



No. 346
December 2021



Old Huntsville

HISTORY AND STORIES OF THE TENNESSEE VALLEY

The Christmas Candle

"You know, Son, I've been thinking. I want to do something really different for our yard decorations this year."

I'm all for it, nodding my head with wide eyes and I'm awaiting Daddy's elaboration.

He's pulling out a table decoration my mother made, with a large red candle that sits on a round mirror around a ring of plastic holly for the dining room table.

"What if we made the real thing, only much bigger—tall as you are—for our yard?"



Also in this issue: A Christmas Child; Grady Reeves, Promoter; 1952 Christmas; Last of the First; New Hope's Mysterious Grave; The Season; Holiday Comfort Foods and much more!

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A Hardware Store....

The Way You Remember Them

Domie Lewter
Mac Lewter

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The Christmas Candle

by M. D. Smith, IV

Think of a Saturday morning the weekend after Thanksgiving seventy years ago. It's a bit chilly in the old two-story home because the coal heating furnace is off to clean out the clinkers and make it ready for the colder season coming.

A man dressed in khaki pants, a blue long-sleeve work shirt and boots is finishing loading the prickly metal coal leftovers in a tin bucket and closing the firebox of the coal-fired steam heating system in the poorly lit basement. He's in his late thirties and already has a receding hairline, but is otherwise strong and trim.

"Well, Son," he says, with a cigarette in the corner of his mouth and his eye in a wink to avoid the smoke drifting up his cheek. "Now's time to get the outdoor Christmas decorations and lights on the house."

The boy to whom he's speaking is me. I am ten. He calls me

"Son" and not M.D. because that's his name too. Only my mother calls me that when she's mad at me.

Decorating for the season is my favorite thing to do with December nearly here and the beginning of the countdown to the big day on the twenty-fifth.

Together we begin removing boxes from a musty corner of the concrete-floored basement, which smells like something dead back here—probably a rat. Yuck. We're looking for containers marked "Xmas" with a red crayon on the sides and peek inside each one to find the outdoor lights. Then, finally, we locate the big outdoor strings wrapped around folded cardboard which makes it much easier to unwind from the previous year. Now to test, replacing burned-out bulbs before putting them on the towering cedar trees on either side of the front porch.

In my eagerness to help unwind the strings, I let one drop heavily on the concrete floor. A quick "pop-pop" and I see colored glass scattering from two bulbs that I've broken at my feet.

"I'm sorry, Daddy. I didn't mean to..."

"That's alright, Son. However, those do cost a nickel each—so be more careful."

I just broke two Hershey bars. Darn.

I recall the brown spots in the living room rug from last year and my eagerness to test the indoor lights. I plugged them in the wall socket, and our dark

"If you can't think of a word, say you forgot the English word for it. That way people will think you're bilingual instead of an idiot."

Jeb Riley, Athens



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blue wall-to-wall carpet was about to smoke from the seven-watt bulbs that get too hot to hold. Another lesson learned today.

"You know, Son, I've been thinking. I want to do something really different for our yard decorations this year."

I'm all for it, nodding my head with wide eyes and I'm awaiting Daddy's elaboration.

He's pulling out a table decoration my mother made, with a large red candle that sits on a round mirror around a ring of plastic holly for the dining room table. "What if we made the real thing, only much bigger—tall as you are—for our yard?"

Daddy can make anything in his workshop in the other part of the basement. "What can you use for the giant candle?"

"I've been thinking about this and if we get some stove pipe just the right size and paint it red, that could be the start." He holds his hands in the air cupped into an imaginary circle about eight inches around.

"Yeah," I say. "That'd work."

He pulls out of our driveway and stops a few blocks down

where the curb is missing, and a large hole is in its place that's under construction. A few large concrete drain pipes lay on the ground. The excavation is ringed on the roadside with those round steel kerosene lamps, about the size of a bowling ball. He measures something using a string from his pocket. Now, back in the car, we drive on.

"What was that for?" I ask.

"You'll see." He smiles on one side of his face and winks at me.

We continue to the store that sells metal pipes of all kinds. Inside, on the old wooden floor of the showroom, sits a black coal-burning stove, warming the store. A bucket of coal is next to it. My father is talking to the man behind the counter, who looks at me, admiring his stove and the flickering flame inside.

"You can add a fist-size lump of coal if you want, kid."

I look at them and my father is nodding, so I unlatch the indigo steel door and toss in a lump slightly larger than my fist. I stare at the flame building inside and try to imagine a candle as big as I am, burning in our front yard. That would be a lot of wax,

I think.

Later in the afternoon, Daddy uses two sections of tin vent like the kind used for air in my friend's house with his warm-air gas heat.

We locate an empty five-gallon bucket, and I'm helping paint both the tin pipe and bucket a blazing fire engine red from a partial gallon he had leftover from another project. Next, he locates one of the floodlights we use for indoor home-movie film-making. It has a clamp and an aluminum shield focusing light. It'll be on the ground to light the candle at night.

The rest of the afternoon, we visit the nearby woods and I get to chop limbs off small pine trees to put at the base of the outdoor display and hide the spotlight in



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front. I swell with pride, getting to use my hatchet that Daddy keeps sharp for me to help make our Christmas project.

My hatchet cuts the pine limbs like butter. The pine sap on my fingers is sticky, but the smell of the needles amplifies the season. I get another idea.

"Daddy, can I come back later and cut a tiny little cedar tree and decorate it in my room?"

"Don't see why not. But no higher than your nose. It'll have to fit on your table. I'll help you with a stand for it."

"That'd be great." I'm bubbling over with the rising Christmas spirit.

Soon, he says, "That's enough for today, Son. Let's gather up and go home. I'll use some sand from your sandbox in the five-gallon bucket that will hold the stovepipe, so we don't have to dig a hole in your mother's front yard. She'd fuss about that after the holidays."

The next morning is cold and gray. But it's time to finish the project. I'm wondering what Daddy will use for the candle flame. I'm thinking an electric red light bulb at the top is most likely, but he hasn't told me.

We both slip into our bomber leather jackets and button them up.

"Let's go," he says. I am right behind, carrying the brown outdoor extension cord. We set the wire and spotlight on the pine needle-strewn lawn, then we shovel sand into the red paint bucket and set our candle in place. Next, I'm helping him put the two tin tubes, inserted into the other for the long red tube, and supported in the sand. We have to push back and forth while pressing down to get it

deep.

Then Daddy gets a hand-held blowtorch and melts four cakes of paraffin wax from the top of the red tube, so it looks like a candle dripping white wax. I back off a bit and look.

"The wax looks great, but the top looks pretty plain," I say.

With a twinkle and a wink, my father holds one finger in the cold air of the afternoon. "One minute, and I'll be back." He walks over to the driveway and opens the trunk of his car. Holding something round with his fingers, he comes back. He has a steel kerosene road torch in his hand and he places it directly on top of the red stove pipe. The rim of the torch is perfect for holding it, with only the round top sticking out. As he is filling it and I'm holding the burner he took out of the top, I'm smiling because I know I'm about to see a real flame on top of our creation.

After finishing, he asks me, "Would you like to light it?" I stretch to reach the top as I hold his Zippo lighter on the wick. It catches immediately. In the growing darkness, it stands like a beacon. The giant illuminated candle is breathing life. It's REAL and I

know it will be the pride of the neighborhood.

My mother walks out with me, tugging at her hand to see the masterpiece.

"It's beautiful. It's real. You men (I love it when Mom says that) did a wonderful job - but where did you get that torch for the top?"

My father puts his hand on my shoulder, smiling, and winks at me as he answers. "We'll never tell."

We had a "Toledo Torch" blazing atop our giant Christmas candle for many years after that. It's still burning in my memory.



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Linda Drake, Huntsville



Times Mother

by Bill Goodson

"Alma Goodson of Huntsville, former co-owner of Goodson's Variety Store and Zesto's, died Wednesday. She was 91."

So said the Times on Thursday, July 4, 2002.

A friend, writing to me in a sympathy card, called her the "Queen of Five Points." She lived in the same house on Clinton Avenue for 62 years. She saw her three children through Miss Mary Bierne Darwin's kindergarten, then on to East Clinton Elementary, finishing at Huntsville High.

(I lied. I only lasted three days in kindergarten. Ms. Darwin finally acknowledging that I had the worst case of the Mom-mies she had ever seen. My claw marks and tearstains are probably still on her screened porch on McClung Avenue. I would have needed I-V fluids soon.)

Alma wore her crown quietly. To her dying day, she avoided publicity. A few months ago the Five Points Historic District newsletter editor wanted to do a piece on her. It took my two sisters and me pleading with her for days. She's frowning at me now for all these words about her.

I researched the history of the house and lot to have a historic marker placed out front. As it turns out, there had been a baseball field where my father played as a youngster, and our house was just about in left field where he often roamed and where she cheered him on.

Mother had plenty of stories about growing up with six siblings in the Dallas Mill Village. Her father was a foreman at

the Cotton Mill. One of the machines there had caught Granddaddy Englebert's index finger and amputated the end of it. He loved to wiggle the wrinkled stub at us children, nudging it menacingly on our arms. We laughed and acted scared.

She would tell of older brother Ben sending money for her to attend Woman's College (now Huntington) and then of her returning the favor for young sister Ruth.

She blushed and told how she and Dad courted, about eloping to get secretly married because a rule at Rison School forbade a married couple to teach there. Then how their principal, the beloved Cecil Fain, later bent the rule to accommodate them.

There wasn't much rule-bending at our house,



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though and discipline was simple. Just to the right of our front porch was a mean little bush that grew the stingingest switches in God's creation. Believe me, it didn't happen often, but I can still see and feel the thin red streaks on my legs.

Mainly, though, she reigned with simple dignity, strong faith, and frugality. A rose garden was her main extravagance.

Never a complainer, I had to drag symptoms out of her to discover just how badly she was doing in her last illness. "Mother, is your head hurting?"

"Yes."

"Are you dizzy?"

"Yes."

"Don't you think we ought to go see the doctor?"

"Okay."

That's about the closest to whining that she ever came.

We knew things were taking a decided turn when, in the last two years, she had given up both bridge clubs. Partly because there were not enough players anymore, partly because her arthritic hands couldn't manage the cards.

Her last regular activity was attending church at First

Methodist. She surprised us all when she embraced the New Song contemporary service. I wondered if John Wesley approved, but I guess she had seen enough changes in her lifetime that one more didn't faze her. After all, a little guitar music at the altar isn't exactly cataclysmic when compared to, say, a man walking on the moon.

I once attended a writers' conference. There was a consensus about the bane of publishers' existence. It is the flood of short story manuscripts they receive in the category of what they call "Dead Daddy Stories."


Thus I tender this piece with some trepidation. It might be sent back to me by the Times barely read.

But the obituary couldn't do justice to a life lived so close to my heart.

The Queen of Hearts.

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The Pouting Parlor

by Betty Hallmark Atkinson

Some of my fondest, or should I say, exciting memories when growing up would be made when spending time with my Grandparents, Johnny Hopwood & Willie Mae Hallmark.

My Pawpaw had a room added to the outside of what people used to call the pump house, where the water pump was kept. That added room is what today is referred to as a "Man Cave". Pawpaw's "Pouting Parlor", as he called it, was a place to get away from Grandma, when things got too heated up in the kitchen.

The pouting parlor had a sloped ceiling, like a lean-to, with a roll-a-bed, a couch and a wood burning stove. It was built with cinder blocks, tin roof and no insulation.

On this particular weekend, because my Mom was staying over, Grandma and I decided to go out and sleep in the "Pouting Parlor". During the night, the temperature dropped, and being that the pouting parlor was made of cinder blocks, it was cold.

So as the morning sun began to rise, Pawpaw decided to build a fire in the stove, so when Grandma and I got up it would be warm and toasty.

As I lay snuggled in Grandma's arms, I heard Pawpaw enter and began filling the stove with wood. All of a sudden, "BAM"! The stove eyes blew off hitting the ceiling, I jumped up,

Grandma raised up, banging her head on the sloped ceiling, yelling, "Hop, what hell are you doing?" Pawpaw, laying on the floor with the long stove pipe across him and black soot all over us, didn't utter a word.

Pawpaw slowly got up, and without speaking, went out the door and into the kitchen where my Mom was making breakfast. He reached up into the cabinet where he kept his Nitroglycerin tablets for his heart. My Mom asked what was going on and was he all right, and he replied, "I just blew up my pouting parlor." When Mom heard that, she ran out to find Grandma and me, covered in the black soot also, but thankfully uninjured.

Later on Pawpaw discovered that instead of grabbing the can of kerosene to light that fire, he had poured turpentine, thus causing the explosion.

To this day, I don't seem to recall Pawpaw ever attempting to start a fire in that old wood burning stove again.

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"The only time a woman
really succeeds in
changing a man is when
he's a baby."

Natalie Wood, Actress

A True Love Story

from 1910 newspaper



In New York, early this year, a building began to burn and the family inside it was in instant danger of losing their lives. The mother, Scarlet, was outside the building at the time of the fire, but she raced in to rescue her five young children. She didn't think of herself, or the danger she was putting herself in, all she could think about was getting the young ones out of there.

She managed to get two of them out, went back in to get the rest. Her eyes became blistered shut but she went on until she found the three, then took them, one by one, outside the building to safety.

You see, Scarlet is a cat. Her paws were burned very badly, her eyes were completely shut with blisters, but she made a head count of her young ones, touching each one with her nose to make sure they were alright.

The heroics of Scarlet turned the once-homeless feline and her brood into the most coveted kitties in any animal shelter. While they recuperated from their injuries, more than 700 people called wanting to adopt them. Firefighter David Giannelli of Brooklyn found the kittens a few feet from the side of the burning building and three more across the street.

When he found the mother and put the kittens near her all together, he couldn't believe

the way she gently nudged each one of them to make sure all were accounted for. Her eyes were burned shut. He brought the family to a local veterinarian who was able to doctor her injuries.

Her eyes began to open slightly a few days later and it is believed that she will regain her sight. Her 4-week old kittens are doing fine.

The shelter manager, Marge Stein, said "She's a wonderful, gentle animal who did a courageous thing. It shows with all creatures, animals or people, there is no way of really measuring a mother's love for her children."

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"My life is just a series of awkward and humiliating moments separated by snacks."

Fred James, Gurley

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A Christmas Child

by Congressman Bud Cramer,
originally published in 1991
Old Huntsville magazine.

As Christmas draws near, the words of Longfellow echo in the heart of mankind: *"I heard the bells on Christmas Day. Their old, familiar carols play. And wild and sweet, the words repeat of peace on earth, goodwill to men!"*

Christmas and all the glorious entities that go with it are meant to strengthen family ties, enhance charitable values and promote goodwill. It is a season that is mystical to children and sentimental to elders. A time, we like to believe, is joyous to all. A spirit, we want to believe, is felt in all homes across America.

Unfortunately, this holiday season is not celebrated by many. They are the homeless, the poor and the abused. Each year as Christmas approaches, my heart aches for the many children who are abused, neglected, exploited and missing. We too often close our eyes to the plight of abused children in our society. With more than 2.5 million child abuse cases reported each year, we can no longer be blind.

As a former District Attorney, I have seen many children leave their abusive homes and struggle to testify against their violators. While their stories are very similar, there is one I remember often during this holiday season. It was just a few weeks before Christmas when Suzy was taken from her abusive parents and placed in foster care. The social worker who helped Suzy remembered the day she retrieved the seven year old child from her classroom.

The sounds of Christmas carols could be heard down the school hallway. All of the students inside the second grade classroom were singing "Silent Night", except for a pretty young girl with long blonde curls sitting on the first row of seats. She smiled shyly and looked at the other children as they belted out the Christmas song. Young Suzy was afraid to sing or speak. The elusive, socially-withdrawn child was a victim of physical and sexual abuse.

Suzy's teacher had suspected a problem of abuse for months, but had no actual proof. One day, Suzy confided to her about the secret games her step-father played at night. Mrs. Higgins immediately notified the right authorities who discovered Suzy's step-father was a previously convicted child molester. The timid child then told counsel-

ors at the Children's Advocacy Center in Huntsville about her abusive stories by demonstrating her father's "secret games" with model dolls. The evidence was overwhelming. Suzy's step-father was arrested and Suzy was ordered into foster care.

When the social worker entered Suzy's classroom, the caroling stopped. Mrs. Higgins nodded her head approvingly at the woman and then walked to young Suzy's desk. "Suzy, this nice lady wants to take you on a trip," said Mrs. Higgins. The frightened and confused girl started to shake as she cried out for her mother.

The young girl was removed from the classroom and from her abusive home that day. Yet, her trauma was not removed, only multiplied. Suzy felt more alone and scared now than ever before. She was faced with the shock of being taken out of a familiar, yet abusive home and placed with strangers in a new environment.

Suzy's foster parents were exceptional. Ben and Carolyn Jones had two children of their own, but still had much love to share with the new addition to their family. Yet, they like many foster families, faced recession with little money. Determined to give Suzy and their teenage sons a wonderful Christmas, the Jones family improvised. Instead of fancy and expensive tree orna-

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They go through checkout at Walmart, Mapco, Dollar General, Walgreens.*

Cities Served: Huntsville, Gurley, New Market, New Hope, Hazel Green, Harvest, Madison, Hampton Cove, Ryland, Meridianville,

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ments and glittering lights, they laced their cedar with trinkets made from love and colorful tinsel.

The Joneses accepted donations from community organizations to buy Suzy's presents. They bought her a lovely, wooden music box for Christmas, knowing how Suzy had loved to sing before her step-father abused her. They hoped to break through her security wall of silence with music.

On the night of Christmas Eve, the young girl was awakened by a loud noise in the living room. Santa, she thought. She got out of bed and walked slowly to the room. Her eyes grew larger as she saw a plump old man wearing a red velvet suit and hat laced with white fur. His silhouette glowed in the brilliance of the fireplace. Suzy hid behind a chair and watched the man as he placed presents around the Christmas tree.

Suddenly, the intruder turned to face her. Suzy looked very closely at the man she thought was Saint Nick. Without saying a word, the stranger gave her a gift and said, "Merry Christmas, my child." She tore off the red ribbon and festive Christmas wrapping paper to find a beautiful music box. When she opened the lid, the wooden box began to play "Silent Night".

As Suzy listened to her favorite carol, the bearded man began telling her how Christmas carols served as powerful sources of recognition. "The songs foster Christmas like the Jones family fosters you," said Santa. "Whenever you feel sad or frightened, listen to this music box for comfort and remember you are a part of the Jones family as Christmas is a part of this song."

The little girl looked up at the stranger with big brown eyes and watched as he left the room. Unlike Saint Nick, this Santa could not escape up the fireplace. He had to hurry out the front door and run down the street to return his disguise to a neighbor who portrayed Santa each year for the

children at the local hospital.

The next morning, Suzy joined Ben and Carolyn Jones and their two sons around the Christmas tree to exchange gifts. When asked about the special gift she clutched to her heart, the young girl smiled and showed them her music box. As the music played, young Suzy began to sing for the first time in two years.

Suzy's wall of silence was finally being torn down. With the strength and support from her foster family and continued professional counseling, she was on her way to recovery. This young crime victim would soon learn to cope with the violent acts her step-father committed against her.

Many children, however, are not as fortunate. They are forced to battle the traumatic effects of child abuse alone. We must hear their cries and we must open our

hearts. While we may never be able to give these children back their innocence, we must try to give them back their lives.

Now, when December draws near, the words of Longfellow ring with meaning. "Peace on earth, goodwill to ALL this special holiday."

(Robert "Bud" Cramer, Alabama native, former United States Representative, introduced the concept of the Child Advocacy Center on local, state, and national levels in 1984. The first Child Advocacy Center in the nation was established in Huntsville on May 1, 1985 by Representative Cramer.)

"If we learn from our mistakes, why am I not a genius?"

Dave Schmidt, New Hope



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I am up and running today, determined to get the Christmas decorations out and up. It is always so much fun looking through the box of ornaments that I have collected over the past sixty-plus years. Some are handmade and painted by myself and others are the ones the children made. Then some are from friends who are no longer with us. So many memories!

I will make popcorn for little ones to string on the tree along with cranberries. Heavy colored art paper is always fun for the kids to cut into strips, staple together, and make paper chains to circle the tree. I used to use only red and green paper strips for Christmas colors. Also, don't forget the star for the top of the tree, either painted or covered with foil.

Having just returned from a fifteen-day trip to Seattle visiting my childhood friend put me a bit behind in baking and decorating for Christmas. So if any of you are planning on going

anywhere for the holidays, you better get your reservations and tickets now, especially car rentals. They are in great demand, and while in airports, be patient as they are understaffed.

When making desserts or casseroles for the holidays, why not make an extra one to take to a friend who is having difficulty getting around. I'm sure they would really appreciate it.

With shipping containers in the Pacific Ocean on fire and some having been lost overboard and floating in the ocean, many stores will not be getting their merchandise. So if you are waiting until the last week or so to shop, I suggest you get busy now with a change of plans as I have found several items that I ordered in August will probably not arrive until spring or maybe not at all.

Covid has lessened a bit, but I hope everyone who is eligible to get their booster has done so or will soon. Children from six to twelve years old are being given, so sign your little ones up as soon as you can.

I wish each and every one of you a safe, healthy, and Merry Christmas. Enjoy the season and keep smiling until next time.

Kirt to Chrislyn: "Daphney said you lost your staff card so I requested Service Desk to activate a new one for you."

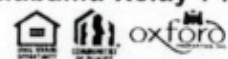
Chrislyn to Kirt: "Oh no, it's not lost. It's somewhere in my house and I just don't know where it is."

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Chase

We want to wish everyone a
Merry Christmas with warm
wishes for a blessed Holiday
Season from our family to yours.



Christopher



Jerry & Lynn

December Days

by Elizabeth Wharry



December is an odd month. It seems to start the Friday after Thanksgiving and end December 25th.

It's also a time when people are a little kinder to each other. That seems to last until mid January.

December reminds me of an elderly white haired lady. She realizes that she's growing older, but decides to be gracious, yet spunky. That kind of lady everyone knows and whose company is much appreciated.

On the other hand, December can be a cantankerous old woman.

Growing up on the south shore of Lake Erie, we never knew if December was going to be just cold and snowy, or be cold, grey and with winds that seemed to go through one. Sometimes, it was mixed.

December also brought the fun and excitement of finding just the "right" tree, and decorating it. There was also the fun of baking special treats, and planning Christmas dinner to be shared with family. Christmas shopping was also a big deal. Finding or making just the right gifts for family and friends was always fun.

Merry Christmas to all!

"We all get heavier as we get older, because there's a lot more information in our heads. That's my story and I'm sticking to it."

Mike Self, Huntsville

"If all you can see out of the windscreen is ground that's going round and round and all you can hear is commotion coming from the passenger compartment, things are not at all as they should be."

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New Hope's Mysterious Grave

by Col. Martin T. Burke (USA Ret.)

One day last year my friend Jack Dilworth and I had been fishing on a lake near New Hope. As we were not doing any good, he asked that we visit a country cemetery to look up some of his kinfolks.

I had helped him do a little genealogy on his very large family on several occasions. As we drove to the cemetery, Jack had me stop by a large field that he said had belonged to his family for many years.

Jack pointed out a small area that obviously had not been cultivated for many years. It looked like it might have been an old well site or perhaps a large tree had been there, but Jack had the real story. He said that his father instructed all the boys not to plow in that plot because it was the grave of a Union soldier. I asked Jack if he had ever questioned his Dad about the grave. "Oh, no," he said. "I was brought up not to question what my Dad said and I sure didn't want to get his dander up about a Union soldier. Actually, we boys heard rumors and stories handed down by our grandparents about the Civil War and this story had been circulating for some time."

The story sounded a little far-fetched for me. I thought I knew a lot about the Civil War. I even knew about the Federal troops stationed in Huntsville.

Anyway, I was a bit skeptical about Jack's story and I got him to go the Historical Section of the library in Huntsville. We had been up there several times before when I helped him look up data about New Hope on his very large family tree. Jack couldn't see very well and I often read the information from the books we located. We were helped in this research by a nice lady who Jack recognized as a cousin of his.

In fact, she gave us the clue we needed to check this story out. She referred us to the large collection of Union and Confederate Official Records. Then, she reminded Jack that New Hope was named Vienna during the Civil War.

With that information, I looked up Vienna in the index and found several entries about the troops stationed at Huntsville and their patrolling activities. Attached was the action report that surely must have been the basis of the stories still being repeated about the Union soldier buried in the field in New Hope.

The so-called bushwhackers that shot up the Union patrol were led by Capt. Johnson, also known as Parson. There is a story about him that

needs to be told. I was told that Parson Johnson led a congregation in nearby Tennessee that had protested the secession of the South and he refused to join up as a soldier. Then his flock was occupied by Union troops who proceeded to pillage and burn everything in sight. This so angered the Parson that he started a very successful guerrilla action against all Union troops and installations in his area of Tennessee and Alabama. He was aided by Union scout John C. Martin, who became friends with Parson.

This was a very dangerous thing to do because if captured by the Union troops, they were likely to be executed on the spot. Martin was killed during the fighting.

I am not sure why the body of that scout John C. Martin was not retrieved by U.S. Col. Reed's men, but I suspect that the bushwhackers gave them such a trouncing that they didn't have time to retrieve him and later action required that they move elsewhere.

There is no further action report about this unit in Vienna or New Hope.

So, there is the story about the unmarked grave of the Union soldier in the field in New Hope.

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Huntsville Old and New

Huntsville's Wonder of the World and the People Who Built It

Rick Chappell, NASA Marshall Retirees Association

Space exploration is the most significant exploration in the history of humankind. For the first time, humans have been able to leave the Earth, travel to another heavenly body and live in space for more than 20 years! Rockets and spacecraft that have made this possible have been built in Huntsville, Alabama by the employees of the NASA/Marshall Space Flight Center together with its partnering companies.

When we drive into Huntsville we see the Saturn V rocket, all 363 feet, 6.6 million pounds of it, pointing spaceward and reminding us of its 500,000 mile round trip journey from Spaceship Earth to the moon and back at speeds of up to 25,000 miles per hour. The Saturn V is Huntsville's landmark, It is OUR calling card, OUR Eiffel Tower! Although the Saturn V is only one-third of the height and weight of the Eiffel tower which took only 500 workers 2 years to build, the Saturn V was built by more than 100,000 workers in 10 years AND WAS LIFTED INTO ORBIT! Its journey to the moon and back was more than 100 times farther than Columbus' journey to the new world made at speeds 1000's of times faster!

We see the rocket and we know that it is special and significant; but how significant is it on a world scale and who are the hundreds of 1000's of people who built it? Space exploration began here in a cotton town of 18,000 Huntsville residents in 1950 and, over the years brought more than 50,000 new Huntsville space workers and their families who built the Saturn V, as well as other great missions for America; like Skylab, Spacelab and Space Telescope!

In the grand sweep of human history, the Saturn V is a wonder of the world, arguably the most significant peacetime wonder that has ever been built. The NASA Marshall Retirees Association is creating a Space Exploration Memorial which will capture the history of what has been done by all of the space explorers in the Huntsville area. The physical memorial will be located at the U.S. Space and Rocket Center among the rockets and spacecraft that our explorers have built. Its accompanying online database will have the names and stories of those who

have been part of the amazing space accomplishments done by employees of the Marshall Space Flight Center and all of the partnering companies.

If you or a family member worked for the Marshall Space Flight Center or for a contractor working with MSFC, go online to the www.marshallretirees.org website and add their names and their stories of space exploration so that Huntsville's space history can be known.

Also, make a contribution to help create the Space Exploration Memorial through the website, the Space Explorers Huntsville Facebook page or

the "Build the Space Exploration Memorial" GoFundMe page. Total contributions to date exceed \$120,000.

Let's celebrate the significance of what has been done in Huntsville and acknowledge the people who have come here and have made space exploration possible for our City, County, State and Nation.

We Built This City On Rocket's Roar!

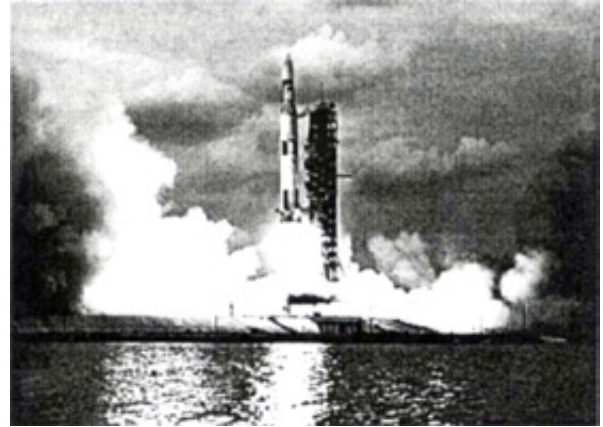


Photo Credit NASA



BEING SANTA CLAUS

by Chuck Owens



In my early years, and before I had my own family, I was asked by my friend if I would be willing to come to his home on Christmas Eve and play the part of Santa Claus for his two children; Carol, 4-1/2 years old and Janet, 3 years old. He told me that he had the necessary costume and everything else to do the job. I agreed, though I was a bit apprehensive since I had never played this merry old gent before.

I arrived at their home at 9 PM as I had been requested. The children had been in bed for a couple of hours so they were deep in dreamland. Henry, my friend, and his wife Carol had a very elaborate costume with boots, the long beard and even some pillows to help fill out my more sparse areas. With their help I got into my regalia and must admit that I made a pretty good Santa

I was given a big chair on the porch, next to their decorated Christmas Tree, and it was very bright with some extra lamps that had been added. At 10 PM Carol went into the bedroom and awakened the two children. She came out with a big smile on her face and the two children in tow, one at each hand. Henry stood at the side completely elated with the scene he was watching.

The two children came up to me and I gave them my best "Ho Ho Ho" and they looked absolutely terrified. I put my arms around each one of them and helped them sit on my lap. I continued with my "Ho Ho's" and talked to them in my best Santa voice and they just sat there - rigid. They were shaking so much that it was difficult for me to keep each one perched on my knees. Finally, I helped them slip off my lap and they ran back to their mother and her protective arms. Carol carried them back to bed.

The next morning I was back to wish the family a Merry Christmas. When I arrived the two children ran up to me and excitedly related their experience the night before. They told me that they had seen Santa and they had hugged and kissed him and told him all the toys that they wanted for Christmas.

I thought to myself that there is no end to the imagination of a little one.



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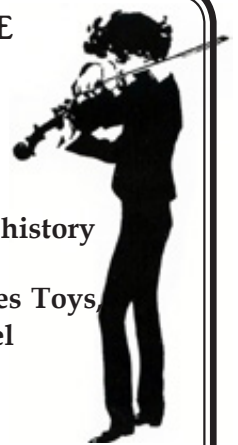
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Heard On the Street

by **Cathey Carney**



I have to tell you something. When **Tom** and I started this little magazine, I was 41 years old. I am now 73. In my mind I'm still in my forties. My picture above is the current me with naturally silver hair and I'm OK with it! My reason for saying this is to tell you **Thank You!** If it weren't for our advertisers, our subscribers and readers who buy magazines from our locations, we couldn't stay in business. You are paying for our printing. Thank you SO much. I hope you'll still be reading this in another 20 years!

Our winner for the Photo of the Month in November was **Mary Hubbard** of Altoona, AL. She guessed that the photo was that of **Kathleen Vaughn**, who spends her time crocheting tobaggans

for police, firefighters, as well as homeless people! They are warm and well made and every recipient loves them. Mary happens to be related to Kathleen but she had never seen the photo, so it is a fair win.

Our winner for the hidden butter knife was **Patricia Rice** of Lac-ey's Spring. She spotted it on page 44, in the Rolo's ad. Do you see it now? This one was a bit larger than other items so we had a lot of calls. Therefore I will have to go back to my devious ways and make it so tiny NO ONE finds it! Congratulations to both Patricia and Mary!

A sweet lady who just had a 90th birthday on Nov. 9th was **Carolyn Clinite**, of Paso Robles, CA. You think we don't have subscriptions going all over the U.S.? She gets one and loves reading all about Huntsville. Her sweet 2nd cousin is none other than Old Huntsville premier editor, **Cheryl Tribble** of Marietta, GA. We send you love Carolyn and hope you had a delightful birthday!

The leaves changing colors are really beautiful this year. I remember years ago when my mom and dad were still with us and loved to travel to Tennessee to see the colors changing, my **Dad** got back one year and said, "We've traveled hundreds of miles and the prettiest colors we've seen have been right here in Huntsville!" He was right.

Dr. Richard Showers was City

Councilman for District 1 for 28 years. He was first elected to the Huntsville City Council in 1988. He retired on July 1, 2005, from the Huntsville City Schools where he was a Career Technical Education Teacher. He was a life member of Huntsville Alumni Chapter, Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Inc. At Union Chapel Missionary Baptist Church, he was an active and faithful member and he served as a Deacon. Richard was an educator for 36 years and loved mentoring and helping young people. Dr. Showers passed away on Oct. 16th and is survived by his wife, **Bettye Ann** and they are the proud parents of five children: **Richard, Jr., Felicia, Jenise, Gwen, and Wanda**.

Happy Birthday to our sweet Old Huntsville reader **Louise Manning**. One of her favorite writers is **Barry Key**. Louise will be 96 in December.

Dale Rhoades called me one day and said she had a complete set of Old Huntsville magazines. She was downsizing and wanted to see they got a good home. She wanted someone to buy them and

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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 handsome boy grew up in TV and radio with his Dad.



have the money donated to National Children's Advocacy here in Huntsville. I called **Deane Dayton**, who has lots of contacts in the literary world and in total 3 people made donations for the complete set. The donation was made in the memory of **Dr. Richard G. "Dick" Rhoades** who was a voracious reader and appreciated the value of libraries. He and Dale were married for many years. Deane called the library at UAH and the gentleman said he would love them. So a win-win for everyone - a good donation made to Children's Advocacy, a full print set available at UAH library, and Dale downsized. Thank you to Dale and Deane and the donors for your generosity, lots of positives all the way around.

Charlie Scott was someone that you won't forget if you had the good fortune to meet him. He was an excellent photographer whom you would always see at events all over Huntsville. He was a musician who loved donating his time and talent to Golden K picnics as well as other organizations. He was funny, brilliant, down-to-earth and a dear friend to so many. The love of his life was

his wife **Aneita Scott**. He spoiled his little Chi dogs and would often post pictures of them. Charlie passed away on Nov. 9 and his passing leaves a void in so many lives. Charlie leaves wife **Aneita** (43 years married), two brothers **Steve Scott (Kathie)**, **Larry Scott (Nancy)** and many nieces and nephews. He will be missed always.

If you're a cat owner like me, you know how much our cats love Amazon boxes. I heard a warning recently that these boxes are sprayed with an anti-rodent poison to keep rats out of the boxes prior to shipment, and that they could prove to be very dangerous for our pets. Has anyone else heard this? Please let us know, definitely worth being careful.

You readers know I have hidden something in this issue and yep - it's a **whiskey bottle**. If you are the first to spot it CALL me and you win a year's subscription to the magazine. I can tell you, tho, it will be very difficult to find.

Here's something I tried the other night and it turned out great. Take 4 chicken breasts, skinless and boneless, lay them on a cookie sheet. Season with salt &

black pepper. Put a dollop of sour cream on each piece of chicken. Then cover the sour cream with a mixture of Panko bread crumbs, Cajun seasoning and grated Parmesan cheese. Throw in the oven for 30 minutes at 325 degrees. Delicious and easy.

Mary Jane Miller is a dear friend in Grand Prairie, TX and she just lost her sweet husband, **Wayne**. When you're married for 50+ years that's a hard transition to make. She wrote something recently that might help other couples. *"I wanted to share, might help others. I am trying to do what Wayne and I both have done in the past. I think everybody might try to do everything without the help of a spouse during their married life - just to show a little appreciation for what the other person does to keep a home moving. I know that doesn't make a lot of sense, but it might save a lot of marriages. They need to appreciate each other. I am sure you know what I mean."* Thank you Mary Jane for your thoughts.

The holiday season is often a difficult time for those who've lost loved ones. Our hearts are with you as we all celebrate in our own ways. We love you all!



Huntsville's Own Sports Hero! Kyle Wright, pitcher for the Atlanta Braves

Congratulations to Kyle Wright, pitcher for the Atlanta Braves, who just won the Baseball World Series in Houston, Tx. He pitched 6 innings and was very instrumental in the 3rd game win for Atlanta. Kyle played for Buckhorn High School, then on to Vanderbilt University. He was drafted by the Braves in 2017.

Baseball definitely runs in Kyle's family!

Kyle's Grandpa Billy G. Wright pitched fast pitch softball for 23 years. Billy's wife Barbara Daniels Wright is a former beauty queen from Foley, AL.

Kyle's dad is Roger Wright, a college baseball player and coached baseball at Lee High School and Buckhorn HS for 25 years.

Kyle's mom is Belinda Mitchell Wright, a NASA Engineer and Auburn grad.

Kyle's oldest brother is Mitchell Wright - pitched for UAH and is currently head baseball coach for Hazel Green High school.

His youngest brother is Trey Wright, a student and baseball pitcher for UAH. Both brothers, like Kyle, attended and played baseball for Buckhorn High School.



Holiday Comfort Foods

Hot & Spicy

2 lb. smoked sausage
2 lrg. red peppers, chopped
1 bottle prepared barbecue sauce

Boll the sausage til hot, punch hole in skin. While still warm, cut the sausage into one-inch pieces. Place them in a frying pan with 2 tablespoons vegetable oil and fry for 2 minutes. Add peppers and cook for another 2 minutes, stirring often. Remove to glass bowl, pour warmed barbeque sauce over all.

Serve with toothpicks - these won't last!

Parmesan Pimento Dip

1 c. mayonnaise
1 c. Parmesan cheese
1/2 c. ripe olives, chopped
4 oz. jar pimentos, chopped
2 cloves garlic, minced

Combine all ingredients in a baking dish. Bake at 375 degrees for 20 minutes. Serve with crackers or chips.

Fried Cucumbers - Old Recipe

Peel the cucumbers, then cut them in strips lengthwise very thin. Coat strips in corn-meal and salt. Fry until tender. Sprinkle with melted butter and pepper, and serve very hot.

Tipsy Garlic Shrimp

1/2 c. butter
4 cloves garlic, crushed
8 oz. whole mushrooms, stems removed
1 T. lemon juice
12 oz. fresh shrimp, peeled and deveined

1 c. white wine
2 T. cornstarch mixed with just enough water to dissolve

Melt the butter in a large skillet. Add the garlic and mushrooms. Gently mix in the lemon juice and shrimp. Saute for 1 minute on each side, til pink. Add the wine, increase heat and bring to a boil. Remove from heat and add to the

corn-starch mixture. Return to flame til sauce is thickened, serve over brown rice.

Spicy Hoppin' John

1 lb. black-eyed peas, dry
1/2 lb. bacon, diced
2 medium onions, chopped
1 t. garlic powder
3 stalks celery, chopped
2 c. water
2 t. salt
1/2 t. Tabasco sauce
2 c. rice, uncooked

Cook black-eyed peas and season as directed. In large skillet, fry bacon crisp over low heat. Drain off most of the grease. To that add onions, garlic powder and celery, cook over moderate heat til soft but not brown.

Add the cooked peas, water, salt and Tabasco. Bring mixture to a boil, cover and reduce heat. Simmer for 30 minutes.

Stir in the rice and cook til rice is tender and liquid is ab-

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sorbed. Add more water if needed. Check for seasoning and add more if needed.

Cabbages with Sausage (Very Old Recipe)

Boil cabbage in salted water, drain. Fry a pound of sausage, put in a deep dish and cover with the cabbage. Top with 4 teaspoons of butter and sprinkle with pepper. Set in a warm oven for 4 hours, season to taste.

Savory Glazed Ham

1 5 lb. ham
1/2 c. firmly packed brown sugar
1 T. cornstarch
1/2 t. ground cloves
1/2 t. ground ginger
1/2 c. lemon juice

Place ham in a shallow baking dish, and begin cooking it according to the instructions on the package. In a small saucepan combine the brown sugar, corn-starch, cloves and ginger. Add the lemon juice and heat, stirring constantly, til thickened.

Spoon the glaze over the ham during the last 30 minutes of heating time. This will become one of your favorite recipes!

Phyllis Rogers Best Hushpuppies

1/2 c. corn meal
1/2 c. buttermilk
2 onions, chopped
1/2 c. flour
1 t. garlic salt

Mix all together and place in fridge for 4 hours. Drop by spoonfuls into hot cooking oil til browned.

Apple Crisp

4 medium Granny Smith apples, peeled and sliced
1 c. dried apricots, chopped
3/4 c. plain flour
3/4 c. brown sugar, packed
1/3 c. chopped pecans
3 T. butter, softened
Whipping cream

Place apple slices in a buttered square pan, 8x8x2". Mix remaining ingredients, except for the whipping cream, and sprinkle the mixture over the apples and apricots. Bake at 350 degrees for 35 to 40 minutes til crisp, serve warm with whipping cream.

Buttermilk Pie

1-1/2 c. sugar
1 c. buttermilk
1/3 c. Bisquick
6 T. butter, melted

1 t. vanilla extract

3 eggs

Blend all ingredients in a bowl with electric mixer. Pour mixture into buttered 9" pie pan and bake for 50 minutes at 350 degrees. Cool for 5 minutes. This is good served with a liquor like Grand Marnier

Old Fashioned Mulled Wine

Mulled wine used to be heated in the old days by sticking a red-hot poker into the drink. Heating this way the alcohol did not evaporate, which happens when you boil this liquid.

Stud a lemon with 4 cloves. Put in a saucepan with 2-1/2 cups red wine, 7 tablespoons brown sugar and two cinnamon sticks. Bring to simmer and continue for 10 minutes. Remove from heat, add 2/3 cup brandy and serve in front of a roaring fire.

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The Last of the First

by Robert L. Sanders

It's been said that the last of the first generation of the 20th century was born in the year of 1927. Supposedly the logic for this belief is that people born in that year were old enough to have experienced the Great Depression and to have participated in at least the last year of World War II. I am one of the "Last of the First", having been born on 23 August 1927 in what was then the small southern town of Huntsville, Alabama. I have vivid memories of the Great Depression and served in the U.S. Marine Corp. during 1945.

When I was about 3 years old, my family moved to a house on Wells Avenue across from the northwest corner of Maple Hill Cemetery. My first recollections were while residing at this address. My family consisted of my mother Helen, a housewife at that time; my father Roy, who was part-owner and partner in a small electrical and plumbing business; and my sister Margaret, two years my senior. In March 1931, the last of my immediate family, a brother, John Morgan, was born. My first memories were of playing with my brother and sister on the front porch of our home on Wells Avenue. I also recall many visits to my grandmother's, Mama Lulu Sanders, whose home was about three blocks down California Street. We would walk on the rock wall of Maple Hill Cemetery to and from her home. Even at that time, Mama Lulu was quite old but she was a very pleasant person who was always spoiling us kids. She lived with her daughter, my Aunt Lena, a very stern woman, who also catered to all our desires, especially those of my sister, Margaret.

One of my favorite treats was Mama Lulu's homemade biscuits, and cornbread. She was an

excellent cook, who had a wood burning stove on which she cooked Southern style meals. My father's family came from Grundy County, Tennessee in the area around Tracy City. A community, Sanders Crossroads, just outside of Tracy City, is named for my great-grandfather.

In about 1932, our family moved from Wells Avenue to the second house back of the Jewish Synagogue on East Clinton Street. It was while at this address that I entered the first grade at St. Mary's Academy, one block down at the corner of Lincoln and Holmes Streets. I attended St. Mary's through the ninth grade, when in 1942, I entered West Huntsville High School. Although we only lived on East Clinton Street for about a year, one of the most eventful happenings of my young life occurred. My grandfather, Lawrence Schamberger, came to live with us. Grandpa was born in Maumee, Ohio, a small town outside of Toledo in

"Why do I feel like it's the morning after a wild party and I haven't been anywhere?"

Jason Rudders, 86 years old



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1862, the only son of German immigrant parents. Grandpa lived in Northern Ohio until around 1900, when he moved south and bought a farm near Manchester, Tennessee. He and his family lived in Manchester and Bellvadere, Tennessee until 1904 when they moved to Huntsville. In about 1908 Grandpa bought a lot, and built a house at the northeast corner of Pike Street (now Triana Boulevard) and Seventh Avenue. His family consisted of Margaret, his wife; a daughter, Helen; two sons, Leo and John; and two other daughters, Mary and Esther.

In 1929 my grandmother Margaret Schamberger died. Since I was only two years old at the time of her death, I have no recollection of her, although I understand from my mother that she too was very good at spoiling us kids. Following Grandma's death, Grandpa continued to live on Triana Boulevard until 1932 when he decided to rent his house and move in with us.

I can vividly recall the day that Grandpa came to live with us. He arrived with his belongings, a couple of old trunks, in a two-horse wagon driven by the self-proclaimed Doctor Hatchett. Doctor Hatchett was a "Jack of All Trades" type, who among other things, pulled teeth, hence the "Doctor" title. Grandpa was a tough, old, mean, seventy-one year old man. A stern, autocratic, disciplinarian in the old German tradition. He was a self-educated, intelligent individual who was well-read, well-informed and extremely mentally sharp even until the time of his death at age 85. To us kids, Grandpa was also a great story teller. Many a summer evening we would sit on the front porch and aggravate Grandpa until he would tell us a story. Grandpa had done a number of things in his life: a farmer, a railroad man, a carpenter, a painter, a landscaper, even worked with an oil drilling crew. So he had a great source of information to draw from for his stories.

I recall a number of stories about his two uncles who had fought with the Union Army during the Civil War. According to Grandpa they had both been captured, escaped, killed their captors and returned North. I'm sure Grandpa embellished these stories, to our delight.

In 1932 or 1933 we moved to 523 Madison Street, which is about 4 blocks south of the Madison County Court House. We resided at this address until my Father's

death in 1935. Grandpa always had a big garden in the backyard, and us kids would sell Grandpa's vegetables to our neighbors for spending money. Grandpa was an excellent gardener and raised a wide variety of vegetables, which I'm sure our neighbors were delighted to get for little or nothing.

This period was at the height of the Great Depression, and virtually every afternoon around three or four o'clock during the summer months, a couple of hobos would show up at the back door and ask Ma if we had any "yard work". Of course, Ma had no yard work, as I'm sure the hobos knew, but she would always ask them if they wanted something to eat, which they always did. Ma apparently cooked a big pot of Grandpa's vegetables and corn bread every day for her expected guests. While eating at a table on the "screened-in" back porch, they would converse with Grandpa about their travels around the country looking for work, which was obviously scarce at that time. Us kids would listen intently to their stories, which invariably included being put off the train by railroad policemen at some God-forsaken place.

These hobos' stories were pretty-well depicted in that old country song, "Waiting For A Train" which was pop-



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ularized by Jimmie Rogers during the hard times of the 1930s. The song went something like this:

"All around the water tank waiting for a train. I'm a thousand miles away from home sleeping in the rain. I walk up to the brake man to give him a line of talk. He says if you've got money I'll see that you don't walk. But I haven't got a nickel, not a penny can I show. Get off, get off, you railroad bum. He slammed the box car door. He put me off in Texas, a state I dearly love, the wide open spaces all around me, the moon and the stars up above. Nobody seems to want me or give me a helping hand. I'm on my way from Frisco, heading back to Dixieland. My pocket-book is empty, and my heart is full of pain, I'm a thousand miles away from home, waiting for a train."

These hobos, who were desperate looking men, would always before leaving express their thanks to my mother and my grandfather for their kindness.

I'm quite sure that our home, like many others at that time, was targeted by hobos as a place where they could get a meal.

Grandpa, having worked for the railroad in Ohio in his younger years, seemed to be very interested in trains. I'm sure this was also due to the fact that trains were at that time about the only means of transportation to and from Huntsville. Whatever the reason, Grandpa, about three o'clock every afternoon, would walk me and my brother John, by now nicknamed "Muggins", some 8 or 10 blocks north on Madison and Jefferson Streets to the Southern Railroad Depot to watch the 3:15 train arrive from Memphis, Tennessee. This was the highlight of the day for us kids.

Certainly the biggest thing to happen to me, at least up until that time in my life, occurred on my seventh birthday when

Grandpa, as a birthday present, took me and Muggins to Decatur, Alabama on the 9:15 westbound morning train. We spent the day loafing around Decatur and rode the 3:15 pm eastbound train back into Huntsville. That was the day of days for me.

My best friend during this time was Terry O'Reilly whose father was a business partner with my father. Mr. O'Reilly was a plumber and my dad was an electrician. They had a small business located on the site of the Old Russel Erskine Hotel at the corner of West Clinton Street and what was then Gallatin Street. When the Russel Erskine Hotel was built in 1932,

their building was torn down and they moved to a location on Franklin Street next to what is now Constitution Park. While at this location, Terry and I would frequently visit their business and rummage through the supply room and I'm sure make a general nuisance of ourselves.

My father was a quiet man of whom I have only a limited recollection. He seemed to work most of the time. Those things that I recall most were those pleasant and not-so-pleasant things that occurred. I remember he apparently did most of the electrical wiring for the Madison County Fair which occurred every September. He always had free passes to the fair and to all the rides on the midway. The fair was a big event,



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maybe the biggest event in Huntsville each year and us kids always looked forward to it. The fair lasted about a week and Dad would take us two or three days. He would let us ride all of the rides on the midway, except one, "The Swings". "The Swings" was a ride that had individual seats in a circular swing set that extended almost horizontally when running at full speed. Dad had seen a kid killed when one of the swings broke and apparently it made a lasting impression on him.

Another thing I recall about my father was that we always seemed to have more modern electrical devices before any of our neighbors. This was obviously due to the type of business my Dad was in. We had one of the first refrigerators, radios, electric toasters, frying pans, egg poachers, etc. We had one of those big console-type radios with one dial on it. Dad would invite his friends in to listen to the heavyweight championship fights on that big old radio. One of the fights I recall was between Max Bear and Joe Lewis, when Lewis was first getting started in 1934 or 1935.

Another fond memory of my father was a trip we took up Monte Sano Mountain to cut a Christmas tree. He owned an old Ford coupe, and we rode out what is now Highway 431 three or four miles, about halfway up the mountain. After parking, we searched for what seemed like hours for that perfect tree. When it started to snow we had to make a quick decision on the tree in order to avoid becoming stranded on the side of the mountain. Dad finally decided to cut the top out of a big cedar tree, which was almost perfectly shaped. When we arrived home in the snow, Ma, Margaret, and Muggins were thrilled and pleased with the size and shape of the tree.

Like in most families, Christmas was always a very special time and looking back on those times, it certainly wasn't the gift-giving that

made it so special, because in our family there weren't many gifts to be given. Financially, up until my father's death in 1935, our family was about as well off as any of our neighbors. What young people today have difficulty understanding is that during the 1930s, at least in Huntsville, 90% of the people were poor and poorer. After my father's death, our family became poorer.



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I guess the anticipation and preparation was what made Christmas so special in those days. Getting and decorating the tree, preparing the special foods, i.e. fruit cake, egg nog, turkey, homemade candies and cookies. That was what made it so special. Of course, the highlight, as we got older, was attending midnight mass at the Church of the Visitation. After mass, Ma would always have two or three of her closest friends, usually Protestants, by the house for eggnog, fruit cake, and opening a few presents that were under the tree.

My mother was a very unique person, who was always pleasant and optimistic, even during the difficult times I'm sure she experienced following my father's death. Raising three children, all of whom were under ten years of age during the Depression would have been difficult for almost anyone, especially a widow with little or no income. Needless to say, I have a great deal of respect and admiration for my mother.

Having been raised a Catholic in a small southern town in the 1930's always seemed highly unusual to my northern friends with whom I came in contact in later years. It really wasn't, or at least I was not aware of being unusual in any way, although most of my childhood friends were Protestant.

There were probably 200 or more Catholic families in Huntsville during the 1930s. St. Mary's Academy was a twelve-grade Catholic school that had 200 or more students, although some who attended were of the Protestant faith. I really didn't become aware that my religious beliefs counted until I graduated from Auburn University in 1949, and

attempted to obtain a teaching and coaching position in the public schools of Alabama. I was turned down for two positions that I already had been accepted for when the principals of the schools learned that I was Catholic.

Later in life I learned that religious intolerance knows no bounds. I was amused when my wife-to-be, Theresa Murphy, informed me that her father, Jim Murphy, could not believe that I, a Southerner, could have been born and raised a Catholic. It took some convincing before old Jim would agree to his darling daughter becoming my lawfully wedded wife.

Sister Ignatius was a very old nun whose primary duties were teaching music and acting as the principal disciplinarian at St. Mary's. She had taught my mother some twenty-five years earlier when St. Mary's first opened in an old house on Franklin Street. Other nuns that I recall during my days at St. Mary's were Sister Mary Loretta, Sister Mary Lewis and Sister Marcella. Sister Marcella, who was my first grade teacher in 1932, left Huntsville after that school year. After teaching 32 years in other schools throughout the Catholic Diocese of Mobile, Sister Marcella returned to Huntsville in 1964 and taught my daughter, Julie, in the first grade at Holy Spirit School.

Some of my classmates at St. Mary's included: Sammy and Johnny Citrano; Lectrice Tumminello; Caroline and Buddy Chapman; Bubba Stolz; Eva Louise Stolz; Elsie Stolz; Terry, Margarite, Elizabeth, Martha and Marie O'Reilly; Donald and Pat Sims; Louis and Dorothy Cicero; Sylvester and Elenoir Mazza; Joe, Jimmy, Sam, and Rosalee Lanza; Bobby Stevenson; Evelyn, Christine, and Rachel Maddox; Sonny Stockton; Pat Richardson; and of course my sister and brother, Margaret and Muggins.

Many of the kids in the 1930s and 1940s had nicknames which usually came from some physical characteristic or an un-

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**"I don't go crazy. I am crazy. I
go normal from time to time."**

Sheridan Prentiss, Scottbsoro

usual incident in which they were involved. My friend Donald Sims got a new name as a result of an incident in which he was involved at St. Mary's. One cold winter day during recess, Donald, who was in about the fifth or sixth grade, decided it would be great fun to take the first grade kids' knit hats and throw them over the tall wooden fence which surrounded the back school yard at St. Mary's. Sister Ignatius spotted Donald throwing the hats, and immediately hit him across the knuckles with a thick wooden ruler. As she was striking Donald she was calling him "You Brute". After that it wasn't Donald, but "Brute Sims".

He lived in a two-room log cabin on stilts on the Old Pendleton Plantation. My uncle John Schamberger had served in the U.S. Navy during World War I, and upon his return to civilian life became a butcher by trade. He worked for at least two grocery stores in downtown Huntsville during the 1920's. His first love, however, was hunting and fishing and during the early 1930's, he made a living at it, along with overseeing the farming on the Pendleton Plantation.

I recall visiting him for days at a time during the summer months and holidays in the early 1930's. His log cabin was located on Indian Creek, and you had to cross the creek by boat to get to his place. This was a real adventure for me being only 6 or 7 years old at the time. Uncle John had a Ford pickup truck and he would pick me up at our home on Madison Street. We would drive southwest from Huntsville about five miles down, what is now Jordan Lane/Patton Road to the intersection of Martin Road, then west to Dodd Road, then south to Buxton Road and then west again along Buxton toward the town of Triana.

The area where the Pendleton Plantation was located is now in the southwest corner of Red-

stone Arsenal. The log cabin was surrounded by a tall wooden fence, and was five or six feet off the ground on stilts. The fenced area included a small garden plot. One of the rooms of the cabin was a sleeping room, the other was a kitchen and living room combined. The two rooms of the cabin were built in a V-shape connected by a small screened-in porch which was used as a sitting and sleeping room during the hot summer months. When visiting my uncle in the fall of the year, we would be up before dawn out hunting squirrel or rabbit. He would bring his kill back to the cabin and clean it for breakfast. My Uncle John's common-law wife Lola would cook up the rabbit or squirrel with gravy and biscuits. We were always hungry after being out for a couple of hours in the cold air and this was a great breakfast.

Taken from the book by Robert L. Sanders that he wrote for his family and friends, called "Last of the First."



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BASIC RULES FOR CATS WHO HAVE A HOUSE TO RUN



In order for us cats to have enough energy for playing, we must have plenty of sleep. It is generally not difficult to find a comfortable place to curl up. Any place a human likes to sit is good, especially if it matches your fur color. If it's in a sunbeam or near a heating duct or radiator, so much the better. Of course, good places also exist outside, but have the disadvantages of being seasonal and dependent on weather conditions such as rain. Open windows are a pretty good compromise.

a. Snoring is not a talent unique to humans - if the cat is sharing a bed with two humans, the well-skilled cat can cause one of the humans to be blamed/swatted/smacked for the deed by the other.

b. If your humans don't let you into the bedroom at night, make them suffer for it. Even if they give you a nice warm room of your own to sleep in, with a catflap to the outside world, that just isn't good enough. There are several ways of registering your strong disapproval.

Trash the room they give you to sleep in. After all, the humans don't sleep in it - so why should you? Are they better than you? Of course not.

Fight noisily with other cats in the neighborhood, just outside their bedroom window. Make sure that you appear in the morning with as many fresh scars as possible and a little grease if you can rub against the underside of an old car. Spend some time perfecting an aggrieved "Well, I wouldn't have all these injuries if you only let me sleep in the bedroom at night" expression.

When they finally rise and take a shower, locate the appropriate drainpipe

and yowl up it. That amplified and disembodied "Meow" is sure to surprise them, as is the length of time you can do this without getting hoarse.

When they finally come downstairs and call for you, refuse to use the cat flap to enter the house. There's a perfectly good front door they can open. Of course, if they should anticipate you by opening the front door and calling, ignore them. You should only appear by the front door and yowl once they've closed it again and walked away a bit from the door.

Scratching Posts

It is advised that cats use any scratching post the humans may provide. They are very protective of what they think is their property and will object strongly if they catch you sharpening your claws on it. Being sneaky and doing it when they aren't around won't help, as they are very observant. If you are an outdoor kitty, trees are good. Sharpening your claws on a human is a definite No-No! Couches and chairs, especially new and/or antiques, are the best because the material shreds really well and will give your claws a good workout. Curtains and drapes are great



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fun because you can swing a little once you get up to where you want, and you are also out of reach of an angry human.

Waking Them Up

It is not known why humans like to sleep when it gets dark, just when the day is young and the masters of the house are fresh and ready for play. Sleeping humans are very boring and occasionally must be roused to attend to our needs, such as to get fresh food or water or to help us find a toy we battered under the couch. Almost all of them strongly dislike being awakened in the so-called "wee hours" of the night, some even pretend they're asleep, hoping we'll give up and go away. Persistence is the key to success in any case.

One effective method of rejuvenating a dormant human is the "direct approach", namely jumping on the bed from a good distance and doing one or more of the following: trampling, licking and/or nibbling any exposed part, purring, meowing, head-butting, light taps on the eyelids, or playing "Catch Mouse" or "King of the Hill". This may result in your being ejected from the bed, but at least now you have the human's attention.

If the human is being stubborn, you may have to resort to more drastic tactics, such as ripping down posters, rattling blinds, knocking over and emptying a wastebasket, knocking items off a dresser especially perfume bottles, singing at the top of your lungs, or curling up on top of the human's head. As well as keeping warm, in this way you will be acutely aware of any movement made by the human and you won't have to wait for long.

Another effective tactic is to walk, jump or knead on the human's abdomen - especially on the human's bladder. If the human hasn't been to the Big White Drinking Bowl during the night you can be sure of a rapid response. Eventually the human will get up and do what you want, usually employing some bad language while doing so. Great fun.

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Living through the Depression

by Robert French, Jr.

We were a large family trying to survive the Depression, so we lived close together. My grandfather must have had a good deal with Mr. Bean because he traded for a new car every two years. I would sit on the running board and look at the stagecoach metal decal, "Body by Fisher." My grandmother had a maid and a cook in the big house. Both ladies lived down the road. Their husbands worked on the dairy. Uncle Arnold was able to attend some sort of veterinarian school in Huntsville.

Although times were horrible, Granddaddy saw to it that the 15 of us lacked for nothing. We had a hen house full of eggs and chickens, a pigsty producing pork and bacon, beef in the field, potatoes rolled under the floor and a huge garden every year. Plus, there were apple and peach trees on the place, as well as a vineyard. Except for being a little short on money, we did well.

The dairy had tractors, plows, harrows, small trucks, large trucks, two silos and all the equipment necessary to produce enough milk to fill a truck bound for the creamery on Clinton Street West in Huntsville.

When electric milking machines became in vogue, my grandfather and Mr. Bean bought enough of them to milk the cows. This greatly increased production and speeded operations significantly. However, the men spent more time cleaning the machines and barn than they did anything else. The rubber boots and rubber hoses functioned for at least 6 hours every day.

It was as though milking and processing was secondary to keeping the barn and machines clean. Granddaddy was constantly inspecting, finding fault and making corrections in cleanliness.

Mother would let me go down to the barn when the cows were milked by hand. Sitting on a short metal milking stool, my Uncle Edgar would catch me looking at him, pulling on the teats, spraying the milk into the milk bucket. I went up close to hear the squirt-squirt sound of the milk hitting the bottom of the bucket. He let me come closer to see him milking and then he turned the teat up, and sprayed me in the face. He then laughed uproariously. I didn't cry. I dried my eyes with my sleeve and never went that close to him again. Electric milking machines ended that trick anyway.

Approaching sundown, the cows would gather at the pasture gate and bellow until they were let in. They wanted to be milked, they wanted to eat and they let you know it.

The barn had 16 stalls to the side. Each cow would walk up, the metal halter would clamp around her neck, her udder would be scrubbed and she would start eating



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from the feed trough as she was being milked. The following morning the same procedure endured. The cows knew the drill and would walk directly to their assigned stalls. They didn't hesitate to butt another cow if she tried to go into the wrong stall.

Granddaddy said that contented cows gave more milk. My Uncle Arnold bought a small brown Majestic Radio, and put it on a shelf in the bam. It was played loudly when the cows were in the stalls. Before he passed away, he gave the radio to me and I still have it on the roll-top desk in my office. It takes a while for the tubes to warm up, but it plays and is still tuned to WSM, Nashville, Tennessee.

When "a cloud" would come up - our name for a serious thunderstorm - the entire family would gather in the barn, sometimes with the cows. Being concrete, it was the strongest building on the dairy.

I can remember my cousins Marie, Earl, Ira, George Baker and me sleeping on the

large rolling feed cart that rolled down the feed trough area between the stalls. The feed was removed from the big buggy into the trough feeding the cows as they were being milked.

Mother would bring a blanket, put it down on the feed, and lay me on it with another blanket on top. Later, when my sister Doris was born, she was laid on the blanket with me. My cousins were sleeping on the other end of the feed buggy. Earl, the oldest, would eventually become Police Chief of Huntsville.

Sister Hester, named after my grandmother, was born in June 1938, and she was laid on the feed buggy with us as an infant. That barn was the family storm shelter. Plus, it was a lot of fun when the family was all together.

"My neighbors listen to good music whether they like it or not."

John Walters, Old Town

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A Good Christmas Lesson

by M. D. Smith, IV



A boy's prayers and letter to Santa were answered — I got a sleek blued-steel, compact, beauty. The perfect companion to my Red Ryder BB rifle. The ad appeared in every comic book that season... the Daisy #118 Targeteer. Perfect for indoor shooting.

Christmas 1947 in Birmingham, Alabama, I had just turned seven and knew the pistol used smaller shot at .12 caliber than the standard BB. What I didn't realize was that the tiny spring-powered BB would only puncture paper. Barely noticeable when I shot it into my pants leg. A BB rifle hurt a lot. Awww, I was disappointed with the power.

After other presents were opened, my father and I pumped lead into paper targets taped in front of a cardboard box with an included rubber sheet at the back to stop the shots. You could collect and reuse the itty-bitty shot.

On Christmas evening, my parents left to attend a party at their friend's house, leaving only the housekeeper, Mariah, in charge of me.

I was in the living room later that evening among all the Christmas gifts of the day, climbing under the sofa on my belly, pretending I was on a war mission behind enemy lines. But there was nothing to shoot that would react to the tiny BBs . . . until I spied the Christmas tree with about 150 ultra-thin glass ornaments on it of every size, shape, and color.

Only as an experiment, to see IF it would break one, I fired off a .12 caliber round from my trusty pistol. A loud POP followed by the shattering of glass rewarded my marksmanship on the first shot. Wow! What a GREAT target that was. I knew my parents would not like me busting the tree decorations, but they'd never miss one. I knew I could clean up the little bit of glass, remove the tell-tale hook and cap from the tree, and they'd never notice. I would have been correct.

Then, I thought, well, they'd never miss two, so another bit the dust. It was like trying to stop eating just one potato chip, so another and another exploded and came tinkling down.

When I finally came to my senses, over half of the ornaments were gone and you definitely could tell it. I cleaned up the best I could, but I couldn't get inside the tree and behind it in the corner. Uh oh, I hope they don't notice. Pretty sure I said a prayer.

Then my parents came home and entered the living room. Their eyes immediately transfixed on the tree. Yeah, it did look somewhat barren.

Dad shouted, "My God, Son, what did you do?"

My mother was speechless as tears trickled down her cheek.

Mariah entered the room and said, "Well, ain't he cute?" That was her favorite phrase for me and anything I did, good or bad.

That didn't save me, having destroyed handed-down antique figurine ornaments along with the round balls.

I got a hard spanking on the rear end, but the worst punishment was that I didn't see my trusty BB pistol for six months, almost a lifetime for a kid.

Lesson learned.

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John Purdy
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Sarah Chappell

The Season

by John H. Tate

For many of us, the season that symbolizes the warmth, safety and comfort of home is upon us. Yes, the sounds of mom cooking in the kitchen all night long, along with the smell of vanilla floating all through the house, has to be the most powerful memory I have.

Remembering daddy with the large 12-inch-long candy cane, and him using his buck-pocket knife to break off chunks for us kids always bring a smile to my face, but the smell of the mint from the broken candy cane takes me back to that kitchen table.

The memory of Daddy buying cases of oranges and apples around the Holidays, creating a fresh fruit smell, still means "home for the holidays." Oh yes, the fresh-cut Christmas Tree, my sister and I helped Daddy cut and drag to the truck. I am sure he did most of the dragging. Just remembering the smell of that evergreen transports me back in time.

Yes, I remember some of the presents I received as a child and some of the gifts I gave; however, there are no memories that invoke warmth and comfort more than the smells I remember from my early childhood. The smell of a turkey cooking in the oven, at the time, I could not tell you that the predominant smell was that of sage; all I knew is it made me feel good.

Smells had such an impact on me that as a young adult, if I were to cook for a date, I would boil a pot of water and throw the spices into the water. So, if I were cooking Italian, I would boil Italian spices; and if I were cooking just a country meal, I would add some vanilla to some water. I did not know it at the time, but Realtors do the same thing because vanilla's smell invoked the sense of home.

As I think of the things that bring me comfort, such as a fire in the fireplace, a cup of hot chocolate, or just hugging my kids, every single physical action is more profound because of related memories related to smell.

During these challenging times, surrounding the Corona Virus, the wife and I enjoy movies from Netflix or Amazon

Prime. The smile I have on my face is not just because of a good movie; it is also because I recall popcorn's smell in the movie theaters from my childhood.

Wow, how about that? The things that bring me comfort are the smells of my childhood. Yes, a good movie, warm fire, maybe a good book and the quiet time with my wife is all great; but add in the smells from my childhood and I find real comfort.

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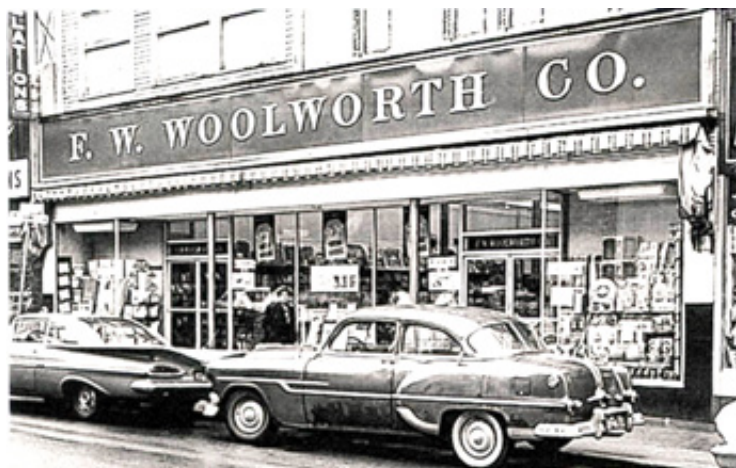
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1952 Christmas

by Jane Barr

It was almost Christmas, my husband and I had married in El Paso, Texas and came to Huntsville, Alabama with the Wernher von Braun group. Tom was a young engineer working for General Electric, contractors for the group. Needless to say, our finances were limited. We had a small house in Hillandale, a new subdivision on Holmes Street that had been a cotton field. We had bits and pieces of furniture. We had a few books and magazines so I thought to make a bookcase, buffet-like, for our dining room.

I stopped at a Used Furniture Store and purchased two table leaves that the kindly gentlemen who operated the store showed me along with other pieces of left-over furniture. I needed the wood and purchasing from lumber yard was too expensive. The men only charged me \$1.00 a piece. Home I went, happy with my treasures! When my husband, Tom, came home I asked him to get a few cinder blocks, he knew what I was going to do.

A couple days later I had the cinder blocks painted, the table leaves painted and a home-made bookcase-buffet in the dining room.

Being a Christmas Lover I wanted an example of a Christmas Scene. I had been looking through magazines and soon cut out Christmas pictures. I had a family playing in the snow, singles skating on ice, a round mirror (taken off wall) for a skating pond. I went to Woolworths Dime Store and purchased some cotton, Elmer's glue and construction paper like kids use in school. Woolworth had the first nickel and dime store, underselling competitors.

In Huntsville they also had a Soda Fountain where you could sit at the counter and get a soda in a glass and sometimes a meal of meatloaf, potato, green beans, a small dish

of jello and a glass of water all for less than a dollar. If you were an adult who spent most of the morning shopping you might get a cup of coffee, 5 cents.

Home I went with cotton batting about 1/8" thick. Cotton batting was usually used in center of quilt.

Was I making a quilt? No, no, I was making a Christmas Scene! On the living room floor I put a small mirror, surrounded it with cotton batting. I had been to A&P Grocery Store where I purchased a box of sugar cubes. Being in The South tea was a necessity when friends came visiting and sugar cubes was a must! Was I taking a Tea Break? No, was I expecting company? No. What was I going to do with a box of sugar cubes?

I carefully began stacking the cubes. I finished before Tom came home. I had a sugar cube house! The next day I put the cut-out pictures on the dining room table, along with the construction paper, Elmer's glue and scissors. I proceeded to cut and paste pictures. By the time Tom came home I had a house, a pond with skaters with others walking and standing. I was in a Christmas Wonder Land! Never had magazine pictures given such pleasure! Tom put the finishing touch, a light in the house.

For several days I enjoyed my Christmas Scene. One morning, soon after Tom left for work, I walked into living room to admire my handiwork and then I noticed something different. Something was moving around inside my Christmas House. It was a very tiny mouse! In 1952 we had a Christmas Mouse House!



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City News from 1924



- Mr. William Berry is reported to have caught a huge catfish weighing 116 pounds while running lines in the river near Ditto Landing. The fish was brought to town where it was weighed at the scales of Miller's store.

- Mrs. C. T. Greaves, of Dallas, Tx., one of the most seriously injured in the wreck of the Southern passenger train near Scottsboro last week, is still at the Huntsville Infirmary, where she was taken immediately following the accident.

Mrs. Greaves is, however, reported to be doing well. She is the only one of the several brought here who have not returned to their homes.

- Two boys, Lonnie Jones, 16 and Warren Sanders, 14 will be held in Huntsville for the arrival of their parents this week. They said they lived near Scottsboro and were taken in charge by Chief Hackworth. Their parents had telephoned the chief to notify him that the boys had traveled to Huntsville, after telling them that they "wanted to see the world."

They were without money and seemed quite ready to return home after seeing enough of the world and its hardness. No doubt they will receive their rewards after reaching home.

- Announcement is made of an important called meeting of the Grace Club, to be held at the Twickenham Pharmacy at 5 o'clock Tuesday afternoon. All members are urged to be there.

- While riding his bicycle on Walker Street Sunday, Howard Larkin, a small boy, was run into and knocked from his wheel by an automobile driven by Henry Thomas.

Young Larkin was jolted but not seriously injured.

- Messrs. James McGill and Lee Guy have perfected a new automobile light for which they intend to apply for a patent. The light will contain a revolving fan on one end and colored lights on the other, the lights being generated from a dry battery and being operated by the car. The gentlemen have tried out their light with complete success.

- Mrs. William Halsey entertained the members of the Friday Morning Card Club, at her summer home on Monte Sano. A most enjoyable way to spend the day was had. Miss Beirne Spragins won the first prize, the consolation being cut by Mrs. M. H. May.

A Decatur man claims there are two reasons his wife won't wear last year's dresses - she doesn't want to, and she can't.

Eggnog - Very Old Recipe

10 egg yolks
1/2 lb. powdered sugar
2 pints spirits
1 pint heavy cream, whipped
Nutmeg
3 c. cold milk

Beat yolks until light. Add sugar and beat til dissolved. Add spirits slowly, while beating. Spirits can be rum - light or dark or all bourbon. I like 1 1/2 pints bourbon to 1/2 pint dark rum. Let mixture rest for 10 minutes, then add milk and chill for a couple of hours. Just before serving, fold in the whipped cream and beat thoroughly. Serve in punch cups with a sprinkle of nutmeg.



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HUNTING ON MONTE SANO

by Austin Miller



One Saturday morning in February 1967, Daddy, Uncle Robert and I went squirrel hunting on Monte Sano mountain. When we started out about daylight it was clear and cold. A bluish tinted full moon that had moved west across the sky through the night was still visible. There was no wind and a heavy frost covered the ground and rooftops. The countryside was so white that it looked like a light snow had fallen.

Daddy had an old single barrel 12 gauge shot gun that I got with my cotton money when I was in the eighth grade. Uncle Robert had my grandfather's single barrel 12 gauge and I had a brand new 12 gauge Remington 870 pump.

When we started out it was cold, but as we began our climb up the mountain we warmed up in a hurry. Daddy was fifty-six years old, weighed about 250 lbs. and was six feet two inches tall. He was solid muscle and there was not an ounce of fat on him. Uncle Robert was almost two years older, weighed about 150 lbs. and was also six feet two. But he was stooped shouldered and appeared a lot shorter than Daddy.

That day, there was no evidence that they were in their late fifties. He and Daddy both went up the mountain like it was a flat field. I think Daddy could have run all the way to

the top. I didn't have any trouble with the climb either, but I was thirty years younger.

They both knew the mountain like the backs of their hands. In their growing up years, it was their playground. As boys this is where they hunted and cut firewood with my grandfather. Sometimes they hunted raccoons at night and had to find their way through the trees, sink holes, caves and rocks with lanterns. They searched the slopes for ginseng, bee trees, haws, muscadines and chestnuts. Rattlesnakes were plentiful on the mountain and there is no way to know how many they had found and killed. That day, they talked a lot about their past experiences.

One place we went to was a spring that they drank from as boys. They said it still looked like it did the first time they found it.

Just under the summit, we walked around what they called the bench road. It was a clear trail around the mountain. I am not sure why it was there. Maybe it was a natural phenomenon or maybe it was an old logging trail. By the time we got to the bench road the sun was high in the sky. It had warmed up considerably and it was hard to believe it was so cold when we first started out.

Most of the vast variety of trees on the mountain had grown tall and slender. I didn't know the names of many of the trees but Daddy and Uncle Robert did. They pointed out hickories, oaks, maples, locust, beech, ash, sweet gum, black gum and some I can't remember. Through the thick

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THE GRADUATES OF HUNTSVILLE HIGH SCHOOL**

OSCAR LLERENA

long limbs you could see a deep blue clear sky that seemed to be only a short distance from the tree-tops.

As we walked on, we came across Bill Gossett and his son Michael. I didn't remember any of the conversation but I am sure that Daddy asked him about his father, Clyde Gossett. Mr. Gossett and Daddy had been close friends since they were little boys and one of their favorite things to do together was hunt and explore the mountain.

Scattered on the ground all over the slopes were fallen tree trunks. The bark was gone and the big logs were weathered almost white. This made them stick out and you could see them clearly in all directions. Some were several feet in circumference and 30 or 40 feet long. Daddy and Uncle Robert said they were dead Chestnut trees. When they were boys the trees were alive and the mountains with covered with them. This was evident by the number lying on the ground. The trees produced a nut that could be eaten raw or roasted.

Either way they were delicious and very nutritious. Also, the wood was hard and slow to decay. It made good lumber, was excellent for firewood and thrived throughout the Appalachian chain. Around 1900, blight started in the trees in New England. It spread to the south in the 1930s and by 1940 all the Great American Chestnut's in the United States were gone. For years, scientists have tried to re-grow the trees. Sadly, they have not yet been successful. The loss of these great trees may be the biggest botanical loss in the history of our country.

We did not see the first squirrel or even a nest. We were gone several hours and did not fire the first shot. It was a failed hunting trip. But it is a day that still lives in my memory. It was a pleasure to spend time with Daddy and Uncle Robert. I enjoyed their excitement about the mountain; hearing them reminisce and seeing them find

places they had known in their youth. Also, I had been back from Vietnam less than two months and it felt good to be home alive.

That day, all was well in my world.

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- The very nearest approach to domestic happiness on earth is the cultivation, on both sides, of unselfishness.
- Never both get angry at once. Never speak loud to one another unless the house is on fire.
- Let each strive to yield oftenest to the wishes of the other.
- Never find fault unless it is perfectly certain that a fault has been committed, and always speak lovingly. Never taunt with a past mistake.
- Neglect the whole world, rather than one another.
- Never make a remark at the expense of one another; it is meanness.
- Never pass for a day without loving words to think of during absence.
- Never meet without a loving welcome.
- Never let the sun go down on any anger or grievance.
- Never let any fault you have committed go until you have confessed it and asked forgiveness. Never forget the happiness of early love.
- Never sigh over what might have been, but make the best of what is.
- Never forget that marriage is ordained of God, and that His blessing alone can make it what it should be.
- Never let your hopes stop short of the eternal love.

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PET TIPS FROM ANGEL

Winter Play



Getting pets who dislike the cold to go outside in winter can be a challenge, but chilly weather or not, pets need fresh air and exercise. ASPCA experts assure us that while short-haired and smaller breeds may require cozy apparel to protect them from winter's bite, others simply need a little training to learn how to enjoy a cold-weather romp.

"With a few simple training tricks — and the right attire — pet parents can teach animal companions to be much more enthusiastic about playing outdoors in winter," says ASPCA Animal Trainer Kristen Collins.

1. Entice your pooch with off-leash exercise sessions; playing tug or fetch, or romping with canine buddies — the more aerobic the activity, the warmer the dog will be.

2. If your dog's playing off-leash, you can use treats to reward him for fetching toys — even if you usually don't have to. The extra incentive might further spark his interest in the great (and chilly!) outdoors.

3. Offer your pet special treats during outdoor excursions. While on a brisk walk, pop something delicious into her mouth every now and then - or feed her breakfast by hand while outdoors.

4. Winter is a great time to enroll in indoor training classes. Sports like agility and flyball are often taught in heated facilities and are excellent exercise for the canine body and mind - and you'll enjoy them, too!

5. Walk your pet in wooded areas during the winter months. The forest not only provides protection from wind, but the rich smells, sights and sounds can be infinitely interesting for dogs to investigate, distracting them from chilly temperatures.

6. Many dogs dislike going outside during winter because snow, salt and chemical de-icers hurt their paws. Canine booties can protect paws, while keeping them warm — and disposable latex boots are available for dogs who don't like the feel of thicker boots.

7. Musher's Secret, a waxy substance that you can apply to your dog's paws, can be an effective alternative to booties for protecting toes and paw pads in snow and ice.

8. Getting your dog to play outside may simply be a matter of keeping him warm:

- Dress puppies — who don't have as much body fat as adults — in a coat or sweater.
- Get waterproof gear for wet days.
- Invest in a well-fitting coat that covers your dog's back and underside. (Fleece is nice!)
- Staying warm during winter takes more energy, so increased food intake may be necessary. Good body condition means you can feel, but not see, your dog's bones. If you can see his spine, hips and ribs, then he's too thin and you should talk to your veterinarian about increasing his food intake.

9. If you've tried everything and your dog still seems miserable when you take him outside, provide extra exercise indoors by playing games that involve physical exertion, like tug-of-war.

10. Help your dog expend mental energy by feeding her meals in food-puzzle toys, giving her plenty of things to chew, teaching her new tricks and playing interactive games like hide-and-seek. Make sure your dog has access to shelter and water at all times. And please remember, that if you're cold, your dog probably is, too, and it's time to go home.

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Get a Real Job

by Tom Carney

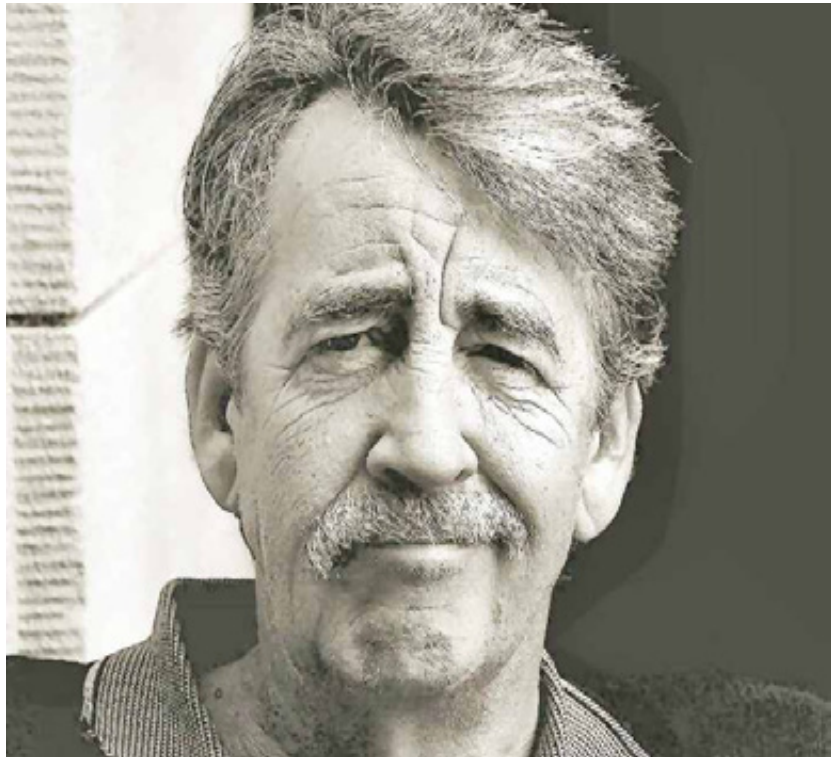


Baseball history in Huntsville, like much of our history, is full of irony and untold stories. Perhaps one of the best tales of baseball is one of a young man who grew up over in Georgia and made his way to Huntsville in pursuit of a career.

The young man was born near Royston, Georgia, in 1886. At a young age he discovered the sport of baseball and immediately it became the passion in his life. This was in the days when every city, town, and mill village had its own teams and professional players were almost unheard of.

At the age of nineteen, the young man left home to pursue his new career. Walking and hitching rides on wagons, he made his way across the Southland, looking for the "Big Time," or so he thought. According to one report of the day, there were so many baseball teams that the scores were no longer listed in the newspaper.

The young man sought out every sandlot team in town trying out for a position but was repeatedly turned down. One team offered him a position as an unpaid player, but he had to furnish his own uniform and



glove. The young man had a glove but did not have the money to buy the uniform.

The manager of a local team, a mill village team, listened to the young man and then burst out laughing. "Son, you better go on back home and get a real job. If you think you can make a living playing baseball, why, you're crazier than you look!" Probably a large part of it had to do with the exorbitant salary he was asking—\$65 a month. Disappointed, he left Huntsville after only a few days and eventually ended up in Detroit where he landed a job with a local baseball team.

This team went on to become one of the best-known teams in baseball history and the young man, Ty Cobb, became a legend in his own time.

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OLD BELIEFS AND SUPERSTITIONS ABOUT CHILDREN

Papers from 1867

These old tales are presented for your entertainment - always check with your doctor before trying anything unusual or new.



- In 1867 a noted journal said that when an infant was first dressed, his clothes should never be pulled on over his head (which would bring the child bad luck) but drawn on over his feet.

- In England, if several children from the same family were stricken with whooping cough a curious remedy was tried. A lock of hair from the eldest girl's head was cut off and put in milk, which the other children then drank, starting from the youngest and working upwards. It was believed that the whooping cough would then leave the household.

"All I can say about the U.S. Senate is that it opens with a prayer and closes with an investigation."

Will Rogers

- In the seventeenth century, bachelor philosopher John Locke suggested that all children were mollicoddled and far too warmly dressed. He even told mothers to give their children leaky shoes on purpose in order to get them used to having cold feet.

- The interval between a baby's birth and its baptism was considered a dangerous period, during which the child was prey to all sorts of evil spirits. Protective objects - such as a pinch of salt, a clove of garlic, some iron nails or a knife - would be placed in the cradle.

- In Scotland the mother's petticoat was placed over the boy child, while the father's coat was placed over a girl.

- For the first year the baby was kept in a darkened room, since his eyes were believed to be sensitive to light and exposure to bright light was considered to cause squinting in later

life. Most babies today are born under bright hospital lights - but a dark, cozy environment helps the mother relax and is now recommended by the some practitioners.

- In the fifteenth century mothers were confined to their bed for as long as four weeks after the baby was born. For many weeks the threat of the mother dying from "childbirth fever" was very real, so she was kept warm and still. After a week or so, if she made good progress, she was allowed to sit up. This was often celebrated by a party known as "the lady's upsitteing feast."

The new mother's first outing would take place when she would go to church to give thanks for her child. Today it is common for mothers, even first-time mothers, to be asked to leave the hospital beds only a day after giving birth. Things certainly have changed.

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The Christmas Puppy

by Morgan Smallwood, Student at Hazel Green High School, in an interview with her grandmother, Charlotte McWhorter of New Market Al (1953)



Christmas was usually the same each year for our family of thirteen. Looking back, it wasn't even great, but at the time, it was the happiest time of the year for us. We didn't have to pick cotton for once. Just the thought of Christmas was enough motivation for us to keep working our absolute hardest.

On Christmas morning every year, we would walk into the kitchen to find eleven chairs or however many children there were at the time. On each one was a single apple, orange and peppermint candy. I was so happy that most of the time it took me weeks before I would ever even eat the candy, I had to eat the fruit, of course; otherwise, it would have gone bad quickly. It was a happy moment for all of us.

One Christmas, however, things went a little differently. I was somewhere between the age of ten and thirteen. We all went into the kitchen as usual, collecting our fruits and candy. My father let the excitement in the room settle a little. Once we were calmer, he told us that there was more this year. We looked around at each other in confusion, wondering what possibly could be more to it. We whispered about the possibilities, like new shoes or fabric for dresses.

"I don't build snowmen. If I wanted to hang around with a cold man with slush for brains I'd still be married."

Maxine

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Local Experts

He told us to cover up in some warm clothes because we were going outside. Once we were all dressed, he led us out to the barn. What could possibly be out here? An idea ran through my mind that made me want to cry. What if we have to work this year? I quickly dismissed the thought. I knew he would not have done that to us, get our hopes up like that.

What we saw when we entered the barn I'm sure none of us were expecting. It was a happy, yappy little brown puppy. It was so cute, that none of us knew how to react. I think we were all afraid to touch it, that we might hurt it or that it might not be real. My father just laughed and told us it didn't bite. It danced at our feet, licking any fingers that tried to pet it. It was a girl and we decided to name her Lucille.

We brought her inside with us because it was freezing outside. She explored every inch of the house, and we followed right behind her, laughing when she thought random objects were alive and barked at them.

After a long while of begging our mother, my sisters and I let her sleep with us in our bed that night. She wouldn't let us go to sleep at first so we finally had to pretend to be asleep so that she would settle down. We had completely forgotten about our fruit and candy at this point. It was the best Christmas to us by far.

The puppy became everyone's best friend. We all argued over who got to sleep with her

each night and hold and play with her. She grew quickly before our eyes into a big chocolate lab retriever. She was such a good dog and always stood by everyone's side. We took her with us into the cotton fields when we had to work, and she had a way of making it all bearable.

I don't really know how long she lived because I left home at sixteen. I do know that it must have been unbearable for my younger siblings to have to witness her death of old age.

She was the best Christmas that had ever happened.

"I'm at that age where my mind thinks I'm 29, my humor suggests I'm 12, and my body keeps asking if I'm sure I'm not dead yet."

Bud Conners, New Hope

"Whose cruel idea was it for the word 'Lisp' to have an 'S' in it?"

Becky Patterson, Gurley



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Pearl

Hello, my name is Pearl. I live at the Ark Animal Shelter. I am about 1 year old and have a very sweet and calm disposition. When I came to the Ark, I brought my 4 baby kittens with me. I was hardly more than a kitten myself but I was a good Mama to them. My kittens have been adopted but I am still

here waiting to be adopted by kind people who will keep me inside their house. I live in a room with a lot of other young cats and we all get along well with each other. I hang back a little when people come into our room compared to the other cats so I don't get noticed as much. I like to sit up high and watch the others. I am very affectionate and just as sweet and playful as the other cats if you will give me a chance. Will you come to the Ark and ask to see me? I will love you for all my life. Come see me, I'm Pearl.

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Grady Reeves, the Promoter

by Billy Joe Cooley

I was on my way home from the Korean War, my soldiering days far behind, when I stopped off in Huntsville to visit my old radio pal Grady Reeves. It was the summer of 1954 and I was anxious to get back to familiar ground.

Grady had always called me "Boondocks," a reflection on my rural raising, so I called him the Cincinnati Flash, a throwback to his hometown. I stopped by WBBR where he was a record spinner and a part-time show promoter. They told me that he had gone out to the Madison County coliseum on Holmes Avenue. I went out there.

"Come on, Billy Joe, you can help me with the show I've booked in here," he greeted.

The coliseum in those days had no end walls, since it was primarily used for cattle shows and such.

"What kind of show have you got promoted here?" I asked.

Grady explained that a Nashville agent had called and said he had a large bunch of traveling musicians who needed a night's work while passing through here on their way to Tuscaloosa.

"The whole bunch will perform and it's only costing me \$600," he said. "I ought to make a good profit." I helped unfold and set up chairs.

At about 5 PM a long Cadillac limousine pulled up and about a dozen people got out. A rack on top of the car contained suitcases, guitars and amplifiers. It looked like a band of gypsies. The car was old, half covered with mud and resembled something that had traveled across a lot of plowed fields in recent days. The musicians and singers were about my age, so we sat around and gossiped for a couple of hours. They were fascinated with Grady's tales about his days as a sportscaster.

About an hour before showtime the audience started trickling in. Most were older people. They paid \$2 a person, which was the going rate for a concert in those days.

A few people showed up. Very few.

Grady lost about \$200 on the show. It was the first time I had seen a grown man whimper.

The show was excellent and it was a shame that so few people saw it.

When the show was over I helped the gang get the stuff repacked atop that old limousine and bade farewell to Johnny Cash, Jerry Lee Lewis, Carl Perkins and Elvis Presley.

Little did we know that each was to become a super star one day.

Some of us learn from the mistakes of others. The rest of us have to be the others.

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Frosty

by Bill Alkire



We all have a favorite cousin, a favorite nephew, a favorite aunt, a favorite neighbor, a favorite teacher...you get the point. Sometimes an object can be significant as a catalyst, principal player, or a main character.

Many of you have overheard me mention Herman "Frosty" Jones. Frosty, next to God, had the most influence in my life both then and now. I never understood how Frosty became such an influence in my life. God works in mysterious ways - I do not question God anymore! I could talk about my experiences and relationships, if afforded the opportunity and audience, for hours.

Today I am going to tell you a brief story if you will allow me. Frosty's family considered me a family member - or they made me feel that way. I was truly blessed! Frosty loved his wife and two daughters Sue and Debbie - so did I and still do.

My one regret in life has been not attending Frosty's and Emma Jean's funeral. They knew I loved them... I needed to tell them!

Well back to what I wanted to talk to you about. Frosty's violin, which was too soon put away, never to be played again. Frosty would make his signature soup and play his violin - rather as he referred to her as his fiddle. Foot stomping traditional, hillbilly, bluegrass, and country music would come from that fiddle. When I hear a fiddle today, a tear comes to my eye just thinking about Frosty.

Frosty could make that fiddle be happy or sad, and he could make it laugh or cry. Frosty and that fiddle were magic. Having been exposed to concert piano and violin, along with voice lessons at Mrs. Gothrup's boarding house and the music studio she had in her house - Frosty's fiddle playing was totally different, like night and day. I can see that old violin being put away too soon, never to be played again. You cannot change the truth.

When Frosty picked up that old fiddle something magic happened. I cannot begin to explain it. When the rosined bow cut across the strings at first the instrument would make an evil hissing sound, like it had been wakened from a nightmare or was angry.

Then the sweetness of the "Orange Blossom Special" warmed the air. Then the "Angels" would dance on violin's bridge to "Guardian Angel". You could sense a covey of quail shoot up from a field as Frosty played the "Great Speckled Bird".

Butterflies would flap their wings as they cooled down when "Red Wing" would penetrate the atmosphere. Then one could feel the energy being released along with "Old Joe Clark", "Do Lord", and "In the Garden".

Mr. Melvin Wine was known as the greatest West Virginia fiddler. However, Frosty Jones was in my mind's eye the greatest. I still have a vision of that violin being put away too soon, not to be played again.

I am still moved today by the sound of Bluegrass Gospel and the Appalachian sound of an old-time fiddle, a Dobro, or a Mandolin being played. I can sense Frosty's fiddle crying, being put away too soon, and never to be played again.

That old violin and I are much alike. We give our all to something or someone, and soon, way too soon, we will give our life also. Sometimes late at night I wake up to a hissing sound and wonder, is that Frosty rosinning up his bow? No! You cannot change the truth.

I know that Frosty is playing in heaven, because I have heard the older the violin, the sweeter the music.

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A Good Life

by Ernestine Moody

Seated on the small balcony at my apartment, and enjoying the brisk breeze of fall, I glance at a small table by my side. There sits a plaque, actually my favorite reading. Tears begin to flow as once more I indulge in the beautiful words printed there.

I do not know the author, but his or her sentiments certainly fill my heart. One verse reads, "Don't feel guilty that you have life. Life that was denied to me. Heaven is truly beautiful, just you wait and see! So live your life, laugh again, enjoy yourself, be free. Then I'll know with each breath you take, you'll be taking one for me."

On September 11 of this year, after 62 years of marriage, my husband, Tom, passed away from complications of a viral heart infection. I recall, as if it happened yesterday, the day we met. In 1957, we were both students at Armstrong Jr College in Savannah, GA. We attended the day classes.

For some unknown reason, my friend suggested that we enroll in a night class my last quarter before graduating. It was an English class and since working folks participated in night courses, we decided it would be easy and fun.

My sorority had begun selling stickers to place on notes and letters. Therefore I approached this guy in class, whose name was Tom and tried to make a sale. Had I known his financial situation, I would not have asked him for any kind of financial transaction. He said that he did not bring any money with him, but would purchase some the next time our class met.

Well this sales lady did not easily give up. As soon as he walked in the door of the classroom, there I stood with stickers in hand! Digging deeply in his pocket, he produced the necessary funds. A couple of days later, April 26th, he called and asked me out for his birthday. We went to the Brass Rail at Tybee, Savannah Beach. After that date he visited my home every day. We got engaged in June when he uttered the romantic words, "Say, I got a cool idea. Let's get married."

We purchased a fake diamond and told my folks that we planned to marry. My Dad realized that it was not real. A couple of months later I received my real ring.

We were married on February 7, 1959.

As in all marriages there were great times, and on occasions, difficult periods, but we strived forward. We, with the help of our Superior Being, were able to enjoy our beautiful family.

Now, though the circle is broken, we look forward to the day when gathered again, perhaps we can hold hands and express our love in family unity.

"THE WAY IT WAS," THE OTHER SIDE OF HUNTSVILLE'S HISTORY BY TOM CARNEY



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Christmas Visits with Santa Claus

by Gwendolyn Joop

Every December 12th on my wedding anniversary we visit The Gallery in Birmingham, on the Friday following December 12th.

We stay at the Wynfrey Hotel. Completing our Christmas shopping and a lot of stores window visiting.

I'm not your typical female. Shopping was never the highlight of my trip. Visiting Santa Claus was my tradition. Thankfully, the same Santa each Christmas.

The Santa Claus Village was located on the First Floor in front of Belk's. Christmas Village was a Christmas Wonderland.

There would be young parents and grandparents with infants to seven year-old children. Lines wrapped around the village and down the aisles. Being a True Southern Belle, I waited until the small child in Santa's lap finished. I'm standing in front of the exit. Trust me. Some of these young children wanted no part of visiting Santa.

When the last child finished I would run through the exit and hop in Santa's lap. After many years he recognized me.

"Have you been a good girl?" Absolutely, not!!! Even mischievous girls deserve surprises. "What would you like?" A happy and peaceful year. "Santa will be proud to deliver your request." Received my coloring book, crayons and candy cane. Happy camper.

Fearing at any moment a parent or grandparent was going to whack me across the head for breaking line. Would have been on my own. Frank would walk away pretending he didn't know me.

The only year I requested a gift. There was an original autographed photo of Cam Newton, when he was Quarterback for Auburn, I informed Santa that I really wished to have that picture. Santa will help you out. Never have you requested a gift. No. Happy with my coloring book, crayons and candy cane. Whispered in Santa's ear. Should request an Auburn football helmet. My luck is going to run out breaking line. These parents and grandparents are going to whack me over the head. Santa laughed in his Holly Jolly laugh.

The last time I visited Santa was December, 2019. Still in a left leg cast and right arm cast from a horrific automobile accident on September, 2018. Wheelchair bound on long distance walking.

I requested my husband push me to Santa's exit. Gwendolyn, get it out of your head. This is one year you can't get through the exit without pulling down the entire fencing.

Just push me to the exit. First time he stayed around. Curious if and how I planned on pulling this one off. Patiently, I waited at the exit. No way getting through exit. No problem. Santa looked up and came to me. "Wondered where you had been. Thought you forgot Santa." NEVER! He inquired why I was in a wheelchair and what happened. I explained and he gave me a big bear hug.

As I was being rolled away, Santa screamed "WAIT! You forgot your coloring book, crayons and candy cane." Then he gave me the most gentle kiss that only Santa's Holly Jolly spirit is capable of delivering.

I spent longer time with Santa that year. More than the previous 24 years. No longer afraid of being whacked on the head by angry parents. Who would whack a woman across the head in a wheelchair???

Actually, I received my first picture with Santa. Frank took the picture. "Unbelievable, you pulled this off. You are so stubborn!! How rude..."

My tradition was broken the last two years, due to COVID-19 or it would have been 27 years in a row.

Always have found a positive out of any negative. Think about it ladies. If we do not feel like doing our makeup or have wrinkles, just throw a mask on. No one will know. Men if you do not feel like shaving or have wrinkles throw a mask on. Blessing in disguise.

Be respectful and kind to each other. Agree to disagree. PUUUHLEEZE GET YOUR COVID-19 SHOT. GOD BLESS AMERICA AND GOD BLESS THE WORLD.

"Dedicated to my dear diehard Roll Tide Fans. Waaaaar Eagle. Laugh out loud. Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to ALL!!"



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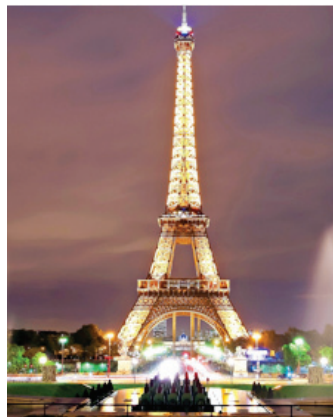
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The NASA Marshall Retirees Association is creating a Space Exploration Memorial (pictured on the left) which will capture the history of what has been done by all of the space explorers in the Huntsville area.

If you or a family member worked for the Marshall Space Flight Center or for a contractor working with MSFC, go online to the www.marshallretirees.org website and add their names and their stories of space

exploration to the database so that Huntsville's space history can be known.

Also, make a contribution to help create the Space Exploration Memorial through the website and the Space Explorers Huntsville Facebook page or the "Build the Space Exploration Memorial" GoFundMe page. Total contributions to date exceed \$120,000.

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