



No. 332

October 2020



Old Huntsville

HISTORY AND STORIES OF THE TENNESSEE VALLEY

From Mill Worker to Entrepreneur



Also in this issue: Horrible Halloween Crash; Working for G.C. Murphy's; Rosie the Robot; Theft at Walgreens; A Triangle of Stars; When Huntsville was a Small Town; Crock Pot Recipes 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

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Dorrie Lewter
Mae Lewter

From Mill to Cafe

by Lawrence Hillis

When the cotton mills opened in Huntsville and the surrounding Mill Villages in the late 1890s and early 1900s, thousands of people left their farms from North Alabama and Southern Tennessee and came to Huntsville to get jobs. One of those families was the Baucom family from Farmington, Tennessee near Shelbyville.

Troy Walter Baucom and his sister Nora Baucom Jackson moved to Huntsville to work at the Merrimack and the Dallas Mills. Workers in the Mills were nicknamed "lintheads" because of all the lint floating around in the air throughout the factory. The air was so thick, the lint clung to their hair as they worked. Many of my aunts and uncles dropped out of school and became Mill workers.

Huntsville was a small town in the early 1900s. The Mills opened outside the city limits, and it would just a few short years before the Villages were incorporated into Huntsville.

The Mills also hired children, because they had small

hands that could reach in among the spindles and other moving parts to remove clogs of yarn. However, the machinery was dangerous. There were many accidents which resulted in dismembered limbs and loss of life.

Working conditions in those early Mills were deplorable. The average work day was 12 hours, six days a week. Wages were low. Most of the workers' income was spent on the company housing and at the company store where they were overcharged, but it was convenient shopping for what little time they had remaining in the day. When they didn't have enough money, the company store would let them run a tab. Some workers never got caught up from their debt with the company store.

In 1924, my Grandparents Hurley and Hattie Warren were employees of the Dallas Mill. Hurley contracted a respiratory disease, probably due to inhaling the lint. He passed away, leaving my Grandmother Hattie to raise two children; Edith, my mother, and her brother Robert. Troy Baucom was divorced and was raising his son Buford Baucom. Troy and Hattie married and one of the first things he said to Hattie was, "we got to get out of this mill."

They both were good cooks, so they believed they could make it in the food service business. Troy was a tall, heavy

If the Cincinnati Reds were really the first major league ball team, who did they play?



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Huntsville, Al 35801

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Publisher - Cathey Carney

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Sales & Mrktg. - Cathey Carney

Editor - Cheryl Tribble

Consultant - Ron Eyestone

Gen. Manager - Sam Keith

Copy Boy - Tom Carney

(in memory)

"Old Huntsville" magazine is a monthly publication. Annual subscriptions are \$40 per year.

For subscription change of address, mail new information to the above address.

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set man and was a charismatic person. Everyone liked him. Since he could cook, it seemed that he would do well with the public. People called him Troy, or T.W. and later would call him Pop. In the 20s and 30s that was the usual name for "the man behind the counter."

T. W. had worked his way up in the mill and had managed to save enough money to start a cafe business. These days, small cafes serve as informal establishments for selling light meals and various refreshments. People enjoy gathering and enjoying a refreshment and spending time talking and relaxing. In those days, small cafes were popular because they served the public with a much-needed place for noon time quick service meals so employees could get back to work quickly.


Back then it did not take much to start up a cafe. All they needed was a building with a serving counter and stools, a few tables with chairs, a cash register and possibly a display case for donuts and pastries. As for the kitchen, they needed

a good cook stove, a refrigerator, a sink for washing dishes, a mop sink, pots and pans and other cooking utensils. Most of the food was served on paper plates, with forks and spoons, paper napkins and cups for coffee. Soft drinks were served in the bottles. Troy did not need a lot of storage space, because W. L. Halsey Grocery Store was a short distance away on Jefferson Street. In 1925, Troy opened the Sandwich Shop 7th Street across the street from the Merrimac Mill. The Street name was changed to Triana Blvd. Business was so good he opened a second Cafe in 1926 on Sherman Street in Decatur. T. W. sold both of those cafes in the 1930s.

In 1928, T. W. purchased the Big Spring Cafe from Evin and Mae Phillips. It was in a box car located on Gallatin Street which is now Spragins Street adjacent to the Big Spring fountain and canal. Soon afterwards, he built a small red brick building near the same area at the corner of Spring Street and moved the Cafe to it.

In the late 1930s he built a small white block building a little further to the north which is now a parking lot behind the Russel Erskine Hotel. His wife Hattie was concerned about their low profit margin and was always trying to encourage him to raise the price of the hamburgers. Troy always considered volume and thought he might lose customers with higher cost so he replied, "But Hattie, just look at how much business we are doing now."

During that time, it was a custom to offer your pastor a free meal now and then. However, Troy's pastor was coming by several times a week and would order a big meal and walk out without paying. This bothered Troy, especially



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when his pastor didn't offer to pay and would not even say thank you. So once when the pastor stopped in to eat, Troy delivered his order to him at the bar and showed him his revolver in his belt and said, "Pastor when I come to your church, don't I put money in the offering plate?" His pastor answered, "Yes you do T.W." Troy then said, "Well that is what you should do when you come to my place."

I don't know if the pastor ever came back, but I am pretty sure he paid for the burgers that day.

In 1930, Troy opened the Busy Bee Cafe on the corner of Oakwood Avenue and Meridian Street where there is currently a Marathon gas station. During the summer months for the next few years, his step-daughter Edith, who was 10 to 13 years old at the time, would take a basketful of hamburgers and hot dogs to the gate of the Lincoln Mill and sell them to the workers.

Sometime in the 1930s his lease ran out and the owner wanted to build a service station, so Troy had to move. During the late 1930s T. W. owned Wimpy's Grill on the East Side Square. Later under a different owner it was called Wimpy's Grill and Billiards. The James Steak House shared the same building.

By now most of the customers called Troy "Pop." Since he was my step grandfather, my name for him was Papa. One time, I called him "Pop" and

he told me that he wanted to be my Papa not the man behind the counter "Pop."

Someone once said, "you should not do business with a relative." One of Papa's relatives was out of work, so Papa hired him. At the end of the day when the last few customers were finishing eating, his relative would cook more hamburgers and hot dogs than were needed. As they cleaned up, he would tell Papa that he would take the extra food home to his family. Many times, Papa would tell him not to fix so many hamburgers that late with only a few customers remaining, but his relative would not follow directions and kept on putting more food on the stove. Papa then started charging him for the food which he was taking home and a big argument occurred. I am glad Papa didn't have to pull out his gun that day.

In 1935, Troy had a wonderful and dedicated employee named Hazel Cowley who moved from Big Cove to Huntsville and rented a room at the Baucom's house at 600 Ward Avenue. She became well acquainted with the operation of the Big Spring Cafe

and helped run it while Troy worked at other locations.

In 1946 he sold the Big Spring Cafe to Eugene Thornberry who sold it to Hazel who by then married Fly Beene who worked for Meadow Gold Dairies. They built a new building at 115 Church Street next to the Big Spring lagoon.

Later, in the 1970s, when the city of Huntsville wanted that property for a parking garage to serve the Von Braun Center, the Beenes opened a second location at 2906 Governors Drive and the name remained the same. Howard and Doris Cowley owned the Cafe from 1972 until 1992. They kept the same hamburger recipe but obviously had to increase the price over the years as Hattie suggested.

The Big Spring Cafe is still in the family and is owned and operated by Mrs. Pam Milam since 1992. Many newspaper articles about the cafe and its hamburgers have been written throughout the years and was referred to in one article as the oldest restaurant in Huntsville. In 2022 it will be

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one hundred years old. Pam built a large attractive building further west at 3507 Governors Drive in 2017 and again moved the Big Spring Cafe to the current location where it is still doing great.

I asked Grandmother Hattie why Papa would sell his businesses and then open up another cafe. She said he knew he could make money at one, but he would make more by selling one and then opening up another. His reputation would follow him and his old customers plus new customers would patronize his new location.

He also enjoyed a challenge. He went on to open two other eateries after selling the Big Spring Cafe. One was the Why Not Cafe in 1939 on Andrew Jackson Way across from what is now Po Boy's. Troy put his step children Edith and Robert Warren who were 19 and 20 years old in charge. However, when World War II broke out in 1940, Robert joined the Army, and Edith could not manage the store by herself and had to close it down.

The store that I remember the most was his last cafe called the Snack Shop on Meridian Street about a block north of Lewter's Hardware. The Servis First Bank building is there now. T.W. opened the Snack Shop in 1947.

I remember as a young child before attending school, going to the Snack Shop while my Mother worked there. My seat was on top of the large cracker barrel near the end of the counter at the back door. I enjoyed watching Papa interact with his customers. He was always entertaining his patrons with a joke or something funny that had happened recently. I didn't understand the jokes at that young age, but I laughed because they were laughing.

Lunch time in his cafes was like a happy hour. I wish someone had made a record of those jokes. I wonder if they would still be funny or as applicable now. Sometimes I would sit on the back steps which were facing Washington Street and see the police bring in bad guys to the Washington Street police station. The Veterans Park is

there now and Washington Street is leading to the 565 overpass.

Due to throat cancer, Troy retired in 1955. Other than fishing, the highlight of T. W's life was socializing with his customers, neighbors and family and telling jokes. Those great times of social communication ended when Troy underwent surgery to remove his larynx. It was a low moment in his life. What Troy enjoyed the most was taken away from him when he lost his voice.

T. W. sold the Snack Shop in 1956 and left everything behind, even down to the last bar stool, except for a wooden sign which he brought home. He hung it on the wall to remind him of his business career. Grandmother said he had made it for one of his first cafes and moved it to each of the other cafes until he sold them and set up new cafes. It was a motto; we would call it a business statement these days.

Troy Baucom passed away in 1969 and Hattie died in 1977. The sign was stolen in 1975 during a home burglary. The family thought it was odd that a thief would want to steal it. Grandmother said it was like stealing a Bible.


It read: "MAKE A GOOD BURGER - MAKE A FRIEND - MAKE A BUCK"

"My wife was at the beauty salon for over two hours and that was just for the estimate."
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My Body the Hoarder

by Janice Depew

Since moving to Huntsville from northeast Tennessee, I have gained 14 pounds, one million freckles and acquired a constant allergy. I blame it all on being closer to the equator. Avoiding the sun and allergy medicine helps two problems. Truth is, as far as my weight gains, my mouth doesn't have an inspection station, but my stomach and intestines do.

I've tried and tried to find the problems in my two inspection stations. The finger keeps pointing back to my mouth. What am I putting in my mouth that is causing so much confusion? It's all out there - avoid certain food store aisles, shop the outer walls only, watch fats, blah, blah, blah. Doesn't work for me. I have to know what is going on.

I think I've figured it out. My body is a hoarder. Soon as my stomach gets something from my mouth, the process begins; churning around, adding acid, essentially processing to send to my intestines. My intestines find some foods they recognize; potatoes, carrots, fruits, etc.


They also find junk they don't recognize or like; trans fats, high fructose corn syrup, all colors of food dyes, additives, preservatives I can't even pronounce, much less spell.

Doctor I'm not, but it looks to me like the intestines say, "We don't know what to do with all this crap but we may need it someday so let's just store what we can in her fat cells." They like the storage above my waist. I can rest my arms on this storage.

I try to have some fun with my shape. Last time I was in the doctor's office, I sat next to a young very pregnant woman with my arms resting on my fat middle. She was staring at me quizzically. I just patted it and said to her, "Would you believe I'm 82?"

Common sense tells me I must do something about my mouth. It must recognize that the wrong food is going to kill me. So I'm not eating anything anymore that has been processed to death with all the resurrection stuff added back. That means I will have to eat natural foods and relearn how to cook.


But, once a month, I'm going to eat a delicious chocolate-covered donut.



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Bikes, Booze, Boys of 1956

by M.D. Smith, IV



My friend Mardis Howie and I had many adventures in the fifties. This story is about one such almost routine Saturday night that ended in a boy's disaster that could have been even worse.

It started about 6:30 p.m. as we rode our bicycles a mile to Mt. Brook Village and Gilchrist Drugs store. There we both got a large Limeade in a cup bigger than a Solo cup. Down to the bridge at the edge of the village, and taking out our filled four-ounce medicine bottles full of vodka from our seat saddle bag, we mixed and consumed it all.

Next, we hopped on our bikes and started pedaling a bit over a mile up the hill by the Botanical Gardens. A bit steep, and we had to stand up on the pedals, even with our lightweight English bikes.

I had a date with Sally, my girlfriend, at her house. We were both fifteen. She lived at the top of a driveway on a hill. By the time we walked our bikes there, the booze

was kicking in and I didn't want to slur.

Sally greeted us at the door, thankfully, and suggested we go downstairs to her father's giant slate pool table for a couple of games. Great way to start the evening. Mardis and I would play first. Then the winner would play Sally, who was better than both of us.

On the way downstairs, we passed the den, and there was Mr. and Mrs. Mabury seated in chairs, and Mr. Mabury said, "Hello, Mr. Smith. How are you this evening?" I replied and greeted both of them. Let me tell you, he was the very first, and for years, the only one to ever greet me

as "Mr. Smith." I loved it. If I slurred, it wasn't much.

Teens speak fast and un-clearly anyhow. I doubt he'd have noticed.

After a couple of great pool games downstairs, Mardis suggested going to the living room, with hardwood floors, listen to some music and dance. He already knew Sally's older sister was there who was seventeen and could drive. She had a beautiful body and Mardis loved to slow-dance close to her.

On that warm summer's evening with the screened windows open on the hardwood floor, we did the jitterbug and bop. With slow music like the Hilltoppers version of "Only You," we danced close with sweating foreheads touching.

By ten o'clock, it was time for us to get on our bikes for home.



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What's the difference between a cat and a comma? One has claws at the end of its paws and the other one is a pause at the end of a clause.

Mardis left the front porch, and I remained to work up the nerve to give Sally a good night kiss, which I did. My night was complete. Or so I thought.

It was light when we came, but now dark. No matter, we had generator lights on our bikes. That was the small device that rubbed the front tire that turned a tiny generator for a bright headlight and red tail light. The faster you go, the brighter the light. We knew a path through a narrow part of the woods on the side of the Birmingham Country Club golf course.

It was a direct ride home that way instead of the long way we'd come. Mardis was behind me because my light was brighter. I turned off the road when I saw the beginning of the path. Going slow to make sure I was on it, the light dimmed, and there I got slightly off the trail. It was steep downhill heading toward the fairway of the golf course. I speeded up to get a better light. I was going fast for a bike in the woods.

Then my front wheel hit a large tree root in the ground, and the jolt on my front tire, caused my generator to bump into the off position and lock. Normally, I could have reached down, hit the release button, and had light again. But I was going fast on a bumpy path, so I tried to use moonlight and miss the trees in front of me and hold on.

Only a second or two and I felt myself in space. I was weightless and gradually nosing down to land somewhere.

"Smash." The front-wheel hit first and in the nose-down position, my face first hit terrain. My body collapsed in a heap and my lightweight bike toppled on me. My mouth was full of sand.

In only a moment, I realized I'd plunged off the high bank of a sand trap, into space, and then landed in the middle of the sandtrap. Any other place and I'd be going to the hospital.

My buddy Mardis came up behind me and out in the open, we had decent moonlight for him to

see me and what had happened. He helped me to my feet. No broken bones but a bleeding place on my lower leg where it hit a gear cog. We needed to get home, but upon inspection, my front wheel was crumpled like Charles Atlas had practiced making a pretzel with it.

No way to ride home. Too far to walk, so we elected to go back to Sally's. I managed to hold up the front part of my bike with the rear wheel rolling behind and trudged back up the hill and steep driveway to Sally's house.

I called my mother to pick us up. If there was any chance I wasn't sober when I left Sally's earlier, I certainly was now. Her family was very sympathetic as we waited for the ride. I smiled at the attention but was gloomy about my ruined bike.

To this day, when I tell this story, I say it wasn't the booze that caused the disaster, which could have been much worse. In hindsight, I was fortunate that evening to live to tell this tale.

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The Gentry Brothers

by Austin Miller

The Gentry brothers grew up in the Ryland/Maysville communities. Their names were Frank, Jim Tom and Marvin. In the thirties, they were well known local baseball players. I never met Frank but most people said he was the best player of the three. Independent baseball and basketball teams were very popular and well attended in Huntsville and Madison County in the thirties. Until Redstone Arsenal came to Huntsville the only jobs available for most people were at the shoe plant, Martin Stove, John Blue, the cotton mills, store clerks and cotton farming. The Gentry's as well as my people were sharecroppers. Sharecroppers farmed land that belonged to a landowner, did all the work and got half of the crop for use of the landlord's house and land. It was a life of poverty and hard work. There are few jobs worse or paid less than picking cotton by hand.

Jim Tom graduated from Central High School in the late twenties. This was quite an accomplishment; very few sharecroppers in those days went beyond the eighth or ninth grade. Working in the fields was necessary for survival of the family and children didn't get to go to school when there was cotton to plant, chop, plow or harvest. This meant that most children didn't get to start to school until after Christmas each year and had to leave at planting time in April or May, giving them about three or four month of school. My father was an intelligent man but he was 20 years old in the ninth grade when he quit school in 1931. Somehow Jim Tom made it to graduation.

I doubt if there is anybody alive today that went to Central High School. It was a high school from 1917, until it burned in the spring of 1931. A new school opened in 1933 but it was a junior high and only went to the ninth grade. The remaining three grades finished at Madison County High School in Gurley. It was always a sore spot to the people around Central that Madison County High was built at Gurley. You can see their point, Central is situated in a key location in the north eastern part of the county and with the school at Gurley, children from several communities had to be bused to a distant location about a mile from the Jackson County line.

After Jim Tom graduated he was employed by and played second base for Dallas Mill. All the Mills had a team and played each other in tough competition. Jim Tom was a star and gained a reputation as one of the best baseball players around. In my growing up years, I saw him often. When he left his job at the Mill he farmed in Ryland. I would see him at the Ryland gin, at school events, Central ball games and at the Ryland store. He was a man that attracted attention wherever he happened to be. Jim Tom married a lady from a prominent Madison County family named Florence Andrews. They lived all their married life in a white frame house on Old Gurley road about halfway between what is now Moore's Mill Road and Shields Road. The house still stands.

They had four children; Jerry, Florence, Jimmy and Edna. Jerry's biological father was Frank but he was raised by Jim Tom and Florence whom he considers his real parents. I was in school at Central with Florence and Jimmy; Florence was a cheerleader and Jimmy played basketball. I don't know Edna but she currently lives behind the old house where she grew up, Jimmy lives close by and Florence lives



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Jim Tom, Marvin and Frank Gentry

in Decatur, Georgia. Edna is a retired teacher and Jimmy and Florence are retired from Bell South/Southern Bell (AT&T).

Jim Tom was elected to the Huntsville-Madison County Athletic Hall of Fame in 1990. His information sheet said he was a legendary hitter and second basemen. It also said he was the first to hit a home run out of the new Optimist Park. There is a cartoon on his page showing a ball sailing over the fence and a boy yelling "That one is headed to the Fagan Springs Pore House, Mister." An article written in 1990 by sports writer John Pruitt in the Huntsville Times, said "the truth is, Jim Tom Gentry is one of the finest baseball players who ever took the field in Madison County or in northern Alabama. And that includes professional, semi-pro or amateur." According to Mr. Pruitt, the legendary Hub Myhand said he was one of his favorite players of all time. He quoted another Huntsville legend, Cecil Fain, as saying "he was the best local player he ever saw."

I didn't see Jimmy for over fifty years until recently at Andrew Jackson Way Baptist Church. It's also where I met Jerry for the first time. They came there for an exercise class in the church's gym and I walk on their inside walking track. The church is generous enough to let non-members use their very nice and modern facilities. I am Methodist but I can tell you that I am enjoying getting to know the people of Andrew Jackson Way. I

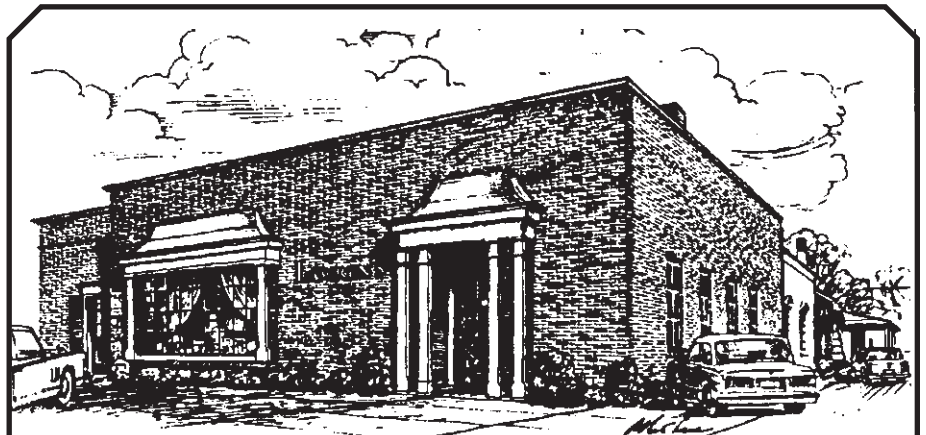
may not have met Jerry before but I heard of him all my life. The Gentry baseball gene was passed down to him. Central didn't have a baseball team when he was there but he played for Madison County High during his three high school years. He was an outstanding pitcher and I heard about his baseball feats during all my years at Central and Gurley. Somebody always had a story about trying to bat against Jerry Gentry. A few days ago I couldn't believe that I was sitting on gym bleachers talking one-on-one with Jerry Gentry. Jerry lives in Huntsville and is a retired State Farm insurance agent.

Marvin was a pitcher. He never stayed with one team long because he hired out to play for the highest bidder. He was well known all over North Alabama and Southern Tennessee. It was quite a feat to get paid to play baseball during the Depression when money was so scarce. I met Marvin in the early sixties when he worked in Herman

Hall's grocery store at Cedar Gap. I often stopped to get a soft drink and talk. He was opinionated, a jokester and said what was on his mind. But I loved talking to him and listening to his stories. He always wanted to match double or nothing for whatever I bought but I instinctively knew there was no way I could ever win against that wily old fox.

The Gentry brothers were once household names in Huntsville and Madison County. But their time as well as the times of their contemporaries passed long ago. Most could not play baseball as well as Frank, Jim Tom and Marvin but others were outstanding basketball players; many others were good but not outstanding.

Players like the Gentry's, were celebrated because they were the best and entertained with their skill giving a little respite from the burden of hard times suffered by most people in Madison County during the thirties.



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Since my knee surgery in June, I find myself getting really tired. That's resulted in my having to take an afternoon nap. When I was dozing, I actually saw Bama on the field in Tuscaloosa playing USC. They were ahead by three touchdowns. I was cheering so loud that I woke myself up – what a surprise.

It has been a summer of a lot of cancellations and unease for many of us. I have found myself wondering what I will be doing on Saturday afternoons. Maybe they can get regular by October. The routine of many of us has been interrupted with some cancellations extending past December. My world has turned upside down and rearranged. I've even learned to attend exercise classes via Zoom meetings.

While my church service started back September 20th, they still strongly suggest if you are over 65, you not attend. Unfortunately, that includes me. But, they added, I can still watch on my computer. I just

can't watch extended programs on a laptop computer screen. Who would have thought I'd be going to church in my PJ's the past few months?

While shopping recently, I saw the aisles full of Halloween candy. It made me wonder if I buy some early or wait to see if any ghosts and goblins are coming by for a "Trick or Treat." One way or another, I'm going to get out my witches' costume and decorate. Surely some will come to see me. Now that we all wear masks, I won't recognize anyone anyway.

If your child does go trick or treating, be sure to have an adult go with them, take a flashlight and only go to houses where you know the people who live there. As you always hear, check the treats before you let the little ones eat any of them.

Many of the churches are having their annual "trunk-or-treat," and that's always a safe place and plenty of stash for the little ones to get in a short period of time.

Until next month, I'll have plenty of candy for Halloween and I hope I can give most of it away.. .or... "goodbye diet."

A reporter in Afghanistan saw a woman walking 5 paces behind her husband. She was asked why, after so many social changes, she was still doing this. She answered, "Land Mines."

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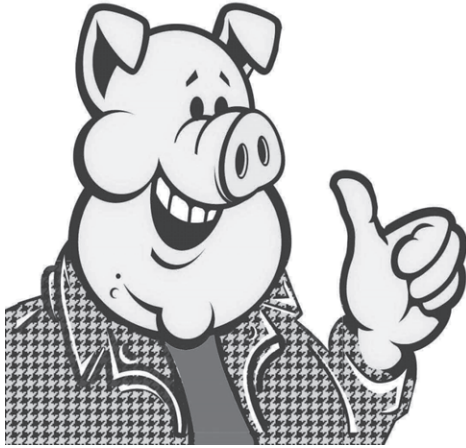
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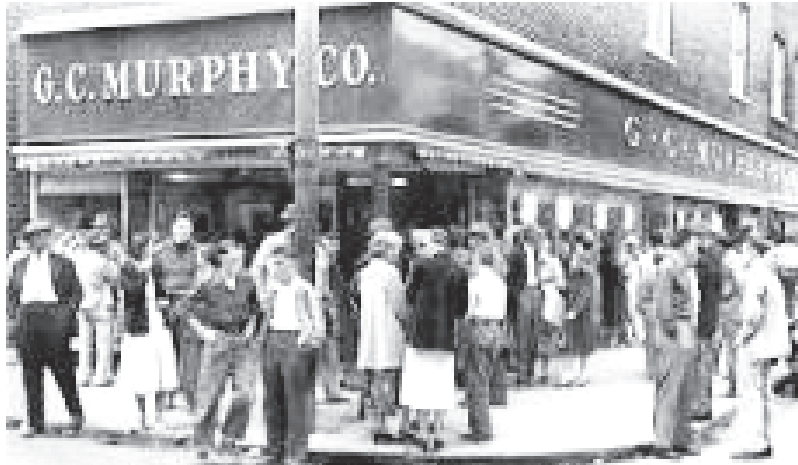


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WORKING FOR G. C. MURPHY'S

by Don Broome, Sr.



After I graduated from Huntsville High School in January 1966, I was hired at G.C. Murphy's as an assistant manager trainee. They had one of the best retail training programs in the industry. I started out working in the stockroom of the Parkway City Shopping Center location receiving merchandise and pricing and delivering product to the sales floor. This let us learn the products quickly and the departments they went with. We also had to carry out things for customers and assemble things like bikes and swing sets.

The store was like a department store in that each department had a register to ring up sales but we also had "Quick Service Stations" at the back of the store and 2 others at the front near the two entrances.

Our manager was named Mr. Griebel. He was a quiet man who always seemed to be studying something. I didn't deal with him much but came to appreciate him when we had a customer come in the back entrance. The customer came in yelling vulgar language about an ejector razor he had bought that wasn't any good. He was furious and threw the razor at the girl at the back Quick Serve.

Mr. Griebel was there quickly and asked what the problem was. The customer got in his

face yelling about what a poor product it was that he had shaved 3 times and never noticed any hair gone.

Someone retrieved the razor during all of this and with the man who was only 4" from the manager's face spewing vulgar talk at the top of his lungs. Mr. Griebel examined the razor and carefully removed the blade for the razor, pulled out a lighter and lit the paper display blade. As the small flame and smoke rose between the customer and the manager he stepped back to see what was happening. As the last of the paper burned out Mr. Griebel looked at the customer and said one word. "PAPER".

It slowly dawned on the man that the blade that came in the razor was for display only and you were supposed to remove it and install a real blade before you shaved with it.

All was quiet for several minutes as the man stood there deciding what to do. It seemed like 10 minutes but in what was probably a much shorter time the customer turned around and fled out the back door. As he reached the door Mr. Griebel gently tossed the razor at his back telling him "You forgot your razor". If nothing else it made him run harder to get out of the store.

It was lucky for him that the doors swung both ways because he would surely have broken his neck if that door hadn't opened.

"The key to a beautiful, well-kept lawn is a good mower. I highly recommend one who is muscular and shirtless."

Maxine

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The progression in my training dictated that I would be transferred to the Chattanooga store and then my last assignment was the store located in Decatur, Al. It took some time to adjust to ladies 50-60 years old calling me Mr. Broome and I would call them by their first name.

The Chattanooga store was in the Eastgate Shopping Center which was the newest shopping venue in town and was always very busy. One time there was a rumor that the Hell's Angels had been to town and one of their members had been hurt in a fight. Rumors were flying that they were coming by the thousands to level Chattanooga. Their progress towards Chattanooga was being watched and on the day that they were to arrive we looked outside to see hundreds of bikes parked outside our store.

Our plan was to protect the girls working there first. We planted axe handles and large hammers within easy reach. There were enough of them entering the store for the store to be crowded with just them.

Our paint department had our key cutting machine and one very large gentleman wearing his colors and patches went up to my girl and asked her if she made keys. She was so scared I saw a puddle forming between her feet. I threw a cloth on the floor and asked her to get some paint from the storeroom for me. I asked as nicely as I could what I could do for him. He looked really sorry and told me he didn't mean to frighten her and felt real bad about it.

I told him what we had heard about the reason they were here and he laughed saying they were just out for a ride and he didn't know anything about plans to tear down Chattanooga.

If a man washes a dish and no woman is around to see it, did it really happen?

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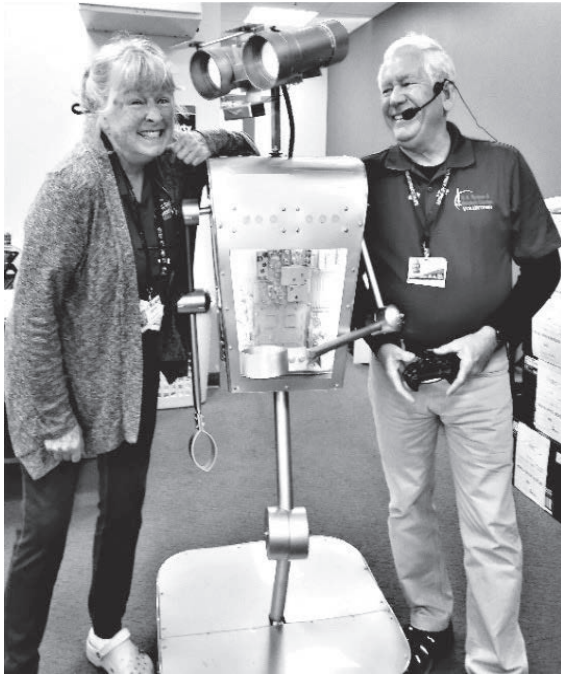
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ROSIE THE ROBOT

by *Patty Trigg*



Before I was a month old, I was airborne. My Dad, a bomber pilot during WWII, opened an airport and flying school in Texas after completing his tour of service. To assuage the fear of young men who wanted to fly, Dad would load me aboard and take to the sky. He told me I was a natural and I would smile and coo softly on takeoff.

The idea of being in Space has always captured my attention. I have always enjoyed looking at the stars and learning the names of the planets. If you walked up to me right now and offered me a seat on a craft leaving for the moon or Mars, I would not hesitate. "Yes! Where is the seat belt, I am ready to go! Start the count down!"

The closest I have personally

"What we think or what we know, or what we believe is, in the end, of no consequence. The only consequence is what we do."

John Ruskin

come to blasting off is visiting the U.S. Space & Rocket Center here in Huntsville. The Rocket Center is a veritable wealth of knowledge on any and everything on space and space travel since the inception of man's first recorded notes on the topic.

When you visit the Space & Rocket Center and you take that first step on the property, it is like visiting Disney only on Rocket fuel.

One of my favorite things at the Space & Rocket Center is the Planetarium. INTUITIVE remodeled the Imax theater introducing the first planetarium of its kind featuring five Christie Laser projectors with an 8K projection. To put this in perspective, a high-quality picture taken by a professional camera is about 1200 to 1500 pixels per square inch. These laser projectors are 8,000 pixels and there are five of them. The color, the depth, the size is all there. You are transported into the universe's secrets.

Now that I am retired and have a lot more free time, I keep active by volunteering. I ran into a friend, Laura, and learned that she volunteered at the Space & Rocket Center. You learn to be a guide and explain the exhibits. There are retired scientists and engineers who take care of the hands-on exhibits. In my ongoing desire to experience space travel I signed up for the next training session.

In the training class a gentleman, Steve, came through and went into a side room. After a few minutes, a Robot came out of this room. Right behind the Robot was Steve. The Robot began to talk to us and moved around our table getting our names and asking where we were from. She introduced herself, "Hi, I am Rosie and I would like to welcome you to the Space & Rocket Center."

Steve wore a head piece with attached microphone and had a control box in his hand. He was Rosie's voice and controlled her movements. Rosie, created by in-house engineers, was designed based on the Robot in the Jetsons cartoon from the 1960s. Can you see the resemblance? Her purpose was to greet visitors and welcome them to the Space & Rocket Center. The kids love her, and she is always available for photographs.



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When the instructor told us that there were openings to learn to work with Rosie, I found my new calling. Without hesitation I was on board and ready to become a Robot Handler.

I met with Steve and for the first hour we moved among the visitors. I learned about Rosie's interaction with the public. What was and was not allowed and how to handle situations, so Rosie did not get damaged.

Without a heads up, Steve turned to me, handed me the control box and headset and said, "Okay Rosie, go for a stroll." It was terrifying and exciting. Learning to control forward, backward, right, left and talk at the same time? Once I understood the controls, I was off and running and having the time of my life.

Soon, a young family walked in and they had a little girl of about four or five. She was dressed in a ballerina outfit with a tutu. I had Rosie ease over and introduce herself to the family. A little timid at first and half hiding behind her Mother, the little girl closely watched Rosie with interest. Rosie asked the little girl her name.

Lily, "My name is Lily."

Rosie, "I love your ballerina outfit, do you like to dance?"

Lily, "Yes."

Rosie, "Would you do a twirl for me?"

Lily came out from behind her Mother, brought her arms up over her head with her fingertips touching, raised up on her toes and she twirled. Rosie responded with appreciation and then asked Lily, "Would you like to see me twirl?"

Lily, "Yes."

At this point I had Rosie twirl. Lily clapped her hands and let out with a little squeal of delight.

Soon, Steve eased over and said it was time to take Rosie in and re-connect her to her charger before she ran out of steam. Rosie, available for a two-hour run, had been out three hours. Proof that time flies when you are having fun.

As we left, this young family was leaving. When Lily looked up and saw Rosie, she let go of her parent's hands and ran to Rosie to say goodbye. Rosie said, "Will you do one last twirl for me?" Without hesitation, Lily took the ballerina pose and twirled on her toes. Can you

think of a better way to end the first day?

I was hooked! Being a Robot Handler has now moved up to be my number one most favorite thing! I have never had so much fun and am now a full-fledged Robot Handler. If you find yourself at the Space & Rocket Center and you see Rosie, look off to the side. I will most likely be close by so come over and say Hi and I'll introduce you to Rosie.

I Love this job!

"The skeleton is what is left after the insides have been taken out and the outsides have been taken off. The purpose of the skeleton is something to hitch meat to."

Scotty, age 7, on science test

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Heard On the Street

by *Cathey Carney*



Our Photo of the Month winner for last month was **Tommy Gipson** who correctly guessed that the little guy was **Brad Travis** of Channel 48. Every year in September when the Lion's club would host Trade Day Around the Square, we would see Tommy and catch up with him. And we had many who called about the hidden football. Did you find it? If not look at page 37, see it in the ad there? Our first caller and winner of a free subscription was **Scott Nixon** who lives in Huntsville with his wife **Melissa**. It was really strange because he said his favorite number was 37 and when he looked at p. 37 in the magazine he saw it immediately. His favorite U. of Alabama football player was **Shaun Alexander**, whose

number was 37 and he kept that number when he went into the NFL. Congratulations to both **Scott** and **Tommy**!

Back on Jul. 20 a sweet baby boy was born and his grandma is **Joyce Russell**. **Noah Mack** was premature but he is doing fine. His proud parents are **Megan** and **Jason Mack**, and they're starting to get some sleep. Congratulations to the family!

Happy 100th birthday to **Ret. Marine Capt. Burrel Edmund Sumner**. He is **Craig Sumner's** Dad and he is beyond proud of him. His grandson **Aaron Sumner** recently wrote a wonderful article about his grand dad and it is quite a story.

Our favorite customer care banker at BB&T Bank on Church Street is **Ianthia Bridges** and she has major events in October. Her niece **Carla "Cee-Cee" Jowers** of Camden, Al has an Oct. 4th birthday. Cousin **Bridgette R. Pettway**, also of Camden, has an Oct. 7th birthday. Her Uncle **Leonard "Craddock" Ramsey** has an Oct. 20th birthday. And best of all, **Ianthia** celebrates her **23rd year as a breast cancer survivor** on Oct 7th. SO proud of you, lady!

With all of us staying at home these days several I've talked to have the right idea. Instead of being mad about having to stay home, make it a haven for you, not just a place to drop by and leave again. Maybe a fresh coat of paint, new rugs, candles, get rid of clutter. Make it a calm, soothing

place so you can just relax and enjoy it! You don't have control over what's happening but you can decide what your attitude will be.

SO proud of our local restaurants who are hanging in there and needing our patronage - **Rollo's**, **Big Spring Cafe**, **Tenders**, **Marios**, **Po-Boy**, **Big Eds Pizza**, **Old Heidelberg** to name just a few. Get some great food locally and you won't have to cook!

Be sure and visit with **Steve Watters** at the Sunoco on 231/431 North - he has had one of the Old Huntsville honor boxes for years!

LeeAnna Keith is from Huntsville and has written several historical novels that have gotten much attention, including being on CSPAN. Her latest book is now being carried at all Barnes & Noble book stores and of course on Amazon and other distributors. The name of the book is "When it was Grand, The Radical Republican History of the Civil War" and is a fascinating look into a time when some in the Republican Party planted the roots for the civil rights movement. LeeAnna currently lives in Manhattan with her family but loves to visit. Mama **Janet Watson** and dad **Sam Keith**

Photo of The Month

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

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This baby isn't with us anymore but his name is on a very scenic road.



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are so proud of her and I am too.

One of the nicest guys I had the honor to know was **Buddy Esslinger**, a lifelong resident of Gurley, AL. He would call each month to tell us how much he enjoyed the stories in Old Huntsville magazine. He married **Sandra Lee Bradley** of Birmingham, Alabama on March 5, 1960 and they had three girls; **Teresa Lee, Catherine Elizabeth** and **Cheryl Ann**. He was a very active member of Chestnut Grove United Methodist Church He was also heavily involved in his children's school, Madison County High School where among other things he was the announcer for all home football and basketball games. He was lovingly called "the Howard Co-sell of Gurley".

He is survived by his wife, **Sandra Lee Bradley Esslinger**; daughters **Teresa Lee Esslinger Humphrey (Gary)** and **Catherine Elizabeth Esslinger Brockman (George)** as well as 6 grandchildren; two great grandchildren; brother **Marvin Oliver Esslinger Jr. (Brenda)**; sister-in-law, **Loyce Esslinger (Neel)**; dear friend **Connie Blackwell** and his beloved dog, **Sir Bandit Romeo**. I personally will miss his monthly calls. Buddy was a very special person and will be so missed.

Judy Smith had a birthday on Aug. 30 and there was lots of celebrating with husband **M.D** and her large family. We love you!

In this month's issue I have hidden a **tiny twig**, because I want cold weather now! This one will be impossible to find, I promise you. But if you do find it, call and we'll see if you're a winner.

We continue to add locations where you can buy Old Huntsville magazine and the latest is the **Mapco on Zierdt Road**. It is SO clean in there and the gas prices are pretty low. Check them out!

No one wants to be a hoarder, it seems things keep piling up and you don't use them, you say you'll use it/need it one day. One tip I heard the other day that I liked - when you decide to buy something, including food, make sure that you have a place for it. If your freezer is overflowing then don't buy any frozen stuff til you empty some of it out. If your closet is so full nothing will fit, take some items out and donate them! Most food has expiration dates to be sure and take inventory occasionally of what you have; canned goods, boxed food, etc. and throw away the old stuff.

I get questions alot about who is printing the magazine now. Remember a couple years back the

paper was thin and there would be ink bleeding? I decided to change to **Colonial Printing** here in Huntsville and the quality went up 100%. When you find someone who you can count on and is dependable it means the world - thank you to **Kim Patterson** and the Colonial team!

Did you know that women who drink coffee generally have less belly fat? Fat around the belly is dangerous, and coffee gives you energy too - might be worth a try.

Katie Harris had a 95th birthday on Sept. 13. Her dad worked for NASA and she left here in 1950. She remembers when California Street was a gravel road! We need stories from Katie as a long time resident back in the day. Happy Birthday, I hope it was so fun.

Many spend lots of money on skin softeners but the best I've found that is available everywhere is **Palmer's Cocoa Butter Formula** that heals and softens. I use it everywhere including face and it is not expensive and makes your skin feel so soft!

Fall is here and the city has lots of History events so you can help celebrate. Check the city website at www.huntsville.org/events/huntsville-history-month/ to get all the locations and dates!

Stay safe and Mask Up!



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Crock Pot Favorites

Italian Bean Soup

- 1 c. small dried white beans, rinsed
- 6 c. chicken broth
- 1 onion, chopped
- 1/2 c. chopped fennel
- 1 t. chopped fresh thyme
- 1 bay leaf
- 6 mushrooms, coarsely chopped
- 1/2 t. black pepper
- 1/3 c. prosciutto, chopped
- 1/4 c. dry white wine

In your crock pot combine all ingredients except the wine. Cover and cook on low for 8 hours and beans are tender. Remove and discard the bay leaf. Stir in the wine and serve.

Smoked Sausage with Red Cabbage & Sweet Potatoes

- 1 small head red cabbage, thinly sliced
- 2 sweet potatoes, peeled, cut into 1/2" slices

- 1 apple, peeled, cored, thinly sliced
- 1 lb. smoked sausage ring, cut into 1-inch slices
- 2 T. brown sugar
- 1/4 t. ground cinnamon
- 1/4 c. red wine vinegar
- Dijon mustard

In your crock pot, alternate layers of the cabbage, sweet potatoes, apple and sausage. In a small bowl, combine brown sugar, cinnamon and vinegar. Pour over the layered ingredients in the pot and cover. Cook on low for 7-8 hours and serve with hot fresh bread and mustard.

Burgundy Beef

- 1.5 lbs boneless beef round steak, cubed
- 1 1-oz package dry onion soup mix
- 2 cups mushrooms, sliced
- 1 small onion, chopped (about 1/2 cup)

- 2-3 cloves of garlic minced
- 1 T. Worcestershire sauce
- 1/2 cup beef broth
- 1/2 cup red wine
- 11 oz. can of condensed cream of mushroom soup, undiluted
- 1 package of egg noodles prepared

In a 5-6 qt. crockpot, add in your cubed steak. Sprinkle with dry onion soup mix. Add the mushrooms, onion and garlic. Pour wine, broth and Worcestershire sauce into crockpot. Top everything with cream of mushroom soup. Cover and cook on LOW for 6-7 hours or HIGH for 4-5 hours.

Serve hot over egg noodles.

Fiesta Black Bean Dip

- 1 c. dried black beans, rinsed
- 1 qt. water
- 1 onion, chopped
- 1 garlic clove, chopped
- 1/4 c. cilantro, chopped
- Salt to taste

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1 fresh jalapeno pepper, seeded & chopped

1/4 lb. salt pork, coarsely chopped

3 oz. goat cheese, crumbled

In your crock pot, combine the beans, water, onion, garlic, cilantro, salt, jalapeno pepper and salt pork. Cover and cook on low for 8-9 hours and beans are soft. Drain and discard the water. In a blender or food processor process the drained bean mixture til almost smooth and spoon into a serving bowl. Sprinkle goat cheese over the top, dip chips into the mixture and top with salsa if desired.

Tom's Beef Stew

4 carrots, sliced

2 lb. beef stew meat, cubed and seared

2 T. Worcestershire sauce

2 stalks celery, chopped

1 bay leaf

1 bell pepper, chopped

2 potatoes, raw, chunked

1 beef stew flavoring packet

3 onions, chopped

3 cloves garlic, minced

Salt to taste

2 t. paprika

Water to cover all plus 3" over top of ingredients

Put all ingredients into a large pot and stir just enough to mix the spices. Cover and cook over low heat for 3-4 hours.

Dessert Fondue

3 t. butter

16 oz. Hershey's chocolate bars with almonds, broken

3 c. miniature marshmallows

6 T. milk

1 c. whipping cream

Rub crock wall with butter. Place candy bars, marshmallows and milk in the crock pot. Cover and cook, stirring every 30 minutes til melted and smooth. Gradually add whipping cream. Cover and keep warm for serving from 2 to 6 hours later. Serve with bite-sized pieces of pound cake, bananas, fresh strawberries, grapes, bread or mandarin oranges.

Apple Dump Cake

1 (20 oz) can apple pie filling
1/2 cup chopped pecans
plus more for serving

1/2 cup jarred caramel ice cream topping plus more for serving

1 (15.25 oz) box spice cake mix not made - just the dry cake mix

1 stick (1/2 cup) unsalted butter cubed

Grease crockpot with cooking spray. Dump in apple pie filling and spread to evenly cover the bottom of the crock

pot. Top filling with pecans and then caramel.

Pour in cake mix and use your hands to spread it out evenly and gently press it down. Top with cubed butter. Cover and cook on LOW 4-6 hours (5 was perfect for me), or until cake is cooked to your liking.

Scoop and serve with vanilla ice cream and a sprinkle of pecans and drizzle of caramel.

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MY FRIEND BUDDY

by Bill Goodson

The Old Huntsville Magazine issue of August, 2020 delivered once again with a memory-chasing article. Cathey's "Heard on the Street" piece caught my attention with a paragraph about Nita Keith Grieder Spitzer. It was a notice of her death and listed her surviving family members, many of whom live in Huntsville.

She didn't mention Nita's deceased brother Marshall (Buddy) Keith. He was my close friend in Huntsville High School, class of 1953 and beyond, until his untimely death from cancer at age thirty-seven. In our youth, we were found frequently visiting in each others' homes, living only a couple of blocks apart on East Clinton and Pratt Avenue.

Another of his HHS classmates, Ray Jones, and I visited Nita at her home in Shreveport when Buddy was living with her while receiving radiation treatments.

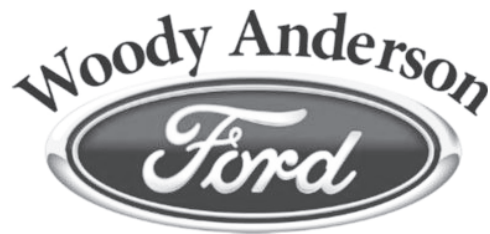
Buddy lived a memorable life.

For one thing, he was endowed with a creative, artistic mind that found several outlets. Early signs of that were seen in high school, when he was cartoonist and poet for the student newspaper. He engaged in choral singing and theater, as well. He and I sang in the choir at

First Methodist Church and we also worked up a little country music act. We even took first place (\$10 prize!) in a talent contest at Butler High. He was voted Wittiest Boy in the senior yearbook.

Anyone who knew him well would know that his real passion was creative writing. He majored in English at the University of Alabama, where he and another high school friend, Topper Birney, were roommates and fraternity brothers. Those years, the 1950s, saw early forays into desegregation at the Capstone. Buddy wrote courageously progressive articles for the school paper, standing up for fairness as not many of us were willing to do at the time. More on that later.

Pursuing pre-medical and medical studies at Vanderbilt, I lost touch with him during that decade. Much of what I know about him through the late fifties and early sixties comes from Topper. After finishing at Tuscaloosa, he made the crucial decision to move to New York City, where he believed he would find inspiration and an environment that would nurture a writing career. He made a reasonably good living as a technical writer, while embarking on the awesome task of starting his first novel. In addition, he wrote poems and a few of them were published. (I might add here, that a limited-edition collection of his poems was printed posthumously by friends.)



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My contact with him remained largely one of letters back and forth. My wife Elise and I spent three years in Boston while I was in psychiatric residency. From that proximity, we visited with him once at his apartment on the Lower East Side. Elise was always fond of Buddy, going back to regular summer visits from her home in Miami to Huntsville, her birthplace and first hometown. In addition, he graciously served as place-holder for me when she was in her freshman year at the University of Alabama in 1955-56, until our marriage in June of '56.

The sixties were to be a momentous era for most of us and Buddy looms large in my memory. He had returned to Huntsville from the city when his father became seriously ill and remained after Marshall, Sr., passed on. With his work history, he was able to find a job easily on the Arsenal. He also made contact with members of the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) to continue his anti-segregation activities.

CORE organized a sit-in at a lunch counter in downtown Huntsville. Buddy was the only white participant. They were all arrested and then released on bond that was arranged by some sympathetic citizens. He was living in his uncle's isolated, remote house outside the city limits. That night he was awakened by men in white hoods, beaten, doused in his private parts with a caustic liquid, dragged to a remote cotton field and left there.

He made it back to his place and then to the hospital where he was treated for "minor wounds," as it said in the newspaper the next day.

That episode was enough to put an end to his time living in Huntsville. He was soon in his VW Bug and back in NYC. Then he boldly followed in the footsteps of famous American writers and spent a year as an expatriate in Europe, mostly in Paris, still persistently working on that novel. Topper joined him for a short while and reports that Buddy became an avid snow skier after a few weeks in Austria. The next time I saw him was in 1968, when he attended our fifteenth high school re-

union. Correspondence continued via mail.

The last chapter of his life was not a happy one. In 1972, while on a skiing weekend in Vermont, he suffered a brain hemorrhage. Medical tests revealed the bleed to be located within a metastatic tumor that originated in his lung. (Yes, he had been a smoker.) He decided to pursue the recommended, palliative radiation treatments in Shreveport, living with his beloved sister, Nita Spitzer. I learned of his death only after his ashes had been strewn in the East River, NYC, as he had requested. I must admit it pained me to learn that he did not elect to be buried in Huntsville.

The epilogue to this story strikes a happier note.

For years, I found myself grieving whenever something would bring back strong memories of Buddy. Then, it was around 1990 that Topper and I discovered we had both been living with similar reactions. We resolved to do something about it. That "something" would take the form of an annual scholarship awarded to a Huntsville High School senior with demonstrated ability in the field of creative writing. After conferring with a few other classmates, we initiated a fund-raising effort and collected \$20,000.

Since 1992, the Marshall C. Keith, Jr. Scholarship has been given annually to a senior who has submitted writings to the head of the English Department. A panel of independent judges is conscripted each year to determine the outstanding submission. The Department has eagerly taken the lead in this process. If you are ever in the HHS building, you can find a plaque in the counselors' office area that names all the winners.

With an average award of \$1500, a total of approximately \$42,000 has been distributed over the years. Another classmate, W.F. Sanders, Jr., has expertly managed the fund with a professional investment strategy, so that the balance hovers around \$35,000. I think Buddy would be proud.

Thank you, Cathey, for presenting me with the opportunity to dislodge Buddy's story from the cobwebs of my mind and share it with your readers.

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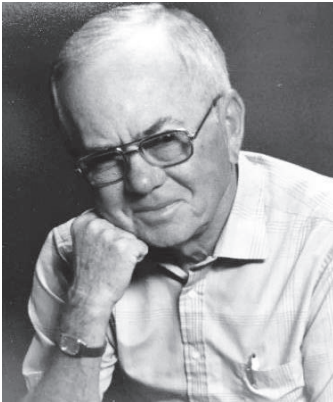
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The Man Who Wore a Star

by Pat McCown Throneberry,
written in 2015



Virgil Junior "Bill" Thrower, son of James Henry and Thelma Lucy Sanders Thrower is my Uncle and I'm proud to say it. He was born at Holly Tree in Jackson County, Alabama and he was one of those men who wore the star - the Texaco Star. He wore it proudly. He worked much more than 8 hours a day, more like 16 or even more than that I would venture to say. He had a very successful gas station business for his efforts. First he opened one on Meridian Street near Lincoln Village and later a bigger station on the Parkway across the street from the Tasty Freeze. He still works hard today at age 90+ in spite of the fact he is going blind. He's the sort of man they write books about or mention in books; for example, "Mr. Anderson's Monument" written by Tillman Hill in 1996 mentions my Uncle Bill and how he treated his customers.

Uncle Bill told me recently that he quit wearing the star when a company man came to his gas station one day and told him he had to start giving out S&H Green Stamps and charge his customers more for gas to pay for the gifts his customers would get when they redeemed the stamps. Uncle Bill told the company representative that he would not charge his customers more for gas to cover the S&H Green Stamps. The man made some threat or made his request a demand and Uncle Bill told him he would no longer operate his Texaco station under the new circumstances.

Time to put up or shut up came and Uncle Bill stood his ground. The Texaco representative backed off when he saw Uncle Bill's resolve and then told my Uncle to forget about the S&H green stamps. But, Uncle Bill turned in his star anyway. He was not going to be

intimidated or threatened when it came to caring for his customers. Today, a lot of Bill Thrower's former customers and people who know him remember him as a man of honor and honesty. Today those Green Stamps are a thing of the past; honesty and integrity like my Uncle Bill always lived by are not a thing of the past. If they are we all are in serious trouble.

I'll always remember Uncle Bill as the man who wore the star with great dignity, pride and good old fashioned honesty! When he passes on to the next life, my prayers are that God will put His arm across my Uncle Bill's shoulders and say "well done" and then give my Uncle Bill a new star - a bigger and brighter one.

(Bill Thrower passed away at the age of 94 on Aug. 29, 2017)

About Time Travel - "If you don't straighten up, I'm going to knock you into the middle of next week!"

Things my Mother Taught Me



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Horrible Halloween Crash Kills Seven Youths

by Billy Joe Cooley

It was early Halloween night, 1937 and the city fell into a different kind of shock as word spread across town that seven of the county's most popular and fun-loving young people had been

killed in a one-car wreck on narrow U.S. 72 Highway going toward Gurley.

A man named Pylant, walking along the road on the far side of Chapman Mountain, had come up on, the wreck, which had occurred just minutes before. The road wasn't heavily traveled in those days.

The wreckage had come to rest in a field, just off a curve near the bottom of the mountain.

Pylant flagged a passing car and hurried across the mountain to a Fifth Street cafe at the edge of Huntsville, where he would notify authorities.

"I was talking to some other guys in the cafe when this car came sliding up and young Pylant jumped out and rushed in, yelling that a terrible wreck had just happened on the far side of the mountain," recalls Jodie Gray of Kildare Street.

"I jumped in my car and hurried in that direction, other drivers were following," said Gray.

But Gray, who was first on the scene, wasn't prepared for the sight that greeted him. Bodies were strewn over a wide area. "The first body I saw was that of my own brother, Mack. His head was sticking out the window and squeezed against a tree stump," said Gray.

"Then I saw the body of his wife Irene. A few feet from her were the bodies of my sister Fanny and a young man named Slaton."

The body of a pretty girl named Vivian Elledge had been thrown from the back seat, as had that of her boyfriend, Leighton Preston.

The Huntsvillians had been headed for Chattanooga, where one of them had relatives and where they had planned to attend a street dance and other Halloween festivities.

Authorities, after examining the wreckage, theorized that the driver of the car, a man named Osborn, had been speeding along the crooked mountain road and that Irene Gray, who was seated in the front seat between her husband and Osborn and who had a fear of fast driving, had reached over and turned off the car's ignition.

"It was a type of Ford that when the ignition switch was turned off, the steering wheel would lock," recalls Jodie Gray. "Of course, Irene wouldn't have known that."

The seven young victims had hundreds of friends, many of whom still speak of the night of horror.

"I still have unnerving memories of that tragedy," said county official Billy Harbin as he and Jackson Way Barbershop owner Floyd Hardin recently recounted the incident.

"Hardly a week goes by that somebody in the barbershop doesn't bring up the subject of that wreck," says Hardin.

"Thousands of cars a day travel up U.S. 72 and there's probably not a driver in the bunch who knows about the wreck," says Hardin.

"One thing's for sure, though; I always slow down and remember."



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News from 1923

The Bradleyan, a Work of Art in the Year 1923

The Bradleyan, the annual of Bradley School, is out and being circulated among graduates and subscribers now. The annual this year is surprisingly good, and complete, being at once a register of events that have happened and hopes that have been formed for the future. It contains pictures and records of the various classes, athletics of all kinds for both boys and girls, which will make it a valued keepsake in the years to come when hopes have been realized or blasted as the case may be.

The Bradleyan is beautifully printed, made up and bound, making it worth a place on any library shelf or center table. The school itself is recognized as one of the most complete and efficient in the state, every provision being made to carry on the best and highest school work for the students attending.

Found Baby on Front Porch

Attracted by the crying of a baby, Mr. and Mrs. Harry Baldwin, living on Randolph Street, investigated and found a 2 day old baby boy wrapped in a quilt lying on their front porch. The finders notified Dr. G. A. Cryer of the presence of the baby at their home and the official turned the infant over to Mr. and Mrs. Charles A. Davison, who had expressed a desire to adopt it.

**"Back up my hard drive?
How do I put it in reverse?"**

Louise Avery, Huntsville

Street Cars Halted by Molasses Lake

Whether because of an accident or an attempted joke, street cars on 9th Street between Second and Third Avenues were unable to make their schedules for an hour or two yesterday because of a veritable lake of molasses on the right-of-way in that section. The sticky substance had to be shoveled up and placed in carts and a liberal supply of sand placed on the tracks before traffic could be resumed. It is not yet known where the sticky substance originated.

A reward of \$500 is being offered for the apprehension of the party who placed the molasses on the track. If caught and the act found to have been committed as a joke by someone with a questionable sense of humor, the joker will be prosecuted.

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A TRIANGLE OF STARS

by Barry Key



Our Greatest Generation is leaving us quickly. A generation whose perseverance through the Great Depression and family sacrifices during World War II, preserved for us the freedoms that we now enjoy.

My mother and dad, Houston and Dot Key, were a part of that generation. Both came through the Depression with a positive outlook on the future. Then, my dad served and survived the last two years of WWII. My mother, for the last two years of WWII, was able to raise and care for me, alone, despite the rationing of necessities such as food, clothing and gasoline.

Following my dad's return from service, including millions of other men and women, our nation saw a national economic recovery that history had never witnessed before. The hardships and sacrifices that the Greatest Generation had suffered for decades instilled a work ethic that could not be restrained. Living through hell for so many years taught our older population frugality, conservatism and that no family is an island.

Then came the 1950 and 1960 decades of what has been considered the most contented, auspicious and prosperous times of life for our Greatest Generation. Individuals and families had learned that relying on one another meant mutual prosperity for all.

The painful downfall for our Greatest Generation during those 20 years were the Korean and Viet Nam wars. Our Greatest Generation Veterans saw their sons and daughters being shipped to the hell holes of the world to fight for the democracy and freedom that they had fought for during WWII...a war that was to end all wars. That had to be a terrifying, stressful time until their loved one was once again home, forever dressed in civilian attire.

Judy and I have two boys that served four years in service after high school. We were very proud that they were willing to serve their country. However, a lot of prayers were said during their time in service, that the United States would not engage in an active war such as Korea or Viet Nam.

It really pains me to see someone desecrating our flag, Old Glory. It tells me they have no respect for, or the understanding of, what suffering and sacrifices have been made by millions of people over the last 250 years to give them the right for such an act.

I know that it has to be heartbreaking when an old Veteran, that spent four years in a fox hole somewhere in the world, sees such disregard for our NATIONAL SYMBOL OF FREEDOM...a flag that he was willing to give his life to protect and preserve.

I have my father's ceremonial burial flag, A TRIANGLE OF STARS, that I am truly proud of. But in reality, I wish the "inevitable time" for this emblem of honor, courage and eternal life would have been delayed.

I want to thank all the VETERANS that have served and sacrificed for our country and my family.

Did you know (and most families are not aware) that three spent shell casings from the 21 gun salute, one casing from each volley, can be inserted into the folds of the folded flag before presentation to the recipient, if so requested by the recipient?

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There's been a Killin' on the Place

by Anna (Gene) Clift Chesnut



During cotton-picking season in the South, the air is hot and humid, sometimes unbearable in the heat of the afternoon. A bar/dancehall, where passions run high as well as heat, in an evening, can be an inviting temptation from a hard days work in the sun.

One late evening my mother telephoned me, a college student at that time, to say she had received a call from the man who had once been the overseer on our cotton farm in Meridianville, a town twelve miles north of Huntsville. At that time he was living in a retirement home on the outskirts of Huntsville.

The call from him that evening went something like this: "Miz Annie Martin, Miz Annie Martin, there's been a killin' on the place. Turn on the TV to the news". So, of course, my mother rushed to the television and, sure enough, there was our farmhouse with cameras and a journalist telling about the killing of a farmhand that had taken place there. My mother did not know any of the circumstances so, therefore, our conversation was short and I never heard any more about the incident at that time.

My mother died in 1987. On another hot summer night

in 1988 I was with a Huntsville girlfriend and the current farm overseer, who had managed our farm before my mother's death but now worked for me. Interestingly, we were out at a restaurant/pool hall, grabbing a bite to eat and then decided to shoot some pool. It suddenly gave me the feeling of what the night might have been like when the farmhand murder took place. I knew there was no longer a farmhouse so I asked my overseer if he knew what happened on that fateful evening. This is how he described the events.

My mother had leased the land to a man who farmed several farms. His mechanic who worked on the farm equipment and a farmhand lived in our farmhouse. One night a married couple and this farmhand, who was a friend of theirs, went to a bar/dancehall. During the course of the evening, the farmhand borrowed seven dollars from the husband and then,

asked to dance with his wife.

There seemed to be no immediate acrimony at the dancehall but when the three drove back to the farmhouse and the farmhand got out of the car, the husband, no doubt feeling offended by his friend's attentions toward his wife, slit his throat. With his throat gurgling blood and the husband chasing him, the farmhand ran to the porch and beat on the farmhouse door.

When the mechanic opened the door and saw what was happening he grabbed a hatchet, which he kept on the right side wall. He chased the killer who jumped into his car and escaped but was later caught by the authorities.

According to my overseer, my mother, being a very religious person, was so upset over the incident that, shortly thereafter, she called the fire department and had them burn the farmhouse down as a teaching exercise. A killing to her was a blasphemy against God!

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THROUGH THE EYES OF A CHILD

by John Carriker



As this nation and the rest of the world enters into a new way of learning and living, it is too easy to assume that all have the same ideas, regrets and dreams. The Coronavirus pandemic has birthed an alternate history while developing new memories. What will we tell those who come after us? What were their interpretations of the world when they were younger? Sometimes it's a good exercise to see the world through the eyes of a child.

This story begins where most of my observations are born: the Bible, the Word of God. You may ask how the Bible appeared through the eyes of a child: "Jacob was more famous than his brother, Esau, because Esau sold Jacob his birthmark in exchange for some pot roast. Jacob had a son named Joseph who wore a really loud sports coat. Another important Bible guy is Moses, whose real name was Charlton Heston."

That was a mixture of good and bad information and how it sometimes gets translated. But the eyes of a child — especially a younger child — reflect curiosity, innocence, a lack of inhibitions.

When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put the ways of childhood behind me. (1 Cor. 13:11)

"We must all hear the universal call to like your neighbor as you like to be liked yourself."

George W. Bush

One such child is the grandson of my wife, Judy (aka Nana). He is a six-year-old native of Alabama with light brown hair, uninhibited, who goes by the name of James. The following anecdotes occurred prior to the introduction of the virus into our environment.

Just a few samples of James aptitude and attitude:

The aroma of food cooking in the church kitchen added to the ambience of the afternoon children's performance for members and guests. Two of my wife's grandchildren — James and Samantha ("Sam" for short) — were outstanding as they sang, remembered/recited their dialogue and brought joy to their families, friends and other visitors to the large Methodist building.

After the finale led by the youth, the group was treated to Italian cuisine, pasta topped with a succulent, meaty sauce cafeteria-style. Italian bread smeared with garlic was added to the plate while a tossed salad with (you guessed it) Italian dressing completed the serving.

Guests were seated in the spacious dining area, including Judy's family, that is, except James. She spotted him



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headed to the other side of the room. "There he is!" she exclaimed and waved. Instead of joining the family, he went the opposite way and directly to the table where his objective was seated: Kate, a pretty 6-year-old classmate. He then nudged his way to a seat next to her and gave her the choice of two pie slices which he had selected from the dessert line. Next, he took her near-empty glass of tea and refilled it in the kitchen before returning and establishing a rapport.

No one at the family's table commented or seemed to notice his single-minded goal. James has the distinction of being uninhibited and never meeting a stranger. What he says and does is not for attention or show, i.e., it's just a natural, inquisitive mind located under a tousled head of hair — a child of God. Some other examples:

- His Nana, who until recently picked her grandchildren up after school, was driving them past a cemetery where a memorial was in progress. "Look, Nana," he observed. "All those people are coming by to see their loved ones. When I get old like you, Nana, I'm going to buy me one of those rocks." (He was speaking about the headstones.)

- "Don't you want to get married someday?" Nana asked. "Yeah," he replied, "but I want to have some fun frst."

- Another time James and his family went out to eat after a Friday of activity. The waitress who served them was heavily tattooed which seemed interesting to him. When it came time to take James' order, he looked at her and seriously observed: "I really like your stickers."

- While seated with his Nana at the dance studio where his sister Sam was taking ballet lessons, James noticed a mother sitting across from them. She had holes in her designer jeans in an area of the knees. He proceeded to walk over to where she sat, touched her knee and asked, "Did it hurt much?"

How do we see the world as it is? As it was? As it will be?

James and other children like him still live in a world where God creates the chapters and writes the day's events and surprises. They are learning a valuable lesson which we, as adults, should remember: never curse the darkness until the exposure of the Light reveals its surprises.

"I asked the Librarian if she had any books on Paranoia. She whispered, "Be careful. They're behind you.""

Fred Peavy, Meridianville

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- 1 stick butter, melted
- 1-1/4 c. brown sugar
- 1 egg
- 1 T. vanilla extract
- 2 t. ground cinnamon
- 1-1/2 c. rolled oats, regular or quick
- 3/4 c. plain flour
- 1/2 c. Golden raisins
- 3/4 c. chopped pecans
- 1/2 t. baking soda
- 1/2 t. salt

In one bowl with mixer combine butter, brown sugar, egg, and vanilla extract. In another bowl mix dry ingredients - raisins, pecans, cinnamon, oats, flour, baking soda and salt. Add the wet ingredients to the dry and mix well.

Spray a cookie sheet with butter spray and drop by spoonful on the sheet, amount about 3 tablespoons. Spread out with 2 inches in between each cookie as they'll spread. Bake in 350 degree oven for 8-10 minutes and edges just begin to brown.

Remove from oven and cool on cookie sheet for 5 minutes, remove to wire rack. These can be stored in fridge or frozen. These are really moist & sweet!



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When Huntsville was a Small Town (How Small was It?)

By Jean Brewer McCrady



In the 40s and 50s the grass was thought to be greener north of the Mason-Dixon line and for good reason. Hard working folks from the south could always find work up north. "Up north" was synonymous with Chicago, pronounced "Chicargo", and included dozens of towns and bergs with names of their own. Harvey, Hammond and Hegewisch are some names I remember hearing as addresses of the northern relatives. Several of Mama's 10 siblings were among those northbound migrants. Most of them stayed there until retirement then returned home to north Alabama. Some of the cousins who were born and raised there stayed on to raise their own families as "yankies" and are still there.

It was common practice for the Chicago relatives to come home for their two weeks of summer vacation and make the rounds visiting those who stayed put in Alabama. That was great fun for the cousins, who only saw each other once a year. Sometimes the visits included overnight stays, which meant sleeping on pallets wherever there was floor space and playing outdoors on dirt roads and in hay lofts and cow pastures.

One of Mama's siblings who went north was her only full sister, my Aunt Nina Mae. She is what this story is really about. Her entire adult life was hard going to put it mildly, for many reasons.

Among them was a rocky marriage and periods of skimpy help with raising six kids. She had limited education when measured by school years, but she had a PhD in Perseverance, Hardknocks and Determination.

Aunt Nina Mae was unstoppable in her desire and motivation for her kids to have more opportunity and an easier life than hers had been. Her only daughter, Ruth, married Troy Hughes in the mid-50s and, yes, they went up north to find work. Within a year, Ruth came home and fetched her Mama and two youngest brothers, Lonnie and Larry, who were still at home and took them back north with her.

Aunt Nina Mae had the brazen audacity (to outsiders) to believe she could get a job to support her and the boys and save enough money to someday buy a new car. This confidence was supported by her lifetime of practice at stretching pennies. She could stretch a dime so thin it looked like aluminum foil. So her seemingly audacious dream was not without sound backing.

Fast forward to 1962. By then Ruth and Troy had finished a tour of duty in the Army, returned to Alabama and bought a small house near Hazel Green. That summer of '62, Aunt Nina Mae and the two boys drove to Alabama for their two-week vacation—in her brand new Chevy Impala! Check mark for that goal. They



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"The world has turned into Las Vegas. Everyone's losing money, it's acceptable to drink at all hours and no one knows what day it is."

Sharon Jemison, Decatur

established headquarters with Ruth and Troy and traveled out from there to visit kin-folks. Before I get to the story about their trip to Harvest, there's more to say about Aunt Nina Mae's financial "audacity." In less than a decade she returned to Alabama for good and bought the first house she'd ever owned. A nice modest-sized brick house in Meridianville. She paid cash for it! Another, and bigger, check mark.

Back to the vacation visiting. When it was time to visit Mama and her sister Vera Brewer, Aunt Nina and the boys loaded into the new Chevy for the trip to Harvest, which back then was a sizable trip from Hazel Green. While passing through Huntsville she stopped at a service station to fill up.

Just to make sure she was clear on how to find Harvest, she asked the station attendant for help with directions. He gladly ran through all the road names and turns she'd need to make and then added: "If

you are going to the Brewers' house, I can tell you an easy way to find it", and then proceeded to pinpoint her right to the door.

When she recovered from the shock of his accurate guess, she asked how on earth he knew where they were going. His answer was, "I can see you are kin to Ms. Brewer so I figured you were going to visit her."

Upon arriving at the house, she couldn't wait to tell of that strange happening and my brother Buzz was able to quickly shed light on it. He asked was it a Shell station? The answer was yes. He then explained, that was Sherrill Thomas. He lives just down the road and we all grew up and went to school together. He's a son of the Mr. Thomas that Daddy builds houses with.

So Sherrill's insightful guess turned out to be a simple case of observation and connection that is characteristic of small towns. That's how small Huntsville was in 1962.

"I took my wife to a wife-swapping party. I had to throw in some cash."

Henny Youngman

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This is NOT a Sales Call

by Al Dean

Alexander Graham Bell, on March 10th, 1876 was awarded a patent for the telephone. The first words spoken on this amazing instrument were to his assistant, Thomas Watson: "Watson, come here! I want to see you."

The direct dial system came to Huntsville in the early 1950s and dial-less phones, party lines and switchboard operators would soon be relegated to the past. Josiah Childers's first words to his wife were: "What good is it if we can't listen in on our neighbors' conversations?"

I remember the antenna of my first car phone dangling from what remained of the rear window of my Dodge. I sat frozen in darkness and fear at the traffic light on Airport Road and the Parkway beside the Turtle Carwash watching the November '89 tornado destroy everything in its path. I was still able to use it to call my wife. My first words were: "I was in the tornado, but I'm okay."

If I answer an incoming call today, after "Hello," my first word is "No."

Why?

In the past month I have been selected to receive a security system for our home, free of charge; relief for my outstanding credit card debt by transferring to an interest free credit card with a low transfer fee; freedom from the burden of my non-existent student debt; renewal of my Microsoft computer software license which was about to expire; the blessing of providing financial aid to a grandson, named Mike, who had encountered travel problems in Minnetonka, Minnesota during severe flooding; the opportunity to avoid harsh penalties or perhaps incarceration due to delinquent I.R.S. remittances; the distinction of becoming a sustaining member to aid the Venetian blind, all simply by saying "yes" to the Pakistani marketer on the other end of the line.

I once answered "yes" when a caller asked me if I could hear him; the call immediately went dead. I received a free back brace through the mail; the bill went to Medicare.

Smartphones are available that rival mid-range desktop computers in power; yet, we can't totally eliminate robocalls. I recognize I am not nearly as smart as a smart phone, or even a flip phone. While many of today's high-tech products are capable of much good, they can also be a

Seat belts are not nearly as confining as wheel chairs.

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pain in the part of our anatomy that gets over the fence last; so what can we do about it?

My dad had a friend with a stuttering problem, who, yearning for a cure, answered a magazine ad that unconditionally guaranteed an end to his dilemma. It was expensive, but it was his last option. The cure arrived in an 8.5 by 11 manila envelope containing a single sheet of paper upon which was written: Keep your mouth shut. Impossible to do, but certainly effective. It appears that with the exception of eliminating phone service - effective, but an existential impossibility - our only option for managing annoying robocalls is also to keep our mouths shut. Don't answer!

Phones are equipped with an automatic caller or number identifier that gives us the option of not answering, but we often have good reasons to answer unfamiliar numbers, especially if the caller ID flashes an exchange from our hometown 700 miles away and a loved one is ill - could be a doctor or a hospital or a cousin with bad news. Complicating our conundrum, our wonderful technology has devised a way for our Pakistani's call to appear as a local number on our caller ID; and who won't pick up a local call. "Hello."

Momentary delay. Here's a clue. Hang up!

"Can you hear me?"

"Yes."

Click.

"Hello. Hello."

Too late; a back brace is on the way. It only takes one "yes" at any point in the conversation for a deal to be closed; and the caller has our commitment recorded.

Some callers will give us the opportunity to hang up by requesting that we to press 1 to speak to a representative for more information. Don't press 1. If our curiosity leads us to learn more about this incredible offer and we press 1 to transfer

the call, a popup on their web browser will give them our name, address, phone number, and other important details and we are forever in their data base, which will be e-mailed or otherwise distributed to anyone on the planet anxious to get us into theirs.

Apps are available to catch some robocalls, but won't eliminate them. We might not be able to stop them all, but we can get revenge with an app that provides a simulated conversation so we don't have to talk to them, and enough oohs and aahs are included to keep the caller engaged until their frustration reaches the peak that ours often does.

The Federal Trade Commission's advice for handling illegal robocalls is to: Hang up.

Use call blocking devices. Report the call to ftc.gov/complaint.

"Oops. I've got a phone call. Let me check the caller ID. It's my own number! Ain't technology grand?"



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THEFT AT WALGREENS

by John Michael Hampton

Finishing the last of the ice cream, the man left the dish on the counter and stood to go to the restroom. Little did he know that this dish of ice cream was going to be his last taste of freedom for a long time.

My grandmother, Annie Jackson, worked at the Walgreens Drug Store in downtown Huntsville during the early 1950s. Like many other drug stores of the era, this Walgreens had a lunch counter and a soda fountain to serve breakfast, lunch, dinner and treats to drug store customers and other workers and residents of the area.

She had worked there for several years when the incident that I am writing about occurred. By the time of the incident, she had worked her way up to assistant manager of the lunch counter in the store and was also in charge of the soda fountain

There was a man who came in everyday to the drugstore. This man would order a banana split, which was twenty-five cents at the time. He would eat the banana split at the counter, leave the dish on the counter, and go to the restroom. He would take the ticket for the banana split to the restroom with him and dispose of it, such that when he came out, there was no ticket for him to take up front to the drug store cashier.

My mom started watching him closely when she noticed that there was no money or tickets being returned to the soda fountain for his banana splits. She saw what was going on after about three days of observing the customer and she knew that she had to be ready to accuse him once she had evidence to arrest him.

She knew what time each day that the customer came into the store, so she had a Huntsville Police officer waiting in the store, but not where the officer could be seen, when the customer arrived the next day. He went through his normal routine of eating the banana split, then he left the dish on the counter.

He stood, grabbing the ticket, making his

way toward the restroom.

When he exited the restroom, the officer followed at a distance until the customer passed the cashier, preparing to exit the store. At this point, the officer approached the man and asked for the ticket for the banana split. When the customer could not produce the ticket in question, the officer arrested him for theft and took him to jail.

The customer ended up getting three years in county jail for the theft of the banana splits. My grandmother continued working at the lunch counter for another year, until she married and moved to Nashville.

The Walgreens Drug Store no longer exists in Downtown Huntsville. It has been replaced by a more modern Walgreens on Governors' Drive that does not have a lunch counter. However, this story still exists of a time when my grandmother showed a customer that crime does not pay and the taste of stolen ice cream can lead to hard times.

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Memories of Brahan Spring

by Phillip Johnson

"The Spring" was what we Village boys called it when we referred to Brahan Spring. I recall that the mill company owned and maintained the Spring. A single cinder-covered lane at the end of Ivy Avenue led up to the Spring. Automobile traffic was discouraged by a cattle guard and locked field gate. A wayside entrance was constructed for the convenience of the villagers who wanted to pasture their cows. A barbed wire fence enclosed the pasture that surrounded the Spring.

Some weeks during the summer months the Mill would open the gates for fishing and picnicking. We would

simply slide under an eroded washout as various locations around the fence. We caught brim, bluegill and shellcracker if we were lucky - we all loved to fish back then.

There was lots of algae covering the top of the water, which posed an obstacle for us boys. Wayne Quick concocted a technique by using a long cane pole, twine and a hook. We would tie the twine to the pole, then a hook to the other end of the twine, then finally apply a fat red worm to the hook. We would loft the pole into the air, slinging the line out and over the algae.

We caught so many dark, fat brim this way, I lost count. We also had some good times frog gigging around the edges of the spring.

We found so many Indian artifacts in that area near the mud flat - I figured there must have been some Indian homes

there at one time.

Some of the older guys who were residents of the Village fished at the Spring quite often. Abe Daniel and Pete Hammond were two that come to mind. Abe was a member of a very large family, whose father died when he was just a teenager. He had to quit school and go to work to help support his family. He was a loom fixer in the Mill and told me how he would get up every morning for work and take cold biscuits and streak of lean for lunch. A shelf was designated as the location for storing lunches. Abe made use of the same sack for several days, causing the sack to become quite greasy.

One day while on his lunch break he noticed a clean brown sack. He thought he would take this one and leave his greasy one but when he looked inside the sack all he found was a hammer and two hickory nuts.



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Halloween Back in the Day

by Elizabeth Wharry



When I was a child, Halloween was magical. There was something exciting about being allowed to go outside after dark, staying up a bit past bedtime. During the day, we would chat-

ter about our costumes, and brag about how much candy we were going to gather. The reality was usually quite different from our grandiose plans.

Store-bought costumes had plastic molded masks that never quite fit and were usually made from an inexpensive fabric. They rarely lasted more than one or two wearings. Monsters, especially Frankenstein and Dracula, princesses and cartoon characters were among the most popular. The top homemade costumes included cowboys, hobos, beatniks/hippies and Indians.

Oftentimes, oranges, apples or small boxes of raisins were given out instead of candy. Occasionally, a popcorn ball would make its way into the sack. Then there was always that one neighbor who gave out something unpopular like black licorice, Bit 'O Honey or starlight mints. Ewww. Most people gave out Necco wafers, Smarties, candy cigarettes, wax lips/mustaches, bottle caps, fireballs,

Sugar Daddys, bb-bats, miniature Nestle bars, Bazooka bubble gum or Cracker Jacks.

Parents didn't worry as much in those days. We kids usually went in groups of 3 to 6. Neighbors know each other and each other's kids. I went to a school friend's neighborhood, it was arranged well ahead of time. We kids knew we'd better be on our best behavior. We were expected to say "trick or treat" and "thank you". It was understood that if the lights were off, we bypassed that house. We didn't dare think of vandalizing it, either! When we approached a house that had a jack-o'-lantern outside on display, we left it alone and usually said something nice about it to the adult answering the door.

Today, costumes, yard decorations and jack-o'-lanterns have gotten more elaborate. Some things haven't changed....kids are still chaperoned, say "trick or treat" and "thank you".

Happy Halloween!

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PET TIPS FROM ANGEL

Taking Care of Your Parakeet



Parakeets Are Easy to Care For if You Follow These Tips

Parakeets make for fun and entertaining pets, without requiring a lot of maintenance or cost. Given the proper care, parakeets can live as long as 10 to 14 years – nearly as long as cats and dogs. These tips will help you to raise happy, healthy birds!

1. Parakeets Like Company

If you have a single bird, a mirror is practically a must. A lone parakeet will enjoy your company, but a mirror helps them feel less alone when you are not around.

You can also buy bird stand-ins from pet stores to give your keet company, but that seems rather silly to me. Consider getting a second bird for ideal level of companionship for your parakeet.

However, you may want to keep multiple birds separate when they are young so they will learn to bond with humans rather than just other birds.

2. Be Sure to Vary the Food

Plain old bird seed gets old fast. Pet stores and most supermarkets sell a range of birdie treats, from clip-on treat sticks to millet sprays to birdie biscuits. You can also give your birds small pieces of fruit as a special treat. Try cilantro.

3. Parakeets Love Toys

Parakeets are playful creatures. There are many toy options you can get for your bird, from rings to swings to bells and beads. Parakeets are drawn to shiny things, things that make noise and objects they can move around with their beaks or feet. Just take care that any toy you give your parakeet does not have small parts which can come off and become a choking hazard. Don't over-clutter the cage, either, but rotate through several different toys for variety.

4. Earn Their Trust

With parakeets, trust may take months to build. They will likely be very shy when you first bring them home, but their personalities will emerge within a few weeks. Build trust by placing your finger in front of your bird. Do this every day until it gets the courage to hop on. After a few days of this, try coaxing your bird by gently nudging your finger against its lower chest. With patience, you will build trust in this way. Don't worry if your bird is slow to trust you. Eventually it will learn to like interactions with you.

5. Never Grab Your Parakeet

To a small bird, few things are more terrifying than an open hand reaching in and grabbing it against its will. Trust between bird and human can evaporate quickly if you grab the little guy. Your parakeet might frustrate you in the beginning by refusing to sit on your finger. But resist the urge to grab. I've found it very helpful to buy a cage with a top that detaches – this allows you to easily let your birds out without grabbing and pulling them through the cage door.

6. Parakeets Love to Sing

In fact they can be quite loud! They will chirp, sing and squawk on their own, but they love to sing along to music or even your own singing. If you're not vocally-gifted, try playing some music near your birds and see how they react. If you are away all day, consider leaving the radio on for them at a moderate volume. Some birds love country music.

7. Make Sure They Get Exercise

There is only so much exercise your parakeet can get inside of its cage. It should be taken out regularly to run and fly around. Rooms with hardwood or linoleum floors afford the easiest clean-up. Be sure all doors and windows are shut and curtains closed (birds may fly into windows and injure themselves). Make sure ceiling fans are off.

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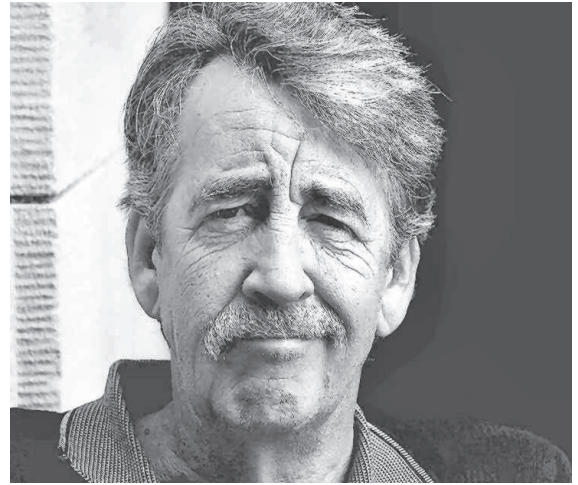
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An Excerpt from "The Way It Was, The Other Side of Huntsville's History"

A book of local stories by Tom Carney and
other local authors

To Cross the Hogohegee by Tom Carney



He moved silently and quickly through the autumn foliage near the Big Spring. The Alabama forest formed a canopy that kept the normally thick undergrowth down and made it easier to move.

Still, his senses were alert for any noise, smell, or movement that could mean danger or death. John Ditto had come too far from Virginia to end his quest through carelessness.

The year was 1802 and the world was changing rapidly. Across the ocean Napoleon was solidifying his conquest of Italy. Beethoven and Hayden were busy composing new masterpieces. In America, Thomas Jefferson was President of the New Republic and Ditto was looking for a place to camp on a site that would later become downtown Huntsville, Alabama.

He built himself a comfortable campsite consisting of a lean-to shack against a bluff near the Big Spring. He had cool, clean water and the surrounding countryside abounded in game. For most men this would have been enough to make them stay.

John didn't tarry long, though. He had a mission. Like so many other frontiersmen of

this era, John had moved into the new territory looking for a new life and fortune. And find it he did. Traveling south, he located the big bend of the Hogohegee River and at a place called Chickasaw Fields, below the lower point of an island, John found the place he had sought.

Making friends with the Indians, Ditto soon established a thriving trading post. Another incentive to settle here was the burgeoning keel-boat traffic from the up-river settlements en route to New Orleans.

The river was good to John. In 1807 he built a gunwale type flat-boat propelled by sweep oars that he used as a ferry to transport settlers across the Hogohegee. He also set up a boat yard where he built shallow draught boats for use over the treacherous shoals down-river.

Andrew Jackson with his small army of volunteers used

the ferry in 1813 en route to fight the Creeks during the great Red-stick Indian uprising.

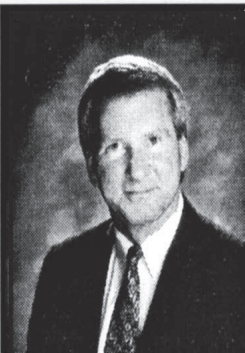
The Hogohegee later became the Tennessee River. Chickasaw Island eventually became known as Hobbs Island and Ditto's Landing was the focal point for the town of Huntsville's transportation network. The infant town's great highway was the river and Ditto's Landing was its port.

John Ditto was one of the forerunners of that romantic, boisterous and sometimes dangerous period of the 19th century Southern frontier movement. His contemporaries were men like Jim Bowie, Davy Crockett, and Mike Fink.

It would be for others to build the settlement into a thriving and prosperous city. But they couldn't have done it without men like John Ditto and a place called Ditto's Landing.

**"I support bacteria.
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some people have."

Jim Reagan, Huntsville**



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Can You Believe It? Early 1900 News

A Lady Living in Birmingham went blind from sneezing. Mrs. Joe Jacks, wife of a doctor in that town, had a violent attack of sneezing. Mrs. Jacks was so exhausted by the violence of her sneezes and the prolonged period of attack that she fell asleep immediately after obtaining relief. When she awoke in the morning she was unable to see.

Birmingham specialists who are treating Mrs. Jacks believes the violence of her sneezing caused a hemorrhage of the blood vessel to the eyes.

All Ladies take Heed!

Mrs. C. V. Lewis was taken to the hospital yesterday, the victim of an accident which carries a moral for other women. She was in her yard hanging out the week's washing on a line and pinning the clothes up with ordinary pins. These she carried safely in her mouth until she sneezed suddenly and swallowed at least half a dozen of them. Since then she has suffered intense agony and at the hospital it was said she was in critical condition.

A one-legged man attempted to take charge of the Southern Depot today and was arrested by the police. He was drunk and anxious to get a fight out of anybody. He refused to give out his name.

Huntsville Crap Shoot

Officers Crunk and High and Deputy Sheriff Mitchell made a raid on a bunch of crap shooters late Saturday night near the Rodgers stable. They captured Jim Johnson, Tim Lightfoot, Step Lowe, Frank Reeder and Eli Brooks. They were all gathered around a blanket on a floor shooting craps. One made an attempt to pull a gun but was battered on the head and gave

up the idea. They were "Rolling Bones" as they called it.

An Important Birthday

Mrs. Elizabeth Freeman celebrated her 113th birthday at her home in Nashville, Tennessee. Aunt Betty, as she is called by her seven children, fifty-five grandchildren and three great grandchildren has been addicted to the tobacco habit for the last ninety years. She says that smoking the pipe is partly responsible for her good health and long life.

Corpse "Winks" at Undertaker

In Birmingham a local undertaker received a telephone call, telling of the death of an old woman who has for years been an object of charity here.

On entering the door of the room the undertaker's assistant went first, but he remained only a very short time, for the "corpse's" eye winked at him. There was an open door near and he didn't

stop to tell his employer of his astounding discovery, but took advantage of the opportunity for getting out of the room.

But the undertaker made the same discovery himself and instead of bolting, he made a hasty examination and found the woman indeed alive.

Then he decided that the woman's condition was critical, believing that she was in the last throes of death and he decided to sit down and wait.

He waited about two hours and on discovering that the woman was breathing stronger he made another exam and found that her strength was rapidly returning. She was not even dangerously ill. He has since learned that she has been guilty of "dying" a number of times before in order to get sympathy from the people.

Now this young undertaker (who has many friends here) is looking for the person who sent in the telephone call.

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Dr. Harryett (Maenetta) Jackson

She's Pure Marble from Sylacauga, AL

by John H. Tate



Marble from Sylacauga, Alabama, is known as pure white marble, with a very fine grained, translucent and pearlescent appearance.

Harryett Maenetta Jackson, who goes by Maenetta, is also a product of Sylacauga, Alabama. Just like the famous stone from her native home, she too is of a fine-grain and is pearlescent, not only because of her physical beauty but because of her translucent spirit.

When asked about her name, "My name was given to me by my mom. She had a very good friend who was an educator like her; that influenced her a great bit during her early years of teaching and her name was Maenetta Davis. So when she started teaching, I think Maenetta had such an influence on her that she decided to name me after her. Not only named me after her, but she was also my Godmother."

In the small town, Maenetta was always in a fishbowl because both of her parents were well-known educators. In her own words, "My mom taught first grade for thirty-five years before she retired. She taught pretty much everybody that is my age that decided

to stay in Sylacauga; they know her well."

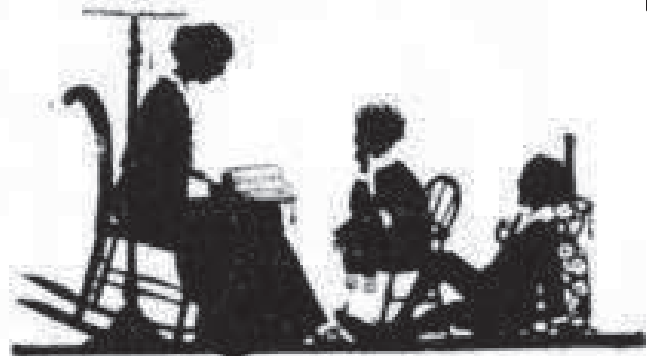
"My dad taught fifth grade math and science for years and then they eventually asked him to become an Assistant Principal, so he did that for a while. So, I was just brought up that everywhere I went, I had a book in my hand. Even if I was going somewhere fun, I had a book."

Maenetta attended the University of Alabama in Tuscaloosa on a full music scholarship, but found that her heart was not in it. The music was her mother's dream and not hers; Maenetta wanted to become a BAMA cheerleader and not play music, but her mom would not have it. All of this was not without struggle.

As Maenetta explains, "I did not get to do the things I wanted to do because I was in music, I had to practice. There is nothing wrong with that, but you know, it was more of her dream than mine. My parents are great and I love them, they did some wonderful things for me, they exposed me to a lot. But sometimes what's on the inside of you is different then what their vision is."

Like all parents who teach their kids to be independent thinkers, one day the Jackson's independent thinker changed the beat and was marching to her own drum. In Maenetta's junior year, she got married and moved to Ohio. Five years later, she got divorced and moved back to Alabama to complete her degree at the University of Alabama.

After graduating with a Business Degree, she went to work at The Space and Rocket Center as the Lobby Shop Manager. She always had her resume handy to present to exciting people. This practice landed her



Schools will be back to normal Soon.

Sending love and best wishes to ALL the graduates of Huntsville High School!

From Oscar and Maria Llerena

a ten-year career at Teledyne Brown Engineering, starting as a Management Analyst and when she departed, she was in the Public Affairs office.

Why did she leave? With a very reflective tone, Maenetta states, "Well, I became involved with a ministry where I started learning things that I had never been taught before. One of the things I learned was understanding what God created you to do, understanding what your purpose is."

"I started praying to understand my purpose and it was just like one-day things started happening on my job that shouldn't happen. One day I was sitting on the edge of the bed and Real Estate came to my mind. I chuckled and said, no, I'm not doing that... me selling houses? No, N.O."

"The more I started seeking God, the more and more it was on me. It started coming together and I decided to take a leap of faith. But God was like, I want you to leave your job. I didn't understand and I said what am I going to do, I have two small children, I need to be able to pay my mortgage, take care of them. He just said 'You have to trust me.'"

While she was in Real Estate school, she also started an Events Planning company called Requires Inc.; she had a successful business. She states, "In probably the second month after leaving Teledyne, I was making more money than they ever thought to pay me."

She finished Real Estate School and started with a Real Estate Broker. It took Maenetta six months to sell her first house. She was asked more than once if she thought she was supposed to be in Real Estate.

"I would get up, get dressed, and go to the office. Somebody would say, 'Have you sold a house yet?' I would say no, and they would ask, 'Do you think

you are supposed to be in Real Estate?' I would say yes, I am supposed to be in Real Estate."

Looking back, she realizes she was working with some of the future power brokers in Huntsville Real Estate, some have passed on, but others are still alive. She learned her craft from some of the best in the business.

When she finally sold her first home, it was a small bungalow in the \$30,000 range. She was as excited as if she had sold a million-dollar mansion. In a little while, she was one of the top producers in the city.

In about two and a half years, God had Maenetta open her own Real Estate Company and He gave her the name, Canaan Properties. One of the agents she worked with came with her to her new company. She was also led to writing her first book, "Daring to Be a Success."

God shifted her once again. He asked her to close Canaan Properties and go back to school. In her own words, "God showed me the gifts on my life and what I am supposed to be doing. When I fully submitted unto the call, I needed to be

equipped for what I was called to do. So, I entered Oral Roberts University, and I started working on my Masters."

Maenetta completed her Master's degree and she was so happy to be done! But wait, God said, "You are not done; you now must work on your Doctorate."

Maenetta completed the Doctorate program at Samford University; then she went to work for one of her ex-employees in her Real Estate company.

In a short period of time, she opened her own Real Estate Brokerage again, Jackson & Black Homes & RE was born.

Dr. Harryett Maenetta Jackson, like the marble from her hometown, the pressures of life have allowed her to shine with pure brilliance. She offers this advice to help all of us to help us through the troubles we face, as individuals and as a nation. "Pray until something happens and press on."



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John Purdy
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Mei Ling, a Tiger at Heart

by Gary Gee, Sr.

Right out of Huntsville High School, Al went off for four years in the U.S. military. He then returned home for college at the ripe old age of 21. Off to Tuscaloosa for semesters, he occasionally could cram in a summer quarter at University of Alabama/Huntsville. While in town, during these quarters, Al could stay with his mom and his stepdad for a nice summer visit (free room and board). They had a couple of pets, a friendly and affectionate parakeet by the name of Bing, and a female Siamese cat named Mei Ling (Chinese Mandarin name for "Beautiful tinkling of gem pendants").

Now the stepdad, Bob, was into electronics in a big way. And he came up with a plan to protect the defenseless Bing from Mei Ling's inborn desire for preying. This cat loved to find a way to get to the top of Bing's cage, which was suspended on a pole stand. Mei Ling could surely do it, even if it meant climbing up the drapes and making a final, desperate and sideways leap - to latch on to the cage (just like a precision acrobat). Once on top, Mei Ling then would stealthily move about the roof bars of the cage, pursuing the spooked bird like a tiger. How lucky can you get? This bird was in a trap. Mei Ling would stop from time to time in her pursuit to put her paw, with claws ready for action, through the bars.

Not used to such an attack, Bing would try to fly about the tight jail; and he would flutter his wings as he banged about in panic - screeching - trying to escape Mei Ling's hungry weapons, which were more than just ready for action.

Bing, the bird, saw this as a cowardly attack and was close to going nuts. He was screaming for help, Mei Ling was the successful hunter. She had lived up to her primal expectations. It was not her fault that she could not open that cage door. But she would keep trying to make a meal out of this noisy bird, because nature demanded it. Mei Ling was no quitter.

At times, while lazily sprawled atop the cage - with a front leg and

claws thrust between the bars - Mei Ling would try in sweeping motions with her sharp nails to snag her fluttering lunch - who was squawking and attacking the ears of those in the house with piercing cries for help. So reclined and relaxed, Mei Ling really seemed to be just toying with Bing; but no one got this message through to Bing.

Bob decided that the time for his action and skills had come; he would save the day, and Bing. He built an electric-powered metal plate that he fixed outside the bars at the top of the cage. Whenever Mei Ling touched the plate, she would get the shock of her life. The solution had been in sight all along; Bob would have to electrocute this damn cat (well almost).

The invention worked. Whenever Mei Ling received that shock, her fur stood straight out - and she flew off that cage like Wonder Woman - with a yell of her own. She would hit the floor and take off running like the gun had gone off at an "informal" drag race in the middle of the night at Cedar

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Gap. Mei Ling just disappeared like a shot. Bob had succeeded. The world was safe for Bing - well maybe. Sitting in hiding after her latest lightning surprise, Mei Ling planned her next move to get even with this guy with the electric personality: "Who in the hell does he think he is? Super-electric man?"

Bob was really into religion in a big way and generally would not hurt a flea. Was he back-sliding here? Well, Bob announced that a religious-book salesman was coming to the house. For the preceding several weeks - when Al would take a break from his boring studies - he had trained Mei Ling (or maybe it was just the reverse) for a bit of recreation.

With Al at one end of the long hallway and Mei Ling at the other end, this cat would charge with abandon at Al, who would drop one knee to the floor and present his other knee like a step for the on-rushing cat. They practiced this routine until they had it cold. Near the end of the run, Mei Ling would spring up to Al's knee and then using this knee as a platform, do another continuous spring up to Al's shoulder. Simultaneously with this, Al also was rising to stand in the vertical. This smooth two-spring routine ended with Mei Ling curled around the upright Al's neck and shoulder. This all occurred without Al getting so much as a scratch or puncture from Mei Ling's claws. Al had the feeling that Mei Ling was planning something, but he did not know what.

Then the doorbell rang. The religious-book salesman had arrived. Bob swung open the door and greeted the salesman, Caleb, who was carrying an arm-load of books. "Welcome, Caleb! Come right in. I've been expecting you with great anticipation!" said Bob. "You are most welcome," responded the salesman. "Thanks for inviting me."

Just as Caleb stepped into the front of the hallway, Mei Ling began her charge from the opposite end. Bob and Caleb both presented perfect targets for the onrushing tiger. But none of these guys dropped down and presented a knee for a step, as was customary with Mei Ling and Al's routine. Nearing the end of her dash, Mei Ling sprang as usual. But with no knee step appearing, she instead sprang with a gigantic single leap for the salesman. Sinking her claws into him as she ascended, Mei Ling climbed Caleb like he was a tree.

In complete shock, Caleb spontaneously threw the books, which scattered in the air and hit the walls and floor. Simultaneously, he also ripped the clinging Mei Ling from his body and flung her against the wall. In complete shock and pain, Caleb screamed, "Gosh darn!!!" (Well almost gosh darn).

Bob was extremely apologetic: "I am so sorry!!" he said over and over like a broken record; "I just don't know what got into Mei Ling!!" (But secretly, he knew it was that Al - the would-be animal trainer and bored student - who had played a major role in this entire catastrophe).

The religious book salesman grabbed the doorknob and let himself out in a flash. He left without his books, not even a word of farewell. In hiding again, Mei Ling felt triumphant: "Just try and shock me again, Mr. Bob."

Bob canned his invention. Al thought, "Oh well, fun's over; back to the books."

Later, Bing, the friendly bird - with no protection from Bob's invention - had a nervous breakdown.

"Have you ever listened to some folks for a minute and thought, 'Their corn bread ain't quite done in the middle?'"
Joshua Henry, local Farmer

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STEP RIGHT UP

by Belinda Talley

"Hold your horses, Reba, I'm getting there, but he liked me first. He did that is, until Sally wiggled her way in between us."

Life back then could not get any better than going to the Madison County Fair on a Friday night. We were all supposed to meet at the Ferris Wheel at 9:00. It rained hard the day before, making for a messy Midway. They spread hay down to cover the mud puddles.

"I can still smell that wet hay, just like it was yesterday.."

"Thelma, do you think he'll come?"

"Yep. And I think Jim likes you." Walking backward, Thelma said, "Breathe in, you smell that? I'm hungry; let's get a corn dog. I like mine with mustard. You?"

Agnes leaned against the heated window, "Thelma look, what's that by the Candied Apples?"

A raspy voice came from behind the counter, as a tattooed fair lady stood-up. "It's a Caramel Apple. We don't got many. Better get it now."

"Well be back, I promise; I have to try one."

"What do we ride first, Bumper Cars? Scrambler? Jim told me that the Bullet's his favorite ride, said it's a scary-thrill that he can't get enough of."

"It's 8:47; there's a short line for the Swings and we have just enough time."

"My church welcomes all denominations - tens, twenties, fifties.."

Jere Phillips, Huntsville

Circling above the fairgrounds, we felt the wind in our hair. Gripping the chains and dangling our feet, we were glad we had worn our petal pushers. Showing off our legs in a skirt, would be showing more than legs.

Twisting around, Agnes said, "I see the guys, but I don't see Jim."

"Don't worry about him, enjoy the ride," Thelma said, slinging her hair from side-to-side.

"Is that them over there?" Gazing down, Thelma stiffened. "Whatever you do, don't look at the Tunnel of Love."


Watching her face flush and knuckles turn white, Thelma knew that Agnes had seen Jim.

Raising her brows, Thelma said, "Oh my, I didn't realize that there would be fireworks tonight."

"That slithering Sally and her hot-pink, short-silk skirt; she will live to regret this."

Reba's eyes were wide with anticipation. "That wicked little witch. She deserved whatever you did. What'd you do?"

"Nothing. I didn't do a thing." Agnes smirked, cutting her



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HISTORY AND STORIES OF THE TENNESSEE VALLEY

Old Huntsville, Inc. (USPS #8510)
716 East Clinton Ave.
Huntsville, AL 35801
(256) 534-0502

Email - oldhuntsville@knology.net
(Website) www.oldhuntsvillemag.com

Publisher - Cathey Carney

Advertising - (256) 534-0502
Sales & Mktg. - Cathey Carney
Editor - Cheryl Tribble
Consultant - Ron Eyestone
Gen. Manager - Sam Keith
Copy Boy - Tom Carney
(in memory)

"Old Huntsville" magazine is a monthly publication. Annual subscriptions are \$40 per year.

For subscription change of address, mail new information to the above address.

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Old Huntsville Magazine - Statement of Ownership

13. Publication Title		14. Issue Date for Circulation Data Below	
Old Huntsville Magazine		Sep. 15, 2020	
15. Extent and Nature of Circulation		Average No. Copies Each Issue During Preceding 12 Months	No. Copies of Single Issue Published Nearest to Filing Date
Local History + Stories			
a. Total Number of Copies (Net press run)		770	762
b. Paid Circulation (By Mail and Outside the Mail)			
(1)	Mailed Outside-County Paid Subscriptions Stated on PS Form 3541 (include paid distribution above nominal rate, advertiser's proof copies, and exchange copies)	230	227
(2)	Mailed In-County Paid Subscriptions Stated on PS Form 3541 (include paid distribution above nominal rate, advertiser's proof copies, and exchange copies)	370	355
(3)	Paid Distribution Outside the Mails including Sales Through Dealers and Carriers, Street Vendors, Counter Sales, and Other Paid Distribution Outside USPS®	0	0
(4)	Paid Distribution by Other Classes of Mail Through the USPS (e.g., First-Class Mail®)	0	0
c. Total Paid Distribution (Sum of 15b (1), (2), (3), and (4))		600	582
d. Free or Nominal Rate Distribution (By Mail and Outside the Mail)			
(1)	Free or Nominal Rate Outside-County Copies included on PS Form 3541	40	40
(2)	Free or Nominal Rate In-County Copies included on PS Form 3541	100	100
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e. Total Free or Nominal Rate Distribution (Sum of 15d (1), (2), (3) and (4))		140	140
f. Total Distribution (Sum of 15c and 15e)		740	722
g. Copies not Distributed (See Instructions to Publishers #4 (page #3))		30	40
h. Total (Sum of 15f and g)		770	762
i. Percent Paid (15c divided by 15f times 100)		81.08%	80.61%

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eyes. "That is a bald-faced lie. You didn't do anything drastic, did you?" "Depends on your definition of drastic."

"That night, I became the ring-leader of fun. Me and Thelma sang Twist and Shout on the Tilt-a-Whirl. We rocked on the Rockin' Roller Coaster and flew on the Ferris Wheel."

Then, right there before my eyes, there they were. Jim convinced slithering Sally to ride the Bullet. The wire cage door locked and the motor hummed a low roar. She started sissy-screaming before it ever moved.

"Come on, Thelma, let's go get that Caramel Apple thing before we leave."

Approaching the food trailer, tattoo lady shushed us away. "Gone, they're all gone. Sold the last one to a girl wearing a short pink skirt."

"Step Right Up," the man barked, "See our freaks: a two-headed cow, three-legged chicken and a seducing-snake woman."

"I looked him square in the eye and said, "That's not freaky. Snake-woman is riding the Bullet, right now."

The barker man must have taken a liking to us. We told him about our friend that loved the Bullet and couldn't get enough.

Wearing a broad smile, Barker man winked, then nodded at some guy. And we went home.

"Really, Agnes? That's it?"

"I told you, Reba, I didn't do anything. But it seems that Barker man's cousin is the operator of the Bullet and he gave them an e-x-t-r-a long ride. We heard that when that

wire door opened, they poured out like a pair of caramel covered ragdolls."

"I guess Sally's no longer the apple of his eye."

"If I'd known in early March that it would be the last time I'd be in a restaurant, I would have ordered dessert."

Becky Galloway, Huntsville



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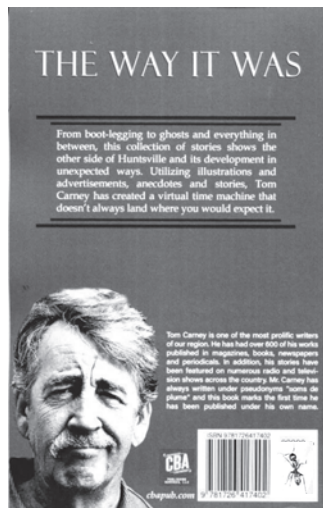
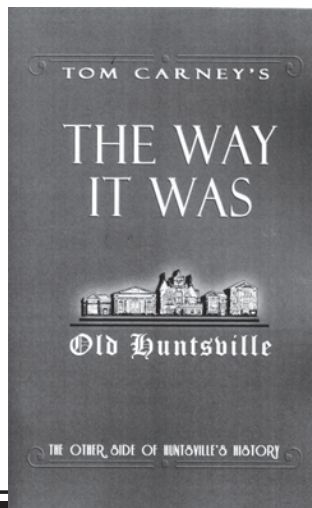
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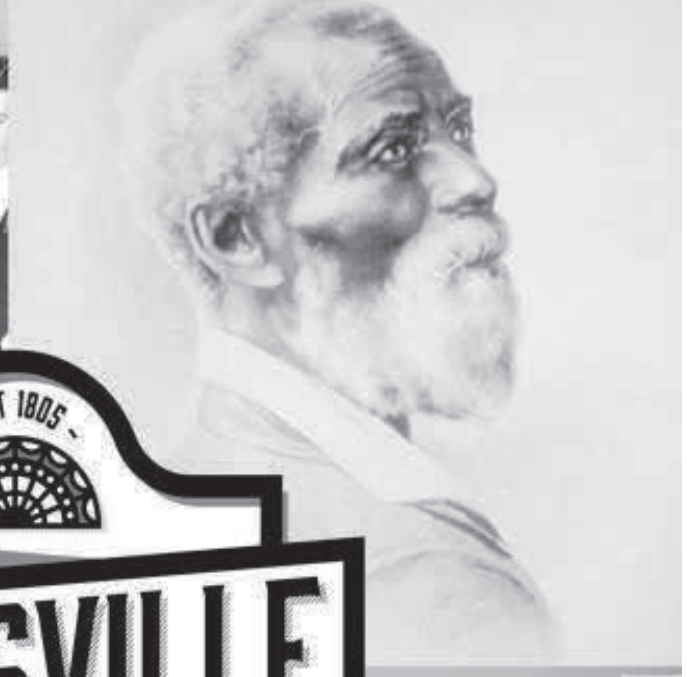
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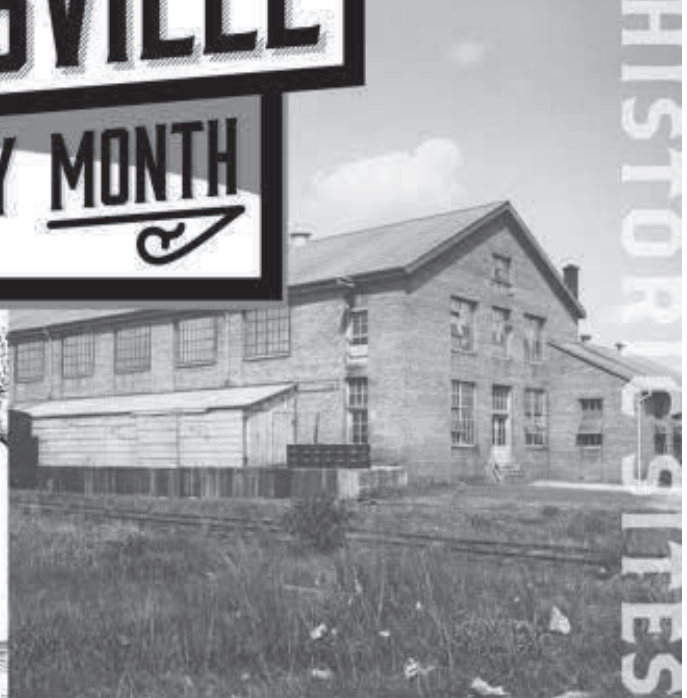
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