



No. 324
February 2020



Old Huntsville

HISTORY AND STORIES OF THE TENNESSEE VALLEY

About Love and Death



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ABOUT LOVE AND DEATH

by Tom Carney

Lucille leaned tiredly on her hoe in the cotton field and watched the mailman come to a stop in front of the mailbox. Lucille and her husband, Kenneth, rarely received any mail so whenever the mailman stopped it was a cause of great anticipation.

In this case, as Lucille looked at the official-looking envelope, she felt a sense of gloom descend upon her. Although Kenneth and she had talked about it almost every day, it had done nothing to lessen the impact of actually receiving it.

Though a war was raging in Europe and almost every able bodied male in the community of New Hope had received his draft notice, Lucille had still held the hope that her husband would not be called.

Silently, she placed the envelope in her apron and walked back to their home. It was a typical share cropper's house; two rooms, heated by a wood burning stove and an outhouse

in the back. Regardless of their surroundings, Lucille and Kenneth still considered themselves lucky.

1943 was promising to be a bumper year for cotton and even after giving the landowner his share and paying the bills, hopefully, there would be enough left over for the down payment on their own land.

Lucille stoked the fire in the stove as she thought about what to fix for dinner. Kenneth would still be in the fields for another couple of hours and she wanted to prepare something special for him.

When they married she had thought her husband was the kindest and best man in the world. Now, a year later, she was even more in love with him. Several times she had wondered what life would be like if he was gone, but the thought was so horrifying that she immediately put it out of her mind. Life without her husband would be unbearable, so she refused to think about it.

That evening, after they had completed dinner and she was clearing the table, Lucille took the envelope out of her apron and placed it on the table in front of him. The look on Kenneth's face after he hastily read the notice confirmed her darkest fears.

He was being called up and had to report for induction in ten days.

That night, lying in her husband's strong arms, would be

"Those who claim they can take it or leave it, probably never had it."

Billy Harolds, Gurley



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the most memorable of their brief marriage. They talked of their dreams and of their love, and of how soon the war would be over. Two young people, madly in love, dreaming of the future but with a fear of the unknown lurking in the back of their minds.

Kenneth had always been a hard worker but the next ten days saw him working harder than ever. Up hours before daylight he would already be in the fields when the first glimmer of a new day began to peek across the mountains. Every evening, after working in the fields all day would find him chopping wood for the upcoming winter by the light of a kerosine lantern.

Often, late at night, Lucille would carry a fruit jar of tea out to the woodpile where he was working and implore him to quit for the day.

Laughing, Kenneth would take her in his arms and tell her that he wanted to be sure that his wife would be warm that winter.

The morning Kenneth was scheduled to appear for in-

duction they got up even earlier than usual. After preparing breakfast they began the trek to town. Not owning an automobile and declining to ask neighbors for a ride, they chose instead to walk.

They had already talked about his departure and both had agreed it would be easier if she did not accompany him all the way. Two blocks from the bus station, they paused and after setting his bag down, Kenneth took his wife in his arms one last time to tell her that he loved her. Then abruptly, while choking back tears, he grabbed his bag and was gone.

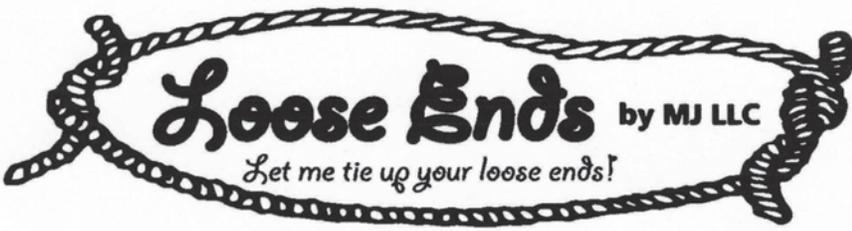
During the long walk back home Lucille's mind was a frenzy of plans and ideas. She would finish the cotton crop and save every penny she could so they could buy their own farm when he came home. She would write every day and send pictures and clippings from the newspaper. Everything would be all right. She just knew it.

After returning home, Lucille spent the day working in the fields hoeing cotton. As she

thought about the cruel war that had separated her from her husband, she attacked her work with a vengeance. The young cotton plants became Nazis and her hoe became the instrument of their destruction. Unfortunately, the hard work was only a temporary relief. When she returned to the house late that evening she was instantly confronted by silence. The kind of silence that only one who lives alone can understand.

And Lucille did what millions of other wives did that summer of 1943, she sat down on the edge of the bed and cried.

Although she worked from daylight to dark it was impossible for her to keep up with



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the growing cotton by herself. Where there had once been neat orderly rows, more weeds began appearing weekly. The harder she tried, the farther behind she got. It quickly became apparent that she would be unable to finish the crop.

Late one evening, as Lucille trudged tiredly home, she saw the landlord sitting on the porch waiting for her. Apologetic and with hat in hand, he told her that he was going to have to take over the crop. He had too much money invested he said, to take a chance on losing it.

"Of course," he said, "if you can get someone to help you, maybe we can do something."

Lucille knew there was no hope in hiring any farm help. Even Redstone Arsenal, where they were paying top wages, could not find all the hands it needed.

Reluctantly, she began to make arrangements to move. During the war, with gas rationing and overcrowded conditions, even a simple task like moving became a major chore. Finally after days of trying, she found a neighbor who was willing to move her to town in his horse and wagon in exchange for some farm implements that she no longer had use for.

Lucille went to work at the cotton mill and after several months of living with a relative, was fortunate enough to be assigned a house in the mill village. The previous occupant had been fired for allowing Arsenal workers to board with him, a practice the mills discouraged for fear of losing workers to the Arsenal.

Lucille's life soon settled into a regular routine. Up at 5 o'clock every morning, work all day, and back home by 6 that evening. Run to the mailbox to look for a letter from Kenneth, and then write another letter describing her day. Although a slow reader, she forced herself to read the newspaper every day to keep track of the war news. On her kitchen wall she had taped a map of Europe and every week or so she would laboriously trace the advances of the Allied Army. Every foot the Allies advanced meant the sooner Ken-

neth would be coming home.

Finally after almost two years, Lucille received the letter she had been waiting for. The war had been over for months and the Army was beginning to discharge its soldiers. Kenneth wrote to say that he would be arriving home by bus in a couple of weeks and that he missed her terribly.

A friend later said that she had never seen Lucille look so lovely and radiant as she did when she received the letter from her husband.

Two days before his scheduled arrival Kenneth called a friend to say he was in Fort Benning, Georgia, being discharged and would be home in a few days. "Tell Lucille," he said as

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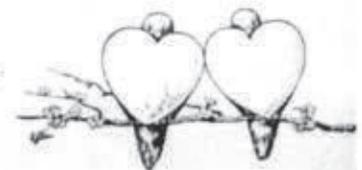
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"You always learn something from the late night talk shows - usually that you should have gone to bed earlier."

Billy Kruse, Huntsville

he hung up, "that I love her."

On the appointed day Lucille was at the bus station. Busload after busload of soldiers arrived to be welcomed home by their families, but Kenneth was not among them. Late that night after being assured that no more buses were scheduled to arrive that evening, Lucille finally returned home, only to return at first light the next morning.

Again, buses arrived and buses departed all day long but Kenneth was not on any of them. The same routine was followed for almost a week until she was threatened with losing her job if she did not return to work.

Kenneth and Lucille had been given a lamp when they first married and now she placed it in the window so he would be able to find the house if he arrived home at night. Every night she would rush home after work to wash, do her hair and change clothes and then spend the evening sitting on the edge of a chair next to the lamp, waiting patiently for her husband who never showed up.

Her neighbors began to grow concerned and finally talked her into writing the War Department. Several months passed until she received a reply. Kenneth had been discharged at Fort Benning and given a travel voucher to Huntsville. The department was sorry but it had no further information.

Neighbors began to speculate on the fate of Lucille's husband. "Surely," they reasoned, "something must have happened to him. And it's not normal for a woman to keep waiting for so long and acting like nothing is the matter."

Finally a delegation of neighbors approached her. "Lucille," they said, "we've known you for a long time and we just want to help. It's time you realized that maybe your husband is not coming home."

For what seemed like an eternity, Lucille stared silently at them, as if she was looking through them. When she finally spoke it was with a deliberate calmness. "My husband said he would come home and I believe him. Now if you will excuse me. ..."

Weeks turned into months, and months into years and every night the lamp was turned on, a silent beacon to a long ago memory.

Periodically, over the years, friends or neighbors would take an interest in the fate of Lucille's husband and try to discover what had happened to him. Letters were written to various organizations and inqui-

"I've had two bypasses, a hip and knee replacement. I'm half blind and half deaf and take 20 different medications that make me subject to blackouts. Can hardly feel my hands or feet anymore and not sure if I'm 88 or 90. I've lost alot of friends, but thank God I still have my drivers license!"

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ries were made of police departments and hospitals. The answer was always the same. "I'm sorry but we have no information."

Whenever someone would relay the latest inquiry to Lucille, she would scornfully reply that they were wasting their time with such foolishness.

"My husband," she would always reply, "is on his way home."

In 1956, some of the mill homes were torn down and Lucille moved to a small cottage at the foot of Chapman Mountain. Immediately, before her belongings were even unpacked, the lamp was once again placed in front of the living room window where it continued its lonely vigil.

When she lived in the mill village most people had been familiar with her story and had been sympathetic. Many of the residents, probably having seen enough suffering of their own, went out of their way to be nice to her, always asking if she had any word from her husband."

"No," she would reply. "He's on his way home and probably hasn't had time to

call."

Now, living in a new location, she soon became known as "the crazy woman." The neighbors knew nothing about her except that she still believed her husband was coming home and turned the light on for him every night. That was enough to make her different.

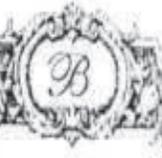
She rarely ventured out of her house, and when she did, she was often greeted by taunts from the neighborhood children. At Halloween her yard would be rolled with toilet paper and rotten eggs would be thrown at her front door. Every few years some neighborhood woman would visit for a few minutes, more to satisfy her curiosity than anything else.

Ignoring her neighbors, Lucille continued to live in her dream world, turning the lamp on every night and waiting for a knock that never came.

More time passed and the friends who had sympathized

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Plato



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with her began to die off. Every year there were fewer people who knew the story behind the lamp in the window. By this time, Lucille had become a virtual recluse and though able to take care of herself, her family still decided it was a good idea for someone to check on her every day.

In 1992, almost a half century after Kenneth had left for the service, Lucille's nephew stopped by one evening to see how she was doing. After knocking several times and not getting an answer, he used his key to enter the house.

After searching the rest of the house first, he discovered Lucille crouched in a corner of the bedroom, with a sheet wrapped around her, sobbing. Looking up and seeing her nephew, she began to cry again.

"He's not coming home is he? Kenneth's not coming home."

It was all the nephew could do to not cry himself. Sitting on the floor he wrapped his arms around his aunt and tenderly assured her that everything was all right.

"Don't worry Aunt Lucy, he's on his way home. He'll be home any time now."

Carefully he tucked the frail old woman into her bed. As she drifted off to sleep, a gentle smile played on her lips, the smile of a woman who still believed that love was forever.

Sometime that night, in the wee hours of the morning, Lucille died. Her body was found on the living room sofa, fully

dressed and with her hair done up neatly.

It was apparent from the calm and serene look on her face that she was finally reunited with her husband.

As the hearse pulled out of the driveway a group of small children, probably no more than 5 or 6 years old, began to chant: "Crazy woman, crazy woman, the crazy woman's dead."

At the family's request, we have refrained from publishing Lucille's last name. The mystery of what happened to Kenneth has never been solved. Though it was later established that he definitely boarded the bus in Columbus, Ga., for the trip to Huntsville, he was never seen again.

Cold Facts

* During World War I, military doctors noticed that men who slept in wet trenches during the winter had fewer colds than those who lived in comfortable barracks behind the line.

* Sufferers often feel a greater sensitivity to temperature changes during the early stages of a cold. So when you start shivering and think, "I'd better put on a sweater or I'll catch cold," you probably already have one.

* An unusual cure for the cold is called the Hungarian Hat Trick. Place a hat on a bedpost. Get into bed and start drinking your favorite hot toddy. When you see two hats, stop drinking.



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"Man is a creature who can't wait ten minutes for his wife to get ready, but will sit for hours waiting for a small fish to bite."

Kate Ogden, Madison

Man Hides in Well for Nine Years

from 1893 Newspaper

After living most of the last nine years in the bottom of a deep well, J.W. Owens is back behind the bars at Huntsville to complete a term which would have been served out had he remained there when first taken to the penitentiary.

As it is he begins his ten-year sentence all over again.

He escaped from jail after he was sent there on a murder charge 10 years ago.

Owens lived at the bottom of a deep dry well on his farm near New Hope all the time the law was searching for him. He fixed the well into comfortable living quarters and was never in danger. He remained there daytimes and came out at night to be with his wife and children.

Scores of times his property has been searched by officials, but they never once thought of taking a trip into that 70-foot well.

Owens was at the bottom, comfortably reclining on his bunk and smoking his pipe in an underground room he had tunneled out from the well.

Unfortunately, for Owens, he became careless and officers came upon him so suddenly that he was caught in the act of getting into his home away from home.

He was hauled back to prison to start over his ten year sentence.

It was 11 years ago that Owens was charged with murder and given his sentence. He had been a prosperous farmer.

He was discovered missing only one day after arriving to pay his debt. He had simply walked away in broad daylight.

Owens talked freely of his

hiding place, which he had taken up immediately upon returning home.

His food was lowered to him in a bucket at night.

For the last three years he has spent much time on the surface, even to the extent of helping with the work around the place. It appeared the law had given up the hunt and believed him gone, but he became careless and it was reported that "he was at home again."

Owens says he will not try to escape this time. He says his family is in good shape and can get along without him, so he will stick it out.

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down. But if you have a
toddler at home you learn
that it tastes pretty good."**

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"MY" CRAZY GREEK WEDDING

by Anna (Gene) Clift Chesnut

There are two important precursors for this story, one of which I have already mentioned in another story, but will reiterate, again, later. The other is that I took night classes in Russian when I was in high school. I think the class was given at Butler High School in Huntsville, possibly a class in the early days of UAH and was taught by a Ukrainian professor whose day job, so I was told, was at Redstone Arsenal, as we locals called it. At that time, however, it was NASA and Army Ballistic Missile Agency. I had taken Latin for two years at Huntsville High School and, like Latin, Russian has declension of nouns and conjugation of verbs so would be a challenge, I thought. Also, like Greek, it uses the Cyrillic alphabet with some modifications.

The other precursor, from one of my previous stories, is that I started taking dancing classes when I was six years old from Mrs. Hazel Robinson, which included tap, ballet and acrobatics. She even taught in our house on West Clinton Street for a year or so when she could not find another venue. By the second grade I was ballroom dancing with the sixth graders when the classes were in my home. Music and dancing were a big part of my childhood, until finally, in the seventh or eighth grade I had had enough!

I wish I had kept better records to know the exact year my husband and I went to Greece, but alas, I did not. It was probably in the early 1980s as I was still young enough to love adventure. After visiting the usual tourist attractions - the Parthenon, Delphi, assorted ruins and a little sailing in the islands, we decided we wanted to go to the Plaka, a village in the hillside shadow of the Acropolis, to see what it had to offer. We asked the concierge at the hotel where we were staying to give us some suggestions, which he did. While walking in the Plaka I had great fun trying to read the names of the businesses from my knowledge of the Cyrillic alphabet. Some words were like our English words, but they certainly did not look like it, the alphabet being so different. I understood, then, why some of the best English schools required in depth knowledge of Latin and Greek.

Since England ruled a large part of the world and traded in so many countries it had to have those who had knowledge of both these alpha-



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Billie Steadman, Woodville

bets and languages, the bases of many countries and their histories.

Our concierge, for a nighttime experience, had suggested a performance in the Plaka of Greek dancing so as evening approached we ambled over to the venue. Inside, there was a stage with a semi circle viewing area, in tiers. We were on the second tier in the center. I only remember the belly dancer (her movements were amazing) and the four couples who did several traditional Greek dances.

It was announced that at the end of their dances each couple would go into the audience and pick a couple to dance with them. I "willed" the lead couple to pick us by staring at them the whole time of their dances. They were the best dancers and when they finished dancing, that couple (can you believe it?) walked to the second tier and picked us.

We made a circle on the dance floor and tried to dance like them. It was probably hilarious for the audience watching us kicking and stomping and practically falling in the process but it was great fun for us, the dancers. Like all good things, however, the show ended and we were back on the streets and it was very late.

While still in the Plaka but walking back to our hotel, we came to a building with the door having a window like a round porthole on a boat and emanating from within was the most incredible music. Charles, my husband peered in, then I was peering in when the door suddenly flew open and I ca-

reened inside. Fortunately, the man opening the door caught me before I fell. Whew!

It was dark in this large room but as our eyes adjusted we realized it was a Greek wedding celebration. The musicians played instruments that were similar in configuration to those in an American blue grass band but instead of banjos and guitars they played bouzoukis and mandolins, which gave it that unique Greek sound. Music of that sort to me meant DANCING!

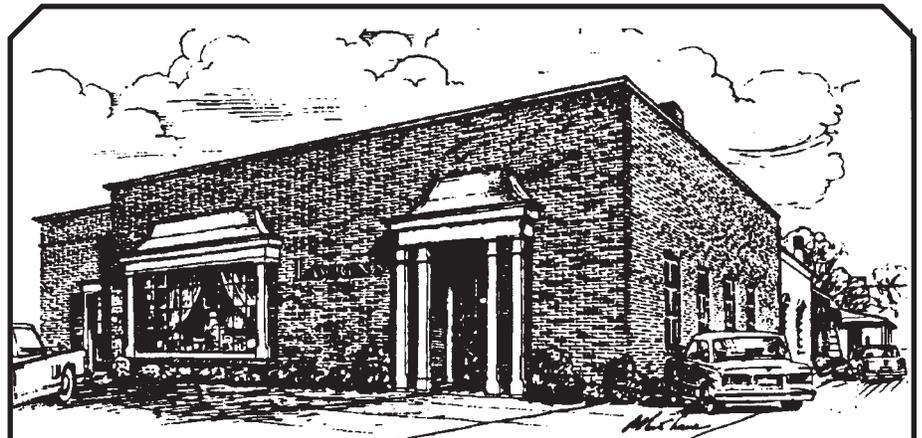
We were invited in - my husband said no but I said yes so we stayed. The man took us to a corner for refreshments but I had other things in mind. I summoned with my finger one of the men to the dance floor where I stayed the rest of the time we were there, danc-

ing, and dancing, and dancing. Charles danced a couple of dances in a circle with the men waving a handkerchief - maybe a little too much ouzo!

We, the uninvited guests, probably were having the best time of all! Finally, when I sat down to rest, my husband said to me, "Now that we have made such fools of ourselves I think we should leave." So we stood up and motioned that we were leaving.

One of the men pushed Charles back onto his seat, stuffed a piece of bread in his mouth, pushed a glass of ouzo in front of him and ushered me back onto the dance floor.

Such a fantastic evening at "my" crazy Greek wedding since I did not even know who was the bride as the women never danced!



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**Ask
Grandma**

by Mimi

After walking down to the mailbox and feeling how much colder the weather has gotten, I got the bug to clean out my closet and get the summer clothes moved out and the winter ones together. Just hoping I haven't gained too many pounds and can still wear the ones I bought on sale at the close of last season. It's a good idea to have a couple of boxes or plastic bins marked give away or keep. Many charities need coats, sweaters, gloves, and scarves. Keep adding to your bins.

By the way, why not tackle the linen closet? Our homeless could use blankets and bedding. Usually, in January, many stores have white sales. That is a great time to replenish any worn-out linens and towels! Who wouldn't appreciate a pretty pair of pillowcases or a set of towels to spruce up a bed or bathroom? Also might find something for an upcoming wedding or birthday present for that special friend, saves running out at the last minute for a gift.

As long as we are talking about the weather getting colder, it's a good time to check out the furnace and fireplace. Many fires start in the chimney with a buildup of creosote. A chimney sweep and a repairman are easy to find on-

line. If you don't have access to a computer, ask a friend that has one to help find the number.

Why not start the new year off by learning something new such as a sewing project, knitting, music or join an exercise group. It is always more fun if one has a buddy to do whatever it is you do, together. You can motivate each other especially if you are doing a weight loss program. It is good for the brain to challenge it by staying active and keep learning something. I have a friend that at eighty years of age, has gone back to college to get their Master's Degree in Creative Writing, so proud of him. Learn a new hobby, something you've always wanted to do. Take the first step and join a class or hire an instructor. Don't wait until "someday," which never comes. Do it now. Don't put it off.

Just a reminder Valentine's Day is just around the corner. I got a text from Costco before New Year's Eve to place an order for Valentine flowers now. At least they waited until I got the Christmas tree down, but only by a couple of days, to send out the message.

While out in the back yard yesterday, I noticed daffodils already up by six inches, so tomorrow I will plant the tulip bulbs that have been in my vegetable drawers for the last four months.

Enjoy the pretty weather with a walk and a smile on your face, be thankful because you never know what fate has in store for you.

Spring can't be all that far away either. Have you seen those little yellow jonquils blooming in some places? They don't even know there still is some cold weather to come, but it's refreshing that the first sign of spring has sprung.

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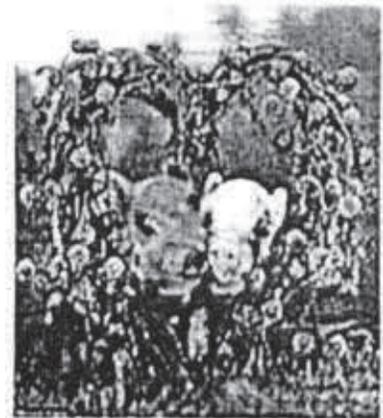
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Going to Town on Saturday

by Jean Brewer McCrady

Our trips from Harvest to town on Saturday were a family affair. And there was a standard protocol for the day. Daddy would park the car on the Northeast side of the Square, as near as possible to the space where he parked it the last time. A designated time would be set for everyone to be back at the car or some other designated spot. Before cell phones, these things had to be pre-arranged. A single logistical miscue could ruin the whole day for everyone and result in a car full of silence on the way home.

With all instructions clearly understood and acknowledged, Daddy would head for the pool hall in the Elks Building to meet his buddies. Mama would take our two younger brothers, Buzz and Ray, on her standard rounds to Montgomery Wards (the "anchor" store on the Northside of the square) and J.C. Penny's (having the same status on the Eastside). My sister Net and I were allowed to go on our own, and our favorite places were the Ten Cent stores.

There were 4 five-and-dime stores in the 2 block stretch on the East Side. They were McClellan's, Woolworth's (pronounced Woolsworth), Grant's and Kress's. Did you know the Kress name is still engraved on the front of that building?

One of those memories was about Net's first non-cotton pickin' job after high school. It was at Kress's as a counter clerk. Back then, each counter in the store had it's own cashier and you paid for your purchases from that counter right there. No shopping carts and no upfront check-out stations. Net worked 6 days a week for \$18.00 a week. After \$1.10 was withheld for taxes, she took home a whopping \$16.90.

I asked her recently how she got to town everyday and she said "I drove that ole red truck." She was referring to a big flatbed farm truck that was her only transportation. Net had married just before the end of school the year she graduated.

She and her husband, Gordon Landman, moved from Harvest further south on Wall Tri-

ana and started their own farming operation. Regarding the truck, she told me she parked it on the edge of town and walked to Kress's on Washington Street. The edge of town in 1949 was probably somewhere around Holmes and Church Street. Holmes was THE thoroughfare into Huntsville from the west in those days.

Another dime store story has stayed with me. Our kid brother, Ray, and I were in McClellan's and like any young boy would, he wanted some candy. I decided to let the occasion be a learning experience for him to help build his confidence for conducting business. Being a young country boy in the big city was a bit intimidating for him, and especially in the presence of an authoritative figure like a store clerk. (That was before Net became a counter clerk at Kress's and he learned they were just regular people.)

Clutching his dime, he walked up to the counter and I purposely waited a few steps back. As he stood there, drooling over the luscious tidbits behind the glass, two or three other customers came and went and the clerk was paying no attention to him. With my objective being to let him see how easy it was to make a

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It's been proven that once people start appreciating the things they have, instead of wishing for things they probably will never have, their moods improve almost immediately.

purchase, I began to realize this was not going well.

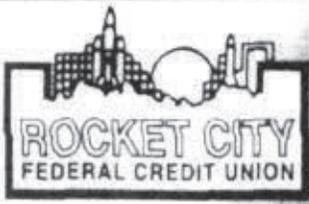
I stood it as long as I could and then stepped forward and addressed the clerk in a firm voice with the question, "Do you see him (pointing in Ray's direction) standing there?" She acknowledge that she did. "Do you understand WHY he is standing there?" Without giving her time to answer, I proceeded to inform her in the same tone of voice that he wanted to buy some candy and "You're going to sell it to him, RIGHT NOW!" And she did, without further hesitation.

Ray told me later that what he learned from that incident was, he had a big sister he could count on in crunch times like that and if he ever got into real trouble, he'd want me to be his mouthpiece. What I learned was that being assertive (though I didn't know that word yet) would cause things to happen.

I've wondered many times if that nameless candy counter clerk grew up to be somebody I know now and if she would remember that bossy teenager who bullied her 70 years ago. (In case you are still around and happen to be reading this, I'd like the opportunity to meet you and apologize.)

The fact that I remember the incident so clearly must be an indication that bullying was not my normal style, but it served a good purpose on that occasion—it got my little brother some candy and allowed him the learning experience of making a purchase.

And it taught me something that has come in handy many times over the last 60 years in the business world. That being assertive causes things to happen.



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The Wreck

by Ted Roberts



Most men think that women, to put it politely, could improve their driving skills. Being a member of that bigoted majority, I felt the same. Consequently, as a passenger, when my wife drove, I was full of shouted instruction. As usual, when we drove together, I was orating about my half a century of error free driving. Not one "moving violation". Of course "moving violation" was tightly defined. The fender bender of 2017 was not included - both vehicles were not "moving", my record was spotless.

"Watch out for that white car." "You're following that red car too closely." My auto school curriculum must have been worthwhile, she never had a wreck.

On the other hand, when I was the driver, I was full of illustrative examples; "See, I'm not turning in front of that white car" and "notice how far back I'm hanging from the red car."

Everybody knows that women can't estimate distance because they played dolls as kids instead of football. Ask two ladies to gauge some distant object and you'll get answers such as "about 100 yards" and "a half mile" but don't goat guys - "the world, she is a changing" - Girls now play sports and estimate distances as well

as men, which doesn't contribute to future mothering, so don't challenge your wife or girlfriend to a distance judging contest. You might lose. And don't offer instruction while you're behind the wheel. Wait until she's driving. This worked fine. For many months she was a quick learner. Until one bleak day my dreams and auto curriculum crashed.

I was driving down the oft-traveled residential street near our home. Cars were parked on both sides of the street, as I explained in my best professional voice that there was still room for me and an oncoming car to pass each other. She trembled with fear: "You wouldn't dare," she gasped.

"Well watch this," I said as I zipped past a white car headed in the opposite direction. Trouble was that two parked cars sadly crowded the roadway. What was that noise? I had interrupted my speech by knocking the rear vision mirror off one of the parked red cars. The professor had failed the test!

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"When you were a child you thought of nap time as a punishment. Now it feels like a mini-vacation."

Ron Eyestone, Madison

My True Love

by Barry Key



What is true love? I have always loved to hunt and fish. Growing up I had dogs, cats and a horse. I dearly loved them all. You can love many people; parents, siblings, friends, relatives and so on. You can love materialistic things, spiritual things, even an ideal. Is this True Love... I thought so... until:

In 1958 I was introduced to a girl on a blind date. Instantly, something happened that I had never experienced before. I stuttered, I couldn't make a coherent sentence, my palms became so sweaty I was afraid to touch her hand. Using an old cliché, this wasn't my first rodeo, but it was the first time I had been thrown this hard.

Throughout the night I tried to act calm and cool. But, it was like, the harder I tried, the bigger fool I made of myself. It was a double date, one of my good friends from high school and his date (my date's sister) whom had set up this blind date. We had gone to the Whitesburg Drive-In Theater. I continued to think this was a mistake, this girl hates me... she's going to use the old excuse "I have a headache, can you take me home?"

"And your crybaby whiny-butt opinion would be...?"

What you wish you could say at work

Although things in my mind were going terribly bad, I still had this funny feeling that I'm not sure what it was, or even if it was a good or bad feeling. As the night progressed, I did seem to get my apprehension under control. Before the show was over we were having a sensible conversation, laughing and enjoying each other's company.

During the show she had moved next to me. I had put one arm around her shoulder and was holding her other hand. Man...I was in tall cotton now. Should I try to kiss her? No!! While you are finally ahead, leave well enough alone.

By the time the show was over it was curfew time. On the way to her house lots of thoughts were going through my head...do I shake her hand or kiss her good night. Hell, do what your heart is telling you and really lay one on her. This will probably be the last time she will ever accept a date with you again anyway.

When we were on her front porch I had lost my nerve. I told her I had really enjoyed the night (the truth), shook her hand and we did mutually share a "friendly" good night kiss.

To make a "two year" story short, Judy Hill and I were married in November 1960. This year we will celebrate 60 years of marriage. That, my friends, is what I call "TRUE LOVE".

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Heard On the Street

by **Cathey Carney**



Did you find the hidden pencil from last month's issue? It was on page 27, on the Alabama Credit Union ad - under **Ray Pfeiffer's** picture - see it? I made it larger than usual and had quite a few callers, but the first one was **Glenn Thomas** of Huntsville. Glenn worked at the Post Office here with **Malcolm Miller** many years ago. Congratulations to you Glenn!

Then our sweet baby picture was City Councilman **Bill Kling**. SO many called and said it just had to be **Mayor Tommy Battle**, but it was Bill. The first person to ID him was **Marie Andrews**. Marie told me she worked at First Alabama Bank when it was here years ago and really loves our history. Congratulations to you too!

Greg Gressman is that friendly guy you see when you go into the Redstone Federal Credit Union on

Parkway and Mastin Lake Rd. He works as security there but everyone coming into the credit union said hello to him and he knows EVERYONE! Greg told me he buys Old Huntsville each month and sends them to family across the US. He's been working at the credit union for many years and I could tell that people sure do think the world of him.

Then when I went into Walmart on Winchester Road I talked with **Gary Oglesbee** who's front entrance greeter there. He and his wife **Beth** have been residents of Madison for 20 years now. So good to catch up with him.

Linda Lewis Johnson was 81 when she passed away on Dec. 11. Many remember her as the secretary at Butler High School for 25 years. From a young age she was a leader and took charge. She loved organizing reunions of Butler retired teachers and was the sponsor for the Butler HS cheerleaders. She made things happen and was loved by so many. She loved her church, Friendship Baptist in Huntsville. Linda Johnson is survived by two sons; **Rick (Paula) Johnson, David "Hoss" Johnson (Lisa, deceased)**; her daughter **Melanie (Bill) Lockard** and sister **Jeannie Lewis**. She and husband **Cotton Johnson** had twenty-two grandchildren and eighteen great grandchildren. What an amazing life.

Recently in our area we got 5+ inches of rain, it is crazy warm and still rainy in mid-winter! This time last year I found 6 feet of water in my dirt basement, after a re-

ally heavy rain. I called AFS Foundation and David Flamm to fix it. Well I was so relieved that they took care of it because this year - no water in the basement - it is completely dry and what a relief. Many of us have older homes with basements and that's one home project that just needs to be taken care of. David gave me lots of different options and NO MORE flooding.

Special hello to **Joyce and Ted Rogers** of Huntsville. Joyce wrote a sweet tribute to a four-legged friend and you'll find her story in this issue.

We've gotten a few suggestions from people who have arthritis and are trying to help the pain by methods other than medicine. One lady said when she cut down on the sugar she ate, her pain diminished quite a bit. Another lady said she had to go gluten-free because of a health condition and without the gluten, she has much less **arthritis pain**. Then a neighbor told me he started using CBD oil for stress and a side effect was nearly no more arthritis pain. A young guy I spoke with swears by Tumeric (in the vitamin section of your store) and one of my favorites is tart cherry juice with

Photo of The Month

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as little sugar as possible. Always check with your doctor if you're trying something new but at least with natural remedies you don't have the bad side effects that some people experience with medicine.

So many people are ordering online now and that means the UPS/mail/FEDEX drivers are busier than ever. Old Town historic district has had **Orlando** as our driver for over 30 years and it is so good to see him back after being gone for a few months. We missed you!

Please remember that mistakes can be made and these drivers are doing their best so if your package doesn't arrive when it was supposed to, if you wait a day or so it'll turn up. Sometimes it's just delivered at a wrong address, especially when there are temp drivers hired. Neighbors are great about swapping packages when they're mis-delivered.

If you've read this far you know I hid something in this issue. Since this is February and Valentine's Day is near, I have hidden a tiny little heart somewhere in this issue. I will accept calls on Feb. 10, at 8am. This will give our out-of-towners a chance. This one won't be so easy!

You know how sometimes you just feel like a bowl of rice & veges but don't want to wait 30 minutes to cook rice and maybe it'll

be good or not? I just discovered that cooked rice can now be found in packages in all stores, already cooked. All you do is dump it into a frying pan with a bit of butter, warm it up and it's ready. Where have I been? It's perfectly cooked and you can buy flavored, brown rice, basmati, etc. SO good.

I usually don't recommend appliances or items unless I'm really impressed. Well recently I had need for a floor sweeper and had tried a few in the past with no luck, they just wouldn't pick up anything. My friend **Lawanda Allison** of Decatur told me about the Shark Floor & Carpet sweeper that uses a rechargeable battery. I found one (lavender, really pretty) on the JC Penney website and ordered it. It was even on sale for \$49! I had never ordered from Penney's before but it arrived in a week. I LOVE it. It's easy to use, picks everything up and is easy to clean out. For that price you can't beat it, my model was the 12" with motorized brush (V2945Z).

Roscoe Roberts is a name many will recognize; he served as State Senator, State Representative; Board of Education; Boy Scouts of America Chairman; Space & Rocket Center. He was a Golden K Kiwanian for many years. Roscoe was a people person for sure and loved pulling pranks on his friends. You never saw him

without that huge smile. He had a Monday night poker group that met for 60 years. Roscoe lived a full life and was the true Southern Gentleman. He is survived by wife **Rosalie** (his deceased wife **Jane Grote Roberts** preceded him in death); 5 children, 13 grandchildren and 7 great grandchildren.

It seems every month there are more and more events for people to attend in Huntsville. With the new Mars Music Hall as part of the Von Braun Civic Center, the entertainment is amazing. On Feb. 8 there will be a Fleetwood Mac Tribute; Feb. 4 there will be Lyle Lovett & his Acoustic Group at the Mark C. Smith Concert Hall.

Also at the Concert Hall on Feb. 15 the Symphony Classical Series will present Ravel and Trombones.

The 5th Annual Space City Tattoo Expo will be held at the Westin in Bridge Street Feb. 21-23.

On Feb. 13 at the Museum of Art, Mary Badham (Voices of Our Times) will be featured. If you're interested in RVs, the VBCC will be featuring the Alabama RV Supershow Feb. 14-16.

Jim Parker's Songwriters Series will take place Feb. 7 at the VBCC. On Feb. 15 at the Stovehouse on Governors Dr. you can learn how to make Valentine cupcakes!

Remember this is a leap year with 29 days for February!

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Old Fashioned Favorites

Senate Bean Soup

2 lbs. navy beans
 1-1/2 lbs. smoked ham hocks
 1 onion chopped
 Salt and pepper
 Wash beans and run through hot water. Add beans to a kettle with 4 quarts hot water and the ham hocks. Boil slowly for 4 hours, covered. Braise chopped onion in butter and when light brown add to soup. When beans are tender, season with salt and pepper and serve.

Chicken with Almond Sauce

4 chicken breasts, bone in
 1 T. Crisco
 1 T. flour
 2 c. heavy cream
 1 T. fresh parsley, chopped
 1 c. blanched almonds, chopped
 Heat Crisco in skillet and

fry chicken til golden brown and done. Put it on hot platter while you make the sauce. Thicken the grease in the skillet with the flour, stir til smooth. Add the cream and parsley, add salt and pepper. Stir well, add the almonds. Let boil for 5 minutes, stirring constantly. Add liquid if it gets too thick. Pour the sauce over the chicken and serve.

Cheesy Hash Browns

2 lbs. hash brown potatoes
 1/2 c. melted butter
 1 onion, chopped
 1 c. cheddar cheese, grated
 1 can cream of chicken soup
 1/2 pint sour cream
 Mix together all ingredients, saving part of the cheese for topping. Salt and pepper to taste. Grease a 9x13" pan, put the mixture into the pan and bake 1 hour at 325 degrees. Sprinkle the remaining cheese on top the last 30 minutes.

Mother's Meat Loaf

1 lb. ground beef
 1/4 lb. ground sausage
 1 t. Worcestershire
 1/2 onion, chopped
 1/4 c. milk
 1 c. bread pieces
 1 egg, beaten
 Mix all ingredients well in large bowl. Salt & pepper to taste. Form into loaf and place in baking pan with small amount of water. Spread cat-sup on top, bake at 350 degrees for 45 minutes.

Chocolate Truffles

2 packages chocolate chips
 15 oz. can sweetened condensed milk
 1 t. vanilla
 1 c. chopped nuts
 Melt chips over hot water in double boiler. When melted remove from heat and add remaining ingredients. Chill until firm on a buttered plate. Shape into balls and roll in cocoa or coconut.

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Chocolate Popcorn

- 1-1/2 c. sugar
- 1 rounded T. butter
- 1 sq. unsweetened chocolate
- 3 qrts. freshly popped corn
- 3 T. water

Boil the sugar, butter, chocolate and water til mixture spins a long thread. Pour hot over warm popped corn and stir til all popcorn is coated.

Vinegar Pie

- 1-1/2 c. sugar
- 4 eggs, beaten
- 4 T. vinegar
- 2 T. flour
- 3 T. butter
- 1 c. hot water
- Nutmeg to taste

Mix together all ingredients and pour in a fresh open pie crust. Bake in moderate oven (325 degrees) til the center is done. Very old recipe.

Fried Apples

- 5 tart cooking apples
- 2 T. butter
- 1 c. sugar
- Red hots

Cut the apples into 1/4 inch slices, do not peel. Melt the butter in a skillet and add the apples. Sprinkle sugar over the apples and add 3/4 cup of water.

Cover and cook for a few minutes until the sugar is dissolved. Remove lid and cook til done. Stir only enough to keep apples from burning.

Add more water if necessary to keep them from becoming dry. Add a few red hots for even more flavor.

Apple Pandawdy

- 1/2 loaf stale brown bread
- 2 T. butter
- 8 tart apples
- Sugar
- 1/2 t. cinnamon
- Salt

Cut the bread in thin slices and pare off crusts. Butter each slice. Lay them in a buttered baking dish so that it is neatly aligned. Top with the pared and sliced apples. Sprinkle with a thick layer of sugar. Add the cinnamon and a dusting of salt. Pour 1 cup of water over all. Top with buttered bread crumbs. Bake slowly at 325 degrees for an hour. Serve with hard sauce if desired.

Slow Cooker Chocolate Cake

- 1 pkg. chocolate cake mix
- 1 8-oz. container sour cream
- 1 c. semi-sweet chocolate chips

- 1 c. water
- 4 eggs
- 3/4 c. vegetable oil
- 1 3-oz pkg. instant cocolate pudding mix

Spray your crock pot with nonstick cooking spray. Mix cake mix, sour cream, chips, water, eggs, oil and pudding mix in bowl by hand. Pour into slow cooker and cover.

Cook on low 6-8 hours or high 3-4 hours. Serve hot or warm with ice cream or whipped cream.

Easy Key Lime Pie

- 8 oz. Cool Whip
- 14 oz. sweetened condensed milk
- 1/2 c. key lime juice
- Graham cracker pie crust

Mix first 3 ingredients together, whip by mixer til stiffened. Pour mixture into crust. Refrigerate at least an hour. There won't be any left!



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EARLY DEVELOPMENT ATOP GREEN MOUNTAIN

by Bob Baudendistel

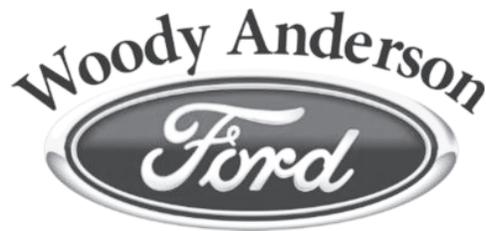
Lands atop Green Mountain and other Cumberland Outliers here in Northern Alabama have not always been regarded as a valued asset, particularly back when agriculture was deemed the most effective means of making economic ends meet. Throughout the Paleoindian, Archaic and Woodland periods; mountain lands were merely viewed as a source of timber, wild game, coal and medicinal waters. The first land patents with the majority of acreage found atop the higher elevations did not take place until long after sections of the lower valleys had already been purchased.

Early records show land purchases atop Green Mountain did not occur until 1855. The mountain's unique environment, remoteness, rich timber, interior wetlands and geology were appreciated by only a handful of owners for nearly 100 years. During the late 1950s, the mountain

would see major changes due to the ballistic missile era at Redstone Arsenal.

It was around this time when the American Machine and Foundry (AMF) Company began aggressively purchasing lands atop the mountain. The plan was to develop an underground bunker system where missiles could be manufactured. Having easy access to both rail and water transportation off the southwestern edge of the mountain greatly enhanced its appeal for this type of installation. The decision to build an underground missile factory was eventually shot down mainly due to some mountain landowners having the courage to stand their ground.

Another key with the decision was the government's realization that despite being beneath thick-bedded layers of limestone and sandstone cap rock, any given bunker system would not be able to withstand enemy attack



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"I've learned that if someone says something bad about me, I will live so that no one will believe it."

Johnny, age 15

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from the newer inter-continental ballistic missiles; most specifically those equipped with nuclear warheads.

In 1963 AMF sold their land holdings to the Lane Development Group and Buck Creek Industries for a mere \$500,000. The new owner/developers immediately went to work promoting the mountaintop community as "Monte Vedra", named after a Spanish mountain city. Newspaper ads from 1963 show a completely new planned development housing project featuring multi-story high rise apartments, retail, a golf course, club house, new roads, bluff view lots, schools and churches. Fresh water and electric power for the new development was to be fed off a series of pump stations and overhead power lines built up along an easement off the southwestern slope of the mountain near Green Cove Road. Efforts to build a new water reservoir atop the mountain were also underway. By 1966, the State Health Department had even approved plans for the required sewage oxidation ponds.

While the new development looked promising to many, it was a little ahead of its time as efforts to sell the plan simply never lifted off the ground. As a result, the newly cut roads and remaining woodland areas atop the mountain remained dormant for years while becoming a popular hangout for late night party goers. One last glimmer of hope came in 1976 when all of the property holdings were sold to a private developer for \$1.2 million. Continued efforts to sell and promote the area would still fall short such that in 1995, Huntsville's largest ever public land auction took place with the property to help pay off any outstanding debts.

Only recently would the mountain begin seeing a higher number of new home sites including many restricted subdivisions. Parts of the old water system that were constructed back in the 1960s have since either been abandoned or upgraded to newer standards.

I recall my first hiking expeditions across Green Mountain where some friends and I would follow a trail up from Sugar Tree off Weatherly Road near the foot of the mountain. Once atop the mountain, the "Spacewalk" trail was taken south past the TVA power lines until North Shawdee Road was reached. From here, we hiked and biked nearly every square foot of the mountain. Being the

only true map reader of the group, I convinced everyone that the first place to visit was the Alum Cave just off the south end of the mountain (now part of the Land Trust). Once there, we paused beneath a canopy of short-leaf pines admiring the view of Campbell Cove found below. When asked "Where are we?" by a fellow mountain hiker who got lost fairly easy, I had him all tricked out by saying "Why we're looking out over Birmingham!" Interestingly, he thought it was true!

Having such appreciation for the mountain growing up, I convinced my father to loan me the money needed to buy land atop Keel Mountain over to the east and out across Big Cove near Cherry Tree. Similar to Green Mountain, this area is now starting to see its share of new development. As history shows, getting anything in terms of infrastructure atop these elevated sections carries a noticeable risk factor with the associated costs.

Still, time well spent in the great outdoors atop any of these mountains means enjoying their rich forests, historic culture, geology, waterfalls, wildlife, natural resources, bluff views, archeology and meeting the people who call the mountains home. In doing so, it never ceases at convincing me that we live in the greatest place on Earth. And with that, Green Mountain will always be noted as a point of true inspiration.



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Thompson Machine Gun Incident

by M. D. Smith, IV

"No, sir, we won't move an inch, and we are putting the Thompson down," I said as I looked at my son, Owen, who had just emptied the 30-round clip shooting at cans in the water.

That's what you do when a Madison County Deputy, flanked by a local town policeman, gives that order, and he has his hand on his weapon by his side.

Let me tell you first how we came to be in that situation eighteen years ago. I had gotten a new, perfectly legal Thompson semi-automatic gun from a local gun shop. An exact copy of the famous 1927 automatic model is still made and available today for about \$1,400. My son, Owen, was as impressed as much as I was, and we wanted to just do some plinking at cans and "shoot-em-up" fun with it. Therefore, instead of the local gun club, we went to a spot on the outskirts of a small town in Madison County that I had discovered a few years earlier. It was a bridge over the Flint River where evidence of others target shooting, drinking beer and dumping garbage was abundant.

We arrived on a warm late summer afternoon, unpacked

several of my guns that all shot the .45 ACP cartridge, including the Thompson. We had shot several boxes of ammo at cans and floating bottles in the river. They make perfect targets and sink when you hit them with a bullet. I had used my .45 Colt Gold Cup semi-automatic handgun that is a marvel to shoot. We both had taken turns with the Thompson loading up the 30-round clip and shooting until it was empty.

Just about to wrap up, and I believe Owen was shooting the last clip roll of cartridges and I was standing nearby with my gun empty and holstered on my side, watching him. Just as he shot the last round and I heard the "click" of the empty gun, we both heard those words behind us.

"Put the gun down on the ground, now," calmly but firmly spoken.

We both turned and saw the Madison County Deputy standing behind us with his right hand on his pistol, still in the holster on his side. Behind him was the local town policeman, also with his hand on his gun at his side.

I instantly realized how imposing a possible threat we were. Two armed guys and one with a Thompson Machine Gun that he had just stopped shooting and could still be loaded with ammo and ready to fire.

I saw Owen look at the new gleaming blued steel of this new prize of mine, and then down at the dusty and muddy ground near the water. I sensed a reluctance on his part because he hesitated to put my prize in the dirt. At least they didn't say, "Drop it."

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"Owen, do as they say. It's Okay to put it down, just do it now," I said.

Owen did as he was told, slowly and carefully. The officers relaxed a little bit and then continue to approach us from the twenty-foot distance they had stopped. They came over and asked to see ID from both of us.

While I was getting my driver's license out, the deputy said, "It's not illegal to be shooting out here, but we did get a report of gunshots in the area and I see you are shooting into the water." I nodded.

"Bullets can ricochet from the water to parts unknown, and you were shooting towards the populated area."

Let me tell you, I know what they said is true. If you aim at the flat water's surface a long distance away, the bullet will skip a longer distance. I have done that on purpose in safe locations with a hill backup and seen it hit the water in front and jump to the dirt behind. But we were shooting down at a sharp angle into the water very close to us. There was no chance of that happening. There was also no chance I was going to argue with the cop, either.

I just said, "Yes, Sir, I understand," with a trembling in my voice.

Owen didn't say a thing.

Behind the officers was the open hatch of my SUV, and sitting just inside were two open cans of Coors Light, with the name sticking above the Huggies. Oh my God, I thought, if they see the beer, we'll be in even more trouble.

Presently they decided to leave, and we had decided we had shot enough for the day anyhow, even though we were not ordered to leave. The law departed and we were soon behind. I finished off my beer and had a fresh one on the way home.

Owen and I will never forget the day we were confronted by armed, and likely nervous, officers of the area while we held a Thompson Machine Gun. Thank goodness I'd taught my son to lower a rifle towards the ground when he turned around with a two-handed grip to confront the officers. It might have turned out worse.

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I know a guy who is addicted to brake fluid, but he says he can stop at any time.

A MAMA'S LOVE

by Linda Sabourin

In mid-May in Arkansas anything can happen weather-wise, and one night it did. It started out a typical day, with a beautiful blue sky, clouds on the horizon and temperatures still in the bearable range. I was going about my normal routine when I noticed our cat Flower marching across the room with one of her kittens in her mouth. I gently took the kitten away from her and put it back in the basket in my brother's room where the kittens "lived." Five minutes later she did the same thing again. Again I took the kitten away from her, but this time swatted and scolded her. A few minutes later, she returned again.

I was curious so I let her go and watched. She took the kitten into another room, and then over to a wooden nightstand that was missing the top drawer.

Flower is a mostly white calico with short legs and a long plume of a tail; she looked pretty cute as she sat on her hind legs and tried to raise herself high enough to drop the kitten into the bottom drawer of the nightstand. Her big golden eyes glowed with determination as she tried to figure out the best way to accomplish her goal.

Understanding what she wanted now, although not understanding why, I emptied the bottom drawer and put a soft blanket inside it. Then I moved the drawer into my brothers room, placing it where Flower's kitten basket had been. I carefully transferred the kittens from basket to drawer, Flower watching me intently.

When I was done, she hopped into the drawer with the kittens and lay down to let them nurse, purring loudly. I had to admit, the nightstand did make a better place for the kittens—with the hard wooden top and sides it was protected from drafts and anything that might be accidentally dropped. I praised her for her intelligence and beauty and went back to what I had been doing before we started the Great Kitten Relocation.

That evening, storms rolled in. As we watched a basketball game on TV, thunder rumbled outside. Lightning flashed across the sky. The wind blew and the rain came down—a nice thunderstorm!

We left the front door open to enjoy the fresh air and

Barbara Brown Johnston



Barbara Johnston was nearly 81 years old when she passed away on Dec. 7. She was born in a log cabin on her family's farm in Baker's Crossroads, TN along with her twin sister Wilene. She loved her family more than anything. The love of her life was Johnny Johnston and together they traveled all over the U.S. before coming back to Huntsville in 1983. She was a faithful member of First Baptist Church, having first joined in 1958. Johnny and Barbara were married for 61 years.

She is survived by her husband Johnny, her son Rick Johnston (Signe); daughters Martee Harris (Tim) and Rebecca Marshall (Chris), five grandsons, one great grandson and two sisters, Diane Stout and Laura Brown.

Johnny took such good care of Barbara when she first became sick and the family will have her in their hearts always.

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watch the storm.

Then the weather changed. The wind went from twenty miles an hour to at least sixty – then it blew harder still. Rain blew horizontally, coming six feet into the house. We struggled to close the door, and as we pushed, I gasped... everything outside had turned into a complete blur. The door finally closed, we stared at each other in shock. We listened to the storm rage outside, and then heard a loud crack and pop nearby. All the lights went out.

Less than fifteen minutes later, the storm had passed. The wind calmed and the rain was just a soft patter. We breathed a sigh of relief. The electricity was still off when we went to bed, but we were confident it would be back on by morning.

Morning brought a few shocks, but still no electricity. There were huge trees uprooted all around us. The ground around the big walnut tree in the front yard was cracked and raised – we nearly had a tree in our living room!

The neighbor behind us couldn't get out of her house until the landlord sent someone with a chainsaw to help. She also lost part of her roof – we found it in the churchyard across the street. Power poles looked like toothpicks, cracked and broken on the ground.

Oddly enough, the two trash cans we had set out by the curb were still there, untouched.

Most of the town was without power and stayed that way for three and a half days.

Word started getting around about what we already suspected – a tornado had come through our little town. And as happens so often with nighttime storms, the sirens never went off. But Flower knew it was coming.

Hours before it happened, that little cat

knew we were in for more than just a regular old thunderstorm and she wanted her babies safe.

After that night, the nightstand with the missing drawer, which has since been home to three more litters of kittens, became known as The Storm Shelter.

And Flower became known as the smartest cat we know.

“The kids text me ‘plz’ which is shorter than ‘please’. I text back ‘no’ which is shorter than ‘yes’.”

Dave, an Athens dad



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A Letter to Mom

by Ernestine Moody

Usually a small child doesn't retain many family memories. However, seeing my mom cry and feeling the apprehensive atmosphere in our modest home that day burned a lasting spot in my young mind.

Dad was pacing up and down the hardwood floor trying with all his heart to comfort mom. Over and over he repeated, "It will be fine. We just have to trust that he will be fine."

Years later I learned that it was on that day that my brother had received his draft notice. He had just finished a year of Forestry Studies at the University of Georgia and was now being informed that he would be involved in this country's big fight for freedom.

He was sent to serve in Italy. I will never know, nor have a desire to know, what devastation he witnessed during that time. When he returned home, he had changed. The young carefree man that left us, returned full of sadness. In the 1980s after my parents and my brother passed away, I searched through a neatly bound stack of papers that were carefully tied with a frail gray string. They were labeled "important". The very first document was a letter addressed to: Private Frank J. Rizza, with an A.S.N. number, Postmaster, NY City. The envelope was postmarked October 1943 and stamped in many areas with the words, "No records found".

In a future story I would like to share with you its contents. Please note, as stated in the letter, my mom had not received mail from my brother for several days. Perhaps you can feel her anguish as with pen in hand she placed her thoughts into words. Not only had she failed to receive any current correspondence from him, but then to have his letter returned marked, "No record found". Until hearing from him later, her emotions had to have been almost unbearable.

Fortunately, in my lifetime

I have been spared the anguish of seeing my child being sent from the comfort of his or her home to help preserve one's right to live in freedom. I can only take this opportunity to thank all who have served and their families. Hopefully the day will come when there won't have to be a small child witnessing the heartbreak surrounding the separation of a family, and we will all live in a loving, peaceful world.



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How to Get Your Man to Clean a Bathroom

by *Bill Cassels*

"Mr. Clean" stands there, arms folded, on the labels of many bathroom cleaning products, but does he ever use them? Not if he's like most men, according to a survey by the Soap and Detergent Association. In this survey, women reported they do 79% of the housework. Half of the women surveyed specifically complained about their mate's failure to clean the bathroom. This article is for those complaining women who are desperate enough to consider suggestions from a man who never cleaned a bathroom until I retired a few years ago. Then my wonderful wife taught me how it's done.

I never realized until I did it, how hard it is to keep a bathroom clean. Grunge accumulates so quickly...it's mystifying! My bathroom has several small rugs on the floor. I always walk on these rugs; thus, nothing ever touches the exposed tile floor. Yet the floor gets dirty anyway. My bathroom has a separate shower and tub. The tub is never used, yet the tub needs cleaning. Just a few days after it's cleaned, the sink mirror looks as though a congested soccer team sneezed on it.

Here's my theory. If you can somehow persuade your man to clean a bathroom once, he'll realize how hard it is. Then, he will no longer take this work you do for granted, and he'll naturally want to share this chore, especially when you follow up with whatever positive reinforcement techniques you have found effective. That's it; that's my little theory.

OK, you say, even if that theory works, how do I get my man to clean the bathroom the first time? Here are some possible approaches which, I readily admit, may not work. Most men are said to be alike in many ways. But finding the motivator to get men to clean bathrooms is probably very man-specific and for some men, may not exist.

Here are some iffy and untested approaches. A subtle hint: you're at a home show. You point out an easy-to-clean bathroom. Your man remarks that the expense is not worth it. This gives you a great opening to gently explain to him what exactly is involved in cleaning a bathroom and to suggest that he experi-

ence this for himself. Appeal to his sense of fairness. For example, "Phil, today while I'm working my two jobs and taking care of your mother, is there any chance you could take a break from watching the ball games to clean a bathroom?"

The "you big strong man" approach: I know you're skeptical of this approach, but it might work. Combine a macho compliment with an implied request. For example, "You're so strong, and this box I'm carrying is so heavy." We men realize we are being suckered into doing something, but we often do it anyway.

The gift. For a Valentines Day or anniversary, tell him you'd rather he clean the bathroom than give you more lingerie. Fear: Post enlarged pictures of dust mites and bacteria on the fridge. Add a few articles about diseases from unsanitary conditions.

The lure of a new cleaning tool. If your man is wavering, he might be persuaded by giving him a new cleaning tool such as a crevice brush, a stylish squeegee, a toilet wand, or Magic Reach Bathroom Explorer. Be sure to let him open the package.

How did my wife get me to clean bathrooms? She is so clever...I don't really know. Good luck.



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Saying Goodbye to Our Favorite Hello

by Joyce Rogers



I could not leave his name off our Holiday greeting card without paying tribute to "Sometimes Bob". OK, an obit for a cat if you must. He introduced himself to us when we first moved into our house, some 14 years ago. Being a mature, four-to-six year old cat, he graciously sprayed our doors, windows and bushes to welcome us and our cats to his territory. Even though somewhat aloof, he was very smart and bold. His ordinary dark gray tabby markings were offset by his natural, but rare, bobbed tail.

The first few months at our new home, I introduced myself to our neighbors by inquiring about ownership of the collarless Bobtail cat. The answers were the same; people knew him by sight, some fed him and some named him since he was a common neighborhood icon. "Toby" spent time in a boat under the tarp. "Tiger" observed inside house cats through a patio door while relaxing on a deck. "Auburn Tiger" was curious about two creatures called children. There was "Pretty Boy" because he was. He was also known as "The Cat" that was trapped in a chimney for three days before being freed. To us, he was "Bob-Bob" or "Sometimes Bob" but it did not matter as he answered to all names.

Over time, doused with some good cat food, trust developed between us. With no lost owner found, we thought it best to have him neutered and his left ear tipped; the universal sign of a feral, but neutered cat. This act changed his life and ours forever. Gradually, Bob-Bob visited us more frequently and finally chose to enter our house and the lives of our cats. Like a truck driver returning after a long haul, our cats looked forward to Bob-Bob's homecoming with their ritual of touching noses, butting heads and sniffing everywhere.

We were always amazed that no hostility ever occurred. He also learned of my ritual that if he jumped up on the dryer, he would get a combing, some hugs and of course some treats.

In passing years, "Sometimes Bob" came and went as he pleased. There might be months without a visit or meal. While walking around the neighborhood, if Bob-Bob saw me, or I him reconnecting with an alias name, he would join me, keeping the pace with his bobbed tail pointing to the sky. Other times he would only come inside for a few hours to get a quick bite to eat and catnap with our cats before hitting the hood again.

The last visit from Bob-Bob was late August this year. Looking tired and frail from losing considerable weight, he moved slowly but his purring never skipped a beat. While grabbing a catnap, our two indoor cats joined him that day, lying next to his side. When he woke, he munched some cat food but only sat by the dryer for treats.

I declare he was reliving how he made the jump in the past but was now contemplating his frailty. So I removed his anxiety by placing treats on the floor and he was soon out the door, continuing his journey.

That is the last time we and the other neighbors saw our neighborhood cat. We analyzed he was at least 20+ years in age; amazing for an outside cat. We want to think he stopped by that day to say a last goodbye, as he always said thanks in his own way for the kindness we and others had shown to him.

He was fortunate not to have just one home, but a whole neighborhood of homes and families that were part of his life.

Personally, I have never met a cat that had such street smarts or was so wise, grateful and loving.

He will be missed by us, our cats, and those who knew him.

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February Memories

by Elizabeth Wharry

Growing up in northern Ohio, February weather was really unpredictable. One day, it could be snowing and blustery, the next could be sunny, wet and slushy. Either way, Valentine's Day was looked forward to.

While I was in grade school, the teachers would decorate the classrooms with paper snowflakes, and/or white heart shaped paper doilies. We kids were told when the class party was, and what to bring. Lunch always came first. Room mothers would bake cupcakes. About half were vanilla, and the other half were chocolate. From first through fourth grades, the moms would make sure the cupcakes were iced and decorated. From fifth through eighth grades, we would have decorating stations. We chose a cupcake, went to the icing station and then to the sprinkles. We had a choice of white, pink or red icing. The sprinkles were usually red and white.

Once we had our decorated cupcake, we were given a cup of Valentine punch. It was made of a clear soda, red punch and pink sherbet. After we had our cupcake and punch, we would decorate lunch bags with stickers or crayons.

About half an hour later, we would line up single file and drop our Valentines in everyone's bag. Considering we could have as many as 50 kids in a classroom, you can imagine the controlled chaos!

After exchanging cards, we would clear a part of the classroom and play some games. Musical chairs and blind man's bluff were the favorites.

Somewhere around 2:30, the bell would ring, signaling clean up time. We kids threw away any trash, cleaned up our desks, swept up any crumbs and pushed our desks back into neat orderly rows. Usually, the room mothers would clean up the cupcake stations and punch area.

When the final bell rang around 3, we would head out to the buses. When we would disembark our drivers gave each of us some kind of candy.

It was normally a small box of those candy hearts. In return, we kids would give them a Valentine. We were not allowed to eat any of the candy we got at the party until we got home.
Happy Valentine's Day!



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Poplar Ridge School

by William Sibley

Poplar Ridge community is located three to four miles northeast of New Hope and is beautiful farming country. The residents of Poplar Ridge are very proud of three landmarks in their community: Bethel Primitive Baptist Church, aka "Old Bethel Church" constituted in 1823; Poplar Ridge School, established in 1858; and Hayden (Haden) Cemetery, dating from 1858.

A historical marker has been placed at Hayden Cemetery indicating that Tranquilla J. (Jenkins) Hayden donated 1.5 acres of land to the Poplar Ridge community on Aug. 19, 1887, for a cemetery to be called Hayden Cemetery. The site had been used as a cemetery since 1858 and others donated land later. Tranquilla Haden was a sister of my great-grandmother, Evaline (Jenkins) Sibley.

Mrs. Priscilla Scott, New Hope librarian and secretary of the Poplar Ridge Homemakers, has written a very informative book titled "Poplar Ridge School". Written on the front cover are facts: "Still Standing After All These Years;" "1858-2008, Celebrating 150 Years;" "A Smattering of History in SE Madison County."

A historical marker was placed on the school grounds in 2003 and former student Betty Jo (Hodges) Johnson gave an excellent history of the school. Some highlights of Mrs. Johnson's report are given below.

A deed for the land on which Poplar Ridge School was built was recorded on Sept. 30, 1858 in the Madison County Court House. The land was purchased from Senah and Margaret Smith for one dollar. The first trustees were Dickson Cobb, James H. Poor and Canada Butler.

The school was built "just before the Civil War." Description: "one room log building with a large open fireplace for heating." Later the fireplace was replaced by a pot-bellied stove. "The seats were split logs with peg legs and no backs."

Pupils in the early years

at Poplar Ridge School carried their books in a homemade sack "hung over their shoulder." A Blue Back Speller was always in the book sack. The lunch was packed in a tin pail. The typical school day began at 8 a.m. and dismissed at 4.

On a humorous note - when I was teaching at Owens Cross Roads, two of my sixth graders were cousins Johnny Buford and Donald Patrick. Johnny's maternal grandmother, Mrs. Mamie Lou (Hunt) Craig and another family member gave a birthday party for Johnny and Donald, and our sixth graders were the guests.

Mrs. Craig wanted to know if I was related to Leatha Sibley, who had been her teacher at Poplar Ridge. Leatha was my father's first cousin. One day at Poplar Ridge School only minutes before dismissal, Mrs. Craig's boyfriend told her to go get their coats. When returning to her seat, Mrs. Craig met Miss Sibley and got a paddling for being out of her seat. The pupils got a big laugh out



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of Mrs. Craig's story.

At one time there were 99 pupils enrolled in Poplar Ridge School and one day 99 pupils were present. The principal wanted 100 pupils so he sent for Albert Butler, Sr. to come to school. Although Albert was too young to attend school, he became a student for one day, making the principal happy that he had 100 pupils. Albert, in his adult life, was a leading merchant in New Hope.

Many of the alumni at Poplar Ridge School have been very successful. One example is S. R. Butler, long time superintendent of Madison County Schools.

A major reason why Poplar Ridge pupils were successful is because of the excellent, well-trained teachers they had. A list of some of those teachers is given in Mrs. Scott's book, beginning in 1860 and ending in 1941, the year the school closed. All of the teachers deserve to be listed, but that is almost impossible. I have chosen to list a few.

(1) 1860 - Margaret Vann - Instructress.

(2) 1866-1867 - James E. "Jim Ed" Butler, veteran of the Civil War.

(3) 1879 - Prof. Henry "Edward" Hancock.

While Prof. Hancock was teaching at Poplar Ridge School, some of his pupils were outside playing ball when several of those pupils were struck by lightning. "Two boys were seriously injured."

(4) 1880 - Henry Hollis Horton, Jr., a native of Princeton, AL and son of a Baptist minister. He served as Governor of Tennessee from 1927-1933.

(5) 1919 - Leatha Sibley - A popular teacher, a relative of my family. On 22 Feb 1958 Leatha Sibley McKown died at age 61, in Sewanee, TN.

Several bells have been stolen from Poplar Ridge School. Rex Moon has restored and encased the last school bell.

After closing in 1941, Poplar Ridge School became a polling place.

On June 10, 1989 Poplar

Ridge School had a homecoming celebration. One can only imagine the many memories and pleasant recollections that the former pupils had at the event.

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LITERARY CREATIVITY

by Charles H. Chesnut, III

The past few months I've been much bemused by my wife Anna Chesnut's apparent infatuation with her literary muse and her hours spent in writings; initially I pondered for what and to whom? Were these clandestine epistles to past unrequited loves or; perhaps, present requited loves? At our somewhat mature age (me 83, Anna 78, married [presumably happily] for 55 years), the former seemed the more likely, but at our ages one never knows.

I breathed (at age 83, a physiological event much appreciated) a sigh of relief when I discovered early on that her writings were rather a series of recollections of events of her childhood and later of growing up, and returning to, her hometown of Huntsville. These are published in Old Huntsville (currently numbering 5 recent publications, with apparently no end in sight). Also appearing in OH were frequent works by our Huntsville friends M.D. and Judy Smith, as well as equally superlative and enjoyable articles by other "old Huntsvillians".

I concluded that Huntsville must have been a most evocative and literature inspiring environment for growing up, providing a fertile soil for not only cotton and corn and eventually rockets, but also for literary creativity.

I then puzzled over the origins and genesis of these literary feats, and of the remarkable reception of, and allegiance to, the entire genre of reminiscent tales frequently recreating earlier, sometime youthful, events. In this regard, it's obvious that both the writers, and the readers, of the contents of OH are most dedicated and enthusiastic in assuming one or both of these roles.

In considering this puzzle, I should provide some contextual background for my subsequent observations. First I'm not from Huntsville, growing up in 2 Southern states to the immediate east of Alabama. Second, my own writing experiences are quite different from those of the authors of the articles in OH as I've typically written rather straightforward and hierarchal medical research articles in a near 50 year medical career as a professor at the University of Washington School of Medicine here in Seattle. However, a few years ago I crossed over to the literary bright side by becoming a graduate student in English Literature at the same university institution, and writing more ambiguous, but equally satisfying,



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articles in that discipline.

There are quite obviously rather extreme differences in writing, and reading, literary works over the past few decades in an academic/ as compared to a personal and recollective, environment. As noted by Rita Felski of the University of Virginia, the former is frequently encapsulated in the phrase "... a hermeneutic (an interpretation) of suspicion..."; i.e., a skeptical questioning or even outright condemnation of the writing, and exploration of its underlying (usually socio-political) meanings, at least to the writer. The latter however, as evidenced by the OH writings, is subjective, affective, emotional, mood creating, and generally optimistic; such is quite different from the former regimen. Again, Rita Felski's comments are most appropriate:

"Why - even as we extol multiplicity, difference, hybridity - is the affective range of criticism so limited? Why are we so hyperarticulate about our adversaries and so excruciatingly tongue-tied about our loves?"

In other words, why as writers and readers, can't we write and read not for simply fashionable literary critique, but for the pleasure, emotional stimulus and return, and yes, love of the experience. I therefore realize what Old Huntsville provides in its many permutations: a sense of remembrance of what has been, and remains, most significant in our lives.

Keep writing, Anna, and keep publishing, Old Huntsville.

Felski, Rita. The Limits of Critique. 2015. University of Chicago Press, Chicago, Illinois, pgs. 1 and 13.

"Does your train of thought have a caboose?"

What you wish you could say at work

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1 cup sugar
1 tsp. baking powder
Pinch of salt
1 tsp. vanilla

20 Ritz crackers, crumbled coarsely
1 cup pecans, chopped
2/3 cup cream, whipped

Beat the egg whites until they start to stiffen. Slowly add sugar, baking powder and vanilla. Continue beating until stiff but not dry. Carefully fold in coarse crumbs and pecans. Grease and lightly flour a 9 inch pie pan and fill with mixture. Bake for 30 minutes at 350 degrees F. Cool and top with slightly sweetened whipped cream flavored with vanilla. Combine following ingredients and sprinkle over whipped cream.

3 Ritz crackers, crumbled fine
2 Tbsp. toasted pecans, chopped
1 Tbsp. sugar
1/2 tsp. cinnamon

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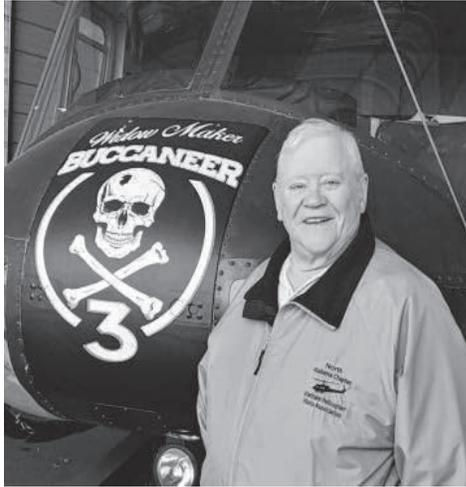


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JAMES (JIM) WHITE, A BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH



I was born in Mount Hope, West Virginia on 04 November 1940. I was raised in coal mining country until I was seventeen. I then joined the US Army on 06 November 1957 at the young age stated above.

Education: 1957-1970 - I took several CLEP tests through the Army and several night courses at William and Mary College in Virginia. 1971 and 1972. I attended the University of Nebraska at Omaha, Nebraska where I earned a bachelor's degree in Business Administration with minors in Economics and Military Science.

Military Experience: 1957-1977 - I went to Basic Training at Fort Jackson, South Carolina and Advanced Training at Fort Dix, New Jersey. I then went to Fort Campbell, Kentucky where I attended Jump School with the 101st Airborne Division. I was there about two and a half years and then was reassigned to Fort Ord California. I then was reassigned to Germany where I spent about four years. During this period the Berlin Crisis began, and my unit was deployed to Berlin when the East Germans started building the wall. From Germany I was reassigned to Fort Lewis, Washington and from there I went back to Fort Campbell, Kentucky and back on jump status.

During this period, I applied for Army Helicopter Pilot school and was accepted. I graduated from flight school as a Warrant Officer and promptly was sent to Vietnam. I spent from September 1967 until September 1968 flying Hueys (UH 1 D and F). After that year I was reassigned to Ft. Eustis, Virginia.

During this period, I was asked if I would like to attend Army Fixed Wing school. I of course accepted and again after graduation I

was reassigned to Vietnam. From November of 1970 until November of 1971, I flew Missions in the RU-8D for the Army Security Agency.

I returned from Vietnam and went straight to Omaha, Nebraska where I attended the University of Nebraska at Omaha as mentioned above. I then was assigned to Redstone Arsenal in Huntsville, Alabama where I flew both helicopter and fixed wing aircraft. I was the Aircraft Maintenance Officer and Test Pilot.

I retired from the military in November of 1977 at the age of thirty-seven. I was then hired as a flight instructor by Embry Riddle University at Daytona Beach, Florida. I stayed there less than a year and then went to a little town in Virginia where I flew a helicopter for a coal company. I then went to Fort Rucker, Alabama where I was a civilian flight instructor at the Army's helicopter school. I stayed there for about two years and was contacted and asked if I would like a job back at Redstone Arsenal as a Civil Servant Pilot and of course I accepted. I was hired in July of 1980 and stayed there until December of 2000 where I retired again as a GS-13. While there, I was an Aircraft Test Pilot and the Airfields Standardization Pilot.

I flew missions in support of research and development at Redstone and all over the United States and Canada. Also, transportation missions for the commands at Redstone and some major commands all over the United States. I received numerous military awards including the Distinguished Flying Cross, Bronze Star, thirty-eight Air Medals including one for valor, Master Aviator Wings, Master Parachutist Wings, Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry and several others. I also received the Army Civilian Decoration for Meritorious Service for bravery. I was also inducted in the Madison County Hall of Heroes in 1975.

I am a member of several professional organizations to include the Warrant Officers Association, American

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Legion, Retired Military Officers Association, National Rifleman's Association, Veterans of Foreign Wars, Disabled American Veterans and the Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association. I also formed and founded the North Alabama Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association (NAVHPA). with the help of several others. I was the Original President and served two years.

I am also a member of the Golden K Kiwanis here in Huntsville since October 2006. I have served as Secretary, President Elect, President as well as a member of the Board of Directors and various committees. I am President Elect now for the second time.

I have been married to my lovely wife Teresa for 44 years. We have two children, Joseph and Todd, who both live and work in Huntsville.

We have three Grandchildren, Sierra, Kyra and Tyler, and one Great Grandchild, Liam.

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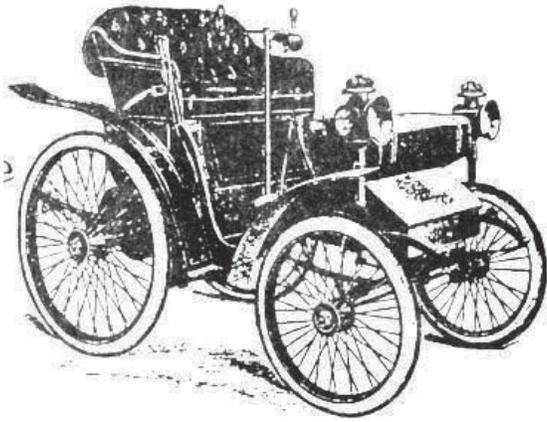
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From 1904 Newspaper

The cargo on the train that slowly pulled to a stop at the railroad depot, that spring morning of 1904, contained a revolutionary invention that would forever change the way Huntsville lived.

Crowding around the boxcar, the people anxiously

awaited the unloading of the freight. When it was finally manhandled off the train, the assembled throng gasped with amazement. No one had ever seen anything like it!

Sitting there in the middle of the road, gleaming in its shiny black paint and hand-rubbed leather upholstery was a 1904 Oldsmobile, the first automobile to ever arrive in Madison County.

George Cooper, its proud owner, had purchased the car while on a trip to Cincinnati, Ohio, for the exorbitant sum of almost four hundred dollars. The tool box accompanying it had cost an additional one hundred dollars and contained, among other things, a shovel, an ax, a red flag and one hundred foot of rope.

The company had offered to send an instructor with the car to teach its owner how to

drive it, (for only \$45 extra) but Mr. Cooper had declined the offer. After all, a machine had to be easier to drive than a pair of ornery mules!

Sadly to say, if Cooper had taken them up on their offer, the first automobile ride in Huntsville history would have been longer than 15 feet and would not have ended by crashing into the side of the depot. Of course everyone agreed that the floor board was a dumb place to put the brakes!

Luckily no serious damage was sustained and Cooper eventually learned how to drive it before selling it two years later, to a Mr. Liles of Gurley, Alabama..

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Tom Ruggs, Scottsboro



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PET TIPS FROM ANGEL

Training Your Puppy

In many cases, behavior problems in adult dogs can be traced to their development during their first months of life. Behavior issues are often rooted in fear, with anxious responses and even aggressive behavior learned as ways to respond to scary situations. Puppyhood is when your pet learns what is safe and what is dangerous.

Poor manners also can take root in puppyhood, as young dogs learn through trial and error that certain behaviors, like barking or jumping up, garner desirable results, like more attention. There are five areas of concern that owners should address during the early months of a dog's life, rather than trying to fix them in adulthood.

Socialization: The more socialized and well-adjusted a dog is to various sights, sounds, smells, etc. the less likely he will react in fear or aggression. The most critical learning period is from about 6-14 weeks of age, during which time dogs are the most receptive to altering their perception of the world around them.

If a puppy is alone or has gone through negative experiences in which he learned a certain situation is unsafe and best avoided, he is likely to develop anxious and defensive behavior.

During socialization, puppies should be introduced to various environments such as riding in the car or visiting the veterinarian and groomer. Then be sure to end the event with rewards like treats or toys. Social relationships with people, other dogs and other household animals is critical at this time. Socialization impacts a dog's behavior and confidence for his entire lifetime.

Handle Your Puppy: Pick up your puppy, handle and pet him. Pair the handling with rewards the dog enjoys, like licks of peanut butter from a spoon or treats. Accustom puppies to having more sensitive areas touched, such as paws, ears, muzzle, tail and legs. Nail trims are one procedure that can trigger panic in many dogs. Pre-



vent nail trims from becoming an issue for your dog by doing lower-stress trims yourself or finding a professional who clips nails using gentle handling paired with rewards.

Head off Resource Guarding

Many dogs guard treasured items from animals and people. This may include food, treats, chews, toys, resting places or even seemingly unimportant items like empty wrappers and tissues. Teach your puppy early to willingly give up items when asked by training the "drop it" behavior. Start with low-value items and move up in value

as he gives up the item when asked. Dogs can be very possessive about their "things" and training needs to start early.

Set Boundaries: Whatever you allow a puppy to do, he's likely to do as an adult. For that reason, all behaviors your puppy does with you and others should be permissible when he's fully grown. If behaviors like jumping up, pulling on the leash, barking for attention and jumping on furniture are allowed during puppyhood, they are likely to remain and be habits when the dog is an adult. Though cute in a 10-pound puppy, those behaviors may not be as well-tolerated from an 80-pound adult. Place boundaries on your puppy that will be in place when he is fully grown, such as having four paws on the floor when greeting, to prevent problem behaviors from being rewarded and rehearsed into habit.

Get Your Puppy Used to Separation: Train your puppy early to be OK when separated and alone. Canines can develop an over-reliance on people, especially when first brought home and smothered with constant attention. It's a rude awakening for a puppy when his family leaves temporarily and he has never been taught to be OK by himself. One safeguard against dogs becoming stressed during separation is to teach puppies from an early age to relax when left alone and even associate alone time with good things happening.

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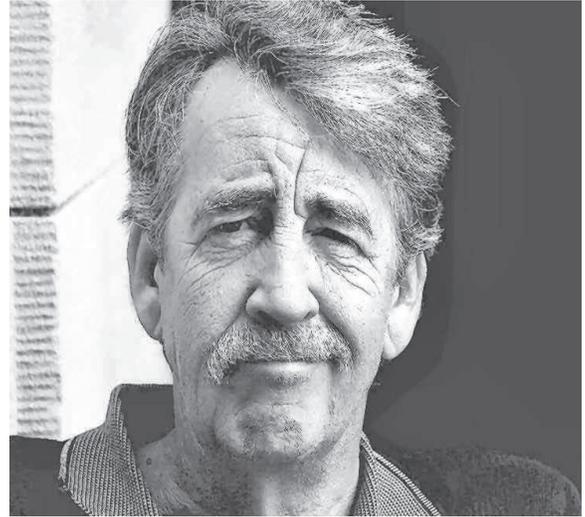
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A MONUMENT TO LOVE



She had always dreamed of her wedding day, imagining how her handsome husband would take her hand in his and pledge eternal love to her.

But, when that day came, and Mary Chambers took her wedding vows with William D. Bibb, they both knew she would be dead in three months.

Mary Smith Chambers was born in 1816, daughter of Dr. Henry Chambers, an early Alabama legislator who had been born in Virginia. Upon graduation from William and Mary College in 1808, he had studied medicine before coming to Alabama, a new territory at the time.

After serving as a surgeon on the staff of Gen. Andrew Jackson during the War of 1812, he made his home in Huntsville and was elected a member of the state constitutional convention in 1819. He was elected U.S. Senator and stayed in office until his death in 1826. He died while en route by horseback to Washington.

The whole town took an interest in the fatherless young lady, Mary, constantly speculating as to who would make a perfect match for her. The local gossips, after exhausting their limited list of possible candidates, surmised that none were good enough for her. But that was before the dashing and handsome William Bibb appeared on the scene.

Bibb and his brother, David Porter Bibb of Belle Mina, were both handsome, reckless, polished and everything a young woman could want in a husband. Their father was Thomas Bibb, second Governor of Alabama

Whether by accident or intentional, both of the young people were invited to a party arranged by mutual friends. It was here that the brothers met the beautiful Mary and her cousin, Mary Parrott Betts.

As the Bibb brothers courted the two cousins, the older people watched with approval. Relatives on both sides agreed that they were perfect matches. These courtships seemed the logical preliminaries to unions that would connect these three prominent North Alabama names.

It was to no one's surprise that the brothers proposed marriage to the damsels in the fall of 1834. The proposals were accepted breathlessly. It was to be the most elaborate double wedding in the history of Alabama.

Orders were sent to Paris for elegant hand-made wedding gowns. Both trousseaus were to be prepared of the finest materials and by the best designers possible.

Many parties feted the couples. Prominent citizens from here and adjoining counties celebrated the upcoming event extensively. The date, however, was yet to be set.

Christmas came and went with no word of the wedding day. January wore by. No one knew what was causing the delay, but the couples seemed as much in love as ever. The real reason for the delay was the fact that the wedding dresses had not arrived. Conversations circulated about the length of time required for goods to arrive from France by boat. The brides-to-be met each

"When driving, be sure to watch after the car that's in front of the car that's behind you."

Buddy Esslinger



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stagecoach as it rolled to a stop on the downtown square. They were disappointed time and again.

Finally, in early February, a large package arrived that definitely looked like a wedding dress container with only one dress. William and Mary decided to marry at once. then the unthinkable happened. A few nights before the wedding, to calm Mary down, Mammy gave her a glass of clear liquid, salts. Mary drank it down and her throat started hurting her terribly. "Oh, what have I done to you?" Mammy sobbed.

The "salts" had come from a bottle containing oxalic acid.

A doctor was summoned. After examining Mary he said she could only hope to live for a short time, about three months at the longest. It would be a painful death from a severely ulcerated stomach.

Instantly, the Chambers home was buried in a deep depression. William Bibb was overcome with grief upon learning of the tragedy. For days he never left her bedside. During this time, he abruptly announced that he and Mary would be married immediately.

On Feb. 26 an entirely different wedding than that which had been planned took place. Friends and relatives, trying to act cheerful, watched as the Rev. John Allen, pastor of the First Presbyterian Church, united Mary Chambers and William Bibb in holy matrimony. The poignancy of the moment was such that words could not describe.

Mary Bibb lived three more months to the day. After her death, Bibb erected the finest monument money could buy. It was placed above her grave in Maple Hill Cemetery and was the first mausoleum ever built in the cemetery.

Across the face of this mark-

er is inscribed the three major dates in Mary's life.

Mary S. Bibb

Wife of Wm. D. Bibb, Daughter of Doct. Henry Chambers

Born October, 1816

Married Feb. 24, 1835

Died May 26, 1835

Unfounded rumors have arisen through the years concerning the unusual mausoleum. According to one legend, the tall structure was built to house Mary, who had been buried up-right, sitting in her rocking-chair. Like most legends, the truth is much simpler.

It was built by a grieving husband as a tribute to his wife, a testimony to two young people who were very much in love.

So if you are ever walking through Maple Hill Cemetery and happen to go near the mausoleum of Mary Bibb, try to remember her as she was, when she was young and in love.

Cauliflower with Fresh Herbed Butter

1 stick butter, melted
2 T. parsley, chopped
1 T. lemon juice
1 T. chives, chopped
1 T. fresh thyme or
1 t. dried thyme

Cook cauliflower in boiling salted water with about 1/4 cup milk to keep it white. Cook only til crisp, don't overcook.

Combine butter, parsley, lemon juice, chives and thyme.

Spoon mixture over cauliflower and serve at once.

Layne Dorning

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Bridging the Years - After the Civil War

*by Charles Rice, from his
book "Hard Times", 1994*

With the end of the fighting, the veterans of both North and South returned to their homes. The Union soldiers were hailed as conquering heroes, but no such welcome awaited the soldiers of the South. These men made their way home in small groups or as individuals, and not as military units. For many an ex-Confederate, the sights that awaited them must have been almost as traumatic as the war they had somehow managed to survive.

"As we came west on the train nothing but lonesome looking chimneys remained of the villages and farm houses," recalled John Allan Wyeth of Guntersville. "They were suggestive of tombstones in a graveyard. Bridgeport, Stevenson, Bellefonte, Scottsboro, Larkinsville, Woodville, Paint Rock — in fact, every town in northern Alabama to and including Decatur (except Huntsville, which, being used as headquarters, had been spared) — had been wiped out by the war policy of starvation by fire. Farm houses, gins, fences and cattle were gone. From a hilltop in the farming district a few miles from New Market I counted the chimneys of the houses of six different plantations which had been destroyed. About the fireplaces of some of these, small huts of poles had been erected for temporary shelter."

North Alabama's development had been set back by at least a generation.

Huntsville and Madison County also continued under Union military occupation for years, only this time the soldiers in blue were often black. The former slaves themselves were in little better condition than the white Southerners and not much of the promised Federal aid ever came to pass. The Freedmen's Bureau did undertake to set up schools and help prepare the ex-slaves for a life as free men. But the disillusioned African-Americans soon discovered that freedom brought little change to their lives. Most found themselves living for some time on government handouts, since white Southerners were too impoverished to employ them. Many soon turned to share cropping to provide at least a degree of independence.

The government-run Freedmen's Bank also became a major scandal, with African-American investors losing virtually every hard earned dollar they had put into it. Black Southerners had

just one more reason to beware of Northern promises. (The records of the Huntsville branch of the Freedmen's Bank do, however, contain valuable information for black genealogists. They are available in the Huntsville Public Library.)

Republican "carpetbaggers" from the North and turncoat "scalawags" from the South soon brought unbelievable corruption into the State, though Reconstruction was not as entirely negative as tradition has claimed. Nevertheless, Reconstruction is not a period that anyone can look back on with a great deal of pride. Probably hardest for white Southerners to accept was the temporary loss of their civil rights. "The best white people of the South were not allowed to vote," wrote John Wyeth. "My father (Judge Louis Wyeth) was disenfranchised, while Peyton, one of our former slaves, who still lived with us, performing the same service he had done before he was freed, announced himself as a candidate for the legislature!"

Yet defeat for the South was not as harsh as it could have been. There was none of Sherman's notorious colonization plan, with its Cromwellian vindictiveness. And though some ex-Confederates left the country for Mexico or South America, most eventually returned. Fortunately, the Tennessee Unionist Andrew Johnson occupied the White House at the end of the war, and Johnson kept the Radical Republicans from completely running roughshod over the helpless South. Because of this, the Radicals brought impeachment charges against Johnson and tried unsuccessfully to have him removed from office. They failed to unseat the President by just one vote. However, there was no Federal aid forthcoming to rebuild the defeated South — as there would be for Germany and Japan after World

**MAKE THE TIME TO SPEND
WITH YOUR LOVED ONES!**

**With Special Valentine Greetings to
the Huntsville High Class of 1966**



FROM OSCAR AND MARIA LLERENA

War I. The South would take generations to completely recover. In many parts of the South, even marriageable men were in short supply and women learned to overlook a missing limb or disfigured face when choosing a husband. Madison County alone is estimated to have lost 150 soldiers to death in battle, while perhaps 200 more died of disease. Thousands of families left North Alabama to seek a new life farther west, many of them going to Texas or Arkansas.

The veterans themselves set about picking up the pieces of their lives and starting over again. For some, such as W. D. Chadick, D. C. Kelly, and "Bushwhacker" Johnston, it was simply a matter of returning to the pulpit. For the average ex-soldier, it was a difficult time of starting from scratch. Men had to rebuild their farms and somehow manage to feed their families until the crops were ready to harvest. Few people realize that charitable food shipments from Northern churches were all that kept many of the people of the South from actually starving that first postwar winter. It was a trying time for Southerners both black and white.

By the 1890s, however, a "New South" was being talked about across the nation. The war was now far enough into the past that much of the animosity had vanished. The Confederate veterans were finally allowed to organize and Huntsville hosted several major reunions. Northern veterans, a few dozen of whom had settled here after the war, were invited to take part.

The largest gathering took place in July 1890, when the 4th Alabama Infantry Regiment and the 4th Alabama Cavalry Regiment held a joint reunion. The veterans and visitors were enough to nearly double Huntsville's still small population. Even the 4th Alabama Cavalry's commander, Colonel Alfred A. Russell, who had left Alabama to live in Mexico, showed up for

the memorable occasion. A.R. Simmons, formerly of the 45th Ohio Infantry, delighted the old Johnny Rebs with his speech on behalf of the Union veterans, noting that his first meeting with Confederates had earned him a bullet in the ankle. "Besides that," he said, "you licked us like the devil." Frank Gurley did his part by providing an impressive barbecue for one and all.

Also in the 1890s, New England fabric mills began moving South and Huntsville became something of a mill town. The population increased as Northern money and Southern labor moved in. Joseph Wheeler was elected to Congress, and in 1898 the country went to war again.

President William McKinley, a Union veteran, invited Wheeler to the White House and offered him command of the U. S. troops who would invade Cuba. Wheeler protested that he was too old, but McKinley explained he needed the ex-Confederate as a symbol that North and South

were now united. Wheeler accepted and put on a uniform once more, only this time it was a less familiar suit of blue,

Huntsville again saw soldiers marching in its streets in the fall of 1898. This time they were victorious veterans returning from the war with Spain. Some of these soldiers probably camped on the same spots as their fathers had back in the 1860s. The Spanish-American War might have been brief, but it showed to the world that America was one nation again.

As the years passed by, the ranks of the veterans steadily grew thinner. Around the time of the First World War, black ex-Confederates began being accepted into the local veterans organization. Huntsville's Egbert J. Jones Camp United Confederate Veterans eventually included four African-Americans. Interestingly, the white veterans took up a collection to pay their black comrades' dues. They also helped send their black brothers to sev-



Sidney

Hello, the Ark named me Sidney after one of our volunteers found me wandering on and off the highway. I think I had a loving family at one time but not sure what happened. I am only about 6 months old and a little shy. I think I'm a very good looking young guy and would love to be an active part of your family. I'm very loving and know how to sit on command.

Please come to the Ark and ask for Sidney, that's me.

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eral national veteran conventions, proud to have them represent our city.

By the 1920s only one ex-Yankee was still alive in Huntsville, former Corporal Samuel Sweinhart of Indiana. The Confederate veterans invited him into their camp and made him an honorary member. It was a far cry from the old animosities of the war.

In May 1933 the Huntsville Times interviewed the last of the local Johnny Rebs. They now numbered only 13 old men, including Matthew Gray, the ex-slave Ormsby Mitchel's men had tried to drown back in 1862. One by one, even they passed away.

Finally in 1948, the last veteran in Madison County died. He was 102-year-old John Alexander Steger, a former sergeant in Roddey's 4th Alabama Cavalry. The old horse soldier had actually lived long enough to fly, making a trip to Birmingham by airliner. An era in Huntsville's history ended with him.

Huntsville's real growth began when Redstone Arsenal was created during the Second World War. Closed in late 1945, Redstone reopened when the war broke out in Korea in 1950. The Arsenal has been a mainstay of the city's economy ever since. In the 1960s, the world famous Marshall Space Flight Center also opened to join Redstone in attracting tens of thousands of new residents to the city.

Unfortunately, a misdirected burst of enthusiasm known as "urban renewal" hit Huntsville during the 1960s. At first, only slum areas were scheduled for destruction, but eventually the demolition got out of control, much like the proverbial bull in a china shop. Many fine homes were lost, including some dating back to the Civil War.

Even the historic Huntsville Depot was once scheduled to be destroyed. Ironically, all this was happening while the nation was celebrating the centennial of the Civil War.

Fortunately, however, this regrettable episode gave birth to the city's two nationally recognized historic districts, Twickenham and Old Town. Perhaps without the threat of urban renewal hanging

over them, these lovely districts might never have come into existence.

Huntsville today is a city of nearly 200,000. Most of the Civil War campsites are now lost under houses or city streets. The 1861 Confederate Camps Jones and Bradford are scarcely identifiable, while a Union stockade near the depot lies beneath Dilworth's Lumberyard. The large Union fort on Echols Hill was leveled long ago, although the foundations cut into the bedrock must still be there if anyone cared to dig up his yard and look for them.

Russell Hill and Byrd Spring, both popular camp sites, are now mainly residential areas, as is College Hill – which takes its name from a school building torn down by Union soldiers for bricks for their camp chimneys.

Madison Station is now the city of Madison, AL. The Sinks, where Colonel Patterson's raiders threw captured Union equipment, reportedly has been filled in.

Yet modern Huntsville is once again taking an interest in its history. Although the city's eyes are firmly fixed on the future, the 20th century "Rocket City" continues to take pride in its colorful past. Let us hope that it always will.



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Tips from Earlene

* After washing a cucumber, take a fork and scrape the sides from top to bottom. Then slice your cucumber. This will leave a little design around each slice - very pretty and easy.

* If you want to make evenly round hamburgers, use an ice cream scoop to scoop up the meat. Then put the ball on a plate and press evenly until it's the thickness you prefer.

* For a different taste when serving olives, do this. Use ripe or green olives, drain them. Put them in a small clean container and pour just a bit of olive oil in them. Add a couple of dashes of garlic or onion powder. Shake the olives in the mixture and let stand at least 30 minutes before serving to your guests.

* For a great smelling kitchen, take some orange peels and lay them on a cookie sheet in your oven. Heat it to 350 degrees. Before long your whole house will smell delicious! Apple slices sprinkled with cinnamon works too.

* For a change to the same old salad, sprinkle waxed paper with paprika. Roll the cut side of a damp head of lettuce in this and it will make beautiful red lettuce.

* If you slice your banana with a pure silver knife the banana will not turn dark. Slice the fruit lengthwise. Sprinkle the cut sides with sugar and a little lemon juice. Serve for breakfast - it's good!

* To get a really crispy crust on your roasted chicken or turkey, use a pastry brush and lather the bird with plain mayonnaise, getting under the wings and in the folds of the fowl. Then sprinkle with garlic salt and pepper and roast as usual.

* Never put a rubber band around your silverware or you'll have a permanent stain.

* When you find that your sweaters have those little "pills," just use a piece of fine sandpaper and sand away. Sweater will look almost new.

* Dip asparagus into egg batter, roll in fresh bread crumbs or cracker meal and fry to a golden brown in butter. A very select vegetable with a juicy steak.

* Give your colicky infant mild ginger tea. It's wonderful for digestion and gas.

* For fever, eat grapes throughout the day. Also dilute pure grape juice and sip.

* For sinus headaches, sniff a little horseradish juice - the stronger the better. Remember to do it slowly.

* For regularity, drink the juice of one lemon mixed in one cup of warm water, when you wake up every morning. A bit of honey may be added to sweeten. You'll be amazed at the results.

* A lady who had ringing in her ears tried dropping 2 drops of onion juice into her ears 3 times a week and it stopped, much to her relief.



"I miss my wife's cooking - as often as possible."

Henny Youngman

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John Purdy
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One Step Back - Two Steps Forward

by John E. Carson

Mr. Freckles and Rescue Me had a busy year. From Christmas of 2018 to the Christmas of 2019, the Huntsville based Non-Profit has furthered its mission with talks at two Coffee Calls, two fund raisers and two new clients waiting for companion animals.

In April of last year, Rescue Me held a fund raising breakfast at Applebee's on South Parkway, assisted by many volunteers, family and friends. Providing entertainment and support was American Legion Post 237 member, Dave Dunlap. Both a Veteran and veteran entertainer, Dave lent his time and talents as Uncle Sam, tap dancing and singing to the delight of the many people in attendance throughout the morning. The fund raiser was a success, providing much needed money for uniting traumatized shelter animals with veterans suffering from PTSD/TBI.

In the Fall, Rescue Me was invited to the VA Clinic on Mark-A-View Drive to participate in a Veteran Services Day where we had the good fortune to be in-

terviewed by WZDX News. Many copies of the book, *Scruffy* were sold with the proceeds going to Rescue Me. The interview was broadcast on the nightly news and is still available online.

Next came the Redstone Arsenal in October for the Military Retirement Day where Rescue Me President, John Carson, Vice President, Colonel Mike Vaccaro USAF (Ret.) and Secretary/Treasurer Colonel Terese LeFrancois USAF (Ret.) and Mr. Freckles provided information from their table to many interested attendees. Again, many copies of the book were sold. *Scruffy* raised much need funds.

Sadly, it was to be the last event Mike would attend. A few days before Veterans Day, Mike passed away in his home with his beloved Golden Retriever at his side. With heavy hearts, the Honor Guard of Post 237 bid him farewell on Veteran's Day.

The excitement of the busy year had come to an end, but we knew Mike would want us to go on.

On the weekend before Thanksgiving, John and Mr. Freckles attended the Huntsville-Madison County Senior Center Craft Fair where John's Creative writing Class and Rescue Me sponsor, CBA Publishing Services, LLC sold many copies of *Scruffy* and met two new volunteers. Things were looking up!

Then, just the week before Christmas, we received an email and met with a veteran who had received our card from the event at the VA. Mr. Freckles and John went to interview the man and we left with a new client.

That same week John was approached by a man at Post 237 to provide a dog for his son, also a veteran suffering from multiple issues.

We had work to do!

And in 2020 the work will go on. We will continue our mission of rescuing shelter animals and matching them with veterans in need.

Mike and Mr. Freckles would want it that way.



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Life in the Country

by Joe Brewer

Sometime long ago, I was on one side or the other of 5 years old and we lived close to Cave Springs in an old house on a mountain (or good sized hill) that belonged to a Mr. Solomon. My mother's sister, my Aunt Mildred and her husband came down from Louisville, KY to spend a few days with us in the country. Aunt Millie was a very pretty woman and my favorite aunt.

Well, soon it was wash day and my brother Junior and I got the chore of drawing water from the well to do the laundry. Mama, Aunt Millie and my sister did the laundry on a scrub board. We had never even seen a washing machine. The clothes were then hung out to dry and some time later Moma sent my brother out to bring in the ones that were dry. Well, I went along to help him. Everything was going along just fine until we came to the "step-ins." Junior told me to get them and take them in, but I refused. They were like underwear. So he told me to get a stick and we would get them down that way. We got the clothes pins off and managed to remove the "step-ins" that way with a long stick. Years later when we were grown and he had half a dozen kids, I asked him if he still used a stick to get those "step-ins". He had no idea what I was talking about.

Another memory, does anyone remember the bird that used to sing in the late evenings and it sounded like it was saying "Chip.....flyout"? I was 7 or 8 years old and not sure what that bird was but always remembered it.

We had an old hound dog when we lived near Cave Springs. He was black and weighed nearly 60 pounds. Smart as a whip. One day we were picking cotton and Ol Rover (all dogs back then were named Rover) got after a cottontail rabbit, chasing it down the middle of two cotton rows. Suddenly he just stopped chasing, moved over one row, laid down on his stomach and just waited. It wasn't long before that rabbit came running down the row, nearly ran right into Rover's mouth. Dirt and leaves flew with cotton bolls and in a few minutes there was Rover, with the rabbit in his mouth and on his way to new adventures.

The sad memory about Rover was that my Dad had to shoot him because he sucked eggs. Old timers will know what this is but eggs were precious back then and if you had a dog that ate them before they could be gathered couldn't be around the farm. But he was such a smart dog, and I'll always remember how he outsmarted that rabbit!

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Thousands of people turned out downtown in 1961 to celebrate Alan Shepard's space flight aboard the Redstone rocket. That same year Olin King founded SCI and construction was started on a 70-foot tall illuminated cross on Monte Sano.

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We are a Huntsville Kiwanis club who meet once per month. Our only fundraiser since 1992 has been sales of "Old Huntsville" magazine. We have raised over \$620,000 for local children's charities in those years. If you would like to attend a morning breakfast meeting and see how you can help, we'd love to hear from you.