



No. 348
February 2022

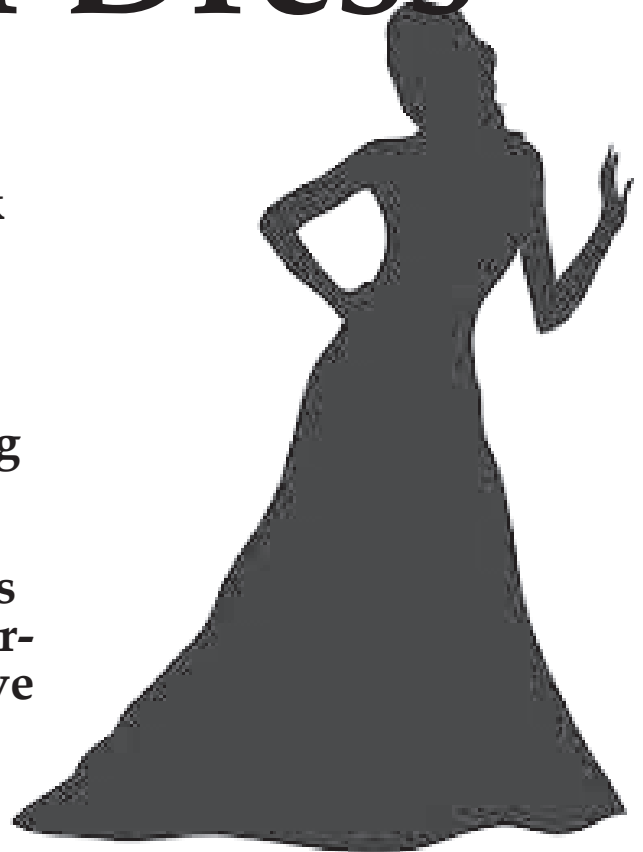


Old Huntsville

HISTORY AND STORIES OF THE TENNESSEE VALLEY

The Red Dress

As a young woman Susan would lie in bed, early in the morning while it was still dark outside and wonder what it would feel like to be in love. She knew it would make her feel warm and giddy all over. She could even visualize feeling light-headed as she fantasized about an imaginary beau who would sweep her up in his arms before carrying her off to a never-never land where they would live forever.



Also in this issue: The Upside Down Hill; Old South Superstitions; The Human Cucumber (1880); News from 1943; Hikes to Monte Sano; Law and Order in 1860; Vera Tippett Recipes; Dog Tips and much more!

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The Red Dress

by Tom Carney

As a young woman Susan would lie in bed, early in the morning while it was still dark outside and wonder what it would feel like to be in love. She knew it would make her feel warm and giddy all over. She could even visualize feeling light-headed as she fantasized about an imaginary beau who would sweep her up in his arms before carrying her off to a never-never land where they would live forever.

Unfortunately, most times her dreams would be interrupted by the crying of a baby or the loud snores of her husband. As she pulled herself out of bed to begin preparing breakfast, she would once again come face to face with the stark reality of her life.

She was a married woman with a child, and love was something she would never know.

Susan Baxter was born in Huntsville in 1919, the daughter of a God-fearing man who made a living delivering coal to homes around town. He and his wife were solid pillars of the community; never rais-

ing their voices, always paying their bills on time and attending church every time the doors were open.

The church they attended, Brother Sharp's "Welcome All Congregation", was located on the fringes of a neighborhood in Huntsville known as the Honey Hole, a notorious area where gambling, bootlegging and prostitution flourished openly with little interference from the authorities. The church was a small frame building that had probably once been a store but had grown into such disrepair, the owner was willing to rent it for the few dollars a month Brother Sharp paid.

The Welcome All Church was in many ways typical of the small independent churches that were currently a phenomenon of the southern culture. Part Baptist, part Holiness and part Pentecostal, the congregation usually focused on a charismatic leader who interpreted the "Word" according to personal "revelations" he received from God.

The services were conducted in the typical "Hell, Fire and Damnation" manner with all the women and girls sitting on one side and the men and boys on the other. All the women wore long black cotton dresses, with the hems brushing the top of their shoes, their hair tied up in tight buns on top of their heads. The men wore white, long-sleeved shirts with the top button always fastened no

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P.O. Box 4648
Huntsville, Al 35815
(256) 534-0502

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

Publisher - Cathey Carney

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

"Old Huntsville" magazine is a monthly publication. Annual subscriptions are \$40 per year for print copy and \$25 per year for digital. Copies can be found in boxes and machines throughout North Alabama.

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

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matter how hot it was. Adornments such as hair bows or suspenders were frowned upon and public displays of affection were thought of as being scandalous.

"The whole time I was growing up," Susan later remembered, "I never saw a husband hold his wife's hand."

The Welcome All Church was not as inclusive as the name might suggest. Brother Sharp taught that the world was a sinful place and that true believers should limit their contacts with outsiders. To have any social contact with someone not belonging to the church was considered improper. Children were sent to school for only a few years, just long enough to acquire a crude understanding of basic skills before being pulled out so that they would not be corrupted.

Despite Susan's meager education she became a voracious reader, eagerly devouring everything she got her hands on. As a young teenager she discovered the "Dime Romance Novels", a popular series of romantic novels that sold for

a dime. All the novels had the same basic theme; boy meets girl, boy and girl fall in love, boy and girl get married and live happily ever after.

Susan had to hide the novels, as her parents would not allow any book except the Bible in the house. The one time she was caught reading one she was forced to "confess and ask for forgiveness" in front of Brother Sharp.

The first inclination that her life was about to change came when she was fifteen years old, One Sunday morning as she was about to leave the church and walk home with her parents, her father told her to wait; Edwin Sharp, the son of Brother Sharp, wanted to walk her home.

Edwin Sharp was a young version of his father. Tall and thin, never smiling and always with a Bible in his hand if he was not working. At twenty-two years old, he was considered to be one of the most eligible bachelors in the church. For the next several weeks Edwin walked Susan home every Sunday. There wasn't much

conversation; they really didn't know one another enough to feel comfortable talking about everyday things and they had nothing else in common. Mostly they just walked in silence.

One afternoon Edwin and his father suddenly appeared at Susan's home. Her mother, quickly sizing up the situation, took her into the kitchen where they remained until the visitors had left. When Susan entered the room where her father was, he motioned for her to sit down.

"Brother Sharp's boy has asked for your hand in marriage."

One look at her mother, sitting with folded hands and a smile on her face, told Susan that her future had just been determined.



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"I don't want to, I don't love him! I don't hardly even know him!"

Mother tried to be persuasive. "He's a good provider and he's a good God-fearing man. What else could you want?"

Susan burst out crying. "I don't love him. Can't you understand?"

The argument continued until finally her father put an end to it. "Love has nothing to do with it. Those books have put silly ideas in your head. You will do what we say is best for you!"

As impossible as it may sound today, Susan had little choice. She could either agree to the marriage and make everyone happy or she could refuse and become an outcast among her own family and friends.

Susan Baxter and Edwin Sharp were married five days after her sixteenth birthday. Years later she would recall the ceremony. "While Brother Sharp was praying, a train passed by behind the church. Its whistle was blowing and I remember wondering where it was going. Suddenly I decided I wanted to just walk out of the church and go with it. I tried, I really tried but my legs would not move. I just didn't have the courage."

The next week was busy as the newly married couple moved into their own home and church members stopped by with wedding gifts. Edwin's mother Lula purchased a new clock for the bride. Susan was thrilled with the present until she learned its purpose.

"Edwin is just like his father," Lula explained. "He likes his breakfast exact - one

egg, one biscuit and two slices of bacon promptly at 6:15 every morning and dinner should be on the table at 6:00 sharp every evening. He needs a clean shirt every Sunday, Tuesday and Friday and he likes the collar starched."

This was followed by another fifteen minutes of detailed instructions of what Edwin expected from his wife. Completely overwhelmed, Susan blurted out. "But what if I don't want to?"

A puzzled look appeared on Lula's face. "But why would you not want to?"

Lula Sharp was a huge woman, probably tipping the scales at two hundred and seventy five pounds and with a heart just as big. Although her hair was snow white, her upper lip boasted a black moustache. She later confided to Susan that she had once tried to shave it but her husband had forbidden it, saying she was being vain.

Despite the difference in age, the two women became friends of a sort. Susan called her husband Mr. Sharp, just as the other wives called their husbands by their last names. One day while

washing clothes, Susan asked Lula what her husband called her. Try as she might, she could not ever recall Brother Sharp calling his wife by any name.

Lula looked startled by the question but was too honest not to reply. After thinking for a long moment she replied, "Woman."

"What does Edwin call you?" Lula asked,

Susan did not have to think about the answer. "Nothing," she replied as she angrily sorted through the dirty clothes. "He never calls me anything."

Lula, perhaps remembering when she was a child bride, wrapped Susan in her massive arms. "Honey, you just have to pray. We all have our places in this world."

Years passed and Susan tried to become the dutiful wife. Dinner was on the table every night at 6:00 and she starched the collars of her husband's shirts. A daughter, Lizzie, was born.

And every night Susan would lie in bed with a stranger, cringing at the thought of him even touching her.

"My husband said he needed more space. So I locked him outside."

Betsy Fisher, Arab

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One day when her daughter was about four years old, Susan was shopping and without thinking anything of it, purchased some paper cutout dolls. That afternoon when Edwin came home Lizzie was sitting on the floor cutting out the dolls and dressing them in various outfits. With hardly a second look he grabbed the dolls and threw them into the fireplace, saying, "She's got no business with such foolishness."

Suddenly a feeling of revulsion and hopelessness engulfed Susan. For a split second she saw her daughter's future. Her daughter would grow up to be just like her and it would be Susan's fault.

Grabbing Lizzie in her arms, Susan ran from the house. For hours she wandered the streets of Huntsville, her mind in a turmoil, trying to decide what to do. Finally, hours after dark, Susan returned home. Her husband was sitting on the front porch waiting for her.

Without any preamble Susan put into words what she had just dared to think about before. "I want a divorce."

"That's impossible," he replied with a blank look on his face, "Why would you even think something like that?"

Susan tried to explain. "I just don't love you and I have never loved you."

When Edwin reached for his Bible, Susan fled to her daughter's bedroom where she made a pallet on the floor. The next morning when she got up he had already left.

That afternoon Edwin was late getting home from work. When he did arrive he was accompanied by his father and mother as well as several other members of the church. Brother Sharp motioned everyone to be seated and announced, "We need to pray for Satan to leave our sister."

Susan lost it. "Get out of my house!" She screamed. "Get out of my life! Get out!"

During the next several weeks Susan moved out. She rented a room in a boarding house and found a job. The lady who ran the boarding house agreed to watch Lizzie while Susan worked. But, if she thought her troubles were over, she was mistaken.

It was 1939 and divorces were almost unheard of.

She talked to an attorney about a divorce and was told it would be expensive and hard to get. Edwin was a good husband and it was doubtful the court would rule against him. "In fact," the attorney told her, "Edwin will probably get custody of your daughter if he tries. He knows a lot of people in these parts. People respect him."

Edwin must have been talking to the same lawyer. Several days later Susan returned to the boarding house to find that he had taken Lizzie. That afternoon she confronted Edwin and with tears in her eyes, begged him to let her have her daughter back.

His eyes were stone cold when he replied, "Come home, do the Lord's will and you can see her."

Edwin, his family and the congregation made it impossible for her to have any contact with her daughter, no matter how hard she tried. The only time she could see Lizzie was at church where she was surrounded by his family.

Days, weeks and months passed. Susan attended every church service hoping for a chance to hold her daughter's hand or to tell her how much she loved



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"When you are courting a nice girl, an hour seems like a second. When you sit on a red-hot cinder, a second seems like an hour. That's relativity."

Albert Einstein

her. In a perverse sort of way many of the church members seemed to approve of the arrangement. There was no divorce allowed and it was clear to everyone that Edwin was still in control of his wife.

Susan had given up all hope when one afternoon she stopped at a used clothing store hoping to find something that would fit her. She had sorted through most of the clothes and was about to leave when she noticed a dress at the bottom of a box. It was bright red, made of a shiny, silky material with large bows on each shoulder. It was the kind of dress you would have expected to see in a burlesque show. For the first time in months a smile played on her face.

The next Sunday, Susan timed her entrance into the church perfectly. Brother Sharp was in his element, condemning everyone who did not believe like him to eternal Hell, and the congregation was shouting their second round of Amen's. Looking straight ahead, Susan slowly made her way down the aisle and took her regular seat.

Gasps broke out as the members gawked at the red dress. Never had the Welcome All Church been defamed in such a way. The congregation shifted their attention to Edwin who was sitting in his customary place staring straight ahead, his face almost matching the color of Susan's dress.

After the service Edwin confronted her, telling her that she could not dress that way in church. Susan looked at him coldly and said, "I want Lizzie and I want a divorce."

It became almost a dramatic comedy. Each week Susan would show up wearing the red dress and Edwin would grow more flustered as the congregation whispered, snickered and pointed. At the end of one

service a group of members actually approached him and demanded that he do something about his wife.

It was obvious that something had to be done, so Brother Sharp took matters into his own hands, announcing loudly that the next week he was going to preach from the Letters of Paul. Everyone knew what he meant, A woman was to be submissive to her husband and especially obedient in church.

The next week began like a repeat of the previous weeks. Susan, dressed in her bright red silky dress, made her way to the woman's section where she took her seat. Edwin was in his seat staring straight ahead and trying to ignore the laughter and whispers.

Brother Sharp started off in good form. Quoting scripture, he explained how the Lord had ordained that everything in his kingdom had a place and a woman's place was to be subservient to her husband.

"At the end of time God will take his vengeance," he shouted, "and you had better be ready!"

Warming to his own words, he let his voice rise to a feverish pitch as he railed about women who adorned their bodies with fancy clothes, ribbons and bows. Suddenly, just as his voice reached a rousing crescendo, he stopped in mid-sentence while staring at the women's section.

Every face in the church turned to look as Lula Sharp, the preacher's wife, reached into her bag and pulled out a small red bow which she carefully fastened to the shoulder of her dress. Titters of laughter broke out among the congregation as they struggled to keep their composure.

The following week Edwin agreed to the divorce, explaining that his father had had a revelation.

Nine years later, almost to the day, Susan met her true love. They were married and lived happily ever after until her death in 1992. Lizzie grew up to be a proud daughter of her fiery mother, and was the first in the family to obtain a Master's Degree in Education.

Susan never talked about religion except to say that her God had always been one of love, not of vengeance.



"If you don't talk to your cat about catnip, who will?"

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The Love of a Friend

by Elizabeth Wharry

The internet can be a mixed blessing. Several February's ago, I met a wonderful friend. We've never met in person, yet have had some wonderful conversations about anything and everything.

One of the first things we discussed was our respective marital statuses, and the number of children we each have. Have we exchanged pictures? Yes. Are they photos we can share with our spouses? Yes. I've even shared some of our conversations with my husband. Has this developed overnight? No. It's taken years to develop this level of trust. We've been internet friends since February of 2014.

It wasn't until I was having surgery last February, that I finally found out exactly what his profession is. It turns out my friend is a surgeon in another state! He has been supportive and kind, but has never attempted to second guess my local surgeon. When I've asked about what state he's in, his answer like mine, has been vague.

February is supposed to be about romance and love. Sometimes, romance has nothing to do with love, and vice versa. Give me the solid love of a friend over the fleeting fickle romance.

Blessings to all.

"The doctors examined my head and found nothing."

Dizzy Dean after being hit in the head by a ball in the 1934 World Series

Cheesy Potato Soup

- 4 slices bacon
- 1 sweet onion, chopped
- 1 carrot, chopped fine
- 3 c. potatoes, sliced thin
- 1 t. garlic powder
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 1 c. water
- 1 c. Cheddar cheese, shredded
- 3 c. milk
- 1/2 c. cream

Cook bacon in sauce pan til crisp. Remove, drain and keep for later. In the bacon grease, saute onions and carrots. Add water and potatoes and simmer til potatoes are tender. Add the seasonings and milk, heat to boiling point and add cream.

When serving, sprinkle the crumbled bacon and top with cheese



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Old Southern Superstitions

- If your child isn't growing fast enough, have him stand next to an oak tree and cut a notch in it right above his head. Then put a lock of his hair in the notch and he will begin to grow quickly.
- If your child has thrash, have a preacher blow in her mouth and she will get better.
- If a very sick person wants to know their true condition, they should touch a piece of bread to their lips and throw it to a dog. If the dog won't eat it, they have only a short time left to live.
- If a baby is allowed to see her reflection in a mirror, she will be cross-eyed. Keep mirrors away from children for the first year.
- For a snakebite, take a frying chicken, split it and put it on the wound. The chicken will turn green as it draws the poison out.
- If someone you know snores, you can stop it by placing his or her hand into a bowl of water while they sleep.
- For a case of sunstroke, take a lock of hair from the person's head and throw it into a stream which flows north. This will cure the sunstroke.
- To cure a sty in the eye, rub an engagement ring across it. Or, go to a crossroads and say three times: "Sty, leave my eye and go to the next one who passes by."
- If you pull a tooth, throw it on the ground and a dog walks on it, you will grow a fang.
- If you pull a tooth and put it under your pillow, the next morning you will find a new dime where your tooth was.
- For varicose veins, drink sheep-sorrel tea.
- If you have warts, plant a pea for each one and they will disappear.
- For bad chills, dip a string in turpentine and tie it around the waist.
- If you are superstitious, you know that the first thing that must be placed on the dining table after the cloth is the salt shaker, and it must be the first thing removed.
- To stir another's cup is to invite strife into the home.
- To fold your table-napkin after a meal is a certain sign that you will never return to that house.

- If bees nest in the roof of a house, the girls of that house will not marry.
- When you drop your comb, if you will put your foot on it, your wish will come true.
- If a rooster crows on the back steps, a neighbor will become quite sick.
- If you sweep under a person's feet, that person will never get married.
- If you ear begins to burn or itch, someone is talking about you.
- If your index finger itches you should go play the lottery.

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THE STORY OF THE UPSIDE DOWN HILL

by John Crow

(originally published in "Old Huntsville" magazine in 1991)

The year was 1959. Fidel Castro became the Prime Minister of Cuba, "Tom Dooley" was a popular song and I had come to Huntsville. My father and I were staying in a boarding house on Adams Street until he could close on a home and bring my mother and sisters down from Ohio. I had come down that summer with Dad to get squared away at Huntsville High for my pending junior year and to try out for the football team.

That summer I learned that Southern boys take their football seriously, that I resented being called a "Yankee" (I had lived most of my young life out West or in Tennessee), and through the auspices of my soon-to-be best friend, discovered what surely must be one of the all time great mysteries of the universe.

"Minus" Mullins was the football team manager. We called him "Minus" because at that time he was so small. His real name was Bob and he had sort of an impish, con-man quality about him. He was always cooking up some scheme or another designed to make a quick buck.

Well one day after practice we were sitting around at Gibson's Barbeque drinking iced tea. I forget exactly how the conversation got started but I was telling Bob about some of the wonders I had seen in my travels out west.

Bob got this sort of far away look in his eye, hunkered over closer to me and in a low, serious voice said, "John, I bet you a dollar that I can show you a wonder right here in Huntsville, Alabama that you'll have to agree is the greatest wonder you've ever seen."

I'll have to admit I was pretty leery of what was taking shape but I could tell Bob was serious and that look in his eye was downright scary. I figured I couldn't lose and I was awfully curious. "OK, show me," I said, a little smugly.

We got in his '58 Chevy and headed north on the Parkway and took a right on Governor's Drive. We headed toward the mountain and then veered left onto Big Cove Road. Now you have to remember that back then the area around the Big Cove turnoff was mostly rolling, sloping, grass-covered hills and the traffic wasn't anything like it is now.

We traveled up Big Cove just a little ways, it seems, then Bob started to slow down. He began looking from side-to-side then stopped, backed up a little, then stopped again. He put the car in neutral and with his foot still on the brake said, "We're on a hill going up, right?" Well we were definitely on a hill, granted the spot where we were at was not a particularly steep grade, but it was definitely a hill.

"Bob, you know darn well we're on a hill."

"OK," he said, "When I let



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my foot off the brake we'll start to roll back down the hill, right?" "Right," I said, not hiding my smirk. Bob let his foot off the brake, and I swear, instead of rolling backwards down the hill, the car rolled up the hill for a short distance, then came to a stop.

"Whoa, do that again!!" I said. Bob put the Chevy in gear and backed up (down) the hill a short distance, then repeated the performance.

"Bob, that's the strangest thing I've ever experienced." "Yeah, it's weird alright. Let me show you something."

He reached over and opened the glove compartment and pulled out a folded piece of paper. "Read that," he said. I unfolded what appeared to be a piece of an old comic strip section from a Sunday newspaper. Someone had written a date on it that now was very faded, nineteen fifty-something.

When I read it I could feel the hair on the back of my neck start to rise. It was a very old "Ripley's Believe it or Not" strip. You remember when it was in color in the Sunday comics. Well it showed this car on a hill and a man scratching his head and little question marks coming from his head and said something about the upside-down hill in Huntsville, Alabama.

"Bob," I said, "This is really something. Imagine, we're on a spot in 'Ripley's' Believe It Or Not."

"Don't it beat all you've ever seen?"

"It sure does," I replied. Then I saw his eyes light up and he said, "John, you owe me a buck."

Well, I begrudgingly paid Bob and armed with a marble and a carpenter's level, all that summer I'd go back and try to unravel the mystery of the upside-down hill. I never could figure it out. I do know that the

level would show "down" but the marble would roll "up".

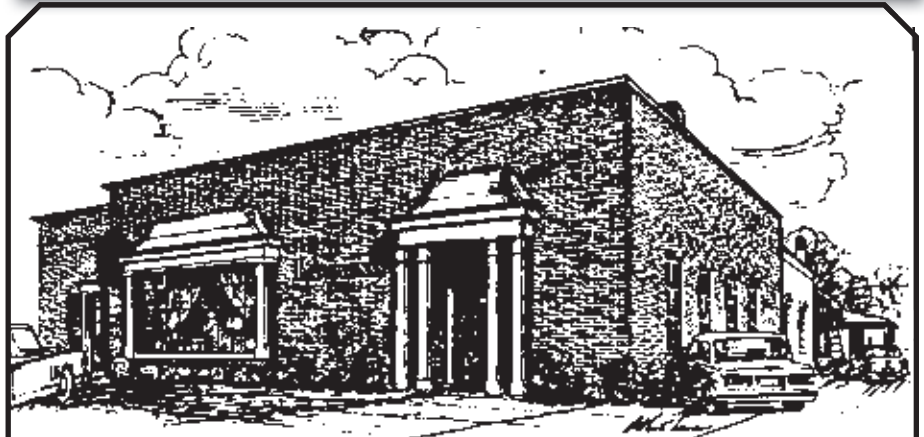
I had forgotten about this incident until a couple of weeks ago when I was thinking about my old friend. Bob's been dead over twenty years now. Little did we know that summer would be one of the few left when we still had our adolescent innocence. The sixties, Vietnam, the seventies, careers, family, all the changes and stresses of adulthood, almost caused me to forget that first summer in Huntsville.

I guess in memory of old Bob "Minus" Mullins I tried to find that spot on Big Cove the other day. I can tell you this, if you try to stop your car on Big Cove Road today the odds are you'll get run over, and to walk around there with a marble in your hand is just plain suicide. I've never found that spot where down is up. I sure would like to, though.

I'd also like to know more about the "upside-down hill" and its history. Perhaps one of you gentle readers out there could let "Old Huntsville" know. I would be grateful. There's a new generation out there that could use a simple wonder to marvel at.

**"Facebook just sounds like a drag to me.
In my day, seeing pictures of people's vacations was
considered a punishment."**

Betty White



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**Ask
Grandma**
by Mimi

The news once again repeated the need for vaccinations. Even with three, you can still catch the new omicron strain, but likely to have a mild case and perhaps not have much in the way of symptoms.

It certainly isn't over. As I write this article, the end is not clearly in sight. Omicron is nothing to fool around with as probably the most contagious disease of the last 100 years, including the pandemic of 1918. (Cover story last month).

One day in early January, we had over a million virus cases reported in one day, setting a new all-time record.

Readers, this virus is never going away, so we all must manage it and use precautions, including masks in eating places and any venue where many people have gathered. Frequent handwashing has always been a good idea, particularly outside your home. I carry both sanitizer and hand cream in my car and purse in the winter be-

cause my hands sure do dry out. As we get older, our health is one of the most precious things we have, and we must take very good care of whatever is left.

The Dog Ball is coming up on February 5, 2022, at the VBC South Hall. It supports the Greater Huntsville Humane Society, a no-kill shelter dedicated to providing adoption services and furthering the humane care and treatment of unwanted and homeless animals.

Donations are greatly appreciated. It can be anything from money to pet supplies or if you can volunteer your time. They are located on Johnson Road near the old airport.

Valentine's Day cards were in stores the day after Christmas, and I'm sure as you read this, Easter cards and candies are well stocked. I wish they'd let one holiday end before starting the next one.

That makes me remember my old school days taking a shoebox covered in paper and red Valentine decorations. Everyone in the class did the same, and it was great fun. Some cards had suckers taped to them. If you were very lucky, you might get a tiny box of chocolates.

The teacher served cookies and juice near the end of the day when the exchanges took place. Those were the good old days.

I sure hope my sweetheart remembers me. I'm not hard to please. I like almost everything, especially red roses. So why not send someone you know a Valentine just saying, "I was thinking of you."

Happy Valentine's Day!

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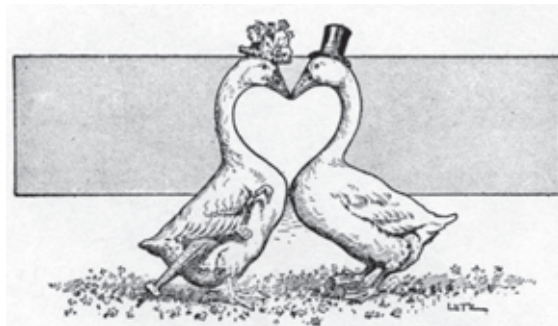
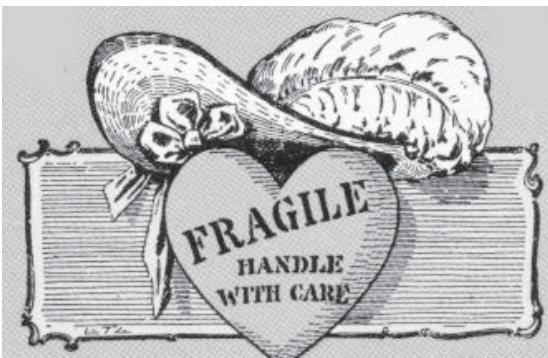
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A Fifty-Year Waltz, and Counting

by Ted Roberts



It was only a Junior Congregation Dance at Beth El Emeth Synagogue, celebrating the Sunday school graduation. But in Memphis, Tennessee on a Saturday night in 1946, what choices did a 16 year-old have except for the picture show. And if your date liked popcorn with the movie, an evening at the Rialto Palace could set you back 25 cents. The Synagogue Dance was free.

But Betty Grable and Ty Power awaited us at the Ri-

alto Palace. The Junior Congregation Dance, on the other hand, featured Rhea Mendel and Marsha Klodkin with a supporting cast of the Sunday school graduating class. I'd seen that show. Then I reminded myself that alongside the dance floor, there'd be a short oilcloth covered table with plates of sticky donuts and sugar cookies. The equivalent of free popcorn. Whatta bargain. So, I went to the dance in the synagogue basement.

Good idea. Because, besides Mendel and Klodkin and the crowd of extras who had overindulged for years on sugar cookies, there was a new star in the constellation of cuties that moved and grooved on the synagogue circuit. And as the poet says, she was a dove with dove's eyes.

Around, between and behind the Sunday school graduating class, I watched her cautiously. I was so stunned by this newcomer that every platitude known to smitten suitors leaped into my consciousness all at once, headed by "Where have YOU been!!" This was the evening star peeping between the clouds of the Sunday school graduating class.

But nothing about our first meeting would have inspired Jackie Collins or Danielle Steele. It was more of a Louisa May Alcott moment. There was the usual third grade dialogue, which was beneath us since we were almost in high school and should have done better.



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"Hi." "Hello." "Wanna dance?"

"I guess."

Not exactly zingy. But my radar screen lit up and my heart shrieked, TARGET! TARGET! TARGET! Easy does it, I thought. Remember the patient tortoise won the gold: not the herky-jerky hare.

I remember trying to impress her with my maturity and adult conventionality by remarking that the dance floor was slippery because only an hour ago the basement floor, which we called the social hall floor, had been the dining room floor. And it still retained smidgens of spilled tomato sauce. "Gotta be careful, you could slip and turn your ankle," I remarked. (Fifty years later I made her the same speech about getting out of the tub - only this time I worried about her hip.)

Six or seven couples glided across that treacherous tomatoey floor. The jukebox watched and churned out hymns to romantic love, not lust. Inside, we bubbled like an agitated fifth of champagne. But the culture alchemized lust into something mildly civilized: like the Hoover Dam tames that rampaging river into a force that lights our lamps.

So we danced carefully, under the baleful eyes of armies of chaperons. Only two dance forms were available to us: the hi-speed frenetic jitterbug, definitely not for lovers or talkers: and the walk-to-the-music-around-the-dance-floor. Great, if you weren't Fred Astaire. And perfect for lovers because it allowed hand holding and back touching. It was also OK to let your eyes flame with passion - if you knew how to do it without looking goofy.

The walk-to-the-music was my choice since it also allowed me to show off my conversational skills about slippery dance floors and other hot topics that fascinated the young ladies of the dance circuit.

The two-armed torso clutch was only practiced in dimly lit dives. Definitely out. After all, this was the synagogue basement.

Looking back fifty years to that dance in the basement of the Beth El Emeth Synagogue, I marvel. I was wise beyond my years. Somehow I knew this was a marathon, not a hundred-yard dash.

We've danced demurely now for more than half a century. May it continue.

Editors Note: Ted passed away Mar. 2, 2020, we miss him and will continue to share his wonderful stories.



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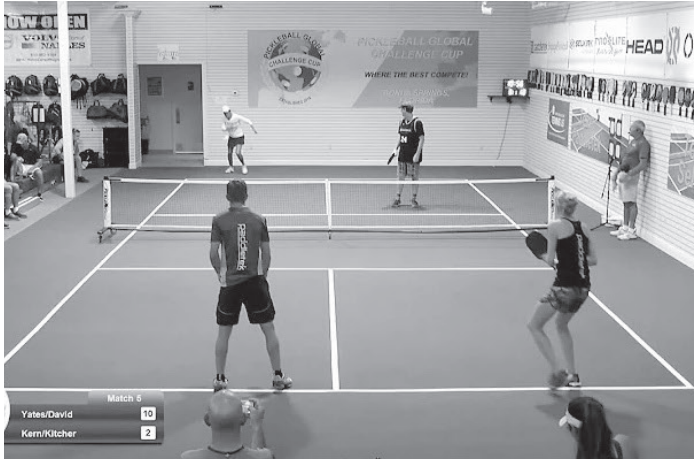
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PICKLEBALL IS HERE!

by Clarence Golson



Back in the winter of 2012, I had just retired and was looking for something to do. I heard about the Senior Center. On my first visit, I strolled around looking in all the doors and windows. I stopped at the Twickenham Ballroom, peered in the window of the door and all of a sudden, a hand comes out and pulls me in. Vivi introduced herself and then introduced me to pickleball. But I had on sandals and wasn't allowed to play that day. On my next visit, I met the rest of the players and learned more about the rules of the game. Because I had some experience with racquet sports, I picked up the game fairly easily. Everyone was helpful and patient with knowledge of the rules.

When we first organized our club, we were closely associated with the Senior Center but as we grew and were invited to play in city gyms, we expanded our membership to younger folks and that's when we began to grow. The only age requirement is 18+.

As time went on, more and more people came to play. Jane was the primary teacher for the newbies and then promoted them to play with the rest of us. Later, a by-invitation only training was started to allow new players to hit the ground running, so to speak. Plus, each of the venues has a suggested skill level. As of December 1st, there are 419 card carrying Huntsville pickleball players.

When the club first partitioned the City to be allowed to play in the city gyms, we got a cool reception. But with the help of some of our better known players, we were welcomed to play at most of the city facilities.

With the skill level of some of our members getting better, we started attending tournaments around the country. Georgia, Florida, Louisiana and other states have hosted tournaments and next spring the club plans to host our own tournament.

USAPickleball.org is the major national organization and acts as keeper-of-the-rules and clearing house for all tournaments. Even internal tournaments are listed here.

With most of the older players, we have established badges of courage and longevity. Cataract, shoulder repair and knee replacement are the most popular surgeries. As with any sport, there are always injuries. One of the founders of pickleball in Huntsville, Tony Horn, was injured while rushing backwards and fell over a chair in the Twickenham Ballroom. It sidelined him for several months and he was not able to return to normal play. Pulled muscles and sprains are common. During one of the drills, a lady player

who was 76 got her feet tangled, fell and bruised her hip. No time off for that.

Charity events are popular for local clubs. The Huntsville Club held an in-house tournament to benefit "Rock Steady Boxing" that helps Parkinson victims.

Anyone and any age can benefit from playing pickleball. Arobic exercise, improving eye-hand coordination and meeting like minded people are just the beginning. The club holds a social event from time to time and sporting events benefit the community and/or charities.

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Short History of Pickleball

by Clarence Golson

Most of the information presented here comes from usapickleball.org.

In 1965, Joel Pritchard, a U.S. Senator in the state of Washington, was hosting a family gathering at his home and realized he needed something to keep the family occupied and moving. He just happened to have a badminton court in his back yard. At first, the net was typical Badminton height. Using Ping Pong paddles and a perforated plastic ball, they just hit the ball back and forth over the net, similar to tennis. Later, the net was lowered to 36 inches, plywood paddles were made and general rules were formulated to make the game playable for young and older family members.

In 1967 the first permanent pickleball court was constructed in the backyard of Joel Pritchard's friend and neighbor, Bob O'Brian.

A corporation was created in 1972 to protect the new sport. During the spring of 1976, the first known pickleball tournament in the world was held at South Center Athletic Club in Tukwila, Washington. Pickleball pioneer, Sid Williams, began playing and organizing tournaments in Washington state in 1982.

The United States Amateur Pickleball Association (U.S.A.P.A.) was organized to perpetuate the growth and advancement of pickleball on a national level. The first rulebook was published in March 1984.

The first composite paddle was made of fiberglass honeycomb panels that commercial airlines use for their floors and part of the airplane's structural system.

By 1990, Pickleball was being played in all 50 states. In 2005, a new corporation for the sport was established as USA Pickleball Association (USAPA). The new website is www.places2play.org. Today the growth of Pickleball has become meteoric with over with over 40,000 members in the USAPA.

In Huntsville alone, the Huntsville Pickleball Club has 419 members as of December 1st. There are 10 indoor and 6 outdoor facilities, that can be found at Huntsville Pickleball Locations (pickleball-huntsville.com) The Sandra Moon facility is busy most evenings and weekends with players, members and non-members.

Search youtube.com for Pickleball, there are tournaments and training videos available. You just might have found your new favorite sport, that keeps you in good shape!

"I'm actually not funny. I'm just mean and people think I'm joking."

Ned Philips, Gurley

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Heard On the Street

by *Cathey Carney*



Well Huntsville finally got a good deep snow that many had missed for years. Some of the pictures shared by residents were just stunning. But it was nice when it all melted too. Can you imagine living in snow for 4-6 months a year? I love our North Alabama weather, perfect.

We did get many calls on the hidden heart, I made it a bit larger this month to give our readers a little break, however that changes this month. There's a tiny tree hidden somewhere in the pages of this issue - if you find it and are the first to call me - and haven't won previously - you are the WINNER of a \$40 annual subscription. So get out the specs and flashlights.

The first caller for the little heart in February was **Benny Pugh**. He had never won before so he was

my winner. He is retired from the phone company (AT&T) and loves life in New Market. Congratulations to you Benny! The heart was hidden on page 25, in the Oscar Llerena ad. Do you see it?

And our photo of the month for January was none other than **Doc Overholt**. He worked so hard in taking over the Downtown Rescue Mission and managing it's growth for many years. He is retired now but his son **Keith Overholt** is doing an amazing job as CEO. Our first caller to identify Doc was **Betsy Allen** of Madison, who had met Doc years ago at a presentation he was making in behalf of the mission. Congratulations to you and love to Doc!

Wade Paradise called recently to renew his subscription for his wife **Heather**. He told me something that just melted my heart - he said that their children are home-schooled, and part of their day is reading issues of Old Huntsville magazine! He said their kids love it and always ask to hear the latest stories. **Jasen** is 8 and his little sister is **Celina**, who's 5. Greetings to Wade, Heather, Jasen and Celina!

Many in this area were heart-broken to learn that local attorney **Allen Brinkley** had passed away at the young age of 72, on January 2. For 47 years, he found joy in helping people through his law practice, which he founded in 1978 and intentionally stationed next door to his church, First United Methodist Church where

he was a member for 65 years.

He was a 1967 graduate of Huntsville High School. He held such leadership roles as president of the Huntsville-Madison County Bar Association and member of the Executive Committee and Board of Governors of the Alabama Trial Lawyers Association. Locally, he established and, for decades, ran the **People's Law School**, which eventually grew to be televised and available to the public state-wide. You can see the lectures online at www.plsala.net and they are so interesting.

If you asked him, he would tell you that one of his greatest accomplishments was serving as assistant Softball coach of his daughter's Little League team.

He is survived by his wife of 51 years, **Melissa Crute Brinkley**, whom he loved since their middle school days; son and law partner, **John Allen Brinkley, Jr. (Kristen)**; daughter, **Rebecca "Becca" Brinkley Brady (Jimmy)**; brothers, **George Lewis Brinkley III (Glenna)**, **James Clyde "Jimbo" Brinkley**; sister, **Jane Brinkley Plaxco (Mickey)**; sister-in-law,

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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He's now retired, but he was one of the best food critics for the Huntsville Times. Many remember him - little guy on the right.



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Mary Alice Kelly Brinkley; and 15 nieces and nephews and their families. He had 10 grandchildren who were the loves of his life. His dear friend **Gwendolyn Joop** worked with him for years on the People's Law School and will miss Allen always. He definitely made his mark in this world.

Happy Birthday to **Phyllis Rogers** - I remember from our Hewlett Packard days many years ago that she had a Feb. 2 birthday - be sure and party it up - you deserve it!

I noticed a Facebook post recently that horrified me and I wanted to pass this along. A lady working as a television anchor was home recently taking a nap. She had lit a candle (a 3 wick candle in a bowl) before she went to sleep. When she woke up she saw that the candle was on fire - in other words the wax was burning. She did the first thing she thought about - she threw a glass of water on it. It completely exploded causing major burns to her face, arms and legs.

The message is, NEVER throw water on a burning candle, EVER. Keep the tops of those candle jars you buy. I normally throw mine away but no more. The way to put a burning candle out is to simply put the top back on your candle and it will go out. If it's a regular flame on a wick, just blow it out. You snuff out the flame, remove the oxygen. Flame goes out. It works the same as a grease fire - Never throw water on a grease fire either.

Sending greetings and love to one of our longtime subscribers - **Joyce Richardson** of Athens, Al. She wrote us a note the other day telling us she's 93 years young! You Rock Joyce!

Many of our readers are also writers, or would like to be. **M.D. Smith** wanted to pass along some information if you had considered being part of a small writer's group. The Senior Center on Drake Avenue is the place where one of the groups meet, in person, every Thursday after lunch. The other one is a Zoom meeting held on Tuesday evenings. Tuesday is fiction, Thursday is both fiction and non-fiction. The groups currently are very small and they would welcome more writers, everything is free. For more information inquire at mdsmith@hiwaay.net.

Janet and "Brink" Brinkerhoff just celebrated their 55th year of marriage on Jan. 28th. If you know these two they are lovebirds for sure! Happy Anniversary to you.

Many have arthritis these days and it seems in cold weather it just

gets more painful. The uric acid in your system is a major contributor to your pain as it collects in the joints. I read that lemon juice can help in removing some of the Uric acid in your body. Just a lemon a day. so I started drinking a tablespoon of fresh lemon juice in water every day and you know what? The arthritis pain is not gone but it's definitely not as bad. I'm going to stick with it and it's a good source of Vit. C as well. We certainly need that these days.

Have a good February and remember to keep an eye on your older neighbors!

Old Huntsville ad run in 1997 issue #70

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Vera Tippett's Favorites

Vera Tippett was Louie Tippett's Mom and was quite a cook. These were some of her favorites.

Gobblers Knobb Pie

- 4 eggs, well beaten
- 2 c. milk
- 1 c. sugar
- 1 t. vanilla extract
- Pinch salt

1 9" unbaked pastry shell

Combine eggs, milk, sugar, vanilla and salt - mix well. Pour into pastry shell and bake at 425 degrees for 35-40 minutes. Serve slightly warm or cold, do not over-bake or custard will become watery.

Sweet Coconut Cake

- 1 box yellow cake mix
- 3 eggs
- 3/4 stick butter
- 2/3 c. water

Mix & bake in greased rect-

angular pan. Let cool. Punch holes in cake with drinking straw so filling can soak in.

Filling:

Mix 1/2 can Eagle Brand milk with 1/2 can cream of coconut. Pour this over the cake, then spread 1 medium Cool Whip over cake. Sprinkle one can of coconut over it.

Keep cake in the fridge and serve cold.

Delicious Slaw

- 5 lbs. cabbage
- 1 green pepper
- Jar of pimentos
- 1 t. mustard seed
- 1-1/2 t. celery seed
- 4 T. dry onion flakes
- 1 pt. white vinegar
- 3 T. white sugar
- 1/2 t. tumeric
- 1/2 t. salt

Grate cabbage & pepper. Mix rest of the ingredients and heat mixture til it comes to a boil, then cool and pour over

the cabbage mixture. Store in covered jars in refrigerator. This tastes better after it sets for a day and will keep several weeks in the fridge.

Cream Cheese Candy

- 1-8-oz. pkg. cream cheese
- 1 box powdered sugar
- 1-1/2 c. pecans, chopped
- 1 t. vanilla extract

Melt cheese in double boiler. Mix in sugar, nuts and extract.

Drop by teaspoons onto sheets of waved paper. These will harden and are delicious!

Orange Delight

- 12-oz. cottage cheese
- 1 large can drained crushed pineapple
- 1 pkg. orange jello, sugar free

4 T. Cool Whip

Mix all together, refrigerate & serve.

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2 lb. ground beef
1/2 c. fine dry bread crumbs
1/3 c. finely chopped onion
1 egg, slightly beaten
1 t. salt
1 t. black pepper
4 T. water

Mix 1/2 cup of the soup, bread crumbs, onions, eggs and salt and shape into loaf pan. Bake at 375 for 1 hour and 35 minutes. Blend remaining soup and 2 tablespoons of water, warm in pan and pour over hot meatloaf.

Serve immediately.

Cheesy Onion Bread

1/2 c. chopped onion
1 T. butter
1-1/2 c. all-purpose flour
1-1/2 t. baking powder
1/2 t. soda
1 t. salt
1 c. grated Cheddar cheese
1 egg, beaten
1/3 c. milk
2 T. butter, melted
Garlic powder

Preheat your oven to 400 degrees. Melt butter in saucepan, add the onion and saute til light brown, combine the flour, baking powder, soda and salt.

Add the onion and half of the cheese to the flour mixture. Combine the egg and milk and add this to the flour mixture. Stir til the dry ingredients are moistened.

Spread the dough in a greased round cake pan (8 inches) and sprinkle with the rest of the cheese. Drizzle the melted butter over all, sprinkle

with just a bit of garlic powder. Bake about 20 minutes or golden brown. This is best served hot.

Vera's Carrot Cake

1-1/2 c. Wesson oil
2 c. sugar
4 eggs, separated
4 t. hot water
1-1/2 c. finely grated carrots
2-1/2 c. self-rising flour
2 t. cinnamon
2/3 c. pecans

Crack eggs and separate out the whites, set aside. Mix yolks with other ingredients. Beat 4 egg whites til stiff. Fold in the whites to the carrot batter. Pour into 2 layer pans or 3 small layer pans.

Icing:

1 pkg. cream cheese
3 c. powdered sugar
1 stick butter
1 t. vanilla extract
1 c. pecans, chopped

Mix cream cheese, sugar, butter and extract with mixer at low, then turn on high to blend. Frost when cake has cooled. Sprinkle with pecans, cut and serve.

Hot Fudge Cake

3/4 c. sugar
1 c. flour
2 T. cocoa
1/2 c. milk
3 T. margarine
1 t. vanilla

Mix ingredients together and pour into greased pan. Do not heat the pan before you pour the batter in. Then make topping:

Topping:
1/2 c. sugar

1/4 c. cocoa
1/2 c. brown sugar

Mix topping ingredients and sprinkle over cake batter. Pour 1 & 1/2 cup water over mixture. Bake in pre-heated 350 degree oven for 45 minutes.

Bourbon Balls

2-1/2 c. crushed vanilla wafers
1 c. pecans
1 c. powdered sugar
2 T. cocoa
2 T white Karo syrup
1/2 c. good bourbon

Grind wafers and nuts in food processor, mix in sugar and cocoa. Stir Karo into bourbon, mix and pour this over dry ingredients. Mix well, shape into small balls. roll in powdered sugar.

If there are any left, you can keep these in a covered container.

(Old Huntsville recipe)



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“My tolerance for idiots is extremely low today. I used to have some immunity built up, but obviously there is a brand new strain out there.”

Groucho Marx

America is Calling (1963)

by Bill Alkire

I had been the Assistant Section Leader since arriving in South Korea. Staff Sergeant Blevins had cycled out October (1962). I had been elevated to fill his position while waiting on a new Staff Sergeant to arrive. A couple of days earlier I had been informed a new Sergeant was on the way. He was coming in from a Chicago, Illinois area Air Defense that was being dismantled and sent to Vietnam.

The excuse for not making my stripes permanent was that it was the 1st of May and I only had four months left on my enlistment. I was told if I extended my enlistment to complete a thirteen-month tour of duty, would better my chances. I do not work off promises, "Put it in writing." Those words did not set well with the 1st Sergeant.

My current schedule for me to exit South Korea was September 15, 1963. My End Time of Service (ETS) was September 30, 1963. I had been working vigorously to complete the GED Testing for 1 year of college equivalent. I had been taking courses by mail through the University of Maryland. My objective was a reclassification to a Warrant Officer W01. This plan was also, I believe, impacting my promotion to Staff Sergeant.

When the approval for Warrant happened, I would be going to Fort Rucker, Alabama for Officer Candidate School (OCS) for six months. I had met with a Military Board of Officers Panel in March of 1963 and again in April 1963. The Colonel that was Chairman of the Panel had warned me that I may have to extend to complete a full thirteen-month tour. I had objected

to that premise, also the extension would be determined by the OCS open class date.

At this time, the classes were being used to train Helicopter Pilots for Vietnam. I was not prepared to spend another Thanksgiving, Christmas, my wife's birthday and another anniversary away from home. That seemed unfair and unreasonable to me.

My 1st anniversary was just a day away and here I was stuck in this Mickey Mouse place. Not being home for our anniversary was very upsetting for me. I usually do not get upset with things, however being here in South Korea seemed a worthless effort right now. I was having my own "pity party." I tried to convince myself that being here was needed for National Security, however it was not working.

Mistakes that had been made in Vietnam were continuing. The arrogance I was experiencing was affecting me personally and leaving a bad taste in my mouth for a Military Service career. The popular song of the day "Please Mr. Custer (I Don't Wanna Go)" seemed to hit the nail on the head. There was wrangling over the fact that I had complete travel authority (Visa), authorized to carry a firearm



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and had traveled all over South Korea.

The award of Proficiency Pay 1 & 2, had also caused jealousy among others that had failed to pass the tests. The Battery Commander had commented that it was not right for me to be making the pay I was making and how my allotment was 100% going home.

I never received any money on pay-days, yet I seem to get along okay. The Battery Commander was unhappy with that scenario, he nor the 1st Sergeant or any other personnel could access my pay information to ascertain what I made each month, because everything was sent home. That is the way I had planned this tour, a way to maximize the saving of money. At home, my wife was doing the same thing with the monies she was making.

This was our anniversary and I was having a tough time dealing with it. I was in full blown depression. I had gone to the Post Exchange and had purchased one of their large hamburgers and a soft drink.

I picked up a copy of the "Stars and Stripes" newspaper - the paper covered what was going on in other Military Theaters. I carried everything back to the barracks and my room. I ate, read the paper, then the "Gospel of John" and finally fell to sleep.

About 3:00 am I was awakened by the Charge of Quarters (CQ), "Hey Bill, are you awake man?"

"Yeah. I am now - what going on? Is somebody hurt?" I asked.

"You got a call from America," the CQ chimed,

"What? What did you say?" I asked.

"A call, you got a call from America," he continued, "get up man - come with me."

"Okay," I said as I was pulling on my fatigue pants.

The orderly room was a short dis-

tance. It took just minutes. I picked up the phone, not knowing what I might hear. "Hello?"

"Happy anniversary B," it was my wife. "Yes. Happy Anniversary Baby, this is such a surprise. How did you do this? I Love you - miss you Baby" what more could I say - I was stunned.

"I Love you too B - I just had to call - it took a couple hours to get through - miss you. You still coming home in September?" she continued.

"Yes, nothing has changed" I answered.

"Coming to Pittsburgh?" she asked.

"Yes." I continued. "Listen, I have to hang up now - I'm at work you know."

"I just wanted to hear your voice - Love ya - Happy Anniversary," she finished.

"I love you Baby, I'll write tomorrow - thanks for calling - be careful - I love you - Happy Anniversary!" I said as the phone went dead. Then I cried.

What could be more wonderful than this? "There are Faith, Hope, and Love, these Three; but the greatest of these is Love." - 1 Corinthians



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"If you can read this, I've lost my trailer."

Seen on Woodville bumper sticker

SHE'S STILL THE ONE

by M. D. Smith, IV



In early 1961 I decided a young lady named Judy Chandler was The One for me. We married in June and lived in the Student Apartments in Tuscaloosa for the next two years. I graduated in May 1963. By then, we had a one-month-old son, Dee. We moved back home to Huntsville, where in November of that year, I began my work at WAAY-TV, Channel 31. I worked there until we sold the station in 1999.

In 1976, the ABC Television network was the nation's number one network. Our station was an NBC affiliate.

Desiring to have an exclusive network affiliation for North Alabama and join the current top network, Dan Whitsett, our sales manager, and I succeeded in talking the ABC Affiliate Relation people to switch to our station. ABC agreed in June of 1977.

To keep you updated with my family situation, Judy was expecting our fifth child in December. We already had four sons and we'd given up hope for a girl.

ABC enjoyed their "Number 1" status, and their fall campaign theme for the coming year was "Still The One, Number One to choose for news, sports, and entertainment." Dan and I went to the Promotion Manager's meeting in July held in Los Angeles at Century City to get us fired up since we'd missed the Affiliate Manager's meeting in early June. For the next four solid days in the Century Plaza hotel, ABC immersed us with "Still The One" banners, and at every meeting, the music of the song played. Orleans originally recorded the song and hit #5 on the Billboard charts.

ABC bought rights and recorded their custom lyrics touting that "ABC was Still The One"... for top shows like Partridge Family, Laverne and Shirley, Happy Days, and many more. The theme song lyrics matching Orleans music ended with, "We 're still having fun, and we 're still the one!"

We began ABC shows on December 11, 1963. I have a photo of my son, Brent, holding a full-page ad announcing the switchover day. Before that, in

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

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Yep, 1977 was a while back. Judy and I celebrated our 60th wedding anniversary on June 8, 2021, and this time I played the instrumental version and sang lyrics that I made up to celebrate this occasion. The song, complete with a showcard based on the original logo, assured her, "We're still having fun, and you're Still The One."

It's been a long and sometimes rocky road, losing one of our sons in 2011, but throughout all those years, love has held us together.

Sometimes in a tender

moment, Judy will look me in the eyes and ask, "Who's your favorite wife?"

And I will answer, after a thoughtful pause, "You are."

A moment later I ask, "Who's your favorite husband, who whispers in your ears?"

And she just smiles.



November, we had a massive party for all our clients and advertisers at the Huntsville Hilton. The whole cast of "Carter Country" flew here from California at ABC's expense to greet our guests and have photos made together. My wife Judy attended in a very pregnant condition with the baby due in a week or two. It turned out the baby waited until after Christmas and was born on December 28, 1977. Allison—our first and only girl—out of what eventually would be eight children. (Eight is Enough—also the name of a TV show)

Over the years, I have played both the Orleans song and the ABC customized jingles many times. Ask my family, they'll tell you. Here's part of the original lyrics.

"We've been together since way back when..."

But I want you to know after all these years...

You're still the one I want whispering in my ears."

"The art of medicine consists of amusing the patient while nature cures the disease."

Voltaire (Year 1750)

"The Senior Choir invites any member of the church who enjoys sinning to join the choir."

Typo seen in recent church bulletin



STAY IN TOUCH WITH YOUR OLD FRIENDS - YOU WON'T REGRET IT!

OSCAR LLERENA, WITH LOVE TO THE HUNTSVILLE HIGH SCHOOL CLASS OF 1966

A Trip to Town

by Mildred Thomas

The residents of Lacey's Spring and other points south of the Tennessee River were somewhat isolated from civilization for years, until the C.C. Clay Bridge was built in 1931. Before the bridge was built, the only way people could get to Huntsville and Madison County was by ferryboat at Ditto Landing.

Before there was a bridge across the Tennessee River, the postman and his horse or mule rode a ferry to the north bank, then went on to the train station at Farley to send off a sack of letters and pick up any mail coming in. Man and beast would then take the ferry south across the river and deliver their route.

At one time, Mr. Bill Thomas rented Hobbs Island where he grew cotton and corn. He would take his farming equipment and mules to the ferry, cross the river, then go down Hobbs Island road to the island. When he got to the island, he would ford the Little River to the island where the animals and equipment would stay until the first stages of the plowing were complete.

Mr. Bill would do this two or three times a year. He and his sons, along with some hired hands, would board a large canoe type boat, (they called it a Yawl), at Johnston Landing and paddle across the Tennessee River to the island. They worked in the field all day, then paddled back to the other side before daylight's end. It was a hard life, but it was the only life we knew.

At this time a railroad ran from Huntsville to Whitesburg. Our train was transferred from the rails to a riverboat where it was carried to Guntersville.

Mrs. Berta Kay of Lacey's Spring was a large landowner and

very nice lady. She thought it would be a nice gesture to take a truckload of youngsters to see a movie in Huntsville. The C. C. Clay bridge had just been built and at the time was a toll bridge. I think the toll was about a nickel. Mr. Nat Hough was the toll bridge keeper. Mrs. Kay furnished a truck for about fifteen to eighteen of us kids and paid the toll for all of us to go over the bridge. Buford Garrett drove the truck.

The old truck was a ton and a half that was used to haul cotton and do work around the farm. It had high sideboards and we all stood up in the truck like cattle - singing songs, laughing and telling jokes. We had a lot of fun.

We parked at T. T. Terry's and walked to the Elks Theater that was on Eustis Street behind the Schiffman building. My sister Ebb, who was four years younger than I, had never been to the city before. So when she saw street lights for the first time in her life, she didn't know what to think. She was so amazed that she just wanted to look at the pretty lights. We almost got lost from the others while I was trying to get her to come along!

Mrs. Kay bought everybody's ticket to get into the movie theater. I don't remember what movie we saw, but we had a wonderful time. On the way back home, about halfway between the bridge and what is now Hwy. 36 (which wasn't there then) the truck broke down. We had to walk at least two miles to get home.

The evening was one of the wonderful memories of my childhood and of a wonderful lady, Mrs. Berta Kay.

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MY SWEETIE'S GRANNY

by Susie Parton Bryant

Most of my stories that I have shared with you and Old Huntsville have mainly centered around my childhood, my brother Steve and my precious Daddy. Well, this one certainly begins the same way, but ends somewhat differently as a new person and a new family is introduced into my life.

One day in the early summer of 1975, my Daddy had taken us to The Mall on the Parkway and University Drive for something that I presume had to be important. Because the only time we went into town (not to sound too old) was usually on a Saturday and this was in the afternoon. We were walking through the mall toward the Woolworths store.

Fast forward to now: I did a Google search to try to find a little history on Woolworths and at about what year it came to find a home in The Mall. Seems that most of the first stores to occupy the mall opened between the second and third week of March of 1966. This I can't be 100% sure of since I would have only been one year old in 1966.

In my internet search I came across a man who stated that he had gone to Woolworths store with his Dad many years ago. He had noticed that the atmosphere was very pleasant and that the employees were very kind and helpful, but most of them seemed to be of Social Security age.

So, my being a ten-year-old at the time would explain a lot about my experience. Daddy strolled around the store for a while and then he

headed toward the restrooms. They were located right in front of the toy department. Daddy said, "You kids stand right here and I'll be right back."

Well, it so happens that right in front of the restroom there was a bin about the size of a regular kitchen table with four sides and about 2 inches deep and it was full of small wind-up toys, cars, balls and plastic animals. Of course my brother and I had to check this treasure chest out.

I don't recall being too rowdy but it wasn't out of the question, and of course it would have been totally Steve's fault. From out of nowhere appears this little old lady and she told us that we couldn't play in there. I thought, this has got to be the meanest lady in the whole world.

In 1975 Woolworths had employed Ms. Lorene Pendergraft. And believe you me, she was very diligent about maintaining order in her department. I don't know if she was over the toys, but it was like she was the toy department Gestapo. She was very serious and we were terrified. We stood there frozen waiting for

Daddy to emerge from the restroom.

In 2002 is when Miss Lorene and my paths crossed again and a new person and family became a part of my life. I discovered that Miss Lorene was that little old lady whom I had encountered those many years ago.

I also met her handsome, blue-eyed grandson, Mike Bryant. We have now been married for 10 years and between us we have four children and six grandchildren. We own and operate Bryant HVAC Services.

Happy Valentine's Sweetheart, I love you very much.

Miss Lorene worked for Woolworths til 1990. She was 92 years old when she passed away January 2009. She certainly was not the meanest little old lady in the world, but in fact was very kind and loving. She loved her family and we loved her.



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

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John Purdy
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OUR STORY

by Clarence and Maryann Golson



Once upon a time, long ago, in the city of Montgomery, Alabama, a boy from the country was born in the winter of 1946, and, would you believe it, a girl from the city was born about 36 hours later at the same hospital. As the time passed in the nursery, they got to know each other and agreed to get together in high school because that was the next place they were likely to cross paths again.

It was funny that years later, they happened to look at their birth certificates and saw that the numbers were consecutive. They imagined that their dads were probably standing together looking at the little babies in the nursery - without knowing each other or the connection that would happen years later.

Now the young man joined the U. S. Marine Corps Reserve in the fall of 1963. Unrealized by him, that made a huge impact on his life.

Again beyond belief, at Sidney Lanier High School's spring concert, these two kids met and sparks flew. The world lit up for both of them. In the following spring, they were married. Their honeymoon consisted of a weekend at a friend's cabin on Lake Martin. Then back to school on Monday morning.

The following summer, the boy was to attend Marine Corps Boot Camp, the first part of his Marine training. He was promoted to PFC at graduation ceremony because he was the best shooter in his platoon, his mother and the young lady attended the graduation. Then he attended combat training at Camp LeJeune.

The lady worked with her aunt in a print shop and later went into banking. Upon his return to Montgomery, life was more normal, both holding down various jobs. He attended weekend drills for the next 5 and a half years. In the winter of 1967, they were blessed with a beautiful baby daughter.

Then in spring of 1970, they moved to Atlanta, GA where he trained for a life in computer programming. The young lady worked in banking and worked up to being a head teller and he worked up to a titled position of Programmer II with ambitions of being a Systems Programmer. In the winter of 1971, they were again blessed with another beautiful baby daughter.

By summer of 1975, he found a position of programmer with the career path to systems programmer. So off to Monroeville, AL they went. Again the



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young lady worked in banking and the young man began his career as a systems programmer on IBM mainframe computers. When a better situation came in Jasper, AL, they jumped on it. It was a little humorous because he was involved with making bras and panties and now he was working with a strip mining operation.

Two and half years later, an opportunity came up in banking in Mobile, AL and off they went but now the young lady started working with a CPA firm as accounts payable and receivable and worked up to office manager. The young man worked up to Tech Support manager. Then at another bank in Mobile, his manager took a position with the bank that bought out the Mobile bank and lured him to Birmingham. The young lady continued her career with a CPA firm there and worked up to Office Manager and Supervisor of clerical staff.

His career worked up to a VP of Tech Support but because of a down turn in the economy, he was allowed to move on and back into the textile industry and she went with him.

A call came from a NASA contractor and the next 14 years, he was the systems programmer supporting the Shuttle and Space Station projects and she returned to banking as an executive assistant to the bank president.

Both retired in 2012, when the shuttle program was canceled, leaving support of the space station to the Russians.

In the fall of 2017, the retirement became a lot more problematic, the young lady was diagnosed with Stage IV ovarian cancer. And ever since, she has struggled to keep this terrible disease at bay. It seems that every fall, the disease makes a comeback.

With the progress that modern medicine has made each year, she keeps up the good fight and puts her faith in God.

They raised their two daughters, who now have their own families with one child each.

The sweet couple who first met at the nursery in the Montgomery hospital are now enjoying retirement and spending time with family at their home in Huntsville.

“People who complain about paying taxes can be divided roughly into two groups: Men and Women.”

Greg Fields, Athens

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The Strong Family Home

*by Charlotte Neal,
Gertrude Watson and
Linda Bennett - the Strong
Sisters*

*(This story written many years ago
and published in Old Huntsville Maga-
zine)*

Our family home at 1207 Pratt Avenue in the Five Points area of Huntsville holds a lot of memories. This three story house was built in 1947. We had a large family that grew up there. There were Daddy (Lacy), Mother (Peggy), Grandmother (Mammy), Granddaddy Strong and five daughters: Charlotte, Gertrude, Linda, Betty and Kathy. Our Mother passed away last year, leaving the last family member to vacate this home in over seventy years.

We remember when we were all young and Christmas was a great and wonderful time for us. We would take a walk to the Star Market and each get a box. We then took it home and decorated it with our name on it and put them under the Christmas tree. That way Santa knew who was who.

Speaking of the Star Market; as we grew up when our grandmother Mammy needed something from the store she would call them and tell them what she needed and they would watch for one of us walking home from school and give it to us to take home. Of course on Saturday Daddy or Mother would go by and pay the bill.

We also put on a lot of plays in the big basement of our house. We would invite the neighbors and charge them

a nickel. They always looked forward to the fun. We sisters were always into something. With so many women in one house our poor Daddy was spoiled and of course he spoiled us. He was so proud of his girls that when he wanted to introduce us to someone he would make us line up by age.

When we first moved into our home Daddy and Mother rented the three upstairs rooms to three women that worked with Daddy. Our Daddy was the payroll chief for Redstone then in 1960 moved over to the NASA side as the payroll chief. Of course this made us have 10

**“Dear God - my brother told me about how
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He’s kidding, right?”**

Kid’s note to God

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women in the house. Now can you imagine the laughter and noise in this wonderful home? It was a wonderful and happy time but as we sisters grew older, it was nice when we got to take over the upstairs bedrooms. Our home was a great hangout place for our friends. You never knew who might be there and how many at any given time.

Our younger years were full of fun but it must have been a hoot when we started in our teenage years. The boyfriends were always there and there were also dances at school. Our activities were soft-ball in the field next door or kick-the-can, biking all over the neighborhood, or playing dress up and walking around the neighborhood showing off our outfits.

Most of the sisters married at an early age (around 18 which was not young at that time). There were 6 granddaughters born in this family before the first grandson. Our father was adopted so therefore it had been 56 years before we had a blood male relative in

the family. Of course since then we have produced many more. We now have five grandsons, nine granddaughters, numerous great grandchildren and one great-great grandchild.

Not only has our Mother and Daddy passed away but we have lost our two youngest sisters in the last few years. However they have left us with wonderful children and grandkids to continue our memories with.

Even though the home has been sold it will stay in our life forever and we will always remember the great old Strong family home on Pratt Avenue. We hope the new owners will make as many memories as we have at this home.

We were all blessed with a loving close family and great friends that we are still in contact with after all these years.

"I'm not a complete idiot - some parts are missing."

Frank Jones, Arab

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My Life with Bonny and the Importance of Keeping It Simple

by Steve Gierhart

You know, some of us guys are just a little slow to wake up. Our hormones are in control of our lives though their hold declines as we enter middle age. I'm 64 and still like to believe the lie that I'm part of that age group, at least until I have to apply for Medicare. Or maybe it is simply the fact that experience makes men smarter, able to somehow rationalize our way around the ... oh, let's get it off the table ... that deadly sin of lust, at least lust under the wrong circumstances. You know what I'm saying guys, Sex can mess up love. And for men and women looking for not only fun in the sack but companionship, a guy, especially an old guy, has to learn new "tricks."


I've been in love multiple times in my life. I remember the first ones, the middle ones and especially the last one. My wife. Bonny.

We both tried marriage and failed. Divorce is a real bummer, especially with children in the mix. The lack of companionship seems to kill a lot of marriages. By companionship I mean the positive kind of relationship in which both parties not only enjoy closeness but distance. They enjoy fun but also quiet. In short they take pleasure in lives of intimacy built on an ability to depend on each other. The one-sided relationships fail but not the two-sided ones.

In 2000 Bonny and I were both divorced and professionals, she as a software engineer at a local defense company, and I as a business manager for a project office on Redstone Arsenal. We met first in the safe confines of a class for older singles at Trinity Methodist Church. I was a greeter that Sunday morning of our encounter, but she stood out with a bright smile. I remember the shortness in my breath and the tingling stand of the hair on my arm at her warm handshake.

Over the course of several weeks we talked a bit and socialized a bit more inside our class. However, the tipping

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Tony Guthrie, Owner

point occurred at Ruby Tuesday's. It was both humorous and memorable. My daughter, Erin, was only thirteen at the time and was with me that November Sunday.

We arrived a few minutes after class, but by noon the "after church" crowd was in full force. Tables were at a premium and our class had close to a dozen munchers, so we opted to use the bar stools instead of waiting for a large table.

Erin and I sat together and were soon joined by Bonny and an older gentleman from our class. He was clearly struck with Bonny. Most of his conversation was directed at her. As the meal progressed, Bonny inched closer and closer to me as our classmate got friendlier and friendlier. She would talk to Erin as well as me and that was relaxing.

I knew Erin felt out of place with a bunch of old geezers and geezerettes. It was in those moments of closeness, whether forced by our classmate or by hormones, that we exchanged business cards.

I held on to that card. Finally, within a week of Christmas, I called her at work and suggested lunch. She picked O'Charley's where we enjoyed a first quiet lunch date. We opted for a movie that weekend, Mel Gibson's "What Women Want". We went to our seats, only to find two of

our friends from our singles class sitting in back of us! Of course, the word spread but we did not mind.

That first holiday season was momentous. We went to a New Year's Eve class party and then visited her family afterwards. It snowed that day and Bonny asked me to come to her house to watch New Years bowl games. We walked in the snow on her farm in Brownsboro with her huge and friendly dog, Jodie, she holding my arm, and both of us feeling very comfortable with each other. We knew there would be more.

We did not rush, but enjoyed the little things. She had picked a large number of apples from the old tree in the yard earlier in the year, so we peeled apples as we talked and began to discover each other. Like most couples, we enjoyed a lot of similar things, but importantly, family was significant for both of us. And where we were different, we let it be.

Bonny did not shy away from saying what she thought, but neither did she interfere with the things I enjoyed, such as fishing and football. She understood if I had to spend time with children or grandchildren, or if I wanted to go to a movie she did not care about.

Not rushing is an important part of developing a companionship. We spent three years enjoying each others' company before I asked her to marry me. In 2004 we flew to Costa Rica where we stayed at an all-inclusive resort on the Pacific Ocean. There we wed on the beach on May 9. It was hot, blast furnace hot, but that week was special, whether we walked through a rain forest or took a dinner cruise on the ocean. We even rented a car and drove through small villages and up a volcanic mountain where we bathed in a hot mud pool.

No matter how good the memories are, they will not preclude relationship fatigue. However, the mutual realization of the safety and enjoyment in true companionship always maintains the flame. Bonny and I have stayed together for over fifteen years, married over eleven. She is more than my Valentine and that makes February 14th extraordinary. I know she will be there next February 14 and many more after that. That is love. Bonny is the one I turn to when I am happy or when I am sad. She does the same for me.

"Money will buy a fine dog, but only kindness will make him wag his tail."

Gail Lee, Huntsville

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turn to the experts 

Old Huntsville

From The Year 1943

Allies Land in Italy

8th Army Leads, With Naval Air Cover

Allied Headquarters in North Africa - The Allies have breached the fortress of Europe. On the fourth anniversary of France and England's declaration of war against Germany, Allied troops are striving to establish a bridgehead on the Italian side of the Strait of Messina.

Under the thunderous support of Allied air and sea power, British and Canadian forces of the British 8th Army crossed the narrow strip of water to bring the war at long last to the Continent that Germany has enslaved.

Preceded by a thunderous artillery barrage across the strait and by a number of reconnaissance landings, the main party set foot on the mainland at 10:30 EM. Eastern War Time.

No details were available on either this morning's historic assault or the previous reconnaissance missions. The latter were plainly those referred to in German broadcasts as landing attempts beginning on Aug. 29, which the Germans said had been repulsed with heavy losses.

A Mutual Broadcasting Systems commentator, speaking from Algiers, quoted an official Allied spokesman today as saying that the Allies were apparently involved in heavy fighting. A special dispatch issued from London said merely, "Allied forces under General Eisenhower continued their advance. British and Canadian troops of the 8th Army, supported by Allied sea and air power, attacked across the Strait of Messina early today and landed on the mainland of Italy."

Germans Coming to Huntsville

Huntsville - Chambers Construction Co. has been awarded a \$24,000 contract to build a facility for German POW's at Redstone Arsenal. Most of the prisoners are from Rommel's Afrika Corps and are expected to be employed in agricultural work. Civilian workers at the Arsenal are cautioned against having anything to do with the prisoners.

In other Arsenal news, it is reported that large quantities of chemical munitions, captured from the Nazis, are to be stowed at specially built facilities.



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Area Whiskey Runners Beware

Huntsville - Police Chief Herman Giles recently announced the purchase of two-way radios for the city's police cars. It is expected the radios will help to put a stop to the county's whiskey runners who have been operating with impunity so far. The radios have been tried successfully so far in Birmingham and Mobile. Giles is quoted as saying, "The benefits will justify the cost."

A Confederate Reunion

Huntsville - A piece of history has faded into the background as Confederate Veterans unfurled their flags for the last time. The last official reunion of the comrades in gray was marked by John Steger placing a wreath of flowers at the base of the Confederate statue. A volunteer honor guard was provided by soldiers stationed at the Arsenal.

With few people attending, it was unanimously decided to make this the last official reunion.

Madison County Purchases B-24

Huntsville - Residents of Madison County have set a state record in purchasing war bonds. The \$446,000 raised will be used to purchase a Liberator B-24 bomber that will be named, "The Madison County, Alabama."

In other county news, a new housing project located on Seminole Drive had its grand opening last week. The project is named Binford Court in honor of the late Henry C. Binford.

The project is one of the most modern facilities in the state.

Big Spring Safe From Enemies

Huntsville - Breaking news - In a joint statement issued by Mayor McAllister and Huntsville Police Chief Herman Giles, assurances were given that adequate measures have been put in place to protect Huntsville's water supply from possible enemy sabotage. This news has been rumored to be legitimate. Mayor McAllister says at this time there are no plans to erect a fence around the headwaters of the Big Spring, but that may change.

Madison County Deputies and Huntsville City Police are jointly patrolling the spring and have been issued orders to arrest any strangers loitering without cause.

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SAVING CHLOE

by Lisa Abend



August 31, 2003 was a day that changed the lives of my husband, the kids and me. That was the day we found 6-month-old puppy Chloe. We found her trying to get off a highway after she had been hit by a car. We stopped to help and little did we know just what we were getting ourselves into.

After rushing her to a Veterinary hospital we found that we had a difficult choice to make. We could either take on full responsibility for the dog (which would include an estimated veterinary bill of somewhere around \$1,000 or we could relinquish her to animal control. With tears in our eyes we had to let the local animal control take over.

But, the story didn't stop there. Over the next few days, I stayed in contact with animal control to find out the status of this beautiful little dog who had stolen my heart out on that highway. I ended up finding out that the only injury she had from her accident was a broken front leg. Still, the veterinary bills were being estimated at far more money than my husband and I could afford, because on top of the broken leg she was found to be suffering from kennel cough, intestinal worms and Lyme disease. That was when I started looking at my other options.

I quickly learned the undeniable truth that many "no-kill" organizations just don't have the funding to take on the responsibility for an injured animal. Across the country there are thousands

of animals a year that get put down and can't be saved that are completely healthy. Most organizations just can't realistically pass over a bunch of healthy animals in order to fund the care of a sick one. Also, when most people decide to adopt a new pet, they don't want to take on the responsibilities associated with a sick or injured animal, when they have many other healthy animals to choose from. This poor dog was quickly put on the un-adoptable list at the animal control facility and was slated to be put down.

I knew that if I didn't do something, she was going to die. I had looked at many options and had not yet found an answer when it came down to the last 48 hours before Chloe was to die. It was then that a co-worker suggested I send out an office-wide email telling the story of this dog and asking for any help that I could get. I was desperate enough to save Chloe, so I did just that.

Within just a few hours I had more than enough money to take care of her bills and ultimately save her life. Just hours before she was going to be put down, my husband and I went into animal control with the money and paperwork needed to adopt this beautiful dog. At the time, we were just planning on adopting her in order to save her from being put down and then we would look for a permanent home for her when she was healthier. We never thought we would keep her.

On September 30, 2003, nearly 4 weeks after we had found Chloe on the highway, my husband and I brought her home. That day was also the day that Hurricane Isabel came through where we live, and "Hurricane" Chloe stepped into our lives for good.

Before all of this happened, I was never really one to want a dog. I actually never had one before and now I can't imagine life without her. I never thought that I could feel such intense love for a little dog, but adopting Chloe has changed my husband, our kids and me. She has brought a light into our home that is indescribable.

The joy that she brings us is immeasurable and we would go through everything all over again. How lucky we are to have her for her lifetime.

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THE HUMAN CUCUMBER

from 1880 Newspaper

It is well known that when cucumbers are first cut from the vine there is a piece which exudes or bleeds from the stem. One of our prominent Northern truck-growers, Jared Benson, cut his hand a year or two ago and this juice got into the cut and his hand commenced to inflame, and an eruption similar to erysipelas made its appearance on his hand and extended up his arm, and finally spread over his whole body. Strange to say, there was no pain attending these eruptions of erysipelas, and he continued to gather and pack his cucumbers and prepare them for shipment.

To the great surprise of everybody, these little erysipelas pimples assumed the appearance and form of small cucumbers and continued to grow. Although Benson kept well and hearty, he was compelled to strip himself and take to his bed.

Of course the news of this strange phenomenon spread far and wide, and the doctors and scientific minds visited him from various sections of the country. One doctor prescribed one solution, another doctor would suggest another. One wished to bleed him; one wished to cut the cucumbers off; another said not to let him have any water and they would dry up; another said stick a hole in each cucumber and they would die and a new skin form; another wished to wrap him up in a mammoth poultice of barnyard manure and draw them all to one head; another said they ought to be scattered.

Each had a different remedy, but all disagreed. So there was some hope that the patient would get well. But the small cucumbers grew into big ones and his whole body was completely covered with them from head to foot, and they commenced to ripen and turn yellow and hang down, and the man assumed the appearance of a huge bunch of banan-

as. When they got ripe they began to shrivel and dry up, and so did the man. His sap was all gone and he died.

The doctors procured the consent of the family to permit an autopsy to be made for the benefit of science and they cut into him with their knives. To their utter amazement they found no flesh, no blood, no bones, no muscles, no sinews, no veins, no arteries - but only found one solid mass of cucumber seeds. It was so remarkable that it would be useless to have the remains interred and foolish to have them cremated and so the widow concluded that she would keep them in the house. She kept him in the barn. The next spring some of the children picked up some of the seed which had dropped in the barn and planted them.

These seeds grew rapidly and matured, and instead of being like the parent stock of cucumbers, they were pure pickles, and needed no vinegar, no pepper, no salt, nothing but simply packing into barrels and shipping to market to sell.

Of course, news of this discovery spread rapidly and multitudes of applications for seed flowed in like the incoming tide. Thus enabled the disconsolate widow and children to turn the cause of their bereavement into a means of maintenance and support.

The wind of affliction was thus tempered to these shorn lambs. They sold small packets of seed for big prices, and could not supply the demand. The vine grown from the new seed is a perennial evergreen and can be propagated from cuttings. It blooms in the spring and bears in the summer a bountiful crop of absolutely perfect pickles. The widow sells the seed at \$1 a paper.

**"Looking back over the years
That we've been together;
I can't help but wonder...
What the hell was I thinking?"**

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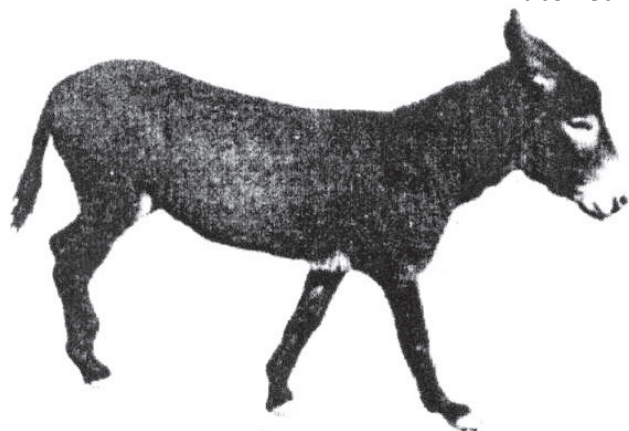
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THE DONKEY

From a 1899 newspaper



One day a farmer heard some crying in the back of his home and upon going outside, found that his donkey had fallen down into the well.

The animal cried piteously for hours as the farmer tried to figure out what to do. Finally,

he decided the animal was old, and the well needed to be covered up anyway; it was quite deep and just wasn't worth it to retrieve the donkey. He invited all his neighbors to come over and help him. They all grabbed a shovel and began to shovel dirt into the well.

At first, the donkey realized what was happening and cried horribly. Then, to everyone's amazement he quieted down. A few shovel loads later, the farmer finally looked down the well. He was astonished at what he saw. With each shovel of dirt that hit his back, the donkey was doing something amazing.

He would shake it off and take a step up.

As the farmer's neighbors continued to shovel dirt on top of the animal, he would just shake it off and take a step up. After several hours, everyone was amazed as the donkey stepped up over the edge of the well and tiredly trotted off!

MORAL: Life is going to shovel dirt on you, all kinds of dirt. We have to shake it off and take a step up. Each of our troubles is a stepping stone. It is sometimes hard to do, but we need to pick ourselves up and never ever give up....giving up is not one of our options.

Always keep going and take a step forward...

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PET TIPS FROM ANGEL

Valentine Love for Your Dog



Nothing says "I Love You" like a new Kong toy filled with peanut butter or an afternoon with your dog on your lap while you watch TV. Do things to show them you value them as part of your family. So read on for some fun and thoughtful ways to celebrate your love for your canine companion this Valentine's Day.

1. What dog doesn't love a treat? Fabulous treats are available to order online, from cakes and cookies to "doggie wine" (broth in a bottle). Or find some recipes and bake treats right in your kitchen (your dog will most likely be right there with you, waiting). Make sure these items are made in the U.S.A.

2. Surprise him with an extra walk, or a trip to his favorite dog park or trail — especially if you haven't been there for a while.

3. Read any good dog books lately? Curl up together on the couch with a book or a great dog movie. Together time is precious and often hard to find with our busy schedules. He'll love the attention.

4. Does he need a new coat to keep warm this winter, or a nice new collar or bandana? Add a pretty charm to his collar and while you're at it, check his tags to make sure they are still readable and reflect your current contact info.

5. Healthy teeth and gums help keep your whole dog healthy. Consider a dental check-up with your vet and have her show you how to brush your dog's teeth. Be sure to get the special paste made for dogs (human toothpaste is toxic to pets). February is National Pet Dental Health Month, after all.

6. How about a day at the spa to

make him feel special? Many options are available, like do-it-yourself facilities in pet stores, specialty salons and even mobile grooming vans that come right to your house.

7. Get him a new toy, make a big deal of opening it and then play with him. Lots of Valentine-themed toys are available, or buy a new toy, fill it with treats and watch the happiness unfold. By the way, when you buy Kong products, get the special cleaning

brush that goes with it; otherwise you'll never get that peanut butter residue out.

8. Many pet owners forget to check their pet's beds when doing laundry. He might need his bed washed before putting that new toy or treat on it and he'll love it if the washing and drying fluffs it up a bit.

9. If you have a disaster preparedness kit for your family make sure you have one for your pets.

10. Find a veterinarian you really trust.

11. Make sure your pet is micro-chipped - this is one of the best ways to ensure you will be reunited if you and your pet become separated or he gets lost.

12. Take your pet with you when you go to the bank, drive-in restaurants etc. Many banks have dog biscuits for their canine customers and your friend will start to look forward to these trips.

13. Leave a legacy by making a donation in his name to an animal rescue group or shelter. Check around and find the organization that feels right to the two of you.

14. Many pet-oriented web sites have opportunities for you to post a photo or story about your pet. Consider posting something to share the love you have for your special friend with all the world. Happy Valentines Day!

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The Real Story of Abraham Lincoln's Marriage

by Tom Carney

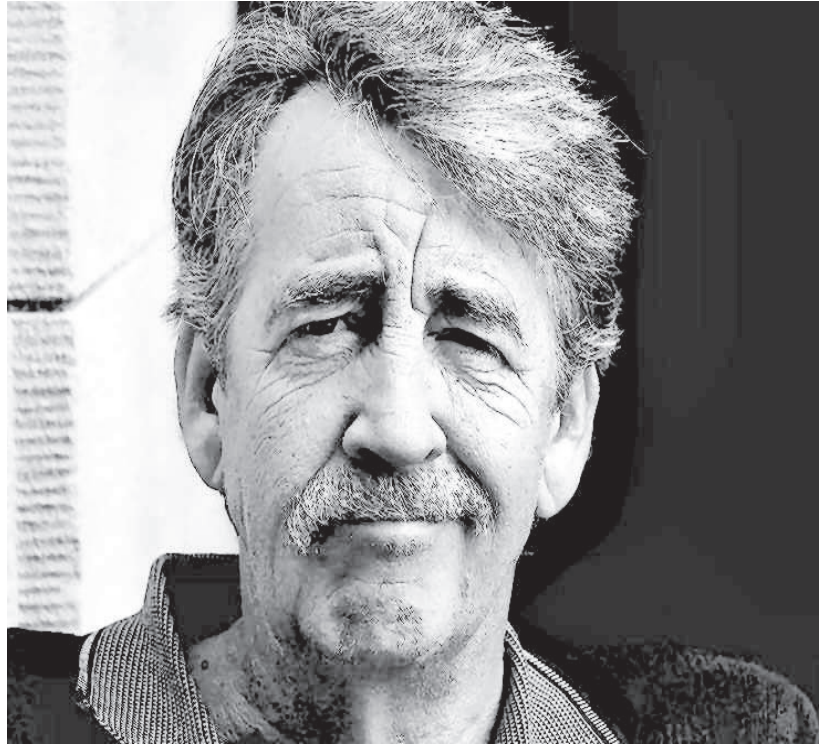
Not many people would have known this, but when Abraham Lincoln and his wife Mary Todd were married, it proved to be one of the most unhappy unions in the history of marriage.

In the early nineteenth century, the two became engaged. Shortly afterwards, Lincoln realized that he and this woman were as opposite as any two people could be. For example, Mary Todd attended a snobbish finishing school in Kentucky; she spoke with a Parisian accent and was one of the best educated women in Illinois. Lincoln had attended school a total of less than twelve months in his entire life.

Her family was her great source of pride. Her grandfathers and great grandfathers had been generals and governors and she reminded Lincoln of this weekly. He, on the other hand, had no pride whatsoever in his family. He said that only one of his relatives had ever visited him, and that man was soon accused of stealing a neighbor's jews-harp before he even got out of town.

Mary Todd was passionately interested in dress and show and ostentation. Lincoln took no interest whatsoever in his dress, and oftentimes walked down the street with one trouser leg rucked into his boot and one on the outside, which drove Mary crazy.

She had been brought up to believe that good table manners



were expected, but Lincoln had been reared in a log cabin with a dirt floor. He stuck his own knife into the butter and did other things that shocked Mary and drove her wild.

She was proud and haughty - he was humble and democratic. She was wildly jealous - would create a scene if he merely looked at another woman. It was pretty much her idea to get married. But shortly after they were engaged, Lincoln wrote her a letter saying that he didn't love her sufficiently to marry her. Giving this letter to a friend, he asked the man to bring the letter to Mary Todd. The friend burned the letter in his fireplace and told Lincoln to go and see Mary Todd himself, like a man. When Lincoln confronted her with his uncertainty, she burst into tears, and this upset Lincoln so that he took her in his arms and

"I don't want to achieve immortality through my work. I want to achieve it through not dying."

Woody Allen

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said he was sorry.

Their wedding day was set for January 1, 1841. The cake was baked, the guests were invited and had arrived, the preacher and Mary Todd were there, but no Abe. He never showed up. His friends found him later that next day, mumbling incoherent sentences. He said he didn't want to live. He had become dangerously ill in body and mind, and had sunk into a spell of melancholy so deep and terrible that it almost unbalanced his reason.

His friends took away his knife for fear he would use it on himself.

Lincoln then wrote the most pitiful letter of his life. It was written to his law partner who was at that time in Congress. This is the letter, word for word:

"I am now the most miserable man living. If what I feel were equally distributed to the whole human family, there would not be one cheerful face on earth. Whether I shall ever be any better, I cannot tell. I awfully forebode that I shall not. To remain as I am is impossible. I must die or be better it seems to me."

For two years after that, Lincoln had nothing to do with Mary Todd. Then a self-appointed matchmaker in Springfield brought them together again, behind closed doors, and Mary Todd told Lincoln it was his duty to marry her. So he did.

Things just got worse after that. One story of Mary's violence to Lincoln came from a boarding house where the Lincolns came to stay shortly after they were wed. It seems that one morning Mr. and Mrs. Lincoln were having breakfast with the rest of the boarders,

and Lincoln said something that displeased Mary; she picked up a cup of just poured, hot coffee and threw it into his face. This was in the presence of the other boarders, who were shocked and silent. Lincoln didn't answer her, he didn't scold her, he said nothing while the landlady brought a cloth and wiped off his face and clothing.

Similar incidents happened in the Lincoln household for years.

Mary Todd Lincoln finally went insane - perhaps this early behavior was an indication of what was to come later.

One of the most beautiful things remembered about Lincoln is the fact that he endured his unhappy home for twenty-three years without bitterness, resentment and without saying a word to anyone about it.

He was a patient and easy-going man, and forgave his wife for the pain it must have caused him.

White Chicken Chili

4 chicken breasts, cooked & cubed

2 cans Great Northern beans, drained

1 can chopped green chilies

3 cans Rotel tomatoes

1 med. onion chopped

2 t. minced garlic

2 t. dried thyme

1 c. sour cream

Mozzarella cheese

In a saucepan mix all ingredients except the cheese. Heat to boiling, reduce heat, simmer for 20 minutes. Add sour cream & mix. Add chicken broth to thin. Top with Mozzarella or cheese of your choice.

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"California is a fine place to live, if you happen to be an orange."

Fred Allen

HIKES TO MONTE SANO STATE PARK

by Betty Miller Lewis

I grew up in the Big Cove community in the 30s, 40s and part of the 50s. My sister Shirley and I were reared by our maternal grandmother, Nin Hucks and her daughter, our aunt Nannie Hucks. Our grandfather passed away in 1940 so it was left up to our grandmother and aunt to raise us. Our parents operated a "honkey tonk" called the Green Lantern on the (then) Athens Pike, which was no place to raise kids. Our house was located off Dug Hill Road on what is now Wimbledon Way. My uncle Herman Hucks and his daughter, Earlene, lived in one of the rental houses on my grandmother's farm.

The Roy Medley family lived in a house located southwest of us across the cotton fields and near a wooded area. We went to school and played with the Medley children. Those that I remember are Roy Medley Jr, Doris Jean, Peggy, Shirley, Yvonne, Johnny, Rayford, Roger Dale and Betty. Rayford passed away at an early age of rheumatic fever. Doris Jean was one of my best friends at Big Cove school and we completed 9th grade there.

One day in the late 40s, my uncle Herman got us all excited by telling us that he would take us and the Medley children on a hike to Monte Sano State Park for a picnic. I know that I was so excited that I did not sleep very well the night before. Early the next morning (I have no idea what day, maybe a Sunday), uncle Herman, my sister Shirley and I, my cousin, Earlene, along with Doris Jean, Peggy, Shirley and Yvonne Medley, started out on our journey.

We carried picnic lunches but I don't remember what, probably fried chicken and biscuit. Yvonne thinks that they maybe had "fatback" and biscuit. My uncle Herman often cut timber and hauled out of the

mountain with a horse. We went to the edge of the mountain and used his trail where he had dragged logs until the trail ended, then we just walked around in the woods on the mountain.

I remember we came to a site where a homestead once stood and it had a big "sink hole." Somewhere on the mountain, we came across a stream and it felt so good to pull off our shoes and wet our feet for a few minutes. We finally arrived at the picnic area on Monte Sano, ate our lunch, rested for awhile, and began our trek back home down Highway 431. There was not very much traffic back then, and we walked down the middle of the highway - no way could you do that now. All of us were so tired, but we really enjoyed the trip.

Sometime later, we made two or three more trips up through the woods on the mountain without my uncle Herman. These trips included Zella Mae, Laura, and Edna Mills, along with our younger sister Lucy. The Mills family lived off Dug Hill road on the east side of the mountain. On one of the trips we came to the Forest Ranger tower located on the south side of the mountain. My cousin Earlene was brave enough to climb to the top of the wood structure, but the rest of us were too scared. Recently, my sister Lucy and I decided to see if the tower was still standing. We took the hiking trail from Monte Sano State Park and walked for about 30 minutes. We did find the tower, along with a steel one, which had replaced the wood structure. Both are fenced in so no one can enter.

These trips were just a few of the happy memories that I have of growing up in Big Cove.

"Marriage certainly makes a change in passion. Suddenly you're in bed with a relative."

Billy Jacobs, Paint Rock

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1860 Law and Order in Huntsville



- No fireworks were allowed in the city in 1860 without the consent of the Mayor, who specified when and where they were to be exhibited.

- A person was permitted to burn a stove pipe or chimney fire only when the roof was wet from rain or covered with snow.

- A fine of from \$5 to \$10 was assessed upon any individual who carried an unguarded candle or lamp into a stable, or who kept ashes in barrels, boxes or wooden vessel of any kind. The punishment in case of such violation was "any number of stripes, not exceeding 39, at the discretion of the Mayor."

- If an individual failed to obey an order of the Mayor, as head of the fire department, the fine was \$20.

- All persons attending a fire and not a member of any company, were required to assist the firemen, if called upon, or pay a fine of \$10,

- Whenever a fire was discovered by a policeman, or he heard an alarm, it was his duty to cry "Fire", to ring the city bell and to make known the place of the fire. He then proceeded to the blaze to help extinguish it, or to keep order.

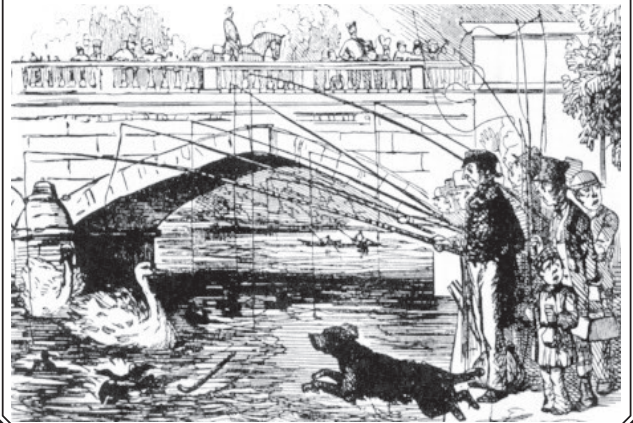
- Officers and members of the fire companies were exempt from paying the city poll tax for work upon the streets.

- The community bell, a vital factor in the life of the community back in those days, was rung by the police every two hours. This was one of their standing duties and could not be overlooked under penalty.

- Water rates were based on the assessed valuation of property. The owner of a dwelling house valued at \$1,500 or under, \$5 per year; \$2,000 and over, \$10; more than \$8,000, \$15.

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Barney

Hello, my name is Barney. I'm a ten month old Lab mix. My coat is beautiful and soft and the ladies at the Ark love to pet me. I was found by a nice man who brought me to the Ark. I love to play and go

for walks. I have a lot of energy and would love to have a family who gets out and walks. I know some of my commands already but I get really excited when I first meet people and forget my manners. A dog training class would help me and I would love it. I need an energetic family but can cuddle with you on the couch too! Please think about making space in your home for me. Come and ask to see me, I'm Barney.

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Proposal in the Front Yard

by John Michael Hampton

As I mentioned in a previous article in "Old Huntsville", the weekend that I turned thirty, my grandfather, Robert Ward Hampton, had to be taken to the hospital for a kidney infection that had spread to the rest of his body. As soon as she found out what happened, my girlfriend Charlotte was by my side unless she was at work.

A week into the situation, on Memorial Day, we were both off from work and spent most of the day with my grandfather at the hospital. That afternoon, we took a break to sit in the carport and watch the neighborhood kids and teens with their sparklers and fireworks.

Sipping from our cans of Dr. Pepper, Charlotte asked, "Have you and your mom talked about grandfather and what to do if he is able to come back home? Not only is he going to still have to be carried to dialysis three times a week, but it appears he may need special assistance, otherwise."

I told Charlotte that mom and I had indeed talked about the situation. "We have been told by doctors that the first stop is going to be an in-patient rehab facility for several months. After that they will decide whether he can return home or if he will need a nursing home environment. Plus, they are telling us at this point that, with his infection spreading as it has, they cannot guarantee that he is going to make it through treatment. Either way, we are committed to helping grandfather."

Charlotte added, "Just as I am committed to being with you through this tough situation."

I thanked her and we took the opportunity to rest. Later, while eating some hot dogs from the grill, I could not help but to notice that she ate hers the same way that I ate mine. I knew it was just one of many things I found out we had in common, from our favorite foods to what shows we watched on TV to the fact that we were both Alabama fans. (Roll Tide!)

The next day, after a long day as a Walmart cashier, we both sat at the outdoor furniture set drinking bottles of water. I kept thinking about the way she had put ev-

everything on hold to be with me while my grandfather was in the hospital.

Then, I thought of her beautiful smile when she sat across from me in the breakroom at work while we held hands. Then, I thought of how she was so much like me in many ways, and how it felt so natural to be around her and share life (and secrets) with her. I thought about three weeks earlier, when my mom had said something about moving to Mississippi, I immediately told my mom that I wanted to stay here in Huntsville, mainly because I wanted to be with Charlotte.

I set my bottle of water on the table. I knelt next to Charlotte on one knee. "Charlotte, I would like to spend the rest of my life with you! I have realized you are the one perfect person for me, and I would love to

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share what years I have left with you. You have shown me true love in many ways, and I can say that I have never felt love like this before. Will you marry me?"

She answered that she would marry me. I hugged her, pulled out my class ring and put it on her finger. I would have provided her an engagement ring but could not afford one at that time.

We left the house, heading to visit with my grandfather. Along the way, we stopped for supper at the Dairy Queen that used to be at the corner of Max Luther Drive and Memorial Parkway. We ate a cheeseburger and fries, then left for the hospital.

At the hospital, Charlotte and I told my grandfather about her and I being engaged. He told us that he gave us his blessing and if something happened to him, he wanted us to continue with the wedding.

He also promised Charlotte that if he was there, he would be glad to walk her down the aisle if he needed to help with the wedding. He also told me that he had "made things right with God," It was as if he knew that he might not be getting out of the hospital alive.

The next morning, we got a call about five minutes after seven. The nurse on the other end told me and my mom that my grandfather had slipped into a coma and that he was being placed in the ICU at Huntsville Hospital.

As soon as Charlotte arrived some thirty minutes later, we were on our way to the hospital. After arriving, I stood there, watching my grandfather's measured breathing as he was being helped by a bank of machines. While standing there, I remember him promising me that he would live long enough to see me get married before he passed away. And, thinking on those words, I cried like a baby.

So, would my grandfather awaken and be able to go to my wedding? Or would he fall victim to the infection that had attacked him so quickly? Only time would tell!

Tune in for the next part of the story next month.

"My wife is such a bad cook, in our house we pray AFTER the meal."

Rodney Dangerfield

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How I Almost Ended the Space Program

by Steve Meigs



Huntsville, Alabama was the Watercress Capital of the world until Redstone Arsenal, its Army base, was chosen as a major research site for rocketry and munitions at the end of World War II. A sleepy southern town with a Confederate statue in the Square suddenly became the fastest growing city in the U.S.

Scientists from the north, from the west and from Europe had arrived. Russia was rumored to name Huntsville the #5 target in the United States. All because of those brilliant European scientists building those intercontinental ballistic rockets.

There were rumblings every afternoon off in the distance, the sky glowed from rockets on the testing stands by the river. Alan Shepard led a parade after he survived that first manned space flight, and the Confederate staring balefully from the courthouse saw confetti and an array of

military vehicles rolling by.

It was a warm fall day at Madison Pike Elementary School, 1960, I was in fourth grade. Our class went single file to the library. There were about fifty of us in the library. Maybe 300 students in school, a city school at the edge of Redstone Arsenal.

There were barbed wire fences at the back edge of the school and beyond that was the Arsenal. The Arsenal kids were bussed. I saw them every afternoon as I walked home, five or six big modern Army green buses filled with kids, probably half the school.

I was at Madison Pike for three years and this was the only time we ever had an "assembly" in the library. The principal was there, Mr. Morris, a balding bespectacled friendly man. Mr. Morris introduced the guest, a famous scientist and I didn't catch the first name, it sounded foreign, but the last name sounded like "Bran".

The man was very important looking. He had an accent. I had an accent too at the time, but mine was southern and this tall man's accent was German. He looked important, with broad shoulders, an expressive broad face and extremely handsome in a gray suit, with a slight bit of gray at the temples. He spoke briefly about his life and his job, building rockets.

The librarian passed

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around a book about the man by a writer named Willy Ley. The man's picture was on the cover, and his name: "Wernher Von Braun." He wasn't wearing a suit in the picture. He was in a white shirt.

The librarian asked for questions and I raised my hand and asked if man would be going to go to Mars. I saw my teacher's look of surprise.

I was a lousy student, probably should have been on Ritalin or something. My dad was a scientist, too, a doctor anyway, a pediatrician. The Meigs family had talked about space at the family dinner table. There was a rocket visible a half mile behind the little house on McCallister Drive, under bright arc lights. It was the last thing I saw at night from the top bunk in the tiny addition added on the rental house.

Mr. Von Braun said eventually that man would go to Mars, though first would be the moon.

Five or six years later I found out Von Braun was a neighbor of sorts; he lived less than a mile away, near the Grau family, where I was learning what a bad poker player I was and what great mathematical minds the sons of German scientists had. I had even met Margrit Von Braun, a tall pretty blonde, one of the man's 2 daughters. His son was named Peter I remember.

Flash forward to 1968. I'm driving around the Blossomwood area of Huntsville in a Fiat 850 Spider, a turquoise racy looking car, with rocketry inspired lines and a motor a little bigger than the ones the vacuum cleaner salesman has. My mother had a part time job at the Fiat place, making a few bucks and escaping the drudgery of raising six sons and no daughters. The Fiat was fun to drive though.

I'm going faster than the speed limit and come zipping over a hill and around a curve and have to brake suddenly

because there is a tall man striding close to the side of the road, with another car coming. My heart pounds harder for a moment, then the car glides slowly past the man, and I glance at him as I go by.

It's Von Braun, looking regal in some European walking shorts and carrying a walking stick.

I almost ran over the space program, while trying to look cool in my mom's baby blue Fiat 850.

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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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