly flowing and the sun was beginning to rise over the mountain. June 23rd,

1940, my parents were married... at sunrise on the Guntersville Bridge.

The story isn't over. Fast forward 30 years.

Another first-born child and another baby-of-the-family fell in love. A family tradition was repeated. The birds were singing and the Tennessee River was flowing as the sun rose on that Sunday morning, September 6, 1970. William Tom Talley and Belinda Joyce German were married at sunrise... on Guntersville Bridge. TV cameras captured the historic event as the 300 guests were serenaded. Yes, music was played from a boat, on the Tennessee River beneath the bridge. History was repeated "Like-Mother Like-Daughter".

The George Houston Bridge in Guntersville served the area well for its 64-year lifespan. That bridge provided passage, connected and joined people and families together. Only two wedding ceremonies were performed

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on that bridge...both saw the sun rise.

Wait...you thought the story was over? No, we aren't quite done... Fast forward 33 years.

The baby-of-our-family meets another first-born child, they fall in love and make the decision to be married. Problem; the bridge has been torn down. Besides "this bride" and sunrise wedding would not work well together.

May 31st of 2003...with two hundred witnesses along with a few random strangers with their dogs, Pastor Rusty Nelson performed the wedding ceremony of Adriane Ovella Talley and Jason Stanley Kulvinskis at Big Spring Park. East side, in the historic part of the park, there is an iron bridge. Yes, the ceremony was on a bridge. The time of day...sunset, of course. Like-Mother, Like-Daughter...Like-Mother, Like-Daughter. History does repeat itself. My parents were married 49 years when my mother went to be with the Lord.

Tom and I have been married 47 years. My daughter, Adriane and her husband, Jason have been married 15 years. Seems to me, that bridge weddings really do connect people pretty well...at

least it is true in our family.

We all know that opposites attract. A first born marries a baby of the family. But we also know that marriage is not always wine and roses...

My husband winks at me and says..." Our wedding on the bridge... I should've jumped off!"

Opposites Attract but sometimes Opposites Attack!

What does future hold for this family tradition? Perhaps ask one the five grandchildren... if they like bridges.

In the summer of 1954 Tom and Buna German opened a fabric store in Huntsville called The Cloth Basket, a successful fabric business for 35 years.

Tom and Belinda Talley live in Huntsville. Belinda has worked with local seniors for 17 years and retired in 2017 to pursue her dream of writing. When asked what she would like to write about, she gave a mischievous smile "Oh, I have numerous tales about our escapades and adventures. Don't you think for a minute, that seniors are done living. No, siree! When we're together... we're all 18 again! I have more stories than I do time. Wait for it, there's more to come."



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Very Old Superstitions



* You should never hand a hot pepper directly to a friend – superstition has it that is will bring discord into the friendship. If you want to give your friend a jalapeno, put it on the table or counter and have them pick it up.

* Eggs symbolize fertility, so farmers would scatter broken eggs into their fields hoping they would bring forth an abundant crop. Also, if you break open an egg and find two yolks, that means someone you know will be getting married or having twins. And when you're cracking your egg, make sure to crush the eggshell afterward: otherwise, legend has it, a witch will gather up the pieces, set sail and cause terrible storms at sea.

* Cure leprosy and the plague by swallowing a spider rolled in butter.

* If you cut open a loaf of bread and see a hole (a.k.a. a large air bubble), that means somebody will die soon. The hole in the bread represents a coffin (spooky!). You should also cut a cross into the top of your loaf before baking, otherwise the devil will sit on it and ruin your loaf. Now "hot cross buns" makes more sense.

* If you eat cabbage regularly, you will grow larger breasts.

* Tea, also used in divination (we won't get into that), has lots of superstitions connected to it. For instance, you should never put milk in your tea before the sugar, or you may never get married. Seemingly contradictory, undissolved sugar at the bottom of your cup means someone is in love with you. Spilling your tea means a stranger is about to visit you. And let only one person pour the tea – it's bad luck if the duty is shared.

* A sneezing cat is the sign of future wealth.

* An acorn at the window will keep lightning out.

* If you spill black pepper you will have a serious argument with a good friend within the day.

* Two people pull apart the dried breastbone of a chicken or turkey until it cracks and breaks, each one making a wish while doing so. The person who gets the long half of the wishbone will have his/her wish come true.

* When the wind is out of the east, fish bite the least; when the wind is out of the west, fish bite the best.

It's no accident that *Stressed* spelled backwards is *Desserts*.

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TRUE LOVE



by Judith C. Smith

True Love, a 1937 Black Chevrolet, was the most beautiful car that I have ever owned. She, and I say she because there was a certain feminine appeal about her, was given to me on my seventeenth birthday. I had been in the car a year earlier at my grandmother's when it was painted grey and it was 19 years old at the time.

So, I awakened to find "True Love" that day with her new fresh coat of black paint, sparkling in the sun. Her white sidewall tires new and clean and hub caps that were polished so brightly that I could see myself in them from at least twelve feet away. It gave her an air of dignity. Inside, there was a new set of seat covers, clock, radio and a heater.

True Love had something special that set her apart from all the other cars in our neighborhood and that was a rumble seat. All my friends used to toss a coin to see which ones would ride in this seat. True Love was in every parade, and always won the prize for the best decorated car. Everyone looked forward to parades just to see what True Love's decora-

tions would be. Last but not least, I must mention her unusual sounding horn, there was nothing like it. The sound was a cross between the whistle of a train and the toot of a bus. One could hear her coming long before she was in sight. Finally, True Love had to be sold in order to purchase a newer model car for college use, but I shall always remember her new and shiny on that perfect seventeenth birthday.

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Remedies that Work

* Trying to quit smoking? Each day wait one hour longer before lighting up.

* Have you had a heart attack? Get a pet. Studies show that the majority of people who have had heart attacks and get a pet, have a shorter recuperation period and a longer survival rate than those without pets.

* Rosemary tea strengthens the heart.

* Addicted to soda drinks? Stop drinking it. Recent studies show that soda drinkers have faster bone loss.

* Allergies and migraine headaches seem to be more prevalent among left-handed people.

* Many swear that they can get rid of a bad headache by rubbing the fleshy part of their thumb (between the thumb and forefinger) for a few minutes.

* Need a good hair setting lotion? Find a beer that has gone flat and run it through your clean hair. The beer smell will disappear in less time than it takes to drink a 3-pack.

* Many believe that you breathe positive energy through your right nostril. Take a cotton ball and put it into your left nostril, breathe through the right one for about an hour, in a quiet place. Feel the energy.

* Next time you're in a boring business meeting and feel you might go to sleep, press your

elbows against your sides, exerting a lot of pressure for a few seconds. Your blood circulation will be increased and keep you awake.

* Alfalfa sprouts are said to clear vision. Buy the seeds, sprout them yourself and eat the sprouts in your salads and you will see a difference.

* Never burn a patch of poison ivy, it can get into your lungs and be very dangerous. Instead wear gloves, pull plants up by the root and let them dry completely, then dispose of them.



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The Good Old Days

by Barry Key

Every generation has had its "good old days". For the purpose of this story, I'm referring to the 1940s and 1950s....my good old days.

Every child should have had the experience of growing up in the late 1940s through the 1950s. WWII was over, the economy was still strong and the majority of the population seem to be faring well. Children and preteens had all the freedom to roam and play outside (even after dark) without fear of being harassed or abducted. Young adults of driving age could cruise the popular hangouts in Huntsville and Guntersville to show off their favorite jalopies.

Don't misinterpret what I'm saying, life was still a struggle for many people, but on the other hand, life seemed simpler, more carefree, and less stressful. No one cared if your pants and shirt colors didn't match, or if your black tennis shoes had holes in the toe. Sometimes the top of your old stretched out socks would slip down to the top of your shoes in a rumbled mess, so what, no one really cared.

The mind is an amazing thing. While growing up it seemed I was always doing home chores, working in some farmer's field, mowing lawns, or delivering newspapers....anything to make a dime. Now that I'm thinking back, those things have become obscured. The things that are still clear in my mind now are what I would consider the enjoyable moments in my life, i.e., playing ball, hunting, fishing, water sports, visiting family, and of course hanging out with friends.

When you met a friend, or a stranger, on the street, there was

eye contact, a nod of the head (or tip of the hat) or "a raised arm with a friendly salute with the pointed index finger".

Casual greetings, even to strangers, seemed to be the way of life in our rural town of New Hope, Alabama.

It was that period in time, in the rural areas, when baseball and basketball were the sports of choice....we had no other choice. I don't think any kids in the south had ever heard of hockey or soccer. If some guys had said let's go play sock-her, I would have thought they meant let's go down the street and beat up Peggy Sue or Mary Jane, or let's play hockey....I'm not even going there.

Our ball teams weren't chosen by a committee at the Town Hall or YMCA (we didn't have either), but usually by the two best players in the group. They



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by default were the captains and alternated picks from the rest of the group. Yes, there was always someone picked last, usually the youngest and smallest, but everyone got to play. I can't remember anyone traumatized as a result of being picked last. We all went through it at one time or another.

We had no referees or umpires; calls and plays were on the honor system. We had disputes, but no instant video replays. Disputes were settled by the flip of a coin. When a coin flip was challenged, the dispute was usually settled by the best fighter on each team standing on either side of a line drawn in the dirt. After several minutes of "pecking" each other's shoulder with clinched fist and daring the other to step across the line, physical negotiations finally started. The first one with a bloodied nose or black eye usually conceded the decision. A minute later the game was under way as if nothing had ever happened.

It was a period in time when most rural families lived off the land as much as possible. Nearly every family had a garden, or access to one. In addition to our garden, my dad raised a calf and hog each year for our pork and beef. We always carried our animals to a processing house for preparation for the freezer or to be cured. My grandparents around Thanksgiving, or a little later depending on the temperature, would have (sounds crude) "hog killing". The men would slaughter a pig, cut it up and salt it down for the "smoke house". The women would render the lard and make the cracklings. The lard would be put in a shiny new 6 gallon "lard stand" to be used as cooking oil for the rest of the year. The cracklings were used for snacks and in corn bread. Old lard stands were used for storage. The old saying about a pig, everything was used except the "oink".

My mother cooked with lard for years. I guess it's what you

become accustomed to but I have never eaten any food, fried or baked, that tastes as good as food cooked with lard. It would have been sinful to cook a pot of pinto beans or green beans without a big chunk of fatback floating in the pot. And a pie crust cut-in with homemade butter, or lard, man oh man!!

Your doctor today would have a stroke if you told him you used lard for cooking. I know all the research that has been done says that animal fat is harmful to your heart and veins. I think a person's activity level has a lot to do with how well their circulatory system handles nutrients, good or bad. The agricultural generations, before my generation, that cooked with lard for their entire lives were manually active from before sun-up until sun-down. The use of lard may have provided the energy that kept a person going 12 to 14 hours per day, six days a week.

Before I conclude my story, I would like to tell you how I came up with the idea and title. A couple of years ago, a high school classmate and friend, Jerry, invited me to go squirrel hunting. Since then we have

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gone hunting and fishing several times. Now, before I get any further, I've got to tell you this story.

This winter Jerry and I had gone squirrel hunting. The temperature had been below freezing for a couple of days. While walking through the woods we came to a creek that was covered with ice. Thinking it was too thin to walk on, Jerry decided to jump across. He didn't make it to the far bank but hit right at the edge.

When his feet hit the ice they started slipping and sliding back and forth almost in a blur, his arms were swinging in circles as if he were attempting a vertical liftoff. Trying to maintain his balance, Jerry went through all sorts of body contortions that would make an Italian Ballerina proud (You have to be visualizing Jerry's animation).

One of his feet hit the bank and the other slid out from under him in the opposite direction. The splits he did would have scored a perfect ten at any Olympics. All this took place in a matter of a split second. My immediate thought, he was going to break through the ice into the frigid water. Somehow the ice held. After we determined Jerry was alright, no broken bones or pulled muscles, we both had a good laugh....as I am doing again as I write.

Now, back to how I come up with the story and title. When Jerry and I were going hunting or fishing, we mainly traveled the country roads. It didn't matter if Jerry was the driver or the passenger, when we met a car or passed someone standing in their yard, here comes the "raised arm with the index finger salute". I think his gesture comes totally unconsciously, a consequence of our yesteryears. (Yes reader, it's OK to try the salute, no one is watching).

Watching Jerry's cordial greeting brought back memories of my youth, memories from....."THE GOOD OLD DAYS".

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MYSTERIOUS PHOTOGRAPH APPEARS AFTER LIGHTNING STORM

from 1886 Huntsville Newspaper

During a heavy thunderstorm that visited Sand Mountain the evening of July 18, Miss Lillian Paul was in the dining room of her father's house when she noticed a gleaming tray about which reflections from the lightning flashed incessantly almost like a flame.

Reaching for the tray to remove it, there came a flash of extreme brilliancy when she placed the tray under the table and left the room. The next morning it was noticed that the tray bore upon its centre a profile of the young lady's head and face.

Mr. Leo Doft, the inventor of the electrical motor which bears his name, holds that "the picture was printed by light and not by heat, and that the flash was reflected from the face to the inside of the opposite window pane and thence thrown upon the tray, producing an actinic portrait."

However curious this may be, this result is not peculiar to Alabama lightning, as the following incident, related by a northern newspaper:

"We have heretofore published an account of a portrait supposed to have been photographed by lightning on a pane of glass in the window of an old farm house in this county."

Another instance of the same curious phenomenon has been found in the window of the Mansion House on the "Mount Eagle" farm, more generally known as the "Gentry Place."

The portraits of four persons are plainly discernible - two men, a woman and a child. The faces are not all on one pane, that of one of the men and the woman being on adjoining glasses, the face of the other man on another, and that of the child on one of the lower panes; and the theory is that the party were all looking through the window during a thunderstorm, when a sudden flash of lightning, by some mysterious process, instantaneously fixed their features on the glass.

The existence of the portraiture are of comparatively recent discovery, and have attracted many visitors as well as experts from across the Southern states who all express their bewilderment.

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RINGS AND THINGS

by Jane Barr

Tom and I came to Huntsville, Alabama right from our wedding reception in El Paso, Texas.

Tom had been working with the Von Braun Rocket

Team and was being transferred to Huntsville.

We had a used car with a heater but no air-conditioning, this was August 1950 and no car had air-conditioning. In fact air-conditioning was almost unheard of!

We looked at the map, drove from El Paso, Texas

across Texas stopping at Judge Roy Bean, the Law west of the Pecos. Judge Bean had a wooden saloon in the middle of the desert. He was known as The Hanging Judge (he didn't believe

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in prisons).

On we drove across Texas to Austin and Houston. All of this was on two-lane roads, across the hot desert. No air-conditioning, no Interstate, no McDonald's, no cell phones. East we went through Baton Rouge into the Bayou country of Louisiana with moss-hanging trees, alligators and rickety bridges.

It was getting late and we were hungry, then we saw it, a country store! It was built elevated to keep from getting flooded so up the steps we went into the one-room store. First stop, at the original cracker barrel. Yes, there was a wooden barrel, you reached in and grabbed crackers, no they were not in paper wrappers, just like they came out of the oven.

Next stop the counter, there we ordered cheese cut from a large round piece and some slices of bologna (baloney). Last, we got a soft (bottled) drink; there were no metal containers then!!! We asked the owner if he could tell us where we could find a motel or hotel. He laughed !!! By then we were really tired and he took pity on us. "If you want, you can park overnight where you are." Now, that was really friendly and he didn't even charge us. We were truly Babes in the Bayou.

The next morning we continued heading toward New Orleans. The scenery didn't change. We stopped at a small store, all signs were in French. This was Lower Louisiana where the Cajun and Creole, French speaking, lived. Pointing to the grocery stores, we bought a few groceries.

Two nights later we entered New Orleans. We stopped at the first hotel that looked OK. Tom must have looked really weary for we got a room. We were at the Monte Leone, in the French Quarters, where one must make a reservation at least 6 months ahead. This was a very elegant hotel built

in the late 1800s, catering to the wealthy. Again, we were Babes.

The next morning we wandered to the Cafe du Monde (coffee from around the world) for their beignets (fried donuts) and cafe (coffee, usually with milk). The beignets were square, covered with powdered sugar that got all over your face, clothes and were

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the most yummy, especially with hot coffee. Finger-licken' good!

On we went to a grocery store and bought food, not knowing what might be ahead.

We drove northeast to Biloxi, Mississippi and Mobile, Alabama. Wandering north we saw a large billboard with a picture of a handsome Arab man, mounted on a grand looking Arabian horse. Nearby we past the Arabian Motel. We didn't stop in Arab, Alabama, we were anxious to get to Huntsville.

By now we were riding up and down mountains, across Sand Mountain. Down the mountain we came, crossing the Tennessee River and along what is now Whitesburg Drive.

Into Huntsville we came tired and hungry. We stopped at the first cafe we saw. After lunch Tom went to pay and the cashier pointed to a sign "No checks. Cash only." Tom told her they were Travelers Checks, good as cash. "No!" was the answer. This was a time before Credit Cards.

So Tom left me as collateral and walked to the bank on the Square. No luck! It was Wednesday and all the banks and businesses were closed Wednesday afternoon. This was a town of 16,000. Walking around the Square Tom stopped at the only business open, Hill Jewelry Company. Mr. Hill took pity on Tom and cashed the Travelers Check. (Years later Mr. Hill was our neighbor on Monte Sano!). Tom came back to get me out of Debtor's Prison.

Coming into town we passed a motel. There we spent the first night. The next night was at Monte Sano State Park cabin. It was a one-room cabin with bed, indoor toilet and shower and kitchen, everything we needed to live in the cabin. We had a screened-in porch with picnic table.

Sitting on the porch, I thought back. Two weeks before I stood in front of Tom and said "With this ring, I thee wed." And Tom placing a ring on my finger said "With this ring, I thee wed."

Tom passed away February 7, 2018. We were married 67 years filled with love, trust and respect.

I now wear his ring next to mine.

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Heard On the Street

by Cathey Carney



The adorable little boy in last month's Photo of the Month was Hall Bryant, as many of you called to identify. So Cute! My very first caller was Norma Ricketts of Huntsville. She loves working at Jackson Way Styling Salon as a women's hair stylist/cutter and said she would know that face anywhere!

Then my hidden hummingbird was not quite as small as I thought I made it so I had calls from everywhere! The winner was Ramona Rogers of Hazel Green, who spotted it and called. Many may remember Ramona because she worked at Aunt Eunice's restaurant for years before Aunt Eunice got sick and had to close the restaurant. Congratulations to both Norma and Ramona.

Heard a good hint the other day for you who like to root cuttings of plants in soil - roses are a great example - use ground cinnamon. You have it in your cabinets and it works! Just dampen the end of the cutting, dip in cinnamon

and into the soil.

So many June anniversaries to celebrate - M.D. and Judy Smith will be married 57 years in June. I know there will be parties in the Smith household. Chuck and Barbara Saunders will celebrate 50 years of happiness on June 31, and they're welcoming family for some serious partying. Ken and Diane Owens will have been married 48 years in June. Their son Brandon will be moving here to Huntsville for good and that's an amazing anniversary present! Congratulations to all you lovebirds who have been so lucky to have so many years with your true love.

Be sure to mark your calendar for the 2018 Huntsville Area Crime Stoppers Auction scheduled for June 23 at 1pm at the Redstone Federal Credit Union on 220 Wynn Drive. There are items that will be auctioned you won't find anywhere else and it all goes to a great cause!

It's been a really sad month, we lost some very important people in our lives. Ray Weinberg was a Golden K Kiwanian, a retired Army Major who served overseas. He married the love of his life, Kathleen, 66 years ago on April 26, the day he passed away. He had sent me the story of how he met Kathleen, the day before he died. He leaves wife Kathleen Jeanette Weinberg and his 3 children: Paul C. Weinberg, Nina Lawles (Bobby), and Allan J. Weinberg (Lois Anne). He has 18 grandchildren and 30 great-grandchildren.

Ray loved to bowl and won city and state championships, until he got too sick to bowl anymore. In

Ray's memory I'm hiding a tiny bowling ball somewhere within the pages of this June Old Huntsville. He would love that and would be rooting for several winners! He had the best sense of humor. We'll always love you, Ray.

Happy Birthday to Dot Branche and Lynn Green from sis Rosemary Leatherwood. Also Happy Birthday to her son-in-law Allen Woods!

Happy June Birthday to my handsome grandson Evan Troup!

Mary Harris called and told us that her sweet husband, Ben Harris, had passed away at the age of 105. Their home is in New Hope, and Ben lived life to the fullest his whole life. Mary and Ben were married for 33 years and he rode motorcycles til he was 102! We had written about him on each of his birthdays in the column. He leaves Mary, and children Ann Moore and Debbie Parker and step-children Debbie Rodgers (Boyd), Bobby Nash (Diana) and Marvin Nash in addition to grand/great/and great-great grandchildren. His spirit will live on forever in their family and friends.

Jim White is a proud member of the Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Assoc. and there were so many pilots and crew members who

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 little girl lives in one house and plays hostess in her other one.



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lost their lives during the war. Jim and his wife **Teresa** recently attended the dedication of a monument placed at Arlington National Cemetery on April 18th. There were thousands in attendance and a well-deserved recognition for those brave men and women.

Have you noticed that before any storm you'll see birds soaring through the air? I never paid attention to it til Tom told me about that years ago and it's a fact that all animals have premonitions of storms and bad weather. I'll bet your pets let you know when there's storminess on the way.

A most interesting auction was held in Old Town in late March. There were so many people it had to happen under a tent and everything from the old home was sold. The people in attendance were mostly older and I hear from young people that they (for the most part) want to travel light these days and not collect antiques or items that will get in the way of their mobility. I still love looking at old furniture and kitchen items that folks used back in the Depression and early 1900s, I think they're just fascinating.

Benny Hale was one of those individuals whom, once you met and got to know him, you'd never forget him. He was funny, kind, everybody's electrician, friend and husband. He loved sports immensely and had traveled to every baseball stadium in the U.S. Benny passed away at the young age of nearly 73. Benny is survived by wife **Carolyn**, daughter **Michelle Cooper (Eric)**; son **Mark Hale**; sisters **Kathleen Pierce**, **Betty Thomas** and **Alma Sand-**

ers (Buck); stepsons **Nathan** and **Evan Basler** and his grandkids **Danica**, **Nicholas** and **Oliver**. He will never be forgotten.

It was so good to talk with **Chester Huskins** recently, who moved to North Carolina to be with family. He will be 97 in January and is proud of that! He was a loyal Golden K Kiwanian for many years in Huntsville.

Another Huntsvillian who stopped by recently to say hello was **Ray Moring**. I could publish a book on his memories of Huntsville and his younger days! A really sweet man.

Bill and Rosemary Leatherwood opened Ole Dads BBQ June 10, 1995. Bill passed away June 9, 2016 and she continues to carry on his dream and will celebrate 23 years in business. Also June would have been their 41st wedding anniversary (June 1).

The guy who keeps my yard beautiful is **Charles Petty** and he gave me a good tip recently. He uses gas powered blowers, edgers and other equipment and he said if you want them to last longer, use non-ethanol gas. It costs a bit more but those who don't do this find they are replacing their equipment much more often. It pays for itself in the long run!

I know that we have this gorgeous warm weather now and many of us are tormented by mosquitoes and biting bugs. We are advised to spray ourselves down with DEET and other bug sprays but that just feels weird on your skin, it's a strong chemical. So I had this great idea - I'm going to try something more natural, and smell good at the same time. I love

the scent of **Patchouli**, reminds me of the good old 60s, so I will look for either patchouli lotion or spray and give that a try. Most bugs don't like patchouli so it'll be a good experiment.

Dr. J. D. Jones was a dentist in Huntsville years ago, and many patients remember how gentle he was when it came to dental procedures. What I remember about Doc Jones is he'd wait til your mouth was just full of equipment then he'd tell an amazingly funny joke - you'd nearly choke. He'll always be loved and he was 89 when he passed away April 28. He was a West Huntsville High graduate as well as University of Alabama and Northwestern U. in Chicago. He was an Air Force Vet, serving two years in Korea. He married his young sweetheart **Martha**, in 1953, who passed away after many years of marriage. He is survived by son **Donald Carter Jones (Kelly)** and daughter **Lisa Dickson (Doug)** and grandchildren who treasured him.

There are so many activities coming up in Huntsville now that the good weather is here. We all know how to "Google" which is a great way for us older folks to search. Google Lowe Mill activities, City of Huntsville events, Burritt Museum dates, Huntsville's 200th year celebration events and walking tours, Huntsville Botanical Garden dates, and for sure the weekly Green Street Market, Ayers Farmers Market; ArtsHuntsville and all the other upcoming events.

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Summertime Snacking

Zesty Cold Vegetables

1 cup each: Broccoli
 Cauliflower
 Squash
 White mushrooms
 Carrots
 Red, yellow and orange pepper

1 bottle Kraft Zesty Italian Dressing
 3 T. chopped parsley

In a large bowl break up the washed vegetables into bite-sized pieces.

Pour the bottle of dressing over them and mix well. Sprinkle parsley and mix.

Seal and let set overnight in fridge, turning at least once. Drain and serve cold with toothpicks. Can add/change other vegetables per your taste.

Savory Ranch Mix

Pretzels
 Pecan halves
 Cheerios
 Rice Chex
 Corn Chex
 Cheese-its
 1 env. Hidden Valley ranch dressing mix (dry)
 1/2 btl. butter popcorn oil

In a large bowl, mix about two cups each of the listed dry ingredients. Pour 1/4 bottle of the oil over the cereals and mix well. Sprinkle half the ranch dry mix and mix well. Repeat with the remaining 1/4 bottle oil and ranch dressing mix. Toss and stir very well.

This can be served immediately, stored in an airtight container or frozen.

Spicy Cheese Bites

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

Mix all ingredients together, will be very stiff. Roll the mixture into small balls - about the size of a large pecan - and flatten gently. Bake on greased cookie sheets at 300 degrees for 30 minutes or so. Be careful not to burn. These are good warm but also freeze well.

Rolled Tortilla Bites

8 oz. pkg. cream cheese, softened

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4 oz. can chopped green chilies, drained
 4 oz. jar chopped pimento, drained
 1/2 c. chopped black olives
 10 6-inch flour tortillas
 Salsa & sour cream

In a small bowl combine first 4 ingredients and mix well. Spread a heaping tablespoon on each tortilla and roll it up. Place, seam side down, on a plate. Cover and refrigerate for 2 hours. To serve, cut each roll into 6 1" pieces and serve with sour cream and salsa.

Deviled Mushrooms

2 lb. mushroom caps (no stem)
 8 oz. pkg. cream cheese
 6-1/2 oz. can deviled ham
 2 t. garlic powder

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

Barb's Hot Shrimp Dip

1 lrg. onion, chopped
 3 cloves garlic, crushed
 3 mild banana peppers, chopped
 3 jalapeno peppers, chopped

2 tomatoes, chopped
 2 lbs. cream cheese, cubed
 1/2 lb. cooked shrimp, chopped small

Salt and pepper to taste
 In a large crock pot, add all the vegetables. Add the cheese and slowly heat til the cheese is melted. Mix well. Let simmer for a few minutes then add the shrimp at the last minute. Stir well and serve with hot crispy tortilla chips. Delicious!

Artichoke Dip

1 c. mayonnaise
 1 can artichoke hearts, drained and chopped
 12 oz. skim milk mozzarella cheese, grated
 1 c. Parmesan cheese, grated
 Triscuits

Mix all except for crackers and pour in a baking/serving dish. Bake at 325 degrees for 25 minutes. Serve hot with Triscuits or crackers of choice.

Mini-Cheesecakes

3 8-oz. pkg. cream cheese, softened
 5 eggs
 1 c. sugar
 2 t. vanilla extract

Mix the above ingredients til smooth and pour into foil cupcake liners (regular size)

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

1 8-oz carton sour cream
 1/4 c. sugar
 1 t. vanilla extract

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

Mint Julep

Chill or freeze glasses or julep cups. Chop fresh mint coarsely and add equal parts of simple syrup. (sugar & water 1:1) Refrigerate several hours. Fill glasses 1/2 full of crushed ice.

Add 1 tablespoon of the crushed mint mixture and 1-2 jiggers of bourbon. Stir and fill glass with crushed ice. Garnish with large sprig of mint.

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Ivy's Mom



Ivy

“Who Will Be My Mother There?”

by *Becky Johnson Head Richardson, Boaz, AL*

We moved from Guntersville to Huntsville in 1966 because my daughter, Ivy Louise Head, would start first grade. I stopped working for NASA/MSFC (1962-1966) to have the summer with Ivy before I enrolled in the University of Alabama Huntsville and she enrolled in the Whitesburg Elementary School. My neighbor's six-year old came home each day with homework. Mine didn't. After two weeks, I called the teacher because they were in different classes and I wanted to find out if Ivy's class assigned homework or not.


Her teacher paused and I could hear her take a deep breath before she said, "We were going to wait another week before we called you. Ivy is not a disciplinary problem, she behaves really well, — and then came that dreaded “BUT—she does not seem to understand what is going on with the lessons. It is the school's recommendation that you take her to a child neurologist to determine if she is mature enough for first grade."

I took Ivy to the recommended neurologist—could have only been a Ph.D. It was a small, cramped office with only a folding chair in front of a desk. He asked Ivy to draw a line between two dots on a regular sheet of white paper. She took the pencil, started at the first dot, then meandered around the paper from margin to margin staying between the two dots, stopping at the second dot. He had her do another similar test. I don't remember it. After the second test he said, "Hasn't anyone every told you that your daughter is retarded?" I remember praying for the concrete floor to open up and let me fall through. The prayer was not because of Ivy's condition, I could deal with that. What I didn't know how to do was go home and tell her father who beat us both and constantly said, "You are the worst mother in the world." I later learned he was mentally ill.

With no public school, I found the Huntsville Achievement Center for Children with Learning Disabilities in the basement of a church



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near downtown Huntsville. (If anyone remembers or can identify that church, we would greatly appreciate it!). To defray her tuition, I worked with no salary all week at the school. I diagnosed children with mobility problems, eye-hand coordination dysfunctions and inability to follow instructions. These routine tests were required to assess the children's dysfunctions and to judge which class was best for them.

Our school was educationally supported under the tutorial leadership of Dr. Newell Carlyle Kephart (1911-1973) who was a professor at Purdue University in 1966. Dr. N. C. Kephart had written a book on recognizing and helping children with learning disabilities. It gave detailed instructions how to evaluate children who had insufficient learning abilities. (You can find information about his publication on the internet by using his name.)

Dr. Kephart presented a workshop for parents and interested persons at Purdue University over a weekend in 1967. Many parents went to Evansville, Indiana. We met his associate/assistant, Dr. Rhoda E. Wharry. I hope it was because of our interest in maintaining the school and our interest in learning about special education that led Dr. Wharry to accept a professorship at the University of Alabama, Huntsville, around 1969. She became a strong force in getting special education recognized in Alabama. Also, from what I have read of her efforts—the entire country owes her its gratitude and thanks also. However, I was not able to determine if she is still alive or not. I hope she is because I would like her to know how deeply grateful I am for her services.


In 1967, Ivy would normally have progressed to the next level of classes. However, the small school didn't have more students for the next level. She would have to repeat first grade. Through my research, I learned you cannot waste a year of a child's life during their formative years. I began looking outside Huntsville for a school.

I found King's Daughters' School (KDS) in Columbia, Tennessee. At our visit to KDS, Ivy ran inside to play. It was a pleasant place. We were told that they had a waiting list and might be six


months before they would know. Secretly, I was happy. Too much so fast. I wanted to spend as much time with my seven-year-old child before she moved 90 miles away. I should say: My only child—only one I could ever have.

(Due to government funding for public special education, KDS was not needed under that charter. KDS is now devoted to a new educational phenomenon: Autism.)

There were so many questions. How were "we" going to pay for this? I soon learned "I" was going to pay for her schooling. Her father told me I had to get a job if I wanted



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Ivy to go to KDS. I was employable. I received a great offer from an electric manufacturing company, but I had also applied at IBM and had not heard from them. IBM had better benefits.

When I got home on Sunday from a trip to see my folks, my husband said, "IBM called and they want you to call them today – not tomorrow – today." Well I did. In Sept. 9, 1967, my job at IBM was to be secretary to the Staff Scientist, Dr. Filiposky (Austrian), who had come over with Dr. Werner von Braun. He was writing papers for patents on trigonometric waveforms for communication satellites. (The things we use today for our cell phones, computers, telephones, etc.). He needed someone who knew mathematics and could type extensive equations. I had taken four quarters of scientific German at UAH and had taken many mathematics courses. I didn't and don't speak German but I could translate from German to English. He reported to the Vice President, IBM-Huntsville, as did I.

In December 1969 I came to work after Christmas and my boss called me in to tell me IBM has enacted another benefit of a lifetime grant of \$25,000 to defray special education tuition with a monthly subsidy to employee children. Ivy used almost every penny of the grant before she aged out of KDS. I worked for IBM for almost 25 years before I retired in 1993 under their disability program.

In Aug. 1967 (two weeks after our visit), KDS called and asked us to have Ivy ready in two weeks. (This was two weeks before IBM called.) I remember every second of those two weeks. I had to buy her a complete wardrobe that could withstand industrial washing machines. Get all her toys ready to go with her. Get her medical records updated. At night, I would sit by her bed while she slept and hand sew name tags in all her clothes, socks, and write her name in her shoes and on her toys.

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I don't remember sleeping. My birthday is August 11. I baked a birthday cake for me and we took Ivy to Reid's restaurant near the Gunterville Lake that had partitioned areas to have a private lunch. I can still see her sitting in the high chair at the end of the table. After we ate and celebrated my birthday, I told her about King's Daughters' School.

I asked her if she remembered visiting the school. She said she did. I asked if she like playing with all the other children. She said she did. I asked her if she would like to go to school there. She looked at me and said, "Who will be my mother there?" I sucked tears. I did not want her to see me sad because she picks up on other people's attitudes. I told my precious seven-year daughter that she would have a "day mother" to get her up in the morning and make sure she was dressed, just like I would do, and make sure she had her breakfast before going to her classes. I told her she would have a "night mother" to tuck her into bed at night, help her say her prayers, and make sure she was safe - just like I would do. I told her she would take all her clothes and toys and she would have lots of friends to play with - but - "I WOULD ALWAYS BE HER REAL MOTHER." In all these years since that day until this moment, it has never crossed my mind that she didn't ask about her father.

With baggage in tow, we arrived at the school. She didn't cry or cling when we got ready to leave. She just hugged me and said, "Bye." For two years my husband and I went almost every weekend on Friday right after work 180 miles round trip, picked her up, and returned her on Sunday evening. Ivy has always respected and loved her father because she was away from him most of her childhood during his mental incapacities. One was he could not accept anything about himself being "not normal." His reaction was to ignore her as much as possible and he did not think it was his responsibility to support her financially. We divorced in 1969. He died in 2000 from heart disease.

Ivy became my total responsibility and I continued the weekend trips until she reached her teens, when I just went one day on the weekend. In 1975, I moved to Manassas, VA. Ivy stayed at KDS. I sent her airplane tickets to fly round trip from Nashville, TN to Washington, DC to visit me. Her first trip was alone at age 15. I also made trips to KDS on my trips home to visit family. Additionally, she was home two weeks in summer and a week at Thanksgiving and Christmas. One weekend she came for a visit so I could

"I asked my wife where she wanted to go for our anniversary. 'Some place I've never been,' she said. 'OK,' I said, 'How about the kitchen?'"

Jim Berry, Scottsboro



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tell her my second marriage had ended. We went to a local carnival. I slipped and fell in to a rain puddle. Soaked my clothes. Leaving the carnival, Ivy said, "Well, that didn't help us find you a husband, but we will."

As teenagers, KDS moved Ivy and a friend to a large basement area. The girls became lifelong friends. She was from Asheville, NC. They continued to call, visit and write each other after aging out of KDS (1978) which did not provide vocational training. Their friendship lasted another 30 years. Then Ruth stopped corresponding and all my efforts to get her brothers to contact us and let us hear from Ruth has gone unanswered. Ivy thinks Ruth has passed away and they don't know how to tell us.

While Ivy was at KDS, I spoke at many PTA meetings about what it was like to place a young child in a residential school. For example, Ivy couldn't tie her shoes when she went to the school. At one visit home, I had her in my lap and started to tie her shoes. I reached to get the laces and she slapped my hand away and said, "I can do that now." She took one lace and laid it over to the other side. Then she took the other lace and laid it to the opposite side. She wiggled her finger underneath the two laces and got one and pulled it out. Then she put her hands on the ends of the two laces and pulled with all her strength. Then she said, "That's all I know for now, you have to finish it."

It was at that moment I knew I had her in the right place and all the whispers I heard my family and friends say behind my back were from ignorance. It all came full circle while my first cousin and I were sitting up when my father, who had Alzheimer's, had had kidney-stone surgery. Someone had to

be with him because he would pull out the IV's. He went into a coma during the surgery. He awoke and lived several years afterwards.

In my large extended family I have never experienced harsh words with any of them. Well, my cousin looked at me and said, "Becky I owe you an apology." "What for?" was my immediate reply. She said, "When you put Ivy in the residential school, I thought it was because you wanted a career and didn't want to take care of her. I now realize that was the best thing for Ivy and it must have been extremely hard on you. I drive the

special education handicapped bus. I know Ivy's capabilities are leap years ahead of any of the students her age that were kept at home."

She knew that Ivy (1) flew into and out of Washington National or Dulles, West Palm Beach, Florida, Atlanta; (2) had lived for several years at a YWCA and worked at a vocational workshop in Florida while she was in Georgia; (3) could use a grocery list and buy the entire list; (4) uses her own debit card; (5) takes her own medicines with slight supervision, including ordering her refills; (6) cooks many things and "polices" the



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kitchen; (7) writes out the checks for our monthly utility bills; and (8) does the entire family's laundry. My cousin also experienced child separation when her daughter who had scoliosis, was hospitalized 90 miles away for 9 months and she was required to be a long-distance mother also.

What I think I did right is this: I never put limits on her. I helped her try new things. If I gave her record player, it was hers and if she broke it—that was fine. I nearly came to regret this plan when Ivy took a screwdriver to a plugged-in VCR, unscrewed the back, and pulled the tape out BACKWARD: destroying the VCR player. Not about the player: she could have been electrocuted! She is never going to be perfect—nor am I. I always asked myself what would she do if I was not here? The answer was that it was my job to prepare her to be as self-sufficient as possible, to be proud of her accomplishments, how to handle mistakes and learn to live with other people. I told her one night while she was getting upset trying to do something in the kitchen—"Mistakes create wisdom!" Well, I hope it sunk in. Then I heard her stomp her foot in her room where she was trying to get the king-sized bedspread on her bed and say: "I'VE HAD ALL THE WISDOM I CAN STAND TODAY!"

Ivy's condition is that her frontal brain did not form correctly and this affects knowledge getting into her long-term memory. This requires much repetition, but it can be done with a lot of patience. She functions mostly in a concrete world. She needs to see things done rather than have them explained to her. She likes things to be constant but not fanatically so. It's okay to eat at 6 p.m. or 7 p.m., or to delay a plan. She has her good days and bad days—we all do.

Her IQ was last measured at 69. Her language has been copied from two people who were college educated and from her many teachers and family. Her verbal skills often fool people as to what her real mental abilities are. She sends birthday, anniversary, get well, and sympathy cards to almost

everyone she knows. She can remember the dates of these occasions in her head. She reads, paints, watches a lot of TV, collects Disney and Scooby-Doo CDs. She is my kitchen and house helper and navigator when we drive. Once driving home from Manassas, VA, she read every road sign for 12 hours: Roanoke 120 miles, Roanoke, 110 miles, gas, food, etc. Finally, at dark, we turned off 159 at Collinsville headed to Sardis. No road signs—I relaxed. Quiet—for a minute. Then I heard this soft voice say, "Up a hill, down a hill, up a hill, down a hill." When I arrived at Mom's, I sat on her porch and laughed for 30 minutes.

Yes, there are days my nerves get frayed. I yell when I shouldn't. I reach limits, especially when she leaves the peanut butter spoon on the counter. She gets angry or has anxiety attacks. It's not always pleasant. But then she does something that makes me laugh and I realize just how lucky I am. Every day she brightens my world and I thank God for giving the responsibility of Ivy to me. I have always wanted her in my life. Soon I will be 78 and she will be 58. I have had this rewarding and fulfilling job now for 58 years, and I work each day to make sure it continues as long as possible with all the warts, bumps and happiness it can bring.

If anyone from the Huntsville Achievement Center for Children with Learning Disabilities School wants to contact me, I would enjoy hearing how your children grew up. You can reach me at bejayrich@aol.com.



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A Dirty Love Story

by Mark Dyer

Relocating 2,000 miles to not date someone who didn't want to date me is hardly the beginning of your typical romantic story, is it? It was 1979, a time when long distance love affairs came with some serious impediments. This was decades before cell phones, twitskypes and faceblogging. Long distant communication was a "pick your poison" sort of choice between telegrams, telephones and the U.S. mail. Telegrams required gold bullion up front and the mail was pretty much the equivalent of texting one word per day, one way. That left good old Ma Bell, by far, the most misleading and dangerous of the three.

At this time local calls (distances you could shout) were free on a private line, but long distance calls required major body parts, such as an arm and a leg. A discounted rate was available during times that were considered miserable or highly inconvenient. As a sophomore in college, earning \$2.65/hr. part-time, I was relegated to using the insomniac's bargain calling time of ten cents per minute after 11:00 p.m. for my amorous efforts. Even at this rate, I racked up a whopping total of \$700 in phone bills during the semester. Just for reference, my tuition AND books were less than \$500. The object of my potential affection, (OOMPA), and I concluded it was obviously cheaper for me to relocate out to the Rocky Mountains for school. Probably not one of my logical high points, but love tends to find its own path and sure doesn't have much to do with logic.

While I was making plans, unbeknownst to me, OOMPA met a handsome, wealthy, intelligent, affable, jerk named Dirt. That wasn't his actual name, but it is a close approximation and I have an aversion to law suits. Additionally, he may or may not have been an actual jerk, but that is also a close approximation. As far as I could ascertain, the only problem Dirt had was a slight speech impediment from being born with a silver spoon in his mouth.

It wasn't until OOMPA came home from school for Christmas that my powers of deduction uncovered Dirt. OOMPA gave me a hint when she said, "Leave me alone. I have a handsome, wealthy, intelligent and affable new boyfriend with a slight speech impediment. Go away. Now." Her message wasn't

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all that clear, so I hung around for a while. I was actually pretty good friends with OOMPA's family and they seemed to like me, so I wrangled an invitation to eat dinner with them. OOMPA was not thrilled, but it was six against one, so I figured I had some protection to hide behind.

Later that very uncomfortable night, I happened to be the only one near the family phone, so being polite and slightly nosy, I answered it. There was a deep, manly voice of some affable dude with a silver spoon scraping against his mouth-piece asking for OOMPA. I smiled my best "aww shucks" grin at OOMPA and told her, "Your public is calling."

She snatched the phone from my hand. Phone handsets at this time came with actual cords which could then be tangled in fantastic and mesmerizing ways, providing hours of entertainment. OOMPA stretched the forty-seven foot cord, knots and all, to the farthest corner of the house for privacy not realizing (I think) that it had mysteriously wrapped itself around my throat. I was saved by the timely intervention of one of the sisters, a trained EMT.

A few days later, I happened to be visiting OOMPA's family (they had invited me back when I asked them to) as the phone rang again. It was mid-morning and I was standing right next to it when someone shouted, "Answer the phone!" I obliged and I was pretty sure I was speaking with Dirt once again. He sounded a little surprised and asked to speak to you-know-who.

It occurred to me why he was surprised. OOMPA was one of four girls and no brothers. Except for her father, who never answered a phone in his life, there should be no other male directing phone inquiries - especially at all hours of the day. I called to OOMPA and flung the phone this time to avoid any additional neck bruising.

About a week later, I invited the family to have me over once again. OOMPA's mood had progressed from sour to downright ugly in the meantime. It was about three in the afternoon and guess what? Ring. Ring. I was closest, so once again, I answered and who should it be but Dirt.

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As OOMPA seized the phone and walked away I heard the words, "Oh, he's just a friend." I was a "just" and that was about as much as even my desperate ego was willing to take. I decided that even though I was already registered to go to school out west, I wasn't going to go. I walked out the door without saying a word to anyone, climbed into my car, and began to put this whole "dirty" affair in my rearview mirror.

OOMPA's father was a diminutive, highly intelligent, troglodyte whom I had known for several years, but had only spoken to a handful of times - to say he was reserved would be a massive understatement. This was not a man who could ever be found guilty of chit-chatting. As I was backing down the driveway, he came running out of the house and pounded on the fender of my 1969 SS Impala, nearly scaring me to death. I rolled down my window and this man who rarely spoke, pled with me to not leave. He said, "Things are not always what they appear to be," which remains as our longest conversation to date. He then asked me to stay a little longer and I was so caught off guard by this remarkable occurrence that I forgot to be disgusted with OOMPA and stumbled mindlessly back into the house.

Nothing improved with OOMPA, but I decided to go out West anyway. OOMPA flew in the same day I arrived in town and had been met by Dirt at the airport. Okay, things get a little crowded, so try to keep up. My ex-college roommate, who knew OOMPA, had coincidentally arrived at the same time to

meet his fiance, who was just flying in from China.

So now we have Dirt and OOMPA heading to the baggage area as they bump into my old roommate and his Chinese fiance. Roommate says hello to OOMPA and then, before roommate can say anything else, friendly fiance, assuming that I was the fellow holding OOMPA's hand, said hello to "me." Apparently, roommate had told fiance about my love for OOMPA, so Chinese fiance naturally assumed I would be the fellow meeting her at the airport.

That same afternoon, I went to visit OOMPA at her dormitory. I was met coolly at the door, but she made up for it by utterly ignoring me and stomping off down the hall. As I stood there in the entryway, I was invited in by one of her five cute roommates to move heavy stuff around the apartment. About ten minutes later, there was a knock at the door and since everyone was busy but me, I answered it. Standing there was a silver spoon with Dirt attached.

Confused, he asked for OOMPA. I pointed and Dirt headed in the direction of her voice. I didn't hear any of their conversation, but I don't think it went very well. I later found out that Dirt had phoned only three times during the Christmas holidays and I had answered every one of his calls. He had gone to the airport and was mistaken for me by complete strangers. He came by to visit OOMPA and was greeted at the door by yours truly. Apparently, I was an omnipresent, unstoppable force.

After he left, OOMPA oddly never heard a single word from him ever again. Dirt went on to become a wealthy plastic surgeon practicing in southern California and eventually had that silver spoon removed and framed.

I think he married Miss America, had 2.5 perfect children, and a golden retriever name Beau. OOMPA married spoonless me five months later.

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A Thankful Recipient

by Cheryl Tribble

As the years pass, many details of our history come forward. I would like to share one such memory today about the Kiwanis Club and an event that happened long ago. As many of you know the Kiwanis Club sponsors many charities and individuals across the nation. I too, was one of the lucky people that benefited from their generosity long ago.

I was the oldest of four children being raised by a single Mom. Economically we struggled each day. My Mom actually made \$60.00 per week (no child support from my Dad) to support a family of five. In those days, a teenager might make \$.50 cents an hour for baby sitting. So, you can appreciate our situation.

I was raised in Southern California. I attended school in the Los Angeles School District. Right before my 1965 graduation (about 3 weeks) I was notified that I was the recipient of a "In-School Scholarship" being granted by one of the Kiwanis Clubs in Los Angeles. I do not know how I got on the list of candidates nor who recommended me. The amount was for \$50.00. It was a considerable amount of money at the time. This was such a wonderful surprise, a blessing and forever remembered.

I was able to rent my cap-and-gown for the graduation ceremony. Thanks so much. I was one of the top students in the class and had to be on stage - this was an important situation. There was even enough left that I could purchase a new dress for the occasion. There-

90% of men kiss their wives goodbye when they leave the house. The rest kiss their house goodbye when they leave their wives.

fore, no direct impact on our financial situation at home. Yes!

I am amazed that all these decades later, I am now a satellite member of the Golden K Kiwanis club and editor for Old Huntsville Magazine. The old saying "what goes around, comes around..." is certainly true in this case.



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Golden K Kiwanis Spotlight

Sam Zeman



I was born in Chicago, on 24 February 1928, to immigrant parents from the eastern European country of Czechoslovakia. My father was a milkman and furniture factory worker and mother was a homemaker. My mother passed away when I was just 13 and dad had to cope with raising me and my younger brother. I met a girl named Nora Mikrut while in high school although we went to two different schools. We dated some and went to one Prom. We corresponded frequently when I left Chicago to go to school at the University of Illinois in Champagne-Urbana, IL and later to the Army.

I graduated from Harrison High in June 1945. Four years later I graduated from Illinois with a BS degree in Chemistry and went to work at Allied Chemical in Chicago as an analyst. I didn't like the bench lab analytical work and quit my job to go into private business in commercial refrigeration. Refrigeration technology is one of the sidelines I learned going to night school while I was in high school. I had a business selling, installing and servicing refrigeration equipment for grocery stores, restaurants, taverns etc. and was doing well for 21 months when Uncle Sam drafted me into the army as a result of the Korean war.

My Basic Training was at Ft. Leonard Wood, MO and from there I was shipped to Washington DC for interviews at the Pentagon, and assignment to Redstone Arsenal to join the 9330 Technical Service Unit. This unit consisted primarily of technical college graduates assigned to support the German scientists at Redstone. I was assigned to the Ordnance Missile Laboratories to work on solid propellant fueled rockets.

Three months after my arrival I married Nora at the Redstone Post Chapel. I was allowed to move off post and we found a place to live in Huntsville Park near the Lowe Mill. Our income was very tight and Nora got a job as a librarian at Redstone to help with finances. My military duties were quite limited and I worked in one of the laboratory office buildings along with dozens of civilians. I developed expertise in rocket ignition, high energy fuel research and rocket design. I was hired by the Army in a civilian capacity two years later when my tour of duty was completed.

Three years later, I was hired to work at the Huntsville Division of Thiokol Corporation, a major producer of solid propellant rockets.

My career at Thiokol lasted for 31 years dur-



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ing which time I contributed and supervised work in Rocket Engineering, Ignition and Quality. My final position was as director of quality, testing and safety.

I retired from Thiokol in early 1989, but it didn't last long. I was contacted by an Army supervisor involved with Interceptor Missiles who persuaded me to provide consulting services on ordnance items and destruct systems for them. This new career lasted on-and-off for about 25 more years.

Nora and I raised and educated two children, Jill and Mark. We became charter members of the Covenant Presbyterian Church, travelled as much as we could and enjoyed club activities, socializing and living in Huntsville. I stopped consulting briefly when my wife became ill and needed my help at home and she passed away in 2006.

I had previously thought work and life were over after Nora passed away, but a fellow Kiwanian named Archie Murchie introduced me to his daughter, a former college professor named Liz Hall, at a Kiwanis Christmas party. We met once accidentally a few weeks later and eventually we had a few dates. To make a long story short, in February, 2009, we married and life resumed.

We have now been married nine years and we have travelled extensively and enjoyed life and visits with our families. We spend time socializing, making presentations (Liz), church activities, home repairs, yardwork, visiting grandchildren, volunteering, tutoring reading at Ridgecrest School (Sam), attending and teaching (Liz) at Learning-QUEST/classes and playing poker (Sam).

As a final note, in the year 2000 a friend of mine named Chuck Owens (father of Cathey Carney) invited me to

attend a breakfast meeting of the Golden K Kiwanis.

It was great! I saw Don Royston, Bill Grunwald, Tom Neely, Billy Hunter, Chester Huskins and a whole bunch of other great guys there.

The next thing I knew, I was a member and for the last 18 years, I have enjoyed the companionship, education and great personal feelings created by helping children with the funds we generate.

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He Had the Gift of Educating Children: Barnett (Barney) Gamble

by John Gamble

Barnett Gamble returned to Huntsville from the front lines, fighting the Germans, in WWII. He worked on the Arsenal for a while, but had the urge to return to college and become an educator. After finishing his BS from Middle Tennessee State and MS in Education Administration from Peabody College (Vanderbilt), Barnett was ready to pursue his dream of being a school principal and educating young people. His first job was a rural school in Camargo, a community about seven miles north of Madison County, located in Lincoln County Tennessee.

Camargo was a 1st through 8th grade elementary school with less than one hundred students. Barnett was principal, taught the seventh and eighth grade class and served as the boys and girls basketball coach. Barnett loved this school and community. His favorite story dealt with the girls' basketball team. Camargo played a nearby school and walked from Camargo to the nearby school, only five miles away. He used to say, "Can you imagine telling a team today that they would have to walk 5 miles to play a game and then play a full game, and then walk 5 miles back? We won the Lincoln County championship with the Camargo girls. It helped that I had two McAllister girls on the team. Their Dad was the coach at Elora High School. We played on outdoor courts and had to build our own backboards and goals."

"My winning the basketball championship, not my MA degree, was the reason Mr. Cecil Scott called and wanted me as Principal at Petersburg Elementary" stated Barnett. At Petersburg, we were furnished a house on the campus of the school. Petersburg was an old school town. It was the home of Morgan School and Elizabeth Training School. I wrote my MED thesis about Morgan School and education in Petersburg. At Petersburg I won the girls county tournament and the District tournament. We had great students and several of them went on to being physicians, including Billy Sam Moore. Petersburg Elementary was a much larger school with a teacher for each grade."

"Jim, my oldest son, played football in the sixth grade and in the seventh and eighth grade when

we moved to Lebanon, Tennessee, where I was principal of McClain Elementary School." Barnett made one of the greatest decisions of his life at McClain, when a black physician showed up at his school with his little boy and asked to register his son in school. At this time in the early 1960's no public schools in Middle Tennessee was known to have integrated. So Barnett showing great courage called the Chairman of the School Board and told him that they needed to admit this child to McClain Elementary School.

The Chairman agreed and this was a historical moment for the black community, for Barnett and the Middle Tennessee community.

Barnett was married to Elizabeth Hill.

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Elizabeth was born in Tennessee in a farm house, not far from Huntsville. She was a science teacher at Lebanon Jr. High. In 1965 her father died of heart disease, leaving Elizabeth's mother by herself at the farm. Barnett and Elizabeth decided to move their family, including children Jim, John and Mary, back to Huntsville to be close to the farm and Elizabeth's mother.

Barnett and Elizabeth both took jobs teaching in the Huntsville public schools. But it wasn't long before Barnett was promoted to Principal of Stone Middle School.

John, Barnett's middle child, said, "I remember Visiting Day at Stone Middle School one day. When I entered the main office, his door was closed. I heard this load noise, Pow! Yer Pow! Yer Pow! The secretary said that he was spanking a student. After the student left, I went into the office and Dad showed me his paddle. It was two paddles with tape wrapped around both paddles with a half inch space between.

Dad said that he didn't hit the students very hard, but with the two paddles and space between, when he hit the student it made a loud noise that could be heard throughout the school. That's the kind of principal Barnett was. He was sending a message to all the students with each spanking. While Barnett was known as a disciplinarian, he was also known by the students as a fair person who

treated all students the same.

During the sixties, the integration of public schools was the main topic and concern in Alabama. While George Wallace was pushing "Segregation, segregation forever", Huntsville was a growing city due primarily to government paid or related jobs from NASA and the Army. Failure to successfully integrate schools in Huntsville could impact Federal dollars flowing into Huntsville.

The leadership in Huntsville, including the Huntsville City School Board and Dr. Joseph Stowers, the Huntsville School Superintendent, needed to make sure that Huntsville's leading school, Huntsville High, had a principal with experience in the integration area to prevent any major problems at this school. As a result, they appointed Barnett Gamble with his Tennessee experience, to be the new principal.

Huntsville High was at the top of all high schools in Alabama during Barnett's tenor in the late sixties and early seventies. The football team, led by Coach Tom Owens and great players like Duffy Boyles, was in contention for the State

championship almost every year. Concerts, plays and major events were held in Huntsville High's auditorium. The best and brightest students attended Huntsville High. Future astronaut Jan Davis was a star student.

In the summer of 1968, Barnett was able to receive funding and have air conditioning installed at Huntsville High

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School. Barnett said, "This was very helpful with late summer heat and resulted in students ability to retain knowledge and control their anger".

Huntsville High was growing during this time and had to add portable buildings to accommodate the growth. Several of the German scientists with children attending Huntsville High came to Barnett and complained that their children were not getting enough science and math challenges to help increase their children's knowledge. Barnett tried to improve staff in these areas, but always acknowledged that the best teachers were those with normal intelligence, that could reach the majority of the students and keep the curriculum at a level that benefit the most students.

After leaving Huntsville High School, Barnett was asked by the Board of Education to take the Principal of the new J.O. Johnson High School in North Huntsville. This high school was built under the open quad concept, and with the anger from students and parents about the new school, nearly made Barnett's job impossible.

Barnett said many times, that he wished he had stayed at Huntsville High. After a few years at Johnson, Barnett left for a desk job with the School Board over Federal Programs. But Barnett was meant for educating children, and soon moved back to his old haunt at Stone Middle School as Principal in 1975.

By now Barnett had figured out the disciplinary situation and hired an ex-Marine as an assistant in charge of discipline. Barnett implemented many innovative ideas at Stone, including flexible student scheduling, special staff selection, media and resource staff assigned to help teachers with materials, and the first junior high special education class in Huntsville. Barnett said, "My love is my T.M.R. kids. If you've ever worked around trainable mentally retarded kids; well they get close to you that's all there is to it."

In April, 1983 an upset student set fire to the curtains in the auditorium, and Stone Middle School burned down.

Fortunately, Barnett and his staff got all the students out and no one was killed or seriously injured. All the staff and students were moved in with Westlawn Middle School. Barnett was 62 and eligible for retirement, so at the end of the school year he retired, (see Burning Memories- Stone principal nears retirement) Barnett always wanted Stone to be restored.

He passed away last year, but he would never dream that Stone would be restored as a viable entertainment and restaurant center.



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"With much affection for what is on the inside of the cup!"

Yankee Doodle Dandy

by Elizabeth Wharry

Growing up as a first generation American, July 4th has always meant more than parties, picnics, barbeques and fireworks.

I had dual citizenship with my parents' home countries. My father was born of Irish parents and my mother was born of Hungarian parents. They were naturalized when their parents became Americans.

We lived in a neighborhood of European immigrants. It was mostly first time home owners, each with feeling of pride in dreams fulfilled.

Growing up, July 4 always started out the same way. Around 9 am, we would gather at the Tishka home. Mr. and Mrs. Tishka would solemnly raise the flag. We would all recite the Pledge of Allegiance, and pray, giving thanks for our freedom. There were many accents.

This took maybe half an hour. Then, everyone would go back home until about 3.

Each year, a different neighbor would host the festivities. The host would usually borrow tables and chairs from everyone else. The host family would provide games, ice, paper plates, napkins, cups, eating utensils and charcoal. Someone usually provided the grill. To this day, that smell can evoke some wonderful memories. Every family would bring a dish to share, and bring their own meat.

Before we sat down to eat, we would pray. All were grateful to be American citizens. After grace, we would sing the National Anthem. Despite all the various European accents, it was truly beautiful.

We kids were pretty much divided by age groups. The youngest group sat closest to the adults. We "older" kids were all around the same age. By the time we all started dating, most of us skipped the afternoon party. Somewhere around 6 pm, we would gather at the flag, and it would be lowered and folded with the same solemnity.

As I was becoming a young adult, the neighborhood was changing. The older generation was either moving to smaller homes, or they were dying. The new people moving in weren't interested in raising the flag, or continuing our "ruddy duddy" ways.

By the time I got married at

20 years old, the only traditions that my parents and I observed were saying the Pledge of Allegiance in front of a small hand held flag, and giving thanks.

When I came back, divorced, a few years later, they had stopped doing that. Three years later, I married my current husband. About a year after that, my parents moved to Florida. My mother passed away in 1991, and my father passed away in 2000.

Sadly, they never knew that on July 4, 2010, this first generation American lived a dream. I had the privilege of singing the National Anthem at Joe Davis stadium for the then Huntsville Stars.

Play ball!



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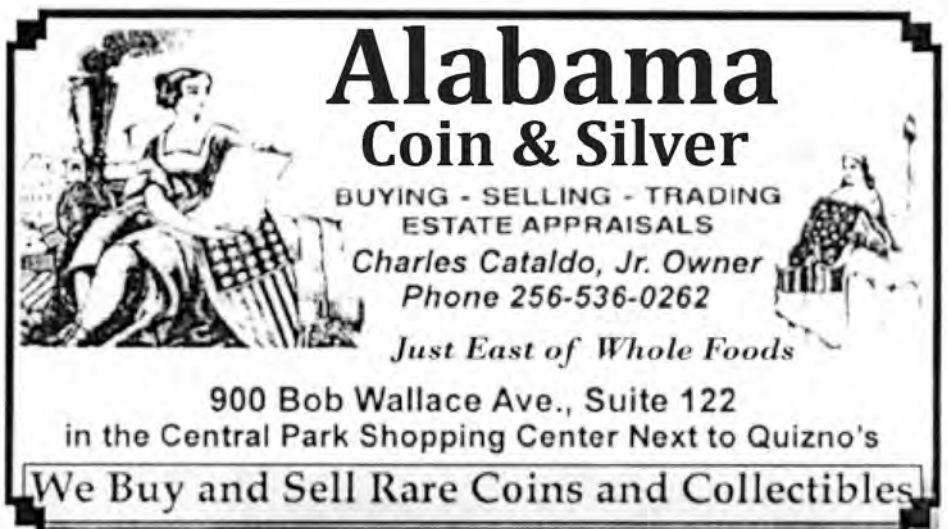
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THE BLIND MAN AND THE GUITAR

by George Wells



To tell the story, we must go way back in time, to when I was 16 years old. Now that is really way back in time, 70 years ago to be exact.

The year was 1947. I was living in Portsmouth, Virginia in a World War II housing project and I wanted a career of auditing and accounting. I signed up for a 24 month Auditing

and Accounting Course at the Norfolk Business School. The school was located in an arcade in Norfolk.

The only way I could get to the business school was by bus and ferry boat. I caught the bus a few blocks from our apartment and rode to downtown Portsmouth. From there I walked to the Ferry Boat Terminal. After the ferry boat ride, it was a long walk to the business school.

Each day on the ferry boat I saw a blind man selling pencils from a can. He had a guitar and a sign that read, "Help The Blind Please Sir". A young boy escorted him on the ferry boat.

The scene stayed in my

mind. In 1981 I wrote the lyrics for the song, "I've Never Seen The Sunshine". My long time friend and co-writer Billy Stone added the music.

It was not until 2017 that we asked Randy Duck, a former policeman here in town, to record the song. Harrison Brothers Hardware allowed us to film a music video in front of their store. The video turned out well and you can view the video at Youtube.com.

To all those young people who ran up big college expenses, my message is that bus ride to the business school provided me a career of 42 years. During that period I worked for two companies, General Motors Acceptance Corporation and Civil Service.

But my love of music and song-writing has been with me all along.



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PET TIPS FROM ANGEL

A Butterfly Garden

Reduce Pesticides

To avoid harming butterflies, which are insects, be careful when applying chemicals on or near plants.

You can handpick some pests, such as beetles. A regular, hard blast of water can remove plant pests, such as aphids, that cause unplanned plant damage.

Another advantage of decreased garden chemical use is the presence of other garden helpers, which pesticides can kill. These are beneficial critters, such as spiders, lacewings, ladybugs and ground beetles that eat the plant pests. There are also other pollinators, such as honey bees, that benefit from reduced chemical use.

Location

Butterfly gardens should be in full sun. All insects are cold-blooded. Their body temperature is dependent on the environmental temperature. Enhance the sun's warming energy with stepping stones or a gravel path. Butterfly adults will bask in these areas to warm themselves from the radiant heat. Your garden will also benefit, because most of the plants used by butterflies grow best in full sun.

Shelters

Include a few blooming shrubs in your butterfly garden or have evergreens nearby for shelter. Butterflies will hide in these areas on cloudy days or at night and find protection from the rain and wind when needed. Your garden might even be located near the garage, gazebo, or garden shed. These permanent structures also give shelter and protection.

Puddles

Male butterfly adults need to puddle. They obtain water and minerals from the shallows of the wet places. To make a permanent puddle, bury a shallow pan of wet gravel or sand to its rim. Fill it



with liquids, such as fruit drinks or plain tap water.

Flowers

Flowers provide the nectar food adult butterflies need. Butterfly season in Alabama is early spring to late fall. Choose a variety of plants, including annuals, perennials, and woody shrubs, to have flowers continuously through the seasons. This plant diversity also attracts a greater variety of butterfly visitors. Many of our native butterflies more often visit purple, red, orange, and

yellow flowers.

How many insects have you noticed flying in straight lines? Remember, butterflies are insects. Their compound eyes have poor vision for distinguishing tiny details. Large sweeps of each flower are most attractive to these near-sighted creatures.

Also, consider their mouth parts. Butterflies suck liquid food with a straw-like mouth. Tubular-shape flowers are ideally suited. Butterflies prefer clusters of tubular or flat-topped flowers, but remember to have a variety. Different species have different preference; for flower size. Compound flowers such as verbena daisies and butterfly bushes offer numerous nectars; containers for sipping in a single stop.

Nectar

Butterflies have a highly developed sense of smell in their antennae. They seek flowers with rich nectar. Surprisingly, some of our newer plant varieties have little sugary nectar due to the breeding and selection process for other plant traits. Choose open-pollinated, fragrant, flowering plants with a single petal row rather than double. Fragrance is sometimes a nectar signal that you can easily detect.

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From the Desk of Tom Carney

THE REBEL YANKEE

by Tom Carney

Of all the Civil War veterans who called Huntsville home, Major S. F. Sweinhart must have been the most unusual. An ex-Yankee soldier who moved to Huntsville after the war, he earned the respect of his former enemies and was accorded an honor unique in Huntsville's history.

Major Sweinhart was a member of an Ohio volunteer regiment and had participated in some of the bloodiest fighting of the war. While stationed in Alabama, he was captivated by the warm climate and the natural beauty of the Tennessee Valley. At the time he wore a Yankee uniform, so it is doubtful that he was exposed to the legendary "Southern hospitality" our region has become famous for.

When the war was finally over and the soldiers had stacked arms for the last time, Major Sweinhart moved to Huntsville, determined to make it his home.

Feelings were running high at the end of the war, so it is not surprising that he was greeted with scowls and bitterness.

"Damn Yankee," the Huntsville natives would say as they passed him on the streets.

"Damn Rebels," the Major would mutter under his breath, while looking straight ahead. But time has a way of healing all wounds and as the Major grew into old age, he began taking his place on the old courthouse bench, reliving and refighting the battles of his youth. An old Yankee officer and a group of old Confederate veterans, with nothing in common except the blood spilled on battlefields years before.

Slowly the town began to accept the old soldier and the scowls he used to encounter on the streets turned to smiles. Sweinhart became involved in the community and became active in veterans' affairs. Of course, the only other veterans in Huntsville were ex-Confederates.

In 1927, Major Sweinhart was awarded the highest accolade ever given to a Yankee by Confederate veterans. The story can best be told by a newspaper article of the day:

"He was invited this week to attend a dinner given by the Daughters of the Confederacy to members of the Egbert Jones



Camp of Confederate Veterans at the home of Robert A. Moore, acting adjutant for the Third Brigade, Alabama Division."

"He was welcomed with hand clasps and smiles. After dinner, the old veterans invited him to attend their business meeting. When discussions lagged a little, Major Sweinhart, who had remained in a corner deep in thought, rose and stood at attention."

"Men," he said, with a shake in his voice, "I've lived down here so long I feel like I belong here." His voice quivered again as he added, "And by golly, I want to belong to you."

"The Confederate veterans gave a hearty cheer and one of them proposed Major Sweinhart for membership. The proposal was accepted immediately and the major was accepted as a member of the camp by unanimous vote."

"He now belongs to the Egbert Jones Camp of Confederate veterans and is believed to be the only Union soldier in the country who has experienced such a transformation."

When Major Sweinhart died, an honor guard consisting of ex-Confederate soldiers stood guard during the funeral ceremony. His body is buried in Maple Hill Cemetery, next to the other veterans he had grown to love.



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The Mail Must Go Through!

by Bill Mayes, "Tales of Tennessee"

From my very earliest memory I would see Mr. Virge West, father of Luther "Sam" West and Woodrow West, come by on the way to carry the mail. He made three trips daily; one very early, one around 11:00 AM, and another around 4:30 PM. This was a very familiar and routine sight in the middle of the day and late afternoons six days a week. I don't know if I ever saw him go by for the early morning run, it didn't seem to fit my schedule.

During good weather, when school was out, young boys like myself would often go with him on the mail run. It was a real privilege to ride up on the seat of the buggy with Mr. West, and go down the cut, where during the hot summertime we would gradually descend into the coolness that is always there.

The sun would hit the road in the cut only a few minutes each day, and the rock on each side, which seemed so high at that age, was always wet. There was a spring about half-way through the cut, which ran delicious cold water year round. The pony pulling the buggy would trot right past the spring going down, but on the way back up he would stop for a refreshing drink from a barrel which stayed under the spring. Nobody ever vandalized the barrel.

Often Mr. West would leave his pony and buggy in the triangle where the firehouse is

now located. He could leave them there overnight, or between mail runs so that the pony could graze the green grass which didn't seem to belong to anybody. Nobody would bother them.

In the winter, with no grass there or anywhere around to graze, Mr. West would take them all the way home each time between trips. He lived on the west side of Betts Road, about 300 yards from Woodruff Avenue.

In the coldest part of the winter he would put a little house on the buggy. The sides and front went straight up, with a slightly slanted roof, and a little smokestack coming out the top, and a glass window in the front. A slot in front provided for the reins, and a kerosene heater or some sort of little stove

back of the seat made it snug, warm and dry. Once or twice I had the opportunity to ride in the buggy in this configuration, one of the earliest versions of today's vans, I suppose.

At first glance it was a strange sight with smoke coming from the little stovepipe. But very quickly it became commonplace and nobody thought it strange or quaint at all.

Mr. West was kind and patient with all the boys. It was fun to make the trip with him, and see him string the mail bag up on the iron contraption beside the track. When the train came by, a mechanical arm would grab the bag and a man inside the mail car would throw off the incoming mail bag. We would pick it up and take it to the Post Office. Nobody but the Postmaster ever opened the mail bag.

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Rock House, as it looked for many years



Rock House, 2018

HISTORY OF THE ROCK HOUSE ON TOLL GATE ROAD

by Harry Dill

During the Great Depression my daddy was able to make a down payment on the Rock House up on Toll Gate Road in Huntsville, AL. Mr. Roy O'Neal had built it but could not make the payment on his mortgage so the house was up for sale. We were living in that big two-story wood frame house that Ms. Figures owned at the time. It was on the Corner of Lincoln Street and Clinton Avenue, very close to downtown Huntsville.

My daddy's relative, Ms. Figures, died and daddy inherited a small sum of money and that was enough for him to make the down payment on the rock house. The house was situated on thirteen acres of land. Daddy then made small payments on the house for many years. The man he made payments to had a feed store and when daddy made a payment he would give him the receipt on a scrap of paper and daddy would keep all his receipts in a

cigar box.

It was good that he did this because when he finally paid off the mortgage the man said he still owed money, but when daddy presented the cigar box full of receipts the man had to admit it was paid in full.

I still remember the day that we moved into the rock house. I walked all around the house and discovered that it

was made of rocks all around on front, sides and back. It had a car garage in the back with wooden double doors and the car could be parked under the house. The door opening was later sealed up with rock by my daddy who was a plasterer and concrete worker and brick and rock layer.

Daddy parked his yellow Studebaker in that garage. The garage and the rest of the basement was not finished and had just dirt floors there except for one room on the west side of the house that had a concrete floor. This later came to be my room.

In back of the house was a small cleared back yard space and then the thick underbrush

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began. I set out to explore the land that was the thirteen acres. I ran through the underbrush and came onto a large flat rock where someone had laid a few rocks on it. Off to the side nearby was a rock cliff. I found a spring where pure water was running but only a small stream and there was a big hole up a little way from the spring. I wondered what made that hole in the rocks. I later heard that Mr. O'Neal had dynamited it to make more water come out of the spring but it had only made it run slower. I got lost in the underbrush and didn't know how to get back to the house for a while. I finally found my way back and was glad to be back at home!

I spent many happy days in my childhood and early youth in that rock house. My sister Alice was born there. When the doctor came they sent me out to play and I went across the street

to neighbor and friend Tim Burgess's house and we began playing down in a big rock cave that was on the side of his house and then we went up into the attic of Tim's house and we played with some real swords that were there. There were a lot of them and they were many different kinds, some from the Civil War and earlier. Tim's daddy, Jess Burgess, must have been a collector of them.

When I went home we had a little baby girl there and mother and daddy named her Alice. Later one night I awoke to see a big fire across the street and Tim's home burned up and no one was hurt but all those swords were destroyed.

After a time daddy had the 13 acres surveyed and split into different size lots. He had a large lot where the rock house was and one lot of the west side of the house that had a big sink hole that went with the house.

All the other lots he planned to sell off. He had the surveyor make two roads for the lots to be sold. One was named Dregger Avenue after my mother's maiden name and the other one Dill Avenue after our name.

Daddy sold a few of the lots at very low prices and then he got sick with diabetes. The doctors didn't know what he had and thought his teeth were poisoning him. His teeth were all pulled out but that didn't help. He lost weight and went from around 200 pounds to 135. By the time another doctor found out that he had diabetes it was too late.

My mother gave him shots

"A James Cagney love scene is where he lets the other guy live."

Bob Hope



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but one day he had a heart attack and had to go to the Huntsville Hospital. He stayed there about two weeks.

Then one afternoon the hospital called us and said that we had better come as daddy was in very bad shape. We all came to see him in the hospital. He was under an oxygen tent and we all gathered around him. I didn't want him to die and I begged him not to but that night he did die. Daddy was just 55 years old when he died and the year was 1955.

He was born in 1899. He was buried in the old part of Maple Hill Cemetery, the Sprague-Dill Lot. I was heart broken for a long time after that, as we all were. After daddy died my mother started selling off those lots and she got a better price for them as Huntsville was growing and the little mountain was a desirable location. Mr. Bruno Helm, a good friend and a German scientist who worked at Redstone Arsenal had already bought a lot from daddy. He came and talked with my mother and told her that he would tell his German friends about the lots that were for sale as they were looking for property to build their houses on. So my mother got much better prices for those lots.

My mother had the rock house basement finished and made it into an apartment which she then rented out. She rented the apartment to several different people during this time. Then when my sister Alice got married she and her husband rented that apartment for a year until they could find a suitable house to buy. They found one in west Huntsville where Alice still lives to this day.

Time passed and my mother died and was buried next to daddy in Maple Hill Cemetery. More time passed and then my sister Jean died. I didn't know what the Probate Judge was going to do with the house and he was going to split it up into parts for all the remaining children. Alice, Brice and I got a share as well as Jean's two daughters, but we made the mistake of selling the house and the lawyers divided the proceeds among daddy's children and Jean's children. I was out in the country so my brother Brice, found a buyer and sold the Rock House to him.

I recently received a few

pictures from a very dear friend and she asked me if it was the home I used to live in. At first I didn't recognize it but gradually I did by looking at the build and outline of the house. I was completely shocked! The beautiful rock house had been painted dark blue and white!

I pray that God will forgive me for selling the house, I never dreamed that it would end up like that. So much history in that house and on Monte Sano as well. I treasure my memories as a young boy there and I can only hope that one day someone will buy the rock house who will really love it and make the effort to take good care of it.

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John Purdy
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Sarah Chappell



A Beautiful Togetherness

by Ray Weinberg

In 1950, while in junior college, I was hired by the Naval civil service as an Engineering Draftsman to work at the U.S. Navy Operations Test Base in the Mohave desert.

This was the area for U.S. early missile programs.

When I reported in and met the people, I noticed a young pretty girl sitting at a typewriter. It didn't take me long to find out that she was supposedly taken by one of the engineers.

At least that was what I was told when I asked about her. I did not see her very often as I would use a different door to my area. About 6 months later I was at the snack bar and she and another girl came in. They sat next to me and we just talked. Kathleen went to the restroom and her girlfriend, who was her roommate, told me to ask Kathleen to a movie. I said no as I was told to lay off; she was spoken for by one of the engineers. Her roommate told me that was not true and she would love to go to the movies with me.

So when Kathleen came back I asked her to go to the movies and she said, "Yes". After the movies, we went off the Navy base to a little restaurant for a coffee.

I did not see her very often as I would go home to Los Angeles for the weekend and I was pretty busy with

my job. Anyway, we did go out a couple of times and she invited me to visit her home in Bakersfield, CA.

I met her parents and two brothers. I started to stay in the desert on the weekends and we had a couple of picnics along a river nearby. We decided that we wanted to get married and left for a long weekend in Las Vegas.

We got married on April 26, 1952 but did not tell anyone. We thought it may cause a job change to be married and work in the same area.

In August 1952 I received a letter from the draft board that I must report for the Army in October. Kathleen went home and I left for the military. We finally told our families and a few friends. Kathleen was brought up as a Protestant and I was Jewish. Many friends said that it would not last and we would have a hard time from each family. That was another reason we did not tell anyone that we were married.

But everything worked out with the families, especially when the first child was born.

We will be celebrating our 66th year together this week. We are still living in a beautiful togetherness.

Editors Note: Ray passed away on April 26, 2018 - a day after he sent us this story.

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Bill Shields

by Ron Shields, as told to Hugh Michaels

How very blessed I, and my siblings, have been to have experienced the joy and stability to be raised by Godly parents. When I was younger, I thought all children had parents of rock solid character and integrity. I was naive and unschooled in the realities and harshness that many others were raised in. I had to gain wisdom and maturity to fully appreciate the solid foundation on which I was raised.

I appreciate it more with each passing day. I have never known my father to lie, not once in his life. Not to his children and not to others. I have known him to be wrong on a rare occasion and he's as stubborn as a mule. That's who he is...uncompromising in the truth and doing what's right. I have never heard him say a curse word, not once.

You may not know this about him, but he was a Drill Instructor in the Army during WWII. Those of you that have spent time in the uniform well know that Drill Instructors use some colorful language to communicate with raw recruits. Dad never did. He didn't have to use that crutch to communicate his wishes known to a bunch of young men.

My Dad has what is known as command presence. He learned it at the foot of his mother, a dear and precious soul. She was pure love and she kept his feet pointed to the thing most important in life and that's serving Christ and living in a way that glorifies his name. His mother was an earth angel and not a stubborn bone existed in her body, so I think Dad got his stubbornness from his Daddy's side of the family. He most assuredly passed it on to his children... all of us.

You can say with confidence that my Dad is a man seeking the will of God and he will not be swayed from that. He is stubborn

that way too, and that turns that stubbornness it into a shining attribute. He doesn't cut and run when adversity strikes. His faith rests on the Rock and is unshakable.

He has reached out to me and pulled me to the safety of his foundation when I was drowning in despair. He has done this for others and he is not ashamed of the gospel. He'll preach it to the lady bagging our groceries or the man delivering furniture to our house. It used to embarrass me somewhat, but now it makes me proud.

Every night as we make our way to bed, the last thing we say

to each other is...I love you. Sometimes he'll say it first and sometimes it will be me. Every night, that's the last thing we say to each other.

One day, one of us won't be here. It could be him, or could just as well be me. Whichever one is left behind will know that the other took their leave loving the other to the end of this life and it will follow them into the next. We are both headed in the same direction and when we are reunited in heaven, the words out of both of our mouths will be...I love you... for all eternity



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A June 1961 Love Story

by M.D. Smith IV

I was a new resident of Huntsville in 1960, but was traveling to attend the University of Virginia. I was looking to meet girls in Huntsville and had managed to meet a few, had a few dates, but they were not for me. Just was not having any luck.

So I found myself in my old home town of Birmingham, dating an old girlfriend and attending a high school fraternity dance where I still knew most everyone. One of my buddies came up to me and said, "M.D., I have my cousin visiting with me from Huntsville and you might want to meet her."

In the next moment when Mickey stepped aside, there was the cutest little blonde girl, with a big wide smile, that I had ever seen. "YES!", I was thinking. Here's someone from my new home town that I'd really like to get to know better. She was wearing a black dress that looked like it had spoked wheels around

the neckline to the chest area and it was super looking to me. Well, the whole package was. I was quick to get her phone number because this was just a chance meeting and I had my date with me as well.

I called her number when I was back in Huntsville and her mother, Mrs. Chandler, told me that Judy was not there but working wrapping gifts for Rose Jewelry downtown, as it was the Christmas season.

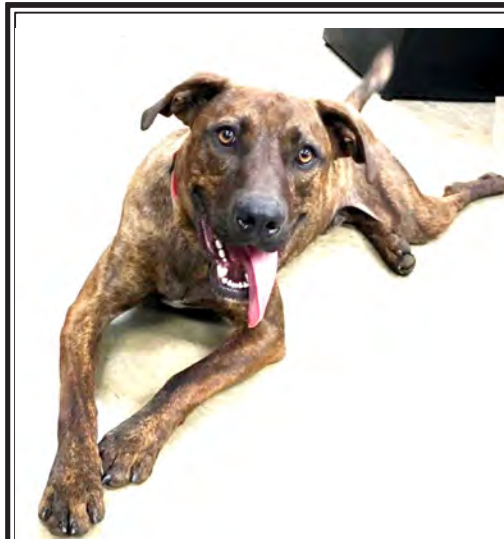
Downtown I went to meet that cute Judy Chandler with the big wide smile (and the black dress). She was there and was able to take a break and we went across the street to the drug store and had a Coke. She even paid for our drinks because she had heard I was a poor disk jockey who

worked the midnight to dawn shift and probably didn't have any money. She did not know that my father owned the radio station.

Time passed and for a while I dated other girls in Virginia and she dated other boys in Alabama. It was when I transferred from UVA to Alabama that our romance got serious in December of 1960. By March of 1961, I proposed and we were married at the First Methodist Church in Huntsville on June 8, 1961.

This June marks 57 years, eight grown children and eight grandchildren later. Here we are and still happy with each other and our love has grown deeper through adversity and some difficult times.

"Happy Anniversary, Sweetheart!"



Sarge

Hi, my name is Sarge, I am a Mountain Cur and I'm only 14 months of age. I weigh around 50 pounds. I'm quite a handsome boy and people say they love my eyes. I am very curious and a fast study. Sometimes I can be a bit goofy, but I do LOVE to be cuddled and loved and will give it back.

Originally I was a stray but now I have a home at the ARK. They love me here and said I can have a better one, just wait and see.

I been waiting for a few months and I think it is time to find out. Are you my new home? See you soon, Sarge.

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BLAME IT ON ELVIS

by John E. Carson

I could not help it; when I met my wife I just knew she was the one. What is it that draws one person to another? It is more than just a pretty face, more than just curves or muscles, even more than money or title or position. At least, in the case of a true love - one that was meant to be.

Born in 1951, I grew up a romantic (as most men are) and I was raised to cherish and respect the opposite sex. In those days, the music on the radio not only entertained us, but reinforced the values we were taught at home. Songs like "Young Love" by Sonny James, "You Are My Special Angel" by Bobby Helms, "True Love Ways" by Buddy Holly, "Only You" by the Platters, and so many others, played in the background of our childhood and teen years, etching themselves into our minds and hearts forever, becoming an invisible compass to guide by in our search for the One.

But I would have to say that one song in particular came to mind when I met my bride to be; Elvis Presley's "Can't Help Falling in Love". Whatever "It" is, she had it. I can still see her standing by the lake as she waited for me to pick her up for a date set up by her sister and my older brother.

Wise men might say only fools rush in, but I wasn't listening. Looking back over these 45 years together I would say they are not always right. We could not have come from two more different worlds, trust me; Gene Pitney's "Town Without Pity"

would have applied here- as Johnny Rivers sang, I came from "The Poor Side of Town".

Of course, falling in love keeps one focused on the present and pleasantly so, and even as the lovers dream about the future, it still seems far off. I should have been thinking of Jimmie Rodgers song, "Kisses Sweeter Than Wine"; it may have prepared me for the next time I fell in love - yes, I fell in love with another while still married to my wife, when our first daughter was born. A different but just as powerful love that brings me joy to this day - and then it happened again when our second daughter was born!

As if that wasn't enough, each of them had two children and I have fallen in love with all of them, which brings to mind another Jimmie Rodgers tune, "Oh, Oh, I'm Falling in Love Again".

Through all the ups and downs of married life we were guided by Tommy Edwards who assured us that "It's All in The Game". Is there a force more powerful than love, yet one so gentle at the same time? Were we tested along the way? Yes, but one cannot know their strength until they learn their weaknesses. The Temptations brought sunshine to the cloudy days with "My Girl" and the Drifters helped us get away from it all "Under the Boardwalk" and "Up on the Roof".

Roy Orbison told us about "Running Scared" and Paul Anka helped us mend with "Put Your Head on My Shoulder" and reminded us that we were meant for each other with "You Are My Destiny" and the Ray Charles classic expressed my feelings perfectly in his song, "I can't Stop Loving You".

Doris Troy's hit, "Just One

Look", brings me back to where it all started. That day by the lake, as the Beatles song, "I Saw Her Standing There", so aptly puts it.

We dated for nine months and had everyone wondering if we "had" to get married and why she did not show it if we did! And on a hot, August 4th, we had a beautiful wedding in a Presbyterian Church, to the dismay of some of our older relatives who debated over religion.

But God knew what he was doing when he put us together and today the love I have been given has been multiplied many times over. Retired now, I live with my wonderful wife in the Blue Bayou that Roy Orbison planted in my mind; God has answered all my prayers - all the things we worked so hard for have come to pass or are in the works.

Five years ago, I fell in love again. Another "Special Angel" came into our lives and again all it took was, "Just One Look" at our rescued dog, Mister Freckles, who has opened doors to paths I had no idea I would walk, all while filling the void in our empty nest with his unconditional love.

And to think it all started with "A Hundred Pounds of Clay", as Gene McDaniels told us with his timeless tune.

A hopeless romantic, I know I will keep falling in love; with my wife, my children, my dog, my friends, my family, and with life itself.

I can't help it, and I wouldn't have it any other way.

"One day a guy pulled a knife on me. I could tell it wasn't a professional job - it had butter on it."

Rodney Dangerfield

Remembering the 1955 Celebration

by *Malcolm Miller*
written in 2002

I remember well when Huntsville celebrated its 150th birthday. Huntsville was still a small town. You knew almost everyone. You met on Washington Street on Saturdays and all the stores, especially the ten-cent stores, were thriving with shoppers or just lookers.

I was working at the local shoe factory at wages barely above the poverty level, but we were very much involved in the Sesquicentennial celebration.

The men were involved in Chapters of Brothers of the Brush, because every man had to either grow a beard or buy a license to shave. Believe me you had better do one or the other or suffer the consequences. There was a pond behind the shoe factory and just about every day some one was thrown into the pond, kicking and yelling, because they had shaved without a license.

Downtown they would have competitions of various kinds between the different chapters. One I remember was a tug of war between my chapter and another one. The side that lost was pulled into the water. One fellow broke and run, but they caught him after he ran all the way up the hill to the First National Bank, then they dragged him kicking and protesting back down and tossed him unceremoniously into the water.

Let me say here that the ladies had their own chapters and dressed in long dresses and bonnets. Their activities were many, however I cannot recall all they did.

I wore a black top hat, string tie and black coat and carried a cane. In this get up I looked like an ugly Abe Lincoln with a scraggly beard.

To illustrate how much things have changed in fifty years, I have a group picture made of all the employees of the shoe plant and believe it or not,

only three women were brave enough to wear pants to work.

Nineteen fifty-five stands out in my memory for another reason. Mr. Louis Collier, then Postmaster of Huntsville, hired both my brother Frank and I to be letter carriers. In this position I witnessed Huntsville's fast growth firsthand as new streets, subdivisions, the Parkway and shopping centers were built.

I was twenty-eight years old 50 years ago and I never thought I would still be around to celebrate the Bicentennial. However I am, and I feel very fortunate to have lived these years and have seen the enormous growth and prosperity in the city of Huntsville.

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Junior High Stupidity

by Carolyn Cloud Gallardo

I'll have to tell you a funny story about myself. I don't know where I got the nerve to tell anyone, but here goes.

I never was very bright. I worried when it was time for the last report card of each year (especially in junior high), because my grades were so bad. If I were to pass to the next grade it would be a miracle. I was actually terrified to look over my own report card. It never occurred to me, that there was a way to stop this year-end cycle.

One quarter in junior high, I received an F in math, and I didn't want to go home. It never dawned on me that I could study and perhaps curb this dreaded trip home and the scene that promised to follow. It was always the same old story. With this failing grade in math, I was really in a state. I had to do something.

Our report cards were about the size of a postcard. The type was small, and the card was light yellow in color.

Somewhere I got a bottle of ink eradiator. I was certain my troubles were over. I knew I couldn't change that F into an A, but I would be pleased with a C.

I used just a tiny drop on that math F located in a tiny grid on that report card. In less than seconds, not only did the formula erase the F, but the grid, and the color yellow of the report card as well. I couldn't believe it! I was so mad at myself for not considering this possibility beforehand.

There it was! The "tell-

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tale" sign of supreme stupidity and I knew it. I embarrassed myself!

What was I to do now? Not only did I have an F in math, but I was caught red-handed trying to change it. I saw no way out of that!

I just confessed up front to my mom. I don't know if my dad ever knew about it, but after more than half a century, it's crystal clear to me.

Another time that stands out, was the day I cut school. I was probably in the eighth grade. I had taken the school bus ride to school. While on the bus, three of my girlfriends and I decided to cut school.

We got off the school bus on our arrival to school, but we didn't enter the school. Looking straight ahead, we walked the couple of blocks to downtown. From there we took the city bus to my house.

We decided to spend the day at my house, since my mother worked. We would stay at my house all the school day and play records and hang out. Then everyone would go home at the usual hour and all would be cool.

Everything was cool until dinner time. My mother came to ask me if I knew what had happened to the ham that was in the refrigerator. I acted like I didn't know what she was talking about, but I knew that my friends and I had made great sandwiches with that ham for our lunch. In fact we feasted!

Now, what is amazing is that I had never thought anyone would miss anything from the fridge. I continued to claim that I had no idea what had happened.

My mother went on and on over the missing ham. It was to be our dinner, and it was gone! If I didn't know what had happened to the ham, she was going to cross the street and ask a neighbor if she had seen anybody enter our house.

This was big trouble for me! When my friends and I stepped off the bus that morn-

ing, "Nan Naw" Record, an older neighbor, had seen us. To make everything seem natural, I had yelled "hello" to her, thinking that would appear ordinary.

When my mother left the house to inquire about her ham, she headed straight to Nan Naw's house. I couldn't let this continue. I called her back. There was nothing for me to do but confess. Again - stupid!

My mother made me confess to our Principal that I had cut school. I stayed after school an hour for a week.

My worst punishment was realizing my own stupidity.

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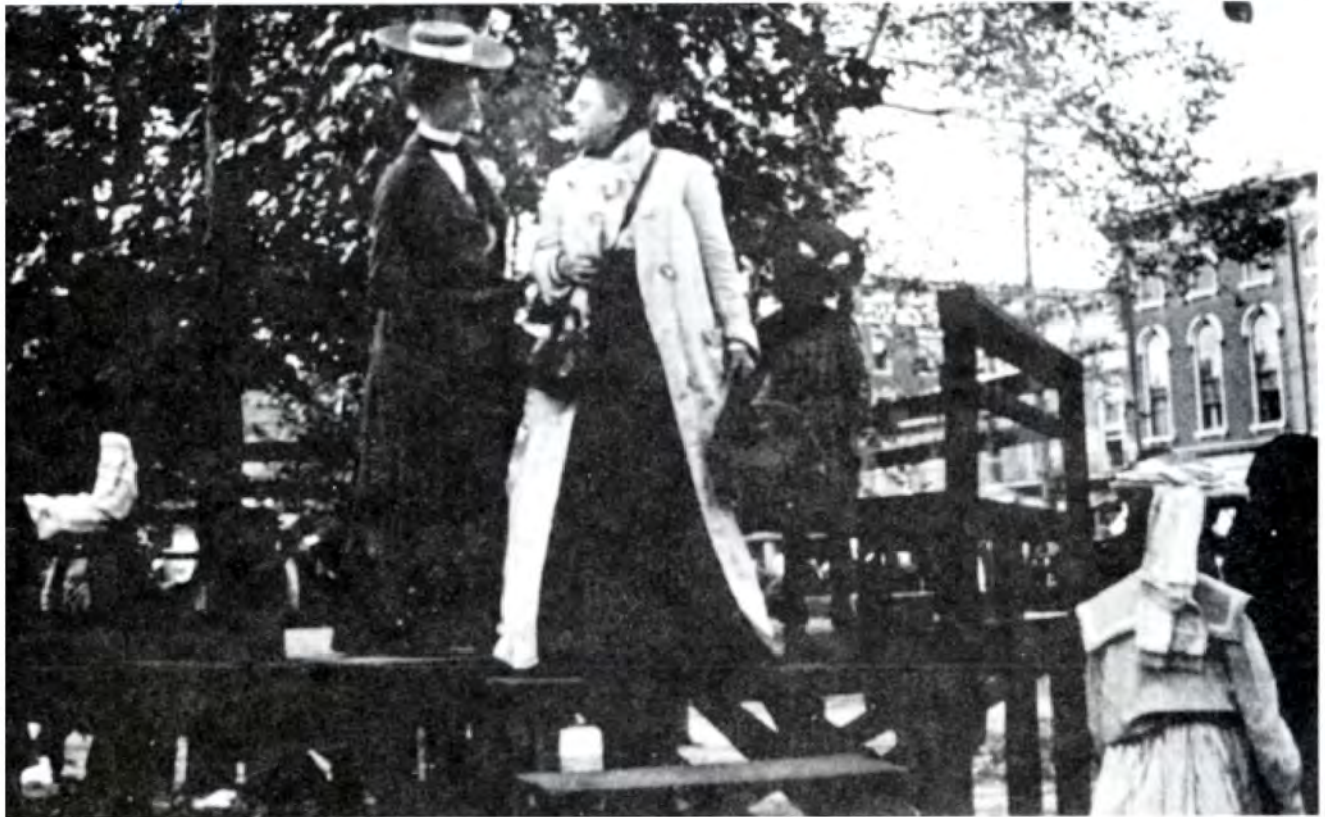
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