



No. 341

July 2021



Old Huntsville

HISTORY AND STORIES OF THE TENNESSEE VALLEY

John Harrison - Huntsville's Colorful Character



On December 27, 1983 Mr. John W. Harrison, the last Harrison brother, died. On July 31, 1984 the heirs to the Harrison Estates sold the building, land, fixtures and contents of 124 South Side Square to the Historic Huntsville Foundation for the sum of \$105,000. This ended the private ownership of what was, at the time of its sale, the oldest business in continuous operation in Huntsville, having been originally established in 1879 and established in Huntsville in 1883.

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John Harrison - Huntsville's Colorful Character

by *Richard Smallwood*

On December 27, 1983 Mr. John W. Harrison, the last Harrison brother, died. On July 31, 1984 the heirs to the Harrison Estates sold the building, land, fixtures and contents of 124 South Side Square to the Historic Huntsville Foundation for the sum of \$105,000. This ended the private ownership of what was, at the time of its sale, the oldest business in continuous operation in Huntsville, having been originally established in 1879 and established in Huntsville in 1883.

The story begins in Smithville, Tennessee in about 1855. In that year John Harrison married Miss Mary Kelley of that city. The children of this marriage were the original Harrison brothers.

Very little is known about the origins of John Harrison. On various official records, he listed his birthplace as Tennessee; Quebec, Canada; New York City; Ireland; and (with more than usual inventiveness) "On the High Seas". Family tradition has it that he

was probably born in Ireland and entered the United States through New Orleans. There are two versions of how this might have happened. Both versions have his Irish father as the Captain of a merchant ship and him as a 16-year old cabin boy.

The first version states that while his father's ship was in port in New Orleans, he and his brother (name unknown) were offered money to take horses and provisions up the Mississippi River. These provisions would be used to feed crews who floated timber rafts loaded with trade goods down to New Orleans. When he and his brother reached their destination, they were not paid, but robbed, beaten and deserted. Because of adverse weather conditions, they were unable to float down the Mississippi River and had to walk back to New Orleans.

On arriving in the city their father's ship had sailed. While waiting for the ship to return, they worked in the area. However, employment opportunities in New Orleans were seasonally dependent and finally each brother had to strike out on his own, never to see the other again.

The second version states that his father treated John so harshly that he jumped ship in New Orleans when the ship docked.

John wished to put a great deal of distance between him and his father, so when he heard of the lands in Tennessee being opened for settlement, he seized the opportunity. Whatever the

"You know you're getting older when 'Friends with Benefits' means someone who can drive at night."

Milly James - Arab



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true story, John Harrison became a farmer.

When the Civil War broke out he joined the Confederacy as a private, in the 15th Tennessee Infantry Regiment on May 9, 1861. Little is known of his war record. However, on May 1, 1863 while attached to Company I of the 15th Tennessee Infantry Regiment, he was sentenced to death by firing squad, for desertion and for persuading two other soldiers to also desert.

This sentence was nullified by General Bragg of the Army of Tennessee in late May of 1863. The story is that on March 25, of the same year John Harrison and the other two soldiers got permission to go home and help with the spring planting and to care for sick wives and families. While the men were away, their Company was engaged in battle and the Commander, his aide and Company Clerk were killed.

When John returned to duty, he was arrested and charged with desertion as it appears that his permission was not recorded. When his court-martial sentence was announced to the troops, two men of his former Company

came forward and testified that the Company Commander had given Harrison permission to go home.

When the war was over John Harrison, now a 1st Lieutenant in Company A of the 15th Tennessee Regiment, was paroled as part of the surrender of the Army of Tennessee in Greensboro, North Carolina on April 26, 1865.

John then returned to farming and was also a part-time recorder for the county. In 1879 his two oldest sons James and Daniel - started Harrison Brothers in Smithville. The business began with the buying and selling of tobacco and later selling of crockery, tinware and iron cookware was added. As the business increased, their only sister Cora kept the books.

In 1882 John's wife died and later that year he remarried. None of the children liked their step-mother and there seemed to have been family problems, so all the children moved down to Huntsville, including the youngest, Robert (born 1872).

Huntsville was selected by James, who had visited here

while buying for the Smithville store. Once in Huntsville, they operated at various locations in the downtown area, but in 1895 they moved to the South Side Square location. They also had a store in Decatur, but closed it to concentrate their efforts in Huntsville. Near the end of his life John Harrison moved to Huntsville to be nursed by his children. He died in 1914 and is buried in Maple Hill Cemetery.

James Harrison married Sally Holmes of Huntsville and built a house at what is now 315 White Street. They had three children, and all members of this family are also buried in Maple Hill Cemetery.

Daniel and Cora never married. Daniel built two houses on White Street, that are now 403



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and 405. Cora died in 1936 and Daniel died in 1940.

Robert married Helen Fraser of Huntsville and built a house at what is now 401 White Street, but lived for 35 years at 314 W. Holmes Avenue (the W. R. Rison House). They had three children Daniel (born 1898), John (born 1901), and Mary Margaret (born 1904). John and Daniel were the last Harrison Brothers.

Helen Fraser (no relation to Dr. Thomas Fraser) was the daughter of John and Margaret Muir Fraser, both first generation Scottish immigrants. Historically, both the Fraser and the Muir families were involved in horticulture. John and Margaret had met while participating in Grange activities in Allentown, Mo. They married in Missouri, then moved to Huntsville to find a suitable location in which to establish rosebush stock.

John Fraser established Huntsville Wholesale Nursery which supplied the majority of roses to Sears, Roebuck & Co. Originally the nursery and the family home was on Stringfield Road where the Vulcan Rock Quarry is now located. Later the nursery was relocated north of Bob Wade Lane and a new family home was built at what is now 427 Eustis Avenue.

All three of the sons of this marriage went into the nursery business. John II took over Huntsville Wholesale Nursery, Oliver started a nursery in Birmingham and James created the Fraser Nursery. Fraser Nursery extended from California Street on the west, to about Owens Drive on the east, Locust Avenue on the north to Fagan's Creek on the south.

He built a house at what is now 1000 Locust Avenue. In 1929 when James decided to get out of the nursery business, he subdivided his nursery as Monte Vista Estates which contain streets named Harrison and Fraser Avenues.

Robert Harrison and his two sons ran Harrison Brothers Store until the death of Robert in 1952. Then, Daniel and John ran the store until Daniel died in 1981. John then carried on along until his death in 1983.

The daughter, Margaret, left Huntsville after graduating from high school. After a year in college, she moved to Washington D.C. and started working at the U.S. Department of Agriculture where she met my father, Harry Earl Smallwood. There were three children from this marriage; Robert, Richard and Helen.

Daniel married Lucille Coons. They had one child who was still-born. John married Carroll Drake, and there were no children, so in many ways the store was their child. While we nephews were required to work at the store during the summer months, there was never an offer for us to enter the business. As a matter of fact, in all conversations, the Uncles encour-

aged us to pursue other occupational endeavors.

When John died, the heirs realized that the store could not be operated as it had in the past. Profit margins would have to be raised, parking was restricted, there was slow turnover of most of the inventory, and the store layout was very labor intensive. Mrs. Eslick had contacted me before my uncles's death and asked if there could be any consideration for the store to be sold to the Historic Huntsville Foundation. The heirs felt that the Foundation would have wide-spread community support and be able to preserve the ambience of the store for the future. For that reason the Foundation's offer was accepted and other higher offers refused.

Submitted by Richard Smallwood (Great grandson of John Harrison)

"The best memories come from bad ideas done with best friends."

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GROWING UP AT BURRITT ON THE MOUNTAIN

by Louie Tippett



When my dad was discharged from the Army he had stomach problems. He saw several physicians in Huntsville without any improvement. A friend suggested that he check with Dr. Burritt. Dr. William Henry Burritt was a homeopathic physician born in Huntsville in 1868. Like his father and grandfather, he practiced natural medicine. In order to become a licensed homeopathic doctor, you must graduate from a four year, professional-level program at a federally accredited naturopathic medical school. In addition, he was required to pass the Naturopathic Physicians Licensing Exam.

Dr. Burritt graduated with honors from Vanderbilt University School of Medicine in 1890. He then attended post graduate study at the Pulte Medical College in Cincinnati, Ohio and at the New York Lying-in Hospital, returning to Huntsville in 1898. He was listed as a Homeopathic Physician in the 1899 record.

In 1954, Dr. Burritt gave me a round oblong metal case approximately 2-1/2" X 16" which contained his original diplomas. At the time, he said he wanted me to pursue a medical career. I still have his diplomas and the case which I treasure to this day.

Getting back to the story, Dad went to see Dr. Burritt concerning his health issue. Dr. Burritt prescribed herbs and goats milk which apparently cured my dad since he had no more problems with his stomach. As I recall, he owned approximately 50 goats. After milking the goats, the milk would be stored at the Old Mine Cave located between the goat barn and Dr. Burritt's house. Water from the coal mine ran into a metal tank and pipes ran the rest of the way to the goat barn.

I remember the first time I met Dr. Burritt. I was 6 or 7 years of age. He had three pup-

pies in a shed to the right of his house which he allowed me to play with while he and my dad had a conversation. His puppies were named Queenie, Trixie and for the life of me, I cannot remember the other puppy's name. For a little boy with no pets of his own, this was quite a treat.

After they grew up, they would chase every car or truck that came up the drive. Dr. Burritt told my dad to throw fire crackers out so they would stop chasing cars. He was concerned they may get run over. Eventually, Dr. Burritt offered my dad a job to care for his goats.

A short time after that day, our family moved from Redstone Park to Monte Sano. The house we lived in was 2 story with living quarters containing 4-5 rooms above a garage. There was a lot of old lumber, doors and things that came from Dr. Burritt's father's home stored there.

My maternal grandparents, Andrew and Delphia Johnson, were paid by the county to run the day-to-day operations of the County Home located at the end of McClung Avenue. May of these



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families had dogs. After falling in love with Dr. Burritt's dogs, I really wanted a puppy. To my surprise one of the dogs at the home had four puppies. I was so excited when we went to see these puppies. My secret hope was that my mother and dad would permit me to have one of them. They said that I would have to ask Dr. Burritt (since he already had 3 dogs of his own). If it was ok, I could have one under certain stipulations; I would be responsible to feed and care for the puppy.


Dr. Burritt said that would be fine with him. I picked out the runt of the litter and named him "Boy." I became concerned and wondered why Boy did not eat what I fed him. Come to find out, Dr. Burritt was feeding him when he fed his dogs. To entertain myself, I would get on my horse and Boy would run along beside us. I would chase the goats pretending I was rounding up cattle like in the western movies. To me, we would have so much fun together playing on the mountain. I can just hear Boy barking and licking me on the face trying to get me up in the morning to go play.

Anyway, Boy was always

crawling under the four legged wood burning stove to keep warm in the winter. One of those times he fell asleep and when he awoke he came out staggering like he was drunk. My mother was concerned that he would possibly bite me, but he just laid down by me and finally seemed ok.

Boy would also crawl under the porch where it was cool in the summer. The area was very low to the ground, so he would have to squeeze himself under there. It was on one of these times a den of rattlesnakes was under the porch. The snakes bit him several times since he had trouble getting out. Sadly, he went over to Dr. Burritt's house and died on the porch. It broke my heart to lose him but nothing could be done. We buried him on the mountain and for a while, I would still visit his grave.


Dr. Burritt was so very kind to me. He would let me play with his dogs, play hide and seek with me, and let me "bang" on his piano since I did not know how to play any songs. He always gave me a peppermint stick when I would visit. You could say he was like a grandfather to me.



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MY EXPERIENCE AT THE SNUFFDIPPER'S BALL

by Malcolm Miller



When I was a teenager my friends and I heard a lot about the Snuffdippers' Ball in downtown Huntsville. The Snuffdippers Ball was located on Jefferson Street in a building called the Labor Temple. Every Saturday night there would be music and dancing on the second floor of that building.

I was sixteen years old in 1943 and my friends and I could not wait to see what the action was. Also I had heard that they had plenty of hillbilly music and that was my love. Many nights you could hear the great sounds of the music on the streets below.

As my friends and I climbed the long stairs to the second floor we were very scared. However, we were able to get in and for the first time we saw a lot of dancing going on and heard some of the best music we had ever heard before that time. For the first time we saw musicians with microphones and a sound system and their music could be heard loud and clear almost bouncing off the walls. I still remember many of the songs played that night. Music was my love and I especially loved this type of music.

It was at this ball that I met

my long time friend Monte Sano Crowder. Monte was named after the mountain where he was born. I never played at the Snuffdippers' Ball but I got to know most all the musicians who played there. There was Buster Holloway, Luther Maze, Charlie Hanes, Gene Jennings, Joe Sharp and sometimes Monte's brother Leon would join with his tenor banjo. I understand Monte's dad was a musician and all three of his boys -- Monte, Leon and Arlie -- were very talented musicians. No doubt Monte was known as one of the best old time fiddlers in the business in this area.

Back to the first time I ever set foot in the Ball, it was a sight to behold. There were the folks from all the Mill Villages ready for some fun after a long hard week of labor in the mills. There were country folks who left the fields early to get out and kick up their heels; and kick up their heels they did. There were cuspidors placed all around the walls for dancers to spit their snuff and tobacco in but you know when you are swinging your partner and dancing around the dance floor it's awfully hard to aim at a cuspidor and most of the time it went onto the floor. Oh well, a

bit of snuff just made it easier to glide across the floor.

The security officer at the Ball was a large man who only had one arm but he carried a slap stick with a chunk of lead sewn in a piece of leather and he could really get someone's attention with that. I saw him hit a man in the head with that thing because he was causing trouble and the man rolled all the way down that long flight of stairs. This was quite a sight for several teenage boys to see.



I would venture to say that Monte Crowder made more money playing music in Huntsville than anyone before or since. He only worked one night a week for between thirty and forty years paying for his home on Washington Street and a farm in Tennessee. There will never be another like Monte Sano Crowder and I feel proud that he considered me a good friend.

"If brains were gasoline you wouldn't have enough to propel a flea's motorcycle around a doughnut."

One "friend" to another

"Thou shalt not steal the copper from the AC unit."

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The Social Delay

by Billy Joe Cooley

Everybody around South Pittsburgh, TN knew that Clinton Knight drove from his Fiery Gizzard farm into town every day at about sundown, a distance of some six miles.

He would join some of his pals for a few beers and games of billiards at Reynold's Pool Hall and would bring a bottle of fine moonshine whiskey along, just in case one or two of the boys thirsted for something stronger. As for Clinton's own drinking habits, he never touched a drop until he was in the second or third billiard game.

One Friday afternoon he set out on his usual journey, but as he drove down the Fiery Gizzard Road and neared the intersection of U.S. 72, which was the main highway between Chattanooga and Huntsville, he misjudged and his foot crambed down hard on the gas pedal instead of the brake pedal.

His 20-year-old Ford pickup lurched and zipped out into the highway, directly into the path of a fancy red convertible that was traveling at breakneck speed and carrying a half dozen college kids home to Alabama for the weekend.

Fortunately, there was no damage to Clinton's well-built old truck, except for a bent bumper, but the pretty red convertible sustained an awful lot of front-end damage and had careened into a roadside ditch.

The collegians, none of whom was injured, came piling out of the car in an angry rage and spewing nasty insults at Mr. Clinton Knight. It was obvious that they all were majoring in smart-aleckness at the great Chattanooga university.

They even challenged the legitimacy of Mr. Knight's birth.

"Now, now, gents," said Clinton, rubbing his chin and trying to calm the situation. "The accident is probably my fault and my insurance company will settle right handsomely with y'all. As a matter of fact, I won't dispute it if you guys want to even claim a few neck and back injuries, if you get my drift."

They got his drift, okay, and suddenly smiles were everywhere.

"To show y'all my good intentions," said Clinton, "let me share a little cheer with you." With that, he produced a gallon of fine moonshine which he had bought the day before from Wheeler Troxell, a kindly gent who helped to service our community with spirits when the need arose, which was often.

Clinton passed the jug around and each of the now-friendly and well-lubricated college boys took a few generous swigs. After the jug had been passed among the students several times, he put the lid back on the container and set it down beside the wreckage.

"Aren't you gonna have a drink with us?" one of the boys asked.

"Oh yes, of course I am," said Clinton, "just as soon as the police get here and leave."

Excerpted from 2000 book by Billy Joe Cooley titled "Away Down South, Front Porch Stories."

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REMEMBERING DON IRWIN

by Faye Irwin

Don was born in Gadsden, AL to Marcus and Nell King Irwin on April 19, 1941. His father died of cancer when he was 18 months old. His mother remarried Ervin Johnson and they moved to Cullman County where they farmed. In 1955 they bought a farm near Grant and he went to DAR School and played basketball for them. He was moved to varsity in 9th grade.

He met his future wife Faye Davis at the "swimming hole" for all the local kids and grown-ups, at the time near Columbus City, in 1956. They soon started dating and were married on January 24, 1959 and have been best friends for 62 years.

Don got a job at the Times Journal then returned near Grant where he and his sister-

in-law commuted until he got on at the Huntsville Times in 1962. He worked for The Times 38 years, for a total of 41 years in the newspaper business. He worked in the composing room all of the time except about the last two years. When he decided how many pages the paper would have, he laid it out.

He retired on August 1, 2001. He and Faye traveled quite a bit to the West Coast where her sister lived and to Canada where Faye's sister-in-law had a cottage on the lake. They built their house on Dug Hill Rd in 1965 and lived there for 57 years. He was always content whether he was at home or traveling, He was at his happiest being with his wife, children, grandchildren, great grandchildren and extended family.

A friend in Iowa said if you couldn't get along with Don, you couldn't get along with anyone. He gave many tractor and wagon rides to his kids, grandkids, nieces, nephews and neighbor kids.

He was good to all of them. He used to load them up on his pick-up and take them to the store for candy and ice cream. He would also take them to a movie, car race or swimming. He was very patient with all of them. Don also loved to play volleyball, horseshoes and checkers which he was very good at. He loved country and Bluegrass music and enjoyed picking his banjo.

Don enjoyed wood carving and he and Faye used to travel to Missouri every March for a woodcarving seminar at Silver Dollar City. Don was a very good driver and was always the "designated" driver on road trips.

Their house was always the gathering place where they used to feed 20-25 family and friends nearly every Sunday. He would grill turkey, ham, pork butts, hamburgers, hot dogs, or steaks, deep fry chicken or fish and hushpuppies and fries. He always fixed plenty and there were lots of "to go" plates. One friend said if you left here hungry it was your own fault.

Don passed away on April 2, 2021. In 2 more weeks he would have turned 80. He is survived by his wife of 62 years, Faye Davis Irwin. Children: Donald Eugene Irwin, Jr. (Kelly Ann), Marcus Craig Irwin (Stephanie), Kelly Faye Irwin Walden (Russell) and Phillip Bradley Irwin. Grandchildren: Brett Tyler Ayers, Misty Irwin Bellomy (L.J.), Ashley Ayers, Dylan Irwin, Nathan Irwin (Abby) and Brad Irwin. Great Grandchildren: Tylei, Tatum and Shia Ayers, Gavin and Hudson Bellomy.

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Doris Neal French

by Robert B. French, Jr., P.C.
Fort Payne, Al

This is a story from my recent book, "Call Me Herman." These pages deal with my early years, in the 30s and 40s, surviving the Depression in Huntsville.

My early family settled at Owen's Cross Roads and New Hope. These were the Maples, Sibleys, Chandlers, Wrights, etc. My great-great-grandfather Chandler's cabin is on display near the Burritt Home at the park on Monte Sano.

In all, at least 4 ancestral veterans of the American Revolution settled in the Huntsville area.

I was approaching three years old in September 1936. My little baby sister was born in June, two years later. One day she was not there and the next day we had a premature baby to take care of with all kinds of problems. She weighed less than 6 pounds when she was born. The entire family was worried that she would not live. She was seriously premature, small, frail, with little chance for survival.

My father put a pull-socket on the light bulb in his and Mother's room. He then tied

a string from the chain on the pull-socket to the headboard of their bed. During the night, he simply pulled the string, and he, or Mother, could see how to get up to take care of my sister Doris, whom we now called Dot.

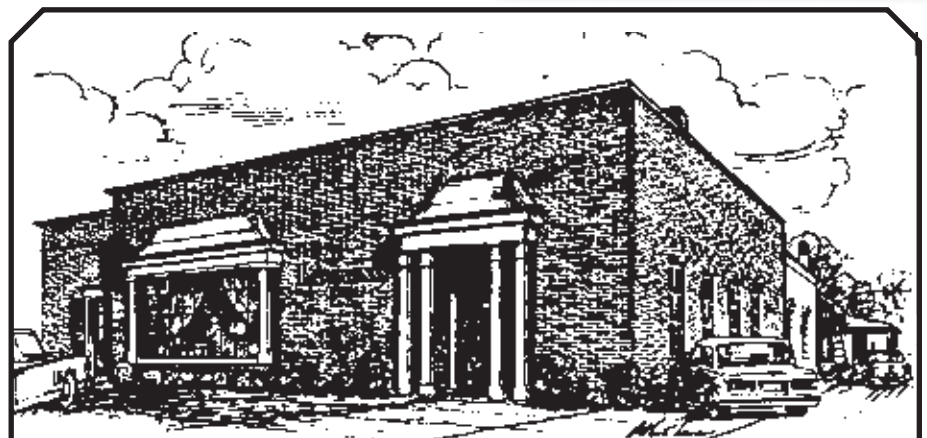
Dot could not keep anything on her stomach and was slowly dying. The doctor told Mother to give Dot light coffee in her milk. This worked, and when I got some, it started my love for coffee that continues until this day. My mother and other relatives worked hard to bring Dot around to become a healthy child after about nine weeks.

Mother had a color picture made of me kissing Dot when I was five years old and she was almost three. It was

Sunday, and I was sitting on a small child's chair in a hay field, wearing short pants and a dress shirt. She had on a small dress and was looking up to kiss me. That picture stayed in the French household until I lost track of it when I went into the service. I recently found an old black and white of it. Ah, precious memories.

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Message an Athens resident received from local cell phone company



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"I asked my old man if I could go ice skating on the lake. He said sure but wait til it warms up a bit."

Rodney Dangerfield



**Ask
Grandma**
by Mimi

Grandma has been enjoying as many of you have, getting out more and interacting with family and friends. Wow, I didn't know how much you could miss those hugs, but I also think people should use their common sense and mask in crowded situations such as grocery stores and concerts, and upcoming football games.

Now that summer is here, although there've been many hot days since the end of May, and the fourth of July is just around the corner, more of us will be going out and around others. Please be aware of others and your surroundings, wash your hands or use sanitizer and be safe. I hope everyone has had their Covid shots. I strongly urge you to do so if you haven't—the chance of after-affects are slight compared to getting Covid. My husband had no affects, and I only had a bit over a day following the second Phizer shot, where I felt bad. Well worth the preventative and to feel safe now.

A friend of mine (same age as me) whom I hadn't seen in quite a while told me just yesterday that her husband, who had not been sick and exercised every day, died this past spring of Covid. What a shock to all who knew him. He didn't think he needed the vaccine.

I wanted to stress to young parents to please have their children take swim lessons. It is the thing these days, even for children as young as 18 months. It's the skill they can use all their lives. Many community pools offer lessons as well as private ones. Always keep private home pools fenced and locked. Little ones are curious and want to lean over to hold floating toys left in the pool. Then they are in big trouble when they can't get themselves back to safety. They should at least dog paddle to the side and work their way to the steps to get out.


Every year we hear news of children drowning and this breaks my heart. The city schools would be wise to require swim lessons to save student's lives. So be mindful of the Fourth of July and the rest of the summer outings because drownings only take seconds to happen.

Even a child rescued may have water in their lungs and might go down for a nap and not wake up. That happened to another friend of mine, and the couple was devastated.

I do wish all of you the best for the rest of the summer. They are already running Christmas movies on Hallmark. Where do the months go?

Until next time, be safe.

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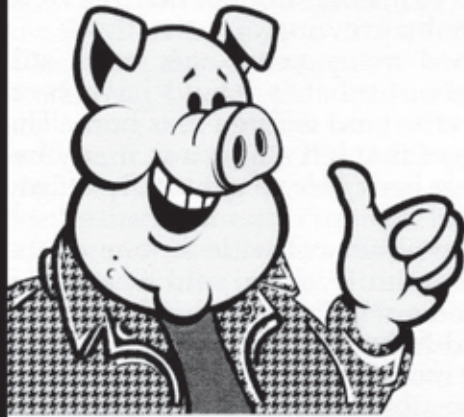
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The Story of Bravo Homes in Weatherly Cove

by Bob Baudendistel

Throughout the History of Huntsville, residential districts often feature hidden stories about the life and times of those who shaped the city we all live and work in today. Some of the area's first subdivisions were developed back in the late 1800s in an effort to house the influx of cotton mill workers and their families. Among these communities were the Lincoln, Dallas, Lowe, Merrimack and West Huntsville mill villages. These developments came as a blessing for those looking to improve their standard of living while the southern states were still in the process of recovering from the post-Civil War economic recession.

Following the announcement of the Huntsville Arsenal in 1941 came a new phase with the development of single family residences. Homes became noticeably bigger with more open space floor plans and larger size lots. Other enhancements included public utilities, improved storm water management, sanitary sewers, paved streets, curb & gutter and neighborhood business districts.

As the newly reformed Redstone Arsenal fired off into the ballistic missile era during the 1950s, an urban sprawl began where subdivisions spread out to even greater depths beyond the city and its limits.

Until recently, no surge in economic development had ever surpassed what took place during the 1960s as the National Aeronautics and Space Administration at the George C. Marshall Space Flight Center led our great country into the space program. New developments throughout Huntsville were now trending toward a more mixed-use environment where residential subdivisions, recreational facilities, and larger commercial business districts all complimented one another. During this time, home builders were racing against the clock in

order to meet the demands much like we have happening today.

One builder who sought to change things up a bit with the rapidly developing landscape in Huntsville throughout the 60s and 70s was the late Mr. Sewall Clarke Southard, Jr. Born in Raleigh, NC and later raised in Birmingham, AL, Clarke, as he liked being referred to, served in the U.S. Air Force earning the rank of Sergeant during the Korean War. He later returned back home attending the Birmingham Southern College.

Upon their first visit to Huntsville, he and his wife realized that virtually every new home being constructed throughout the city was using the same ordinary traditional red brick. Their goal was to launch a new trend in architectural appeal while at the same time providing every new home owner more square footage for their hard earned money.

Some of the first new houses built by Southard Homes Inc. were constructed in the Willowbrook Subdivision, a joint development venture adjacent to the Valley Hill Country Club in southeast Huntsville. As this development progressed through eight phases beginning in 1963, Southard Homes introduced many uniquely styled designs with an enhanced degree of curb appeal. After nailing things down at

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One 88 year old lady to
another - "My joints are stiff."
Her 85 year old friend - "You're rolling
them too tight."

Willowbrook with a solid foundation of quality workmanship, Clarke then focused his efforts in many new directions including the Willow Park Estates subdivision just south past Weatherly Road.

Shortly after the launching of this subdivision in early 1964, its original developer filed for bankruptcy leaving behind a number of vacant lots with a mere handful of customary brick rancher, split foyer, and tri-level homes built along Dunbarton Drive, Allison Drive, and Woodmore Drive. Clarke then stepped in with a more innovative approach by introducing San Franciscan style "Bravo" homes featuring mansard roofs, Japanese style houses with pergolas, contemporary patio homes with arched breezeway entrances, enclosed courtyards, and much more.

Interior spaces were also trending to enhance the buyer's experience with larger bedrooms & baths, walk-in closet spaces, significantly sized bonus rooms, elevated foyers, Pullman-style kitchens, and recessed living areas.

When first built, these homes must have been an instant wake-up call to the building industry due to their record sales. According to sources, new Southard homes were selling for between \$30,000 and \$40,000 at the time. Clarke Southard's work brought Huntsville extraordinary homes across many enriched residential communities. Having served as President of the Huntsville -Madison County Builder's Association in 1970, Mr. Southard was highly respected by his colleagues as being a true innovator with his proven legacy of thoughtful work and creative thinking.

Growing up not far from the Willow Park development, we lived in a more traditional brick rancher adjacent to the Valley Hill Golf Course. Whenever some friends and I were not out fishing along Aldridge Creek or hiking up in the mountains, my favorite thing was to go bike riding through Willow Park and actually see all of the not-so-traditional homes up close and in person.

Turned out I had several friends from school who actually lived in them. Immediately following each visit to their place, I went back home head-over-heels trying to convince my parents to buy one! While these efforts to "sell" the homes didn't work out all that favorably, my passion for them never went away.

For what it's worth: I, John and Chad were sharing a row together in Mrs. Stephens' English class at Huntsville High School around 1985. Buried beneath the desk in a stack of books was a sketch pad I used for Mr. White's art class. Classmate John, being the sneaky guy that he was, managed to swipe the sketch

book/drawing pad without my knowing. Flipping through its pages, John spotted what appeared to be a pencil sketch of a unique yet familiar style of home. He then informed me that his father was the builder!

About a year later while enrolled in a senior art class, an acrylic painting on canvas reflecting one of the very same houses suddenly appeared. After noticing the painting inside a display case out ahead of the school auditorium reflecting his father's craftsmanship, John just rolled his eyes and walked away thinking I was nuts.

Next time we met at the cafeteria, I stopped him to say, "Look John, I know how crazy you must think I am for commemorating the history of your father's great work!.....But somebody's gotta do it!!"

"Please excuse Jennifer for missing school yesterday. We forgot to get the Sunday paper off the porch, and when we found it Monday we thought it was Sunday."

Parent's excuse for child missing school

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More Crazy Memories

by Gwendolyn Joop

As I previously have written, I became an Aunt at age 5. The closest sibling was 13 years older. They were way up in age.

When I was in second grade, we had 3 second grade classes. My classmates thought my Mom was my Grandmother. Proudly corrected. No. That is my Mom.

Approximately, three weeks in a row. My teacher asked every student. What did you do with your Grandparent last week? The first two weeks, now it's my turn. Simply answered - nothing.

Later during recess. Joked. You did nothing with your Grandparent? Wrong statement. Peed me off no end.

Next week. I reply, my Grandmother took me to the zoo, shopping, movies, etc. After approximately six weeks, I ran out of stories. Teacher asked, Gwendolyn, what did you do with your Grandmother? Oh, she died last night. No clue how powerful a kid's words happened to be.

That afternoon, after school. Routine as usual, I was a latch key kid. Changed from my school clothes. Dale arrived and playing ball as usual.

Simply went into my bedroom to retrieve a different sports game. Out of the blue, heard automobile doors closing. My Mom was home at that time. Peeped out my bedroom window. Every elementary school teacher was in the driveway. Parked on the side of the road. Everyone was carrying food and drinks, coming towards our house.

Flew out of the home. Dale you have to go home. Why? No clue.

Every dang elementary teacher is here. What did you do? No clue. Go home.

We had 2 acres. Ran to the farthest corner. Heard my Mom, scream. GWENDOLYN!!!

Thought I was walking The Green Mile. She was going to kill me. Entered the home. Leaves in my hair. Dust all over my clothes and body. Yes, Ma'am. What made you tell such a Lie!!!! Fast on my feet. Started my defense. Thank God, my teacher intervened. Mrs Wales, please do not be mad at Gwendolyn. Had no clue she was the only student out of 3 second grade classes that did not have a surviving Grandparent.

Thankful there was no death. Let's just eat and fellowship. My Mom said, Gwendolyn get in the shower first. I told her politely, I'm not hungry. Flew outside.

One by one the teachers left. OMG, have to face Prime Minister Thatcher. My Mom ruled with an iron fist. Larger than Thatcher.

Easier than I feared. Gwendolyn, sorry you are my only child and you have no Grandparent. DO NOT TRY THAT AGAIN! That is how I learned the hard way in the South. People visit and bring food when they hear someone died.

Please remember. Due to the pandemic 2020 and today has been challenging for all Americans. Please remember the 610K fellow Americans we have lost to COVID. Yes, I'm fully vaccinated. My 33 year old son and 16 & 17 year old grandkids. We can beat this together. DO NOT BE MEAN TO EACH OTHER!! Only extend a warm heart and gently explain. Then it's up to the individual.

For the record. I'm Nana. Refuse to use the "G" Word. Way too many scars.

Parents and kids. If you have a Grandparent living and not able to visit, phone or write. Let them know how much you love them. If not, take it from a pro. Don't make up one.

GOD BLESS AMERICA AND THE WORLD.

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Tips from Earlene

- Raw chicken breasts are easier to cut up if you freeze them, start to thaw them out and use sharp scissors or a knife.
- Greens and vegetables will last longer in the crisper drawer of your fridge if you line them with paper towels and put them in rinsed out cereal liners.
- Lots of coffee lovers try honey as a sweetener instead of sugar.
- When adding ingredients to a recipe, count out loud the number of cups you have added.
- If your kid's shoelaces always come undone, try dampening them before tying.
- If you are going to be out and have no way to brush your teeth after eating, carry some mint tea bags with you to nibble on - they will make your breath smell sweet.
- For a deep-cleaning facial mask, try stroking on some Milk of Magnesia, leave it on for 10 minutes, but avoid the eye area. Rinse with warm water.
- Remove paper that is glued onto wood surfaces by rubbing on some olive oil.
- When you wake up in the middle of the night with a bad leg cramp, immediately flex foot or feet upward towards your head.
- If your windshield wipers smear, clean the windshield and the wiper blades with rubbing alcohol.
- Avoid storing different cakes, cookies or bread in the same container - they affect each other and will get stale much faster.
- Be sure and store your nuts in the fridge or freezer - oftentimes they will get rancid if stored at room temperature.
- If you love to steam vegetables, like I do, pour the leftover liquid in the bottom of your pan into containers and freeze. That way, when you are making soup or need vegetable broth, you will have it ready.
- To ease the trauma of your

child's cut, clean it with a red washcloth so that the blood won't show.

- Is arthritis making it difficult for you to hold a pen? Just push it through a small rubber ball, it is easier to grasp.
- If a chair scratches your beautiful floor, just attach self-sticking bunion pads on the bottom of the legs.
- A few bay leaves crumbled here and there in your kitchen cabinets will stop ants from entry.
- If you have a hard time finding your car in the shopping mall parking lot, always try to park in the same place every time.



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Heard On the Street

by **Cathey Carney**



Our Photo Winner of the month for June was **John Lohenitz** of Huntsville. His sister **Sherri** actually was the caller and she gave the subscription to him as a gift. Congratulations to you John!

Patricia Reed has tried nearly every month with guesses on the hidden item of the month - and she got it for June! Did you find it? The tiny cicada was on page 34, the top left photo, just behind the front wheel of the car. Congratulations Patricia!

Maurice Bahan has been a Huntsville resident since 1954, so he's seen lots of changes. He is a WWII veteran. He was born in Peoria, IL and raised on a farm before he came here. He will be 99 this April. So to Maurice we

want to say, Thank you for your Service, and happy Birthday this past April!

We got a great suggestion from one of our Old Huntsville readers recently. **Mr. Link** said in the old days every family canned and put up food for the winter, when fresh fruit and veges were not available. With prices in grocery stores going up every day, this is not a bad idea. Whether you have a garden or go to the the farmers market, buy a surplus and get some Mason jars and learn how to can food. Tomatoes, Peaches, Apples, Green Beans, fruit pie fillings, okra - there's no limit. That way you know what you've got, you know it was fresh when it was canned and you'll enjoy it all fall & winter. Younger people are getting into this now and I'm happy about that.

We couldn't forget that handsome **Ken Owens** and his birthday on July 31st. My little bro doesn't allow anyone else to have a July birthday celebration other than him!

Louise Manning's great grandson **Dylan Harbour** just graduated from Bob Jones High School in Madison, AL and enlisted in the US Air Force on June 7 to report for basic training. His proud mama and dad are **Kathryn** and **Scott Harbour**. Kathryn is Louise's grand daughter. We're proud of you too Dylan!

Recently when a group of people were asked what they wished

for when they blew out their birthday candles, 32% of them would not say for fear of the wish not coming true. But most of the women who answered said they wished for more wealth, and the men wished for weight loss.

Ianthia Bridges is that beautiful smiling lady you see at BB&T Bank on Church Street. She told me she has a good friend in Mobile, **Veronica Bragg**, who celebrates a July 9th birthday. Also her daughter **Brooke Bridges** will be 25 on July 10. CCI nurse **Belinda McCombs** celebrates her special day on July 10. Ianthia goes to church at PUMBC and one of her special friends there is **Mrs. Minnie Harris** and she will be celebrating her big day on July 10th.

Years ago Old Huntsville featured a story about **Dorothea Hertha Kersten Schlidt**. Born in Stargard, Germany in 1921, she became **Wernher von Braun's** secretary at the young age of 21. She immigrated to the US in 1947 to be with her husband, **Rudolf Schlidt**, one of Von Braun's team members. They all transferred to Redstone Arsenal in 1950 and **Rudolph** and **Dorette** built a home

Photo of The Month

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

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This cute little guy has been a Huntsville City Councilman for a long, long, long time



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on Monte Sano. Her husband died in 2012 and she stayed in her home til she passed away, May 10, 2021. She is survived by daughter **Sabine Garrett** and husband **Geoff**; grandchildren **Ben Garrett**, **Gabriella Garrett Gibson** and husband, **Casey**; great-grandson, **Max Gibson**, all of Seattle, Washington; son, **Carl Schlidt** of Huntsville, Alabama; daughter, **Gwendolyn Huss** and husband, **Christian**, of Burghausen, Germany; and grandchildren, **Andrea Blank** and husband, **Hermann**; great-grandsons, **Benjamin** and **Tim Blank** of Naples, Florida, **Alexander Tiltack** and wife, **Jasmin Widura** of Hochburg-Ach, Austria, and **Jessica Huss** of Berlin, Germany; and daughter, **Gabriella Dorette Schlidt** of Atlanta, Georgia. Dorette leaves many friends and family who will love her always.

You know that many older trees in Huntsville have died, been blown over or just cut recently. We need our trees! We hope there's a good master plan for a beautiful **tree canopy** over our city. In honor of trees, I have hidden a teeny tree somewhere in this issue - find it and you win! Call 256.534.0502 and we'll see.

A very happy birthday to **Felicia Sutherlin Meshke** on July

10. She lives in Marietta, GA with husband **Thomas**. Her mom is **Cheryl Tribble** who is our long time Old Huntsville editor!

Lots of activity in the historic districts downtown - strap on some comfy shoes and take good walks through Old Town, 5 Points, Twickenham, the Mill Districts etc. You'll be amazed at the age of some of the homes (they have historic markers) and how new owners are keeping them maintained. Gardens too.

Rosemary Leatherwood of Ole Dad's BBQ in Hazel Green wants to wish her grandson **Chase Woods** a super Jul. 10th happy birthday! Also she sends love to **Chris Rousseau** on his July 4 day.

Lots of activities going on now that it looks like everything is opening back up. Concerts in the Park at Big Spring Park are packed with people. Monday nights from 6:30 - 8:30 and you bring your chairs, pets, kids and beverage of choice. There are usually food trucks there and lemonade stands. It's free of charge and you'll really enjoy it.

Here are some more July fun events:

Von Braun Civic Center:
Reba McIntire 7/9 VBCC 8pm
700 Monroe Street.

Burritt On the Mountain:
City Lights and Stars Concert
- gates open at 6 - Burritt on the Mountain -3101 Burritt Drive (7/2 and 7/23).

Museum of Art:
\$5 After 5 pm at the Museum of Art

06/17/2021 -10/07/2021
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Recurring weekly on Thursday
until 10/07/2021 at the Huntsville
Museum of Art, 300 Church Street
Harrison Brothers Hardware

"Rooted in History: Interpreting Alabama's Folk Art Traditions"06/25/2021 - 09/07/2021
Recurring daily until 09/07/2021
124 South Side Square

Huntsville Botanical Garden

"Uncaged Birds; Nature and You" 06/11/2021 -10/31/2021
Recurring daily until 10/31/2021 -
4747 Bob Wallace Avenue.

Von Braun Civic Center
"Rumours - Fleetwood Mac
Tribute Band. Based in Atlanta,
GA, Rumours captures the energy
of Fleetwood Mac at the height
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Location: VBCC 700 Monroe Street.
Time: 8:00 PM

Have a great July and be extra careful when you're outdoors in the heat.



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Deep South Fried Chicken

In a brown paper bag, mix:

- 1 c. flour
- 1 t. paprika
- 1 t. dry mustard
- 3/4 t. nutmeg
- 1/2 t. garlic powder
- 1 t. salt
- 1 t. pepper

Cut a washed chicken up into serving pieces and drop each piece in the bag til evenly coated with the flour mixture. In a large, deep skillet, melt about 3 inches of vegetable oil til a drop of water sizzles in the skillet. Drop in your chicken pieces and fry til golden brown. Drain on paper towels.

Fried Chicken Gravy

Put two tablespoons of the fat you used to fry the chicken in a skillet. Add two tablespoons flour and 1 teaspoon onion powder. Stir over medium heat til brown. Add salt

and pepper to taste and 3/4 cup milk. Pour over chicken, rice or potatoes.

Sweet Potato Puffs

- 4 sweet potatoes
- 1 c. brown sugar
- 1/3 c. butter
- 1 c. pecans, ground

Boil potatoes til tender, peel and mash. Add brown sugar and butter and form into balls, like large marbles. Roll each ball in the nuts til completely covered. Place in a 250 degree oven for 30 minutes. Serve with ham or poultry.

Eggnog Pie

- 9 inch graham cracker pie shell
- 1 env. unflavored gelatin
- 1/3 c. sugar
- 1-1/3 c. milk
- 3 egg yolks lightly beaten
- 3 egg whites
- 1/4 c. sugar
- 2 T. dark rum
- 1/2 c. heavy cream

Combine gelatin, sugar, milk, and egg yolks in a saucepan. Over medium heat, cook til mixture comes to a boil and remove from heat.

Chill for 20 minutes, stirring a couple of times.

Beat egg whites into soft peaks and gradually add 1/4 cup sugar.

Beat til thick, add rum to the chilled egg yolk mixture. Whip the cream and fold it along with the egg whites into the egg mixture.

Pour into the graham cracker pie shell and don't serve until you've chilled it for at least 3 or 4 hours.

Red Cabbage with Bacon

- 4 slices bacon
- 2 T. olive oil
- 3/4 c. white wine
- 1 head red cabbage, cored, quartered and sliced into 1/3" strips
- 1 t. dried thyme
- 2 t. salt black pepper

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2 t. red wine vinegar
Blue Cheese, crumbled

Cut the bacon into very small pieces. Saute it in the oil for 4 minutes, add wine. Heat just to simmering. Add cabbage slices to the skillet, sprinkle with all spices above. Cover pan and COOK over low heat for 40 minutes, stirring a couple of times. Add the vinegar, stir, and cook for 3 more minutes.

When ready to serve, crumble the blue cheese over the cabbage (this is optional).

Fried Ham with Red-Eye Gravy

4 large slices country ham
1 T. plain flour
1 c. cold water
2 T. strong black coffee

Add your ham slices to a tablespoon of grease in a medium-hot skillet and fry, turning a couple of times. Cook for 10 minutes til browned. Remove ham from the pan and keep warm on a platter. Leaving just a tablespoon of fat in the pan, toss in the flour, raise the heat and stir til it browns.

Pour in the cold water and coffee. Bring to a boil, stirring well to get all that good stuff off the pan. Lower the heat and simmer for about 5 minutes. Throw your ham back in

if you'd like. Get some really fresh biscuits and start soppin' up that good juice.

Hot Cheese Chips

1/2 c. butter, softened
2 c. cheddar cheese, shredded
1 c. flour
1/4 t. salt
1/2 t. paprika
1 t. garlic powder

Cream your butter and cheese. Add the flour, salt and paprika. Add garlic, mix well. Shape into balls and freeze on a cookie sheet covered with aluminum foil. When frozen put them in a Ziploc bag in the freezer. When ready to use, bake on a cookie sheet at 350 degrees for about 15 minutes.

Best Turnip Greens

Cook ham skins til done. Wash greens and put them in a large pan of boiling water. Have enough water in pan to just cover your greens. Cook the ham and greens together for about 40 minutes. When almost done, add about 1/2 tablespoon of Tabasco Jalapeno green sauce and lots of freshly ground black pepper. Salt to taste.

Collard greens can be prepared this way as well.

Meringue Kisses

2 egg whites
3/4 c. powdered sugar
6 oz. mini semisweet chocolate chips
1/2 c. chopped nuts

Bring egg whites to room temps and beat them til foamy. Add the sugar gradually, continuing to beat. Beat til very stiff.

Fold in the chocolate bits and nuts and drop by rounded teaspoonful onto parchment-lined cookie sheet. Place in 350 degree oven and turn off the heat immediately. Without opening the door, leave the meringues in the oven for 6 hours or overnight.

These can be stored in an airtight container. If you will be giving these as gifts add them to the containers at the last minute because they will absorb moisture and get soggy.



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A Stroll Around the Courthouse Square

by Louise Manning
first published in Old Huntsville
magazine in 2013



The other day as I was driving through downtown Huntsville, I thought of the changes that have taken place in the appearance of downtown since the 1940s, 1950s and early 1960s.

During this period of time, downtown was the place where everyone came to do their shopping and take care of other business. There were retail stores for most any business you can name. Most of the stores had large glass windows in which to display their wares. It was fun to just go window shopping. The city offices and county offices, as well as the fire department, Carnegie library and the Post Office were also downtown.

I am 86 years old and worked downtown for many years. In my memory, these are the years of "my downtown!"

When I arrived home, I took a mental stroll around the Courthouse Square. In the days that I worked downtown, I often took a walk during my lunch hour or on my afternoon break.

"You can easily judge the character of people by the way they treat others who can do nothing for them."

Frank Campbell, Madison

The most obvious change is the Courthouse. In 1964, the Courthouse which was built in 1914, was demolished. This Courthouse was a two story gray brick building resembling a Greek temple with a tower on top containing a four-faced clock. There was a large lawn with grass and huge trees surrounding the building. With the building of a modern and larger building on the grounds, the look of the center of town was completely changed!

Plans were made to restore downtown to look as it did in the 1800s. Many of the stores removed their large glass windows used to display their wares and altered the buildings to represent early Huntsville. The concrete sidewalks were torn up and replaced with bricks.

The parking garage on the corner of Madison Street and Fountain Row was built in the 1960s. At the time it was built it also housed the city offices. The garage replaced the Carnegie Library, city hall, fire department and stores.

In those years, downtown was surrounded by residential streets so some houses were also replaced by the garage.

On the west side of the Square, several very old



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buildings, dating to the time when "cotton was king", were demolished. These buildings were known as "Cotton Row" because they housed, among other offices, the offices of cotton buyers. The entrance to Big Spring Park now occupies this space.

Big Spring Park also had a make-over and was enlarged. The building known as 200 West Side Square also replaced some older buildings. The majestic building on the corner of West Side Square and Fountain Row which had been used as a bank until recently has managed to survive!

Several stores on the east side of the Square were demolished and replaced with the present buildings representing early Huntsville.

While I did not walk down Washington Street or Jefferson Street to Clinton Avenue, the garage on Clinton which covers the block between Washington and Jefferson is visible from the Square. Since this garage was one of the major changes to downtown, I decided to include it. The garage replaced a hotel and a number of offices and stores. Also, from the Square, you can see many boarded-up buildings. These buildings contained businesses.

Two other buildings which were demolished, while not on the Square, which I miss seeing are the Elks Building located on Eustis Street (behind the I. Schiffman Building) and the old Post Office building on the corner lot next to the Elks Building. These two lots are now parking lots. The Elks Building was originally built as an opera house and theater and was later used as an annex for the Madison County Courthouse.

The Post Office building served this area before the Post Office on Holmes Avenue (now the Federal Building) was built in the 1930s. As you can see, these buildings were quite old with a lot of history!

The "Great is the Power of Cash" sign which was in giant letters over T. T. Terry's Department Store on the south side of the Square is gone.

A more recent change is the sidewalk dining associated with today's businesses. There are many other changes that have been made within a few blocks of the Square, mainly the demolition of houses and stores/offices for parking lots. Anyone who remembers down-

town during the above years will have their own list.

I understand that when most people think of downtown these days, they also include the Municipal Complex, Von Braun Center, Art Museum, EarlyWorks, Constitution Hall Village, etc., all of which have been built around or since the early 1960s. That is why I kept my comparison to the Courthouse Square. It becomes tricky to try to explain all that has taken place in order for those buildings to be placed where they are.

Among the many changes that have been made are: streets have been rerouted, renamed, or are no longer there. Big Spring Park has been changed and houses, offices, stores, churches and other buildings have been demolished. Among the buildings no longer on West Clinton Street (or Clinton Avenue) is the West Clinton Grammar School where I spent my first six years of school.

Well, I think I have "strolled" enough for one day. I am getting tired and it is about time for me to decide whether to take a nap or watch television. Maybe, I will start watching television and that will put me to sleep as it sometimes does. And, I will not have to make a decision after all!



Washington Street, circa 1918



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magazine in May 2009

City News - 1923



* The Bradleyan, a Work of Art - 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, containing 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 expressed a desire to adopt it.

"Poverty is a state of mind," said the philosopher with a full stomach. Anon.

* Claims he was Married While Hypnotized

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

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

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

* Woman on Kildare Wounded

Mrs. John Dobbs was severely wounded this week when she opened the door to a group of young thieves who wanted to take what meager belongings she had. She gave what she had including her wedding ring but they weren't satisfied until she was beaten and unconscious. Her husband found her a few hours later and notified the police. A search is underway.

My Husband Ran off

Due to my husband running off with that Davis woman and abandoning his wife and 4 children, I have no choice but to sell his farm equipment, buggy, horse and donkey. All items can be seen at my home in New Hope. Contact newspaper to get in touch with me. (from 1892 newspaper)

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The Rock Crusher

by Barbara Corazzi

Growing up in Huntsville was great fun. I have been away from my hometown for far too many years, but circumstances and fate have taken me to live in many different parts of the country. As a rule I have enjoyed my life and the different people and customs, but Huntsville will always be home and I get back as often as I can.

My parents were plain, hard working people who took good care of me and my brothers and sisters. My mother raised six children of her own as well as her brothers and sisters, as my grandmother died at an early age. Spring and summer were my favorite times of the year and that meant only one thing to me--get outside and explore the countryside! My brother Pete, Uncle David Harbin and I would leave early in the morning, with something to eat that was easy to carry as we would be gone all day long and head for the hills.

We lived in the foothills of Monte Sano and not very far from the "Rock Crusher" which was a little south of where Wells Avenue and the Old Toll Gate or Mountain Road met.

Since we were 9 to 14 years old, everything was an adventure to us; we could not pass up that big hole in the ground. We spent a lot of time and energy there. We climbed up and down looking for the most dangerous spots. Luckily, we never got hurt, but looking back, we got into some situations that could have had bad results. I guess we had someone looking over us.

One of our favorite games was sliding down the dirt wall of the rock crusher. We would get a cardboard box or something similar, hop on and take the ride of our lives. Great Fun!!!

I remember a huge boulder at the

bottom. There was a fairly good sized cave like opening at one end and we would make up stories about buried treasure. We would crawl inside and pretend we were treasure hunters. Of course we never found anything. Lucky for us we didn't find any snakes or spiders or anything like that either.

Visits to Huntsville often take me back to that place of my childhood. Although I am in favor of progress, I am sad to see how it has all changed over the years.

I don't know whether the rock crusher is still there or how one would get to it, but I would sure like to try sliding down it once more.

"If you dropped something when you were younger, you just picked it up. When you're older and you drop something, you contemplate whether you actually need it anymore."

Neil Keith, Huntsville



OPENING THE HIGHWAYS TO ALL MANKIND

Back of all the activities of the Ford Motor Company is this Universal idea — a whole-hearted belief that riding on the people's highway should be within easy reach of all the people.

An organization, to render any service so widely useful, must be large in scope as well as great in purpose. To conquer the high cost of motoring and to stabilize the factors of production — this is a great purpose. Naturally it requires a large program to carry it out.

It is this thought that has been the stimulus and inspiration to the Ford organization's growth, that has been incentive in developing inexhaustible resources, boundless facilities and an industrial organization which is the greatest the world has ever known.

In accomplishing its aims the Ford institute has never been daunted by the size or difficulty of any task. It has spared no toil in finding the way of doing each task best. It has dared to try out the untried with conspicuous success.

Such effort has been amply rewarded. For through this organization, the motor car which is contributing in so large a measure toward making life easier, pleasanter and more worth while has been made available to millions.

The Ford Motor Company views its situation today less with pride in great achievement than with sincere and sober realization of new and larger opportunities for service to mankind.

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Traveling to Huntsville in 1929

by Carnell (Thorny) Thorne

Boy, that was some ride. Can you imagine nine people jammed in a T-Model Ford? Seven children, some of them teenagers. I was the little one of the bunch, but I had two younger brothers, so the youngest one always sat up front with Mama and Dad.

Six were on the back seat and they had to take time about sitting on the edge of the seat so that I could sit behind them. So much fun. Of course I couldn't see a thing but that was alright - I was warmer than they were.

It was a pretty cool trip. We lived in Salem, AL which is about 14 miles north of Athens. You can imagine how long it took us to get to Huntsville back in those days, driving about 25 or 30 miles an hour. Uncle Marcus worked at the Mills and they lived somewhere close by. We left home early and we got there just before lunch. Uncle Marcus and Aunt Lula Thorne had 4 kids so we got there in time to get into mischief before lunch.

Right after we had lunch they took us to the Big Spring Park, which was nothing at all like it is now. We were playing around and all of a sudden we heard singing and a lot of other noises and I looked up the street and there were a lot of people coming down the street in white robes.

It scared me to death. I thought the world was coming to an end. I grabbed my sister from the back around her waist and you couldn't have gotten me loose with a crow bar. I don't remember the trip home but I guess it was about as exciting as it was going down. We made a lot of trips down there because Aunt Lula and Uncle Marcus were our favorite kinfolks.

As the years went by we made a

lot of trips to their house and they came to visit us too. We always had so much fun since my parents and my Uncle & Aunt always made sure we kids were entertained.

I got into so much mischief just by myself. Dad had built a "paling fence" around the yard (fence with a flat board on top) and I liked to walk the 2x4 that was what the palings were nailed to.

Dad had told me one day when he caught me walking on top of the fence on the 2x4 that the next time he caught me he was going to give me a spanking.

One day he and Mama went to Athens and of course I took advantage of their being gone. Well, I climbed to the very top of that fence, in my dress, (we girls weren't allowed to wear pants back then).

When I lost my balance and fell, my dress caught on the top of the fence and I was just hanging there near the top. My brothers thought this was the funniest thing and I begged them to get me off that fence but of course they didn't.

I was still hanging around when my parents got back from town. They acted like I wasn't even there, went in the house and put up the groceries. When Dad came out he got me off the fence and said, "Do you remember what I told you if I caught you on the fence again?" "Yessir," I said. He swatted me 2 times and I looked up at him and said, "Is that all?" He said, "Would you like some more?" Of course I didn't because 2 times was more than plenty.

Years went by and I remember one Sunday we made another trip to Huntsville. I know by that time we had gotten rid of the T-Model. I was 15 years old at that time and Aunt Lula was my mother's sister and she had married my future father-in-law's brother.

Well, the two families met up that Sunday. Pete Thorne and I sat next to each other at lunch time. We were both 15 years old and never dreamed we would get further than that, on that Sunday. Pete went into the Army at age 18 and we started to write back and forth. With the help of Aunt Lula giving me his address - to make a long story short - I married that Tennessee hillbilly and we began our lives together. He came home December of 1945 and we got married in April of 1946 and were together for 61 years.

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BACK YONDER IN THE DAY

by Clarence Potter

Running a store at the Larkinsville Cross Roads. I learned the difference betwix "the fixins and the makins" If a man (some times a woman) came into the store asking for them "fixins" they wanted tobacco and papers to make a smoke. They couldn't afford to buy "Ready Rolls" like other people.

The ready rolls cost \$.16 a pack. The fixins like Country Gentleman was only \$.06. When a person came in asking for the "makins" they wanted to make home brew and they needed a can of blue ribbon malt, three yeast cakes and five pounds of sugar.

We had one neighbor that would buy the makings about every six to eight weeks. It takes six weeks to two months to work off homebrew. Winter and or summer he was a regular. Both the man and his wife traded with us.

They kept a running account at the store. Running account meant we would charge whatever they bought and once a month they would pay what they could on their account. Sometimes part sometimes all, but one thing for sure, the account was settled in full every fall when the gardens and crops "came in!"

They were good customers and "good people" as everybody said back yonder in them "good old days." Now, we never sold him the "makins" when he was with his wife! We never wrote down blue ribbon malt on his charge account. We would charge it as gas, groceries or anything but what it took to make homebrew. His wife did not approve. Knowing his wife did not approve and homebrew had to be worked off in a very

warm environment I often wondered how and where he worked his spirits off in cold weather!

That mystery solved itself one cold winter day when a friend and I were returning home from hunting. We were really cold. Back then we didn't have Northface jackets hanging in the closets. As a matter of fact most houses didn't even have a closet. If you were lucky enough to have two sets of clothes, one set hung on the wall.

Anyway about a mile from home and at the foot of a ridge was an old sawmill. There was a large sawdust pile left by milling of so many trees. As sawdust sets and starts to decompose it puts off heat. Even in the coldest weather. If you dig a foot into the pile, even with snow covering it, one can warm themselves in a sawdust pile. Well, that evening, while Bradley and I was digging into that pile of sawdust we uncovered our friend's stash working itself off in that big pile. Snow covering everything for miles and that little brown jug was fermenting the potatoes he had mixed to give his homemade fire water a taste.

We politely covered it back up and made our way on home. A lot of people say they long to be back in "the good old days." That's not me. I do not long for those days. But I want them in my memories, just not in my life.

Yes, those days are gone forever, except in memories where they belong!



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The Day the Boat Sank

by M. D. Smith, IV



lem, while Dee, 6, and Scott, 4, watched on the dock, already wearing their life jackets. They could both swim, having learned in my parent's pool, and were not afraid of the water.

We spent a great day on the water. Had a cooler of drinks, sandwiches, and chips, and I found little creeks that the flat bottom boat could navigate the shallow water. We fished with some crickets and caught a few fish to the squeals and delight of the boys.

I was a proud dad with my two kids, teaching them about fishing, boats and love of the water like my fa-

It was fall of 1968 and I bought a used 17' camping trailer from a friend for hunting. The next summer, to get more use out of it, I located Ossa-Win-Tha campgrounds near Guntersville on the main lake. I rented a spot for the season of '69, close to water and boat ramp.

With my two older boys, four and six, I needed a boat to explore and enjoy the water at the campsite. Judy didn't care much for the five of us in the little camper, so she stayed home with the baby.

I bought a used 14' flat bottom metal fishing boat complete with an aging Johnson 15 hp outboard engine and trailer. It tested fine. I showed it with pride to Judy when I got home.

"You're going to take Dee and Scott in that little thing?"

"Yes, honey. It can hold four grown men and it's perfectly fine for us."

"Make them wear life jackets," she commanded.

"Of course."

With the camper waiting for us at Ossa-Win-Tha, we headed over on a Saturday morning in June, pulling the boat.

Launching it was no prob-

ther did for me.

You know when things have just been perfect and sometimes something puts a damper on the day? It is almost like in the movies when the couple has been too happy in the middle of the story and there's an eruption of some kind heading their way.

Time came to return to the dock and pull the boat out of the water. As I motored up to the boat dock and slowed the engine, I asked Dee to throw a loop around a post as we gently bumped the wooden piling. Sitting on the front seat, he did as I asked him, then sat back down for me to pull the rear around and tie it broadside before unloading the kids and taking it out on the trailer.

The water was lower than usual and it was a bit of a stretch for son Scott, sitting in the middle seat. I stood up, put my foot on the little metal boat's outer railing near the oarlock holes, and picked up Scott to lift him onto the planks. As I leaned

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and pressed hard on the side rail, the combined weight of me, a bit heavy in those days, and Scott, caused the side of the boat to slip under the water. Barely got Scott on the dock.

What happened next is one of those slow-motion things that I can still recall in playback mode. I never saw a boat fill with lake water so fast. Once the gusher started, the craft sank deeper on that side and was engulfed in seconds.

Dee's eyes had widened and then he started screaming, "The boat's going to sink. We're going to drown."

I'm screaming back, "No, we're not. The boat has flotation under the seats; it's not going to sink."

And it didn't. But it sure filled up with water flush with the sides. There we sat, wet to the waist. Dee sat bawling with his life jacket on and I quickly got him off the boat. Pulled it around to the shore, drained it and loaded it on the trailer. We got changed in the camper and I thought we ended the day with a bit of a thrill, but no harm done.

I learned my lesson about leaning on the edge of a small boat and was happy the flotation under all the seats worked.

I knew Dee would tell Judy, so I beat him to the punch and told her of our little mishap.

Dee's version was more graphic than mine, as you can imagine. So, a couple of weeks pass, I returned to the lake, again with both older boys. Lunch and cooler packed in the boat, tied to the dock, and I motioned for the boys to get in. Scott ran over, and I helped him in, but no way Dee was going. I knew he might be reluctant, after his experience earlier, but thought with us all set to enjoy another great day fishing, lunch and all, he'd come around. He didn't.

I think I might have just run the boat with Scott a bit and returned as Dee played on the

swing sets, and he still wouldn't go out. He allowed as how he'd never get in that boat again. Within a week, I'd convinced Judy we needed a bigger boat, one she and the baby would feel secure with everyone.

I traded the little metal boat for a seventeen-foot fiberglass bow-rider ski boat with room for six adults and several kids. I kept that boat, and our family enjoyed it for years as the kids learned to ski.

Dee, true to his word, never did get in that fishing boat again.



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A Birthday Tribute to Buzz Brewer - 80 Years in the Making

by Jean Brewer McCrady
 Written 2 years ago for
 Buzz's 80th birthday



He was born 80 years ago in a farm house on Squirrel Hill, which 3 years later was a part of the emerging Redstone Arsenal. His birth certificate said his name was Johnie Eugene Brewer. He learned that from his first grade teacher when he didn't answer roll to his real name. From birth his two sisters Net & Jean called him Brother; everyone else followed suit. That is, till our new brother Ray came along. His "Brother" sounded more like "Buzz", so for the last 75 years, Johnie Eugene has been Buzz. "Pistol" is another name acquired along the way and is still my favorite.

At an early age it was evident that his was no ordinary mind. If he didn't like the way something worked, he invented a way to change it. He was a natural born engineer and innovator and had the skill and ability to build with his hands what his mind could envision. Sometimes that ability caused him trouble. For example, one day while Mama & Daddy were away, the young Buzz wanted to try tommy walking. He was not deterred by the fact of not having tommy walkers. He found some wood slats in Daddy's shop and built some. When Mama & Daddy got home, Buzz was walk-

ing around in the yard high above ground level, and Mama instantly recognized the source of his elevation as her hoped-for quilting frames that had long been on Daddy's to-do list. Her reaction brought Buzz down to earth in a hurry and ended his tommy walking forever.

But that didn't end his passion for motion, the faster the better. During high school, he was a regular at Green Lantern Hill's stock car race track. His passion for drag racing and NASCAR increased from there. One of his teenage stunts was to challenge his buddy Jackie Locke to a drag race on the Harvest Railroad Bed, then a dirt and gravel road. The odd thing was, Jackie was in his suped-up hotrod, while Buzz was on foot. They fixed a certain landmark to determine the winner, and Buzz always believed if he could've stayed upright he would've been first to the mark. It was not easy explaining to Mama the gravel rash, scuffed-up clothes and the suddenly worn out shoes.

But he was not finished with drag racing. About age 22 and returning from a 4-year stint in the Air Force, the "boy from Harvest" (as he was called) and his '62 Chevy 409 became a legend in the local stock car drag race circles.

No one could touch him on the strip, but many tried.

After years of humiliation from coming in second, the opposition brought in their biggest gun driver to challenge the 409 in a major showdown. That driver crossed the finish line first, but HE didn't beat the Chevy. The Chevy driver beat himself. To minimize weight, Buzz underestimated, by less than a quart, the amount of gas needed for that fateful run. Just yards from the finish line, the 409 sputtered, squatted and continued rolling toward the finish as his challenger came from behind and shot past him.

This, by choice, closed the chapter on drag racing for the boy from Harvest. I need to mention, "the boy" was a motorcycle man starting at age 12 when Daddy brought home a very used '39 Harley he bought for \$15. Buzz hasn't been without a Harley, Honda, or some other brand since.

As his racing hobby ended, his business life was just beginning. He worked two or three jobs briefly as an employee before shifting to the role of employer. When Olin King started Spacecraft, Inc., Buzz was one of his first hires and its sole function was building cables for the military. SCI is still based in Huntsville and is a

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noted global supplier of defense and aerospace technology. Buzz quickly learned how cables were made and launched his own business making wiring harnesses for the military. These were packed and shipped by strict military specs, and it soon dawned on him that other defense manufacturers were having to meet those same rigorous standards. So he established Military Packaging, a business to provide that service. This involved carrying an increased inventory of corrugated boxes of various sizes, which resulted in another "ah ha" moment—the realization that those boxes were made by somebody somewhere somehow, and if they could do it, so could he.

Without the benefit of Google, the internet and U-tube in the 50s, researching the how-to of box making was not a simple thing. Not to be defeated, he invented a way to make boxes. He found a source for blank corrugated sheets and built a scoring machine for converting the sheets into foldable containers. The "machine" consisted of a threaded rod with washers fed onto it and spaced such that, when pulled across the corrugated sheet under pressure, they would score it for easy folding into the desired box size. While this was effective for getting the right size boxes, it was impractical for mass production. There had to be a better way, and he would find it.

During that quest, he discovered a whole world of box making machinery out there and, you guessed it, if others could operate it, he could too. With his brother-in-law Alton Robinson as partner, they took a leap of faith and built a box plant - Packaging Materials, in Madison. One of their first discoveries was this big complicated machinery would cost big non-existent dollars. Buzz's engineering mind and uncanny ability to see things that aren't there helped them succeed in spite of that. He learned the big box makers around the country often discard-

ed non-performing machinery to replace it with newer models. He got good at tracking down such discards and checking them out.

He could look at a piece of broken down equipment piled in a corner, covered with corrugated dust and cobwebs, and see the missing parts needed to restore it to service. He would purchase the "pile of junk" for pennies on the dollar and when it was on his shop floor, describe to his machine shop buddy Art Farrer what the missing part needed to do, and Art would machine it into existence.

Buzz soon became an expert on certain lines of machinery, his reputation spread and manufacturers used him as a volunteer "salesman" and tutor for their customers. In his usual style, he never let his own business get in the way of helping someone else. He mentored people into the box business from coast to coast, just as he had mentored employees of his previous endeavors into spin-off businesses of their own. In the early 80s he moved to Dothan (where he still lives) to buy and operate a plant he had earlier helped to birth. In time, both plants were sold, and one of the new owners of Madison's Packaging Materials was Huntsville's Benny Nelson of Crimson Tide

fame.

Getting out of box making didn't end Buzz's business career. He ran a retail knife shop in Dothan, then a windows installation business, which transitioned him into his true love—woodworking, making sawdust he calls it. He sold Windows Plus to give full attention to Custom Woodworks for many years. Now when not traveling for Campers on Mission or other reasons, that shop is still his favorite hang out, doing pro bono projects for family, friends, or strangers, and occasionally accepting paying jobs. It's known far and wide, if it can be made of wood, Buzz Brewer can make it. But this craft is not limited to woodworking per se. If he needs a machine to do something the manufacturer didn't equip it for, he invents and attaches the needed accessory to accomplish what he wants from it.

It's been a busy and varied 80 years (82 as of this publication) and Brother Johnnie Eugene Buzz Pistol Brewer from Squirrel Hill has long been, and still is, legendary to many people in many ways for many reasons. And he is the last one who will ever recognize that fact.

I love you Pistol,
Sis "Dickiebird" Jean
July 30, 2019



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Jim White

by Skip Vaughn,
published in the Redstone Rocket,
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On Dec. 10, 1967 Army helicopter pilot Jim White was flying his UH1-D Huey back to his base at Chu Lai, Vietnam, when a member of the four-man crew saw an Air Force plane get shot down. As the F-4 Phantom descended in flames, the two Air Force pilots ejected and parachuted to safety. Maj. Glenn Nordin splashed into the river, about 20 yards offshore, while 2nd Lt. Bob Riddick fell to the sand. White landed his helicopter between the pilots amid enemy fire. His crew chief ran to one of the pilots while his gunner ran to the other. Nor-

din had to be cut out of his parachute. Riddick was able to get out of his chute on his own. Neither was injured.

"They had a rougher ride than I did," White said as he recalled the incident. During their evacuation flight to Chu Lai, Nordin crawled between the seats of White and his co-pilot and looked up at White. "He had his sunglasses on and one of the lenses was gone and he didn't know it of course," White said. White received the Distinguished Flying Cross for his role in this rescue mission. His co-pilot received the Air Medal with V device for valor.

Forty years later, retired Chief Warrant Officer 3 White was home in Huntsville when he received a nighttime call from the state police in Atlanta.

"The thought in my mind was 'Oh what's my son done now,'" White said laughing. The policeman said he was trying to help a friend named Nordin who had been rescued years ago in Vietnam. White confirmed he flew the rescue helicopter, and he subsequently received a call from Nordin. "We talked to each other for a while and then we started emailing each other a lot," White said. Nordin, who resides in San Antonio, has a friend in Decatur. The friend, Nordin and White arranged to have a reunion dinner at the friend's house and brought their wives.

"As I was getting out of the car (in Decatur), one person came out with sunglasses and he had a lens missing," White said of reuniting with Nordin. "He had the same glasses he wore in Vietnam. He kept them all these years. That was our first greeting after a few hugs. There were tears. That was a good dinner there. It lasted till 1 o'clock in the morning."

Riddick lives in Tacoma, Washington, where the family of White's wife happens to be from. Two years after reunit-

"A man who carries a cat by the tail learns something he can learn in no other way."

Mark Twain

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ing with Nordin, White reconnected with Riddick while he and his wife visited her family in Washington. White met Riddick's family; and Riddick told him that he was the reason Riddick survived to have children and grandchildren.

"Every year on Dec. 10th I get a phone call from both of those guys," White said. "Hadn't missed a year since."

White flew 1,000 combat hours from 1967-68 for the 176th Assault Helicopter Company in Chu Lai. He was shot down twice and he had two emergency landings for maintenance problems. In his second Vietnam tour, 1970-71, he flew 600 combat hours of secret reconnaissance missions in a RU-8D twin engine airplane with the 144th Aviation Company. They started in Nha Trang and moved to Cam Rahn Bay halfway through his tour.

The Whitesville, West Virginia, native received the Distinguished Flying Cross, the Bronze Star and 38 Air Medals including one with V device. He also had his master aviator wings and master parachutist wings. He enlisted in 1957 and he graduated from flight school in August 1967 before going to Vietnam the following month. White retired from the Army in 1977. He became an Army civilian pilot at the Redstone Airfield and he retired in 2000 as the standardization officer. He finished with 40 years of government service, including 20 on active duty and 20 as a civilian. Altogether he had 14,000 hours of flying.

White completed his education through the Army and he received his bachelor's in business administration, with minors in economics and military service, from the University of Nebraska in 1972. He and his wife of 45 years, Teresa, have two sons, Joseph and Todd, three grandchildren and one great grandchild. The couple bought their home in Huntsville in 1980.

In June 2010, he became one of four founding members of the North Alabama Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association or NAVHPA. White served as its President the first two years.

He also belongs to the Warrant Officers Association, the American Legion, the Retired Military Officers Association, the Veterans of Foreign Wars, Disabled American Veterans, Combat Helicopter Pilots Association and the National Rifle Association. White, 80, has an 80% disability rating from Veterans Affairs.

He shared his thoughts on this nation's commemoration of 50 years since the Vietnam War.

"I think it's good that they do that," White said. "I got my (Vietnam veterans) lapel pin a couple of years ago. NAVHPA has probably presented hundreds of them."

Editor's note: This is the 320th in a series of articles about Vietnam veterans as the United States commemorates the 50th anniversary of the Vietnam War.

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Peanut Butter Crispies

1 c. dark corn syrup
2 c. sugar
2 c. peanut butter, creamy
10 c. dry corn flakes

In a saucepan over medium heat, bring your sugar and corn syrup to a boil.

Remove from heat and stir in the peanut butter. Add the corn flakes til the mixture is very stiff.

Roll into small balls, place them on large cookie sheet, **place covered with wax paper** in non-dusty room for about 2 hours.

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SASSY

by Bill Alkire



My wife and companion of 58 years passed on October 7, 2020. As one can imagine if your spouse is living, a large void would be left. My son is very resourceful and offered a solution that might fill that gap. He felt what I needed was a furry companion, a cat.

We as a family had raised dogs, cats, kittens, turtles, Guinea pigs, and even spiders (daughter's project). To entice me, my son was sending via e-mail pictures of cats. I succumbed to his "advertising." Dr. Karen Shepherd of Huntsville's Animal Services had always told my wife and I to use the shelter after we had lost our last pet. The shelter it was!

When I got to the shelter, I discovered I must call for an appointment (Covid 19). That done, I spent the weekend in preparations for my new tenant. My son had provided a pet carrier, feeding dish, watering container, food, litter box and litter

to get me started. I previewed cats online and found a Maine Coon I liked. I knew personality was most important. I arrived at the shelter on Johnson Road at the prescribed time.

The young woman volunteer at the shelter explained that the Maine Coon was a beautiful cat but was attached to her brother and would need to be kept as a pair. I knew that would not work for me. The young woman encouraged me to look at other cats. I was about to give up when I noticed this small calico in a double cage by herself. She was staring at me. She possessed a "beauty mark" on her nose. The young woman indicated the cat was eighteen months old and would not get much larger.

The cat was obviously flirting with me, so I spoke to her and let her sniff my hand. She made multiple crackling me-wow sounds as if to say "yes" in an emotional cat way, indicating she was excited and happy. I was sold.

The shelter fixed us up. We were on our way to becoming a family. The adventure had begun. She was silent all the way home in the car, not even one sound about my driving like any other companion would do. I felt this relationship might work out.

She remained in her carrier all night. She did get out in the night - used her litter box, drank water and ate. Mid-morning, she crept out to complete her on-site evaluation. She needed to see if the rest of the accommodations met her approval and to ascertain if she really needed a human around. Lucky for us

both I passed her test and she allowed me to live in the apartment. It took her about three months to allow me to pet her - under her direction.

She began early-on to develop her cat commands to inform her human servant what she wanted. On the second day she became bossy and boisterous. I called her Sassy at a suggestion of a cat lover friend of mine. Sassy trained me well - we get along most of the time. Sassy has certain sounds she uses as commands to her human to provide for her needs.

Long meows indicate she wants food; low-pitch meows



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means she needs water (preferably from the bathroom faucet); mid-pitch meows communicate she wants her litter box cleaned; and chirruping is to let you know she wants her toy "skunk" and "Mr. Bill" characters. This is the same sound she would make in season.

Her favorite toy developed from a morning ritual she performs. She wakes at 6:30 am and provides directions (multiple meows) to check her food dish (she never needs any); and next she directs me (mid-pitch meows) to the kitchen. I must make coffee - she waits impatiently with choreographed purring and low-pitched meow directions. She waits for the foil lined coffee package. She will take it from my hand and with a running fit will head back to the bed to play toss and jump at the package. She will play for hours with the coffee packages - shoving them under furniture and crying for me to retrieve them.

Sassy also insists on a window-blind raised to facilitate her bird watching. This is also one of the games which she intermittently plays between leisure naps. If I leave for more than a day, she will begin with hateful meowing sounds and snubbing actions for several days on my return.

Sassy is beginning to warm to visitors - but she holds back any/all effort to touch her. Sassy is very selective whom she allows to talk to her and will only communicate with those she talks to first. She is very snobbish for a Southern Girl.

She has licked me on the nose, but quite reluctant to show any affection except snuggling and purring. She has been known to take a front claw and reach for my hand if I stop rubbing or brushing her. She can be quite demanding and vocal like most female companions.

"Life is short - smile while you still have teeth."

Jane Smith, Huntsville

Three-Layer Pie

Crust:

1 stick butter
 1 c. plain flour
 2 T. confectioners sugar
 1 c. nuts (chopped fine)
 Melt margarine, mix with flour and sugar. Add nuts. Spread on bottom of buttered pan and bake for 20 min. in 350° oven.

Filling:

8-oz. pkg. cream cheese (room temp)
 1 c. confectioners sugar
 1 sml. container Cool Whip
 Mix cheese and sugar. Add Cool Whip. Pour on top of crust.

Topping:

1 large instant chocolate pudding mix
 2-1/2 c. cold milk
 1/2 c. chopped nuts
 Mix pudding and milk, add chopped nuts. Pour on top of cheese filling. Refrigerate at least 2 hours before serving.




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The Little Gray House on the Highway

by Marcella Hargrove, Buford, GA

Growing up in Huntsville was a great time of peace and excitement. I was about 9 years old when we moved into the little gray house. The street was called Highway 72. Times were hard as money was very scarce. We had to earn our spending money so my brother, sister and I delivered the Huntsville Times, baby sat and sometimes did yard work.

There were very few houses on the highway then in the 60s so not many people could hire help. Everyone knew each other so it was safe to play in your front yard. I can still name some of the people who lived there. D.W. Myrick, Virgil Lacy, Loretta and Carlos Patterson, G W. Wilson, to name just a few. These people were business people and everybody knew them. We would always help one another. My daddy traveled a lot and mother didn't drive. Mr. Carroll, owner of Carroll's grocery would kindly deliver our groceries.

I remember such good times walking to Fifth Street Baptist Church. We went to church and school with most of our friends. Rison Elementary School was on the corner of Highway 72 and Oakwood Avenue. After school we would go to Mullins Cafe, such a treat to buy a 25 cent hamburger.

As the neighborhood grew Lee High school was built. Christmas was always a happy time in the little house. We would hike up Chapman Mountain and cut a real tree. We loved our little gray house and Sunday afternoons after church everyone gathered at the Thompson's backyard for a weiner roast, homemade ice cream and fireworks.

I could write a book on this; my thoughts and memories of the little house on the highway but hope this brings back good memories to many people who grew up in Huntsville in the 50s and 60s. The memories of family and friends still linger in my thoughts.

All my family is deceased now but one brother. My memories last forever. Time marches on as we are now in 2021 and this generation is many years ahead of our slow life in the little house on the highway in Huntsville, AL.

I should say it was Old Huntsville.

"I'm so glad I learned about parallelograms in high school instead of how to do my own taxes.

It comes in so handy during Parallelogram season."

Billy Jordan, Athens

"My wife was afraid of the dark, then she saw me naked and now she's afraid of the light."

Rodney Dangerfield

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Weird Humor

by Elizabeth Wharry



Ever have a night when you're over-tired? The body wants to rest, but the mind decides it's time to play "a hundred silly questions". A few nights ago, I was going through that and I came up with some real doozies.

Before you nice folks write in, I looked up the answers. Thank heavens for cell phones! Here are some of the random and unusual thoughts.

Why won't glue stick to its bottle? The air/liquid ratio keeps it from doing so. Does your chewing gum really lose its flavor on the bedpost over night? Yes, and it's a mess to clean up in the morning!

Why is called rush hour when traffic is practically at a stand still? Ever notice that the bigger hurry one is in, the slower traffic goes? Don't rush time, and it won't rush you.

Diet...the first 3 letters are D-I-E. Round is a shape. The first three letters of funeral are F-U-N.

What would the crook in your elbow steal? Would it steal the cap from your knee? And where does one get a new cap? Is one's hip joint truly with it? What kind of ball does one's shoulder joints play? Have you ever seen anyone beside themselves? Is that left side/right side, or top and bottom?

I've never seen anyone laugh all the way to the bank, nor have I ever witnessed anyone laughing themselves to death. Is it even possible? I'm still waiting to see anyone jump for joy.

As far as working one's fingers to the bone, um... yeah...can't picture that. Yuck.

I hope I have tickled your funny bone. Where exactly is that? Have a safe and happy 4th of July!

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A Heroic Mother Bird

from 1877 Newspaper

A local paper relates this interesting story. During one of the last summer's thunder-storms, lightning struck a barn near the town of Pensacola, Florida. A stork's nest, in which there were some young storklings, was threatened by the flames.

The two parent birds contemplated the horrible situation from a distance with evident

distress. At last the mother bird darted down upon the nest and, seizing one of her young family with her beak, bore it off to a safe spot upon a meadow. The father followed her and settled down to keep watch over his offspring.

When the mother returned to the scene of danger the fire had reached the nest, in which one bird still remained. But while she was flying around it, preparing for a descent, the young one fell through the charred nest into the burning barn. There was no moment for thought. Down darted the mother into the smoke and fire, and, coming up with the storkling in her beak, flew off, apparently unhurt.

The next day a wounded stork fell to the ground in the market place. She was unable to stand, and the policeman who found her carried her into the guard-house, where it was discovered that both legs were

sorely burned. She was recognized as the heroic mother who had done the brave feat of rescue at the fire in the barn. A physician was sent for and the policeman found her a temporary home.

Meanwhile, the spouse of the sick she-stork had discovered her whereabouts. He attended diligently to the two young ones and paid daily visits to the mother, as if to inform himself how the patient was getting on, and to assure her that their children were doing well.

The school children of Pensacola readily charged themselves with the task of finding food for the patient, bringing her everyday far more than the necessary number of living frogs. The mayor paid an official visit every day to the sick guest of the municipality, to see that the doctor's orders were duly carried out. In less than a fortnight the bird was sufficiently hale to fly away to her husband and children.

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* Give your birds a variety of toys. Something they can chew, something they can swing on and maybe even something they can cuddle with. Rotate toys often so your bird doesn't get bored.

* When you're not home, leave the TV or radio on for your birds to keep them entertained. They love music!

* Birds need at least one new toy a month. Toys are a necessity, not a luxury, for birds. Mirrored toys are always a big hit.

* When giving your bird fresh fruits or veggies, try an interesting presentation. If it's just sitting in the food bowl, it may not be too appetizing.

* Spend quality time every day with your bird. Read a book or newspaper to him, or just chat and feed treats.

* Make sure your bird gets adequate rest every day. 10 to 12 hours of sleep in spring and summer, and 12 to 14 hours in fall and winter is a good amount. Make sure your bird sleeps in a quiet, dark room with the cage covered.

* Watch your bird carefully for signs of illness (sitting on the bottom of the cage puffed up, not eating). They usually don't show they're sick until it's really serious.

* Talk to your parakeet a lot. Every time you pass by, stop a minute and talk to him; it doesn't matter what you tell him - he'll just like hearing your voice and the attention. You can also whistle and make clicking noises. Soon enough, you'll hear whistles and maybe even words.

* Be sure his basic needs are fulfilled. Give him fresh food and water every day, keep a slightly cool temperature in the room. Let him fly freely through the room for at least an hour or two a day, unless you have ceiling fans. When you are feeding him/her, try to make sure you are feeding it so your bird will look forward to each feeding with

a variety of seeds.

* Don't expect him to be a bird genius instantly. It's true parakeets' intelligence rivals that of some primates, but don't expect your bird to be having conversations with the whole family and using a toilet tray as soon as you get him. Be realistic.

* Don't actually pet him unless he's a real baby. Most birds detest being stroked. If you are disappointed in this, you can try training the bird cool tricks, and maybe even teach him to perch on your arm, shoulder or finger.

* Remember to always handle your parakeet carefully. They are small and delicate. You don't need to act like you're walking on eggshells with him, but always remember that he is a small bird, not a stress ball.

* Never hit or do anything rough with your bird. This will only frighten him.

* Line your bird's cage with newspaper sheets. It fits perfectly, it's cheap, safe and the ink actually helps slow the growth of micro-organisms.

* Birds need to bathe to keep their feathers clean. Bird "bathtubs" can be a shallow bowl or pie plate filled with water, or you can fill a sink with a couple inches of water for them to take a bath in. Some birds enjoy being misted with a spray bottle too, specially when it gets hot.

* Make friends with your bird, also, make sure to spend time with him, speak to him, and to keep him comfy in your home. He/she is a part of your family, too.

* If you don't want another bird, then put mirrors in the cage. They are attracted to shiny things.

* Many parakeet owners try to control the seed mess that parakeets leave when they eat, throwing seeds out of the cage, etc. However those seed catchers that are made of net and elastic that fit on the bottom outside of the cage can cause your bird to get a claw stuck and potentially with disastrous results as he tries to free himself.

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Life at Sea

by Tom Carney

"Seven knots of wind blowing in a northeasterly direction. For the first time the weather has been good. After leaving Gibraltar nineteen days ago it has been one storm after another. If it had not been for the doldrums in the Red Sea, I would not be making the Atlantic passage so late in the season. It has been almost two years since I left Huntsville in my 28-foot sailboat."

"Sailing down the Tombigbee Waterway I made my way across the Gulf of Mexico and down through the Panama Canal. I have seen sights that most men can only dream about. I have been caught in a force ten gale in the Pacific, picked fresh fruits in Tobago. I was entertained at the Sydney Yacht Club in Australia."

"So many miles. Sri Lanka, Singapore, Suez, Malta - oh please merciful God, let me live until I finish my voyage. My body is so tired."

Joe never finished his trip around the world. He died almost two years ago of Muscular Dystrophy. He had been confined to a wheelchair the last years of his life, unable to take care of even his most basic needs.

I first met Joe about five years ago when my construction company was doing some work on his parents home. His speech was slurred, he could not move by himself but you could detect an alertness in his eyes when you spoke to him. I got in the habit of stopping by to see him when I was in the neighborhood. As I got to know Joe better I began to speak of my dreams. For most of my life it had been my dream to sail around the world. I began to leave maps and magazines with him.

He had me order a sexton. As weak as he was, he could not use it but would sit for hours holding it in his lap with a far away look in his eyes. The day came when he started to dream about making the trip by himself. He knew that his body could not do it but there was no reason why he could not make an imaginary voyage.

I helped him pick a sail boat out of a magazine. We read all the information about navigation equipment and picked the kind best suited to his needs. He



stocked his boat with all types of gear and provisions that he thought he would need.

Finally he cast off. He had postponed his departure several times because of the weather forecast. He had plotted his course so that he knew exactly how long it would take him to get to any point. While visiting with him several weeks later I found that he was downcast. He had been keeping track of the weather in the Gulf and a major storm was brewing. He was not sure how his little ship would handle it. The next day he was happy again - the storm had veered off in another direction.

As the little ship made its way slowly around the world you only had to look at Joe to see that his health was failing rapidly.

Other people became interested in his

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voyage. When he dropped anchor in Pago Pago we had a party in his hospital room, complete with coconuts and fresh fruit. He celebrated Christmas eating Indonesian food and watched movies about the pyramids as he sailed into the Red Sea.

The walls of his room began to fill up with nautical charts, ropes, sea shells and pictures of far away exotic ports. Every day his excitement would grow as he logged the distance his boat had traveled. He would order foreign newspapers and sit next to his bed while we read aloud the weather forecast for that part of the world.

After leaving Gibraltar he knew that he did not have much time left. His condition had been growing worse. The doctors said there was nothing else they could do. Joe began to take chances. He picked the shortest route even though he knew it was the most dangerous at that time of year. He began to carry more sail in storms. The weather radio stayed on 24 hours a day.

Joe died while he was still six hundred miles out in the Atlantic. When they found him he had his navigation charts clutched in his hands. His coast guard radio was tuned to the weather channel, but it was turned off.

When we buried Joe, we knew we had to bury his sexton with him.

It was later that I began to understand why Joe started to take chances towards the end of his voyage. He did not want to die, sick in a hospital bed. He wanted to die at sea.

“It seldom occurs to teenagers that they will grow up and know as little as their parents one day.”

Jere Sutherland, Madison

Chocolate Sundae Pie

1 env. gelatin (unflavored)
 1/4 c. cold water
 3 egg yolks
 1/2 c. sugar
 1/4 t. salt
 1 c. scalded milk
 1/2 t. vanilla extract
 3 egg whites, beaten stiff
 1 c. heavy cream, whipped
 1 oz. chocolate slivers
 1/2 c. pecans, chopped fine
 2 pie shells, deep-dish, thawed

Soften gelatin in cold water, let it stand. Combine next three ingredients and slowly add the scalded milk. Cook in double boiler til mixture coats back of spoon, sticking to it.

Add softened gelatin and stir til dissolved, cool. Add vanilla, fold in egg whites, whipped cream and pour all into thawed crusts.

Sprinkle chopped pecans and slivered chocolate over top of pies, chill thoroughly.

Recipe from Gale Nichols, Athens

Big Ed's Pizza

We've got a new Appetizer! This is our dough dippers. It's our home-made dough, cut up into bite sized pieces, then fried and coated with garlic butter & parmesan. Served with our marinara to dip them in.

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Meet You at the Playground

by Lawrence Hillis



"Meet you at the playground" was a very typical phrase that the kids used back in the 1950s and 1960s. We would say that when leaving school during the school year and also during the summer when making plans for the next day. The Huntsville City Recreation Department had a very good program of providing playgrounds throughout the city.

They call them parks these days. The city purchased vacant lots and also used elementary school yards for children to gather during the summer months. Some of the ones near my side of town were the Beirne Avenue Playground, East Clinton School, California Street Playground, Philpot Playground and the Lewter Playground on Wellman Avenue.

Each playground contained slides, usually a small one and a large one. They had monkey bars, merry-go-rounds, seesaws and swings sets. Sometimes the swings looked like horses, and we would take our cap guns and ride them like Roy Rogers and Gene Autry. There was usually a pavilion such as a wooden canopy which provided shade for a picnic table and a sand box.

Most playgrounds had a building to lock up and store sports equipment and board games. They also had a restroom and a water fountain. During the summer, every park had a supervisor. The supervisor had a key to the shed and would bring out the balls, bats, jump ropes, hula hoops, horseshoes and badminton equipment. Sometimes we would have a long rope to play tug of war.

We would use the picnic tables to play board games such as checkers and dominos. I think the supervisors had to be at least 18 years-old and some playgrounds had school teachers who were off for the summer months.

I remember one-year, East Clinton playground had a very attractive young lady who was perhaps 18 or 19 years old. That year every boy from 13 to 16 years old in the area flocked to the playground to be around the lady we called "the good-lookin' chick".

Most every playground had a softball field and a basketball court. If there were enough ball players to form a softball team, the Recreation Department would schedule a game between two playgrounds. They even sent a bus to pick up the players at one park and take them to another park for a game. I remember that Huntsville Junior High football Coach Ben Berry was one of the bus drivers during the summer.

We tried to stack the team with the oldest kids who were usually the best players, but many of the 16 and 18-year-old guys had summer jobs and could not play during the hours from 8 to 5. They usually came to the playground after work to find a ball game.

Almost ever team had a few girls so the games were pretty evenly matched unless one park had several ringers. During those outings, there were also competitive games such as checkers, dominos, horseshoes and end with tug of war.



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My wife Karen and her sister Pam and brother Johnnie Rousseau lived next to Beirne Avenue playground. I did not know her very well at that time, but I played ball with her older brother. Karen said the highlight of her summer was when the city delivered fresh new sand to the sand box. She and her sister would build sand castles for hours every day.

That was where I first met Karen. She was about 5 or 6 years old and was playing in the sandbox. I was playing left field during a softball game. The batter hit the ball past me and it rolled up to the sand box. Karen picked up the ball and quickly buried it in the sand and sat on it. Everyone knew not to mess with Johnnie's little sisters, so I had to go to Johnnie's house and get him to come to the sandbox and retrieve the ball.

In case the Beirne Avenue playground supervisor lost or forgot her key, their father Cecil Rousseau worked for the city and had a key to the shed. One unique thing about living next to the playground is that when someone got "out of line" Karen and Pam would tell them that their family owned the playground and they would have to leave. The ruse worked a good many times.

Other months of the year when there would not be a supervisor and kids would get hurt, they would go to the Rousseau's house for band aids and iodine. Also, when a fight broke out, the Rousseau house was a safe haven to run.

One day when we came to the Beirne Avenue playground, we found the picnic table had

been lifted and placed on top of the pavilion. There had not been a tornado the night before to cause this, so it must have taken about six or seven large guys to have lifted the table.

No one ever came forward to claim responsibility, but scuttlebutt pointed to some of the older guys Gobby Lambert, Jerry Beal, Phillip Picket and Larry Benson. When asked about it, they just smiled.

The playgrounds provided outdoor activity and social gatherings. A lot of long-lasting relationships were formed at the playgrounds. A few years ago, when one of our playground friends Barry Owens passed away, many of those at his burial at Maple Hill Cemetery gathered for a photo and called it the Beirne Avenue Playground Rascals.



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"When I'm out driving I never use turn signals. It's nobody's business where I'm going."

Thomas J., age 88

A SCHOOL PRANK GONE WRONG

by Barry Key

Larry and I were subject to playing a prank but never anything hostile, vicious or destructive. We pulled a prank while in junior high that we hadn't put enough thought into the consequences if we were caught.

At New Hope High School, if you didn't have a class scheduled, you had to sit in "study hall" which was in the auditorium. The auditorium floor was on a slight downward slant from the back of the auditorium to a stage at the front. The floor was made of boards running perpendicular to the slant. The building was very old and the cracks between the boards had widened.

A monitor would sit behind a desk on the stage to maintain discipline while people were studying. One day someone dropped a pencil and it began to roll down the slanted floor and each time it hit a crack it would make a little muffled sound. Larry and I simultaneously looked at each other with that "light bulb in a cloud" over our heads.

That afternoon we devised our plan. The next day in study hall we both sit at the very back and on opposite sides of the auditorium. On a signal we each turned loose a hand full of marbles. Let me tell you, glass marbles hitting cracks in the floor, and the metal legs on the seats, didn't sound anything like a wooden pencil. As they rolled down the floor, the faster they got the louder the clicking sound. As the marbles hit the front of the stage they made even a louder noise. I know it couldn't have lasted more than a minute, but it seem like the marbles would never stop rolling.

Coach Carpenter was the monitor for study hall that period of the day. Coach Carpenter looked up and immediately motion for Larry and me to come down to his desk. I'm not sure what Larry was thinking, but I was thinking this is my last day on earth. Although guilty, we both tried to deny our way out of it but Coach wouldn't listen. The old legal adage "innocent until proven guilty" and "due process of law" held no bearing on our case.

At times, while Coach was giving us a stern but calm speech, you could catch a little smile in the corner of his mouth (I really think he thought it was funny). As calm as he was, I was beginning to think maybe he was going to set us free. But after his speech, he marched us downstairs to the principal's office.

Mr. Ealy, our principal, believed highly in corporal punishment, so I thought we were going to get our rear ends busted good. Instead, he wrote a message to our parents and sent us home. We were to bring the paper back with our parent's signature before we could come back to school.

I had been sent home one time in elementary school and I wasn't about to give that message to my parents. The next day, thinking things may have blown over, I went to homeroom just as usual. Before I was seated good, here comes one of Mr. Ealy's aides to escort me back to the office. This time Mr. Ealy drove me home and personally gave the message to my mother (I only lived one block from school). After Mr. Ealy left, my mother spoke only 7 little words, "just wait until your father gets home".

I will close here and leave it to "your imagination" as to how things went for me the next few weeks.....

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"You got to find somebody who likes the same stuff. Like, if you like sports, she should like it that you like sports, and she should keep the chips and dip coming."

Alan, Age 10

Hoover Days

by Ruby Crabbe

I fully agree with Jan Street when she brought forth the "Hoover Day Memories." Times were hard back in the Depression days of 1929. People were called "well-to-do" if they could have two bowls of Hoover Gravy for Sunday breakfast instead of one bowl. The kids called gravy "cob sop;" their parents called it "growing mash." Tasted pretty good if you had a nice slab of steak or lean to go with it.

Our mama, Josie Allen, had the prettiest, cleanest floors in Dallas Village. Or, at least, we kids thought she did. On floor scrubbing day, she would send us to the ball park where Rison School had ball games. A big ditch ran alongside of the ball field and in that ditch we would get a big sack of sand, carry it home, sprinkle it on the floor and lightly scrub with clear water. A lot of people wondered how Mama had such clean floors.

I remember a lot of people bragging on Mama's silverware. Her little secret of having sparkling clean silverware was also unique. She would take the silverware, find a nice clean spot in our yard, and everyone of us would take one piece of silverware at a time and stick it down in the ground and rub it up and down, up and down. Then Mama would take all the silverware back into the house, wash it with scalding water, rinse it real good and then dry it, piece by piece, with a dish towel. That silverware, after all those many years ago, is still as bright and shiny as the first day it was bought.

Oh, yes, the Hoover Days during the Depression were hard on everyone, but that didn't dampen the spirit of us kids hatching up jokes to pull on people. Bill Jaco lived next door to us on Rison Avenue and he could always come up with a good joke on someone or a good laugh for everyone.

I remember the day he made the finest, "street car" dummy you've ever seen. That's the first dummy and the last dummy I've ever seen that looked so alive. On Stevens Avenue and 5th Street (renamed Andrew Jackson Way), a bench was placed next to a big tree so the street

car riders would have a place to sit while waiting for the street car.

When Bill caught that bench empty, he placed his dummy right on the bench. There that look-alive dummy sat—legs crossed, work shoes on, hat pulled down over his eyes as if taking a nap, or resting his stomach from eating so much Hoover gravy. He looked more like a man resting from a hard day's work. I declare, he looked more alive than a lot of people who had occupied that bench.

Bill was in hiding behind that tree when the dummy's first victim ascended next to him. A little old lady, bless her heart—I never did find out who she was, but she spoke to that dummy, "Nice day, isn't it, sir." Not getting a response, she leaned over toward the dummy to speak again, but her movement shook the bench and off the dummy went right on top of her feet.

With a whoop and a holler, she came off that bench, and down the street she went like a whirlwind that knew no direction. She was yelling, "dead man, dead man," and gaining speed with every word. And, I'll never be able to describe the speed Bill made in gathering his dummy up and dragging it back down the street toward home. Let me tell you, it was fast!

Minutes later, an ambulance drove up, followed by the biggest crowd of people you've ever seen. People were coming up the street, down the street, across the street and a few seemed to appear out of nowhere. After a lot of questioning, searching and hunting, the ambulance left and the crowd slowly disappeared, shaking their heads.

A lot of people, after all those years, are still wondering about the "dead man's" disappearance. What I've wondered about after all these many years is where in the world did that little old lady go?

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A TRIBUTE TO MUDBALL

by Mary Barksdale



Saturday afternoons in the spring were special times spent with my three young boys, walking down our country road in Athens or through the woods and fields. One Saturday, we had gone up through the field, looking for whatever treasures nature had to offer. Luckily, the boys' uncle had walked down the road and made a wonderful find. A small puppy, probably four to six weeks old, was in a ditch beside the road. Uncle Bob knew just where to find that little fellow the perfect home and make three little boys very happy at the same time. The dirt-covered black and tan mixed breed puppy was instantly named Mudball and just as immediately she became a part of our family. We did not know then how large a place she would make for herself in the relatively short time she was to spend with us.

We never taught Mudball anything, because it wasn't necessary. She was a self-taught, very self-disciplined dog. She was never a house dog simply because she chose not to be. She would sit politely beside the door and look confused if someone tried to coax her inside. The few times she was picked up and brought inside for one reason or another, she was not comfortable.

The first time I realized the Mudball was very special was when she was around two months old. I was working in my garden when she came up the hill with a ham bone in her mouth. She scratched at my shoe and whined. I reached down and scratched her head for a minute, then returned to my gardening. Again, she placed both feet on my shoe and whined. This time I paid closer attention to her, and then realized that her lower jaw was stuck tight in the hollow part of the bone. She was

asking me to help her. I picked her up and tried to gently pull the bone loose, but it wouldn't budge. I carried her to the house and found a hacksaw. I sat on the ground with Mudball belly-up in my lap, laying perfectly still without having to be restrained. The bone had to be sawed in half just to remove it.

When it came off, Mudball crawled out from my lap, stopped, turned around, crawled back in my lap, licked my hand several times and ran off to get a drink of water. At the time I could have sworn she was showing her appreciation when she licked my hand. Looking back now, I know she was.

At about six months, she began to establish her daily routine. She would walk the two older boys to the school bus and meet them in the afternoons. She also took a daily bath in the creek or in the pond. Except for the day we found Mudball, we never had to bathe her. Her hygiene was impeccable. On garbage day, she sat by the roadside until the truck came to pick it up, chasing away any animal that might be scavenging. Then off to bathe.

Mudball was very territorial. She never allowed another animal in our yard until one day when she met a beagle from down the road. This beagle, whom the boys called "Bob" as a tribute to their uncle, taught Mudball how to hunt for rabbits. He would appear almost every day to lie down in the same place under a tree until he was signaled by Mudball that it was time to go hunting. Then off into the woods they would go. If a stranger came upon our property, Mudball was never aggressive, but she would stand either beside us or between us and the stranger until she decided that they were no threat. She never left the boys' sides until the stranger was gone.

The first time she came into heat, we kept her locked in the basement. But the second time we decided not to put her or us through that kind of torture again. One litter of puppies and then we would have her spayed. As the males



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gathered around, one thing became clear, Mudball was going to choose her own partner. She chased away almost every dog that came around until a beautiful collie appeared. She mated and the result was a litter of thirteen puppies, ten of which lived. We eventually found homes for all but one, whom we kept. It turned out that this pup was not the best choice for one to keep. He was not of super intelligence and his manners left a lot to be desired. Mudball, however, kept him in line and made the best child of him that she could. He dared not disobey and suffer the wrath of his mom.

Mudball and Puppy (the name we gave him because even as an adult, he still remained a child) loved to accompany the boys on their romps through the fields and woods. The picture of them as I saw it through my kitchen window will remain in my memory and heart forever.

One night, after putting the boys to bed, I stayed up late to do some needlework. The weather was not great, so I had left the basement garage door half open so the dogs would have a sheltered place to sleep. Severe weather had recently taken the roof off the barn

where they usually stayed. A loud crash and the yelp of one of the dogs brought me to my feet and I started down the basement steps to investigate, thinking one of them had probably knocked something over and wanted to be sure they were not injured.

The stairwell light was out and I had to reach the bottom of the steps before turning on a light. What I saw was Mudball and a skunk, face to face. Mudball then grabbed the skunk in her jaws and threw it up against the basement wall. I ran back up the stairs and called the sheriff's department, who referred me to Animal Control. I guess funds were more available in those days and they came to the house that night. By the time they arrived, the skunk was dead and they bagged it and took it with them to send off for rabies testing.

Needless to say, we had a house with a problem. If you've never been through it, freshly sprayed skunk aroma can not be described as a smell, it's too powerful. It was thick like humidity and would be better described as a gas. It took a pest control company and my homeowners insurance to get rid of it. However, even with all the problems of cleaning the house, it

would have been much worse to have had one of my boys attacked by the skunk, which did test positive for rabies.

The dogs had both had their rabies shots, but shots are only 95% effective, and if a dog or cat has much contact with a rabid animal, the outlook is generally not good. We were heartbroken when we found out later that Mudball tested positive for rabies. She had become another very important part of our little family, and her love and devotion to us was shown in little things she did every day.

When the Animal Control truck came to pick her up, Mudball looked at me, lowered her head, wagged her tail and looked at me again before turning around. It was the last time I would ever see her and I know she was telling me good-bye. She had contracted the disease by trying to protect her family and I watched the truck through eyes filled with tears until it reached the end of the lane.

Although this happened many years ago, and the boys are all grown now, the legacy of Mudball will be with us forever. We salute you, old friend and hope your rabbit hunts are still as exciting as ever, wherever you are.

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