



No. 327

MAY 2020



Old Huntsville

HISTORY AND STORIES OF THE TENNESSEE VALLEY

THE WITCH HOUSE OF WEST HUNTSVILLE



Also in this issue: How Pets Reduce Depression; The Bon Air Restaurant; 1961 Spring in Tuscaloosa; The Space Monkey; Senior Hijinx; Surviving the Depression; Unusual Recipes and Much More!

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The Witch House of West Huntsville

by Jerry Wilbanks

Was she really a witch? Most everyone in my immediate family would have said yes. She was strange, old and frightening, especially to me and my sisters, all of us under the age of ten. For a year back in the early fifties, she was our neighbor in a duplex that my Father had rented in West Huntsville on Sixth Street. In the southern vernacular, we lived in adjoining rooms; or as my Mother would have put it, "joining rooms." It was the only time before the age of fourteen that I lived anywhere besides Huntsville Park. This period occupies a dark fearful part of my childhood memory, a strange interlude steeped in superstition and dread.

There was a fireplace inside and a well outside. The driveway and most of the lot was dirt. A few drooping trees and scrub bushes completed the landscaping. A dilapidated picket fence wrapped the whole property in a scene of ruin and disrepair. We could walk a couple of blocks to a general store, a couple of blocks

to a drugstore, the Center Theater and a block or so more to the YMCA. That was just about the extent of our movement around the West Huntsville neighborhood.

The old woman, Miz McAbee as we called her, always presented the appearance of a witch or wild woman. She had long, ratty dark hair, piercing black eyes and always wore an oversized robe or gown that made her look like a Halloween witch. There was a door between our two apartments that was always kept locked. From her side. At any time of the day or evening, she would silently open it and stand framed in the doorway to the great fear and apprehension of us kids. How long she might have been standing there, no one could say. She would address my Mother and the two would talk briefly. My Mom was always greatly relieved when the old lady faded back into her half of the house and locked the door securely.

Needless to say, we all had nightmares about the old woman creeping into our rooms late at night and getting up to who knew what kind of dark, secret, witchy activities. We all felt like we'd had a curse put on us and we were bravely waiting for the terrifying outcome; would it be snakes, spiders, accidents, or visitation by other-worldly beings? Perhaps disease and long weeks of suffering and then horrible, agonizing death? Our imaginations covered all the bases. We

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(in memory)

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tried to prepare ourselves for any curse, hex, plague or otherwise un-Christian and un-American eventuality.

These few things we knew for sure: (ONE) The old lady's black cat Rums was pulled out of the well in a bucket, drowned, on Monday morning. Miz McAbee seemed unconcerned. By the following morning, Rufus, an exact double, was to be seen strutting around the property, big as life and twice as ugly. The "drowning" had not slowed him down in any way that we could determine.

(TWO) Items seemed to travel in our half of the house. Things that disappeared from the kitchen would turn up in the bedrooms, the bathroom and vice versa. Some things would mysteriously appear in the fireplace, burned almost beyond recognition. Nothing seemed to stay put for long.

(THREE) There were sounds at night. Creepy, moaning, clumping sounds; crying, groaning, altogether disconcerting sounds. Sounds that could never be tracked down or fully understood. Sometimes it was mum-

bling voices and low grieving, for all the world like a funeral or wake; sometimes sharp cries and pleading intonations. Getting a full night's sleep became more and more difficult.

(FOUR) There were the mysterious appearances and disappearances of old Granny McAbee herself. As already described, she would materialize at the doorway between our apartments, no one having seen or heard her arrival. The old woman's lips were always moving: reciting the Lord's Prayer backward, we guessed, or calling down curses on our innocent heads.

(FIVE) And then there was the Big John and Sparky episode. Big John and Sparky was a radio show which aired on Saturday morning and I never missed it. Big John was an adult and Sparky was his kid sidekick. It was regular children's programming with jokes and stories and special features. One part of the show that I was especially fascinated with was the "magic spyglass." Big John claimed that he could look through this glass and actually SEE the listeners. He would supposedly inspect the kids in his

listening audience for clean faces and fingernails, combed hair and brushed teeth. Occasionally he would say something like, "Well, Tony (or Mary,) it looks like you didn't comb your hair this morning!" I always felt supremely confident, because I was always prepared for the closest inspection. Imagine my surprise and consternation one Saturday morning when Big John peered into his magic spyglass and said, "Well, it looks like Butch didn't wash behind his ears this morning!" Why would he lie like that? And how did he find out my family nickname? I was devastated and never listened to the program again. It was the worst humiliation I had ever suffered up to that point in my five year old life!



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However, the spookiest aspect of this whole affair was yet to come. That afternoon while I was sitting out on the old wooden porch alone, the old woman came out of her front door. She stooped and leaned close to my ear. "Well, Butchie," she crows softly, "I guess you'll keep your ears clean from now on!" I was petrified with fear, unable to move or speak. This is what convinced me that the cackling old hag was truly a witch. She might well have picked up my nickname innocently enough, but there is no way she could have known about Big John and his magic glass. The old crone didn't even own a radio!

(SIX) As hard as this may be to believe, there were rumors on good authority that she threw live ammunition into her fireplace in a kind of twisted game of Russian Roulette. We sometimes heard cracks and pops like rifle shots and obscene cackling and chortling coming from the old lady's side of the house. When this would happen late in the evening, we threw ourselves to the floor in our bedrooms until all the rounds had cooked off. We could only guess at when the game might be over.

One more incident occurred while we lived in that witch house which has haunted my memory for fifty years. My Mother's good friend lived a few blocks away. She was not really related to our family but everyone called her Aunt Lydia, in the Southern tradition. She was old and in poor health. When she became so ill that the doctors gave her no chance to live, friends and family began "sitting up" with her through the night. This death watch had gone on for the better part of a week when my Moth-

er's turn came to sit by Aunt Lydia through the night. She brought me along and I was instructed to keep very still and quiet. Around ten or eleven PM., when it became apparent that my Mom's presence would be required through the night, she decided to take me home and return alone.

It was a cloudy and moonless evening, altogether dark and foreboding. It was late winter and a cold wind cut through our thin coats as we turned the corner and started up the walkway toward the witch house. A large bush stood at the corner of the lot and as we walked past it a shimmering, filmy sheet of some transparent substance began to rise up from behind it. My Mom and I were both stunned into immobility as the gauzy thing spread out in front of us. In a moment it was blown away by the wind.

"It's a sign!" My Mom whispered, "it's a sign that Aunt Lydia is gone!"

She grabbed me up in her arms and ran back to Aunt Lydia's house. Sure enough, the saintly old woman had expired in the few minutes that we had been gone. Later that night when we were back in our house, the old witch

next door could be heard chuckling and chattering to herself.

Shortly after this incident, our family moved back into the Merrimack Mill Village and tried to put all the creepiness behind us. We heard that within a month of our moving out, the Sixth Street duplex caught fire in the night and burned to the ground. They say that rocks fell from the sky on that unhappy house, that wild dogs circled the property, that smoke and fog erupted from the well, and dust devils kicked up clouds of dirt which made visibility almost impossible. The neighbors and firemen were helpless to attempt any kind of rescue. There were shrieks and screams coming from the house and the old witch was presumed dead. However, not one trace of remains was ever recovered from the scene.

I felt that a place of evil had been purged and that it was fortunate for my family that we had gotten out of there when we did. Was she really a witch? I'll let the readers decide that for themselves. As for my family, we just don't talk about it that much anymore.

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THE MIDWIFE

by Malcolm Miller

One of my earliest memories as a small child happened many times over. There would be some man standing outside our house usually in the wee hours calling to my Mama saying that his wife was sick. It wasn't until I grew older that I found out what was going on.

You see back in the nineteen twenties and thirties there was very little money and most babies were born at home with the help of a midwife. Even though Dr. Frank Jordan lived in the Ryland neighborhood and didn't charge very much for his services, it was still more than most of the poor sharecroppers could afford.

Sometimes I wouldn't hear the men calling for Aunt Anner or Miss Anner saying my wife is sick because I was asleep but when I woke up hearing Papa rattling pots and pans and fussing I knew what I was in for, Papa biscuits. You see my Mama rolled the dough out real thin and used a tin can to cut out perfect biscuits but not Papa, he would mix up the dough and just pour it out in piles resulting in biscuits usually larger than a saucer.

As far as I know my Mama never in all those years ever received pay for all the work she had done delivering babies, however she was one of the most loved and respected

members of the community. Dr. Jordan often said that he wished there was some way she could be his nurse and believe you me she was a good nurse.

With nothing to work with but things like coal oil, turpentine, castor oil and warm salty water, she could do some amazing things. Her loving hand placed on a small boy's head really made him feel

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"If you're a good kisser, it might make your wife forget that you never take out the garbage."

Love advice from Eric, age 9

better when his head was burning with fever, I know because I was fortunate to be one of those boys.

At Mama's funeral many of the people there had been brought into this world by her.

My Mama was born Eunice Anna McKay, September 18th, 1886 and much of her childhood was spent living in a house by the side of the toll gate on the road up the mountain to the Monte Sano Hotel. In fact she and her younger sister, my Aunt Lucy, operated the toll gate while their father Archie McKay worked to keep the road in good enough shape for the many tourists to be able to travel back and forth to the hotel.

Later on as a young girl Mama went to work in Dallas Mill and after working twelve hour shifts, she would walk to the home her parents had bought on what is now Toll Gate Road. It was originally called Monte Sano Pike.

Finally at age twenty-one she met and married my Papa and together they raised seven sons of which I am the youngest. Their first child was a girl but only lived ten months.

Loretta Lynn recorded a hit song titled "They don't make

men like my Daddy any more". I would like to say that they don't make women like my Mama any more. She had a very hard life as a sharecropper's wife. I don't believe that in her whole married life she ever had a store-bought dress or under clothes. She would make her clothes out of flower sacks or on occasion she would sell enough eggs and chickens to the rolling store man and he would bring her material from town for a dress.

My Mama never attended church real regular. She really didn't have nice clothes to wear and she was busy taking care of seven strapping boys, but I can assure you my Mama was a godly woman.

After spending a life of hardship and misery living in one sharecropper's shack after another, she must surely be residing in a mansion now and throughout eternity.

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"Gone with the Wind"

by Barry Key

It was the Christmas of 1962, college was out for the holidays. My wife Judy and I had gone to my parent's home in New Hope for dinner. We had gone over early so Judy could help my mother prepare the dinner meal.

It was a bluebird day, not a cloud in the sky, in the low 60s, with a light breeze out of the southwest. I had a two man sailboat with a twelve-foot mast. I hadn't been sailing since late summer...I thought, this is a perfect day. I decided I would go and asked Judy if she wanted to go. She didn't, which unknown at the time, turned out to be a wise decision.

I kept my boat in my dad's barn so it was convenient and ready to go. I loaded the boat on top of my car and headed to Whitaker's Lake (now Honeycomb). I had on blue jeans, a shirt and sweater, a field jacket, and lace type boots. The weather was perfect for sailing and I thought this is going to be a day to remember... little did I know.

A light breeze was coming out of the southwest across Bishop Mountain straight toward Hale Point across the lake. After sailing for a few minutes, the breeze began to pick up, but I kept pushing my luck just to get in a little more sailing time. Suddenly, without warning, the wind became so strong that I couldn't turn the boat to

tack back to the landing. I sure didn't want to capsize in 40 degree water with all the clothes I had on.

The wind finally got so strong that I let the boom loose so the sail stuck out over the front of the boat. The sail was now parallel with the boat and in line with the wind which minimized the wind friction. The wind was pushing me toward Hale Point on the opposite side of the lake. I decided (really had no choice) to let the wind push me into the bank at Hale Point and I would beach the boat until the wind subsided.

Before I got to the bank, an extremely high velocity wind lifted up the stern of the boat and flipped the stern over the bow of the boat. It threw me out of the boat and the end over

end roll put the mast and sail sticking straight down. When I gained my composure I climbed up on the bottom of the boat, leaned back on the keel and tried to upright the boat. With the mast sticking straight down, and the sail open, I could not roll the boat upright. The wind was still pushing me toward the bank at Hale Point. I was thinking when the wind pushes me to the bank I can stand on the bank and roll the boat upright.

I was soaked from head to toe, bitter cold, and the wind was still blowing at a fairly high velocity and the sky had become dark. I hadn't panicked yet but I was scared. Let me tell you...I was trying to think of what to do next with a thousand things going through my head. NOW WHAT!!! The boat

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had quit moving, I had forgotten about the mast sticking 12 feet down.

The mast had hit the lake bottom several yards from the bank. As I was laying on the bottom of the upside down boat, I thought of two options; one, try to swim on to shore in the frigid water with all my clothes and boots on, or go under the boat and drop the mast and sail. If I swam to shore I would have a two mile hike to get help. My decision, I went under the boat and released the mast and sail. With the mast and sail gone I was able to roll the boat to the upright position. I removed the center board (keel) to use as a paddle and to splash as much water out of the boat as I could. Luck finally came to me, while all this was going on, the sky had turned a beautiful blue and the wind had subsided to a warm, light breeze.

As I was paddling back toward the landing I had to do

something to prevent hypothermia and shock. I could feel the warm breeze on my face so, yes, you guessed it... I took off my boots and all my clothes down to my underwear briefs. The sunshine and the warm breeze on my body really gave me a much needed feeling of surviving.

When I got to shore, I discovered some people driving on Highway 431 had seen what happened. They had gone to a store towards Gunter'sville and called the Gunter'sville Volunteer Rescue Squad and come back to the landing. The rescue squad arrived just as I was tying the boat on top of my car.

I was so happy to be on shore it didn't embarrass me at all that I was running around in my underwear. I had lost my mast, boom and sail, and that didn't bother me either....I was finally in my car with the heater running.

On the way to my parent's

house I relived the entire experience several times thanking the Lord that Judy had decided not to go. I was still in my underwear when I arrived back at my parent's house. Now that I was warm and safe, the expressions on Judy's and my mother's faces when I walked in was almost worth what I had just gone through.

The high velocity wind came and left in a matter of seconds. I didn't realize what the phenomenon was until July 1984 when a sudden a high velocity wind capsized a large paddlewheel show boat out of Ditto Landing. Several people lost their lives, I was very lucky.

Meteorologists' names for this sudden, unexpected, high mile per hour wind is "wind shear" and "micro-burst". A short lived, violent windstorm that without warning, has capsized many boats and taken down commercial aircraft during takeoff and landing.

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Tips to Avoid the Swine Flu -

Originally Published in Old Huntsville Magazine in
November 2009

We're all trying to avoid the Swine Flu right now, so here are a few tips that may help:

* Avoid going where sick people go: ER, Doctors offices, hospital, drug store, big box stores and any crowded, closed-in locations.

* If someone is sneezing, coughing, etc. avoid them at all costs, go the other way.

* If someone you know wants to come over for a visit and you know they're sick, make it another day.

* Keep your immune system as healthy as it can be; eat right with lots of fruits and veges, don't smoke, keep liquor to a minimum, take your vitamins (especially fish oil & B-Complex), drink plenty of water and get sufficient sleep. It also helps to drink a couple of cups of hot green tea with honey per day.

* That antiseptic gel that everyone is told to use now really works! When you do have to go out, each time you get back in your car put it on your hands and rub well.

* Keep your hands away from your eyes, nose, mouth, etc. You would be surprised how fast germs are transmitted.

* Get the regular flu shot when it's offered, then get the swine flu shot too.

* Try doing more things at home rather than going out all the time.

* If you work and feel sick, stay home! Your company doesn't want you to be a hero, and then you infect everyone else.

* If you feel achy and start having the Swine Flu symptoms, (Diarrhea, nausea, fever, etc.) make sure you stay hydrated! That's very important. Eat bland foods to keep your strength up, stay in bed if that feels better, pamper yourself. Better yet, get your spouse to pamper you.

IT'S INTERESTING THAT THE BASIC TIPS AND ADVICE FOR ANY TYPE OF VIRUS OR FLU SEEM TO REMAIN THE SAME THROUGHOUT THE YEARS. THE 2ND BULLET ABOVE COMES THE CLOSEST TO SAFE DISTANCING.

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HUNTSVILLE HEROES IN GRAY

by Tom Carney

He was a Confederate hero. Born in Huntsville, Alabama, Henry Bolden served in many theaters of the war and saw action in the battle of Nashville. When the Union troops began to overrun his position in bloody hand-to-hand fighting, Bolden, who did not have a gun, picked up a stick and began swinging it furiously.

When the battle was over, five dead Yankee soldiers lay sprawled about his feet. Later when asked how he did it, his only reply was, "I knocked them in the head."

Henry Bolden was a black man.

Although few people realize it, there were a number of black Confederate veterans in Madison County. These men, all of whom were valued and respected citizens, earned a unique place in Huntsville history.

Essex Lewis, one of the best known and highly respected of these veterans, went to war with the man he worked for, Colonel Nick Lewis, and saw action in Virginia, Tennessee, Alabama and Georgia.

After the war he returned to

Huntsville, where he worked as a farmer and as a janitor at the post office. Lewis was a loyal member of the Egbert Jones Camp of Confederate veterans here in Huntsville. In 1910 he was chosen to represent the Huntsville camp at a Confederate reunion in Richmond, Virginia.

When Lewis died at the age of 106, his funeral was attended by an honor guard consisting of ex-Confederate soldiers.

Another Huntsville black who saw service in the Civil War was Matt Gray. "Uncle Matt," as he was known, always wore an old gray uniform with the bronze "medal of the Confederacy" pinned to his lapel.

He also was a member of the

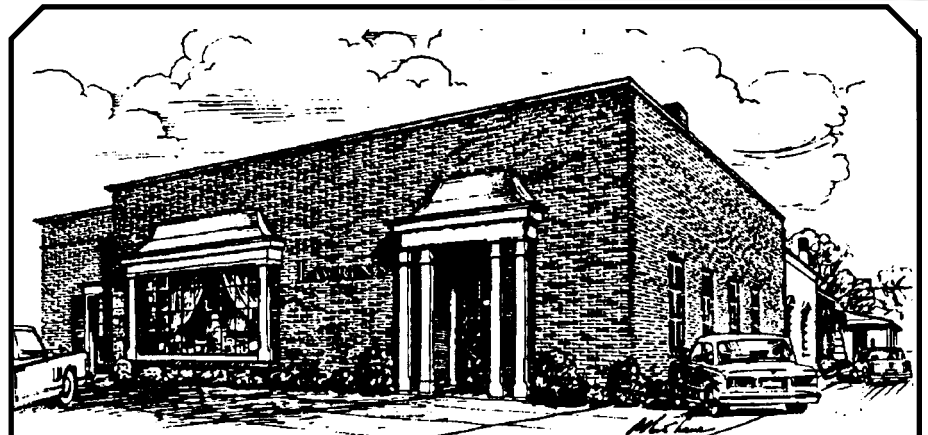
Confederate veterans organization here in Huntsville and had the distinction of a "special" chair being reserved for him at the monthly meetings.

According to newspaper accounts of the day, the only meetings he ever missed were when he was sick.

At his death, the Huntsville newspaper ended his obituary with, "Now Uncle Matt has gone himself to aid with the Rebel yell."

"You can't be a real country unless you have beer and an airline. It helps if you have some kind of a football team, or some nuclear weapons. But at the very least you need a beer."

Frank Zappa



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Shelley Jobe, Scottsboro



This month, Grandma decided to revisit a habit that she did as a teenager.

That habit is to keep a diary. We are living in times that need documenting for our grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

During these times, I advise keeping the family on a regular schedule. Everyone up at the standard time, dress, activities and to bed at the usual hour.

For yourself, I suggest a warm soak in the tub at some point in the day. In the tub, I use one cup of Epson Salt, half cup baking soda and five drops of Lavender oil. Put some soothing music on to play, light a few candles and relax.

With the Coronavirus, washing hands frequently is a must. I know we should practice "Social Distancing"

"Television could perform a great service in mass education, but there's no indication its sponsors have anything like this on their minds."

Tallulah Bankhead

and separating six feet. Hard with family members and worse with kids.

It's a good idea to check with family members older than age 60 and friends more often by phone. We all can use voice contact, at least. Go through your address book and call friends you have not talked to in a long time.

Pets are good company. They can lower your blood pressure just by petting them. Dogs tend to be better listeners than cats. Goldfish? You decide. Dogs love to walk and it's good exercise for both of you.

Another easy exercise for home, lifting weights. Don't have any, you say? Sure, you do. A can of soup or veggies in each hand is nearly two pounds. A half-gallon milk jug with a handle is four pounds, filled with water. My husband uses gallon containers for eight pounds each. Do arm curls, shoulder presses, overhead pulls, and anything to exercise all the arm muscles. Exercise reduces tension and is good for you in so many ways. I use a stationary indoor bike I bought for a few dollars at a garage sale. It's suitable for all kinds of weather and I don't risk falling as I did a few years back.

Soon as pools open, that's another wonderful pastime and exercise for all ages.

Even my purse has gone through a change due to the Coronavirus. I realized this as I reached into it to retrieve a lipstick, comb and mirror. I found none, just a mask, rubber gloves and sanitizer. Who would have ever thought I would leave home without these items?

Help, President Trump.

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Surviving the Depression

by Cathey Carney



I thought you would enjoy reading about family survival tactics used during the Depression years that our readers have sent in over time.

* Women made everything out of flour sacks, including skirts and dresses for girls.

* There was a lot of sickness, we used to take 666 which was so bitter, it only took one spoonful to cure you. We also used castor oil, Black Drought or kerosene and sugar.

* We always used our ground coffee 3 times.

* Mama stretched our butter by softening it, then beating it with a can of evaporated milk.

* Road meat was Depression food. Fowl or wild game killed by cars was quickly retrieved and dressed out for the next meal.

* A favorite kid's game would be to curl up in an old tire and have someone push you down a hill!

* Leftover gift wrap and ribbons were always carefully removed, ironed and saved.

* My Dad would patch the tops and sides of our shoes with tire patches. We used hardened tallow to polish our shoes.

* Mom always watched the first 3 days of spring to see what the next 3 months would bring.

* Everyone had a cabbage patch. Cabbage was used in sauerkraut, as well as a hot vegetable.

* We used to try to beat the squirrels to all the wild nuts like hickory and hazelnuts.

* The weed, Queen Anne's Lace, was dipped in flour and fried. It kept the family from going to bed hungry many times.

* Bread was torn into pieces and added to fried potatoes, to make "Stretch Potatoes."

* Farmers planted only the potato eyes for the garden, then ate the rest of potato.

* We used cardboard in our shoes and washed our hair in Fels-Naptha. We brushed our teeth with salt and soda.

* Mama wrapped my school sandwiches in the cornflake box liner. I used it day after day.

* To un-shrink woolen sweaters Mama would boil them in a solution of 1 part white vinegar to 2 parts water, then stretch to original size and dry.

* Baths took place on Saturday and the cleanest one bathed first, then the rest of the family used the same water in the old wash tub, the dirtiest person last.

* Everything was patched and darned. Orange crates were used for everything from furniture to storage containers.

* Weddings were simple and beautiful, with the average cost of everything - dress, veil, bridal and groom's cakes, reception, etc. being around \$50.

* An unopened box of baking soda will stay good up to 2 years; baking powder 18 months;

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* Baking bread will help improve your spirits when you're feeling low. Pound and knead the dough as if you were trying to beat away all your problems, then pull and push it into shape. Bake the bread, enjoy that wonderful smell in your kitchen, then eat a couple of slices with real butter, while it's still warm.

* Tea bags are often good for two servings. We used it for the first cup, took it out and saved it, then put it back in the hot water later for a second cup.

* Gardens are a must for everyone and it puts all the kids to work. We grew all kinds of vegetables and fruits and a few flowers, but mostly potatoes, tomatoes, peppers, cabbage, corn, squash and onions. A garden is no good without regular hoeing and weeding and in the hot summer days the kids were expected to do it with no complaints. We canned vegetables and there was always extra to give to older folks who couldn't work in the garden.

"I wish my brother would learn a trade, so I'd know what kind of work he's always out of."

Monica Thayer, Madison

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Shopping

by Al Dean



I was watching a recording of Kayak Bassin I'd DVR'd earlier. Chad Hoover was on Center Hill Lake in Cookeville, Tennessee fishing for smallmouth bass. The Chef de Cuisine was making out her grocery list for her weekly shopping jaunt. She tilted her head and smiled the smile that makes me feel fifty years younger and asked me if I'd like to go with her. I said yes.

She knew I was lying. She knows I experience the same pain shopping as when a nurse-in-training removed a Foley catheter with the balloon still inflated. While I've never actually screamed while accompanying her on these outings, my grumbling annoys her, so she does most of the shopping.

There was a time I shopped: for her birthday, our anniversary, Mother's Day and of course Christmas and once and a while, just because. My favorite store for providing her with the finest in ladies' fashions was a small department store with a fancy name that used to be where the Governors Drive Medical Mall is now. I thought they had everything the woman in my life could possibly want. They were clever enough to allow me to believe that I possessed above average intelligence for thinking it.

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Self-employed - what a fiasco."**

Seen on local job resume

Because I put it off as long as I could, Christmas shopping for her was done on Christmas Eve. Given my inability to distinguish colors beyond the basic black, white and yellow, or relate small or medium to size 4 or 6. I always sought out a sales lady that looked to be about her size. The clerks in the little department store were especially adept at helping me choose delightful gifts from the inventory still on hand.

They had special promotions for guys like me. I won a ladies blouse in one of their Christmas Eve drawings; it was an expensive silky thing in her size. She described the color as Blood Clot, which may be why she never wore it. I finally realized that in spite of her oohs and aahs, she didn't wear any of the elegant apparel I spent hours shopping for: wrong color, wrong size or Lee Roy Keesucker's wife had one just like it. She had mentioned on numerous occasions that she was a true summer, which the sales lady in the department store explained had nothing

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to do with keeping the a/c cranked in the summer and the heat off in cold weather. She now receives flowers, gift cards or cash.

About six months ago I did go into a store to pick up some shoes. I have some podiatric issues and my wife, already burdened by my hearing loss, diminished eyesight, creaking joints and psoriasis, is spared the chore of selecting the proper footwear to alleviate the effects of my supination.

In less than an hour, I stumbled upon the shoe department in the bowels of the cavernous warehouse, found a pair of cross-trainers exactly like the ones I had worn for the past eight years, pulled out a box, size: 11, color: white, checked out, went home, and as I laced them up, she asked, "Why didn't you buy a different style or color?"

"It didn't occur to me," I said.

"Did you try them on?"

"No," I said.

"It's pure luck that they fit."

If they hadn't, I wouldn't have admitted it.

My kids give me fishing shirts for various occasions and in cooler weather I slip a sweatshirt on over them. I have thirteen sweatshirts; all are loosely fitting, size extra-large. I don't have to stretch them to make them comfortable and two of them aren't navy blue. One is white and on the front is displayed our daughter's three girls when they were about the same age as our great granddaughter. The other one might be green - or brown. They are delivered right to my door from a mail order house in Pennsylvania. I'm going to order one in a color they call Autumn Maize; it's yellow...ish.

Shortly after my shoe shopping spree I needed a replacement for my favorite fishing rod broken while trying to avoid an agitated red wasp To whom it may concern: remember who frightened away the snake you saw.

I drove the less than forty miles to my preferred tackle shop where I had purchased the rod that proved to be no match for a slamming truck door. Harold, the owner and I, had grown up together and after trying a dozen or so I found one that fit me: right length, weight and flexibility.

After a thorough examination of the colorful display of lures that always catch me instead of fish, I selected various crank baits in what appeared to be shades of brown - or maybe green. I went to the checkout counter where an assortment of spinning and casting reels were conveniently displayed.

I inspected all of them, pored over the manufacturer's specifications, and selected a nifty little ultra-light that had eight ball bearings and a fluid-drive gearing system: perfect for brim fishing in ponds and streams around Huntsville. Of course, I needed a new rod to match, and miniature versions of the same lures I'd just purchased.

If I could get Harold to sell jeans and shoes, I might enjoy shopping.

"In the Olympics games years ago, Greeks ran races, jumped, hurled the biscuits and threw the jav."

Seen on 4th grade history test

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Heard On the Street

by **Cathey Carney**



What a difference a month makes! We sure weren't talking about **Coronavirus** early March, but it's a different and almost surreal world now. It feels like 50 years ago, no traffic, people out walking, people being kinder to each other. But then we have small stores that are closed, our restaurants that were packed with people just a month ago. Our small businesses who are really suffering. So many people out of work. Our people who are trying really hard to not get sick. Being separated from loved ones and friends.

Retirement home personnel are trying to explain to older folks why their families can't visit - some families are knocking on windows so that they

can see their loved ones and try to talk thru windows (first floor of course).

As things are changing now (Apr 16) on a daily basis, it's hopefully going to be lots more positive and we will get back on our feet again. Our small businesses will need us more than ever when things begin to open up again. I think we'll all really appreciate the simpler things in life, and for sure we'll be more careful when it comes to spreading germs. We have sure learned alot. We especially appreciate the local musicians who would sing online on Youtube to try to cheer us up.

And we will forever have appreciation and thanks to the people who continued to work to keep up safe, the medical people and folks working in stores and our banks and essential services. Thank you is just not enough. In their honor we have hidden a tiny tiny heart (if you see a large one don't call) that will be hidden in these pages. IF you happen to see it, and I mean it won't be easy - call 256-534-0502 and ID.

Speaking of banks, BB&T on Church Street is one who continues to open at 9am as usual. the lobby was closed but the drive through stays busy. The ladies who work there are the best, one of them is **Ianthia Bridges**. I asked her if she had any special events in May and she did! Her mom is Joyce

Ramsey, lives in Camden, AL and has a birthday May 28th. Then **Ianthia and her husband Frazer** will be celebrating their 27th anniversary on May 15th. Her great niece **Raegan** will have a birthday on May 12th.

Jane Eller is Customer Care rep at BB&T on Church Street as well and her sweet husband **Danny** will turn 71 on May 16th. Happy Birthday Danny!

Jacob and Jeremy Schmit are sophomores at Grissom and just took part in a great project.

Per Jacob, "I started in 7th grade at Mt. Gap Middle School taking an engineering 3D modeling course. We learned about building robots and programming them. Then I joined the middle school robotics team. Going into Grissom High I took another engineering course and this is where we designed a few projects such as a mini toy car and printed that out on a 3D printer. That's when I really got interested and saved my money to buy my own 3D printer and started making random toys and other things. When I heard about this COV-

Photo of The Month

The first person to correctly identify the youngster below wins a full one-year subscription to "Old Huntsville"

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This boy is no longer with us but at one time had a very popular band with his name on it.



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ID 19 face mask thing I wanted to help. So my twin brother Jeremy and I are now making face shields to protect the first line responders." Proud parents are **Dan and Dawn Schmit** and grandma **Louise Avery!**

Rosa Shild Witt sends love and a big hello to someone who writes for Old Huntsville - **Anna Gene Clift** who now lives in Seattle, WA. with her husband **Charles**. Rosa is an amazing lady of 102 years old and delightful to talk with. Among many other things she was a member of the Huntsville Garden Club many years ago, and remembers Anna Gene as a child!

Here's a message from our Mayor, **Tommy Battle**: "We are all in this together. Like cities and communities across state, country, and the world, the COVID-19 virus has forced us to readjust our routines to a new normal. But Huntsville is resilient. We'll get through this. We're not as powerless as we might think. As individuals and as a community, we can make smart choices that will alter the course of this virus, keep our most vulnerable safe, and give our health care

partners time to combat the illness."

"Each of us has the responsibility to follow doctor's orders to 'separate & sanitize'".

This is the link to use to get daily noon updates by **Madison County and the City of Huntsville** as well as the latest information from:

Alabama Dept. of of Public Health

Centers for Disease Control
Crestwood Hospital
Huntsville Hospital

<https://www.huntsvilleal.gov/coronavirus-disease-2019-response-and-information/>

If you tune in to local channels you can get a daily update on our city's latest updates and recommendations. This changes daily so it's a good idea to tune in at noon.

Also, email address for the State response team is covid19info@adph.state.al.us and the phone # to contact them is Hotline # 1-800-270-7268 from 7am to 9pm daily.

Our winner for the photo of the month in April was **Bonnie Jackson** of Athens. The sweet boy was musician **Ricky Taylor** who has a new album and was planning a release party,

but that will be postponed for now. Bonnie said she had attended an event at Merrimack Performance Hall on Triana Boulevard a few years ago where Ricky was featured, and she loved his bluesy way of singing. It was a pure guess but we're glad she called! And my tiny egg was a hit - it was hidden on the Lewters ad just left of the middle window - see it? **Jason Bell** of Gurley was the first to call and he wins a free subscription!

Rosemary Leatherwood of Ole Dads BBQ in Hazel Green misses her husband every day, and his birthday would have been May 2nd. She says it's been almost 4 years since he passed away and he would be so proud they are going on their 25th year in business. She knows she'll see him again.

It's so hard to believe that **Liz Waggett** has been gone now for 10 years, so many people in Huntsville loved her. She passed away Mar. 31, 2010 of pancreatic cancer. Her family and friends will never forget that special lady.

Please stay safe and still practice good health habits - we're all ready to be normal!



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Comfort Sweets

Easy Coconut Cake

- Duncan Hines white pudding cake mix
- Condensed milk
- Cool Whip
- Frozen coconut, thawed

Using directions on box, make the cake and pour into a 13 x 9" greased baking dish. Bake according to directions.

When cake is done but still hot, pierce the cake all over the top with chopsticks. Drizzle condensed milk over the top (slowly to fill the holes made).

After the condensed milk has soaked into the cake, spread Cool Whip over the top and sprinkle with coconut, refrigerate. If you love coconut, you might want to toast it first.

Crunchy Nutballs

- 1 lb. butter, softened
- 2 lb. peanut butter
- 3 lb. confectioners sugar
- 1 c. pecans, chopped fine

2 lb. dark chocolate
Melt butter and mix well with the peanut butter and sugar. Add pecans to the dough-like mixture. Roll dough into balls about the size of large marbles. Set on waxed paper.

Melt chocolate in double boiler. Using a long toothpick, dip the balls into the chocolate, coating each one well. Set on waxed paper to dry - makes about 200 pieces.

Old Fashioned Chess Pie

- 2 c. sugar
- 2 T. flour, heaping
- 1 T. yellow corn meal, heaping
- 1 stick melted butter
- 3 eggs, beaten
- 1/2 c. buttermilk
- 2 t. vanilla extract
- 1 unbaked 12-inch pie shell

Combine sugar, flour and meal; mix well. Add melted butter and mix well. Add beat-

en eggs, mixing well. Add buttermilk and vanilla and blend thoroughly.

Pour mixture into unbaked pastry shell and bake at 425 degrees for 10 minutes. Reduce temperature to 325 degrees and bake 30 minutes. When pie begins to brown, cover with sheet of aluminum foil to prevent deep browning or burning.

Monkey Bread

- 3 cans buttermilk biscuits
- 1/2 c. sugar
- 1/2 t. cinnamon
- 1 stick butter
- 3/4 c. sugar
- 1 t. cinnamon

Cut biscuits into quarters and roll in sugar-cinnamon mixture (1/2 cup sugar and 1/2 teaspoon cinnamon). Pile them in a greased and floured Bundt pan.

Melt the butter and add 3/4 cup sugar and the cinnamon. Heat til sugar melts and pour over the biscuits. Bake at 350

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degrees for 30-35 minutes. Let stand for 10 minutes, then invert onto cake plate. You can't stop eating this!

Cherry Fudge

- 2 c. sugar
- 1 c. milk
- 1 T. butter
- 1/4 lb. chopped cherries

Butter an 8-inch square pan. Combine sugar, milk and butter in a saucepan; boil for 8 minutes. Beat til creamy. Add chopped cherries. Pour into the pan. Cool and cut into squares.

Walnut Penuche

- 2 c. light brown sugar, firmly packed
- 1/3 c. cream
- 1/3 c. strong coffee
- 2 T. butter
- 1/2 t. salt
- 1 c. chopped walnuts

Butter an 8-inch square pan. Combine brown sugar, cream and coffee; bring to a boil, stirring constantly. Cook without stirring to 238 degrees (softball stage).

Remove from heat; cool to 110 degrees or outside of pan is cool. Add butter and salt. Beat til thick and creamy.

Add walnuts, turn into the pan. Mark top into squares and cool.

English Toffee

- 2 c. sugar
- 1-1/2 c. butter
- 2 T. water
- 2 c. blanched almonds

Butter a jelly roll pan. Combine sugar, butter and water in a medium saucepan; cook over low heat, stirring constantly, til candy thermometer reaches 235 degrees (soft ball stage).

Stir in almonds and continue cooking without stirring til thermometer reaches 280 degrees (soft crack stage). Pour into the jelly roll pan. Cool & break into pieces.

Crunchy Caramel Cheesecake

- 20 caramels
- 4 T. milk
- 2 8-oz. pkgs. cream cheese, softened
- 1/2 c. sugar
- 1 t. vanilla extract
- 2 eggs
- 3/4 c. chopped pecans
- 1 graham cracker crust

Add the 20 caramels to a saucepan and over medium heat (with the milk) heat slowly til the caramels begin to melt. In a bowl, using an electric mixer, mix the cream cheese, sugar and extract. Mix well, add the eggs and mix again.

Add the pecans to the caramel mixture, pour evenly over the crust. Pour the cream cheese mixture on top of the caramel mixture. Bake at 350 degrees for about 40 minutes, middle can be slightly jiggley.

Cool and refrigerate for about 2 hours. Take a few extra caramels and milk and heat til melted, pour over the cooled pie in a drizzling effect. May top with a few pecans for garnish.

Vanilla Cafe

Prepare pot of hot coffee. Drop in 1 teaspoon of real vanilla extract and let sit for 15 minutes. Add 1 jigger of Bailey's Irish Cream Liquor to each cup, top with whipped cream & serve.



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Mary

by John H. Tate

"Baby, why don't you let some of the other chullin win some?" These were the words of Mary Tate's daddy.

In 1970 Mary Tate was in the 6th grade at Highlands Elementary school in Huntsville, Alabama; she learned of the Huntsville All-Comers track meet held at Milton Frank Stadium for all city schools; elementary thru high school. Her dad took her to the competition.

This was Mary's first organized competition against other kids from across the city. She competed in five events that day; the 50-yard dash, the 100-yard dash, 220-yard dash, the long-jump and one she could not remember. She accumulated five awards; three First-place and two Third-place trophies.

When she carried her arm full of trophies into the stands to show her dad, he said, "Baby, why don't you let some of the other chullin win some?" Her God-given talent become clear that day, she also realized that her successes would be for herself and her fight and driving force came from within herself. Mary carried that fight with her through Ed White Middle School, Butler High School and on to the University of Alabama in Tuscaloosa.

At Ed White, Mary was one of the first two black cheerleaders. Mary had three essential reasons for trying out for Cheerleading at Ed White, "I wanted to do it, I was loud, and I did not want to stay home."

She was on the Gymnastics team, since Ed White did not have a track team at that time, she competed in the All-City

Track-meet. She also participated in the Student Council every year, including being the first black President of the SGA President of the Student Council.

When asked how she felt becoming an athlete, she stated, "I was always an athlete, I did not become an athlete." Case in point, trying out for the Ed White Volleyball team, she states, "I did not know how to play and I learned how to during tryouts. It was a surprise I got chosen for the team. I didn't know about competing for the starting lineup; I was just playing." Her just playing landed her a spot on the Varsity team as a 7th grader.

There seemed to be a natural progression as she entered Butler High School. Mary was active in Volleyball, Basketball, Track and Cheerleading. Once again, she was the only active black Cheerleader in her first year at Butler.

"They made me choose my second year; I had to choose between Cheerleading and Volleyball, because of the season," she continued, "and that hurt me so bad, I loved Cheerleading. But at that time, they were not giving scholarships in Cheerleading, so I had to decide on programs that would offer that to me."

In a real moment of reflection as she recalls the years at Butler, Mary states, "I had to be twice as good: what I did and who I was - could not be denied." Her God-given gifts would not allow her to



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go unnoticed, and they would pave her way forward; Bama came knocking.

"Back then, because women did not get full scholarships. Alabama offered me a dual-scholarship in Volleyball and Track." The combined scholarships paid her Alabama tuition 100%. Alabama would prove to provide new obstacles for Mary. "Volleyball ended after my first year because they did merge men's and women's athletics; they said they have one too many people on the team, and they cut me."

Mary lit up when asked if she ever met Bear Bryant. "He knew who I was! I saw him pull up in an old station wagon with a fishing hat on. I'm like - Nowhere to hide, he will see me through the window. So, I pressed up against the wall, I tried to be invisible, and I was going to sneak out the door. When he was coming in, I was going to go out the other door. But our encounter was inevitable! I tripped-out when he called me by name as we spoke! I remember him coming through the door; he looked over and saw me."

He said, "Hey, Mary."

Coach Bryant caught her by surprise; she stuttered a response, "Hi-hi, Coach." She continued, "He knew my name - he knew my name!"

As it turned out, Coach Bryant was the one who recruited Mary. The way she tells it, "When the scouts came to Butler High School to observe several athletes. I was recommended as one to receive an offer to go to Bama! My dream came true!"

Mary's athletic scholarship at Alabama ended while learning to jump hurdles during training. "I hit the hurdle and got a hairline fracture. That was enough for me to decide to leave sports and Alabama. I received excellent care during my recovery. Alabama had top-notch trainers in the Sports-Med Department. But, being in constant pain from a lifetime of running had taken its toll on my desire to continue. My heart was no longer motivated to continue."

When asked which were the winning teams at Ed White, Butler, and Alabama, she stated very matter of factly, "Every team I played on was a winning team, not because of me but because everyone on the team was good."

As Mary reflected on her memories of Alabama, she spoke of some of the racial tension and issues she dealt with and the fact that Coach Bryant had to come to her aid to make sure she was treated fairly. As she filtered through the memories, good and bad, two brought a smile to her face.

One involved her boyfriend at the time, Gary Moore. She smiled when she said, "Going

to the games, the football games and Gary being there with me and seeing tears come to his eyes when Bear Bryant walked on to the field. That was probably it, because he had fun."

The other memory, she recalled, "During a Miami Dolphin break, Bob Baumhower was visiting. I was leaving the weight-room and I was saying something to somebody behind me, I turned and hit a brick wall. As I slowly looked up, there stood the biggest human being I'd ever laid eyes on! I have never seen a neck that big! I said, excuse me. He said, 'You're alright! No problem,' as he looked at me and laughed. This giant of a man spoke very gently." Mary made a note of his large calves, stating, "They were the size of large iron skillet."

Mary's dad passed during her sophomore year of high school, during Christmas break, and never got a chance to enjoy her victories at Butler or Alabama.

This writer wonders, would he still have asked the question, "Baby, why don't you let some of the other chullin win some?"





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You Can't Tell a Book by Its Cover

Anna (Gene) Clift Chesnut

I heard on the radio this morning that Katherine Johnson died at 101. She was the African American mathematician at NASA who, in her era of racial and gender prejudice, seemed to take it all in stride with equanimity. According to the radio, John Glenn would only go into space if Katherine agreed with the computer trajectory of his rocket. She was a woman who counted and was finally given the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the highest civilian honor, by Barack Obama when he was President

This broadcast, having brought to my memory John Glenn, the first American astronaut to orbit the Earth, reminded me of his attendance at a National Osteoporosis Foundation (my husband a trustee at that time) Gala Dinner Dance in October, 1999, in New York City. It was held at the Waldorf-Astoria and chaired by Proctor and Gamble with John Glenn as a guest speaker as well as Katie Couric. It was an elegant affair, lavish, in that many of the people, there were the best scientific researchers from around the US and Europe in bone metabolism, but not necessarily used to that scale of party giving in the Big Apple.

Knowing that she was in the presence of many physician researchers, Katie Couric spoke, sad from her bout with her husband's terminal illness with cancer, but enthusiastic about her involvement in

women's health issues. John Glenn gave an overview of his space flight, then told of his interest in osteoporosis because astronauts lose bone while in space, due to weightlessness and the effects of lack of gravity on the skeleton.

Loving to dance, however, the band was of immense interest to me. It was, without a doubt, the best band I had ever heard at that time. It had many singers (six or eight) as I remember and it played wonderful dance numbers, old and new, slow and fast, with the singers adding to the repertoire their own exciting and vibrant renditions.

I was sitting at a table with my husband and six other couples, all the men, physicians in bone research, and a young Vice President of Proctor and Gamble on my right. Now, all these researchers at our table were very cerebral, not necessarily interested in dancing and here I am listening to this incredible band and all I want to do is dance. I chatted amiably with the Proctor and Gamble representative (much younger than I) about his wife and young children at home in Cincinnati. He was a very clean-cut mid-westerner, looking like a wholesome farm boy, to me. In my own prejudiced way, I imagined him with "two left feet".

He must have sensed my itching dancing feet, however, but I was shocked when he asked me to dance. Oh, my, and what a dancer he was! If ever I did not want anyone to break in it was that night. In fact, my husband did try and I told him to go away!

I still think of that evening in the Big Apple and my silly prejudice. You sure can't tell a book by its cover.







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“Experience - Watered, groomed and fed the family dog for 16 years.”

Seen on clerical job resume

The Bon Air Restaurant



by Libby Sanders

On Meridian Street sat an old cafe, the Bon Air. At one time it was a motel and was a convenient stopover for travelers on their way to Florida. In the early seventies it was a favorite place for my former husband and I and our two sons to have breakfast on Saturday mornings. This was a beloved ritual rivaled only by doughnuts on Sunday, at Mr. Donut, before church. We were later blessed with a daughter who missed all the good stuff, or so she says.

The waitresses were like family and everyone knew everyone else. You had a preferred seat, a special waitress and she knew to bring two coffees and two chocolate milks. The food was good, especially the gravy and biscuits, and the company was nearly always the same.

One lovely lady was still waiting tables at 80 years of age and loved everything about Princess Diana. When it was announced that

“When you turn 70 you can still chase women, but you have to be going downhill.”

Bob Hope

a royal baby was on the way, she crocheted an entire sweater set; a cap, sweater, and booties and mailed them to the soon-to-be mother. She was delighted when she received a signed thank you note. I, for one, will never forget it. She whipped that letter out every time she saw you and you had to read it again. It was finally framed to protect it, mostly from her loving hands.

Another waitress lived near Butler High School and she walked to work. It was not a short stroll. Anyone who knew her made sure to pick her up when they saw her but most times she had to walk, winter and summer alike. Then she walked home again after her shift. I never once heard her complain about being tired. She had a family to provide for.

I have heard a story and I don't know if it's true or not. Wernher von Braun and some of his rocket team were eating in the Bon Air and speaking with, of course, a German accent. An elderly couple sitting at the next booth, on their way to Florida, overheard their conversation. The lady said to her husband, "I

just love that southern accent!"

That's our town and that was the Bon Air, you never knew who might come in. Lunch and supper were good home cooking and my favorite part was the yeast rolls. Light fluffy and melt in your mouth. A couple of days a week the leftover rolls were used as a basis for the most delicious desert ever - chocolate bread pudding. The meal was great, but the whole point was the desert. You came on the right day, no matter what was on the menu, for the Bread PUDDING.

I would love to have a bowl right now. It would bring back memories, sure. But the taste! That's the thing, it was like no other and I've never had anything like it since.

From the huge old painting on the wall, to the cracked and comfortable old booths, it was homey, warm, friendly and irreplaceable.

If anyone knows how to make their bread pudding, I would love the recipe.



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A Good Dog



A Birmingham, AL resident Trudy Bayley says she owes her life to the faithful companion who dialed 911 - her dog Lyric.

"I've got some kind of guardian angel sleeping on my bed with me even if it is red with a fur coat," Bayley said of her Irish setter.

Bayley, who sleeps with an oxygen mask on because of a breathing disorder, said she could have died early Tuesday when the breathing machine plug fell out and the oxygen cut off. But Lyric remembered her training.

The dog heard the oxygen alarm sound and first tried to rouse her master. Failing that, she knocked the receiver off a telephone and bumped a speed-dial button on the phone three times to dial 911. Several buttons on the phone are programmed for the same number.

"It's amazing," said Charlene Hall, a dispatcher at Birmingham Fire & Rescue.

"The dog is trained to go over and hit that phone three times to get 911 and she barks into the receiver." The town's 911 system automatically gives dispatchers a caller's address. Rescuers arrived to find Bayley having a major asthma attack.

Bayley said of 8-year-old Lyric, "Dogs, they really are your best friends."

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MORNING RAIN

A POEM BY J. NEIL SANDERS

FEBRUARY 2020

I AM IN LOVE
 WITH RAINY MORNINGS.
 THE OLD HOUSE
 THAT I LIVE IN
 IS PEACEFUL AND QUIET.
 THE ONLY SOUND
 IS THE MORNING RAIN
 HITTING THE ROOF ABOVE
 AND THE PUDDLES OUTSIDE
 BESIDE THE FRONT PORCH.
 I PLACE FALLING RAIN
 AND GENTLE WIND CHIMES
 IN THE SAME
 FAVORITE CATEGORY.
 KITTY HAS SURRENDERED
 TO A PEACEFUL NAP.
 HIS SQUINTED EYES
 AND STILLNESS
 REVEAL THAT HE TOO
 IS CONTENT.
 HE IS RESTING BESIDE ME
 AS I WRITE POETRY
 ...AS I DRINK FRESH COFFEE
 LISTENING TO THE RAIN
 ...AND TAKING A MOMENT
 TO WRITE ABOUT IT.

He was Hypnotized

from 1923 Huntsville Newspaper

Wm. Dobbins of this city, dragged into the court today on a charge of bigamy, declared his second wife hypnotized him and forced him to marry her against his will.

"I don't know how it happened," he claimed. "All of a sudden I was in the church, saw many people, stood before the altar and was required to kneel. A priest stood before us. I was very much wrought up. Beside me stood my bride, who at every opportunity looked piercingly into my eyes so that I saw glittering before me all the colors of the rainbow. And so I was married a second time. As if in a semi-slumber, I left the church."

The court, however, sentenced him to 2 months in jail and a \$20 fine.

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No One a Stranger

by Jane Tippett

Walking to wherever I needed to go was nothing new to me, but this one school day it was so terribly cold. I loved going to school from the first day I walked into my classroom and always had perfect attendance. Our home was several miles from school. Just a statistic that you may be interested in and was interesting to me when I read it: in 1948 my first year in grammar school, the school leaving age was raised to 15. I was a first grader, and my older brother Billy was a third grader. My younger brother L.B. was not in school since there was no preschool to attend back then. Billy was one of the school safety patrols so he always left much earlier for school than me.

We lived in a new subdivision (since my father had gotten a new job with the Post Office) which enabled us to buy a 3 bedroom house. During his life my dad had been a boxer, insurance salesman and also served in WWII before his steady job at the Post Office. The very first home that I can remember was a 2 bedroom with a living room and kitchen duplex.

Another family lived on the other side of the duplex. The reason I can remember the duplex so well is because it was across from a school that I never got to attend since I was too young at the time. My brothers and I played marbles, hopscotch, and hide and seek. We also played on the school playground equipment in the school yard. Looking back, that was a very special time for me.

Anyway, one day I was coming home from playing and saw that water was running out our front door and down the street. That was a sight to behold for a young child to see! The hot water heater had burst and my mother did not know what to do. The city finally came out to help. A funny aside, this duplex was also the home that I put a dead cat in our ice box (which was located on the back porch) in hopes that by doing this it would revive the cat. My mother told me I kept trying to prevent her from going on the back porch to get anything out of the ice box. Strange how a child's mind works!

My mother had a hearing problem since birth and her father died when she was a young child. So with a limited income, my grandmother raised 5 children alone. She would take mother to a hearing specialist when she had the money which was not very often. My mother told me if her friends had not helped her with her school studies she would

have never passed. Even with this handicap, she graduated from high school. She never wore a hearing aid until late in life since she could not afford to buy one or even knew it would help.

Enough reminiscing, we must get back to that very bitter cold morning I was walking to school alone. I thought I would freeze to death before I could get there. I tried to sing to myself to make the walk more endurable when suddenly a big semi-truck came by me and stopped. The gentleman driver rolled the window down and ask if he could give me a lift. I had no fear of strangers and thought this would be ok. With no second thoughts, I hopped up into a semi-truck for the first time. The truck was very warm and cozy. I could barely see out the window so he could have taken me anywhere besides school. The truck driver asked where I was headed and I told him to school. I guess he noticed I had a few books and that my school was up the road a few miles.

It's true - God takes care of children - for when we arrived in front of the school building , he stopped the truck and let me out. His last words to me were to always study hard and do the best of my ability. I felt pretty good about getting to school early and not walking into the school being cold until I saw that my brother was staring straight at me with a disapproving look. He did not say a word to me, but when I got home that afternoon I received a lecture to remember from both my parents. They were very happy that I was not abducted by a stranger but disappointed in my conduct as a little girl who should know better than to ride with a stranger.

Looking back "No One Is A Stranger" was a blessing that day! I do not know what is ahead in life and I know that things are different in the world today, but I do know there are still good people I can trust.

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An Ideal Citizen

by Hugh Michaels

There have been many great people during the history of America. Never shall we forget their noble deeds. To name them all would be a hard task, but to name a few we would include the following: Abraham Lincoln, George Washington, Franklin Roosevelt, Colin Kelly, and Nathan Hale. More recently John Sparkman.

Who has ever proved a better citizen than Abraham Lincoln? He was a man who got what he wanted and got it the hard way. Would a person of today walk five miles to return a borrowed object? Would he strain his eyes by the gloomy light of a wood fire in a cold house, just to obtain a little knowledge? There will never be another citizen as true and proud as Abe Lincoln. His life has been a memorable statue. Lincoln was a great leader, a loyal citizen and a worthy man.

Therefore, let us today take his life an example of good citizenship. Let us strive for better knowledge. How will knowledge help to make a good citizen? "Knowledge is itself a teacher."

To learn a few problems would be an easy task. Most people would do this. Only a few will strive for the answers to all the problems. These few are our true citizens of today. What nation can survive without some true citizens?

Abe Lincoln possessed loyalty. A few broken statements will describe a loyal person. He is patriotic and he understands our government. A loyal person will answer the call of "Old Glory", and proudly train himself for the defense of his country.

"If you shouldn't drink and drive, why do bars have parking lots?"

Kenny Dees, Guntersville

Let us say in the conclusion of Lincoln's background that he was kind, true, sympathetic, honest, able and willing. Truly a person with these known characteristics will be the number one citizen of today. We could tell many tales of yonder years and how people have fulfilled the policies of a good citizen. The life and history of these people have gone down in the hearts of every living American. Truly a life to be proud of is the life of a good citizen.

We must today build ourselves for the future. What we do, say and think will matter greatly in what we are to build. Who doesn't want to be a good citizen? A person should know the requirements of a good citizen. Let us describe a good citizen of our time.

He will live for the good of life, for himself and for the good of others. He will not want, nor fear any evil, for with him is the spirit of God. He is a man in meaning in stature. He will abide by and practice the Golden Rule. One of good citizenship quality will set up high ideals of life and conduct and stand firmly for them. He will encourage devotion to his country that is true, wise and fair.

An ideal citizen will understand and cherish the meaning and ideals of self-government and democracy. He will cultivate qualities and habits of good citizens and will benefit from the freedom of speech, freedom of want, freedom of press and right of religious belief.

A citizen will never put off tomorrow what can be done today, never trouble another for what he himself can do, never spend his money before it is earned and he will always take things by the smooth handle. He will always strive, seek and find but never fail.

My ideal citizen is one who will never give up, no matter what the odds may be. He will meet despair and defeat with cheer and strive for goodness until his last breath has gone, answer in the call for help, walk through the door of opportunity and rally to the support of his surroundings. The town or community he will help build.

A character for others he shall build by selling a good example himself.

Patrick Henry said, "Give me liberty or give me death."

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1961 Spring in Tuscaloosa

by M.D. Smith, IV



Denny Chimes

I began my mid-Sophomore year at a new place, the University of Alabama. The previous year and a half spent at Virginia and transferred early January to major in Radio & TV Broadcasting. Another inducement was a cute little blonde I met in Huntsville, my new home, the previous year. Knowing I'd be at University of Alabama in January, we dated more seriously over the 1960 Christmas holidays. By January, I had my two-bedroom apartment shared with a buddy.

For the next several winter months, we dated, and Judy would come over after school, and we'd play my big stereo I was using from my room at home.

For a pretty, ninety pound girl, she sure could talk a lot. Some years later, Judy confessed it was one way of keeping things between boys from getting too serious, mainly if kissing started. She'd just start talking, and the growing passion on the boy's part would fade. It reminded me of some of the musical movies of the era if the girl wanted to delay a budding romance until she was sure where it would lead.

But you know what they say about Spring, don't you? "The sap rises." I'm not talking just about the trees. It seems by late April, she captured my heart, and we were engaged to be married in June of 1961. I believe all our parents were excited but also reserved about us having two more years in college and being so young. She was 19 and I was 20 years old.

Besides wedding plans, the beautiful weather had us exploring outdoor parks, farms and woods in Tuscaloosa. When it's springtime and you're in love, every color seems more vivid. The flowers are more fragrant than you ever remem-

bered them being. The scent of honeysuckle growing on barbed wire fences as we carefully picked our way between wires exploring a pasture, lingers with me today. "Whoops, go back, Judy. This field's got a bull over there. Wrong pasture."

Did I forget to mention that when your four foot, eleven-inch sweetheart looks into your eyes, your heart beats more rapidly and a young man's thoughts turn to being physically closer? In my case, it was thoughts of our coming wedding night on June eighth.

Those images are burned in my memory. Passionate kisses in a May breeze are still vivid. Sometimes Judy, drawing a breath, would start talking about school, her roommate over in Tutwiler Hall, or an unrelated topic. Force of habit, I guess, but it worked every time.

We did homework together on a bench on the quad near Denny Chimes. My apartment was a mile away, but her dorm was across the street. Math was my specialty and I loved Algebra. Judy claims, to this very day, she always made straight A's in school. It seemed like she forgot a lot because it was my best subject too and I had to help her a lot.

If you ask her about it today, her stock answer is that she just

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wanted to see how I did it, or that she knew it already. She only wanted to see if I knew the answer or way to solve an equation. In that department, nothing has changed in fifty-nine years.

Polaroid film for my camera was expensive and I only have a few of the black and white pictures I took that Spring. Sadly, in the days before selfies, we didn't take any photos of the two of us together. We made up for it with wedding photos.

Until I dated Judy, I'd barely heard of Joni James. Judy had most of Joni's LPs, and I transferred some of her favorite songs to my reel-to-reel portable tape recorder. I had a big DC to AC vibrator power converter under my seat and powered that tape recorder that sat on the floor of the passenger seat. I could play the best songs on tape to put her in the mood for love.

My favorite crooners were Johnny Mathis and Nat King Cole. The combination of our beautiful music songs set the stage for romantic days and evenings back in my apartment during our courtship months. We continue to listen to them often among my 12,000 digital oldies now played on MP3 memory sticks, CDs and computers.

Thinking of various songs about Springtime, a favorite old Top-40 song of mine that became a hit in 1959 is "Springtime In Alaska" by Johnny Horton. The repeating line of the song is, "When it's springtime in Alaska, it's forty below."

That for sure wasn't the case in Tuscaloosa when a young man's fancy turned to love.

"My mother always called me 'sturdy' and said I have big bones. A little fat is what I am."

Andy Rooney



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Between 65 and Death (Things to Do Before you Die)

Many of us are between 65 and death. An old friend sent me this excellent list for aging and I have to agree it's good advice to follow.

* It's time to use the money you saved up. Use it and enjoy it. Don't just keep it for those who may have no notion of the sacrifices you made to get it. Remember there is nothing more dangerous than a son or daughter-in-law with big ideas for your hard-earned capital. Warning: This is also a bad time for investments, even if it seems wonderful or fool-proof. They only bring problems and worries. This is a time for you to enjoy some peace and quiet.

* Stop worrying about the financial situation of your children and grandchildren and don't feel bad spending your money on yourself. You've taken care of them for many years and you've taught them what you could. You gave them an education, food, shelter and support. The responsibility is now theirs to earn their own money.

* Keep a healthy life, without great physical effort. Do moderate exercise (like walking every day), eat well and get your sleep. It's easy to become sick and it gets harder to remain healthy. That is why you need to keep yourself in good shape and be aware of your medical and physical needs. Keep in touch with your doctor, do tests even when you're feeling well. Stay informed.

* Don't stress over the little things. You've already overcome so much in your life. You have good memories and bad ones, but the important thing is the present. Don't let the past drag you down and don't let the future frighten you. Feel good in the now. Small issues will soon be forgotten.

* Be proud, both inside and out. Don't stop going to your hair salon or barber, do your nails, go to the dermatologist and the dentist, keep your perfumes and creams well stocked. When you are well-maintained on the outside, it seeps in, making you feel proud and strong.

* Always stay up-to-date. Read newspapers, watch the news. Go online and read what people are saying. Make sure you have an active email account and try to use some of those social networks. You'll be surprised what old friends you'll meet. Keeping in touch with what is going on and with the people you know is important at any age.

* Respect the younger generation and their opinions. They may not have the same ideals as you, but they are the future and will take the world in their direction. Give advice, not criticism and try to remind them that yesterday's wisdom still applies today.

* Never use the phrase "In my time". Your time is now. As long as you're alive, you are part of this time.

You may have been younger, but you are still you now, having fun and enjoying life.

* Some people embrace their golden years, while others become bitter and surly. Life is too short to waste your days on the latter. Spend your time with positive, cheerful people; it'll rub off on you and your days will seem that much better. Spending your time with bitter people will make you older and harder to be around.

* Do not surrender to the temptation of living with your children or grandchildren (if you have a financial choice, that is). Sure, being surrounded by family sounds great, but we all need our privacy. They need theirs and you need yours.

* Don't abandon your hobbies. If you don't have any, make new ones. You can travel, hike, cook, read, dance. You can adopt a cat or a dog, grow a garden, play cards, checkers, chess, dominoes, golf. You can paint, volunteer or just collect certain items. Find something you like and spend some real time having fun with it.

* Even if you don't feel like it, try to accept invitations. Baptisms, graduations, birthdays, weddings, conferences. Try to go. Get out of the house, meet people you haven't



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seen in a while, experience something new (or something old). But don't get upset when you're not invited. Some events are limited by resources, and not everyone can be hosted. The important thing is to leave the house from time to time. Go to museums, go walk through a park or field. Get out there.

* Be a conversationalist. Talk less and listen more. Some people go on and on about the past, not caring if their listeners are really interested. That's a great way of reducing their desire to speak with you. Listen first and answer question, but don't go off into long stories unless asked to. Try to accept situations as they are. Everyone is going through the same things and people have a low tolerance for hearing complaints. Always find some good things to say as well.

* Pain and discomfort go hand in hand with getting older but try not to dwell on them; rather accept them as a part of the cycle of life we're all going through. Try to minimize them in your mind. They are not who you are, they are something that life added to you. If they become your entire focus, you lose sight of the person you are.

* If you've been offended by someone - forgive them. If you've of-

fended someone - apologize. Don't drag around resentment with you. It only serves to make you sad and bitter. It doesn't matter who was right.

* If you have a strong belief, savor it. But don't waste your time trying to convince others. They will make their own choices no matter what you tell them and it will only bring you frustration. Live your faith and set an example.

* Laugh A Lot. Laugh at everything. Remember, you are one of the lucky one. You managed to have a life, a long one. Many never get to this age, never get to experience a full life. But you did. So, what's not to laugh about? Find the humor in your situation.

* Take no notice of what others say about you and even less notice of what they might be thinking. They'll do it anyway, and you should have pride in yourself and what you've achieved. Let them talk and don't worry. They have no idea about your history, your memories and the life you've lived so far. There's still much to be written, so get busy writing and don't waste time thinking about what others might think. Now is the time to be at rest, at peace and as happy as you can be!

"I don't know anything about music. In my line of business you don't have to."

Elvis Presley

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COTTON ROW REVISITED

By Jean Brewer McCrady

When I read Judy Smith's story about Cotton Row in the September 2019 Old Huntsville, it opened a flood gate of memories from my growing up years on the farm at Harvest. When we came to town on Saturdays, I viewed Cotton Row with some kind of mystical reverence, as the home of the "cotton gods." I was on the extreme other end of the cotton continuum. Mama and we four kids raised cotton as sharecroppers to supplement Daddy's income as a Post Engineers carpenter foreman at the Arsenal.

During picking season, our recurring goal was to get 1,500 pounds on the wagon so brother Buzz could take it to the gin. The gin was just a mile or so up Wall-Triana from the fields where it originated. We envied his getting to take a break from picking. But he well deserved it. Weighing and emptying the sacks, and tromping it down in the wagon, was part of his job. My sister Net and I made the weighing and emptying more difficult by routinely packing 80+ lbs in our 7-foot tar-bottomed sacks.

It was our habit to see who could pick the most, and on our good days we would both break 400 pounds. But she always beat me by one or two pounds. Buzz was only 11 or 12 years old when going to the gin became a part of his job. It never occurred to anyone to make an issue of a boy that age pulling a loaded cotton wagon with a Farmall Cub on the main highway. The only person who had a problem with it was our younger brother Ray, just about school age at that time, who thought it was unfair that Buzz got to ride the tractor and he had to stay behind and continue picking.

Typically, 1500 pounds would yield a 500 pound bale. It somehow felt shameful to turn out a bale weighing less than 500. And true or not, we always thought the weight of the bale had something to do with how it would test quality-wise. Learning how much the bale weighed was only one of the reasons we were eager for Buzz's return from the gin. Looming just as large was the anticipation of a break

"I went into a bookstore and asked the saleswoman, 'Where's the self-help section?' She said if she told me it would defeat the purpose."

George Carlin



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at the wagon to enjoy the moon pies and RC Colas he brought with him.

But it still was not over. Days later, Daddy would learn from Mr. Lawrence how the bale "graded out," which determined the price per pound it would bring. A decision would be made to either sell or hold, gambling on the price going up or down. No different from the stock market, which we'd never heard of.

We didn't understand the nuances of the cotton market process, but we knew that Cotton Row was a key factor in it all and had ultimate control over the value of our labor. When we went to town on Saturday and parked on the Courthouse Square, framed on the west side by Cotton Row, I stood in awe of that row of buildings, smashed together by common walls and thought of it as Cotton Heaven, where all good bales ended up. I feel certain now that the bales were not physically housed there, but in my mind they were, and believing it was good enough for me.

Judy mentioned in her article about going out to the gins with her Daddy to inspect and "class" the cotton. It made me wonder if her Daddy, and she with him, might have frequented Mr. Lawrence Cobb's gin at Harvest in the late 40's and early 50's. I wonder if it was his discerning eye and magic pen that produced the news we so eagerly awaited after each bale was ginned. News that determined what it would sell for on Cotton Row and therefore what our labor had been worth.

I still wonder about that, Judy.



"It's one of the tragic ironies of the theatre that only one man in it can count on steady work - the night watchman."

Tallulah Bankhead

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- 1 pkg. brown & serve rolls
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Arrange rolls on a butter-greased baking pan. Just barely break apart the rolls, so they're still connected a bit. Mix all remaining ingredients and spread over the rolls. Bake in 400 degree oven for 8 minutes. As the topping melts it should melt in between the rolls.

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FIRST DATES

by Anna Lee



We asked women to describe an important first date. Here are some of their replies.

Jennifer: I kept looking at my watch! We were at a restaurant and I didn't really want to be there. Tom was an engineering student and I thought he would be boring. He was not interested in me, either. I was a cheerleader and he thought I would be silly. Somehow later we got together a few more times and soon we bonded over our common faith and our love of family. Married 24 years, 5 children.

Hazel: There was none! My brother had fixed me up with his friend Bob, but instead of meeting me, Bob got into a fight and landed in jail. I said I never met a man who would rather go to jail than keep a date with me! My brother tried again and this time Bob and I hit it off. Married 40 years, have a son and a daughter.

Lisa: In my engineering class I was one of the few women students and Mike was one of the few men who never flirted with me. I saw something special in him and asked him to help me with homework. He did and that led to walking, talking and sharing meals together. After 7 years we got married. Twenty years, four horses, two dogs.

Mimi: My friend and her fiance had tickets to a concert at Sewanee, TN. She got sick and asked if I would go with him instead. I told her I had never been there, so he came early to drive me there

and show me around. It was a lovely night at a beautiful place. After they got married, they always treated me like a kid sister and a part of their lives.

Lee: Just graduated from college, I was working in Washington, DC at my first job. I was from a small town and felt intimidated at living in such a large city. I developed a huge crush on Martin, a young Air Force officer at work. Finally he asked me to a foreign film festival. I felt so excited and cosmopolitan! Then he showed up with a friend from the Air Force who was on a month's medical leave. The three of us went to many events together during that time, but when the friend went back on active duty, it was obvious Martin and I wanted to be alone together. Married 17 years, two boys.

Theresa: In senior year of high school I was crazy about Johnny. He was tall, smart, good-looking and an athlete in three sports. He asked me to a dance at a nearby small amusement park. I wore the pretty summer dress I made in home economics class. We rode the little train that wound through the park. Sitting in the last seat, he put his arm around me. It was perfect. Then the kids a few seats in front of us pulled down the tree branches that were still wet from a recent rain, letting them go so



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that we would be soaked when we reached that spot. It worked. They laughed. Johnny and I had a good time, but he was shy and did not date. Later, we each married someone else. We stayed in touch as good friends after graduation and always connected at our high school reunions.

Sally: In my sophomore year in college a fraternity boy, a senior, fixed me up with a date. I agreed, but the other boy checked out my picture in the yearbook and said, "No way!" The boy I knew protested that he had already told me I had a date, but still, "No way!" One of the other boys in the fraternity, Chris, felt sorry for me and stepped up. We met, took one look at each other and pretty much fell in love at first sight. Married 12 years, two kids. P.S. I'm really cute!

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Senior Hijinx

by Elizabeth Wharry



I graduated from Lake Catholic High School in Mentor, Ohio. That year, our country was celebrating its bicentennial. Gerald Ford was President, and Nadia Comaneci scored the first ever perfect scores in women's gymnastics.

We students were constantly reminded that we were "better" than our public school peers. We

were also held to a higher standard of behavior. That usually meant that I was in after school detention at least once every two weeks.

During my senior year, I spent more time in detention. The closer it got to graduation, the less respectful I got. I was tired of 12 years of nuns and Jesuits. One of the brothers said that I had a smart mouth... my comeback was "too bad my smarts don't go through the roof of it."

Class of 1975 had pulled some hilarious pranks. Our class of 1976 was determined to outdo them. I'm not sure which prank was funnier.

Mr. Len Orcino was the music director and a really great guy. He was chosen to be pranked because he drove an MG Midget. They are about the size of today's Cooper Mini. The senior boys got together and that little car ended up on the roof of the school!

Fortunately, Mr. Orcino had a great sense of humor and told the class to get it down without damaging it. The administration was outraged that he would let the class off so lightly. We all chipped in and paid for a crane and operator.

The biggest prank was also the worst. I don't know who came up with it. Several of my classmates lived in farm country. One in particular lived on a pig farm. During a change of class, the piglets were released.

Chaos doesn't begin to describe what happened! Imagine 1200 students changing classes, and suddenly, there were about 50 or so young, squealing piglets running loose!

Students were shuffled into the nearest classrooms and told to stay put. It took a couple of hours to round up the hysterical piglets, as well as clean up the hallways. That was the last year that senior pranks were tolerated.

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They were removed from a church on Triana Boulevard around 1970 and placed in the original B&W auction house, now hidden by the underbrush along Capshaw Road in Madison.

In the 45-year history of B&W Auction, there have been three auction houses. But there has only been one set of church seats, always comprising the first four rows of the auction house.

A 10,000 square foot building with a capacity of about 400 people, the seats are occupied by the long-time regulars at B&W.

They gather twice a month, always on Saturday afternoons, to bid on antiques from dealers from Ohio and Pennsylvania, among other places. The auctions start about 4 p.m. and last deep into the evening, usually until about 10 p.m. or so. B&W is not operating during the COVID-19 pandemic.

**B&W sends love and gratitude to so many who are working to keep us safe!
We will never forget your courage and determination. What you continue to do to
help and get us back to near normal is just incredible.**

PET TIPS FROM ANGEL

Reduce Depression with Pets



Studies have found that:

- Pet owners are less likely to suffer from depression than those without pets.
- People with pets have lower blood pressure in stressful situations than those without pets. One study even found that when people with borderline hypertension adopted dogs from a shelter, their blood pressure declined significantly within five months.
- Playing with a dog or cat can elevate levels of serotonin and dopamine, which calm and relax.
- Pet owners have lower triglyceride and cholesterol levels (indicators of heart disease) than those without pets.
- Heart attack patients with pets survive longer than those without.
- Pet owners over age 65 make 30 percent fewer visits to their doctors than those without pets.
- While people with pets often experience the greatest health benefits, a pet doesn't necessarily have to be a dog or a cat. Even watching fish in an aquarium can help reduce muscle tension and lower pulse rate.

One of the reasons for these therapeutic effects is that pets fulfill the basic human need for touch. Even hardened criminals in prison show long-term changes in their behavior after interacting with pets, many of them experiencing mutual affection for the first time. Stroking, hugging, or otherwise touching a loving animal can rapidly calm and soothe you when you're stressed or anxious. The companionship of a pet can also ease loneliness. Most dogs are a great stimulus for healthy exercise, which can substantially boost your mood and ease depression. .

Caring for a pet can help you make healthy lifestyle changes by:

- Increasing exercise. Taking a dog for a walk, hike or run are fun and rewarding ways to fit healthy daily exercise into your schedule.
- Providing companionship. Companionship can help prevent illness and even add years to your life, while isolation and loneliness can trigger symptoms of depression. Caring for a live animal can help make

you feel needed and wanted, taking the focus away from your problems, especially if you live alone.

- Helping you meet new people. Pets can be a great social lubricant for their owners, helping you start and maintain new friendships.

- Reducing anxiety. Because pets live in the moment—they don't worry about what happened yesterday or what might happen tomorrow—they can help you become more mindful and appreciate the joy of the present.

- Adding structure and routine to your day. You've got to feed and take care of pets so you will set a routine. No matter your

mood—depressed, anxious, or stressed—one plaintive look from your pet and you'll have to get out of bed to feed, exercise and care for them.

The health benefits of pets for older adults

As well as providing vital companionship, owning a pet can play an important role in healthy aging by helping you to:

- Find meaning and joy in life. As you age, you'll lose things that previously occupied your time and gave your life purpose. You may retire from your career or your children may move far away. Caring for a pet can bring pleasure and help boost your morale, optimism and sense of self-worth. Choosing to adopt a pet from a shelter, especially an older pet, can add to your sense of fulfillment, knowing that you've provided a home to a pet that may otherwise have been euthanized.

- Stay connected. Maintaining a social network isn't always easy as you grow older. Retirement, illness, death and relocation can take away close friends and family members. Making new friends can get harder. Pets, especially dogs, are a great way for older adults to spark up conversations and meet new people.

- Boost your vitality. You can overcome many of the physical challenges associated with aging by taking good care of yourself. Dogs and cats encourage playfulness, laughter and exercise, which can help boost your immune system and increase your energy. You'll see that your mood will improve!

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From the Desk of Tom Carney

THE SPACE MONKEY

Jake was a long time employee of Ashburn & Gray Construction Company. Although he was known to "tip the bottle" on a regular basis, he was still a valued employee who showed up for work on time every day.

Once during the 1960s he was sent to a construction site on the Arsenal. That morning Cecil Ashburn, one of the owners of the company, was driving around checking on the progress of various jobs and decided to stop by and see how Jake was doing.

Ashburn parked his truck, got out and looked around but there was no Jake. Ashburn was getting worried - it was not like Jake to simply disappear. Finally, after searching for a few minutes he found Jake hiding behind some bushes, trembling with fear.

"Captain," Jake said, "There's a monkey over there staring at me!"

Ashburn looked around, but needless to say there was no monkey. This was a real dilemma. Jake was a valued employee but if he was hallucinating - seeing monkeys - it might be dangerous to leave him on the job alone.

"You been drinking?" Ashburn asked.

"No sir, Captain. I had a few last night but I was fine until a few minutes ago!"

Not knowing what else to do, Ashburn told Jake to go back to the shop and work there for a few days until he got over it.

Jake didn't mention the monkey again but the more he thought about it the more worried he became. Finally, one day at quitting time, he



announced to Ashburn that he had quit drinking. "Captain," he said, "I done learned my lesson!"

Ashburn congratulated Jake on his wise decision and went on home.

That evening he was reading the newspaper when he saw an article about Miss Baker, the first monkey in space.

Miss Baker had escaped her cage and had been gone for several days before being captured in the woods near where Jake was working.

Ashburn clipped the story out and first thing the following morning showed it to Jake.

"Jake," he said, "It looks like you really did see that monkey."

Jake stood there, not saying anything, but with a look on his face like he was about to cry. "What's the matter, Jake?" Jake continued to stand there with a sad look on his face, struggling for the right words. Finally he looked at Ashburn and said, "Captain, I recond I done quit drinking for nothing!"

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

Seen on local accident report



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The Honor

by Glenn Brooks



During the 1960s the northern section of downtown Huntsville was known as the "Z" strip. During this era there was a lot of activity there due to several beer joints, pool rooms and at least one dance hall; therefore a drunk or two was not rare.

As a police detective and assigned to the evening shift, I had just parked my car on Jefferson Street when a patrol unit passed by. In the back seat, apparently under arrest, was a familiar face.

I radioed the patrol unit and asked if I could speak with them about their prisoner before they locked him up.

We met behind the police station and after a brief discussion the arresting officer agreed to allow me to take charge of their arrestee and take him home since he was only guilty of intoxication.

It was a long drive to his home out in the county and a longer drive back. I had been away from my duties too long.

On Monday I was summoned to my supervisors office to explain why I had "interfered" with the officer's arrest.

It seemed that one of the officers had made a complaint.

"It was Paul Bolden," was my only explanation. None other was needed. My supervisor said he would take care of it.

I had first met Paul about ten years earlier while we worked together at Redstone Arsenal. I grew to care very much for this small, quiet man.

Staff Sergeant Paul L. Bolden met the enemy a few days before Christmas in Belgium in 1944. Thirty-five German soldiers did not live to regret it. Practically alone, armed with grenades and an automatic weapon, Paul assaulted a farm house that contained the German soldiers. Paul was wounded three times in that action.

A hero is motivated into action by fear, courage or madness or a combination of all three. What sent Paul into that fortification, I now know. I know he was a hero. Paul has since died. Not much has been written or said about this poor North Alabama country boy. I've often wondered why.

He won the Medal of Honor. I won the honor of knowing him.

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THE SUMMER OF 1964

by Don Broome

In the summer of 1964 I was in summer school. It wasn't that I needed to go, it was because if you didn't, you didn't have anything to do. Life was boring. The cops back then would harass teenagers if more than 4 of you were gathered anywhere. We had Jerry's Drive-In on Memorial Parkway to cruise through but if you didn't buy anything they would tell you to move on so it stayed crowded and we were usually broke. I took Typing I and next summer I would take Typing II. It didn't have homework so was a good choice since I didn't need credits.


I had taken over payments from my parents on a 1962 Plymouth Valiant. It was red and white which stood out for every policeman in Huntsville. It had a push button automatic transmission and if you put it in 1st and dropped your right shoulder as you shifted into 2nd I thought everyone would think I had a 4 speed. Stupid Huh? I never had to buy gas because I could put it in 1st and put the gas peddle on the floor and the small fuel pump would run out of gas before the engine would blow up. I didn't know that at the time, I just thought my car was indestructible. I got 26 tickets in 6 weeks but the bets I made paid all of them plus my gas. That was about a year before they started the points system on driver's licenses. My insurance was really high though.

I first met Buddy Burr in the smoking court and it didn't take long for us to be together almost every waking moment. He was 3 or 4 years older than me having quit school to join the Army. It was something that didn't work out and so he was back going to school. Of all the things you could say about Buddy, the coolest was he could think up things to do that no one else could possibly come up with. He lived on Todd Mill Road which at the time was in the county. The city limit was at Weatherly Road where I lived. At night the sheriffs department would drive down Todd Mill shining their lights just below window level checking

on things. Buddy would time it so he could put his leg out the window moving it so they had to stop and see if there were any problems. Yep! They all knew Buddy.

That summer he and Mona were going steady one week and broken up the next. We would have the excuse of a party for his freedom or for their renewed love affair.

I remember one weekend where bliss was back and Mona's parents were out of town and we scheduled a big party at Mona's. I remember Huntsville High had 3 types of people attending. There were a few hood types that you knew to stay away from because they were trouble. You also had the Elites whose parents owned much of the town. Then you had us, who really didn't care. I for one didn't tuck my shirt in (semi-required) and was laid back and didn't care if something I wore matched. One of the Elites I'll call Nan was in my class



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and I invited her to join me at the party. I was really trying to just get a rise out of her but she said "Yes".

I liked to drink back then and had my sources to get it so as the evening progressed and the lights went out I was pretty far gone and we were on the couch making out. She pushed me away saying for me not to start liking her because I could get hurt. I didn't know exactly what she meant by that but it got me mad and after a few minutes I told her I was going to take her home because I didn't want to get hurt. You talk about mad, she was totally enraged and slammed the door as she got out.

Going back to the party Buddy asked me what happened and I made the mistake of telling him. Everyone but me laughed for the longest time and after the lights were out, I proceeded to get totally wasted. About 1 A. M. the lights suddenly came on and Buddy with his guitar (Susie) told me we were going to go serenade my girlfriend.

Behind Weatherly Heights School we parked my car and started singing what Buddy said were Mexican Love Songs. I have no idea what the words meant and people I have told this story to that knew Spanish say they weren't Spanish but they sure sounded good.

Nan's dad didn't think it was funny at all. A Sunday night is for sleeping so he called the Sheriff's office and they must have thought evil was going on because every available unit showed up. Imagine if you will 2 drunk teens singing Mexican Love Songs at 2 in the morning and the deputies show up, guns drawn leaning over their cars with the father yelling "Arrest them! Arrest them!"

I looked up through blurry eyes. The deputies all recognized Buddy and asked him what was going on. He told them we were serenading my girlfriend and as

we looked up, there was Nan waving like crazy at us in her nightgown. The deputies told us to go home. I think L.D. Wall, the sheriff at the time, had had a few himself.

I can't play any music except the radio but Buddy wanted to start a band so we recruited Ken Owens who started learning to play so he could be part of it and we had Chris Potter on the Bass. Buddy was the lead guitar and singer. I had a car so I was necessary and the band manager and my Mother would let us practice out in our carport. Three times a week we had band practice and I know the neighbors just loved us. We couldn't play but



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3 or 4 songs and nothing we played was on the top 10 list.

We knew several people going to Sacred Heart School in Cullman and they were to have a Battle of the Bands with the winner to be paid to play for the dance. Buddy's sister along with Ken's sister went there so we thought we had the inside track. We came in 2nd although we were awful. I think we would have come in 1st except they would have to listen to the same 4 songs all night long. After the contest was over my girlfriend and I were doing dirty dancing and got told to leave. Oh Well.

Three years later I got a call from the Highway Patrol on Whitesburg telling me to come see them. I was really scared because Buddy and I had in our day sneaked over to their parking lot and stuffed potatoes up the exhaust and shoved them up where they wouldn't be seen and I just knew that they had found that out. I learned that years before I had 26 tickets in 6 weeks. He asked me why they shouldn't pull my license and I told him that I had just gotten married and really needed it. He laughed and told me "that will slow you down for sure".

A few weeks later I was busy packing to move to Chattanooga having been transferred there by my company when I got a call from Nan of the Mexican Love Songs telling me that she was processing warrants for the police and she had a warrant for my arrest for a bad check to pay for 2 of those tickets. I asked her what could be done and she said if I could pay them off tonight she wouldn't have to process them.

I told her I didn't have any cash and she said I could write a check so on my way out of Huntsville, I wrote her a bad check.

"If Lincoln were alive today, he'd be rolling over in his grave."

Gerald Ford

An Official Message

This message was attached to a refund notice that an "Old Huntsville" reader received in 1986 from the Internal Revenue Service as part of their "simplification" process:

"Effective January 1, 1987, the current interest rate we pay, when you overpay your taxes, is one percent less than the rate of the interest we had charged when you underpaid your taxes. However, if we refund an overpayment to you with interest, and we have to increase your tax at a later date, we'll give special consideration to the interest on these accounts. On a tax increase after the refund, we'll charge the lower refund rate of the interest on the tax instead of the higher underpayment rate of the interest.

We will charge the lower interest rate on the new tax up to the amount of the refund for the same period of time we paid interest on the overpayment."



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Predictions & Philosophy

by Ken Owens

Predictions and prophecies of the future have existed since before Biblical times, and history is replete with accounts of seers - some right, more wrong. Why do we get caught up in wanting to glimpse what hasn't happened yet? Criswell, a noted psychic predictor, explains it simply: "All of us are fascinated by the future because that's where we'll live the rest of our lives." Can't argue with that.

Much of the fascination has to do with current events. All of us are asking, "What's going to happen in the Middle East?" Also, "Is there really going to be a giant earthquake in early December this year?" So we look to find early answers to get a jump on what's going to happen.

One of the more notable psychics was Nostradamus, who wrote his predictions 400 years ago. Two thirds of his predictions have already been fulfilled, including World War I, Hitler's rise and fall (in his writings Nostradamus named the dictator as "Hisler") and both Kennedy assassinations. He has a pretty solid track record, all in all. Of particular interest are his Quatrains 9 and 10, which specify that an evil Arab leader will mount an army of nearly a million men and march East. The astrological configuration he gives points to August 2, 1987.

He missed the event by three years (not bad for a 400 year old prediction) but got the day exactly! We are indeed approaching troubled times, according to Nostradamus. In conjunction with the Middle East unrest, Nostradamus also sees a meteor, about a mile in diameter, strike the earth in the Indian Ocean, causing tremendous tidal waves and - guess what else! Earthquakes!

The interesting thing about the meteor impact prediction is that many other psychics, including the modern day Jeanne Dixon, have also predicted this event. Edgar Cayce (1877-1945), the most famous psychic healer and clairvoyant of this century, made numerous predictions regarding natural disasters.

Among them are: Drastic and sudden changes in the earth's surface before the year 1998 due to shifts in the polar axis, resulting in the disappearance of northern Europe below the ocean "in the twinkling of an eye"; the submerging under the sea of southern Alabama, Georgia, North and South Carolina; Japan destroyed by earthquakes and volcanic eruptions.

Short of a meteor hit or polar axis shift, how might one know that an earthquake is imminent? Many scientists believe the key to an early warning system is our observance of animal behavior. One of the most earthquake prone countries in the world - China - has long been involved in a quest for reliable quake predictors. After considerable research, the Chinese government's earthquake office published a pamphlet that lists animal peculiarities that may occur if an earthquake is going to happen. It states:

- Cattle, sheep and horses refuse to go into their pens
- Rats abandon their hiding places
- Chickens fly into trees
- Pigs break out of their pens
- Ducks refuse to enter the water
- Dogs bark wildly for no apparent reason
- Snakes emerge from their winter hibernation
- Pigeons are frightened and won't return to their nests
- Rabbits, ears upright, jump around erratically and crash into objects
- Fish jump out of the water as if frightened

Whether they're right or wrong, close to what happens or way off, it's certainly interesting to sit down with a good book on Predictions and see what might be happening.

This story originally published in Old Huntsville magazine in 2006



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Victory Gardens During World War II

by *Cathey Carney*

World War II began September of 1939, and less than four months later food rationing began. Resources of all kinds were being diverted to support the war efforts. Food became more and more scarce in the stores and soon the government began a campaign to convince people at home that they needed to grow their own produce. The messages were simple, symbolic and very patriotic.

Back in those days people gave up their lives for the country, they funded the war by buying government bonds, they conserved all raw materials, they really recycled, rallied behind their troops and they helped their neighbors. One of the movements that became very popular then was something called Victory Gardens.

Charles Collins of Huntsville remembers Victory Gardens and the patriotic feeling in the U. S. during World War II. He recalled that everyone collected paper, metal, glass and other objects and

turned them in for the war effort. He also remembered the rationing of sugar, coffee, tires, rubber, gasoline and other items but especially remembers how so many people planted gardens everywhere they could, even on roof tops.

Here in the South it wasn't such an unusual idea, because most people had small plots and garden places when the war started. They just continued the process. But in other parts of the country, specifically in cities where dirt was hard to come by - people became very creative in their search of garden spots. The government in some cases subsidized the people for growing small crops, to encourage more people to do this, to help their friends and neighbors.

They were first called "Gardens for Victory" and there were many government public service bulletins produced and circulated with the goal of encouraging more and more people to grow their own. Some of the posters proclaimed "Groundwork for Victory, Grow More in '44." Another stated "Plant a Victory Garden - Our Food is Fighting."

Some of the companies sending out how-to bulletins were Good Housekeeping, International Harvester, Beechnut Packing Company, Simon & Shuster (House and Garden magazine) and seed companies. It was assumed the audience had no experience with a garden and the bulletins were written in just that way.

Some topics included soil health, how to plant, when to plant, how to tend a garden and what to plant next to what. Emphasis was placed on making gardening a fun family affair or community effort rather than a chore. It was presented more as a pastime and a national duty.



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Featured Wines of the Month

Francis Ford Coppola Wines

The Victory Gardens came in every shape and size, and enabled the U.S. to send more supplies to our troops around the world. Henry Ford was known to say, "No unemployment insurance can be compared to an alliance between man and a plot of land." In the Southeast and other parts of the country, pins and prizes were awarded for the best gardens.

Every type of plant you can imagine was lovingly tended by people who had never dreamed they'd be spending time gardening. Again, in the deep South, this was nothing new but more of a "Business as Usual" attitude. Everyone in the South had a plot somewhere - ranging in size from four square feet to as large as you could imagine. Southerners canned, put up vegetables and fruits, put up potatoes and onions and used every square inch of a pig, just as a matter of routine. This was not the case in many other parts of the country.

Nearly 20 million Americans answered the call to plant gardens, and they produced 40% of all that was consumed in the U.S. Soups were very popular, as well as any kind of bread and biscuit. No bread was ever wasted - the bread you had left over from breakfast could easily become the dessert that night. Since you couldn't buy artificial fertilizers in those days, many people used the soot and ash from their stoves or chimneys, lawn mowings, manure, etc.

Sugar was rationed but many people used water or Golden Syrup or honey to sweeten the fruit. Every scrap of food was saved and reused in soups or hash, and if that couldn't be done the leftovers were mixed with gruel and fed to the farm animals. Spices were sparingly used but savored, as they were hard to get. In the South fruit trees and pecan and black walnut trees were harvested thoroughly for Christmas confections.

When the war was ended, however, so came the end of the government's call for people to produce their own food. The policy was dropped like a hot potato, in the opinion of many, much too quickly. In the spring of 1946 many people had no gardens, and since the agricultural industry had not come back to full production, there were many shortages.

Soon after that the entire agricultural industry began to change, with small farm operations giving way to the large corporate farms. Modern agriculture spelled an end to a simpler way of life.

"This evening at 7pm there will be a hymn singing in the park behind the church. Bring a blanket and be prepared to sin!"

Seen in local church bulletin

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Remembering our Veterans

IN FLANDERS FIELDS

*In Flanders Fields the poppies blow
Between the crosses, row on row,
That mark our place; and in the sky
The larks, still bravely singing, fly
Scarce heard amid the guns below.*

*We are the Dead. Short days ago
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,
Loved and were loved, and now we lie
In Flanders Fields.*

*Take up our quarrel with the foe:
To you from failing hands we throw
The torch; be yours to hold it high.
If ye break with us who die
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow
In Flanders Fields.*

— *By Major John McCrae, May 1915*

Two weeks after writing this, Major McCrae was killed in action - on the Fields of Flanders

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Hank Miller - Archie Murchie - Robert Overall - Wilbur Patterson
Roscoe Roberts - Dendy Rousseau - Donald Royston - Bill Russell - Reggie Skinner
Don Slagle - Bob Smith - Steve Stevens - Walt Terry - John Vaughn
Jim Webb - Ray Weinberg - Jim White - Sam Zeman