



No. 330

August 2020



Old Huntsville

HISTORY AND STORIES OF THE TENNESSEE VALLEY

A PRIVATE MATTER



Also in this issue: The Watermelon War; UFOs Spotted here in 1910; Parkway City and GC Murphy; My Convertible Girlfriend; Eating with the Amish; Dog Play; Household Tips and Much More!

Lewter's Hardware Store



1946
From Right: J.M. Lewter, G. Gideon,
C. Giles, H. Brock, J. Fogg

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**A Hardware Store....
The Way You Remember Them**

Dornie Lewter
Mae Lewter

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A Private Matter

by Tom Carney

His name was Robert E. Lee Gilliam but most people simply called him "Gilliam, or "old man Gilliam." He was aged beyond his years, a product of a hard scrabble life and trying to eke out a living on a few acres of sunbaked red clay that never seemed to produce enough to keep body and soul together.

Being a truck farmer was not the life Gilliam had chosen originally. He had worked most of his life at a sawmill near Gurley until an accident left his right leg injured. Unable to find other work, he worked as a sharecropper for a time before the landlord told him he was letting another man, an able-bodied man, take over the farm.

The next several years saw Gilliam moving from farm to farm, each one poorer than the one he had left previously. Finally he ended up, in 1943, on a small tract of land near Winchester Road. The land was a virtual rock pile, overgrown with no water supply and with

a dilapidated old house that probably should have fallen down years ago.

Regardless, Gilliam, with his wife and three children, made the best out of a bad situation. Soon they had several acres cleared and were growing tomatoes, squash and other vegetables. These he peddled from door-to-door in an ancient pick-up truck he had patched together from parts salvaged from junkyards and trash heaps. On weekends, while he worked his route, his wife and children would spend the day at the Farmers Market selling the produce to Huntsville housewives who flocked to the stalls in search of bargains on fresh vegetables.

Gilliam's family was his pride and joy. His wife, a quiet-spoken woman with jet black hair that belied her Indian heritage, was a perfect helpmate. She spent long days toiling in the fields beside him and then going home to cook dinner with never a complaint. The youngest two children, both boys, were still too young to be of much help, but his daughter Lucy, who at fourteen was already turning into a striking young lady, helped her mother sell produce at the market. Many people, captivated by the young girl's exotic beauty and quiet charm, became regular customers.

The summer of 1946 was an especially hot and dry one. Almost three months had passed

"Don't squat with your spurs on."

Old Cowboy's Advice



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with no measurable rainfall and small gardens that had always produced a bountiful harvest began drying up. Gilliam had always hauled water from a nearby spring for cooking and washing but his work load was increased dramatically when he was forced to begin hauling water for the parched fields.

Every day, often three or four times a day, he would drive his truck to the nearby spring where he filled large containers with water. Returning to his garden he would use a gourd to pour a certain amount around each thirsty and parched plant. The work was backbreaking and with the sun seemingly getting hotter every day, it soon became apparent that something else had to be done.

Calling his family together one afternoon, Gilliam announced a change in the family's routine. He was going to dig a well. His wife would drive the truck on the route each weekend and Lucy would work at the market by herself. The two boys would remain at

home with him, helping haul dirt from the proposed well. Gilliam figured a week, maybe two, would be enough to complete the job.

Though at first the job went well, with the dry, red clay yielding easily to the pick and shovel, a few feet down he began to encounter rock. Even the most casual observer surely realized it was going to take much longer than planned. Gilliam, however, was not a man to give up easily. Every Saturday morning he would help load the truck with produce and then return to what many people had already dubbed his "rock hole".

For Lucy, however, these were exciting times. Her mother would drop her off early at the market where she would spend the day selling produce and talking to the other people who worked there. Every day seemed like another adventure to the impressionable fourteen year old girl. Probably even more exciting were the young men who visited the market to flirt with her. Without the stern looks of her mother to warn

them off, there was a constant stream of young Galahads vying for her attention.

One of the men who noticed her was William Roberts. No one disputed the fact that Roberts was a good looking man, well dressed and with a line of blarney that could sway even the most doubtful person. It was the other things about him, though, that made people whisper. Some people claimed he had been married before, although no one was sure what had happened. He was also rumored to be involved in gambling and was a well-known supplier of bootleg whiskey to the G.I.'s at Huntsville Arsenal. Many people said he had a violent temper and was involved in many fights, some of which he resolved with the gun he al-



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Perhaps the thing he was best known for, however, was the "Clip Joint." Some time earlier he had acquired a semi-truck with a 32 foot trailer. On paydays at the Arsenal he would park the trailer close to the gates, and with the help of accomplices, would lure soldiers and employees into the trailer where he had a bar and crooked dice tables set up. The trailer had originally been owned by C & J trucking but local wags, after noticing the faded lettering, quickly clubbed it the "Clip Joint."

Everyone was surprised when Roberts began paying attention to Lucy. Not only was she still a child, she was totally different from the hard drinking, carousing women he normally hung out with in the roadhouses and gambling joints in Huntsville.

For the first several weeks it was merely an innocent flirtation, with Roberts stopping by the produce stall to tease the young girl. Lucy had already heard of his reputation,but he was so handsome. She was also careful not to mention anything about him to her father whom she knew would not approve.

When Roberts appeared at the market one day and proposed that Lucy go for a ride with him she hesitated, explaining that she could not afford to miss any potential customers.

"How much do you make a day?" asked Roberts.

"Three or four dollars, if I'm lucky," replied Lucy.

Roberts quickly ended the conversation by laying a five

dollar bill on the counter.

A pattern soon evolved. Lucy would work at the produce stand every Saturday until lunch time when Roberts would pick her up. Lucy always insisted that she be back at the market before 6:00 pm when her mother arrived to take her home.

Gilliam, preoccupied with digging the well and trying to support his family, had no idea of the courtship until one afternoon, about the time school let out, when Roberts and Lucy drove up.

Gilliam paused, laying the shovel aside, as he watched the couple walk toward him. He knew something was going on, Lucy was dressed in different clothes than the ones she wore to school that morning.

"Pa, we got married today."

Gilliam, stunned by this unexpected turn of events, stood silently as Lucy explained how Roberts had met her at school that morning and they had driven across the state line where they found a Justice of the Peace who had agreed to marry them.

By this time the rest of the family had gathered around

Lucy, wanting to hear every detail. Roberts, not caring much for the emotions of the moment, wandered over to the well Gilliam had been working on.

Gilliam, sensing the need to say something to Roberts but not knowing what to say, walked over to the well with him. Finally, after what seemed like an eternity, he asked, "You going to take care of her?" It was as much of a statement as it was a question.

"Get serious, old man," Roberts replied in an almost sarcastic manner. Then almost as an afterthought added, "You still working on this rock hole? The rains are going to come soon and you won't need it."

Gilliam, surprised at the sarcasm from his daughter's new husband, was at a loss for words. After a few moments of awkward hesitation he replied, "May as well finish it, might come in handy some day."

That evening after the couple had left, Gilliam sat on the porch smoking his

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**"Until I was thirteen, I
thought my name was
'Shut Up'."**

Joe Namath

pipe, thinking about the day's events. If he had his druthers, none of it would have ever happened. "But still, Lucy is almost a grown woman. Her mother was only 15 when I married her and it worked out well. Maybe that boy will take care of her and everything will be all right."

Left unsaid, but in the back of his mind, was the realization that poor people just naturally married young. With no education, no money and no hope for a future, the only thing a girl had to look forward to was getting married.

The first sign of trouble came several weeks later, on a Sunday afternoon, when Gilliam and his wife stopped by to visit Lucy at her new home. Although Roberts was supposedly making good money from his various illegal enterprises, little if any of it went home with him. Most of it went to gambling and drinking. The house where they resided, in Dallas Village, was actually a bootleg joint owned by someone else but the person owed Roberts money and had agreed to let the couple live in the front part rent free while he continued bootlegging in the back.

Lucy was thrilled to see her parents, even in such shabby surroundings. "This is just temporary," she explained apologetically. "We're going to get us a big house just as soon as he gets on his feet."

Even though it was almost three in the afternoon Roberts was still in bed. "He had some business to take care of last night and didn't get in until late."

Wakened by the sound of voices, Roberts staggered groggily into the room where he dropped heavily into a chair. From his looks it was apparent that he was still suffering the effects from the previous night's "business."

Ignoring Gilliam, Roberts abruptly ordered Lucy to get him something to eat. When she didn't respond immediately, Roberts grabbed her arm and shoved her roughly toward the kitchen with the admonition to "make sure it's fit to eat!"

Noticing Gilliam sitting in the corner of the room, Roberts explained sarcastically, "We've still got some kinks to work out but

she'll learn."

With Lucy no longer helping her family, Gilliam returned to driving his produce route every Saturday while his wife worked at the market. Still, he continued digging the well, even if only for an hour or two a week. He had struck solid rock and progress was measured in inches as he laboriously chiseled away at it with a hammer and crowbar. The family, knowing Roberts didn't care for their company, stopped visiting Lucy at her house. Instead, several times a month, she would walk the 5 or 6 miles to her parents' home where she would spend the day. When it came time to return home, Gilliam would drive her, letting her out about a block down the street. "My husband doesn't want me to take any favors from anyone and if he sees me taking a ride from someone he might get upset."

Despite the many warning signs, Gilliam held his peace. Possibly he was hoping that time would work matters out. Most likely however, he was a product of his time, a culture where no one interfered in another person's marriage and where divorce was unspeakable. Never in the history of the Gilliam family had a couple even separated, much less divorced. Making matters even worse was the fact that most people considered a divorced woman little better



Huntsville Hospital traces its roots to July 1895, when a group of civic-minded women from United Charities opened a small infirmary in a wood-frame house on Mill Street. In 1904, the infamous Mollie Teal died and gave her house on St. Clair Avenue (above) to the city with the stipulation that it be used as a school or hospital. This unique, humble start set a vision for service that continues to grow today – 125 years later.

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then a "lady of the night."

Lucy's visits became less frequent, but when she did visit there would often be signs of bruises on her arms and neck. "Just an accident," she would explain. "I bumped into something." One hot sweltering day she showed up wearing a long sleeved flannel shirt. When her mother insisted, Lucy rolled the sleeves up revealing dark ugly bruises. There were even more bruises on her back and legs.

"It was my fault," explained Lucy while wiping tears from her eyes. "I made him upset and I shouldn't have."

Her mother called Gilliam into the room and explained what happened. After examining the bruises himself, he stood silent for a long time looking at his wife and daughter, trying in his mind to verbalize the words he had been putting off for so long.

"You don't have to go back," he said quietly. "We'll go to the courthouse and get papers."

The words stunned Lucy and her mother. They both realized how hard it was for Gilliam to accept a divorce in the family.

The decision was made by Lucy. "Things will get better, I just know they will and he's expecting me to have dinner on the table, so I have to go."

Early that evening Gilliam worked on the well. Long after the sun had gone down he continued pounding the hard rock with a vengeance he had never known before. He was no longer crushing simple rocks, he was crushing his helplessness and despair with a cold rage for which he knew there was no outlet.

The next morning Gilliam drove into Huntsville to talk to Sheriff Blakemore. His second cousin's oldest daughter was married to the sheriff and though Gilliam didn't consider him a close friend, they had what he called a "passable" relationship.

After listening to Gilliam's account of the bruises, the sheriff had but one question. "Will she swear out a warrant?"

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"I don't think so," replied Gilliam.

"There ain't nothing I can do then. It's all up to her."

Nevertheless, that afternoon the sheriff stopped by to talk with Roberts. Though he had no legal basis for the visit, he was undoubtedly hoping a bluff, or a threat, might accomplish the same thing.

Roberts merely listened to the sheriff with thinly disguised contempt and then ordered him off the property. "You ain't got no right meddling in peoples' marriages," he shouted. "This is a family matter!"

Several days later Gilliam and his family had just sat down at the supper table and were about to say the blessing when a neighbor stopped by to say he had seen Lucy at the hospital. He had been visiting a relative, he explained, and just as he was leaving, he saw Lucy being treated by a doctor. "I think she's got a broken arm because I saw them putting a cast on it."

Gilliam said nothing but the look of rage on his face made his intent clear. He had just reached for his coat and was about to walk out when his wife ordered him to sit back down first. "We are going to say the blessing first and then you can go do whatever it is you have to do."

Gilliam rushed to the hospital where the nurses told him that Lucy had been taken away by her husband. Next he drove

to their house but even from a distance it was evident that it was vacant. The only other place he could think of was the "Clip Joint." He had never been there but had heard the rumors of the crooked dice games Roberts ran from the trailer.

Upon arriving, Gilliam knew he was at the right place by the loud music and profanity piercing the night air. Entering the trailer he immediately saw Lucy sitting in a corner. Her arm was in a cast, and her hair hung limply across her face. On her right cheek was a bruise that was just starting to turn a dark purple. "Come on," Gilliam said. "We're going home."

Roberts had been on his knees in the back of the trailer

shooting dice when he noticed the old man. Springing to his feet he ordered, "Leave her be. This is a private thing between her and me!"

Gilliam paused for a brief second, eyeing all the men in the trailer before letting his gaze rest on Roberts. "Boy, I ought to kill you right now but I'm not going to. I'm going to take my daughter home and you can go on about whatever you do. Just don't never let me see you again."

Something about the unarmed old crippled man; something more than the barely controlled wrath in his voice, caused the men in the trailer to freeze in their footsteps as they watched him escort his daughter out.



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"This virus has turned us all into our dogs. We wander around the house looking for food. We get told "NO" if we get too close to strangers and we get really excited about going for walks and car rides."

Cher Jones, Athens

If Gilliam had hoped that would be the end of it, he was sadly mistaken. In the morning's early hours, before the sun came up, the family was awakened by the sound of an automobile and loud cursing. Gilliam quickly grabbed his overalls and started for the front door when he was startled by the sound of breaking glass followed almost instantly by a wall of flames.

In spite of all the noise and confusion of the inferno, the whole family swore they heard Roberts laughing as the car drove away.

Although no one was hurt in the fire, the house was destroyed and all of their meager possessions lost. After salvaging what little they could from the ruins, Gilliam drove to the Huntsville bus depot where he put his family on a bus to Chicago where his wife's sister lived.

Word of the fire and of Gil-

liam sending his family to Chicago had spread throughout the community. Several neighbors, though taking great pains not to get involved, stopped by the ruins of the house to see the carnage from the night before. The first thing they noticed was Gilliam with a pick and shovel still working on the well.

Trying to make conversation, one of the neighbors remarked, "That well will come in handy next summer, won't it?"

Without pausing in his labor, Gilliam replied in a barely audible mumble, "Ain't going to need it. Going to Chicago."

Many townspeople were even more puzzled by the fact that Gilliam had not showed up at the sheriff's office to swear out a warrant for the arson. Until he made a complaint there was nothing the authorities could do.

That same night an unidentified person threw several

sticks of dynamite under the "Clip Joint." The trailer was totally destroyed and its occupants, cut and bruised, barely escaped. People assumed that Gilliam was responsible, probably as a last measure of revenge before joining his family in Chicago.

"If he was responsible," people theorized, "that boy had it coming." Almost everyone had heard of Roberts' abuse of his child bride and of the arson he undoubtedly had committed. For many people there was even a certain amount of wishful reminiscing about the "old days when neighbors took care of that kind."

Gilliam had not left town, though. The next morning he

"Looking in the mirror today, I am reunited with my ancestors."

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was back at the well working at a feverish pace. Neighbors, curious about his strange behavior but still not wanting to get involved, stopped by several times during the day trying to draw the old man into a conversation. Gilliam, after politely acknowledging their presence, continued digging, refusing all attempts at conversation.

Late that afternoon neighbors saw him sitting on top of the huge pile of dirt next to the well. Something about the way he sat silently staring into the hole made it apparent that the well was finally finished.

That evening about 9 o'clock, Roberts was sitting at the bar in the White Castle, a notorious speakeasy located near the intersection of Meridian Street and Winchester Road. With all of his cronies gathered around, he was basking in his new notoriety as he told of running the Gilliam family out of Madison County.

Most of the patrons, however, tried to ignore Roberts. The incidents of the past few days had disgusted them. Probably what bothered them the most, though no one would say it out loud, was the fact that they had let it happen without doing anything.

Suddenly the whole place got quiet as people focused on a solitary figure standing in the doorway, holding a shotgun leveled at Roberts. Some people said it was 'ol man Gilliam, but other people, probably wiser, said there was no resemblance.

Without saying a word, letting the motions of his gun give the orders, the figure directed Roberts outside. A backward glance insured that no one would follow.

Some people claimed to have heard a gunshot moments later but others, after careful thought, insisted it was just a car backfiring.

By the next morning almost everyone in Huntsville had heard of the evening's strange events. Gilliam's neighbors, now embarrassed because they hadn't helped, drove by the burned out homestead. The place looked much the same as it had the day before with personal belongings scattered across the yard and partially burnt timbers swaying in the wind. There was no sign of Gilliam, though.

The only sign that someone had been there since the day before was the well. It had been completely filled up.

Roberts was never seen again. Some people in Huntsville, perhaps a lot wiser than most, said he probably left town suddenly due to "unexpected business."

More than likely they felt, as Sheriff Blake-more was later overheard saying, "It was just a private matter."

"They say it's the good girls who keep diaries. The bad girls never have the time. I just wanna live a life I'm gonna remember, even if I don't write it down."
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Lifelong Regrets, that You Will Never Forget

by Jean Brewer McCrady

Every time I think about the regret I didn't prevent, I want to cry. And often do, like now. The biggest regret of my life is denying my grandparents, and even my parents, the joy and delight of telling their life stories to someone. Of being asked questions about their childhood, their school years (if they had any), raising their families in hard times, things that brought them happiness or sadness. Their hopes and dreams and how they achieved them, or didn't? My recurring regret, that I could have prevented but didn't, I'll tell you about. But first, a regret that I did prevent —

I had been married for many years, living in California. On one of my annual visits home, the family was gathered in the dining room talking about our growing up years (not a usual conversation for us to be having). I made the comment that I didn't know we were poor. In a broken voice, Daddy said "Jean, do you really mean that?" That was the first time, in my 30+ years, I'd seen Daddy cry. There is no way to measure the meaning of that revelation to him. His reaction told us that he had suffered needlessly from feelings of failure as a family provider. And we had thought we were "well off" in comparison to several of the neighbor families. Many times I've relived that event and been thankful that Daddy did not live out his years and go to his grave with that burden on his heart.

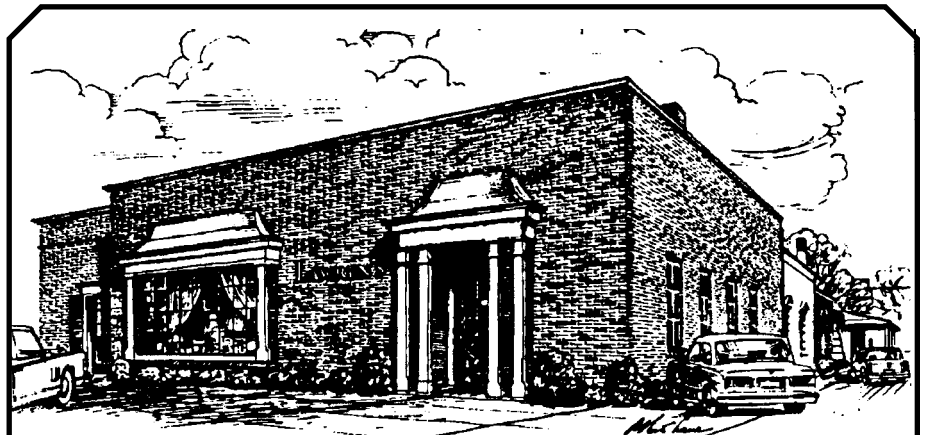
Here is the regret that still burdens my heart. After Memie Brewer (Daddy's mother) died, Pap continued to live alone. Every Sunday, Daddy would go bring him to our house for dinner and the afternoon. After eating, Pap would sit on our front porch

watching the cars go by. I, a teenager, was often on the porch with him, but not once — not once — do I recall engaging him in conversation. What a lost opportunity! Not only for me to learn about his life before and during his years with Memie, their work of raising a family, then their life alone, especially in the later years after a stroke left Memie unable to speak, and the final years he was living out right then without her. The greatest hurt of all is that he was denied the joy of actually having someone ask and listen to those memories. Someone to care about his thoughts and feelings. I have paid dearly for not being that someone.

If you've been hearing me, you already have the message. If there is someone in your life NOW, a grandparent, parent, other relative, or neighbor, to whom you

could give "the gift of a life remembered," told to caring and listening ears, go to them now. Ask those questions that will bring their life of yesteryear back to them, and to you, in spoken memories. Bask in the joy of seeing their faces shine with meaning. And in so doing, prevent those regrets while you still can.

OHM - How many of you can relate to Jean's story? So many treasured old stories that we will never know because we didn't take the time to ask. And more importantly, your relative will be proud that you cared enough to ask. Old Huntsville Magazine and Jean McCrady will be collecting stories starting in August that we would love to share with others. NO event in a person's life is unimportant. More about this in the next issue.



LAWREN'S*

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Hello, Grandpa here. I'm happy to take over for my favorite wife and Grandma. Briefly, my message is lookout for the "FUD" Factor." Yep, that stands for Fear, Uncertainty and Doubt. In these "virus-times," it reminds me of some past events I remember. The Cuban missile crisis is one of them, although short-lived. World War II was another that lasted for four years. Americans weren't positive how it would turn out or when either might end.

Predictions for the next eighteen months regarding the virus are scary. Political times along with violent demonstrations, cause other dire predictions coming to eruption points in November and beyond. Is that reason for us to have FUD? Absolutely.

Since this is an advice column, my advice is to remember Roosevelt's quote, "...let me assert my firm belief that the only thing we have to fear is...fear itself." Fear is debilitating and hurts our health. Roosevelt also has a famous piece about "The Man in the Arena" where he says, decide what to do and then do it, without fear of failure. Failure is better than never trying, never knowing life like the "man in the arena" who may fail, but often succeeds. Fear of failure should not hold anyone back. Fear is paralyzing. Grandma needed a knee-replacement and made the decision. I am sure she will succeed and be healthy and strong by next month. In the meantime...everyone, carry on.

OHM - We are sending love and best thoughts to "Grandma" to get well soon!

I seem to have a way of putting off things that I need to do for just a day or two longer, but this time I found myself in the Madison/Huntsville Hospital having a knee replacement. The hospital was easy to find out Highway 72. They have a great staff and no trouble parking. It seems I must have thought it was going to be a breeze through surgery. Well, it wasn't. Tomorrow will be the ninth day and I continue to scream while getting in and out of bed. This surgery isn't for sissies. Just brushing one's teeth is an ordeal, and by the way, forget combing your hair and getting dressed.

The Corona crisis has called on us to help out family and friends more than ever. That means wearing a mask. Up to Tuesday, June 30, the day of my surgery, I wore one whenever out. Unfortunately, while shopping for groceries, I can't say the same. In the store, I saw a woman with FIVE small children running around and not a mask on any of them. That's irresponsible and inconsiderate of your fellow human.. particularly those with white hair.

My sweet husband will finish the column this month for me as I am running a fever tonight with the deadline tomorrow. I'm not able to give it my best attention.

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Our Treasures are What?

by Patti Wilson

As Jana likes to say, "OK, here's the deal!" Every time Jana comes home, she peruses the house, rolling her eyes upward, saying "You guys really need to start getting rid of stuff." We know exactly what she's thinking: if we don't get rid of it, then she and my sister will have to do it at some future point in time! Having lived in this house for nearly 58 years (I've only been here 41, so not quite as much stuff from my side of this duo), you can imagine all the "stuff" we have accumulated. Now, multiply that by the fact that we are both very sentimental about things. If someone gives us something, then we must keep it, for they thought of us, picked it out and gave it to us from the heart. As my Don is fond of saying, "You don't dust. You caress and reminisce!" Have to say that's probably very true (but don't tell him!). Guilty as charged.

So, the last time Jana was home, she handed me a book, the life-changing magic of tidying up (the Japanese art of de-cluttering and organizing) by Marie Kondo. Now, my initial reaction (in my head, of course) was profound indignation that our treasured items throughout our home were mere "crap" (Jana's words, not mine). As she looked in my treasured "library" (aka, where most of my books are stored)/project room (endless projects that have yet to be done....and, how many years have I been retired??!?!?), she waved her arm expansively as she stated, "You don't need most of this crap!" Well, now....It's my "crap" (once again, not actually vocalized, of course).... and most of it treasures, assuredly! She even indicated on one visit that my bursting-at-the-doors closets housed clothing that, heaven forbid, I probably hadn't worn in 3 or 4 years (don't tell her...but, some possibly haven't been worn in decades....and there's even one sweater that belonged to my mother...who passed away in 1989, God rest her soul). But, I loved wearing those clothes (though would probably never wear them again because of being so outdated or, more likely, because they'll never fit again). Again, don't tell Jana I said that. Most of those clothes bring me great joy {aka, fond memories} when I see them.

So, you now have enough background information to have a better understanding of why Jana then said, "Why, how selfish of you!!! Why not get rid of all that you no longer wear and let someone, who just might need it, get some use out of it and can actually wear it, appreciate it, and get joy from it!" (Me? Selfish? Has she ever even met me before?!?)

But, Jana had planted a seed, and after I let that... harrumph...insulting book sit a few days, I decided to at least read through the very detailed contents section. Hmmmm....remembering how most homes in Japan were relatively small and always neat as could be (recalling from nearly 50 years ago when I lived in Asia...but, we all know how "white-haired" recall can be...), I thought that perhaps, just perhaps this sweet, young thing (Ms. Kondo, obviously not a sentimental bone in her body in my humble opinion) might be on to something. So, I decided to read this book while waiting on my better half to complete his physical therapy at a nearby medical facility (one hour at a time...the length of his PT).

Making copious notes (for a possible article in a retiree publication), this book actually made sense! The further along in the book I read, it actually affirmed some of my long-held beliefs about "everything has a place, and it should be in that place!" Those were not Ms. Kondo's precise words....but, almost! (Having been raised in a military family, we heard this all the time. Think it must have been derived from war/campaign times, sitting in fox holes in the dark, and the absolute necessity of having to know where everything is located to save one's very life. In a split second's time, one might have to lay hands on something to protect oneself and it could be fatal if the sought item(s) was not where it should have been.)

Ms. Kondo even gives detailed instructions on how to begin the de-cluttering process, how to keep only those items which bring true joy (hmmmm....where have I heard that word before?) to your heart, how to



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organize those items you keep, how to store those items and NOT to keep anything "just because."

Now, having been reared by parents who survived WWII, the Great Depression and so many years of life itself, you always keep things "in case you might need it." If you know engineers, you always have at least one, more likely two "backups" for most everything you own. So, there again, it's no wonder we have so much treasured stuff in our home. Besides, by the time one reaches our age, it's almost obligatory to have gathered memorabilia from all of one's life experiences.

One of Ms. Kondo's most profound statements in this "life-changing" book is you should NOT let anyone in your family know of this de-cluttering and organizing process, lest they be tempted to keep some items themselves. Of course, if there are certain things in your home that you feel should be kept in the family, by all means give family that option. But, why encumber someone you love with items that might be outdated, very worn, etc., "just because" you can't bear to totally part with those items yourself? Difficult, thin line to walk there....but, Ms. Kondo spells it all out pretty clearly. (I must confess, this is precisely how I get rid of a lot of my treasured things. Sorry, y'all!)

So, all of the above saga to say, THANK YOU, Jana, for guilting me into beginning the process of de-cluttering and, hence, organizing our home. We both hope the process won't be so difficult for you and Janice when the time comes. Who knows, the items of which we dispose just might truly bring joy to another, as they have brought joy to us....for years, and years, and years, and years, and.....I bow to your assertiveness, Jana, and applaud your persistence! Just remember who's the parent and who's the (retired and now qualifies for Medicare) child.

For those of you who haven't read Ms. Kondo's book, I highly recommend it. You might just find joy yourself...in getting rid of some of your life's accumulation of stuff. At this point in our lives, there's a lot to be said for simplifying rather than complicating our remaining days.

Simplify your life so you can truly begin to live it...unstressed.

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SHORT AND SWEET - SOME MEMORIES FROM OUR READERS

Juanita Adcock, Huntsville

I'm a Sand Mountain girl who moved to Huntsville in 1965. One of my favorite grocery stores was Star Market in Five Points. Chick Russell was the owner and manager and he whistled all the time. Every time I went into the store Chick was whistling. I remember Jeannie Roden worked there, her dad, Don and her uncle George Roden was there too. Jody Turner was the sacker and such a sweet man. Chick's son Wade was just a young guy and he was there all the time too.

When old timers go in to Star Market now, and listen really hard, they say they can still hear Chick Russell whistling.

Hartwell Lutz, Huntsville

Merrimack Village houses had "privies" behind them. From time to time, the company sent something called a "honey wagon" around to collect the contents of the privies (outhouses). One day two guys were working on the wagon when one of them took his jacket off and accidentally dropped it into the wagon that was full of all its contents. When he started to fish it out the other guy said, "Man you know you're not going to wear that jacket again!" The first guy replied, "Yeah, but my lunch is in the pocket and it's lunchtime!"

M.D. Smith, IV, Huntsville

I remember some teacher, perhaps Miss Jones, making us write sentences during recess or after school if we misbehaved in class. I wrote many times, "I will not talk in class". You had to do it and if you had time when finished, then you could go to recess, or leave for

home. Well, once I spent a part of the night writing these sentences in advance, then talked during class the next day.

Sure enough, I was "sentenced" to write the sentences 50 times. After about two minutes, I turned my prepared work in to her and watched her amazement. Of course, she knew what I had done. I smiled and left the room. I got great pleasure out of that victory, since she didn't keep me in. So, during the next night or two, I prepared many more pages, 25 sentences to a page. Victory was sweet and that "homework" was fun,

It was not long before I was caught talking in class again. She wanted 100 sentences. No problem, I had now about 8 pages pre-written with 25 per page, so I was looking for 4 pages full when she announced to me I was to write a NEW sentence, which she wrote on the blackboard. It was something like, "Talking in class is not permitted." WOW! All that work for nothing and I had to write a NEW sentence a LOT of times. I complained that "it wasn't fair to change the sentence." She replied

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**"Breaking news:
Wearing a mask inside your home is now recommended - not so much to stop COVID, but to stop eating."**

something like, "I never said you always had to write the same sentence and it's good for your English to practice different ones."

Well, that pretty much cured me. I never again wrote sentences in advance and she never again assigned the exact same sentence for me to write when I had to do others. I didn't talk nearly as much in class anymore. Dog-gone, teachers always win in the end it seems.

Jim Webb, Huntsville

The lot where I built my current house was an empty lot made so by a tornado that blew the house away. A drawing was required for the city to approve the new use of the property. The surveyor's drawing showed a grave on one side of the lot which caused some distress. The reason for this was that doing the survey and making the plan the previous gravel drive was turned into a grave. A mistake was a short word caused by the omission of an L on what made a grave out of a GRAVEL driveway. There are no graves under a driveway in Huntsville, I don't think. This occurrence was a good example of being precise in the use of language.

Back to my childhood. Chuck Bobo lived a short distance from where I lived with a creek between us. On my side of the creek was an ancient, small grave with a few burials. Several of us hid out in this growth and at the right time, made what we believed to be — haint — noises. There was a field with adults working and numerous kids there with the old folks. Previous talk about the graveyard set the stage for our trick.

It really worked. Kids running in all directions and several adults. Not sure if the adults were scared or just chasing their kids, maybe both.

Kelsey Jordan, Huntsville

Lessons I've learned:

Lesson #1: DO NOT play with ANY snakes you see in the cotton fields or wetlands. Especially, if your mama tells you not to, because then you've gotta go to the doctor and then you're gonna get a whooping.

Lesson #2: When the street lights come on you better get in the house for dinner. Especially, if you mama already told you once, because if you're not in the house when the lights come on you're gonna get your dessert taken away and get a

whooping.

Lesson #3: When a storm is coming you better get in the house! If you don't then mama's gonna worry and when she finds you, you're gonna get a whooping for not taking cover fast enough.

Lesson #4: ALWAYS use your manners, if you don't and your mama finds out you're getting a whooping.

Lesson #5: It's the South, your mama will ALWAYS find out!

Lesson #6: If your mama tells you to wait for your dad know this: You're either in BIG trouble or your mama forgot what you did.




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The Club members helped to distribute Old Huntsville magazine and donated 100% of the money collected for their children's charities. This was the club's only fundraiser for the past 27 years.

"Old Huntsville" Magazine will continue on with regular distribution and a portion of the monies collected will be donated to a variety of local charities.



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Heard On the Street

by **Cathey Carney**



We've been getting so many comments on the feature story in the July issue, by **Lawrence Hillis** about Growing up in Five Points. Many who are still around remember it well. And the cover photo that **Lance George** sent was the perfect one.

Our winner for the Photo of the Month for July was **Carol Harless**. The sweet girl in the picture was a young **Eleanor Holmberg Keith**, of Huntsville. Carol said as soon as she saw that face she knew who it was. Carol and Eleanor grew up in the same church and Eleanor taught Carol's daughters at Blossomwood Elementary. Carol is in the Huntsville High School Class of 1966 and one of her favorite classmates was **Oscar Llerena** of Miami, Fl who always keeps up

with what's happening here in Huntsville! Congratulations to you Carol.

Who was actually able to find that tiny taper candle that I hid in the July issue? Wasn't easy, was it? I know because I got a lot fewer calls than the month before. It is on p. 36 of the July issue, see the photo of the Mama with her kids? Look at the boy on the right, what is near his elbow? Find it?

So the first correct caller to find that candle was **Kathy King**, of Meridianville. She was very persistent and found it. Kathy is retired and not able to get out much, so her sweet husband usually picks up a copy of the magazine for her. But now she'll get it in her mail each month. Kathy especially loves taking care of 3 grandkids every day so that the parents can go to work.

I have hidden a tiny image of a bottle of whiskey in this issue. Something different. Be first to find it and call, you win a subscription for a year!

It's been a year or so ago but I remember there was some discussion about how many people don't have wills. Especially the younger ones who feel invincible. My opinion only, but it wouldn't be a bad idea to have your will done, especially in these days and times. It doesn't have to be complicated or expensive, but it will let everyone in your family know your wishes. I know of several who kept saying, I'll wait there's no rush. Then it turns out, there

really was a rush. Just knowing you've done it and put it behind you, gives you peace of mind. Especially if you have something you want to leave.

We spoke with **Gladys Bryant Chunn** recently of Pearland, Tx. She is a beautiful lady who was in Huntsville a few years back for a large family reunion and I met her then, It was good to catch up with her and Texas, like many states, is seeing increase in COVID cases so Gladys is being safe. Masks are just a habit now anytime she leaves home. We hope to see you back in Huntsville, Gladys as you have many relatives here and they can't wait to see you again.

Can you believe that **Jackie Reed**, Huntsville Watch Dog who has attended every City Council meeting for over 30 years, is running for Mayor in 2020 for the ninth time. She has thrown her hat in the ring every four years since 1988. The last Mayoral election got so much attention with her running that it was featured on the Today Show in New York!

We were so sad to learn that **Kathleen Weinberg** had passed away on May 23, at the age of

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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86. Kathleen and **Ray Weinberg** were soulmates, married and then led the Army life starting in California. They traveled to so many countries and states and during these travels managed to add kids to their life. **Paul C. Weinberg, Nina Lawles and husband Bobby, and Allan J. Weinberg with wife Lois Ann.** Over the years the grandkids added up and at the time of her death, there were 18 grandchildren and 30+ great grandchildren. Kathleen put in over 20 years with Civil Service and when they retired, she and Ray traveled the US in their RV for 15 years. They were skilled bowlers and Kathleen was a quilt-maker. Ray was a long time member of the **Golden K Kiwanis club**, and organized the original distribution partnership between Old Huntsville and Golden K.

Ray passed away several years ago of lung complications from his two tours in Viet Nam. Kathleen loved Ray dearly along with her family and leaves their 3 children and family who will love her always.

Elizabeth Wharry called to let us know that her son Jacob is now **PFC Jacob Wharry**. He will go to Ft. Benning after graduation from

high school and completing his 4th year of JROTC. Congratulations to you Jacob!

Former New York Life Compliance Manager **Joyce Russell** recently had a July 12 birthday. Joyce, you get more beautiful with each year and we can't wait to be able to get together with you again very soon!

Nita Keith Grieder Spitzer was an elegant, loving lady who was an inspiration to everyone who knew her. Nita was a sister, a Mom, grandmother, great grandmother, aunt, cousin and friend. She will never be forgotten. Nita leaves brothers, **Sam Keith, Neil Keith and wife, Eleanor; son, Dicky Grieder and wife, Sally Gee Grieder; grandchildren and great grandchildren who loved her so much. She also leaves neices LeeAnn Keith, Rebecca Keith McKinney and Hilton Keith.**

Shirley Wilkerson of Halls, TN wants to wish her sweet brother **David** a very special birthday. **David Franklin Lemons** will turn 100 years old on Sep. 21 this year. He was in the Army Air Corp in WWII from 1942-1945 as Staff Sgt. He was honored last year in a large parade for being the oldest veteran in Ripley and

Lauderdale County, TN. Shirley says they are so happy to have him with them for so many years. He still drives his truck! He continued to mow his lawn last year til family made him stop this year. She said he has a lot of hair and it's pure white.

Theresa Carlisle of Neighborhood Card and Gift shop in Five Points has been across from Propst Drug Store for many years. She told us she has moved and now is joining husband **Kirk** at Carlisle Galleries - 801 Holmes across the street from Tenders. Can't wait to see it and go shopping!

Eva Carlton of Huntsville wrote us a great note. She said she noticed a tip about using Ivory soap to prevent leg cramps. You just unwrap the soap, place it towards the end of the bed by your feet when you turn in, under the sheets. Something about the soap reduces leg cramps. She saw the tip in the Dec. 2017 issue of Old Huntsville and tried it. She said she has not had a leg cramp since then. Might be psychological but who knows for sure? Old remedies still work in these crazy days too. Thanks to **Diane Owens** for sending in the tip from her mom, **Lola Stutts**.

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Eating with the Amish

Easy Bundt Rolls

- 1/2 c. butter, melted
- 1/2 c. maple syrup
- 3/4 c. brown sugar
- 1/2 c. nuts
- 2 tubes buttermilk biscuits

Mix first 4 ingredients in a bowl. Grease a tube bundt pan and place half of the syrup mixture in the bottom of the pan. Place biscuits on end around the pan, and pour remaining syrup over the top of the biscuits. Bake at 350 degrees for 30 minutes and let stand for 5 minutes. Remove from pan.

Breaded Pork Chops

- 1/2 c. milk
- 1 egg, lightly beaten
- 6 pork chops
- 1-1/2 c. saltine crackers, crushed

In a bowl, combine milk and egg. Dip pork chops into egg mixture, coat with cracker crumbs. Put 1/2" oil into the skillet. Fry pork chops til golden brown, about 8 minutes. Season lightly.

Paprika Chicken

- 3 med. onions, sliced
- 2 T. olive oil/salt & pepper
- 3 T. paprika
- 4 boneless skinless chicken breasts
- 1/2 c. sour cream

In large pan saute onions in oil & paprika, add chicken seasoned with salt & pepper. Let simmer covered 20-30 minutes. Cover chicken with sour cream last 10 minutes of cooking.

Barbequed Green Beans

- 10 slices bacon
- 1/4 c. chopped onions
- 3/4 c. catsup
- 1/2 c. brown sugar
- 3 T. Worcestershire sauce
- 3/4 T. salt
- 4 c. green beans

Fry bacon, break into pieces. Saute onions in bacon drippings. Combine catsup, brown sugar, Worcestershire sauce and salt. Add onions and bacon pieces. Pour over green beans and mix lightly. Bake in a 1

quart covered casserole dish at 300 degrees for 40 minutes and heated through.

Cheesy Potatoes

- 1-1/2 lb. sour cream
- 8 oz. cream cheese
- 1/2 c. butter
- Velveeta Cheese, cubed
- 10 lbs. potatoes

Peel & boil the potatoes and either shred or cube them, then put them into a bowl. Combine all remaining ingredients, and pour over the potatoes, mixing well. Pour all into a greased casserole dish and bake at 350 degrees for an hour.

Coconut Cream Cake

- 1 white cake mix with pudding
 - 1 can Eagle Brand milk
 - 1 8.5 oz. can cream of coconut
 - 1 carton Cool Whip
 - 1 can flaked coconut
- Bake cake as directed on box. While cake is hot, punch holes in it. Pour Eagle Brand milk

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and cream of coconut over top. Cool. Spread with Cool Whip and top with flaked coconut. This is moist and delicious!

Lemon Bars

Crust:

- 2 c. flour
- 1/4 c. powdered sugar
- 1 c. butter

Filling:

- 2 c. sugar
- 4 T. flour
- 4 T. fresh lemon juice
- 4 eggs, beaten fluffy

For crust, mix like pie crust and press into pan. Bake at 325 degrees for 20 minutes. For filling, mix sugar, flour and lemon juice. Add beaten eggs, mix well. Pour over hot crust. Bake at 325 degrees for 25 minutes. Remove from oven and dust with powdered sugar while still hot.

Layered Dessert

Crust:

- 1 c. flour
- 1/2 c. butter, softened
- 1 c. chopped nuts

1st Layer:

- 1 c. powdered sugar
- 8 oz. cream cheese
- 1 c. Cool Whip

2nd Layer:

- 1 pkg. vanilla instant pudding

2 c. milk
 Mix crust and press into 9 x 13" pan. Bake at 350 for 20 minutes. Cool. Mix powdered sugar, cream cheese and Cool Whip. spread on cooled crust. Mix pudding and milk, spread over first layer and top with more Cool Whip.

Peanut Butter Popcorn

6 c. warm, popped popcorn
 1/4 c. butter, melted
 3 T. sugar
 2 T. peanut butter
 1 T. Karo syrup
 Mix butter, sugar, Karo and peanut butter. Pour over popcorn and mix. Cool well and store in gallon Ziploc freezer bags.

Fresh Apple Cake with Caramel Glaze

2 c. sugar
 1-1/2 c. oil
 2 t. vanilla extract
 2 eggs, well beaten
 Juice of 1/2 lemon or 3 T. lemon juice
 1 t. salt
 3 c. plain flour
 1 t. cinnamon
 1 t. nutmeg
 1-1/2 t. baking soda
 3 c. peeled and chopped apples
 2 c. chopped pecans

Combine sugar, oil, vanilla, eggs, lemon juice and salt in a mixing bowl. Beat well. Combine flour, spices and baking soda. Add this to first mixture and beat well. Add apples and pecans, mix well. For family use, bake in a greased and floured tube pan at 325 degrees for 1-1/2 hours.

Glaze:

- 1/2 c. sugar
- 1/4 c. buttermilk
- 1/2 t. baking soda
- 1 T. corn syrup
- 1/4 c. butter
- 1/4 t. vanilla extract

Combine all ingredients in a pan and bring to rolling boil over low heat. Boil 10 minutes, stirring occasionally. Pour over hot cake immediately

Ice Cream with a Twist

Sprinkle ground cinnamon over a bowl of vanilla or dark chocolate ice cream for an unexpected flavor blast!



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A Lady with the Gift of Love

by Ernestine Moody

It was just recently while discussing the pandemic, which seems to be devouring our wonderful country, that a surprising fact was revealed to me.

I had always, as a child, been told that my Grandmother died at a young age from pneumonia. In those days it was felt that kids did not need to know exact details of any event. Just a general bit of information was sufficient. Therefore, I accepted this as factual.

Three weeks ago, I learned the truth when my cousin sent me a picture of Grandmother's tombstone with the inscription, the cause of her death in 1918 was the Spanish Flu pandemic.

She died at 33 years of age. My Mom, her only daughter, was 13. Grandmother had two older boys and her fourth child was a 24 month-old little boy. One can only imagine the worry and concern she felt when thinking of her baby perhaps being raised without a mom.

After days of suffering, Grandmother asked her husband to please bring her pen and paper. As she began to write she informed my grandfather. "If I get well, we will open this letter, and laugh at its contents. However, if I don't recover, please give it to your sister-in-law." (Who likewise had lost her husband in that pandemic.)

Grandmother was with us for just a few more days. Upon her death my grandfather gave the letter to his

dead brother's widow. We were so fortunate that in her unselfish manner she agreed to take care of the children my grandmother had left behind.

She gave them so much love. My mother always realized Zizi, aunt in Italian, had sacrificed her needs and wants to fulfill her sister-in-law's wishes. Of course, Zizi was the only grandmother I ever knew. She was small in stature and wore only black all her life as a sign of mourning for the husband she lost to the pandemic.

I remember as a little girl walking with my Mom to visit Zizi and my grandfather. She would take me by the hand and we would go collect eggs from the hen's house. Afterwards, if they were on the vines, she would let me pick blackberries. She would sprinkle sugar all over them and I would delight in their flavor.

I cannot help but think of the many lives and sacrifices being made in today's world. Parents leaving their small children. Children being raised without the love and guidance of their Moms and Dads.

My family was so blessed. My Mom often remarked that she never heard Zizi make any remarks complaining that life was unfair, how hard it was having had the responsibility of raising her sister-in-law's children. She just kept pouring out her abundant love.



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An Amusing Exercise

by Al Dean

The lawn mowing season is in full swing and The Director of Household Harmony has become positively giddy tearing across the lawn on her zero-turn mower, inhaling the aroma of cut grass. I, on the other hand, abhor mowing grass. Having begun my mowing career with a puuusssh mower, a torture device that required muscle and stamina beyond my appreciation for the patch of dandelions and wild onion, loosely referred to as the yard. Nightmares of the struggle to maintain sustained forward movement and momentum to keep the spiral reel spinning and cutting still haunt me.

Patented in England in 1830 and in the U.S. in 1868, the British inventor, in his application for a patent for his grass cutter, wrote, "Gentlemen would find using his machine to be an amusing and healthful exercise." Gentlemen would find the task amusing; women didn't mow at all, and boys often had to be conscripted to mow, especially when the fish were biting.

Being the only boy in my family growing up in the mid-fifties, it was my onerous chore to push and shove away at the gnarly vegetation we called grass. Not having attained Gentleman-hood, I was blind to any semblance of amusement in the exercise. Mowing an aunt's expanse of fescue using her motorized reel type mower was easier, but still devoid of amusement.

When the rotary power mower became available, yards were transformed into lawns, which were mowed, raked, tidied, aerated, wa-

tered and fertilized. Thus pitting neighbor against neighbor in a competition for the coveted community beautification award. The landscaping industry shifted into high gear.

The Director has suggested a genetic flaw that has rendered me incapable of being amused by grass mowing, landscaping or gardening. She dictates my preference for living outside city limits, where, if the grass isn't cut every week, bushes are not trimmed regularly, or slugs eat holes in the Hosta, I am not summoned to appear before a neighborhood beautification committee to explain my abhorrent behavior.

When I mow, trim or fertilize I do so out of a sense of duty and responsibility to the one for whom I offer up prayers of thanks each time the dirty clothes I dropped into the clothes hamper magically reappear fresh and clean in my closet or dresser drawer.

The yard of the first home we owned could be mowed in twenty minutes using a 24 inch cut gasoline powered rotary mower. The lawn or more fittingly, the field that came with our next home took four hours with the same mower.

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We invested in a riding mower: a flaming red mower with a 38 inch cut. Upon delivery, the Director, cutting a swath around the field complained that it was unfair for this amusing activity to be reserved for men only. Women should be allowed to participate. I objected, but...well...she is the Director.

Given her boundless energy, the fervor of her commitment, her weakness for tidiness and orderliness, I was deposed as Head Groundskeeper. The Director took control of the flaming red riding mower and launched a crusade to counter Mother Nature's insidious attack on the boundaries imposed by our deed of property. As her assistant, I would continue to use the 24 inch rotary mower to maintain hard to reach areas and of course, the lopping, sawing and trimming. We would work in harmony to protect our children and pets from ticks, chiggers and snakes, to transform our field into a lawn that would be the envy of passersby. Besides, what to me was a boring tedious task was for her a meditative healing activity.

Attaching a bungee cord to raise the chute deflector, she delighted in the spew of chopped grass disgorged from beneath the mower's deck; the melon-like odor oozing from freshly cut grass, every blade of vegetation the same length, dandelions in front of her, gone behind her, clover in front of her, gone behind her. Woman and machine; grace and power in tandem. Instant gratification: no interminable wait for the results of her efforts to inspire me to lawnscape greatness. Mowing was for her, as the inventor of the original mower had intended, "an amusing healthful exercise." But there were risks.

At an impromptu gathering, grills were heating up in the back yard. The grass was a tad too tall. It wouldn't take a minute, a couple of swipes around the grilling area with the flaming red mower, and the site would be perfect. However, when the accelerator was depressed the transmission was in reverse, upending and straddling a hot grill. The red mower was flaming, the cookout ruined. There were no injuries. The replacement mower had thicker, tougher belts to transfer the power from the engine to the wheels and it was speedier.

We had a small pond bordered by weeds that provided habitat for delicacies the fish fed on. Cutting a swath around the perimeter meant her husband would have fewer weeds to trim with the gadget called a

weed eater, another source of amusement and healthy exercise he had to be goaded into using, invented by a Texan who got the idea watching the spinning brushes in a car wash. It would also eliminate hiding places for snakes. The leather-gloved, goggle-faced Director careening along the pond's edge didn't see the muskrat tunnel, bounced into the hole and tilted the mower into the water. The driver survived. The mower didn't. The Director's battle with nature's advance became a war. Weekly skirmishes with Mother Nature took a toll on the machines - and me.

With my limited (read non-existent) mechanical aptitude, I needed a plan to guarantee an operational riding mower was always on hand. I made arrangements with the owner of a mower repair shop to provide a functioning mower throughout the year: pick up the defective machine and drop off a replacement.

Secure in the knowledge that a working mower would be available whenever The Director felt the need to amuse herself with meditative meanderings, I, the gentleman, found time to engage in, what to me was an amusing healthful exercise: fishing.



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MAKE AMERICA HEALTHY AGAIN

Anna (Gene) Clift Chesnut

(From My COVID-19 Journal)

Growing up in Huntsville, I was a skinny kid, very skinny - eating was not my favorite pastime! In fact, my mother would sometimes make me sit at the dining table from one meal to the next trying to get me to eat. After all, there were poor, starving kids in much of the world, as she would say over and over. I would just as soon have had my food go to all those poor, starving kids or, better still, the poor, starving kids in Huntsville in the 1940s.

As time passed, however, a pound here and a pound there, a few years ago, I found myself, if not on the obese spectrum, at least eating more and weighing more than I should for my height and level of exercise and this is the impetus for my story.

As COVID-19 struck the West Coast in January 2020 and many deaths began to occur by February in Washington State (Kirkland, a suburb of Seattle), several things became apparent. People in nursing homes, ages sixty five and older with significant co-morbidities of diabetes (often associated with obesity), heart disease (often associated with hypertension), lung disease (often associated with smoking) and autoimmune disorders were dying of COVID-19 in great numbers.

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turn to the experts 

Could some of those be the stresses of modern life? The data we have, now, after several months of this infection might suggest that obesity and hypertension, if not checked at a younger age, are great impediments to a long and healthy life, accidental deaths not included. Obesity is a very cheap fix - we must stop eating so much (especially fast foods) and do twenty minutes of exercise each day (walking is free). In moderation fast foods would not be terrible but fruits and vegetables would be better if excess is required. How often do we hear this admonition - but life or death may, now, be in the balance.

Hypertension is very often, also, a cheap fix - either losing weight or taking a tiny little inexpensive pill that can lower blood pressure; however, one needs to go to a doctor or even a drug store and get a blood pressure reading. Neither of these fixes is painful, that is if not eating so much causes mental pain, but the results of doing just these two things can save lives.

Ceasing smoking is a no-brainer in this day and age. We all know what smoking can do to the body-if not, go to any hospital and ask to see lung x-rays of smokers. We have all been inundated with the issues of alcohol and drug addiction but obesity and hypertension just do not seem to get on our radar, especially as we age.

My doctor husband preaches weight loss constantly, so with the impact and knowledge of COVID-19 I decided to go on a diet to be at an acceptable weight when sheltering in place orders ended. I have lost 15 pounds of my 20 pound goal and feel better, already. (That little inexpensive pill might not

be needed with weight loss.)

I eat what I want, just not as much, with more fruits and vegetables included and "voila" a slow decline in weight. With weight control comes the possibility of fending off diabetes and lowering blood pressure, thereby reducing hypertension.

Although COVID-19 can strike anyone, perhaps, with these lifestyle changes, fending off a visit, due to this virus, from the "grim reaper" might prove possible - a modern miracle in the making of health and wisdom and just think of the money saved!



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Freda Sims, Athens

North Alabama College of Commerce Student/Alumni Celebration in late 1952 or 1953, at the Russel Erskine Hotel Ballroom.

We Need Your Help!

Did you attend NACC in the 50s? If you are able to identify any of these attendees please contact Old Huntsville. Some of the people we know were here were Frances Chesnutt in center of head table with head turned. She was the founder, owner and director of the school.

Jean Brewer McCrady is sitting under the left window with her date to her left, Lt. Richard Barlow, who was a Branch Chief at Redstone Arsenal's Ordnance Guided Missile School. Jean became a GS3 Stenographer immediately after graduating NACC. When he completed his military duty in 1954, they married and moved to California. Across from them are Ruby Hodges, NACC Shorthand Teacher and her date Robert Lakebrink, a civilian contractor on the Arsenal. They were later married and remained in Huntsville their entire lives, raising a family of three daughters. First man center front is Curtis Andrews, and lady across from him adjusting her earring is Frances Myrick.

That's all we got! Please look at the attendees and see if you recognize them or if you were a student at NACC back in the early 50s. We will publish our findings in a later issue! Please call Jean at 256) 302-6190.





Tips from Earlene

- Did you know that fidgety people lose more weight than people who sit around? You burn more calories by being more active and moving around more. Makes sense, doesn't it? Start fidgeting!

- If you don't sleep that well and notice dark circles under your eyes in the morning, why don't you try raising the front of your bed up by 1-2 inches? You can put a board under the two top legs (under your head) or get casters that fit under them. It makes a difference.

- When traveling, always put a towel in the tub before you take a shower. Oftentimes the tubs are very slick and the towels will prevent you from slipping.

- If you put all the stuff you want to take to work with you in the morning in one "to-go" spot, you will begin checking that spot every morning and

not forget things.

- Summer is here, but if you still get chilled at night invest in a good goose down comforter – you wouldn't believe how warm and cozy you feel under one of those no matter what season it is.

- If someone you don't know calls you to tell you to move your money to a bond fund in preparation for the future, DON'T do it. This is the latest of frauds intended for older people and they are using fear to defraud you of your money. Remember to NOT give anyone information about your money or credit cards over the phone, ever.

- Put your bathroom light on a dimmer so that you don't blind yourself in the middle of the night when you use the bathroom.

- A very good marinade for steak is lemon juice, Dale's sauce and Worcestershire with a bit of garlic powder thrown

in. Measure equal amounts in a Ziploc bag, throw in your steak and let it marinate in your fridge overnight. Cook over hot coals on your grill and your friends will come over to see what you're cooking! It smells so good.

- Common salt provides a complete barrier to the hated red ant. Just make a barrier of it to the place the ants want to go, and they will never crawl over it.

- To keep a mahogany table beautiful, do the following. Take a little cold drawn linseed oil and put it in the middle of the table. Rub well with a piece of linen (never use wool). Take another piece of linen, rub for ten minutes, then take a dry cloth and rub it quite dry. Do this every day for a month, and your table will acquire a permanent and beautiful lustre, unattainable by any other means and equal to the finest French polish.

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The Watermelon War

by Gary Gee, Sr.

Hot summers usually brought things like baseball, homemade ice cream and juicy watermelons to the Mayfair neighborhood in Wally's hometown, Huntsville, Alabama. This summer it also brought Nail Preston's cousin, Walter Beauregard Sinclair, III, from the big city of Memphis. All the high school kids in the neighborhood were in awe of this 16-year old city slicker, who already owned his very own classic car. Despite the impressive sound of his formal name, the Mayfair gang decided right off the bat that "Wally" was a better handle to hang on this sort of stuck up, but likeable, foreigner.

Wally's 1940 black Ford sedan looked like a Cadillac to the Mayfair gang. The stick gear shift in the floor (with a plastic, hand-size replica of a human skull for a knob) was especially impressive. No doubt about it. It was a fine car. Welcome to Mayfair, Wally - old buddy.

Wally took them to the local drive-in restaurants, their favorite hangouts, such as Whiteys - a greasy spoon in the Five Points section of town - where young waitresses took and delivered your orders from the curb. That night Wally's car smelled nice, like Wimpy's Grill on the Courthouse Square at high noon on Saturday.

Now they were ready for adventure. And sure enough, their classmate, Virgil - who lived in the nearby village of Monrovia, but who went to Huntsville High School - drove into Whiteys parking lot. Virgil told his idle, teenager buddies that there was a watermelon patch out in Monrovia that he knew like the back of his hand. In just a few minutes he had persuaded 50 carloads of HHS teenagers, including his two city-slicker cousins, Ken and Brad, to follow him the 20 miles out to Monrovia to raid a wa-

termelon field. Virgil assured the group that the farmer was out of town. No problem!

They drove out to Monrovia as though in a funeral procession. Soon they passed the house of the farmer. Sure enough, Virgil's information was correct alright. There were no cars, and it looked like there was no one home. The blood was pumping through their veins as they drove down a bumpy, dusty road for about five minutes; and then, they were there.

One by one the engines were shut down. Then it was dead silence until the car doors begin to creak open and the indoor lights came on, then went out again - like lightning bugs. Then, it was pitch black again.

Well, the invaders slowly began walking toward the center of the field - stumbling at times over watermelons - and then recovering to continue the adventure. Sure enough, the field was loaded with the things. Soon, everyone began to relax, laugh and talk. Brad said, "Man, we are going to make a hell of a haul." They had no idea of the hell in store for them that night.

The night was as silent as it was black, except for



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some very tiny lights way off in the distance. These hundreds of red dots seemed to move slowly (and erratically), dancing on the horizon all around. Everyone strained their eyes. Then after a long pause, almost simultaneously, it dawned on these invaders that the tiny lights were lighted ends of cigarettes and not far away at all. God help them! They were surrounded! Then all hell broke loose! Every one behind one of those lights had a shotgun and began firing at the trespassers.

They were being shot at like fish in a barrel. The multitude of gun flashes and explosions shattered the darkness and silence. It filled the sky and eardrums like a thousand lightning bursts and thunder booms. The resulting panic was as real as described in tales of some of the bloodiest battles of war. Some poor devils in the field cried out, "I'm hit," clutched their chests and fell to the ground. More panic!

In the confusion people ran into each other to escape and became even more disoriented. All the while the invaders were stumbling over those damn watermelons (which were no longer in demand). Many of the trespassers fell and slammed into the ground. Quickly, they were up again, and now running in panic. They ran for their lives.

Most of Ken and Brad's immediate crew, including Nails, somehow managed to stay together and make it to Wally's car and they dove into it, secure in the knowledge that it would protect them from the hell around them. But you can imagine the sinking feeling when they realized that Wally (or more importantly, Wally's car key) was missing.

Someone shouted that he had seen Wally go down, that he had been shot. "My God," Brad said, "Wally is dead and there is no key!" More panic! Ken and Brad exited the Ford in a flash and leaped into another car - one that had a driver. The car pulled away with a pile of scared and battered bodies. They left in the biggest hurry that the world has ever seen.

The invaders flew back to Whites. Shellshocked and confused adventure seekers trickled back to town. The shooting and panic had been so real that all the would-be thieves were

amazed that they had survived the massacre. Then the truth slowly began to emerge as the shock wore off: Virgil and his country buddies had set the whole thing up, to put one over on the city boys.

Wally's car spent the night by the watermelon patch. And Wally, like many others, ran as far away from that field as he could. He walked the twenty miles back to Huntsville. The next day, Wally left for Memphis.

People in Huntsville and Monrovia, to this day, still talk and laugh about that night and the great watermelon war. But no one in Huntsville ever trusted Virgil quite the same way again and he probably still looks over his shoulder. It was a tough but valuable lesson for Ken and Brad; they vowed that they never again would steal a watermelon, or anything else. And everyone in the gang decided that country boys are meaner than hell.

Author's Note: The author was one of those being shot at. Almost 62 years have passed since the War. Ten years ago, I published the article as a background story in a novel; and received a reply over the telephone by someone who identified himself with pride as being "Virgil, from the story, the mastermind of the whole shebang; you know, the Watermelon War."



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MY CONVERTIBLE GIRLFRIEND

by M.D. Smith, IV

This is a recollection of a lovely young girl I dated when I was seventeen. Margie, we'll call her, was a year younger than me. As we became Juniors in high school, it was "fashionable" to date a younger girl who was a Sophomore. Not only that, but we felt that we slightly more mature guys would appeal to the younger girls. Remember, age is relative when you are young.

So I picked Margie to date, as she was the loveliest of all the girls in the two sororities that had the most popular girls in our community. I did get admiration from my buddies, which made my ego swell. I took Margie to all the downtown movies, dress-up parties, and we had good times. I also dated a friend of hers occasionally liked to drink beer and loved dates at the drive-in movies. Everyone knew everything and I felt I had the best of both worlds.

Then I grew more serious and somewhat possessive of Margie and, in particular, another guy who was taller and an athlete. Bo was his name. I referred to him as "dumb Bobo." One time when I was drinking beer with a few of my friends and I found Bobo at a hamburger cruising location about nine one night. I challenged him to a fight. I was barely able to stand and lost the fight. Didn't get hurt bad, but I had failed to "scare" him off dating Margie.

"I was on my way to the doctor with rear end trouble when my universal joint gave way, causing me to wreck."

Seen on local police report

I wanted to get serious and desired more than a good night kiss with Margie, but it seldom went beyond that.

I had seen car commercials, observed automobile showrooms with the new cars, and my father advised me the dealers always put a convertible in the showroom up front. It attracted the men who came in to look, although they usually bought a sedan or other conservative and less expensive model. I began referring to Margie as "My Convertible Girlfriend." I explained to my friends why I called her that. My other good time date, Emily, was my "sedan" most men got serious about in the long run. A girl they enjoyed being with, having fun with, and generally more compatible together. And did I mention that I really liked to "make-out" as we called it in the 50s. I had my convertible and I had my sedan. Wanting more from the "sports car" one night at a significant lead-out dance, I was tipsy, and during an intermission in the parking lot, I attempted to do some serious "necking" in the car. Margie resisted my efforts and frustrated me.

"Fine," I said with anger in my voice. "You're just a convertible." She'd heard me refer to her that way before but didn't know the significance. "You're just the showroom convertible that men are attracted to, but they know the sedan is really the model they want. I don't think I want to see you anymore."



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“That’s perfectly alright with me.” She was unfazed by my comments. “You think you’re so hot, but you drink so much, scare me driving and I don’t like the drinking at all. Bo doesn’t drink.”

That sealed it. She asked me to take her home and I did. I came back to the dance and by a strange coincidence, I met a cute little blond from Huntsville that I would end up marrying a couple of years later. She was visiting with her cousin at the same dance.

Now for the rest of the story. I never dated Margie again, but we remained friends throughout our college years, as I did with Emily, my ‘good time’ date in high school. Margie went on to marry Bo and raised three children together. They moved away to the North for many years and only fifteen years ago they returned to our old home neighborhood.

A year ago, Emily died of a sudden heart attack and when I went to Mt. Brook for the fune-

al, I saw Margie again after eons apart. I barely recognized her. She was there with her daughters and we mourned one of our best friends. She and Emily had stayed much closer friends that I had.

As I wrap this up, last week I was told by a buddy in Mt. Brook that Margie’s husband Bo had died. I knew he was sick with Alzheimer’s when he was not present at Emily’s funeral a year ago.

I had gotten a cell number at the time, so I called Margie to express my sympathy. She related that Bo died several weeks earlier and there was no funeral due to the pandemic.

We conversed about the years that both Bo and I dated her. I reminded her that she was my “convertible girlfriend,” and she reminded me of the drinking I did that she didn’t like. Ouch.

Well, I don’t drink anymore. I haven’t for years, but I stopped because I could not stand the hangovers. I still have “interesting” memories of my Convertible Girlfriend.

“Women age quicker than men, but less often.”

Joe B., divorced

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MY TWO EARLIEST MEMORIES

Jean Brewer McCrady

We lived in the Berry house somewhere between Maysville and New Market. Houses then, as now, were named after the owner and we were renting from the George Berry family, our closest neighbors. This is where I learned about Gypsies and death, from two unrelated incidents.

I was 3 years old and my sister Net slightly older. We were standing in the corner of the front yard picking red velvety pedals from a rose bush and eating them. Our attention was drawn to billows of brown dust rising from the dirt road in the distance and our curiosity was peaked as to what was causing it. As we watched, the image of a horse-drawn covered wagon took shape and as it drew closer, the surprises increased. We soon saw that the wagon carried several passengers and the women were dressed in bright colored robe-like garments with equally colorful head gear.

About this time, our show was interrupted by Mama's frantic calling from the back door, "You kids get in this house, RIGHT NOW!" Either the tone of voice or the words would have gotten us moving, but coupled together, had us headed for the back door in a dead run. Once inside, we learned the reason for the urgency. Mama informed us, "those are Gypsies and they could snatch you into that wagon and be gone with you."

The three of us stood at the front window to watch the wagon pass by, with Net and me clinging to Mama's skirt as she clung to Daddy's shotgun. What happened next was heart-stopping. The horses were drawn to a stop right in front of the house, as the passengers talked among themselves while looking and pointing in our direction. I don't know whether Mama made sure they could see the shotgun she was wielding, or they decided to move on for some other reason, but move on they did. That's when I learned that the traveling nomads we call Gypsies dressed funny and were to be feared.

The Berrys had a teenage son named Howard, who apparently was prone to acrobatic behavior. I remember hearing the adults saying that Howard had been doing somersaults and cartwheels in the yard and it caused his liver to turn over: he was dying. Mama was called over to the Berry's house and she took Net and me with her. I remember going into a bedroom where Howard was stretched out on his back on a fully made bed, in his regular clothes, and his face was a purplish color. That was my introduction to death.

From the Berry house, we moved to Jordan Lane (now Patton Road) in the area of Squirrel Hill. We left there in May of 1941, two weeks before the end of my second grade school year. Daddy must have known that in July of that year, all residents would be mandated to evacuate to make way for the military defense facility that would be Redstone Arsenal. The Lord willing, I will be sharing some of those memories of living on the Arsenal before it was.

"I'm on two diets now. I wasn't getting nearly enough food on one."

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City News 1908



- William Moore is being held here for charges of forgery and bigamy. He tried to commit suicide in his cell by eating the heads of a large number of matches. Women companions had returned from seeing him and went to his mother to get help. The jailor discovered his plight and administered medicine. Before eating the matches he wrote a letter to his mother, companions and chief detectives.

- A local woman asserted that for months she had been abused and threatened by her husband. Mrs. Ethel Olsen, formerly of England and later of Huntsville, sent a pistol bullet at her husband in a crowded street near the Court-house here late Sunday, missed him and powder-burned a passerby. She declares she fired to protect her face from a dash of muriatic acid which she charges her husband was preparing to cast at her. She was arrested and charged with assault with intent of murder. She tells a story of her husband's alleged cruel treatment of her and their children.

- Jennie Smith holds the record in this area for marriages. She claims she was widowed 6 times in Nashville before moving here and marrying Jimmy Smith.

- Mayor R. Earle Smith stated today that no whiskey shall be

sold in Huntsville while he is Mayor. He stated that a few bottles may occasionally change hands but that there will be no general or even restricted sale and that the law shall be enforced as it appears on the statute books. As far as I know bootleggers and moonshiners are about extinct, just another way of life that only remains with those of us who still remember such things.

- A Dallas Mill family is counting their blessings this morning after their home was completely destroyed by fire. The family was sound asleep when the blaze began and were alerted by the pet wire-haired terrier which began barking until the whole family was roused. The dog continued to bark until all were out of the home. The family is staying with relatives until more accommodations can be found and neighbors are already taking up a collection to replace the family's belongings. The Mills have a policy against pets but it is expected to be waived in this instance.



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RIDING ON THE CITY OF NEW ORLEANS

by L. D. Rogers

My daddy worked for the Illinois Central Railroad in Paducah, KY. He was a machinist at the big plant there and built and overhauled steam locomotives. The railroad there was the biggest employer in McCracken County. It took up about six or seven blocks on Kentucky Avenue. There was a round house with a big turntable so they could turn the steam locomotives around. They also had a big freight yard at the edge of town with six to eight tracks to switch cars around to make up the freight trains. They even had a three-story hospital there for the workers.

Employees of the railroad got to ride the trains for free. All they had to do was put in a request for a pass and the family got to ride at no charge. I can remember making many trips on the trains and loved every minute!

We would go from Paducah, KY to Fulton, KY to visit my granny and granddaddy. Then we would take a train from Fulton to Memphis and sometimes on to New Orleans to spend the day there. My mother enjoyed going to Louisville at Christmas time to shop. Mother and daddy would do the shopping and us kids would just tag along and look at everything. Then we would spend the night at a hotel and catch the train back home on Sunday.

I loved train travel because we could walk around the train and not have to sit all the time. It was fun roaming around talking to people and going from car to car to explore.

I remember one Saturday we went to Louisville at Christmas time to do some shopping. The train left early on Saturday mornings so we were up before daylight to get ready to go. It was too early to catch a bus so daddy called a taxi to take us to the station. He didn't like to leave the car there at the station overnight.

We would always get to the station in plenty of time before the train came in but I didn't mind waiting. Next thing you know we would hear the whistle blow and the train would come roaring in. Soon you would hear the conductor yell "ALL ABOARD" and we'd get on the train and pull out of the station.

On this particular trip I was about eight and my brother was twelve. While we were exploring we ended up back in the club car and WOW! I'd never seen anything like that. People were sitting at tables, playing cards and having some kind of drinks that they seemed to really enjoy. They were smoking cigars and cigarettes.

The club car was also an observation car that had a glass roof. You would walk up a few steps to the comfortable seats and you could look out the glass. It went all around the top of the car and you could see for miles. While we were sitting up there looking out a lady came to the bottom of the stairs and said hello to us. She asked if we would like a Coca-Cola. We used our best manners and exclaimed yes! Now we were in heaven. Sitting on top of the world, looking out at the country side and enjoying a cold drink. Now there is one thing that you have to understand about my mother and daddy. They didn't believe in drinking and they didn't believe in smoking. The only card game they played was Rook on Saturday nights at my granny's house while listening to the Grand Ole Opry.

Well, I guess all good things must come to an end. While we were enjoying our drinks and the view, all of a sudden the door to the club car opened and there stood my mother. I can't describe the look on her face when she saw her two angels sitting in the club car where people were smoking, drinking and playing cards. I can only imagine the look of shock on our faces when she walked in that door. It was a long time before me and my brother could sit down with any comfort. But looking back I guess it was worth it. It was the only time we got to sit in a club car and enjoy the view and a cold Coca-Cola. My mother made sure of that.

**"Here's all you need to know about men and women:
Woman are crazy, and men are stupid. And the main reason women are crazy is that men are stupid."
George Carlin**

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Elizabeth

by Betty Hallmark Atkinson



Back in 1973 I found myself a single parent raising three children. During the day I was attending nursing school and at night I worked as a private sitter at a Nursing Home.

On the first day of my job being a sitter, I was introduced to Elizabeth who was in a private room that had a half door, and it was locked from the outside.

Elizabeth smiled at me and said, "How are you making it, Honey"?

Later as I was taking her to

the dining room for dinner, she was smiling and greeting folks the same way.

Just after we were seated, her mood suddenly changed, she became quiet, wouldn't eat, just sat there and even refused to move back into her wheelchair. So we sat for an hour, and finally she looks at me, and with a smile, said, "How are you making it, honey"?

When I was hired to sit with her, no one, not even her family ever mentioned that her brain was deteriorating.

I heard that a church group was coming to sing and after finding out that Elizabeth used to play the piano in a Baptist church, I thought she might find some enjoyment listening to the music.

Elizabeth was happy, smiling and singing, knowing every word of every song. Everything was going well until the Preacher stood up and began preaching. He said if people

don't quit their evil ways of living they're going straight to hell!

Elizabeth looked over at me, and said out loud for everyone to hear, "Did he say Hell, well he must be a crazy damn fool"! You could have heard a pin drop in that room. Everyone was staring at us, I reached over to take her by her arm to remove her, but she wouldn't budge.

I tried to make an apology to the Preacher, but he said, "That's what happens to people when Demons get in them."

I then thought to myself, Elizabeth was right, the Damn Fool!

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Kansas to Alabama

by Elizabeth Wharry



My husband had been laid off from his job in Kansas. He put his resume out on several "head hunting" sites. After a couple weeks, there was some interest from a company in Huntsville. Everything went well and he was hired.

Naturally, that meant making a 14 hour drive here to go house hunting. At that time, our boys were 9 and 6. They were allowed to "help" pick out

the house we were going to be living in. Our first surprise was the humidity. Coming from Kansas, a humid day there was 40% humidity.

We met with our realtor and got down to business. We must have looked at 25 houses that day! We finally settled on the one we are still living in. It was the last one of two and it was a real toss up. The kids settled it by saying how much they liked the back yard.

As we were house hunting, and later exploring the area, I kept seeing people in red shirts with the capital letter A on the shirt. Naturally, I was confused. I said to my husband, "I know Alabama is considered the buckle of the Bible belt.


I didn't think so many would be wearing a scarlet letter!" Our realtor chuckled, and asked if I knew what SEC stood for. Apparently, it doesn't mean Securities Exchange Commission here! She also explained

that the red that I was seeing wasn't scarlet, it was crimson.

I finally asked her to please clarify what she meant. She graciously told us that SEC meant Southeast Conference, and the A stood for Alabama, NOT adultery (I was thinking of Nathaniel Hawthorne). She patiently explained that there was a rivalry between Auburn University and the University of Alabama.

I guess I looked more confused, as she further explained that the three main religions down here are Methodist, Baptist, and football. I asked her about football and again, she patiently explained that one is expected to choose either Roll Tide or War Eagle.

That was 11 years ago. Our boys have grown into fine young men. I finally got used to the humidity. And I have not chosen a football team. Roll Eagle...or is it Tide War?



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Dog Play



Dogs love to play - and some of the behaviors that drive you crazy as a pet owner are forms of dog play. When your dog steals an item of clothing and plays "keep away" with the dirty sock, it's a game to your pup. When you chase your pet all around the yard, trying to catch the dog, in your pet's mind, the game is "tag" or "catch me if you can." Trying to get the dog to let go of the couch pillow can easily become a game of "tug", as far as your pet is concerned. While these "puppy games" can be frustrating, they can also be turned into positive training opportunities.

Playing with your dog also helps to use up the excess energy and reduces the boredom that causes adolescent dogs to get into trouble. One of the best things you can do to build a great relationship with your canine companion is to play games with him or her. The challenge is to change the rules of the game so that both people and pups win!

* The dog holding the dirty sock can play the "trade" game, where the person offers a tasty treat to the pup in exchange for the dirty sock. This game can be taught using the dog's toys, teaching "give" and "take" as well. It is an important game for all dogs to master who live in households with small children.

* The chase game can be turned around when teaching your pup to come when called. Call your puppy and then run away from him! Reward your pet when he catches you with a "good dog", an ear rub and a tasty treat, then run away again - this game can go on as long as you and your pet has the energy to play.

* Hide and seek isn't just for children. Most dogs are pretty good at playing this game, too. You can play with people hiding from the pup and then calling for the pup to find them. This also strengthens the "come" cue. Another variant is to hide one of the dog's toys in a room, then rewarding him when he finds the toy.

* Catch - Throw a small ball to the dog so that he can easily catch it in his mouth. Make sure the ball is small enough to fit

in his mouth, but not so small that he can accidentally swallow it. Once your dog understands the game, make the tosses more difficult. Play this with a Frisbee, especially if you have a large play space or park area.

* Soccer - Kick the ball away from your dog and get him to chase after it. Once he gets to it, let him play with it for a bit. then kick or step it away from him again. Soccer is best played with a larger ball that is not easy to puncture or deflate. Rubber balls are quite durable and can work well for soccer. Pick a larger sized ball, so that it is difficult for your dog to keep the ball in his mouth and chew on it. Some dogs prefer chasing after squeaky balls.

* Fetch is a wonderful dog obedience game. However, it can be difficult to teach to a dog. Go in small, slow steps. Start by giving him a toy. Once he holds it in his mouth, move a few steps away and call him. Give him a lot of encouragement for taking steps toward you and praise him well for coming. When he gets to you give him the "Drop" command and give him many treats for giving you the toy.

Once he is comfortable with this exercise, try throwing the fetch toy a very short distance away. If your dog just ignores the toy, try using a more interesting squeaky toy, or coax him toward the toy with treats and lots of praise.

If your dog comes back with the toy, then there is a big celebration. However, more often than not, he will run to it and then come back without the toy. He may even take the toy and go play with it somewhere else, or tease you with it.

Have patience and treat with a high priority item every time your dog goes in the right direction. If he comes back without the toy, you can try and give a no-mark (e.g. Uh-oh) as soon as he drops the toy. Then use the "Take it" command and offer him the toy again. Once he has the toy in his mouth, walk a few steps back, call to him enthusiastically, and make sure to give lots of praise when he moves toward you.

Always listen to your dog and don't force him to play a game he doesn't really enjoy.

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From the Desk of Tom Carney

UFOs SIGHTED IN 1910

One of the great mysteries of Madison County that has never been solved are the reports of a UFO, here in Huntsville, on January 12, 1910. This was the era when airplanes and balloons were almost unheard of in the Tennessee Valley.

The following account comes from the January 13, 1910, Huntsville Mercury newspaper:

"Strange Airship Passed Directly over the City Yesterday Afternoon. Rapidly Passed Out of Sight, Going in a Northwesterly Direction."

"An unknown airship passed almost directly over Huntsville at half past four o'clock yesterday afternoon coming from the southwest and continuing its course on a straight line to the northeast. The craft appeared to be making a long journey and it passed on its course without making any signal or other demonstration. So swiftly did it move that it was out of sight over the crest of Chapman Mountain before many people on the streets had an opportunity of seeing it. It is believed to have passed on out of Huntsville territory as nothing more was heard of the ship during the evening.

"Before anyone had time to obtain glasses, it had passed out of sight. The aircraft was not traveling with the breeze near the surface of the earth because the breeze on the surface was coming directly from the west. The speed appeared to be greater than any wind short of a hurricane would travel."

At first glance the preceding article appears to be speaking of an airplane or a balloon, except for the fact that a balloon could not travel against the wind and an airplane of that date, by no stretch of the imagination, could travel as fast as a "hurricane." Also, there were no airplanes in the Tennessee Valley in 1910.

If the whole event had a logical explanation, why did



the New York Tribune think it was newsworthy enough to run an article about it on the front page of the same day?

Also on the same day the Chattanooga Times, with a front-page headline, reported sightings of a "cigar-shaped vessel" traveling at a high rate of speed in a northeasterly direction.

The following day the strange airship appeared again in the skies over Chattanooga. The Chattanooga newspaper speculated that it was the same one that had appeared over the city the day before. The article went on to say, "Some are inclined to think the mysterious airship is the craft of a sky pirate who has sinister designs upon Chattanooga."

On January 15, the "cigar-shaped vessel" was spotted in the skies over Knoxville, Tennessee, headed south. This was the last reported sighting. If this "airship" was some type of an airplane or a dirigible where did it come from and where did it go? It was in the area for three days, but there were never any reports of it landing anywhere.

More than a century later, people are still searching for an answer.



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Rev. John Henry Drake (1827-1888) Circuit-Riding Preacher

by William Sibley

John Henry Drake was the son of Elijah Drake and the grandson of Captain John Drake, an officer in the American Revolutionary War.

After uniting with Big Cove's Mt. Pleasant Cumberland Presbyterian Church, John Henry enrolled in Cumberland University, studying for the ministry. After completing his ministerial studies, John Henry returned to Big Cove and preached at his home church and established the private Drake School. He officiated at countless funerals and weddings, including the 1878 wedding of my paternal grandparents, John William Sibley and Anna Milligan Miller.

The people of Big Cove loved John Henry and honored him by calling him "Parson Drake." Parson Drake married (1) Nancy Worthem and (2) Mary Ann Anderson. He was the father of ten children. Several of his descendants were ministers and educators. Grandsons Burns Drake and Lewis Drake were Presbyterian ministers. Great-grandson and great-granddaughter (siblings) Burns Thomas Drake was a long-time principal of Grissom High School. Tom's sister, Dr. Mary Frances Drake, was a professor at the University of Tennessee. Parson Drake's son, James King Drake, served on the Madison County Board of Education for 15 years.

Parson Drake's brother, Albert Wade Neiland Drake, had three generations of his family to serve as pastors of the Big Cove Free Holiness Church. Those pastors were the Revs. Emmett Neely Drake, his son, Edward Mitchell Drake, and Mitchell's son, Edward Oakley Drake.

As a circuit-riding preacher, Parson Drake found it necessary to spend a night or two at an elder's home because of flooded creeks, making travel impossible. Also there was the fear of attacks by wild animals and rabid dogs.

Each Sunday Parson Drake delivered at least two different sermons at two different churches - one in the morning and one in the afternoon.

Those churches would not have preaching services the following Sunday, but Parson Drake would preach at other churches. He preached in Madison, Jackson, and Marshall Counties.

It was a sad day on March 31, 1888 when Parson Drake died at the age of 61, of pneumonia. It was brought on by very cold weather when the minister was riding his beloved horse, "Postboy," home from church.

Parson Drake's son, James King Drake, had a "bugle-like" musical instrument which he blew on happy and sad occasions. Mr. Drake's

son, Herman served in WWI and son, Marvin, served in WWII. My mother remembered hearing the loud, chilling, but happy sounds of Mr. Drake's bugle, which meant that his sons would be coming home. Also, my father, Romie Sibley, a soldier in WWI, would be coming home. Mr. Drake probably blew his bugle, announcing his father's death.

The era of the circuit-riding preachers was a good time for religion in the United States. When I was a young man watching television on a Sunday night, I saw a very clever former circuit-riding Baptist preacher who was about 100 years old and had been preaching for more than 80 years. He told about a time when frigid weather made it necessary to spend a night at a deacon's home. The deacon had him sleep upstairs, far from the downstairs heater; and told him that it was not healthy to sleep close to the "far" (fire). The "good old deacon," however, did sleep close to the fire.

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The Sweet Scent of God

by John Carriker



"... then the LORD God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature." Genesis 2:7

The sky was blue, the sun was bright, and the breeze was calm. Warm? Shirt-sleeve temperatures. Perfect afternoon to walk around the neighborhood, watching where the once saturated ground was beginning to dry and the toxic Bartlett pear trees were either burdened by white bulbs or were shedding them over yards, cars and anything else in the vicinity.

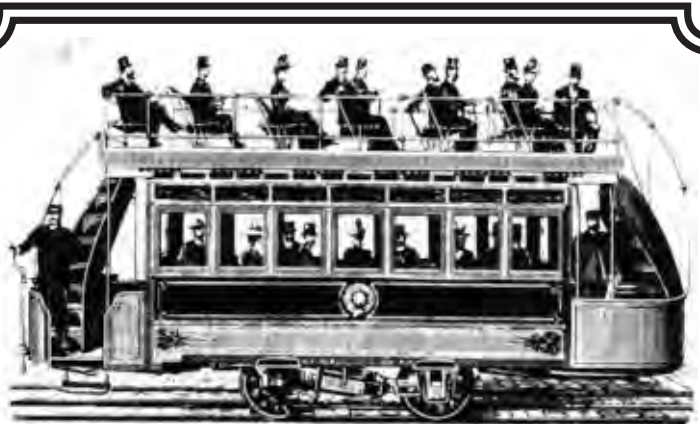
In a recent devotional entitled "Sweet Scent", the story was told of a woman who visited Dover, England. Later, as she was enjoying a cup of tea at an outside cafe, she noticed a "beautiful scent" and asked the waiter from where it was coming. He ex-

plained that a perfume factory was near and when the people who worked there walked by the cafe, the fragrance lingered. The author wrote: "What a beautiful image of the Christian life!"

A smell can bring on a flood of memories, influence people's moods and even affecting their work performance. Because the olfactory bulb is part of the brain's limbic system, an area so closely associated with memory and feeling it's sometimes called the "emotional brain". Smell can call up memories and powerful responses almost instantaneously. (Found that to be very interesting).

Love to walk slowly on the road near the side of the house. It reminds me of a honeysuckle lane. As a youngster, the smell of honeysuckle filled the air with an aroma that, even now, reminds me of sweeter, more innocent days, where life was filled with noble priorities, honesty and the desire to think the best of others. As houses were built in that new neighborhood, the fauna was destroyed, the scents disappeared. Strange as it may seem, honeysuckle has long been associated with superstition. During the Victorian era, honeysuckle flowers were often grown in gardens and around the doors of homes to ward off witches and evil spirits.

Several months ago, in the midst of a group of people at a hospital fitness center, I noted a fragrance that brought back memories of childhood. I turned to see who was wearing the perfume and noticed



**Soon We'll be Sitting Side by Side
again - We can't Wait!**

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Loved Ones Close.**

*From Oscar and Maria Llerena
with Love to the Huntsville High Class of 1966*

**"Low maintenance chicks are
having their moment right now.
We don't have nails to fill and paint,
roots to dye, eyelashes to re-mink,
and are thrilled not to have to get
dressed every day. I have been
training for this moment
my entire life!"**

Linda Drake, Huntsville

the woman who had just passed. I followed the aroma and asked if she could tell me what fragrance she was wearing: It was "Eternity."

How ironic, I remember thinking that such a scent would invoke a time of solitude and peace in my younger life, a time of hope and discovery, a time when I surrendered to Christ and the promise of Eternity with Him. I wonder, as do other followers of Christ, if the fragrance of God accompanies a Christian disciple as he or she shares the Word along the path of witnessing to others.

"But thanks be to God, who in Christ always leads us in triumphal procession and through us spreads the fragrance of the knowledge of him everywhere. For we are the aroma of Christ to God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing, to one a fragrance from death to death, to the other a fragrance from life to life. Who is sufficient for these things?" 2 Corinthians 2:14-16

As observed before, Huntsville is a "melting pot" of people from other states or sections of Alabama, full of personal stories that range from joy to intense hopelessness. Their life roads are numerous and lead to many crossroads, intersections, super highways and country roads. Each has some sort of destination whether it was intended or not and there are various means to travel. But I'd dare say that there is virtually no trip that leads to nowhere; most of the time we have to be willing to look for it.

There are many types of smells. Some are repugnant: five junior high athletes in a car after a hard-fought ball game, cigarette smoke, onions/garlic, wet dog, chicken manure. Oth-

ers are pleasant: fresh air after a spring rain, a steak smothered in onions, a favorite aftershave lotion, some hair spray as well as antiperspirant.

But there are also the counterfeits: the breath mint that tries to disguise the odor of raw onions; the "sponge bath" that removes some evidence of dirt while covering the odor of perspiration; the air freshener which overpowers the more offensive aroma with a smell that is not much better.

"You're only here for a short visit. Don't hurry, don't worry. And be sure to smell the flowers along the way." Walter Hagen

"OK the schools are closed. So do we drop the kids off at the teacher's house or what?"

Jill Schmidt, Athens

Fried Bananas

Fried bananas make for a palatable dish for breakfast, and gives that fruit a flavor all its own, and to many tastes better than when eaten in its natural state.

Take off the peeling and split the fruit in half. Have a hot frying pan with half an inch of butter in the bottom. Into this put the banana, being careful not to let it burn, but brown well on both sides.

Just before lifting it out, sprinkle with sugar and set it in the oven to crisp over the top. Serve as a hot dish.

From 1895 Newspaper



Bandit

Hello, the Ark named me Bandit. I think it is because I look like I have a mask over my eyes. A kind citizen found me and brought me to the Ark. I am having a good time here. The food is really good too.

I keep hearing a sound like this - Meow-Meow. I keep wondering what in the world is that? I heard someone say they wanted to see the cats for adoption. I don't think they were talking about me because I do not go meow; I bark, whimper or howl. I may have

what is called a Heeler breed in me. I really don't know and I do not think it would matter. I will be a very good dog if you take me home. I am the sweetest little guy you will ever want to meet. At my puppy age now I weigh over 8 lbs. I was born May 20, 2000. I want a family that will keep me my lifetime.

When you come to the Ark, ask to see the Bandit. That's me.

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Vernon, Slick, Ralph and Me

by Austin Miller

My best friend at Central School was Ralph Pylant. In July of 1957, Ralph and I started High School at Gurley (Madison County High School). In those days the school was known simply as Gurley because it was located in the town of Gurley. Junior High went through the ninth grade and the first year of high school was the tenth grade. Also, the county schools operated on split sessions. We got out the first of June to chop cotton and started back the middle of July after laying-by time. After about six weeks, we got out again the first of September to pick cotton and started back the last of October.

The first day at Gurley, Ralph and I met at recess in the auditorium, a common student gathering place. He had two other boys with him, one was Vernon Stephens who came from Central. I knew Vernon but he hadn't been at Central long and we hadn't had time to really get acquainted. His family moved to Brownsboro from one of the Mill villages in Huntsville. The other boy I did not know, he was over six feet tall and as skinny as a rail. He looked like a strong wind would blow him down.

Ralph said two things that day, one was: "this is Slick Hill (James Marvin) and you can't whip him!" He was more right than he knew. The other thing Ralph said was, "I don't like this *#@# place and I ain't coming back!" He didn't come back and joined the Navy as soon as he turned seventeen. I saw him once when he was home on leave but after that I didn't see him again for more than fifty years.

Slick, Vernon and I quickly became friends. When you saw one of us you saw the other two. Despite his slender appearance, Slick was as tough as they came! He was not a bully and didn't look for trouble but would finish it if he found it. If you had a quarrel with me or Vernon you also had a quarrel with Slick. He and I used to arm wrestle but I

was no competition and it only took about a second for him to win. But if we were around other boys he would act like he was struggling and sometimes let me win. He didn't want to make me look bad in front of others especially if there were girls around.

Vernon was the most intelligent of the three of us and had multiple talents. If he had applied himself he could have graduated at the top of the class. He had a good speaking voice and was an excellent artist. He could draw anything and was often called on by the Principal and teachers to help with posters and other kinds of art work. He drew the Tiger that is in our 1960 Gurley yearbook. None of this helped with his grades because they were as bad and mine and Slick's. He was also a singer and sang on the radio with his older brother when they were children.

I had my first beer with Slick and Vernon on the way home one night from a school event. That was a big deal

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because I was taught that drinking was a ticket straight to Hell. Slick and Vernon had no such notions and I doubt if either one had ever been inside a church.

As they say all good things come to an end. When we were about halfway through the twelfth grade somebody in the classroom hit Slick with an eraser. He stood up looking around the room and when the teacher saw him standing she told him to sit down. He responded, "not until I find the SOB that hit me with an eraser." She ordered him to go to the office. He told her he was not going to the office and left the room. Vernon got up and followed him out the door.

It was their last day of school. I saw them a few times after that but soon lost touch and didn't have any contact with either for almost a lifetime.

After more than half a century I was finally able to reconnect with all three and learn a few things about their lives. Ralph took up boxing in the Navy and turned semi-pro. He lived in California for much of his life but eventually came back to Maysville. I know that he was married but I didn't learn anything about his wife and children or what he did for a living other than boxing.

Vernon was in the Army for two years and served most of it in Germany. After that he continued his art work, sang in several quartets and became a finger print expert for the Huntsville Police Department. He did artwork for the city and designed the shoulder patch worn by Huntsville police officers. Vernon was married but I don't know anything about his wife. I did meet his daughter at one of our high school class gatherings.

Slick had a sister that lived in Monte Eagle Tennessee. Her husband ran a truck stop on the I-24 corridor. He went to work at the truck stop and eventually took over the business. He made a good living and lived the rest of his life in Monte Eagle. He had four children but was not married in his later years.

Of the four of us that met in the auditorium at Gurley High School on that summer day in 1957, I am the only one still living. Ralph died a few years ago at his home in Maysville. I talked to him by phone two or

three days before he died. Vernon died about three years ago and Slick died last Sunday morning. He died at home of an apparent heart attack. He was seventy-nine. The last time I talked to him was to let him know that Vernon died. In the conversation he said that he had become a Christian and was very active in his church.

In my youth I was blessed to have these boys as my friends and blessed again when I was able to reconnect with them for a short time in our senior years.

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John Purdy
Loretta Spencer
Sarah Chappell

Parkway City & G.C. Murphy

M.D. Smith, IV



Picture Courtesy of Lance George

One of Huntsville's first area shopping centers started business in 1957. Named after Memorial Parkway, the new 4-lane opened in 1955. Parkway City was similar to a long downtown block of stores with a wide sidewalk and covered roof out front. Near the center of the strip, a walkway and stores turned toward the rear. Businesses lined either side out to the back. Plenty of parking, unlike downtown, it was terrific.

G.C. Murphy was located near the center. Thus the aisle to the rear of the stores ran alongside Murphy. Parkway City had a huge parking lot and I don't think it was ever filled, even for Christmas shopping. WAAY-Radio and TV flew Santa to the parking lot more than a few years for him to greet the season and the kids. That ended the year a gust of wind blew the little Bell helicopter towards the roped-off crowd and a near disaster was barely averted.

Sure was convenient to have a bit of everything from record store, drug store, clothing stores, hobby shop, grocery, barber, photoshop, and cleaners; to a movie theatre, later two screens. Wow, all you ever needed right there.

While Montgomery Ward was a bit like Sears, Murphy was more like a five and dime combined with a department store. They had a lunch counter. They

had a little bit of everything. It was a one-stop for me on a lunch break and for sure the entire group of stores was all I ever needed. That was the beginning of the exodus from downtown, parking meters and stores spread out a bit far for walking.

Later we had Dunnavant's Mall, Heart of Huntsville Mall and The Mall all in the same decade. Then there came Madison Mall in 1984, an actual "Super Mall." Surprising they are all gone now, except for the original that has been rebuilt several times over the years to be the Parkway Place Mall we know today.

The 1974 tornado wiped out the south end of Parkway City, did little damage to Murphy's store, and G.C. Murphy continued in business.

It seems somewhat ironic that the very first "Shopping Center" in Huntsville still stands today, while all its sisters are gone and replaced by other larger stores and in the case of Madison Mall, a multi-purpose complex.

We all shortened the name to just Murphy's as in G.C. Murphy's store, I suppose because of the larger "Murphy's Mart" store names. Murphy's sold good clothes reasonably. I have a short sleeve yellow dress shirt with pocket and nice collar I bought there in the sixties. Though a good shirt, there were many years it was too small for me and in the very corner of my shirt closet, but it fits again now.

When I wore the shirt last week, I called my wife's attention to the label. "I wouldn't tell anyone," she said. "Heck no, I'm proud I hung onto it. It's a good shirt, and I'd be happy to tell anyone about it."

So I have.



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Featured Wines of the Month

Francis Ford Coppola Wines

DALFORD ELLIS KEY, IN LOVING MEMORY

by his nephew, Barry Key



Dalford, born May 1947, was the youngest of 14 children born to Walker and Cordelia Key. While living at home, Dalford was the typical country boy. He helped work their farm along side his parents and siblings. He graduated from Kate Duncan Smith (DAR) High School and volunteered for the Navy.

After serving his country, Dalford attended A&M University and graduated with a BS degree in accounting. After college, he worked for civil service at Redstone Arsenal until his retirement.

First, I must say that Dalford was born 200 years too late. His first love was the woods and all its animal inhabitants. Even with all the hardships encountered, he would have been perfectly satisfied as a member of the Lewis and Clark expedition when they explored the western route to the West Coast.

As youngsters, he and I spent many days hiking, hunting and exploring caves in the north Marshall County area.

His favorite area of all was Ledbetter Hollow on Grassy Mountain. Little Paint Rock River runs through the hollow. At the bottom of a waterfall was a large overhang in the side of a bluff.

Dalford had turned the overhang into a home away from home. When hiking or hunting he would use the overhang as shelter, especially during inclement weather. We shared many meals and hunting stories while sitting around a fire and watching Little Paint Rock as it passed over the falls.

In Ledbetter Hollow was Ledbetter Cave. We would spend all day in the cave. We explored the cave many times. I don't think there was ever a time that we didn't find a new room or passage. There were several large stalactites and stalagmites millions of years old that were still alive. There is a stream flowing through the cave that had little white crawfish looking creatures. Also, the cave was a daytime roosting place for thousands of bats. As many times as we explored the cave we never got bored admiring the various wonders of mother nature.

Dalford constructed and maintained the trails in Ledbetter Hollow that the State Park system would be proud of. He spent many days maintaining the original trail that ran from

Honeycomb Camp Ground (around the point of Thompson Reservation, through Pumpkin and Hambrick Hollows) to Gunterville Dam.

On one occasion, our effort to help Mother Nature didn't turn out the way we had planned. Their farm sits on the brow of the Narrows on Grassy Mountain. John R. Hollow was on the east side of the mountain. There was a spring that came out of the ground just below the brow, ran just a few feet and disappeared underground.

We spent most of a day damming the hole so the water would run down the side of the mountain on top of the ground. A few days later we followed the spring to the bottom of John R. Hollow. It had flooded a farmer's pasture with several inches of water. It didn't take near as long to re-open the hole as it did to dam it.

We lost Dalford, June of 2019. He was loved by all that knew him....and his passing leaves a great void in our lives. "REST IN PEACE"

"My mind is like an internet browser. 19 tabs are open, 3 of them are frozen, and I have no idea where the music is coming from."

Jesse Smallwood, Gurley



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