



No. 307
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Old Huntsville

HISTORY AND STORIES OF THE TENNESSEE VALLEY

The Mysterious Plans for Green Mountain



Also in this issue: Hitchhiking the Wrong Way

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The Mysterious Plans for Green Mountain

by Merry Barfield

I have a story that many have not heard about that is almost unbelievable.

My husband came to Huntsville in 1959 as a co-op student and I first came in 1964. I have never heard a word about this story in more than 50 years. As you may know by now, the Varnedoes, Robbs, and Frances Moore are walking/talking history books and when we gather at our homes in Magnolia Springs in Huntsville, there are many stories from the past discussed. Get in a conversation with one of them and you will come away with a bit of new information.

This time, Frances Moore, a native Huntsvillian, was my source. She and her husband owned close to 40 acres on Green Mountain, on both sides of the main road. In 1957 a company by the name of American Machine and Foundry Company attempted to buy all the

land on Green Mountain in order to build an underground munitions or missile plant. When the Moores refused to sell their land, a family friend was "sent" to talk to them about it but the friend told them to do what they thought best.

I told Frances that I had never heard this story and couldn't wait to get home and do some research. Most of you know by now that I am not very computer savvy so it took me a while to find my first clue: an article written by none other than our own neighbor Bill Varnedoe who moved to Green Mountain in 1956.

The article was under The Green Mountain Civic League www.greenmountaincivicleague.org/green-mountain/.

"In the 1950s when Redstone Arsenal was first firing up as a missile development center, American Machine and Foundry Co. began to buy up Green Mountain. Their plan was to quarry out the inside, sell the rock, then make the hollow mountain into an underground missile plant. Although they and the city Chamber of Commerce used "strong-arm" tactics to get mountain residents to sell, a few people held out and refused. Two of these were the Hamiltons and the Moores, (each with 40 acres on Shawdee.) Some of those who left at this time moved to Keel Mountain."

Of course, the dream of the underground factory never

"How can you tell if two people are married?"

"You just have to guess, based on whether they seem to be yelling at the same kids."

Devon, age 9



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came about and AMF sold their entire holdings to a group consisting principally of Buck Creek Industries and Lane Realty Company.

(If AMF sounds familiar, it's because the company dealt in bowling equipment, among other items.)

A little more searching led me to a book published in 1995 by Richard Sauder, "Underground Bases and Tunnels". His theory is that the government has more of these bases than we know about and on page 15 there it was:

"Two articles in 1957 reported that the Army was planning to build a huge underground rocket factory inside Green Mountain. The project was to have been undertaken jointly by the American Machine and Foundry Company, the Redstone Arsenal and the Army Ballistic Missile Agency."

"In addition to the missile plant the facility was also slated to have a sort of subterranean 'Junior Pentagon' where elaborate headquarters would be installed to direct the defense of the southern U.S. from enemy

attack. A local group bought 200 acres along the Tennessee River for docks from which a company called Chemstone would ship the limestone excavated during construction to market."

"This same group, comprised of members of the Huntsville Industrial Expansion Committee, also engaged in a nearly two-year 'series of obscure real estate transactions in which they purchased' in their own names or through proxies, various parcels of land scattered about on Green Mountain for the construction of the underground military-industrial facility."


"In cases where most of the land is owned by private individuals, if the military agency wants to construct a secret base on the land that it does not own, in order to avoid drawing attention to its plans, it may covertly employ a sympathetic group of private citizens or businessmen in the area to handle the real estate transactions for it. In this way, the military gets the land, but without the unwanted publicity and fan-

fare. The Army Corps of Engineers can supervise the actual construction and draw up the plans, but special expertise and equipment would need to be provided by private industry."

"So already, the Pentagon and local business interests showed themselves capable of coming together to plan the construction of a major military underground facility, to be built inside the Green Mountain."

Since there was only part of the book on line, I could not see where the article was first published but it was footnoted. Can you imagine what Green Mountain would look like had this plan succeeded?

After the plan fell through, an individual purchased the land and started a sub-division atop the mountain. That didn't prove to be a successful venture and bankruptcy was declared. According to Bill Varnedoe's article, the Nature Trail was a



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result of the final resolution of the properties that had been bought and sold.

I contacted another Madison County native and received this input: "The project was a government project. It never materialized; the project eventually went to Colorado Springs and housed NORAD. We were second and only because Green Mountain had limestone rock layers that could be easily moved to prepare for the large rooms that they needed. Other than a lot of talk nothing ever happened."

I looked up NORAD and read a lot of declassified history from 1956 when it was established and was to be housed on Cheyenne Mountain, near Colorado Springs. I confess the only reason I read all that history was because I woke up at 3:00am and couldn't go back to sleep.

The history revealed that the U. S. and Canada were ill-prepared to deal with an all-out attack on us. A second, more wakeful reading, led me to more information about paper squadrons, meaning they were

listed but not manned.

No wonder we had those bomb drills during the fifties. Remember those? We were taught to get under our desks, people were building bomb shelters in their backyards and we were constantly told that "the Russians are coming!"

I hope that I am not the only one who didn't really understand about NORAD - North American Aerospace Command - a U.S. and Canada binational organization charged with the mission of aerospace warning, aerospace control and maritime warning in the defense of North America.

I copied this from Wikipedia "The complex was built under 2,000 feet of granite on 5 acres. Fifteen three-story buildings are protected from movement; e.g. earthquake or explosion, by a system of giant springs that the buildings sit on and flexible pipe connectors to limit the operational effect of movement. A total of more than 1,000 springs are designed to prevent any of the 15 buildings from shifting more than one inch. The complex is the only high altitude



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Department of Defense facility certified to be able to sustain an electromagnetic pulse (EMP).” The total cost was \$142.4 million.

Now you know the rest of the theories about the Green Mountain Project and what could have been developed right here in Huntsville.

Information about NORAD

NORAD, North American Aerospace Defense Command, moved its headquarters out of the top secret bunker 10 years ago, but the complex inside Colorado Springs’ Cheyenne Mountain is still operational. Crews typically use the space a few days out of the month to keep the facility maintained.

15 buildings sit beneath 2,000 feet of solid granite inside the mountain. Each one is made out of Navy-grade steel and sits on giant steel springs. The Cheyenne Mountain complex was first designed in the 1960s to withstand a nuclear blast. The Deputy Director for Cheyenne Mountain Steve Rose says the engineering has withstood the test of time.

“If an aircraft was to take off out of Washington D.C. and turn right instead of left, it would be less than the number of minutes you can count on your hand of time to react,” says Col. Travis Morehen, NORAD & US NORTHCOM’s Command Center Deputy Director.

The North American Air Defense Command (NORAD) was established and activated at the ENT Air Force Base on September 12, 1957. This command is a bi-national organization, of Canadian and United States Air Defense Command units, in accordance with NORAD Agreements. Today, NORAD’s mission has evolved past the Cold War. The focus is on more modern threats that include everything in and out

of the United States.

NORAD watches every single aircraft in North American airspace. The command center flags an average of 3 aircraft a week. Recently a belligerent passenger on a flight from Halifax to Calgary forced an airplane to divert to Toronto at the same time a serious of missile launches went off in the Middle East.

“Those were two simultaneous events where we were protecting North American airspace and we were determining if these missiles that were launched out of the Middle East were coming to America,” said Col. Morehen.

A Little History About Green Mountain

By Bill Varrnedoe, Green Mountain Civic League

Of course, Green Mountain Road was originally just an unmaintained wagon road. It was later widened for autos and graded, well, sort of, when the county accepted it as a county road sometime between 1948 and 1952. Then it was graveled.

Finally in the early 1950’s it was blacktopped, not all of it, just the part going up the mountain and none of the roads on top. You see, a county commis-

“If the good die young, what does that say about us senior citizens?”

Neil Keith, Huntsville

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sioner was not friendly with a Mr. Taylor, who had a farm at the foot of the mountain, so the leg across the flats to Todd Mill Road was left dirt, not even graveled, for some time. Some of us remember getting stuck in the mud on that part of Green Mt. Rd. (Bailey Cove Rd. and Camelot subdivision did not exist.)

North and South Shawdee and part of Riverview were blacktop by 1965; asphalt pavement came later. But in all of this, the original grade of the mountain road was not changed. It is still just a glorified wagon road!

One old road from the top of the mountain ran at an angle, from about 5008 Riverview to about the location of Valley Green and Village Square. Traces are still visible between Riverview and Valley Green, where it was not destroyed by development.

South Green Mountain Rd. (the "Back Road" to Owens Cross Roads) was not opened until the late 1980s. A sort of logging road was there, passable only to four wheel drive vehicles (and some fools who tried it in ordinary cars, like I once did.)

Geology

The geology of the mountain is relatively simple. Green Mountain is an isolated fragment of the Cumberland Plateau. The valley lies at about 600 feet above sea level while the mountain averages 1200 feet, for a height of 600 feet above the valley. The bulk of the mountain is flat bedded limestone of Mississippian age (about 300 million years old.) There is a very thin layer of coal between this and the Sandstone caprock of Pennsylvanian age. This Sandstone forms our bluffs that ring the mountain. These cliffs average about 20 to 30 feet high, and in isolated spots reach 70 feet.

From the top down the layers are: Pottsville Sandstone, (cliffs); Pennington Formation (the bench) a thin layered limestone; Bangor Limestone, thick bedded; Hartselle Sandstone (nose of protrusions on the west, not present everywhere; Monteagle Limestone, the lowest layers of the mountain.

Green Mountain is located on the southeast border of Huntsville, Alabama. It is a unique natural resource of great value to the community. It runs for seven miles along the eastern flank of the city just north of the Tennessee River forming a beautiful natural backdrop to the city.



The top of the mountain is a flat mesa surrounded by significant stone bluffs. The area

atop the mountain is roughly 13.5 square miles.

The Mountain is special in a number of ways not the least of which is that it IS a mountain. It makes up a significant part of the southeast "view scape" of Huntsville. It remains largely undeveloped and thus represents a major preserve adjacent to the dense development of the city.

Aside from it's major scenic value, it is an important watershed located between Aldridge Creek and the Flint River. It is an important buffer for flora and fauna. There are significant populations of deer, wildcats, fox, skunk, possums and raccoons, etc.



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Local News 1885

Advice to Women who Stoop:

Don't be taken in by the new Shoulder Braces. Nature furnished the needed braces to keep the shoulders in position, and when you use the artificial method these natural braces become weak for want of exercise. The best way to cure stooping shoulders is to carry a weight on the head a half hour morning and evening. Make the weight large. There is no other single exercise so valuable as carrying a weight on the head. A bag of sand weighing from twenty to eighty pounds is a good beginning.

* Will Weaver entered the offices of the Mercury this morning with a large rattlesnake which measured four feet three inches in length. The snake had been killed a few hours previously by Squire Cornelius on A.

J. Esslinger's place. It was adorned with thirteen rattles and a button.

* The new residence of Mr. Jackson Rand on Randolph St. is nearing completion, and will very soon receive the last finishing touch. It is a large, ten-room building and promises to be one of the handsomest of the many beautiful homes for which Huntsville is so justly noted.

Name Correction

It was brought to our attention that there was an incorrect name used on p. 33 in the August 2018 issue, entitled "Jerry Cattage - a Very Special Person". The umpire featured is Jerry Crigger, who is very well known and respected in the Hazel Green area.

The author of the article and Old Huntsville apologizes for this error!



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Huntsville's Big Spring

by Harry Dill

As everyone who lives in and around Huntsville knows the Big Spring is located in the center of town and just below the back of the First National Bank Building. It and all the buildings and places of business on the west side of the Court House Square were all built on the edge of a bluff and the Big Spring is at the bottom of that rock bluff. That Big Spring had supplied water to all the residents in Huntsville City limits until Huntsville grew so large that the city had to start getting water from the Tennessee River some 10 miles away.

When I was a young boy in the 1930s I first saw the Big Spring.

There was a large pipe upright in a large pile of rocks and water was shooting up into the air some 40 or 50 feet. It was falling down to a circular concrete pool open on the west end and running water to a mini water fall. Then the water ran under the paved road and down the man-made channel into a large pond at the next block.

When I was young I walked barefoot from one side to the other on that waterfall with the cool water running over my feet and never fell off. The Huntsville Water pump house was just opposite this.

Since at that time there was no water on Cedar Mountain and Toll Gate Road where our rock house was, we had to haul water. Daddy took me many times with him to help him get water in some large milk cans to take home and use. There was a large hose for people to use who needed water near the pump house and we filled the milk cans with water from it.

Just across the street from

the water pump house was the large Ice plant where horses and wagons would load up with ice in the hot months and take their ice around Huntsville streets selling it to the residents.

When I was staying at grandma's house I would go along in back of the ice wagon and jump on back and eat ice chips that had fallen on the floor of the wagon like other boys did. We enjoyed the cold ice in that hot summer weather.

The Big Spring not only supplied the city with water and ice but it was also a park and had a lot of really big gold fish in it too. They were all in the pool where the water came out of the ground, the channel and also clear down to the pond. There were also ducks there too from time to time.

I heard that someone had put



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a duck in the bottomless well on Monte Sano Mountain, some 4 or 5 miles away and that it came out in the Big Spring. Do any of you remember those long wooden steps that lead down to the Big Spring from between the two places of business buildings up on the block where the First National Bank was? Well I do and they were real long and it took some time before you got to the bottom or if you went up to get to the top you would get tired before you reached the street above.

One day I was in downtown Huntsville and saw that workers were tearing up the pavement. And being curious I went over to see what they were doing. They were taking out long cedar hollowed out logs they had been using for pipes and replacing them with iron pips. I was very surprised that they had been using hollow logs for pipes all those years!

There is no other spring as big as the Big Spring for many miles around!

I used to drink water that came out of Cold Springs on top of Monte Sano Mountain. The water came out ice cold and it was really refreshing in hot weather to drink it when we had been hiking all around the mountain.

Down near the end of this spring was a small cave that was just on the other side of the new road they had built, going up to the Park.

Speaking of caves, about all of downtown Huntsville is built on top of caves! The Courthouse included.

There was a cave I visited out in west Huntsville where you have to go down in a hole for about 30 or so feet and then in a tunnel for a little way and then you come out into a large room. There was a large wooden platform that they used to use as a dance floor. And there were electric lights strung up over it for lights. I wonder if anyone re-

members this dance hall or even danced there. That was a lot of years ago.

There was also a spring at the end of Fagan's Valley that we used to swim in, but in real dry weather it would stop running. These springs were nothing at all compared to Huntsville's Big Spring!!! Not only did water flow out of that pipe pointing straight up but water ran underneath the rock cliff very fast.

Big Spring has never gone dry, even in the driest weather

God has blessed Huntsville with an abundance of good fresh pure spring water that is free of pollutants, chemicals and drugs. So many places now have water that has to be treated to remove all kinds of pollutants and chemicals. I think Huntsville is still using Big Spring water and also water from the Tennessee River now since the population has increased so much. I praise God that He has given Huntsville such a good source of pure water!

May God Bless each and every one of you!! We should be thankful for an abundance of good clean water these days.

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M - Grand Ma was taken back last week when one of her sons insisted she go with him to look for a new truck, which probably meant, "Grandma wouldn't you like to buy one for me, I have so many bills coming in I don't know what I'll do."

The nice sales lady came out to greet us even before we could get out of our vehicle and look around. One look at her and all I could think of was, "Honey don't you even make enough money so you could buy a decent pair of jeans without a dozen holes in them." I had given better looking ones to the Goodwill.

It was all I could do to keep my mouth shut and not say anything. Needless to say, we left and went next door and bought a truck. A word to the wise should be sufficient.

Ringling in the Ears

* Ringing in the ears may be the result of a mild overdose of salicylate, which is found in aspirin, or other drugs. The ringing should stop when the drug is discontinued.

* If you still hear ringing and there's no one there and you're not in love... Try onion juice. DOSE: 2 drops of onion juice in your ears, 3 times a week should stop the ringing.

* Believe it or not, a heating pad on your feet and one on your hands may ease the ringing in your ears. It all has to do with blood being redistributed, improving circulation and lessening pressure in congested areas.

NOTE: If ringing persists, it might be a sign of a more serious illness, in which case you should seek medical attention.

** What advice do you have for young moms? I know you have raised 8 kids of your own.*

M - If you have a front loading washer please be mindful that children will crawl into it. A mother heard her daughter screaming and found her in a front loading washer - the water was coming in and starting to tumble and the front door was locked when it slammed shut behind her. Children try to think up things that get themselves in risky situations so parents have to watch them at all times, especially when they're little.

M. - Allergies - Mothers please stress to your kids to be very aware of what they can and can't eat if they have allergies. A fifteen year old died today from eating a cookie that had peanut butter in it. She was really hungry and at a friends house so she just grabbed a cookie. An EpiPen was used, but she still died. Such a senseless death that could have been prevented.

A black and white photograph of an elderly couple sitting on a wooden dock. The woman is wearing a striped shirt and the man is wearing a dark jacket. They are looking out over a body of water with hills in the background. The text "It's about how you live." is written in a large, elegant font across the top. Below it, in a smaller, sans-serif font, is "comfort. dignity. dreams." At the bottom right, there is a logo for "HH Hospice Family Care" and the contact information "(256) 650-1212 hospicefamilycare.org".

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PETE AND MOLLY

by Don Broome

In 1966 when I graduated from Huntsville High School I went to work for G.C. Murphy Co. as a manager trainee. It was a variety/department store. After a brief stint working in the stock room in the Parkway City Store in Huntsville, I was transferred to Chattanooga, Tennessee.

That store had 5 fully trained assistant managers that were waiting for the opportunity to get their own store. I was the runt so to speak. It was funny really, being 19 and working as the boss of ladies 50 and 60 years old. They called me Mr. Broome and I called them by their first names. That took some getting used to. I bent over backwards to be kind and polite to them and to learn a little personal stuff of each of them. I had mostly the easy departments like toys and paint departments and also the pet department that no one else wanted.

The ASPCA was notorious for raising Caine if they saw pets not being properly cared for. Our department was run perfectly and we didn't have any worries.

A couple of memories come to mind that I would like to share. The first was a disturbance in another part of town involving a couple of Hell's Angels passing through Chattanooga who were "disrespected" and threatened revenge. About this time we heard that there were going to be thousands of bikers coming through our town and all hell would break loose. I worked in the Eastgate Mall which was the most modern mall in town and had all the big name stores located there.

On the Saturday that the bikers were due in town we managers were told to protect the girls at all cost so we had our secret stashes of Axe handles and the like within easy reach. Our girls were scared as we all were and sure enough they converged on the mall and we had as many as 150 big leather clad bikers walk into the store.

I was in the paint department when this event came about and stayed close to Wilma, my paint girl. This was also where we cut

the keys when one was needing to be cut. I will always remember the very large man with a strong odor from riding all day in the sun came up to my paint lady and ask her to cut a key for him. It was a Harley key which we didn't carry. She was so scared and I noticed a puddle had formed between her shoes on the floor.

I dropped a towel on the floor and told her I needed her to get some paint out of the stockroom and explained to the large gentleman that I was sorry but we never had calls for those keys and didn't carry them. He had seen how frightened Wilma was and he good naturedly said he was sorry if he frightened her and together we found directions to the Harley dealer. He was very polite smiling good-naturedly.

Another memory I have that I will carry with me always was Pete and Molly. Pete was a Viet Nam Vet who lost both legs above his knees but balanced on his crutches and walked along the Interstate every morning about 1/2 mile to come for breakfast at our lunch counter. We had a waitress there whose younger sister (15) was date raped and had gotten pregnant. She

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was there one morning crying her eyes out because her family had thrown her out.

They went for a walk down the mall to talk and came back married. Her twins were born while I was there and I've never seen two happier people. Pete told me he had trouble doing household chores and having Molly there was God's gift that he had been praying for. Molly was so happy to have someone willing to welcome her twins she was in heaven. To see the way they would look at each other was enough to make everyone around them happy too.

Before I got transferred, they came in one time with the twins held by Pete to his crutches and him swinging them with all of us afraid he might fall but he never did. As crazy as it seemed with him middle age and her just a child, they were in my memory the happiest couple I've ever seen.

As I mentioned in the beginning of this story, I was the babe of the assistant managers and had to be taught everything

while all the others were able to run their departments without any supervision from the manager. He was a lazy man and soon got me transferred with little notice. I was told on Friday that Saturday would be my last day in that store and I would be in Decatur, AL on Monday.

The week before, a clothing store had a giant clearance sale with dress shirts on sale for 1 or 2 dollars each and pants cheap also. I didn't have the money to take them off layaway. There was to be no going away party allowed.

Saturday morning, we had a sales meeting to go over any announcements and discuss various things. My crew worked with the other girls (there were over 70 girls in the store) to get my layaway paid and have a cake for me and insisted on sending me off in style. It was funny too because the cake was a sheet cake that was actually a block of foam with icing on top.

We all laughed for the longest time about that.



"It's not lack of love, but lack of friendship, that makes unhappy marriages."

Friedrick Nietzsche

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Blood, Sweat and Tires

by Dark Myer

My Uncle Joe was the lucky owner of a herd of swine and I was the lucky nine-year-old who happened to be sandwiched, age-wise (and otherwise from time to time), between his two sons, Mitch and Kent. You know the old saying, "The sum is greater than the parts?" We were pretty much the opposite of that. Things tended to deteriorate, flee, or attack in our combined presence.

For example, on one overnight visit, within minutes of our arrival at Soobie Estates, Kent started snooping around inside my father's travel bag. Like any good son, I became very concerned with my cousin's conduct. He took umbrage with my umbrage and we fell into our natural state of pulling ears, poking eyes and practice cussing (we weren't permitted to use the real stuff).

Even though I was bigger than him, he was wiry and hard to get a good grip on. In the midst of perfectly timed and coordinated ankle bites, Kent managed to pull Dad's safety razor from his shaving kit and began waving it around. I made a calculated grab and missed badly (calculus not being my strong suit). The result was a shallow gash along the inside of my right wrist.

Seeing the blood, the two of us developed a synopated duet of high-pitched screams that broke the sideburns right off Aunt Gulli's crystal Elvis statue. Shattered crystal is one of the few sounds that could bring every one of the adults bolting in from the kitchen.

As I stood there at death's door - my gosh, my wrist was slashed - preparing to deliver my swan song, I was more than a little perplexed at the universal lack of concern facing me. I had expected ashen faces or possibly a swoon from Uncle Joe, but disappointingly, everyone appeared to be more relieved than anything. Aunt Gulli, always a woman of action, firmly grasped my wrist and with a practiced medical inspection and a single real cuss, applied a bandage and just barely staved off the grim reaper.

These visits are filled with many such warm and tender memories. From time to time I fondly reflect on Uncle Joe's hives of mentally disturbed bees and their tendency for a social swarm regardless of whether it was day or night. Oh how I chuckle as I remember barely outrunning bathtub-sized sows and not quite clearing the same electric fence on which we barbecued cottonmouths for afternoon snacks. Near drownings, wok-sized snapping turtles, and eyebrow-singeing Roman candle battles; oh, I could go on and on.

Yes, my family could definitely put on our cosmopolitan airs as jet-setting globetrotters. During the late summer of 1967, Dad, my brother, and I trav-

elled all the way to the exotic reaches of Mesa, Arizona in our 1958 Chevrolet Apache for a whirlwind five-day trip. We started our adventure with the vast sum of \$100 and even with gasoline at twenty-five cents per gallon, it was going to be a close call. Dad said he could see the air in our bald tires.

I can't remember much of what happened on the first two days of our journey and oddly, I really don't have much recollection of my single day in Arizona, but I clearly remember the last day. We were down to our last twenty dollars and a little over half a tank of gas by the time we hit the Louisiana state line just about midnight.

My brother and I had moved from the cab to the truck bed in an attempt to enjoy the pleasant and much cooler ninety-five degree, 100% humidity on the outside. Midway through the state, Dad finally hit his limit sometime during the wee hours and decided he needed to swerve to the side of the road (this time on purpose), to catch a little shut-eye.

No sooner had my father stopped the truck, than my brother began the supremely annoying action of smothering me with a WWII wool army blanket. By this age, I was a veteran smotheree and used all my survival skills to fend him off. I didn't know what "wool" was at the time, but I assumed it was some-

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thing made from broken glass mixed with sand. Not only was I being raked to death by a thousand cuts, but I was simmering like a pork roast. I kept tossing the blanket off and Mr. Dedication kept wrapping it tighter around the both of us. This went on for hours.

At some point in the night, poor Dad was tossed to the cab floor as the truck rocked up on its front axle during what might be described as a vigorous exchange between brothers. My father, realizing that his rest was doomed, wiped off the blood, started the engine, and wearily headed for home. For some mysterious reason, once we were on the road again, my brother quickly recovered his sanity and called a blanket truce. Exhausted from our skirmish, I dozed off until sunrise.

In the light of day, I was gently awakened by my brother's foot thumping my nose. I was shocked to see Merton's horrifically deformed face glaring back at me. For just an instant, I was kind of proud that I had dealt out that kind of punishment during my fight for survival, but then I noticed the odd uniformity of his blotches.

It turns out that Dad had selected the heart of the Louisiana Mosquito Nature Preserve, Swamp, and Larval Sauna in which to catch his forty winks. Who could have guessed a swarm of the state bird, a delightful little ectoparasite which had not eaten for a month would be served up two Alabama brothers for both appetizer and main course.

I, of course, immediately began to itch, synchronizing my constant scratching and complaining in a wondrous manner. My swollen brother, to his everlasting credit, never said a word as he spent the long, hot day clawing every square inch of his own body. In an effort to preserve my life, I was temporarily banished and spent the morning alone in the bed of the truck. Dad had quickly realized that he needed to put some distance between my complaints and Sir Scratchalot. I am almost sorry to say that wool blanket quietly abandoned the bed of the truck near Vicksburg, Mississippi. Oops.

Two hours from home, both our ghostly front tires abandoned us. I assumed they had been sabotaged by particularly aggressive mosquitos during the Blanket Battle of the Bayou. Miraculously, we were able to coast on our rims into an open gas station, back when gas stations performed mechanical services and did much more than provide petrified hot dogs and mystery sushi.

Dad spoke with "Bob" and was told he had two unused snow tires and being as there had been little call for such a product that near the Gulf Coast, he offered to sell and mount the pair for a one-time discounted deal of ten dollars. The price was right and with a topped off tank of gas, soon we were clumping down the highway to the rhythm of soft winter treads on sizzling asphalt. We made it into Tuscaloosa late that afternoon, puttering on fumes. Our first purchase was a quart of calamine lotion.

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Heard On the Street

by Cathey Carney



We meant to include an important birthday in last months column and didn't, so I wanted to be sure and mention it here. **Billy Lawrence** was a 1962 graduate of Butler High School, and just celebrated his 74th birthday on Aug. 26. We know that his sweet wife **Phyllis** made the day extra special for him and we want to say Happy Birthday to you Billy! He was a football player for Butler and many remember him - he says hello to his classmates who might be reading this!

Our winner for the Photo of the Month was **Eleanor Schmidt** of Huntsville. She was the first to identify **Tallulah Bankhead** as the beautiful child who was born in the Schiffman building on the East Side Square in downtown Huntsville. Eleanor is a homemaker who has one of the best husbands

- while I was talking with her I could hear him vacuuming in the background! **Wilferd** and **Eleanor** have been married 57 years. She told me she was raised in Lincoln Village and has never lived outside Huntsville!

Then my winner for the little hidden cherub wanted to stay **anonymous** of Regency Village in Huntsville. That's a first but we will honor that! I had many calls after she did, and one person told me it was EASY to find. Those are fighting words so I will be hiding a tiny sword in this issue that no one will EVER FIND. If by some weird coincidence you find my sword and are the first to call you win a free year's subscription!

Bill Kling and his pretty wife **Tanjie** celebrated their 25th wedding anniversary July 31st. They are one of the nicest couples you'll meet and I'm so happy they've been together this long!

Pam Dodson Gasser of Smith Lake area had a good tip - she said loose area rugs can be a real trip hazard and she experienced that herself! Even if you think you're safe with the rugs, best bet is to just remove them and make sure you don't fall. Oftentimes a bad fall can be the beginning of the end.

Judy Mullins brought by a story of growing up in Huntsville that she wrote in memory of her mama, **Wanda Taylor Brightwell**. She passed away many years ago, but Aug. 17 was her birthday and Judy misses her every day.

Don't forget that Lowe Mill has started their **Concerts on the**

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We lost an amazing and talented man on July 1, 2018. Huntsville's **Charlie Lyle** was 87 when he passed away. He was a lifelong member of the Church of the Nativity where he was named one of their "Living Saints." An extraordinarily talented musician, Charlie started and conducted the band at New Hope High School. He was a songwriter and went on to form several bands, the most popular was the Charlie Lyle Combo which played for many events in Huntsville and area. He directed an 18 piece orchestra and was a professional musician for 60 years. Once his illness prevented him from playing music anymore, his wife knew it wouldn't be long for Charlie and she was right. He wrote many stories for Old Huntsville magazine. He leaves wife **Janet**, they were married for 54 years; children **Charlie Lyle, Jr., Madalyn (Lyle) Hicks, Alan Lyle** and five grandchildren. We send our deepest condolences to the family, Charlie was an amazing man.

My friend **Lynda Senkbeil** had

Photo of The Month

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a great idea for those of us who need a little help with reading and have inexpensive reading glasses all over the house. As you know, you'll carry them from one room to the other and eventually there will be 20 pairs in the kitchen. So, what Lynda does is buy different colors/designs for each room. She knows that the blue pair goes in the office, the raspberry plaid pair goes in the kitchen, etc. A color for each area - I love it!

One of the most talented songwriters in our area passed away last month. **George Wells** was well known to many in Huntsville for his talent, positive attitude and kind, generous heart. He has written over 4800 songs with many many musicians and some of those didn't have the confidence in themselves until George pushed them and told them they could do it. He wrote many uplifting stories that were published in Old Huntsville. He had so much love for people and his generosity was known everywhere. He battled cancer for many many years and his wife **Barbara** was the love of his life. He decided to stop taking chemo because it made him feel so bad and it wasn't helping. Six weeks ago he sent a story to Old Huntsville that was published in the last issue, August, called "Cleared for Take-off." He knew it would be his last story, and it was. He was still compos-

ing songs with his dear friends just days before he passed away. On Aug. 7 a Celebration of Life was held at Roosters Coffee Shop on Whitesburg Drive, George's favorite spot to meet up with friends. The people who cared about George were there and it was an emotional, memorable event with many musicians there singing songs they had written with George. He is with his wife Barbara now and out of pain, but will forever be cherished.

Nina Beal and the Ark Animal Shelter has been helping homeless pets for more years than I can count. They have been selected as the featured charity by the U.S. Space & Rocket Center's 6th Annual German Biergarten Stein and Dine on Oct. 4, 2018 from 4:30-7:30. A portion of the food sales will go to help the Ark!

Also Nina will be hosting her annual **Needy Paws Telethon** on Channel 31 from 1-5pm on Sep. 23, Sunday. Please tune in and do what you can to help the pets!

The Visitors and Convention Bureau offers Historic Guided Tours through our historic neighborhoods and on Oct. 6 **Jan Williams** will be the Tour Guide through 5 Points. It starts at 10am, is free, and you should meet at the corner of Maple Hill Drive and Wells Avenue. Jan always does a great job and you'll learn some interesting facts!

Malcolm Miller would have been 91 on Aug. 10 and he always looked forward to his birthdays. He passed away 17 days after his birthday last year and we miss him every day. We found some stories that he had written years ago, that we will be running in future issues of Old Huntsville. So many in the Ryland community loved him and it's hard to believe it's been a year since he passed away.

Gary Campbell who owns and operates Cartridge World on Airport Rd., wanted to wish his sweet Mom a Happy Birthday. **Hazel Campbell** of Decatur has a September birthday and she turns 87! He loves her and is so proud of her, we wish you a happy birthday too Hazel!

Brandon Owens has a new member of the family, a Golden Retriever puppy who is just starting to chew on everything - Brandon says he put a wet washcloth in the freezer and **Patrick** loves to chew on it - makes his gums feel good!

It was so good to work with **Brian Bender & Kelly Blackwood** at Loose Ends recently. They were totally professional, fast and careful when they moved out some heavy furniture for me recently!

Have a good Labor Day holiday and remember to drink plenty of water these hot humid days to stay healthy.



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Spinach and Jalapeno Cheese

- 20 oz. frozen spinach, chopped, cooked and drained
- 1/2 c. reserved spinach juice
- 4 T. butter
- 2 T. flour
- 2 T. onion, chopped
- 1/4 c. evaporated milk
- 1/2 t. black pepper
- 1 t. celery salt
- 1 t. garlic powder
- 1 t. Worcestershire sauce
- Red pepper to taste
- 6 oz. jalapeno cheese

Melt butter, add flour, stir, blend til smooth. Add onions, cook til soft but not brown. Add vegetable juice and milk, stirring constantly. Add seasonings and cut-up cheese. Stir til cheese is melted. Combine with spinach and serve hot with chips.

Hot Pepper Fried Onion Rings

- 4 large onions
- 2/3 c. milk
- 1/2 c. flour
- Salt & pepper
- 1 t. dried red pepper flakes
- Oil for frying

Cut cleaned onions into 1/4" slices and separate into rings. In a large bowl, soak the rings in milk for 15 minutes.

Mix the flour, salt, pepper and dried red pepper. Dredge rings in flour mixture, then fry in oil heated to 350 degrees a few at a time, til well-browned, 2 or 3 minutes.

Drain on paper toweling and season, serve.

Spicy Baked Turkey

- 1 10-15 lb. turkey
- 2 cloves garlic, chopped fine
- 1 T. salt
- 1 t. black pepper
- 1 t. cayenne pepper
- Vegetable oil

Wash your turkey and rub the cavity with salt and pepper. Make a mixture of more salt, pepper, cayenne pepper and garlic. Make slits in the turkey and plug them liberally with this mixture.

Rub the outside of the turkey with oil, salt, pepper and a sprinkle of the cayenne pepper. Bake at 350 degrees in large roasting pan, for 15 minutes per pound.

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Spicy Nuts

- 1 egg white
- 1 T. water
- 3 c. nuts - macadamias, pecans, almonds or walnuts
- 1/4 c. sugar
- 1/2 t. salt
- 1t. ground cinnamon
- 1/4 t. ground cloves
- 1/4 t. ground nutmeg

Beat egg white with the water til foamy, then stir in the nuts, coating well. Combine the sugar and remaining ingredients, sprinkle this over the nuts and stir til evenly coated.

Spread the nuts one layer deep on a lightly buttered pan and bake at 300 degrees for 30 minutes, stirring every 10 minutes or so.

Spicy Lentil Soup with Smoked Ham

- 1/2 lb. dry lentils
- 4 c. water
- 1 smoked ham hock
- 1/2 lb. chopped smoked ham
- 1 bay leaf
- 1/2 c. onion, chopped
- 1/3 c. carrots, chopped
- 1/2 c. celery, chopped
- 1/2 t. seasoned salt
- 1 t. garlic powder
- 1/2 t. cayenne pepper

Wash, sort and pick over lentils. Combine all ingredients in a large pot with lid. Bring to a boil, reduce heat, cover and simmer til done, about 45 minutes or so. Really good when served with a dollop of sour cream on top.

Hot Congo Squares

- 2 sticks butter, melted
- 2-3/4 c. self-rising flour
- 3 eggs
- 1 box brown sugar
- 1 c. pecans, chopped
- 1 12-oz. bag semi-sweet chocolate chips

1/2 t. cayenne pepper
 Mix butter with brown sugar; add flour, then the eggs and mix well. Stir in the nuts, chocolate chips and cayenne pepper, pour into 9x13 inch greased baking pan. Bake at 300 degrees for 35-45 minutes.

Slow Burn Sausage Balls

- 1 lb. hot sausage
- 2 c. grated sharp Cheddar cheese
- 2 c. Bisquick mix
- 1 t. cayenne pepper

Remove all your jewelry, like your rings. In a large bowl add the sausage, cheddar, Bisquick and pepper. Mix well

with your hands, til all is well blended. Form into balls size of large marbles.

Bake in pre-heated oven at 325 degrees for 25 minutes or so - check to make sure the cheese is lightly browned.

Coffee Diablo

- 1/2 c. sugar
- 2 t. grated orange rind
- 1/2 t. grated lemon rind
- 1/4 t. finely grated bay leaf
- Instant coffee granules
- Your favorite Brandy

Combine the sugar, rinds and bay leaf in a small bowl, add the coffee granules and mix well. Store in a glass container, covered.

When ready to serve, add one and a half teaspoon of the mix to five ounces of hot water.

Add one teaspoon brandy (or half a teaspoon brandy extract) and mix well.

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**REMEMBERING MISS BAKER
AND OTHER THINGS**

by Greg Biggs

In the present days of "Star Wars: the Force Awakens" and "Solo," I often sit and reflect back to decades ago in the late 1970s when Hollywood started its fascination with space. It all began long, long ago in a galaxy...far, far away. I remember how excited we were to go see the original Star Wars in a one (1) screen movie theatre located on University Drive near "Woolco", the hybrid of Woolworth. The movie "Blazing Saddles" had left a solid impact on our teenage lives, and we still carry those precious one-liners today. Even so, space and space movies were very real and exciting to the Huntsville area.

While other parts of Alabama struggled and fought for civil rights, Huntsville focused primarily on space. It slowly had put man on the moon throughout the 1960s accomplishing the goals set by JFK. As a result, Huntsville was reaping the space craze. We had Star Trek and now, the technology wonders of movie making had produced Star Wars.

To further celebrate Huntsville's contribution, the State of Alabama funded and built a museum dedicated to missiles, rockets and space ships. This became what we now know as the Alabama Space and Rocket museum. The city of Huntsville and citizens from all over the country and world took great measures to promote

"Sometimes I wish I was an octopus so I could slap eight people at once."

Gertrude Johns, Decatur

and enjoy this pinnacle place of celebration of man's accomplishments in rocket sciences.

Of course, in our complete allegiance to Mel Brooks, I want to share with you the dark side of the museum. We actually drew a comic book and called it Star Squabbles. Roughly drawn at work, we starred in a parody of our daily jobs. It was the beginning of our records of the dark side of our humor made to reflect our comical days as employees of the museum. I do thank those who worked with us, and I especially thank a forgiving God who forgives even the most wicked and vile things that we do in our youth pursuing fun and humor. I have asked forgiveness for many of these things listed below. Well, at least, I ask forgiveness for all of them that do not involve a squirrel monkey.

Barry Beavers and I had just graduated from Butler High, and both had to accomplish our goals of getting the much needed academic credentials from University of Alabama in Huntsville. Of course, like all children of the Greatest Generation, we were immediately told go to college or get out! Being thankful that we missed Vietnam, Barry and I decided to follow quite similar and parallel paths in our desire to obtain an education and employment. Barry eventually became some sort of rocket scientist and I became a slithering lawyer. Prior to that however, we diligently studied as undergraduates competing always in everything and anything.



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While challenging each other academically, we also became employees at the Space Center. Our academic schedules were very tough and we were forced to study at the library and work. There was no internet. No cell phones. It was the 1980s. There was nothing but books, beer and babes. Mostly for us, there were books and beer.

The management at the museum was outstanding. There was Ed Buckbee, Scott Osborne, John Monger and Alton Brown. I think that they really liked us because we came from southwest Huntsville with a strong work ethic. I believe that Barry and I are still the only ones to have ever received Plaques of Appreciation from the Space Center.

We both began as janitors, then I became a tour guide while Barry became a Lunar Odyssey pilot. The latter position was the more prestigious because one actually operated and rode in a center console of a spinning centrifuge theatre that took our guests to the moon. The riders would feel three (3) G's or gravitations of force.

I was a "guide". Well... the more accurate title was "Floor Guide". Typically, I would walk round and around the museum making sure exhibits were working properly and answering questions. Of course, when I did not know the answer, I, like any good lawyer, would just make stuff up. This was especially fun when a Yankee needed directions to the beach, and I would send them to Pulaski, Tennessee to get on I65. Yeah, take that you "know it all" from Ohio.

I also had the distinct honor to occasionally take care of Miss Baker, a squirrel monkey, (i.e. a historical treasure). Well, she was a monkey. I cleaned her cage on occasion. Big George, her companion, always would put on a show especially when elderly visitors would gather around the Plexiglas cage. Stormy Daniels would have been so proud. My conflict with Baker was the result of my gallant effort to save her life. You see.. Miss Baker had a water whirlpool under her cage to catch her monkey biscuits and droppings.

One night as I was closing, I noticed the water level getting higher and higher. It was the result of the drain being clogged with a monkey

biscuit. And so, I with my "Starsky" and "afro" hairstyle, attempted to dislodge the biscuit through with a broom handle. Then, it happened. Like the Japanese zeros at Pearl Harbor, I was viciously and without prior notice attacked by Baker. That day...that day, a day that will live in infamy. Why??? I have asked myself through all these decades. I simply don't know. I thought that we had been friends. Maybe it was her dislike for red. Our uniforms were red. In any event, our cold war began.

Luckily, I was able to pry her witch-like fingers out of my hair and I escaped. Satan clearly cannot be a dragon but rather is a squirrel monkey. I had been like Charlton Heston wanting to say "take your hands off of me you dirty, hairy ..." well you know. From that day on, our feelings for one another were adverse. She probably did not remember her spontaneous over-reaction, but I did. Oh, I did clean her cage and give her praise to tourists. But there were ways to seek my vengeance. I wished that I had known about water boarding. But that probably would have been too aggressive and against the law against abusing animals. Therefore, I decided upon mental tactics such as sleep deprivation.

A much less serious strategy, I did find that Baker loved and preferred to sleep during the day, but most assuredly not on my watch! I found that a well-placed, licked palm when appropriately swiped across her Plexiglas cage wall would create a high-pitched screech. She got lots of those. I was 19 and immature. I am sorry Miss Baker.

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SCHOOL DAZE

by Elizabeth Wharry

How things have changed since I went to school! I graduated in 1976 from a private school in Ohio.

Back then, students and teachers had dress codes. Teachers dressed like professionals. The ladies had a choice of wearing skirts, blouses, cardigans, jackets, dresses or pantsuits. Hosiery and dress shoes were mandatory. Hair and makeup were expected to be done neatly. The men wore a tie, button down shirt, dress slacks, a sports jacket or a suit. Hair was above the bottom of the collar, and they were usually clean shaven. Tattoos were kept hidden by clothing.

We students had our own dress code. We girls had an ugly uniform consisting of a skirt, white blouse, sweater vest, either dark green knee socks or white bobby socks, and black and white unforgiving saddle shoes. Our hair was expected to be tied back if it was below the bottom of the collar. Makeup was not allowed until junior year. Periodically, the staff would pull uniform checks. Skirt hems had to touch the floor when a girl knelt down. A female teacher would touch one's back to see if one was wearing a bra.

Boys had their own dress code. Hair could not touch the bottom of one's collar. The boys had to be clean shaven as well. Their uniform consisted of a collared button down shirt in either white or light blue, dress pants in either navy, black or charcoal grey and dress shoes. There were to be no patch type pockets



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on the back of the trousers. One was expected to be neatly groomed and in clean clothes.

Forty-two years later, I have two boys in high school. One is a senior, and one is a sophomore in one of the county high schools. Both boys have their own style of dressing.

I have seen a disturbing trend in public schools. I'm not sure who the teachers are because they dress so much like the students. I remember meeting with one of my son's teachers. I honestly thought she was a student! She had half her head shaved, the other half was dyed an unearthly shade of turquoise, visible tattoos, and... well you get the picture. Since she teaches English, I presumed that she would speak in proper sentences. Although nothing crass was said, I understood

immediately why my son was having difficulty in her class.

Kids today don't really have a dress code any more. They are free to wear just about anything. I've seen ripped jeans, and skirts so skimpy that they look like handkerchiefs. The only garments that are considered "taboo" are T-shirts that promote alcohol, gang violence, politics, or the seven words that shouldn't be said on TV.

I honestly believe if schools had a more formal dress codes, or even uniforms, that would promote self confidence, and decrease the incidents of bullying and/or violence among students. I also believe that if teachers returned to dressing in business casual, they would command respect from students and parents alike.

Dress for success!

French Coconut Pie

9-inch unbaked pie shell
 3 eggs
 1-1/2 c. granulated sugar
 1 t. vanilla extract
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To prevent a soggy crust brush egg white on the unbaked pie shell and bake for 3 minutes in a 400° oven.

Beat eggs lightly and add other ingredients. Pour mixture into pie shell and bake at 400° for 10 minutes. Reduce temperature to 375° and bake for 15 minutes.

At the end of that time, reduce temperature to 350° and bake for 15 to 20 minutes more. The recipe cooks well in large tart shells and goes like hotcakes. Your family will love it!

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The Gale Theater

New Hope, Alabama

by Barry Key

When I was around 6 years old my mother ran the "City Cafe" right in the heart of downtown New Hope. There was an old long "shotgun" building behind the cafe that we lived in. I learned in later years that the building was used as a hospital during the Civil War. I really liked living there because of the location. A service station and a driveway is all that separated us from the Gale Theater.

The Gale Theater, on Saturday mornings, always presented a western movie, a cartoon, and a serial program that would be continued for several Saturdays before a dramatic conclusion. My Saturday morning custom...my parents would give me 50 cents, I would get a haircut, go to the movie and get a candy bar, bag of popcorn and a coke (yes, I said 50 cents). I guess it's all relevant, the 50 it cost me now to take my two grandchildren to a movie is the same 50, but with a "\$" symbol in front. At the Gale, if

the weather was bad and the movie was good, we would sit through the movie several times at no additional admission.

John Wayne was the Duke, Roy Rogers was King of the Cowboys and Gene Autry was the singing cowboy. The Durango Kid and The Lone Ranger were good guys that wore a mask. Lash LaRue's weapon of choice was a bull whip. He could unarm and subdue an outlaw with his whip from 10 feet. In the early 1950s, Lash LaRue came to one of the theaters in Huntsville and put on a live show demonstrating his skill with a whip.

The movie film would be deliv-

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ered to the Gale Theater on the Trailways bus. It was enclosed in a large, round metal container approximately 2 inches thick and 18 inches in diameter. During the show, the film would sometime break and the projectionist would have to splice the film back together. It was similar to commercials on TV today... a good time to use the restroom or get a refill on a Coke or popcorn.


If a movie had religious or educational significance, Mr. Powers, the manager, would run a special matinee during the week. New Hope School would dismiss elementary classes and we would walk to the theater as a group. The school was only a quarter mile away. I saw 2 or 3 of these movies while I was in elementary. Times were hard in those days, even pennies, nickels and dimes were scarce. There were kids that couldn't afford the price of admission to a regular movie showing. The best I can remember, Mr. Powers did not charge admission to the elementary students for the special run matinee movies during school hours. I think he did charge for any Coke, popcorn, or candy that you bought during the movie.

Gale Theater's seating was on a slight slope, the screen was elevated with a stage in front. The rest rooms were on either side of the screen, so when nature called you had to walk down to the front of the theater, walk up the steps onto the stage and into the restroom right beside the screen. (I can't imagine what the architect was thinking when he designed the building). New Hope Spring was right at the back of the theater. In the late fall and winter, sometimes back water from New Hope Spring and Paint Rock River would flood the front of the theater below the stage and rest rooms. If you just couldn't put nature off any longer, you had to go outside next door to the service station restroom.


New Hope Spring is much like the Big Spring in Huntsville in that it comes out of a big hole right underneath the town. It was only about 100 feet from the back of our house

and the theater. It was an excellent place for kids to fish, swim and wade. However, parents trying to keep kids from swimming in the hole spread a rumor that a farmer had driven a team of mules and wagon into the spring and they were never seen again. Kids are still using the spring for swimming and wading today.

The Gale Theater and City Cafe were demolished several years ago. An unfortunate loss of our "bygone years".



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Hitchhiking the Wrong Way

by Hugh Michaels

Transportation in the early years of 1900 was a problem. Cars were not always available when needed. Very few people had an automobile. He who had an auto was a popular person.

As a young man, I wanted to go places. I did not let the problem of transportation stop me from doing that.

I remember one trip some friends and I made. The trip was made from Scottsboro to Huntsville. We made the trip by means of hitchhiking. A suggestion was made that we skip school and hitchhiking was a popular means of travel, if you had the nerve to try.

We were fortunate to get rides. All four of us managed to arrive in Huntsville about the same time. When we got to Huntsville, we had no idea what to do. As we strolled through downtown, we "spotted" the Central YMCA. We decided to go inside. There was no one in the building but us. The swimming pool tempted us, but we had no swimming trunks. We decided to get rid of our clothes and go into the pool naked. Yes, we were as naked as a "picked bird." We enjoyed the pool so much that we almost swam too long. We realized that we had to get back to Scottsboro before our school bus left school.

We were fortunate and all of us, by means of hitchhiking, arrived in Scottsboro before our bus left school. No one knew that we had skipped school.

On another occasion, three of us boys decided to hitchhike to Chattanooga, TN. We made it to Chattanooga just fine. Again, we had no reason for being there. Darkness came and we had no place to stay. We were scared of staying on the street. We talked a night clerk into letting us stay in the hotel and sleep on the floor. After some time of pleading, the clerk let us have a cot. As soon as daylight came, we were back on Highway 72 hitchhiking back home.

On another occasion, while I was stationed at Keesler Air Force Base, Biloxi, Mississippi, I decided to try one more time to hitchhike back home. This time I only hitchhiked to Montgomery. I was in the Air Force during the Korean conflict. I was a proud Airman, serving my country.

"My goal this week is to move just enough so people know I'm alive."

Neil Jenkins, Arab

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I decided to board a Trailways bus. A funny thing happened while I was on the bus. There were only three people on it - the bus driver, me and another man. The bus driver noticed a stream of water coming down the middle aisle.

He stopped the bus and noticed the water coming from the man who was sitting on the back seat. He was drinking beer and was drunk. The driver asked the drunk man: "Where is the water coming from?" The drunk said, "I didn't know this paper sack had a hole in it." He had urinated into the sack.

Since I had such good luck on my last try at hitchhiking, I decided to try one more time. This time, I was "picked up" by a bunch of wild boys. It was late at night and I was tired. I went to sleep. When I got to my destination, I reached for my billfold. My billfold was gone. I was a victim of a pickpocket. My luck had run out. I never hitchhiked any more. Hitchhiking, years ago, was an instrument of hope. If you were wearing a uniform, people would pick you up. They thought it was a patriotic gesture.


Things have changed in my world, of course. I am too old to do such things that once were a challenge. I am now an instrument of God. The only hitchhiking I do is when I slow down to catch my breath. This is a changing world.

Several years ago, while I was traveling in Florida, I got lost. I was attempting to go to Vero Beach. I stopped a Highway Patrolman and asked him if I was on the right road to Vero Beach. He said "Yes." He didn't tell me that I was going the wrong way. I ended in Tampa, Florida. It was a trip of confusion.

I finally am on the Right Path. I am traveling with God. No more hitchhiking. I don't need any help while traveling. I know where I am headed and





I'm close to my destination. I turned 90 years old on July 5, 2018.





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Rescue in Old Town

by Cathey Carney



been in that tree for 3 days with no water, no food.

Neighbors had brought water bowls and treats to try to entice the cat down, but it was obvious it was very frightened and very high up. Several began communicating on Next Door and the Fire Department was called. The Fire Department said they wouldn't be able to help. People came and went with no success, with the cat still crying. Finally Oak Park neighbor Rhea Lorick happened to see the post on Next Door and, as an avid animal lover and rescuer, knew that she and husband Daniel just had to help this cat. Daniel went to check out the situation and went home to pick up Rhea.

Daniel Lorick takes part in Gymnastics Strength Training (with rings) and he and Rhea thought he would possibly be able to climb the tree and get close to the cat, even though it was so high up. They gathered up supplies, went to Home Depot to pick up rope and went back to where the cat was.

They found out the little cat's name was Saul and that he had been abandoned when his owner moved from Old Town, but the sweet neighbors (Alice, Julie and others) had been feeding him and taking care of him, as an outside cat.

When Rhea and Daniel got there no one was there but as they worked on a plan to get up the tree and rescue the cat, neighbors started to come by. Some stayed and tried to help and some just left, but everyone was concerned.

Daniel knew that the top limb hanging over Clinton Avenue went right over a power line, and that if he tried to maneuver across that limb it wouldn't hold him. That's the limb Saul was lying on.

Rhea spoke to a neighbor across the street and he (Johnny) was able to supply a 25' ladder and they put it along the trunk. Daniel climbed as far up as he was able to with the smaller ladder but it wasn't enough, so Johnny brought over a 50' lad-

A little cat named Saul is safe today because two caring people, along with neighbors and a crew from Huntsville Utilities, didn't give up.

On a hot Saturday recently in the Old Town Historic District neighbors had heard the faint crying of a cat but no one could find where the sound was coming from. Finally it was discovered that a black and white cat had climbed up a very large pecan tree on Clinton Avenue, and had gotten at least 65 feet high and 20 feet out on a limb that was over the power lines on Clinton. It had gotten so high that it was terrified and by this Saturday afternoon, had

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der. No one at this point wanted to give up and Rhea and Daniel knew that it was getting dark pretty soon. Rhea said there was no way this cat would spend another night in that tree.

At that point Huntsville Utilities pulled up with two bucket trucks and maybe 6 men. One man got high enough to use a prodder to get the cat to move off the limb, and as soon as Saul began to move Daniel went up the 50' ladder, to the very top. The ladder was shaking and Rhea and some neighbors were trying to hold it steady. Then one of the Huntsville Utility guys grabbed hold of the ladder and Daniel said he could feel that it became steadier immediately.

He was within reach of Saul and reached out and put his hand alongside Saul's face, he said he felt Saul lean his head against his hand. Daniel grabbed Saul by the nape of his neck and held him to his chest as he came down the ladder. Daniel didn't know if Saul was going to try to scratch him, or be so scared that he would try to jump out of his arms. Saul was very weak and dehydrated and scared, he didn't try to escape and they finally got to the ground. As soon as he was put on the ground he ran into the bushes.

His caretaker Julie was there and gave him food and water.

Rhea's not sure but she thinks the people standing around were applauding! She knows she did, she was just so grateful that Daniel was OK and that the kitty was too. She truly believes that all the pieces came together so that this little cat would be rescued. The neighbors, Johnny providing the ladders, Huntsville Utilities, all the people putting messages out on NextDoor.

A little cat's life may not mean anything to a lot of people, but it meant the world to this group of people. Rhea and Daniel are heroes, but so is Huntsville Utilities for taking time out to show up. And the neighbors who stayed to help. Thank you to you all for your concern and great effort!

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Softball on Field 4

by Greg Warnick

It's sad when I turn onto Ivy Ave in Huntsville, and then drive by what used to be Field 4 in Brahan Springs Park. Field 4 was the best of the softball fields used by the 3 Huntsville Senior Softball Leagues.

What? You didn't know that Huntsville had three Senior Softball Leagues? These leagues are sponsored by the Huntsville/Madison County Senior Center, and cover ages 55 through 72 years old. The Huntsville Rockets is a very competitive league with five teams. Players must be at least 55 years old and the season runs from late April until mid-September.

The Huntsville Recreation League, commonly referred to as the Rec League, has four teams. Players must be at least 63 years old, and the season runs from the first part of May through late August. The Triads, ages 72 and up, have two teams in their league, and also play from May through August. These leagues provide recreation for men - and a few women - for those that aren't as competitive as they'd like to be in leagues with much younger players.

Back to the sadness that I feel when seeing what was Field 4. The City of Huntsville does a great job of maintaining multiple softball fields for the use of the leagues - Field 4 had the largest storage room, the best scorekeeper's box, the best field and the largest dugouts of the 3 fields used by the Huntsville Senior Softball leagues.

You see, the City of Huntsville is changing Field 4 to a soccer configuration. The stor-


age room and the scorekeepers box are both gone. The baseball field right across the parking lot from Field 4, Field 3, is also becoming part of the new soccer field complex. I'm told that there was once a lot of baseball played in Brahan Springs Park. I imagine many people in Huntsville remember times when Brahan Springs Park echoed with the crack of bats and the sound of a ball hitting well-worn leather. The times are changing and the children growing up today are playing soccer instead of baseball.

Still, I remember the nights I spent playing softball on Field 4. There were opportunities I had to win the game for my team in the bottom of the 7th and I failed. There was more than one time where I had the chance to win the game for my team, and succeeded! I remember the arguments - strike or ball, safe or out, fair or foul, and realize that all of those arguments are meaningless now. I spent a lot of time readying the field after a rainstorm, or putting plastic corrugated pipe on the top of the outfield fences to prevent injuries. On many Saturdays in the summer, I attended practices there on Field 4. I even have videos stored on my computer taken to help me hit better.

Sadly, those videos haven't helped much. I remember a night where we had to call an ambulance because a player with diabetes collapsed after hitting a double. I remember a night when I was coaching 3rd base and my own player hit me on the back with a hard-hit ball and I collapsed too - at least temporarily. Some nights as we were playing softball in the fall, we could hear the cheers from Milton-Frank stadium as touchdowns were being scored by area high school football teams. Yes, I spent a lot of hours playing, umpiring, fixing, practicing and enjoying Field 4.

The City of Huntsville has refurbished Field 1 and Field 2 for the use of the Senior Softball leagues. The dugouts are larger, the fields are better, and we even have new restrooms - important for older men! There are other sports fields at Brahan Springs Park, both baseball and football, along with playgrounds and a sand volleyball court. Field 4 - or what used to be Field 4 - will always be there, at least in my mind. Instead of runs being scored, goals will be counted. Others will get to use what used to be Field 4 to play their sport to make new memories.

If you're interested in playing senior softball, call Becky at the Senior Center at 256-880-7081, and she'll put you in touch with the right folks.



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On Retirement

by Don Broome

I have had many different jobs including my own business recycling high grade paper. In 2004 I sold my business to South Central Recycling. I had started taking pictures of nature and had gone on short drives to Gunterville and Scottsboro and learned to use Photoshop somewhat to make them prettier. I had a 4 megapixel Kodak camera which took some pretty good pictures. It had a zoom with auto focus so was pretty simple.

After I retired, I became a weekend warrior, driving sometimes 1500 miles in a night or 2 away from home and taking hundreds of pictures. Most of them weren't any good and it took me a long time to realize that I needed to slow down and take several around an area. It was like an obsession with me to take as many pictures in as many places as I could. My cameras changed over time and I learned a little about focus and camera settings.

Wanting to show off my pictures led to me going to shows such as the local NEACA events and the atrium at the main library downtown and I got tired of paying retail to have them framed.

I met a man from Lawrenceburg, TN who discounted his framing and I

started driving 140 miles round trip and spent way too much money framing my work.

At some point he told me he was going to close his business and I bought his used mat cutter and glass cutter with him teaching me the basics of how to use them. He wanted to sell me his Jerry-rigged dual mitre saws. A friend told me of a deal on real professional equipment for the missing pieces to complete my frame shop. I purchased 2600 feet of molding cheap from him and practiced making frames. I had already learned to cut mats and glass. I had helped assemble my pictures from the matted prints. I have at least 120 pictures displayed in my home and each has a story. My studio is open by appointment and there isn't pressure to 'have to buy' anything.

My business is in two parts: My artwork is displayed and very reasonably priced. My framing business is completely in my home and I have no additional overhead for it, other than buying materials. I use only acid free materials and having catered to artists from the beginning, I have learned from hundreds of fellow artists how to pick the perfect mat and frame to meet your needs. If I can help you, I will be glad to.

I work by appointment only so call and we can arrange a time that works for both of us. Thanks.

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It was that time, during the Sunday morning service, for the children's sermon. All the children were invited to come forward to the front.

One little girl was wearing a particularly pretty dress and, as she sat down, the pastor leaned over and said,

"That is a very pretty dress. Is it your Easter Dress?"

The little girl replied, directly into the pastor's clip-on microphone, "Yes sir, and my mother says it's a bitch to iron."

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My Shopping Trip to Walmart

by Judith C. Smith

My Thursday night started off as usual - I got ready for bed, walked the dog and made out a list for the next day. Then I turned off the lights and the next thing I know it is 1:00 AM and I am aching all over.

I get out of bed and get into the hot tub on the sun porch which had a temperature of 103 degrees. It feels really good to my aching body. I finally get into bed at 2:15 AM and immediately passed out until the phone rings at 7:30 AM. I get up and head for exercise class. (I read that for seniors we need three hours of exercise a week.)

M.D. wants navel oranges and I need distilled water. I'll get them at Walmart, a quick in and out - right.

I drove around the parking lot three times and not a single parking place and it is not even Christmas. Finally, I see an old man who could have passed for 100 pushing his mother in a store wheelchair to his car in the van handicap space. I immediately decided to wait on him and get his parking spot.

He unloads groceries, then his mother, then rolls the wheelchair back to the store, returns to parking space, gets in his van and closes his eyes. I think My God he is going to sleep.

I have been waiting over 15 minutes at this point but having 8 kids has taught me lots of patience. Finally, he starts the car and pulls off. As I ease up to pull into his place a lady in a car cuts me off and gets the parking space. I could hardly believe my eyes - where did she even come from?

I pull up as far as possible, walk to her driver's side window, tap on it and told her I had been waiting for the elderly man to get his stuff in his van for now going on 20 minutes. "Didn't you see me waiting?"

"Too BAD", she said. I get back in my van, find a place to park, go into the store. No scooter carts, glad I have my cane, just needing two items. Surely I can make it through the store. in no time

Wrong. There are some grapes and I might as well get some. They are on M.D.'s diet, and some salad mix, what about some almond milk. In no time I had \$93.00 of stuff. Where is a scooter cart when I need one?

As I head for the nearest checkout I remember that when I added water to our fish pond and forgot to turn off the water I saw it had washed all the fish out of the pond. All of my expensive fish from Across the Pond were on the concrete - Dead.

So, I now head for the Pet Department to get several fish. Surely, I can walk a little farther although I'm moving like a snail and leaning on the cart. I make it to the fish tanks, there is no sales person in sight. After waiting five minutes I walk to the Outdoor Department and I'm told there

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will be someone there in a minute. I walk back to the tank and wait and wait.

A man in no shirt, overalls, beard and cap came by to get dog food and said he would find someone to help. A sales person passed by and said that she would be back in just a second, she never returned. By this time, I am sitting on the bottom shelf where dog food is displayed. I have been sitting here for twenty minutes, wondering how I'll ever get up since my cane is in the cart along with all the groceries that I didn't come in for.

At last here comes a grandmother with two grandsons. I beg one grandson to go to the outdoor department and find someone who can get me some fish. Bless his little heart he returns with a male employee. He gets me two fish and I'm off to check out.

I find a checker, put everything on the conveyer belt and hand her the fish. Much to my horror and

the checker we see that there is a hole in the plastic bag holding the fish. She twists the corner up but can't find anything to hold the corner of the bag. I say if you don't mind I can dump out my purse - I know I have a pink paper clip in it somewhere.

She didn't mind so I dumped all of my items out of my bag, found a pink paper clip and put it on the corner of the bag. I was so proud of myself for saving that pink paper clip. Some people would have probably thrown it away.

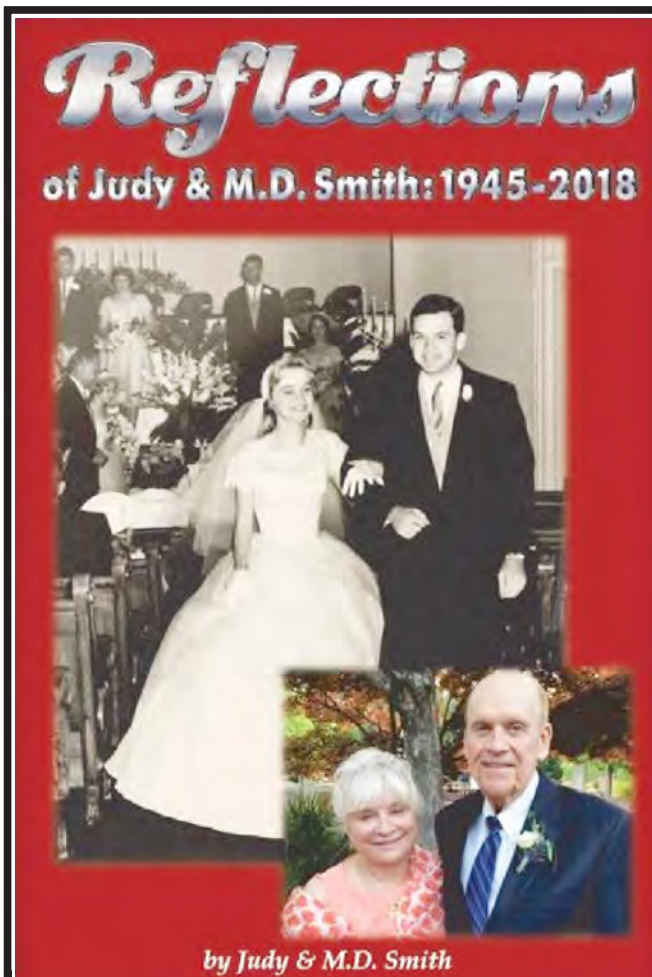
The checker had just informed the man behind me she was closed as water was on everything from the fish and she had to get some paper towels to clean up the mess.

I walk rather slowly to the door where the Greeter says "You were the lady waiting so long for the van parking space. I saw the lady in the white car cut you off and get the space, she wasn't even supposed to park there."

I agree and he gets me a nice lady to help me get to my car and load the groceries. Then she says, "Lady did you know water is leaking out of your fish sack and I don't know how you are going to make it home."

Where is the pink paper clip I wonder? Oh, I found it. It fell on the ground. Let's just twist the bottom corner again, clip on and I'll try to drive home holding it. So, we get it all twisted up again, and I am off. Got home and put sack of fish in pond to warm to fish pond temperature before turning fish loose, go inside to start unloading groceries. My cat Samantha was looking so pitiful wanting to be fed. I feed her, grab scissors to cut bag and let fish out into pond, when I realize Walmart was out of Navel Oranges which is what got me in this mess in the first place.

M.D. will just have to wait on the oranges. It will be a while before I'm up to another Walmart trip.



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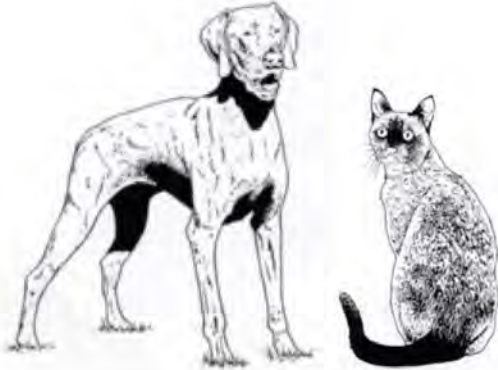
Many of these stories have appeared in "Old Huntsville Magazine" in the past 15 years.

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Some of my Best Friends are Dogs

by Ted Roberts



A dog is a pet. A cat is a mystery. Some of my best friends are dogs; so don't call me a bigot if I tell you that I prefer cats. Why, you ask? Because dogs are so domesticated that they're like humans. They are as dull and predictable as your Uncle Harry. On the other hand, a cat is fascinatingly dark, murky and mysterious. She (and for some reason I envision all cats as female) radiates the pulses of the jungle - she still lives in the world we humans lived in 10,000 years ago. And she's smart while dogs are dumb - yes, I know that's not politically correct, but it's not a hate crime though I'm probably vulnerable to a defamation lawsuit.

And notice how unfairly the Bible treats cats. They're not mentioned once - dogs are cited seven or eight times depending on the translation. This disregard is probably due to memories of Egyptian bondage where the cat was queen.

But consider - the canine is too dumb to keep himself clean. You gotta bathe him - that's like bathing your Uncle Harry. The clever cat understands that cleanliness is next to godliness. So, what does she do in her

"Employment applications always ask who is to be called in case of emergency. I think you should write 'An ambulance'."

Seth Oliver, Guntersville

spare time? Conducts an endless search for germ-carrying fleas, ticks and other gummy creatures on her furry body.

Ever watched a dumb dog go out an open door? He just marches out like there's not a 300-pound beast, who has been surveying that door for hours, waiting for a juicy canine supper. That dog sees the world as Disneyland.

Not so for Ms. Cat. She remembers in her tribal past that there was a 300-pound beast who would gobble her up when she stepped out of her den. Watch her. She tentatively puts a single paw through the doorway. She looks both ways like you crossing a traffic street. You can't be too careful, you know. She sniffs the air, too, as though you can smell dan-



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ger. Only then will she parade confidently through the door.

And take that other canine habit that burdens dog owners. They need to be walked! What a nerve. You must interrupt watching TV, drinking a beer, or reading a book when doggie shows up with a leash in his teeth and a map of the neighborhood in his paw. And you just cut the grass! A low maintenance cat squeaks for you to open the door so she can take a solo safari of the neighborhood.

And yet when it comes to intelligence, the world gives the medal to the dog. Why is it smart for him to roll over on his back at your command? It doesn't do him any good. Cats just laugh inside at human commands. Besides, if it's intelligence you're after, the pig beats both. But who wants to sit on the couch watching TV with a pig - stroking his back? Your friends will stage an intervention - send you off to a loony facility and consume not kosher pork chops for supper. Yeah, pigs are so smart that most of them end up in an oven or on a barbecue grill.

The cat understands human commands as well as a dog - she hears anger or approval in the tone of your voice. If, for example she misses the litter box (notice my admission) - good thing she's not a bear. I shout and scream and wave my arms. She reads my anger. She hangs her head and stares at the mess she made on the floor. I, too, have to understand her language. I know that means she's sorry and would clean it up if she had thumbs and a vacuum cleaner handy.

This rarely happens unless I forget to clean the litter box. Well, it still beats having to usher the dog outside to decorate your closely cut, perfectly green lawn. And who wants a pet that greets your guest by hurling his full weight at their chest - knocking them down and spilling the tray full of martinis? You don't make friends that way. Ever see a cat do that?

And consider the antagonism between the two species. How many times have you seen a cat chase a dog? Never. It's always that foul-tempered canine running down a soft, fluffy peace-loving feline. The dog is jealous, I bet - wishes he was a cat!

If I were a dog, I'd visit a highly specialized veterinarian who could turn me into a cat.



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PET TIPS FROM ANGEL

Litter Box Problems



If your cat isn't comfortable with her litter box or can't easily access it, she probably won't use it. The following common litter-box problems might cause her to eliminate outside of her box:

- You haven't cleaned your cat's litter box often or thoroughly enough.
- You haven't provided enough litter boxes for your household. Be sure to have a litter box for each of your cats, as well as one extra.
- Your cat's litter box is too small for her.
- Your cat can't easily get to her litter box at all times.
- Your cat's litter box has a hood or liner that makes her uncomfortable.
- The litter in your cat's box is too deep. Cats usually prefer one to two inches of litter.
- The new lightweight litter seems to be easier on cat's paws than the heavier litter.

Surface Preference

Some cats develop preferences for eliminating on certain surfaces or textures like carpet, potting soil or bedding. You don't want that to become a habit.

Litter Preference or Aversion

As predators who hunt at night, cats have sensitive senses of smell and touch to help them navigate through their environment. These sensitivities can also influence a cat's reaction to her litter. Cats who have grown accustomed to a certain litter might decide that they dislike the smell or feel of a different litter.

Location Preference or Aversion

If he continues to use one particular spot, place a litter box in that spot and slowly move it to a location you can be satisfied with. This is a last resort measure, because it could take several months to move the box. Like people

and dogs, cats develop preferences for where they like to eliminate and may avoid locations they don't like. This means they might avoid their litter box if it's in a location they dislike.

Inability to Use the Litter Box

Geriatric cats or cats with physical limitations may have a difficult time using certain types of litter boxes such as top-entry boxes or litter boxes with high sides.

Possible Negative Litter-Box Association

There are many reasons why a cat who has reliably used her litter box in the past starts to eliminate outside of the box. One common reason is that something happened to upset her while she was using the litter box. If this is the case with your cat, you might notice that she seems hesitant to return to the box. She may enter the box, but then leave very quickly – sometimes before even using the box.

One common cause for this is painful elimination. If your cat had a medical condition that caused her pain when she eliminated, she may have learned to associate the discomfort with using her litter box. Even if your cat's health has returned to normal, that association may still cause her to avoid her litter box.

Household Stress

Stress can cause litter-box problems. Cats can be stressed by events that their owners may not think of as traumatic. Changes in things that even indirectly affect the cat, like moving, adding new animals or family members to your household – even changing your daily routine – can make your cat feel anxious.

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From the Desk of Tom Carney

A Successful Man

A few years after the Civil War, Thomas Townsend, by any definition, was a successful man. He owned a palatial home on Adams Street, had a large plantation near Hazel Green, was a successful attorney and had been elected as a Huntsville city alderman.

None of this would have been unusual except for the fact that Townsend was an ex-slave in an era when racism controlled every facet of the community's social, business and political life.

And he was also related to many of the most prominent white families in Huntsville.

Townsend's father, Samuel Townsend, was one of the wealthiest and largest planters in North Alabama. He owned a total of eight plantations, seven of which were in Madison County and the 8th in Jackson County. The main plantation where he lived consisted of over 1,700 acres near Hazel Green and was worked by hundreds of slaves.

Samuel Townsend was a hard, shrewd businessman who was known to spend hours poring over ledgers trying to squeeze an extra dollar's profit out of a cotton crop. He reportedly did not drink, smoke or indulge in any other of the numerous vices common to the wealthy elite of that era.

The only weakness he had was Hannah - a tall, dusty and slender slave who worked as his housekeeper and shared his bed at night.

Hannah was reputed to be the daughter of a Huntsville attorney whose illicit affair was discovered when his wife's serving girl became pregnant. The wife, after questioning the servant, discovered her husband was the father.

Fearing a scandal, the wife ordered her husband to send the slave to New Orleans to be sold. Instead, the attorney sold his pregnant mistress to Samuel Townsend where he continued to visit her. After Hannah was born she lived in the "big house" with her mother who became Townsend's housekeeper.

Townsend evidently was intrigued by the young girl. He insured that she was taught proper manners, dressed properly and was even taught to read and write.

At a very young age (some accounts say that she was only 13 years old) Hannah was taken by Townsend as his mistress.

Hannah took a keen interest in everything that transpired on the plantation. Townsend was often gone weeks at a time on business and he began delegating much of the supervision of the plantation to his mistress.



Strangely, given the climate of the times, Townsend made no particular effort to hide his relationship. Even when she began to bear him children, nine in all, they all lived in the "big house" as a normal family.

When Thomas, the eldest son, was born, Townsend doted on him the same way any loving father would. Thomas often accompanied his father on trips into Huntsville where he was undoubtedly the subject of much speculation and gossip.

Many people were infuriated that Townsend had hired a tutor to educate his son. This was a violation of Alabama law forbidding slaves from having an education. Huntsville was a small town and although almost every one realized who Thomas' grandfather and father were, in the eyes of the law he was still a slave.

When Samuel Townsend died in 1855, his will stated that his entire estate was to be liquidated with the proceeds going to his children and mistress. He also made provisions for Hannah and



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the children to be taken North and freed. Under a law passed in 1834, slaves who were freed by their master could not remain in the state of Alabama.

Thomas and his siblings were sent to Wilberforce, Ohio where they were enrolled in a private boarding school.

Repeated efforts were made to have the will declared invalid but they all failed. Townsend had anticipated the efforts and, before his death, had hired some of the best attorneys in the state to draw up an iron-clad will.

Finally, a much simpler strategy was created to deprive the family of their inheritance.

The administrators of the estate simply took their time in liquidating it. Part of the land was sold to friends on credit. Other parts were leased, with the rent going back to the estate where the administrators and attorneys lined their pockets.

Between 1855 and 1860 the family had received less than \$7,000 out of an estate that was valued at almost \$250,000.

Meanwhile, Thomas, the eldest son, had completed his education in Ohio and was devoting almost all of his time attempting to claim his inheritance.

The Civil War brought a temporary end to the settlement, when it was declared illegal to transfer money or property to anyone at war with the Confederacy.

In 1866 Thomas finally gained control of the estate but was immediately confronted with new problems. Much of the property had been sold on credit but, in a country ravaged by the Civil War, there was little money for anyone to pay bills with. Thomas decided to return to Huntsville to try and put the family's affairs in order.

Although Thomas probably thought his visit would be short, he almost immediately became involved in community affairs. He became a teacher for

one of the first Black schools organized in Huntsville and was instrumental in starting several programs designed to aid the ex-slaves in their new-found freedom.

In 1868 the estate was finally settled. Thomas received less than \$4,000 after the money was divided and attorneys fees paid.

Undaunted, Thomas rented the Wade plantation, part of the original Townsend estate, and began farming. Many of the blacks working on the farm were undoubtedly the same people he grew up with as slaves.

As the plantation began once again to prosper, Thomas became even more active in community affairs.

Respected by both the black and white communities, Thomas Townsend became a bridge across the racial barriers. When the government began issuing pensions for the black soldiers, Thomas became a claims attorney and worked with several

white attorneys, helping to secure pensions for many of the black veterans.

In 1880 Thomas Townsend was elected as a city alderman, the first black to ever hold the position. He carried both the black and white sections of Huntsville.

As hard as it may be to believe, he was appointed to a committee overseeing the public schools even though blacks were forbidden to attend. He later served on the advisory board for the fire department and worked as a writer for the Huntsville Gazette.

When he died in 1916 he was eulogized by all the Huntsville newspapers.

As a tribute to a man who was born into slavery and became one of Huntsville's most respected citizens, the city voted unanimously to name a street after him. Townsend Street is located between Madison and Franklin Streets near Huntsville Hospital.

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THE NIGHT OLD MAIN BURNED

by Kay and Joe Ralph Clark, PE

From Kay: While in Atlanta Bread Company today I picked up a copy of "Old Huntsville" and I have thoroughly enjoyed reading it. My husband and I have lived in Huntsville off and on for the past several years and he worked for one of the engineering firms here after his "retirement" in another state. My husband Joe passed away in October of 2017.

After his death I moved to Huntsville permanently and one day, while going through some things on his computer, I came across a very interesting account, written in his own words and personal experience, of Old Main Dormitory burning in January of 1959 at Mississippi State University. My husband lived there when it burned. This dormitory housed over 1,000 boys, many of whom went on to become engineers right here in Huntsville.

I feel sure that many who live here now could relate to this account and perhaps even add to it.

The following is an account of what happened the year Old Main burned at Mississippi State University. I had never read it before and I thought it was worth sharing "in Joe's own words".

THE NIGHT OLD MAIN BURNED

by Joe Ralph Clark

Enrolling at Mississippi State was a big deal for me. I had just graduated from a relatively small unknown high school in South Mississippi that didn't offer the challenges I needed to go to college, but since two of my older brothers had gone to Mississippi State, it was understood that I should also. The night be-

fore I went I became deathly ill, vomiting and diarrhea took hold of me and I thought I would literally die.

It was not an easy thing for me. Along with not ever seeing the campus and having to convince my brother who had already graduated to give me a ride, I was not equipped mentally, emotionally or physically to go. Neither of my parents could take me because we didn't own a car that was reliable enough to go out of town. In fact, they never put a foot on the campus while I was enrolled there.

The day I was transported to school, I remember having all my belongings in one suitcase thrown in the back seat. It took nearly six hours to get there from McComb in 1958 because 1-55 did not exist. Travel to Starkville was on the Natchez Trace from Jackson.

With my stomach still churning, my brother parked in front of Old Main, helped me find my room, showed me where the post office was and then left. I was assigned a roommate I didn't know because the guy I had planned to room with backed out of going a day or so before.

My room was furnished with a single bed with metal frame and a very thin mattress that looked like it had been through a flood. I had sheets but no bed-

spread and no curtains for the windows.

Soon as I put my few belongings in the phone booth-sized closet, I started exploring and was relieved to see two fellow graduates who were roommates together on the next floor. Their parents had come with them and brought every conceivable thing one would need for a dorm room, including soap on a rope, something I had never seen. Their room even smelled good. They had curtains and bedspreads, rugs on the floor and had a lived-in feeling.

Old Main was a dormitory built back when my uncle was a freshman there in the 1920s. The outside was brick but the inside was built of wood. The hallways were dark and wide, polished to a sheen with an oil that made them look wet and attract dust and dirt.

My roommate was an OK guy but we didn't have a lot in common. I got to meet others from all over everywhere and life at Old Main took on a new meaning.

As expected, I enrolled in Civil Engineering and soon realized I was lacking in a background that I needed. Learning how to study was essential for me to be able to stay in school. I hadn't learned that in high school but the guys from Provine and

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Murrah had learned it; therefore, they excelled and had it easier than I did.

Many times I remembered that my high school principal had said that I should not even go to college and that my daddy would be wasting his money to send me. I was determined to prove him wrong and in the end, I did. Not only did I graduate, but I did it in three and a half years and went on to work in Tallahassee, Florida and later for consultants in Jackson. My career took me through appointments as State Aid Engineer from three different Governors. Then after "retirement", I worked for about ten years with private engineers in Alabama and Mississippi.

But back to those college days. There was always a challenge lurking.

One extremely cold night in late January of 1959, I was studying in a room down the hallway from my assigned room so I could be quiet and concentrate. The roomers had gone home for

the week-end and said I could use their room. Sometime after midnight, I fell asleep and was awakened by people running down the hall yelling something about a fire.

My brother, the one just older than I who was in college at the same time, broke into the room I was in and hollered for me to get out. Old Main was burning down.

I rushed back to my room, grabbed a few items and stuffed them in a pillowcase and threw them out the window. Being on second floor, I then jumped out the window on the pillowcase and ran across the lawn.

Then I saw the fire. This old building that housed over 1,000 students was glowing in the dark like a huge monster. It burned slowly but steadily. There was no chance of putting it out. The materials it was made of made it more susceptible to fire and the oil on the floors made it even worse. It was an absolute fire hazard.

The night was extremely cold and I did not own a warm coat. I remember sitting on that pillowcase wrapped up in a blanket and shivering, all the while worrying about exams the next day.

Several hours later, school representatives came around and assigned me to a room in another dorm with three or four other students. Exams went on as scheduled and we were given no mercy or slack.

Old Main burned for days. Smoke billowed and hung in the air for miles. The remainder of the year became a fog. There were 1,000 of us who had to be taken care of and dorms were not plentiful then. There were no apartments and even if there had been, they would have been unaffordable.

I can't help but think of present-day students and how easy they have it in comparison. Not only do most of them have a car, but they have everything they need provided for them. Do they really appreciate this?

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MARY (MCLEMORE) BUFORD

by William Sibley

Mary McLemore was born in 1902 in the Toney community and grew up in that community. Her first grade teacher at Toney was "Miss Mariah" (Worley) Bradford, who grew up in the Cave Spring community near Owens Cross Roads.

After completing high school Miss McLemore attended Florence State Normal School, which is now known as the University of North Alabama. As a young adult, Miss McLemore moved from Toney to the southern end of Big Cove and started a long teaching career that began at Vann's Hillside School and included Big Cove and Owens Cross Roads schools.

While teaching at Vann School, Miss McLemore met her future husband, Milas Buford, Sr., who was a very popular World War 1 veteran. Land records show that Milas Buford's ancestor, Henry Buford, bought land in Big Cove as early as 1816.

Mr. and Mrs. Buford became the parents of seven children. One son, Samuel, died young. All of the other six children graduated from Gurley's Madison County High School. Those children were Milas, Jr., aka "Bo," Doris Maples, Emma "Toots" Maples, John Earl aka "Bill," Sally Adams and Nellie Jo Smith.

Mr. Buford was bedridden with arthritis for a big part of his adult life. Mrs. Buford and the children, with the help of sharecroppers, kept the farm going and Mrs. Buford continued to teach.

While Mr. Buford was bedridden, my grandmother's brother, George Owen, was his sitter. Uncle George told me that Mrs. Buford was a strong woman and could lift Mr. Buford and turn him in his bed, unassisted.

All of the Buford children became successful in life and all

of them reared families in Big Cove, Owens Cross Roads and New Hope communities. Also, the grandchildren and great-grandchildren were successful. I shall comment on a few of those descendants with whom I am familiar, and I apologize for not being familiar with all of the Buford descendants.

Bo was an elder and treasurer in the Big Cove Cumberland Presbyterian Church while his mother was my Sunday school teacher. Bo's daughter, Margaret Earle Mann (wife of Clifton Mann III) was valedictorian of her senior class at New Hope High School and continued her studies at Auburn University. She taught for several years at Big Cove and Owens Cross Roads Schools and later had a career in real estate sales. She also was Madison County's Woman of the Year.

Clifton and Margaret Earle are the proud parents of three successful children. Cliff is Madison County's tax assessor;

Alan is a circuit judge; Deanna is a nurse practitioner. John Earl "Bill" married Doris Craig and they are the proud parents of two successful sons.

Johnny was educated at Lipscomb University where he played basketball and he taught for five years in Gallatin, Tennessee, before teaching 25 years in Georgia.

Bobby played baseball at Snead College and then played professional baseball for several years for a farm league of the Atlanta Braves. He also played basketball for Athens College and served as principal of DAR, Douglas and Brindlee Mountain Schools of the Marshall County, Alabama, school system. Later, he

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was employed in the central office of the Marshall County Schools. Joe Thomas Smith was a small businessman.

When I was a young adult, J. B. Clark of Arab, a student I had known at Athens College, was involved in a fatal automobile accident. When I got to church the following Sunday, Mrs. Buford told me about the accident, and she also told me that she had talked to W. R. Fouch, Sr., principal of Owens Cross Roads School, and told him that I was available to teach. J. B. Clark had been a teacher at Owens Cross Roads School.

Mr. Fouch told Mrs. Buford that he would be at Cave Spring Baptist Church until 12:15 and for me to meet him at his house for an interview. The interview went well and I was hired.

Mrs. Buford helped me get my first teaching job, and I have always been grateful to her for that. Mr. Fouch was an excellent principal and that gave me a good start as a teacher.

The first year I taught at Owens Cross Roads, I taught Johnny Buford and his cousin, Donald Patrick. I coached them and Bobby Buford in the YMCA baseball league. All were excellent students and athletes. When they were Mrs. Buford's third graders, they called her "Mama Buford." Soon all of her pupils called her Mama Buford, and nothing could have pleased her more.

As pointed out earlier in this report, Mrs. Buford and her children, with the help of sharecroppers, kept their farm going. On a Saturday before school was out for "cotton picking vacation", I picked cotton for the Bufords when I was about eleven years old. My siblings Ann, James, Bob and Sherry also picked cotton that day and we were joined by dozens of the Bufords' neighbors. We picked several bales that day and kept Bo running to the gin all day.

In earlier years, license plates for motor vehicles had to be

bought during the period of Oct. 1 — Nov. 15. Each year Mrs. Buford and her teacher-friend, Miss Thelma Spivey, sold car tags while school was out and the Buford children kept the farm going.

On a humorous note, Mrs. Buford once told my mother that she reared six children and thought she would never learn the art of cooking dumplings. She said that she usually wound up with one great big dumpling, but she did learn how to cook dumplings.

On the day I picked cotton for the Bufords, Mrs. Buford came to the field in the middle of the afternoon and helped the smaller kids by picking cotton and putting the cotton into the kids' sacks.

Recently I talked by phone with Clifton Mann III and his wife, Margaret Earle. I also talked with Bobby Buford and Johnny Buford. We recalled many pleasant happenings that involved Mrs. Buford. When her grandchildren were involved in any school activities or sporting events, Mrs. Buford was ready to go.

The first year I coached Johnny, Bobby and Donald we played on a baseball diamond in West Huntsville that adjoined the property of a fast food place. When a baseball player hit a home run, the fast food establishment would award the batter a sack of hamburgers. Our hamburger champions were Johnny Buford and Donald Patrick. They usually hit two home runs but the fast-food place usually awarded only one sack of burgers per game.

Since Bobby was younger than his brother Johnny and cousin Donald, he did not knock as many home runs as they did, but he did knock several home runs. Mrs. Buford came to almost every game that involved her grandchildren and she cheered them on.

It was a sad day in 1979 when Mrs. Buford died. A standing-room-only crowd of people turned out for Mrs. Buford's funeral that was held at the Big Cove Cumberland Presbyterian Church.

She is buried in Camp Ground Cemetery in Big Cove.



Dotty

Hello, the Ark named me Dotty. I think it was because I have a beautiful snow white coat and a big gray dot on the top of my head. This is a true story. I was found in a dumpster with my dead sibling. How horribly sad is that? I didn't know some people could have such a cold heart. Ms. Heike at The Ark took me home and bottle-fed me til I got stronger. I am so glad the young lady heard me crying and climbed in

the dumpster to rescue me. I now know some people do have loving and caring hearts. That is the person I want to adopt me. When you come to the Ark, ask to see Dotty. That's me.

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Preserving a Mid-1800s Huntsville Sidewalk

by Carol Codori

What's under this glass-topped box? Where's it located in Huntsville?

Answers:

The Huntsville Madison County Historical Society, in partnership with The Historic Huntsville Foundation, looks forward to the "reveal" of sunken, hand-made bricks that masons laid on the downtown square in the mid-1800s. They're practically invisible now, below street level in downtown Huntsville.

At press time, this old wooden viewing box still stood. However, work to replace it with a modern structure was scheduled for August. If you go downtown now, you might not even get to see this "before" sight at the new "after" site!

You can find the bricks in front of 205 Eastside Square, in front of the former Elbert H. Parsons Law Library. The lovely tiled-front building itself is being refurbished by new owners—and history buffs too - Attorney and Mrs. Mitchell Howie. They're open to the possibility of interpretive history displays in their lobby in the near future.

With the Foundation, the Society and the City as key partners, we hope you'll welcome the bricks to their newly preserved home soon. Cutting-the-ribbon during the city's annual "This Place Matters" campaign in May 2019 is a distinct possibility. The sunken sidewalk also adds an important historic preservation project to Alabama's State Bicentennial energy: it's been entered on that official calendar at www.alabama200.org.

Best estimates are that the

bricks were made in late 1860 into 1890, so Civil War era citizens very likely walked upon them. The scratched, foggy, broken covering is over 50 years old. It's been heavily damaged by weather and wear.

But according to Redstone Arsenal archeologist Ben Hoksbergen, the old bricks near the original dirt street level are in amazingly good shape. Possibly the fact that they were somewhat over-exposed was a good thing, since they could "breathe" better, as natural materials should.

They're made of red clay, probably dug near Ditto Landing or on local land.

The coordinator for the project team is Society Special Projects Chair and Foundation member Carol Codori, who lives downtown. She'd been walking past the "box" for years and wondered what was beneath it. She decided she wanted to help save this important reminder of Huntsville's past, and the rest as

they say...

Vaughn Bocchino, public history graduate student archivist at University of Alabama Huntsville and Old Town resident, located the original drawings for the box in the Harvie Jones Architectural Collection. He's also the sidewalk's FaceBook page creator.

Local designer, ceramics and metal artist Berry Baugh Allen, also of Old Town, has created an entirely new structure. It will meet modern safety standards and city code approvals. Berry's sculpture and fabrication work can be seen at the Botanical Garden and in the Belk Hudson Lofts lobby.

Several city departments and local businesses are assisting with the installation. Special thanks to Landscape Management and General Services for consulting and labor.

To share all of this on social media - in addition to Vaughn's Facebook - Jennifer Purser of



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Wolfhart Creative is handling photography, Twitter and Instagram.

This summer, special tempered glass and new railings will be placed properly at ground level, to allow for much better viewing. Berry will affix new aluminum framing and railings that match the current black metal style on downtown city benches and lamp posts. After the installation, new permanent signage and night lighting will be added. As drafted by Vaughn, with edit help from local AL.com writer Beth Thames, it likely will say: "In the mid-1800s, masons sculpted local clay into these bricks and created this sidewalk. What once served as a humble walkway for farmers, merchants and pedestrians now links you to Huntsville's past and to all those who trod where you are currently standing."

The project is costing some \$5,000— with a generous contribution to date and administrative guidance by the Foundation. In-kind work comes from the Society, the City, the Howies, Jane McBride of Clinton Avenue, artist Christina Wegman and several other citizen-partners.

Any and all donations are welcome. Funds are especially needed for lighting the interior of the new viewing structure and for developing new educational materials and hands-on brick displays.

Donations of at least \$500 will be recognized by your designated name on the final signage. Other contributors of in-kind support or amounts under \$500 can be listed in the sunken sidewalk's future public-

ity and social media.

The team anticipates that this signage will be placed as a standing marker near the sunken sidewalk or perhaps as a plaque near the Law Library's frontage. It may have a silver look, as the Huntsville Inn marker does. Or it may look bronze, much like the markers in front of Constitution Village on Gates Avenue and the Bibb House on Williams Street. Sample designs are in the works.

To make a tax-deductible contribution, you can send a check made out to Huntsville-Madison County Historical Society, and marked "sidewalk," to HMCHS, Box 666, Huntsville, AL 35804. Each contribution will be gratefully acknowledged by letter, and will include language of the Society's nonprofit status for fu-

ture tax filings.

For ongoing updates, take a walk to visit the sidewalk at 205 Eastside Square, watch your Old Huntsville Magazine, or check the Foundation's and the Society's newsletters at their websites, www.historichuntsville.org or www.hmchs.org respectively.

Watch for posts on FaceBook at SOS-Saving our Sidewalk; at Twitter @HistoryPlace; and at Instagram @PublicHistoryPlaceOldHsv.

You can email Carol Codori at carolcodori@att.net to get more details or volunteer for the team.



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How a Young Boy Made Money in the Early 50s

by M.D. Smith, IV

I always considered myself resourceful to make money from my earliest years. I can remember having the Lemonade Stand, selling it from a pitcher made in my house from water, squeezed lemons and sugar. Made five cents a glass. First time I tried to put ice in the glass pitcher but it melted soon and if you kept adding ice to cool it in summertime, it was a watered-down mess. Keeping it undiluted with ice cubes in a towel wrapped other container was a better idea.

The very best "store" idea was when my mother saw a "shaved ice" tool that looked like a small carpenter's plane, but made of all aluminum with

a sharp adjustable steel blade. It would shave ice from a solid block so fine, you could easily fit it into a cone paper cup, round the top and pour colored liquid syrup on top for a great treat. Neighborhood kids loved it - paid a dime for it - and told others.

I remember one cute little blonde girl saying to me, "M.D., this is the best idea anyone around here has ever had," as she daintily nibbled the top of the snow cone.

"Wow!" I was thinking. "I sure agree with that statement of a good idea." I had sampled one already and I knew it was very good and sweet. Probably just grape or cherry flavored liquid sugar, but it was good stuff.

I made a LOT of money that day. I was thrilled until that night at the dinner table when my mother said to me, "M.D., I am glad you did so well today with your shaved ice stand. But starting tomorrow you will have to buy your own block of ice and pay the ice man out

of what you made today, and when the syrup runs out, you will have to buy that as well. I bought you 100 cups and that will last a while, but eventually you will have to buy some more also."

"That's the way a real business works, Son," my father chimed in.

My goodness that was a shock. I have never thought about that. They were both actually showing and demonstrating how a business really worked with something I could truly understand. That thing called "Profit" had some strings attached.

Not only that, but the new wore off and in the coming few days, sales trickled down to only a little money and one day, didn't even pay for the block of ice, much less syrup. I think I made myself more cones than I sold on that last day of my business.

In the span of less than a week, I learned how businesses start, operate, pay for inventory, put in labor yourself and after all that, what is left is your profit, as long as you keep having customers. When they get too few, you have to close

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up shop or lose money to stay open. What an eye-opener that was. I never forgot that lesson.

Several other businesses I had over several years in the early 50s were more labor focused. The heck with that "inventory" stuff. I had become a pretty good painter in art class and had a few brushes and water based liquid paint at home. One day my mother announced that the mailbox lettering was really faint and if I'd go over it with black paint, she would pay me \$5.00. People were making fifty cents an hour in those days and I jumped at the chance.

It was not all that easy because our large rural size box had the full name and street address on BOTH sides of it. No matter, it took all afternoon for me to trace the outline of every letter and number. It looked great when I had finished.

Even my father, when he came home from work, said, "That's a great looking job you did on our mailbox, Son, you should go in business and ask neighbors if they want theirs re-painted for the same price."

What a great idea that was. I immediately put together a cigar box kit with a small can of black outdoor paint I had already used part of for our mailbox, several size brushes, a little bottle of turpentine for cleaner and a small rag in my back pocket.

Knocking on any door with a faded paint mailbox, I got some "No" answers, but it only took one. My mother had taken

a photo of OUR new painted mailbox that looked super good on the little B&W print I also carried. (If you looked real close, I came outside the lines a tiny bit on square edges of the block lettering, but it didn't show on the reduced size photo).

I finally got a job. "Now you will do a professional job, won't you M.D. and make it look just like it does now, only new black paint," my first customer asked.

"I sure will," I said and headed out to start my job.

That's when I realized it was all SCRIPT lettering. It was free hand done by a professional sign painter with the kind of wide, flat brush where you just letter with one sweep of the brush and drag it off the paint as you come to the end of the letter giving it a very pointed end.

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"We had a great neighborhood watch going when I was a kid, then she closed her drapes."

Sean Abraham, Gurley

"Oh my goodness," I said aloud and thought about Dorothy in the Wizard of Oz saying those same words when she was quite startled. I had just seen that movie again recently and could picture her saying the same thing. I was saying it for a different reason. I might have taken on a job I could not handle.

I was determined to try anyhow. I so very carefully and with the smallest brush I had, tried to letter that script and stay inside the line, but those trailing and beginning ends of the letter came to a tiny fine point.

The harder I tried, the more my hand would shake trying to paint those tiny lines. Hours had passed and I could see the mess I was making. I finally had to just let the script end have a bit of a square ending on them and where they just got smaller, I could see I was going outside the lines. A few times, I just had to put turpentine on the rag and wash it all off before it dried and start over.

It was way past dinner time in the afternoon when I had finished and time to wrap it up. Perhaps Mrs. North would not take too close a look at the new paint job. I went to the door and knocked.

"Well, M.D., I guess you must be finished. You sure have worked a long time on our mailbox. Let's go out and take a look before I pay you."

We walked out to the mailbox and I could see her smiling expression change as we got closer. Finally when we were standing in front of it and she had looked at both sides, she said: "Well I'm sorry, but if you think I am going to pay you for this mess, you are wrong. Now I am going to have to get the entire box painted all over to cover up this mess and then have to pay to have it re-lettered all over again from scratch."

With that, she turned and marched off back to the door and into her house. I was more than disappointed, but I really couldn't argue with her. As I stood there looking at my "mess" it sure was not my best work. It looked like one of my very early coloring books where I just could not "stay within the lines."

I was more successful with my gun bluing business a few years later, but it had a pitfall also. That will be for next time.

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City News from 1894

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- John L. Rison, Druggist, handles mail orders promptly. We carry drugs pure and fresh, toilet articles, flavoring extracts of all kinds. Syringes, face powders, patent medicines, difficult prescriptions carefully compounded. Located on Bank Row.

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

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

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

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

- Do not pay \$1 when you can buy our J & C Corset for 50 cents. Modeled after the best French strip corsets, in white, drab and ecru with silk flossing. A. R. Campbell & Sons, Huntsville, Ala.

- "I take pleasure in stating in the public that Sam M. York of Union Grove, Ala. has cured a cancer of twenty years standing for me. I have never known him to fail curing cancers." Jesse. F. Miller, Marshall, Ala.

- An item appeared in the Democrat recently which should have read as follows: "Mrs. Raskins has the largest and nicest plants in town." In making up the form the "l" dropped out and the word became "pants". The mistake was not noticed until the paper was printed. The whole town was in an uproar and when the lady's husband read the item he armed himself with a shotgun and started for the printing office. However the astute editor saw him coming and escaped quickly through a back window.

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