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Old Huntsville

HISTORY AND STORIES OF THE TENNESSEE VALLEY

Staying Together:

Trying to Survive on the Tennessee River

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The old man would go over and talk quietly to the woman and then, taking her by her hand, would lead her back to the rocker.



Also in this issue: Memories of Christmases Past; Gs Country Kitchen; A German Christmas; Dr. Bill Renfroe; Winter on the Shore; An Amish Christmas; Holiday Pet Safety, Christmas Recipes and Much More

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Staying Together: Trying to Survive on the Tennessee River

by Tom Carney

Will Kendricks, hidden by the thick underbrush, sat patiently watching the scene in front of him. Across the small clearing, with the Tennessee River flowing in the background, an old man dressed in faded overalls was chopping wood. Every few minutes he would glance reassuringly at the shotgun leaning against a nearby tree. A few feet from him was his wife, rocking slowly back and forth in a wooden rocker.

It could have been some rustic scene from an old Norman Rockwell painting had it not been for the length of rope tied to the woman's leg. Every few minutes she would get up and walk toward the woods, only to be brought up short by the rope.

The old man would go over and talk quietly to the woman and then, taking her by her hand, would lead her back to the rocker.

Suddenly the old man froze, looking straight at the woods where Kendricks was hiding. Grabbing his shotgun, the man began yelling loudly, ordering the unseen intruder off the land. After firing a shot in the air as a warning, he ran to where his wife was sitting and untying the rope, hurriedly led her into the house.

"He's crazy," thought Kendricks as he fled the woods. "He's absolutely crazy!"

Walking back to the road where his truck was parked, Kendricks began thinking about the events that had led to this bizarre confrontation.

Since the beginning of time the Tennessee had been a wild untamed river stretching from the Smoky Mountains, down through northern Alabama and up to the Ohio River. While the river provided food and transportation for the early settlers, it also became a curse for people living too close to it during the flood seasons. Rising flood waters devastated farm lands and often made travel on the river impossible.

In one memorable winter in the early 1900s, the Tennessee River near Decatur, Alabama had swollen to a width of almost a mile.

As part of his New Deal, Franklin Delano Roosevelt, in the early 1930s, began construction of a series of dams throughout the entire length of the river to provide flood control and also generate a cheap source

"It's hard to believe I once had a phone attached to a wall, and when it rang I picked it up without knowing who was calling."

Pam D. Gasser, Cullman



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of electricity. For a region of the country in the midst of the greatest economic Depression it had ever known, the influx of jobs provided the only hope of survival for countless people.

In 1932, even before the location of Guntersville Dam was announced, the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) began making plans to purchase the lands adjacent to the river. Though many landowners vigorously fought the idea of moving, they realized they had no other choice. Either they took what the TVA offered, or their land would be taken by court action.

Much of the land was occupied by sharecroppers and arrangements were made to find other landowners who needed farm hands, with the TVA often providing trucks to move the families.

By 1935 the TVA had acquired title to enough land, and construction of Guntersville Dam was started. This was the largest construction project ever attempted in the valley. An entire town was built to house the thousands of workers employed on the project.

The village, known as "Dam Town," was built on the north side of the present dam and consisted of nearly a hundred buildings, complete with mess hall, hospital, school and barracks. Within a few short months Dam Town had become a large community with its own stores and police force (hired by the TVA).

The planners in Washington had planned for everything, or so they thought.

Even before Dam Town was completed the project began running into trouble. Although the landowners had been paid for their land and the sharecroppers had been relocated to other farms, no one had given thought to the old people.

In a custom dating from Me-

dieval times in Europe, landowners normally let longtime employees remain on the land after they got too old to work. Much of the riverbank was worthless for planting so if an old couple built a shanty and took up residence, the landowners simply looked the other way.

Removing these people from land they were squatting on was proving a daunting challenge for the TVA. At first, officials visited each of the families trying to reason with them.

"We ain't got no place to go," most of the people would reply.

The TVA officials had no answer. Unless the old folks had some sort of income, or relatives to take them in, the only alternative for them was the county poorhouse.

The TVA next tried to get the local authorities involved but the sheriff, well aware of the old people's plight, refused. He pointed out to the TVA boys that it was "government" land," and he had no jurisdiction there.

In a few instances the TVA



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tried to use its own police force to forcefully evict the people. But after one case where they were met with gunfire, the ensuing negative publicity made them back off.

Next they tried to force the people to move by more peaceful means.

For many of these country people, with no way to travel to town, the rolling store was their only way to purchase supplies. The TVA police visited the rolling store owners and told them if they continued selling to the squatters they would be forbidden to sell their products at Dam Town or any of the other construction sites. Faced with the possibility of losing a major part of their income, the rolling store operators reluctantly agreed.

By 1937 only a handful of squatters remained. Progress on the dam had reached a point where it was imperative the people be moved, otherwise the whole project would be thrown behind schedule.

Will Kendricks had worked on the Norris Dam project in Tennessee and while there he had established a reputation for being able to solve problems in difficult situations. In one case where a family refused to move, Kendricks was able to win the family's trust and discovered they had a brother who lived in Chicago. After contacting the brother, he put the family in his car and drove them to Chicago.

Kendricks had rightfully guessed the family did not have the money for bus tickets and would not accept charity.

When Kendricks arrived in Dam Town he first asked for a

list of all the families remaining. Next he asked for a list of all the employees who might know the families. By questioning the employees he was able to get a fairly good idea of the different situations and backgrounds. Most of the cases were fairly typical of what he had dealt with before - poor elderly people who had no place to turn to. Only one name, Moses Lamm, seemed to be different.

"He's crazy!" One of the workers exclaimed after being questioned. "I was just walking through the woods when he appeared and started yelling and waving his gun!"

Immediately a chorus of voices spoke up as other workers recalled meeting the old man. "He keeps his wife tied up all the time and won't let her out of his sight," one man said. "She seems all right but she stays in the house most of the time and no one's ever talked to her."

From the little information available Kendricks determined the couple were probably in their late eighties. They had moved to the riverbank about a dozen years before and had subsisted

by growing a small garden and fishing in the river. At first the couple were friendly with their neighbors but as time went on, they cut off all contact. By the time the TVA began purchasing the land no one dared approach the old man for fear of being met with a blast from a shotgun.

Early the next morning Kendricks drove to where the trail leading to Lamm's house began. After parking his truck on the edge of the road he began slowly walking up the narrow path, not knowing what to expect.

Reaching the edge of the clearing, where he saw Lamm chopping firewood, Kendricks stopped. Not wanting to startle the old man, he called out in a loud voice: "Mr. Lamm, my name is Will Kendricks and I need to talk to you!"

Immediately the old man dropped his ax and grabbed the shotgun lying nearby. "Get out of here," he yelled. After firing a shot into the air he ran to where his wife was sitting, and after untying her, led her hurriedly inside the house.

"A woman has got to love a bad man once or twice in her life to be thankful for a good one."

Mae West



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Lamm's actions only confirmed what Kendricks had already been told. The old man was probably a mental case.

Several days later Kendricks drove to Huntsville to talk to the probate judge. After explaining the situation, Kendricks asked for advice.

"Well," the judge replied in the slow Southern drawl that seemed to be typical of Southern judges. "There ain't much we can do. We can't make the old man go to the county poor farm if he doesn't want to. And if he's able to take care of himself and hasn't actually hurt anyone we can't have him committed to a mental institution. There ain't no law against being eccentric or even tying your wife up if she don't complain!"

"It would be better," he continued, "if the woman was nuts. Then you could have her committed and the old man would probably leave of his own accord."

Kendricks returned to Dam Town and met with the project supervisors where he relayed what the judge had told him.

The news was met with a stony silence. The dam was nearing completion and in a few weeks the whole area would be flooded,

"You have ten days," one of the supervisors told Kendricks. "The day after Christmas we're sending our men in there to tear that house down!"

The next morning Kendricks returned to Lamm's cabin. Again he was met with shotgun blasts in the air and loud yelling. And again he retreated to the safety of the nearby woods.

Every day Kendricks traveled to the cabin and every day was a repetition of the previous day. After about a week and with time running out, he decided on a bolder course of action. He had noticed that Lamm always fired the shotgun in the air rather than at him, so hopefully, the old man did not have any real intentions of hurting him.

Boldly and without yelling to announce his presence first, Kendricks walked into the clearing to within a few steps of where the old man was working.

Sensing Kendricks' presence, the old man whirled around to where his shotgun was ly-

ing and while screaming at the top of his lungs, fired a shot into the air.

Though scared to death Kendricks stood still, refusing to run.

Quickly the old man reloaded his shotgun and fired another shot. Kendricks remained motionless.

Realizing Kendricks was not going to run away, Lamm paused and looked at the young man intently. "You don't scare easy, do you?"

Though petrified with fear Kendricks was determined to stand his ground. "Look," he said. "All I want is to do my job and go home for Christmas. I don't want to hurt you or anyone else."

Trying desperately to keep the conversation going, Kendricks asked for a drink of water. Reluctantly the old man led him to the porch and gave him a glass jar full of cold water.

While drinking the water and looking around, Kendricks' glance fell on the old woman sitting at the other end of the porch. The first thing that captured his attention was the length of rope tied to her wrist and the other end tied securely to the porch railing. She was rocking back and forth slowly and seemed



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"You shouldn't try and test a nine-volt battery with your braces unless you're looking for an easy way to melt all the rubber bands."

Chris Denny, age 14

to be cuddling a doll made from corn shucks.

Suddenly Kendricks wheeled around and looked at Lamm. "She has Alzheimer's disease doesn't she?"

Kendricks had helped care for his grandmother who suffered from Alzheimer's and he recognized the symptoms.

"She's just having a bad day." Lamm reluctantly replied. Noticing Kendricks looking at the rope he explained, "If I don't do that she might wander off while I'm doing the chores."

Slowly the reality of the situation dawned on Kendricks. It was not the old man who had mental problems, but his wife. The old man had been scaring people off the place to keep them from knowing. If the authorities had known, they would have had her committed.

Having gained a certain amount of the old man's trust, Kendricks began explaining why he was there. Another week, he explained, the whole place would be under water.

After listening to the young man talk for almost thirty minutes, the old man summed up his situation in several words.

"Ain't got no place to go. If I go to the poor house they will have her committed. We been together for almost seventy years and I ain't gonna let them put her in some place by herself."

"Please don't tell anyone," the old man begged with tears in his eyes.

Sleep was impossible for Kendricks that night as he lay in bed trying to decide what to do. He could go to town in the morning and get a judge to

commit the woman and then her husband would have no reason to stay on the land. She couldn't take care of herself and her husband wouldn't be able to after they were evicted. Another possibility was to simply say nothing and let the TVA forcibly evict them. Deep down in his heart, Kendricks knew that neither one was a real choice.

Giving up on trying to sleep, Kendricks decided to get dressed and drive back to the old couple's cabin. "There has to be another way," he kept telling himself.

As he approached the cabin the first thing he noticed was the faint sound of Christmas caroling coming from inside. Quietly he made his way to the window and looked in.

There was a small tree sitting in the middle of the table, decorated with bits of tinsel and foil. Sitting in front of the tree was the old couple holding hands and singing the Christmas carols he had first heard on approaching the cabin. Every few minutes the lady would hesitate and her husband would patiently coax her on the words. Though Christmas was still several days away, remnants of wrapping paper were scattered

Don't confuse a smile with someone baring their teeth.

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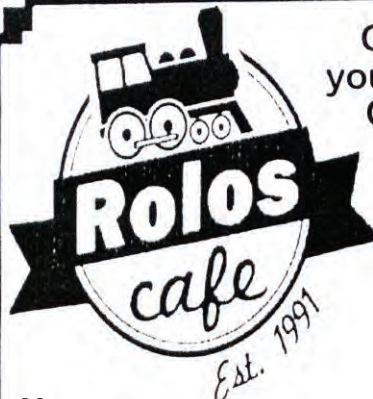
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"When you can feel the wind blowing through your hair, it's time to shave your legs."

Janice Morton, Gurley

about the table where the woman had opened her presents.

Unwilling to interrupt the peaceful scene, Kendricks left.

Early next morning as the heavy fog was still rolling across the Tennessee River, the peaceful quiet of Dam Town was interrupted by the loud ringing of a bell. "Fire!" Men shouted. "The Lamm place is on fire!"

Hurriedly getting dressed, Kendricks joined the men rushing out to the scene. By the time he arrived the fire had been extinguished, though it had completely gutted the rear of the house. After making sure the old couple had not been caught in the blaze, he began looking around the clearing for them.

They were nowhere to be found.

Although a search party was organized and spent two days in the nearby hills, no trace of the old couple was ever found.

Later that week Kendricks made one final trip to the site of the burned out cabin. While walking around the clearing his attention was drawn to a nearby rock. Lying next to it and wrapped in cloth were several old, faded photographs of the Lamms, along with their marriage certificate from almost three quarters of a century before. Kendricks sensed that these things had been placed there on purpose, to make sure someone would find them and maybe remember who they were.

As he stood looking at the old photographs, he became aware of a faint and soothing sound coming from the nearby hills. The sound seemed to permeate the clearing, finding its way into every corner and dark crevice. Maybe it was just the wind, or maybe it was his imagination, but Kendricks later swore that just for a second, he heard what sounded like Christmas carols.

Years later when people asked Will Kendricks about their fate, he simply replied, "They stayed together."

Keep your salt in a small bowl. When you season, use your fingers instead of a shaker, you'll be less likely to over-salt.

"Love is just like playing Checkers. You just have to know which man to move."

Jessie Turner, Athens

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Squadron of Grannies

by Gerald Alois

I just helped my wife get all the Christmas decorations down. I've assisted in laying it out and provided some feedback, but she is in her zone. I enjoy seeing the happiness on her face. I may provide the structure, but she makes it a home!

I was maneuvering one of many boxes and I saw this placard. It read "Over the river and through the woods". We all know the song and I got to wondering how come it's never "Hey, let's go to Grandpa's house." I mean, I have fun with them, but the reference is always to the maternal side, not to the patriarch.

So, yea, I'm a little jealous, but I smile, and I believe most of you think similarly. Grandmas are Super Moms who aren't tired! They can fix boo-boos and biscuits like no other! I believe that the reason that some of us are alive (especially me) is due to their frequent prayers. I'll just say it...they just get straight to speaking to God, and I will have to clear a few things up with him first!

There is a warmth to my home when she's here. There is no HVAC or fireplace that can compensate.

I've always heard never discuss religion or politics; just too controversial! Since I've already spoken of one, I'm going to go for it!!

"I found out it's not good to discuss my troubles. 80% don't care and the other 20% are glad I'm having them."

**Tommy LaSorda,
LA Dodgers Mgr.**

If we want World Peace, we should send over a squadron of Grannies to meet with theirs. Practical gifts would be exchanged, everyone would have plenty to eat and a few world leaders would be made to stand in the corner. It's difficult to defy their logic and intent; they just want everyone to get along. I think they could get a few "I'm sorry's" and could convince all to just play nice.

We all see God differently, but as a heavenly representation, I see that when my wife does the tuck-in at night with the Grandchildren. Me, I'm in charge of sneaking snacks and delayed bedtimes. And "the look" if needed. I guess that's useful, too though somewhat less Divine.

If you still have your Grandmother, be sure to love and appreciate this earthly treasure. Mine have long since passed, but I do have a "horsie" quilt she made for me. It's going on its

3rd generation now. It keeps us warm, and silly me, I can somehow feel the love she put in every stitch. There is something poetic about that!

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The Most Wonderful Christmas of All

by Susan R. Livingston



Christmas was always special in our house in rural Virginia. The house was filled with the good scents of an evergreen tree and something delicious cooking on the stove. But there was an empty feeling, too, as I was an only child. It seemed everyone had a brother or sister, but me. When I found out that my best friend and cousin, Beverly, had a baby sister, I threw myself against the old white refrigerator and cried for want of a sibling, as any five-year old is bound to do.

But the December I turned seven was special because my parents told me that I was going to be a big sister soon. It wouldn't be for Christmas, but it would be sometime in the winter. I not only had my birthday to look forward to and the anticipation of Santa's visit, but a brother or sister on the way. What could make my Christmas any better?

One very dark evening in early December, the doctor came to the house and ended up driving my mother to the hospital which was 22 miles away. (Yes, doctors did things like that then; they even made house calls with a little black satchel in tow.) My father bundled me up and took me to my aunt's house for the night so he could go to the hospital. In the morning, Daddy was at my aunt's to tell me that I had not one, but two brothers! Even the doctor wasn't aware that there would be twins. It wasn't until the first baby was delivered that they discovered the second.

The babies did not come home for Christmas. They were premature by at least six weeks and

had to stay in the hospital until they gained the necessary weight. William came home in January and Wilson, who had to have eye surgery for a small cyst on his eyelid, came home in February. Still, it was a wonderful Christmas, knowing that I had siblings at last.

Once they did come home, the demands of two babies took over the entire household. A neighbor stopped by with a casserole and the opportunity to meet the babies. "There is more action here than a three-ring circus," she said.

It was true. The kettle was always boiling to heat up bottles and the washing machine seemed to go non-stop with tubs of diapers. My job was to fold all the diapers which were dumped on the guest bed in endless piles and to feed one baby, while my mother or father fed the other. There was screaming and crying but I didn't mind, nor was I jealous of all the attention they received. Not for one minute did I want my parents to take them back, as a lot of children do. They were like little dolls, but they were real, and they were mine.

All these years later, I consider them among my best friends. Though many miles separate us, we remain close and talk frequently. They are the Christmas gift that truly keeps on giving.

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**"This morning when I put on
my underwear, I could hear the
Fruit-of-the-Loom guys laughing at me."**

Rodney Dangerfield

A KID IN THE COUNTRY

by Clarence Golson

The hay barn, this was the kid's playground.. The Barn was two levels. The lower level was for cows and calves needing protection from bad weather and cold temperatures. Cows that have provided their initial milk to their calves were moved to the milking herd and the calves were fed with formula from buckets and were kept in the stalls in the barn. The loft was the main storage for hay bales, the building blocks for a kid.

A cousin came to visit for a short while during a summer and he was big enough to handle the bale quite easily. We made forts and caves in the stacks of hay. We hid from our parents for no real reason but it seemed like fun. One cave was on the side of the stacks instead of the front, like most. We had to hold on to the beams that held the roof and we made a door that looked like the full bales but were only about a quarter of the size. Daddy was surprised by the size of the first side entrance cave because he thought he had more hay than it looked like. The kid would bring food and water to the cave to be able to stay longer.

On top of the stacks of bales, the older kids made rope by braiding baling twine big enough to hold without slipping. This rope would then be tied to rafters for swings like Tarzan, including the Tarzan yells. Only rarely did a rope fail, causing a kid to get their bottoms to be spanked on the floor.

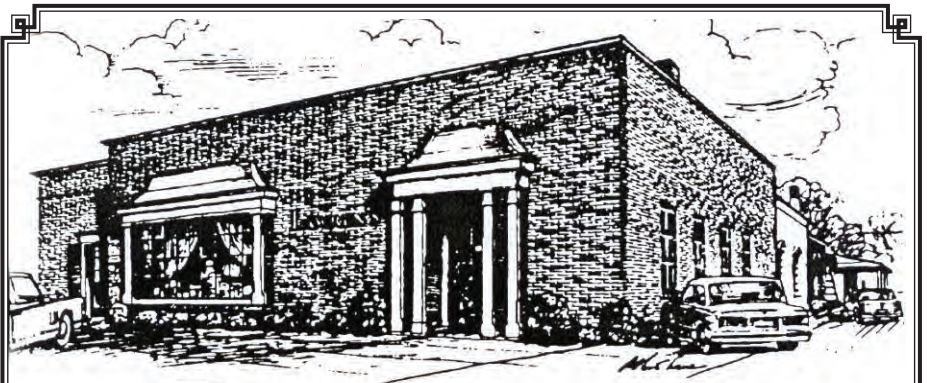
The kid liked to help Daddy feed the calves by pushing hay bales through holes in the floor but one time, when the kid was smaller than the bales, he kept losing his footing on the hay pol-

ished floor and tried to get more traction by putting his arm inside the loop around the hay and lifting to add weight to help his traction. Unfortunately, once the hay bale was over the hole, he couldn't get his arm out before being pulled through the hole and down to the lower level. His first sight was the steel gate that held the calves in the pen. It scared the daylights out of him and he screamed so loudly that Mama heard him at the farm house. No real damage was done and life went on as usual.

The feed room was attached to the hay barn and was open to the loft. Spiders liked to weave their webs on the beams between the feed room and the hay loft and the kid was more afraid of the webs than the spiders. He always kept small sticks nearby to knock the webs down. Older brother brought a puppy home and kept it in the feed room. One evening the kid was asked to feed the puppy and when he opened the door to the feed room, a rabid dog met him snarling and foaming at its mouth. Being immediately scared, he slammed the door and ran to get his brother to remedy the problem. From the hay loft, older brother shot the rabid dog enough times that it finally fell. And then the watch began on the puppy to make sure it had not contracted rabies. It was okay.

Another beast that older brother brought home was a Brahma Bull that had a BAD attitude. The kid was not given any chores that involved this bull. Older brother's intentions were to use the bull for rodeo riding but it proved to be too aggressive, it would throw the rider and then attack him while ignoring the clowns whose job it was to protect the rider.

More stories of older brother's colorful life.



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"I need to teach my facial expressions how to use their inside voice."

Maddie Jones, Gurley



I can hear the red kettle bells ringing, meaning Christmas is just around the corner. The Salvation Army bell ringers really would appreciate any amount you can drop in the red kettles. So many are in need this season, with interest rates, groceries and rent on the rise.

Some fun things to do during the holidays in Huntsville are:

- December 3 - Christmas Fair - Saturday, 10 AM to 5 PM Downtown
- December 4 - A Christmas Carol - Sunday 7 PM to 9 PM Fantasy Playhouse
- December 4 - Master Chorals Christmas Concert - 3 PM to 4 PM - Monte Sano Methodist Church
- December 5 - A Holiday Concert - 7 PM - Huntsville Concert Band
- December 8 - Huntsville Christmas Parade - 6 PM to 9 PM - Downtown
- December 9 - Annual Christmas Concert - 6 PM - Huntsville Library
- December 18 - Brass Band of Huntsville Comfort and Joy - 7 PM
- December 21 - Christmas Lights - 6 PM (over 3 miles options)
- Galaxy of Lights
- Rocket City Christmas Lights Show
- Huntsville Tinsel Trail - Downtown

- Christmas on the River
- Candlelight Christmas and Holiday Magic Dinners
 - Musical at Mid City
 - My favorite is the Living Christmas Tree from December 14 - 17 at the First Baptist Church – Tickets are free but must get ahead of time at the Church

These are just a few of the fun things coming up this month to get all of us in the spirit of the season.

Now, what's for dinner?

If you aren't into cooking a turkey this year, check with grocery stores and some restaurants. They will cook one for you, along with several sides to go with it. Less stress and gives the cook a break. You can even hire someone to decorate your house and yard. No more falling off the ladder. Now, how easy could that be?

I had better get busy and start shopping, and hopefully, I can recruit my husband to wrap the gifts. He does a wonderful job. Maybe I can hire him out!

HAVE A WONDERFUL HOLIDAY SEASON. SEE YOU NEXT YEAR.





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G's Country Kitchen

(Changing Hearts One Plate at a Time)

by John H. Tate



As you walk into G's Country Kitchen, the sign on the door reads, "This is not a fast-food joint." That is the first indication that the dining public can expect something other than the same old food from cans or boxes. The next indication is that a man is walking around the restaurant doing whatever needs to be done, including talking with the dining guests. Is he a busboy? Is he a server? No, that is "Mo."

Mo, real name Maurice Russell, is a co-owner of G's Country Kitchen. The other owner and the secret sauce of G's is Greta Russell, Mo's wife. Because of Greta, Samantha Brown's Places to Love: Season 4 visited G's in April 2021. According to Samantha, "In Huntsville, it's G's Country Kitchen that hits the spot. Founded in 1996, Greta Russell ignites the stove at 6 am in order to perfectly prepare her family's heirloom soul food recipes."

Some might call Mo and Greta a tag team because Greta's food brings the customers in and keeps them coming back, but Mo out front makes them feel at home. In the same article from Places to Love, Samantha says, "At G's, it's not just about the food. G's is the kind of place where you walk in a stranger but leave feeling like family."

Greta is more comfortable behind the scenes making sure the food is right, whereas Mo is more comfortable in the front of the house. Mo brings the hype to the dining stage while Greta is doing her thing, ensuring that hungry bellies are full. The two are a team and leaders of the broader G's Country Kitchen team.

I found Mo very open about his life and some of the challenges he faced. From having to use food stamps early on in life to eat, and his regret for not re-enlisting in the military. He

even spent some time in the custody of the State of Alabama at the Limestone Correction Facility. He attributes his faith in God and the love of his wife to putting his life on a more solid footing.

In describing the start of G's, Mo states, "My wife was working in Corporate America, and she was a hard worker who was underappreciated. She complained about the hours; she just was not happy. I was hanging out with a friend who would open a small club. After talking to him, a light went on. I went home and told my wife that since she was complaining about working for these people, as good of a cook as you are, go find a building and let's open a restaurant. We haggled with the name and finally came up with "G's." We came up with the name G's Country Kitchen twenty-six years ago."

Mo tells why he treats their customers the way he does. He explains, "I watched as someone was buying something from some guy. The seller treated the buyer terribly, and I thought, how can you treat someone wrong who is spending their money with you? That is when the customer service light came on. So, to me, customer service comes first. At G's, Greta is the cook; I don't cook, but my customer service skills fit right in, and as a team, we work. They say that if you can last five years, you have weathered the storm in the business world. God saw something in our business in about two and a half to three years, where it

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just took off."

At this point, Mo says something that underlines his faith in God and describes his personal walk. He taps the table and says, "When you apply for a credit card, what is the first thing you have to do when you get it?" He says, "You have to activate it, and this is what you have to do daily with your faith. I keep my faith activated."

Seeing God working in his life daily led Mo to develop his own clothing line. He named the clothing line ONE - UP, with the tagline "Overcoming Adversities Circumstances Obstacles & Situations."

Mo recognizes how blessed they are at G's. In his own words, "Because of Covid, many restaurants are no longer open in Huntsville, even major chain restaurants had to close their doors. God still has G's here."

When asked about G's best sellers, without hesitation, Mo states, "The most popular dishes at G's are the turkey and dressing and the meatloaf. The meatloaf was written up in Southern Living Magazine, '100 places you must eat before you die.' We only serve it three days, Thursday, Friday, and Saturday. On the other hand, we only serve the turkey and dressing every other week." Why do they only serve the turkey and dressing every other week? Mo's simple answer is, "Put a taste in your mouth that you want. So, when you can't get what you want right then, it just makes the line longer when available; and we sell out."

As we ended our visit, Mo spoke of his favorite memories, "My favorite memories are when you have politicians and entertainers stopping in to eat. Celebrities, such as Cedric The Entertainer, stop in." More memorable are the regular customer moments.

Mo shared with me something that happened one Saturday. A family came in and the grandma was the boss of the pack. This was her first time in G's and the wait time put

her in a bad mood. She did not realize that the people who received their food before her group was ordering the day's specials or had called their orders in.

When they received their food, Mo made a point to go by and check on them. Everyone was happy. However, grandma still had a gruff attitude. Mo asked if there was anything he could do? Grandma asked for some more cornbread and another piece of chicken. After receiving what she asked for, she smiled and said everything was good and she would be back.

Mo looked at me with a smile and said, "See, we change hearts, one plate at a time."

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Puron




Turn to the experts



The Call

by M. D. Smith, IV

"Hello, Mr. Smith?"

"Yes?"

"This is Martha Merkle from the Department of Human Resources. Among other things, we supervise private daycare facilities in the area."

This struck me as odd because I remembered when my wife ran a home daycare business many years ago. Their inspections were something to be feared, particularly the no-notice appearances instead of the scheduled quarterly visits. Both my wife and I had learned to say little, not volunteer any information, and answer questions with as few words as possible. But I wondered why they'd be calling me at my office.

Merkle continued. "We are sending one of our DHR inspectors to your business, and she will be there within the hour. Just wanted you to know they're authorized to enter your premises."

"I see. May I ask what this is about?" I stiffened and sat up straight in my chair. I hoped she didn't hear the sigh under my breath as I waited for an answer.

She cleared her throat. "Certainly. We have a report of unauthorized daycare activities at your location and, further, several violations of our rules that could cause multiple citations against you, which you might have to answer in court."

Well, that got my attention. "Could you be more specific?"

"Of course. We have a report of you having one or more minors aged three and under at your current business location."

As she spoke to me, I glanced at my three-year-old Siamese cat, Sci-Fi, resting in her pink carrier, which sat on my desk. My mind whirred. "Is that so?" I asked.

"Yes, and you don't have a license, nor can I find any record where you have applied for one."

"That's interesting," I said, a smile growing on my face.

"Have you applied for one accompanied by a full facility inspection?"

"No, I guess not." Now, I'm enjoying the conversation.

"That's why we have dispatched one of our inspectors to be there soon. We can't have little ones in crowded conditions with insufficient help for proper attention. And we have to ensure there is a safe environment, adequate food and restroom facilities, and of course, cleanliness. You can understand that, can't you?"

"Sure can." I was glad she couldn't see the smile widening on my face. I acted like I was seriously concerned. "You won't find anything here out of order. In fact, I think your inspector will be surprised."

"Not very much surprises us anymore, not even finding children in cages."

"Cages?" I inquired. "Real cages?"

"Absolutely. With too many little ones to care for, some places call it a playpen with a top, but many are actually wooden or metal cages with a door and a lock. You wouldn't treat an animal like that."

"Guess not." I shake my head, combining what I'm hearing with what is directly in front of me.

I'm looking at my cat in her pink soft-sided carrier with the zipper door open, resting with her head down and chin tilted up. She's taking a "cat-nap."

"Furthermore, we've seen infants soaked in urine and feces and left unattended for hours." I could tell Merkle's voice had anger in it, and perhaps she was even gritting her teeth as she spoke. "Deplorable."

"I hesitate to even mention more atrocious things, like serving rancid food and spanking with a belt."

"Unbelievable," I said with astonishment in my voice.

"Well," she said as she huffed out the word. "That's why you are about to be visited by one of our staff to look into your unauthorized daycare operation, Mr. Smith."

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"I am positive they are in for a surprise, Ms. Merkle."

I almost laughed when I thought about the clean litter box in the spare office, the grilled chunk chicken fresh from Steak-Out, and the contented purring of my "responsibility" in front of me.

"Yes, they will be astounded." I almost chuckled aloud. My cat, now in my lap, purred contentedly. "Goodbye, Ms. Merkle."

The only question I had left was who called DHR? My wife, perhaps?

THE VISIT

I answered the knock on the front door of our office suite, though most people simply open the door into our single desk reception area. We're alerted by remote chimes and have a camera monitor in our private offices. I greeted the heavy-set older woman wearing a purple hat and dress and carrying a ring binder.

"You're Mr. Smith?" she barked. Her voice was shrill, raspy, and could have belonged to a WAC Sergeant in WWII.

"Yep." I resisted a smile.

"I'm Mrs. Benjamin Abernathy." She tapped the ID badge on her chest. "Suppose you know why I'm here?"

"Uh-huh."

She was already looking around the reception area and spied my old coffee cup collection from the many years in the TV business.

"My husband, rest his soul, had a collection like this from his ad-agency business. Unfortunately, he died years ago."

With a wife like this, I couldn't help but wonder if it was suicide. "Sorry to hear that," I said.

"Yes. Thank you." She took a deep breath and looked down the hall behind me and at the little wooden gate in the doorway. "I see you have child gates in your unlicensed office daycare business you've got here."

I moved forward and removed the gate from the passageway down the hall to the other office, past two of the four now occupied by me and my business manager, who was out presently. "I'm afraid they have misinformed you, Mrs. Abernathy. But follow me."

"How could that be? You didn't deny you had one or more three or under in your care, and these child gates appear to substantiate it."

"Well, I do have a care facility here of sorts, and I have referred to my situation as Daddy's Day Care to certain people."

"Ah ha," she said, in a manner like she'd caught a kid with his hand in the cookie jar.

I walked her further down the hall, standing in the opening's way to my office door as we passed it, heading to the small rear office once occupied by my Adminis-

trative Assistant. "Let me show you the food and toilet facilities first." I stopped at the entrance and motioned her in with my hand.

She entered, took a quick look, stood quite straight, and stared at me. "Whose leg are you trying to pull? That's nothing but two bowls of kibble food and water and a cat-litter box. Are you trying to cover up something with this stupid joke?" She put her hands on her generous hips.

I had to grit my teeth to avoid breaking out in full laughter. "Not at all. Now please follow me into my office," I said.

I turned and motioned with my hand as I started to my office. She followed. I entered, stood aside, and made a sweeping motion to point with outstretched palm the little pink canvas cat carrier on the center of my desk, with both zippers open and my Siamese cat curled contentedly inside.

"Here's my three-year-old you were inquiring about," I said.

Her expression was priceless. Her eyebrows lowered, her lips tightened, and a rose color filled her cheeks. "Where are the children?"

"There aren't any, never have been. I don't know who called you folks or why. My cat gets lonely, so for the past month, I've been bringing her with me to work and gate-off the front area where she might get out into the hallway, or worse, outside. But as you see, she's quite content."

Which was more than I could say for Mrs. Abernathy, huffing in front of me.

The front door slammed; that was the last I saw or heard from DHR.

I await a call from PETA or SPCA.

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Heard On the Street

by **Cathey Carney**



We had winners for the Photo of the Month and the hidden item! The first caller for the photo of the month was **Randi Recio**, of Huntsville. The sweet girl in the photo was none other than **Joy McKee** who headed up the Green Team for years and took care of all the cemeteries in town. She did an amazing job and retired a year or so ago. Joy and Randi are friends!

The winner of the little hidden cat **Lu** from **Lewter's Hardware** was **Marty Clark** of Gurley. He found his magazine at the Mapco on 72 West and located the little kitty. If you couldn't find it check page 39 of the November issue, Dr. Renfroe ad, lower left - see it now? It's a picture of **Lu**, the store cat who used to live at Lewter's Hardware. He and **Buffy** are getting great care with the Lewter family. Congratulations to both Randi and Marty for winning a year's \$50 subscription! Not quite the lottery, but close right?

I have hidden a tiny candle in this issue. Look but you won't find it. If you do, call me!

We were so very sad to hear that **Tim McKee** passed away on Oct. 26. Tim was only 70 years old. He was a kind, giving, loving man who freely gave his time and effort to others. His wife **Joy McKee** worked for the City of Huntsville Green Team among other duties and was our photo of the month in November. Tim retired from Huntsville Utilities as Chief Financial Officer and VP in 2010. He was member of both Lion's Club and Rotary Club in Nashville.

Survivors include his loving wife, **Joy**; children, **Dean, Jared (Laura) and Kristen Lowe (Eddy)**; and was Poppy to his grandchildren, **Sydney, Addy, E.J., Emmerson, Beckett, Ruby, and Nolan**. Also surviving Tim are his brothers, **Larry, David and John**, and their families; brother-in-law, **Randy Hasty**; sister-in-law, **Jane Jones**, and their families. Tim leaves behind many friends who remember how special he made them all feel. He will be so missed.

Truist Bank on Church Street has some of the nicest people working there. One of those ladies is **Ianthia Bridges** and when asked what special days she was remembering in December, she had a few:

Her sweet **Aunt Marie** celebrates her birthday on Dec. 12th; **Aunt Yolanda** and her cousin **Cedric** have Dec. 17th birthdays; Dec. 25th is the special wedding anniversary of her **Uncle Mark and Aunt Tammy**. Her brother **Carl** and sis-in-law **Tammy** have a Dec. 23rd wedding anniversary and

Tammy also celebrates her birthday on Dec. 24th. **Ianthia's** family goes from one party to another in December!

A special Merry Christmas to all the ladies who work at Truist on Church Street and make you feel like you're their only customer! Super Professionals.

We are losing way too many of our military veterans. **Col. Cyrus Brocato** is on such hero. He joined the U.S. Army in 1950, fought in the Korea and Vietnam conflicts, and served his country all over the world, eventually being promoted to the rank of Colonel and concluding his distinguished military career as the Assistant Commandant of Redstone Arsenal in Huntsville. Col. Brocato retired from the Army in 1982 but continued to work in the defense industry for over 10 years before retiring for good and finally enjoying some well-deserved rest. Col Brocato passed away at the age of 93, on Nov. 9th.

He is survived by his daughter **Lynne Sarah Anne (Brocato) Daly** and her husband **Daniel Herbert Daly**; his son **John Ward Brocato** and his wife **Donna Kay (Fennell) Brocato**; his daughter **Gail Rose (Brocato) Lenox** and her husband

Photo of The Month

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

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Billy Lenox; his sister **Marguerite Rose (Brocato) Ferrara**, her husband **Salvador Anthony Ferrara**, and their daughter **Heartley Sarah (Ferrara) Thornton**; his grandchildren (Ret.) **Sgt. Kevin Daniel Daly**, **Ryan Keith Daly**, **Sarah Kathleen (Daly) Randolph**, **Donna Bailey (Brocato) Staples**, **Theodore Vincent Brocato**, and **S.J. Brocato**. He leaves six great grandchildren who knew this loving man as "Papa Bro."

There are so many events happening in Huntsville during December. Grandma's column a few pages earlier in this issue listed quite a few of them but there are so many! No one can get bored here in Huntsville. If nothing else, put on some good walking shoes and travel around the historic districts - Old Town and Twickenham really go all out to decorate and driving around at night in this area is a treat as well. It has been proven that walking and staying busy will help with depression and feeling down, it works.

Here's a tip I found out myself by accident, if you have a cell phone who responds to you with **Siri** or **Hey Google**. Mine is **Siri** and he's an Australian gentleman. One night I needed some light to see down a dark hallway and had my phone, I said "Hey Siri - turn on the flashlight." In a second my flashlight was on! I was amazed. Then I told him to Turn Off Flashlight and he did! Very helpful for some of us folks who can't find the flashlight icon and need the light in a hurry. You're welcome!

Many in Huntsville knew and loved **Charles Brinkerhoff**. "Brink" as he was known served as a medic in the US Army, then while earning his Bachelor of Science degree in Mathematics from Louisiana Tech in Ruston, LA he met the love of his life, **Janet**. He was a computer programmer for over forty years for companies such as IBM, M&S Computing, Intergraph, ADS and CAS, and was among the thousands of engineers whose efforts sent astronauts to the moon. He was a golfer, a bowler, an angler, and a geocacher. He enjoyed playing bridge and Texas hold'em, and was an avid Crimson Tide fan.

He leaves behind his wife of

55 years, **Janet Lee Thompson Brinkerhoff**; his son, **Mark Lee**, and daughter-in-law **Zorana Stricevic Brinkerhoff**; grandchildren **Anna Sophia Joy** and **Bennett Asher Brinkerhoff**; grandchildren **Aaric Rylan** and **Liam Carson Brinkerhoff**, and their mother, **Anastasia Maxwell**; sister-in-law **Lisa Ann Thompson Stagg (Mark)**; nephew **Joshua Stagg**; niece **Sarah Stagg Brown (Brennon)**; their children, **Hudson**, **Emery**, and **Caroline Brown**; and **Mark and Zorana's** family; **Grant**, **Emma**, **Amelia**, **Liam**, **Cara**, and **Neeve Janke**.

Happy Birthday to our dear friend **Oscar Llerena**, Huntsville High Class of 1966, who has a Dec 24th birthday! What a great Christmas present for his parents! He is loved by so many, lives in Miami but loves to come back here for visits. Come see us soon Oscar!

Sending love and condolences to **Susan Grunwald** on the loss of her brother, **Michael Hale** on Sep. 22. He was a Grissom HS and Auburn Univ. graduate, loved nature and arts, and his family above all. He leaves wife **Kristy Gould**; daughter **Miriam Hale**; brother-in-law **Mark Grunwald**; his father **Richard Hale** and his mom in heaven **Glenda Hale**; brother **Rick Hale**; niece **Megan Salazar (Garrett)** and **Kristin Grunwald**. He will be loved always.

We wish you a warm and memorable Christmas and try to help others if you can. Many people need love these days.

"I'm a second-hand vegetarian - cows eat grass, I eat cows."

Sam Keith, Huntsville



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Sweet Christmas Traditions

Orange Sugared Nuts

- 1 c. sugar
- 1/4 c. evaporated milk
- 1 T. corn syrup
- 1 t. grated orange peel
- Pinch salt
- 1-1/2 c. pecan halves

Cook sugar, milk and syrup to soft ball stage (2 minutes). Add orange peel and salt. Pour over nuts, stir to coat each nut. Spread on waxed paper and separate nuts with fork, cool.

Mrs. Hugh K. Doak, Sr.

Godiva Fudge Cookies

- 6 oz. Godiva dark chocolate, melted
- 1/2 c. butter, softened
- 1 c. sugar
- 2 eggs
- 1-1/2 c. flour
- 1/2 t. salt
- 1-1/2 c. coarsely chopped pecans or walnuts

Melt chocolate in a pan over hot water. Cool slightly. Meanwhile cream butter, sugar and

eggs until batter is smooth. Stir in cooled chocolate. Combine salt and flour; mix into batter. Add nuts and blend well. Chill for one hour until dough is firm. Drop rounded teaspoonfuls 2 inches apart on buttered sheet.

Bake in a preheated oven at 375 degrees 10-12 minutes until slightly firm when touched with finger. Cookies should be soft and chewy inside.

Wenona Switzer

Chess Cakes

- 1 c. sugar
- 1/2 c. butter
- 3 eggs, well beaten
- Pinch salt
- 2 c. dates
- 1/2 c. raisins
- 1/2 to 1 c. walnuts, chopped

In a bowl, cream the sugar and softened butter. Use a food processor to grind the dates, nuts and raisins. Mix butter mixture with date mixture.

Line muffin tins with good

rich pie crust and fill 3/4 full with the above mixture. Bake at 400 degrees about 25-30 minutes. You can use pre-made pie tart shells. If you want to make tiny ones bake at 350 degrees for about 20 minutes.

Jan Keith

Nut Pie

- 20 Ritz crackers, crushed
- 3 egg whites, stiffly beaten
- 1 c. sugar
- 1/2 t. baking powder
- 1/2 t. vanilla
- 1 c. chopped pecans

Beat egg whites, gradually add the sugar. Add other ingredients and bake in a greased 9 inch pie pan for 25 minutes at 325 degrees. Serve with ice cream or whipped cream. Cut into pie wedges.

Phyllis Lively

Southern Pralines

- 1 c. dark brown sugar
- 1 c. regular sugar

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- 1 t. vanilla extract
- 5 T. boiling water
- 1/2 stick butter
- 2 c. pecan halves

Stir brown sugar, white sugar and butter into boiling water and boil for 4 minutes. Remove from heat and add vanilla and nuts. Beat slowly until slightly sugary on bottom. Drop from tablespoon on parchment or waxed paper. Mixture will spread out. Allow to stand until completely cooled.

Ruth Morrison

Mini-Cheesecakes

- 3 8-oz. pkgs. cream cheese
- 1 c. sugar
- 5 eggs
- 1-1/2 t. vanilla extract

Cream sugar and cheese; add eggs. Add vanilla, pour into miniature cupcake liners 3/4 full. Bake 30 minutes at 300 degrees and cool slightly.

Topping:

- 1 c. sour cream
- 1/4 c. sugar
- 1/4 t. vanilla extract
- Jam of choice

Mix the first 3 ingredients, spoon onto cupcakes. Top with dollops of any flavor jam. Bake 5 minutes at 300 degrees.

Refrigerate or freeze til needed. I like to use strawberry preserves. This makes 24 mini-cakes.

Lynda Doud

Deena's Apple Cake

- 1 c. vegetable oil
- 2 c. sugar
- 3 eggs
- 2 c. flour
- 2 t. vanilla extract
- 1-1/2 t. ground cinnamon
- 1 t. baking soda
- 3 apples diced with skin on
- 1 c. chopped walnuts
- 3/4 c. gold raisins

Use cooking spray to heavily coat inside of a Bundt pan. Combine ingredients in the order listed. Spoon batter into the pan. Bake at 325 degrees for 1

hour 10 minutes and a toothpick comes out clean. Cool 45 minutes, remove to a platter.

Topping

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

In a saucepan, combine all ingredients except the vanilla. Bring to boil and cook and stir for 5 minutes. Remove from heat and add the vanilla. Pour over cake. (Tip: put cake on cake rack, place in sink and then pour the glaze over.) Carefully remove the cake back to the platter. Decorate if desired.

Deena Shields

Orange Cakes

- 1 c. butter
- 2 c. sugar
- Grated rind of 2 oranges
- 1 c. ground raisins
- 1/2 t. salt
- 4 eggs, beaten
- 1-1/2 c. buttermilk
- 1 t. baking soda
- 2 t. baking powder

- 4 cups flour

Cream butter and sugar; add other ingredients. Fill small greased muffin pans 1/2 full. Bake 25 minutes at 350°. Glaze while still warm.

Glaze: Mix juice of 2 oranges with enough confectioners sugar for spreading consistency.

Mrs. John D. Moorman

Mandy's Chocolate Pie

- 1 c. sugar
- 2 T. flour
- Dash of baking powder
- 3 eggs, separated
- 2 c. milk
- 1-1/2 t. vanilla
- 1 T. butter, melted
- 1/2 cup chocolate syrup
- 1 unbaked pie shell
- 6 T. sugar

Sift sugar, flour and baking powder. Add egg yolks beaten with milk, vanilla and butter. Add chocolate syrup. Pour into pie shell; bake 40 minutes at 350° until set. Add meringue of egg whites beaten with 6 tablespoons sugar. Brown in hot oven.

Mrs. Raymond B. Jones

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My Teddy Bear

by Margaret Anne Goldsmith



Who Cares, You Never Heard Me After All

*Faded teddy bear, can you understand?
Your glassy eyes I wonder, can they see?
Placid and content, making no demand
Could it be my teddy bear, you hear me?
Tattered ears, once white, now a dull soft
gray
How long have you heard my joys, felt my
tears?
Teddy bear in the dusty corner lay
Once cuddled, now forgotten through the
years
I take you in my arms and whisper softly
Teenage thrills, feelings that fill my heart
Secrets that no one knows, just you and me
My teddy bear, these things to you impart
I fall asleep and to the floor you fall
Who cares, you never heard me after all*

I wrote the above sonnet in 1959 when I was seventeen. My father won my teddy bear at the Madison County Fair when I was seven. Teddy was my companion for many years and later I gave him to my children. In 2002 I found him stored away and sent him to my first grandchildren. My daughter-in-law Brocha Hanaw covered him in a similar furry white and red material

that he was covered in originally. It was my plan to one day write a story about Teddy's adventures. It follows, in Teddy's words.

Teddy Bear's Story

The Madison County Fair took place at the Huntsville Fair Grounds located where Church Street crosses Pratt Avenue. Everyone looked forward to the Fair in the fall, one of the largest community events of the year since Huntsville during the 1940s was a small cotton mill town with a population of around fifteen thousand. Included at the Fair were exhibits of farm animals, flowers and home-made goods for which prizes were awarded. Most important to the children were the carnival rides, the side shows, games, cotton candy and the grandstand event at the racetrack that included trapeze artists, performing animals, surrey races, clowns and a finale of fireworks.

My earliest memory was during the fall of 1947. I was sitting on the shelf of one of the Fair carnival booths to be awarded as a prize to anyone who could throw a baseball and knock down a row of wooden milk bottles. I remember one special night there was a little girl who was looking longingly at me.

You may have guessed; I am a teddy bear. I am covered in red and white furry material and have glass eyes and facial features stitched with black thread. I heard the little girl ask her father who had loved baseball as a young boy to try and win me for her. After several tries, he knocked down all the wooden bottles and I was placed in the arms of Margaret Anne. She named me "Teddy" short for "Teddy Bear."

I lived with Margaret Anne, her father and grandparents at the Russel Erskine Hotel during the winter and at 206 Gates Avenue in the summer where the family lived from June until September. I lived on her toy shelf with all her other animals and dolls during the day and at nighttime I slept cuddled next to her.

Often when she played with her dolls, I was included in her make-believe games and was often given the role of being the teacher or sometimes the dolls' nurse. Those were such happy years when I played an important role in her life. From the time she was twelve until she was fifteen, during the summers she went to a sleep away camp in Poland, Maine. Soon after she would arrive, I was shipped to her and remained on her bed every day and slept with her at night. Nights in Maine were colder than Alabama and we kept each other warm under a pile of blankets.

The other campers had stuffed animals on their beds and during the day when the girls

were out playing sports and swimming, we stuffed animals talked to each other and told stories about our lives back home. The others were fascinated listening to my adventures at the county fair and living in a small southern town because none of them had ever traveled to Alabama.

When Margaret Anne was fifteen, she went to boarding school in Washington, D.C. and I was shipped to her to keep her company at night and to help her from being homesick. We would talk about how hard her courses were, especially Latin. I always reassured her and did a good job of helping her to build self-confidence. I also talked to her about living with her roommate because she had no brothers and sisters.

Since I had lived with so many other stuffed animals, I was able to share my experiences and explain to her how important it is to listen and be respectful when living with others.

It was during her college years that she left me at home on the shelf. She had grown too old for dolls and stuffed animals. I had thought our lives together would continue forever and did not think about the fact that one day she would grow up and no longer need me. First, she stopped playing with her dolls, then her other stuffed animals, but I remained with her. Even though she had given away most of her toys to friends with young brothers and sisters, she had kept me on a shelf in her room.

Before she married and moved away from Huntsville, Margaret Anne packed me away in a box with her diary and other memorabilia from her youth. She didn't say a word or explain what was going on because she had forgotten how to talk to me, which is what can happen when people grow up. They keep their thoughts to themselves and stop using their imagination. The box was hard and stuffy and so without any control over what was happening to me, I took a long nap.

Then one day the box was opened and there was Margaret Anne. She gave me a hug that felt so good. I knew that she had become more mature because she had regained her imagination. She spoke to me and said that she was taking me home with her to New Orleans to play with her young son who was two

years old.

After I arrived, my life in New Orleans was like what my life had been with Margaret Anne. Her son John was my playmate, then his sister Bobbie who was born in 1968 and Laurie who was born in 1971. There seemed to always be a younger child who needed me to cuddle with at night. By the time all three had gone to college, I was again packed away with some of their toys and many of their books that contained wonderful children's stories. During the years that followed while in the storage box, I read many of the children's stories and wished that one day a story would be written about me and my adventures.

It was in 2002 when Margaret Anne was cleaning out her storage room and came across the box with John, Bobbie and Laurie's children's books and



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toys. She had forgotten about me and when she lifted me out of the box her face lit up and I knew she had an idea. She told me that she was going to send me to her first grandchildren who lived far away in Jerusalem and that I should prepare myself for a long trip.

I felt our connection rekindled when she hugged me good-bye and packed me in a large, padded box and shipped me to Israel. When I first arrived at the airport, I was examined by the people at the Customs Office. Then I was put back in my box and driven to the Hanaw's house at 22 Rashi Street near the Old City in Jerusalem.

When I arrived Margaret Anne's grandchildren, twins Elisha and Elazar opened the box and welcomed me to their home with lots of hugs, knowing that I had belonged to their Bubbie (Yiddish for grandmother) and their Aba (Hebrew for father.) My first days took a bit of adjustment because the Hanaw family spoke both Hebrew and English.

Being a quick learner, I became bilingual and could understand their Hebrew, but I continued to speak to the boys in English. We had a wonderful time together and they played with me just like Margaret Anne and her children had played with me long ago.

Over the years, having been played with by Margaret Anne and her three children, I had lost an eye and my red and white covering had become dirty and tattered. The twins' mother Brocha is a wonderful seamstress and she decided that I needed recovering.

She and the twins went to the shook (market) and found some lovely red and white material just like my original covering. Brocha also bought some new glass eyes for me and thread for my mouth and nose. We came home and she made a pattern and then cut out the new material and made my new covering and sewed it around me so that I looked just

like I did almost sixty years ago.

I was so happy with my transformation; it was like magic. The boys loved me and took turns sleeping with me. As the years passed there were more Hanaw grandchildren including Abigaile, Isaac, Deborah, and Elianna. All played with me; I had a wonderful time repeating the adventures I had many years earlier first with Margaret Anne during the 1940s and her children during the 1960s and 1970s.

When the grandchildren grew older, I was left on the shelf in the girls' bedroom. While sitting on the shelf, I remembered all the children's books I had read during my years of being stored away and had an idea. Since Margaret Anne was writing my story, I decided to take poetic license and write the ending of my story myself, one that would provide me with a happy future.

It was a rainy winter day and John was wandering through his house after the older children had moved away and the younger ones were at school and noticed me on the shelf in the girls' room. He took me downstairs and put me on the bookshelf in his office. He plans to keep me there until he has grandchildren himself and will give me to them, which assures me that I will always be loved by future generations of Goldsmith - Hanaw children.

Epilogue
Teddy Bear Lived Happily Ever After.





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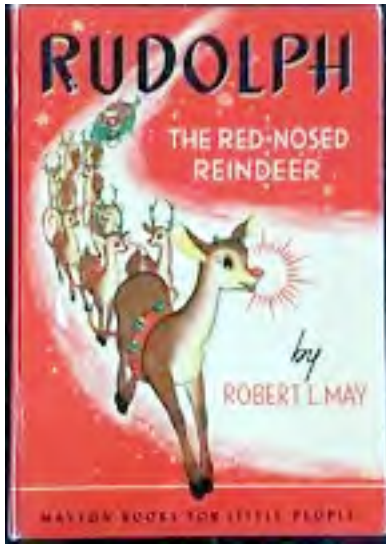
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The Joy of Christmas (1946)

By Bill Alkire

It was a Joyous Christmas Season in 1946. Mom and I had moved from above Kraft's Bakery in February of 1946. Mrs. Sophia Kraft had moved to where her sister lived in Vermont after her husband died. We had moved to Mrs. Flora Gothrup's Boarding House, on Kerns Avenue in Elkins, West Virginia for college age single women; it was a delightful place. I got along well with Mrs. Gothrup and the people who ran the house for her. She was a first cousin of my father's family.

Mrs. Gothrup was indifferent to my mom, and there was a lot of friction between them. My mom disliked obeying the House Rules and broke them repeatedly.

I had received a book in August for my birthday from Mrs. Gothrup which held a story/poem written by Robert L. May, published in 1939 by Maxton Publishers. The book was titled "Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer". It was a child's book which had been sold by Montgomery Ward since 1939.

As Christmas approached, everyone was busy. There was a music studio in the house and piano, strings, and voice lessons were heard all day. The studio was getting ready for a Christmas Recital. Christmas music was playing on the Crosley Radio. The Golden Age of music was still growing in West Virginia. Phonographs were becoming affordable, and Mrs. Gothrup had several 78-rpm records. She enjoyed music by Bing Crosby, Frank Sinatra, and Perry Como. She also played the Ray Noble Orchestra; Jazz and Blues were her most popular genres. She was into the big band sound of Benny Goodman, Duke Ellington, Louis Armstrong, Tommy Dorsey, and Sammy Kaye.

Mrs. Gothrup had decorated the living room, the Baby Grand-Stein-way piano and stairwell banister in a festive holiday mood. A twelve-foot Christmas Tree loaded with tinsel, garland, fragile balls from Europe, and bubbling lights from Italy had taken residence in the living room. Setting throughout the room were many serving dishes of homemade hardtack candy, candied fruit slices, various mixed nuts, colorful decorated cookies, fruitcake, and my favorite, shortbread cookies from Scotland.

The entire house smelled of homemade bread, rolls, ginger, cinnamon, and sweet spices. The mantle was decorated with fresh pine, pine-cones, holly and scented candles. A lone stocking hung from the fireplace mantle, mine.

I aided in the decorating as much as a boy going on six could do. I got out my book about Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer, for everyone to share. Mrs. Gothrup and I had gone shopping at the Montgomery Ward Department Store. I discovered a cardboard punch-out figure of Rudolph that a child could fit together. They were free.... I got one to put on the mantle.

Over the next few weeks, I got three more for a total of four,

two to place on either side of the mantle. Christmas eve came.... after dinner and mass, I was ready to stay up and wait for Santa Claus.

The oak fire log in the fireplace was crackling and was burning well. Other stockings had been hung on the mantel in addition to mine. A glass of milk was placed on an end table close to the Christmas Tree,

A plate of shortbread cookies and scones were left for Santa Claus. I crawled up in a soft chair to wait for Santa. Mrs. Gothrup covered me with a small quilt to prevent me from getting cold if the fire burned down. I was ready to wait and watch for Santa Claus.

I was doing well waiting on Santa. I heard the big Grandfather clock in the dining area ding twelve times, no Santa yet. I stretched my legs out and pulled the quilt up closer to my face. I heard the old Clock ding again, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6.... "Oh no, that isn't right," I claimed to myself. I had slept through the night and had missed Santa Claus' visit. The cookies and milk were gone; only the scones remained. I guess Santa did not like scones... it must be an acquired taste.

Mrs. Gothrup came in to check on me, "I am sorry you missed Santa Claus," she said, "Why not go to bed? I will wake you up about 9:00. OK? You can open your gifts with everyone else." It was a great Christmas, even though I missed seeing and visiting with Santa Claus. At 9:00 o'clock we assembled and opened our gifts, had a delicious special Christmas brunch, and we all thanked God for the many blessings we had received.

That was one of the best Christmases I ever experienced. It was my first, last and only Christmas I shared with Mrs., Gothrup. We moved before the next Christmas.

I stayed connected with her up into my teen years when she died of lung cancer. She was a confidant and friend and appears in many of my writings.

An Amish Christmas

By Dale Lone Elk Casteel

It was in 2001 when I decided to build a log house down on Elk River. The company I bought the logs from suggested a crew of Amish people that they had used at different times. I talked to David Gingrich who was in charge of this crew and they agreed to build my house.

During the time they were building my house, I became friends with David and the ones that worked with him. Since then I have become good friends with David and his wife Mary. They only had two children at that time, Josh and Marian. They now have three more children living; Judith, Diane and Kari.

I have visited their home many times and they have come to my home. This family is very dear to me. I love them very much. Mary is a very good cook and on occasion during my visits she would be baking bread or cookies. I always left with a loaf of bread or bag of cookies.

David called me about a week before Christmas asking if I would like to come up to their school to see their children do a little Christmas presentation. I told him that I would love to come, so on Thursday night before Christmas, I drove to the school which is between Summertown and Hohenwald, Tennessee.

I arrived a little early so I walked in and took a seat at the back of the room. The girls were practicing one of their songs. David and Mary's little girl Diane saw me and waved. She then looked around at the other

girls. I believe she thought she had done the wrong thing.

I believe there is about twenty five students in the school from first grade up. All the children had parts in the play. Each one did their part without missing a word and they knew all the songs they sang. It was amazing to me that these young children could learn and remember all of their parts.

It was a joy for me to be among these people and to listen to the children give praise and honor to God and Jesus Christ. It was just pure and simple worship of our Savior. These children are not influenced by the outside world. They were focused on giving our Lord the praise He deserves.

The girls were dressed in their full length dark maroon dresses with their prayer caps on their heads. The boys were dressed in dark pants with white shirts and wearing suspenders. They all looked very nice.

After the program, you didn't see the children running out to get a cell phone stuck in their ear. They did not have to worry about getting home to get in front of a television or to get on a computer to play video games. I would think that when they returned home, they put their night clothes on and laid down knowing that they had done the Lord's will that night.

The sole purpose of this Christmas program was to celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ. The children did a wonderful job of doing that. I thank them for letting me be a witness to the occasion. It was truly a blessing for me.

The outsiders are living in this fast paced high tech world of today. I don't believe that impresses the Amish people at all. It sure doesn't impress me anymore. The Amish people live a good life because they put their Creator first in their lives, just as the Native American Indians did before the intruders landed on the shores.

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Saving Lucky Charm

By Sarah Davis

Huntsville firefighter Bob Rouse had no experience in mouth-to-snout resuscitation before that Sunday in January, but he thought it was worth a try. The fire that brought Rouse and Engine Company IB to Bide-a-wee Drive was out. Glenda Barnett and her 10 year-old son, Brandon, had escaped the flames without injury. Everyone was safe -- they thought.

"I was just going through and opening up windows, and there he was, lying in the middle of the kitchen," said firefighter Sterling Parsons. "He" was Lucky Charm, the Barnetts' 7 year-old Chihuahua. The dog had left the burning building, but the cold-natured, short-haired pooch found the early afternoon air too chilly and went back inside. He had passed out from inhaling the smoke.

Parsons rescued Lucky Charm from the building and brought him outside. "He didn't have too much time left in there," said Rouse, who spent about five minutes breathing for Lucky before the dog came to. "You've got to do something. I couldn't just let him die," said Rouse. "You just hold the mouth shut and breathe through its nose -- pretty much like you do for a baby."

"That is my baby," said Glenda Barnett, who wrapped the front of her flannel shirt around Lucky Charm as he shivered pitifully and nestled close to her.

Perhaps most upset by Lucky Charm's brush with death and the blaze that displaced the family was young Brandon. He said he acciden-

tally started the fire while playing with a lighter.

"I've given spankings for it before," said Glenda Barnett, shaking her head. "He seems to have to learn the hard way."

Brandon stood tearfully in front of his mother, Assistant Fire Marshal M. L. Jones, and the charred home where his dog almost died. "I want you to know how serious it is what you did today," admonished Jones, the son of a local preacher and someone who knows how to give a good talking-to. "You're in trouble. I'm not through with you yet."

Since the fire, Brandon has met and talked with Jones at the fire station, and gone through a two-month campaign to convince Jones that he has learned his lesson. Brandon was required to write weekly letters to Jones, and also to watch videos, narrated by a cartoon character, that show fire damage. "That way, he'll have to think about what he did for a couple of months," Jones said, explaining the fire department's program for educating children who play with fire.

Incidentally, the fire had destroyed just about everything, but fortunately the Barnetts had insurance. "I'm just glad we're all alive," said Glenda Barnett.

From Greater Huntsville Humane Soc. Pet Gazette 1996



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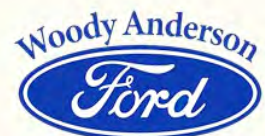
The Ford Motor Company views its situation today less with pride in great achievement than with sincere and sober realization of new and larger opportunities for service to mankind.

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NEWS FROM HERE AND THERE - 1907

In 1907 - Preacher Condemns the Sins of Huntsville

Rev. J. H. Newberry, who is conducting revival meetings in the big tent at the Calhoun lot, says that Huntsville has many influences for evil. He has directed his batteries at the popular amusements of the city and says that the picture shows, the skating rinks and the natorium should not be tolerated by the Christian parents of this city.

He said that the mothers who allow their daughters to go to the rinks and roll on the skates there are allowing them to run the risk of rolling on into hell. He said that the bathing pool and the picture shows have influences against social purity. He promises to continue in his denunciations until he receives a sign telling him to stop.

Two weeks later the following article appeared:

"The gospel tent that has been put up in the Calhoun lot for the Evangelistic services that were to have begun Sunday afternoon, was blown down in the storm of Sunday afternoon, an hour or two before the services were scheduled to begin. It was impossible to open services then. Preacher Newberry is spending the time working on new sermons."

Huntsville Real Estate Bargains in 1907

\$5,500 Two story, 7 room brick residence on Randolph Street, large lot.

\$5,000 The old Gordon property on Lincoln Street opposite Presbyterian Church. Large lot and brick house.

\$4,100 Two story 8-room brick residence on Randolph Street, lot 106 x 200 feet.

\$2,000 Buys 17 lots in Cast's addition on Patterson Street.

\$2,750 Buys 4-room tenant house on Adams Avenue.

Hollywood Stars Testify at Communist Hearings (Reprinted from 1947 Huntsville City Newspaper)

Actor Ronald Reagan, President of the Screen Actors Guild, testified before the House Committee on Un-American Activities today and said that the guild is not controlled by leftists.

Yesterday, in its third day of hearings on Communism in the film industry, HUAC declared it would present "at least 79" subversives in the coming days. Actor Robert Taylor testified against other stars. His deposition was not as damning as the panel may have hoped; he failed to specifically name any card-carrying Communist infiltrators.

Taylor's arrival at the session was greeted with appraising gasps by women spectators. He took a seat before a microphone and swiftly stated, "I personally believe the Communist Party should be outlawed. If I had my way they'd all be sent back to Russia,"

He suspected a few actors, but added sheepishly, "I don't know whether they're Communists." He noted some Screen Actors Guild members "who, if not Communists, are working awfully hard to be so." After 30 minutes of questioning, Taylor retired from the session.

Next week, a group of Hollywood stars plan to protest the hearings. Humphrey Bogart, Lauren Bacall, Jane Wyatt, Danny Kaye and Gene Kelly are among them.

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Dr. Billy Joe Renfroe: An End of an Era

*by Stan Kendrick (with a lot
of help from Dr. Renfroe)*

October 31, 2022 was an end of a great era in North Alabama of Veterinarian Medicine. Dr. Billy Joe Renfroe retired as a veterinarian after caring for animals in this area from guinea pigs to a black bear. Myself and many, many other pet owners will lose the services of a great veterinarian, friend and man after 49 years of outstanding friendly, compassionate, brilliant and truly professional veterinarian performance.

Dr. Renfroe was born in Huntsville, AL in 1947. When he was 9 years old his family moved to a farm which evidently had an impact on his decision to pursue Veterinarian Medicine. He attended elementary school at Lincoln Elementary then Sparkman High School, going on to graduate from Athens High. From AHS he attended Auburn University receiving his Doctorate in Veterinary Medicine in 1973. He then performed his Veterinary Internship in Clarksdale, MS. Dr. Renfroe started his veterinary practice shortly thereafter working with Dr. Joe Pettus, Dr. Sam Eidt and Dr. Charles Horton. In 1991 he opened Renfroe Animal and Bird Clinic with wife Jocie as Office Manager.

Over the years he has experienced many unusual cases as he pursued his career. A couple that stand out in his mind are one where he wrote a health certificate on the wrestling of Black Bears in the area. Another is the situation where he treated sick Bengal Tiger cubs for the Barnum and Bailey Circus as they performed in Madison County, Alabama. He is one of the Veterinarians in this area who treat birds and exotic animals.

Dr. Renfroe and his wife Jocie have two sons and daughters-in-laws and three grandchildren who all live in Burbank, CA. His wife Jocie retired a few

years ago due to non-threatening health problems and spends more time visiting them. He and Jocie live on a farm in the Toney, AL area of Madison County with their four cats and two horses. His advocacy is music (country, gospel and bluegrass). He plays several instruments including the guitar, mandolin, dobro and fiddle. A very talented man. He told during an appointment with my English Bulldog Ruby, that if his musical "chops" were better he would love to do session work in Nashville, TN and Muscle Shoals, AL as more of a hobby instead of a career.

My daughter-in-law Tina worked for him in the late 1990s and early 2000s and my son Jason has heard him play. According to Jason he is a tremendous musician. I hope he pursues his dream of a studio session guy and enjoys it. I have been a customer of his for 20 plus years with several canines and can say I am going to really miss him as Veterinarian and a friend. He said he thought of working until his health makes him stop but goes on to say what kind of life would that really be. He wants to enjoy life without worrying with health issues.

He plans to visit his family in California more often. He has really earned his retirement, we will be without an honest, caring and fair Veterinarian. I know there are more like him available in the area, it just won't be the same.

An end of an era my friend.



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***Merry Christmas to all, especially to the
Huntsville High Class of 1966***

WITH LOVE FROM OSCAR LLERENA

MY THREE CHRISTMAS MEMORIES

by Elizabeth Wharry

Feliz Navidad - Spanish; Joyeux Noel - French; Frohliche Weihnachten - German; Nolloig Shon Duit - Irish; Christ is born! All ways to say Merry Christmas.

Following are three of my best Christmas memories.

December 1974. I had just turned 16. I will never forget the greatest sermon I never heard. One Sunday at church, a man dressed like John the Baptist was holding the Bible over his head chanting, "Prepare ye the way of the Lord". He was walking up one aisle. Coming from another aisle was a man dressed as Santa Claus. He was holding a box wrapped in pretty paper, extolling the latest, greatest, newest, "bestest" thing you know you want.

Both men met in front of the altar and grew silent. The minister said, "What does Christmas mean to you?" As I walked out of church that wintry morning, I started to look at Christmas just a bit differently.

Suddenly, all the beautiful decorations took on a whole new meaning and my attitude towards preparing for Christmas had changed. I didn't mind the cold as I helped hang our single string of outside Christmas lights.

Fast forward to December 2007. My family and I had moved to Wichita, KS a few months earlier. I had just celebrated my 50th birthday. Our boys were 5 and 8. As part of a family tradition, we drove around looking at all the houses that were lit up. Those houses inspired me to "light up the night" as well. It was a definite change from Ohio. The lights

and decorations were more extravagant.

December 2009 found us here in Alabama. What a difference! No single-digit temperatures with wind chill factors to deal with any more. It's cold, but not breathtakingly so. There was much more to see, especially the stunning displays at the Galaxy of Lights. If it's been a while, or you haven't been to see it, take the time to do so. It is nothing short of magical.

This November I turned (gulp) 65. To this day that sermon that I heard, or rather didn't hear, remains with me.

Merry Christmas to all.

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Wernher von Braun

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Winter on the Shore (Bayfield County, WI)

by Joe Cadotte

Sandstone pillars, originally reaching towards the sky, arc and lean across the dry arctic tundra. The same variety of trees lining the villages, towns and cities along the shore, stand stripped and colorless - across the powdered forest's cliffs and edges. An occasional birch breaks the monotony of hibernating trees, silhouetted against the pale landscape, although pretty, not enough to draw color other than white, silver and gray.

The polar north reaches as far south as the Zenith City (currently Duluth, MN) a pearl reflecting across the shore in its grasp.

Underneath the edge of the land, below gnarled tree roots and compacted soil, a wide pocket of sandstone is painted with a rainbow of red, orange and clay colored ice. When it's cold enough, ice clearer than glass paints the clay pocket walls under the forest's edge with translucent waves, some frozen 15 to 20 feet up the sandstone.

The land is sad in an emotional way, as if some great climax had been torn from it with the same force that had elevated the stone pillars, stripped the trees and impaled the area with a 2,700-mile crater of freshwater ocean. Everything reaches upwards as if clinging onto another land passing in the sky, before people, when the area had been rained on by mountains. Underneath the land, the snow solidifies and appears blue after breaking and fracturing across the take.

This season is not fleeting. It's completely stopped. The only thing fleeting are the people trying to hang out and take pictures of these things. I laid down here once, across the ice, to take pictures. This is before I had my brother's extreme-for-cold, Army green parka with its synthetic furry hood.

A lot of things are untouched in the deep north. Faucet water tastes better than bottled water where pipes aren't eroded. A lot of the tens of thousands of

freshwater bodies are too cold to swim, I guess, too cold to touch. It's so cold here, the land even tried to escape. The cold preserves a lot of things.

It's too cold for Manifest Destiny. The deep north's shores and villages are rich with indigenous culture where the original language is preserved and spoken by thousands of people. Spiritual practices, some thousands of years old, can be seen practiced inland and along the shore.

The cold can be fun to play with. In 2011, I saw an online video of someone throwing water into the air from a boiling pot. It was supposed to show that it was cold enough for the water to vaporize before hitting the ground. One night, when it was 30 degrees below zero, I took a pot of boiling water off the stove and dumped it over my apartment railing. It didn't vaporize though. Instead, it poured all over a few cars in the parking lot underneath the balcony. It was 30 below without wind-chill too. A true 30 degrees below zero. It must have been too much water.

This winter, as people across The Tennessee Valley brace for the rising cost of utilities, many people in the deep north are preparing to pay thousands of dollars per month to heat their homes. I was raised in a home with a wood burning stove. Although I much prefer 30 degrees above zero in the south, than 30 degrees below zero in the north, I miss the intense heat of the fire in those arctic winters.

I wonder if it will be cold enough this year for waves to freeze solid against the sandstone along the shores of Lake Superior.

**"If at first you don't succeed, try again.
Then quit. No sense in being a fool about it."**

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Memories of Christmases Past

by William Sibley

Each year as December approaches, my thoughts turn to Christmases past, to holiday traditions carried out at home, at church and at school.

Preparations began with a search for just the right tree. In the past, nearly all of our Christmas trees were cedar, which grew in abundance on our property, but the Leonard Taylor family on at least one occasion chose to decorate a pine tree from our family farm. I usually cut Christmas trees for Big Cove teachers Miss Hazel Colbern and Mrs. Mary Sue Enfinger, for which I was paid ten or fifteen cents per tree. The trees would be erected in the classroom and draped with strings of popcorn and cranberries, chains of red and green construction paper, sprigs of holly and other homemade or homegrown decorations.

About two weeks before the Christmas school break, students would draw names, and on the last day before school was out, we would exchange inexpensive gifts. Popular items were coloring books and colors, bolo bats, jacks, marbles and chocolate-covered cherries.

At Big Cove Cumberland Presbyterian Church, the tree was so tall that the women of the church used stepladders to decorate it. We always had a Christmas pageant acting out the story of Christ's birth. Almost every year when I was a child, cousins Paul Drake, Robert Drake and Worthem Drake were the Three Wise Men, but when I was a teenager, Charlie Mills, Douglas Taylor and I played those roles.

Only one of the Wise Men had a speaking part, a one-sentence line, and somehow Charlie and Douglas got me elected to do that part.

A few nights before Christmas Eve, after we had completed our last pageant rehearsal, Paul Drake drove his Uncle Will Drake's large farm truck loaded with hay and carolers about Big Cove, stopping at the homes of elderly and shut-in citizens.

I taught at three Madison County schools, and at each, we kept alive the traditions of tree-decorating, gift exchanges and the sharing of holiday sweets.

One of the most enjoyable traditions at Owens Cross Roads was the decorating of a live cedar tree with "snow" that we made by adding a small amount of water to Ivory Snow laundry detergent and using an old-fashioned hand-cranked egg beater to whip it into a froth. The children would take handfuls of the foamy mix and pull it through the branches, creating the effect of frozen precipitation. Then we added icicles, and sifted dry detergent through the branches, creating the look of fresh falling snow. The tree was

"Bachelors know more about women than married men. If they didn't, they'd be married too."

Peggy Balch, Owens Cross Rds.



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beautiful and fun to create, but the undertaking was messy. Fortunately, we had the foresight to spread a blanket at the base of the tree to catch falling "snowballs," and we always had plenty of paper towels on hand for cleanup.

At Brownsboro School we had a large campus with many small cedars perfect for Christmas trees. I took my double-blade axe to school, and my fifth-graders and I located and cut the perfect tree which they decorated with paper chains and other items of their own making. They also made other decorations for the classroom, and they were very proud of the creations which gave us so much joy during the Christmas season.

One year at Madison County High/Elementary School at Gurley, my seventh-graders drew names and exchanged toys. They played with the toys until 1 p.m., at which time they took them to needy pupils. The students enjoyed getting to play Santa Claus.

Another year, three school buses loaded with more than 100 pupils rode through Gurley and sang to the elderly and shut-in citizens. The first stop was at the home of a retired pharmacist who was a 1913 graduate of Madison County High. As we traveled from home to home, we were met at front doors by people on walkers and in wheelchairs, thanking us for singing to them. Some of our pupils were brought to tears and vowed to visit the senior citizens again. A local TV personality followed the buses and filmed the event. The students were excited to see themselves on television.

For many decades my family has come together on Christmas Eve for a meal. When we first began meeting at our homeplace, our parents and nine of their ten children were alive. (A sister died in preschool age.) Our traditional meal included ham and sausages that came from hogs slaughtered on our small farm. My father cured the hams. We also had biscuits, salads and desserts.

Mrs. Mary Buford, widow of Milas Buford, was my Sunday school teacher when I was a teenager, and later we taught together at Owens Cross Roads. Her family celebrated their Christmas Eve meal the way we did. Mrs. Buford once told me of baking 80 biscuits for her meal. My mother probably baked that many biscuits for our large gathering.

Our Christmas Day breakfast consisted of ham and sausage left over from Christmas Eve, freshly baked biscuits and Mama's homemade blackberry jam. That was just a prelude to the midday feast, which we called dinner, a meal which included ham, turkey, dressing, cranberry sauce, potato salad, sweet potato casserole, ambrosia, boiled custard, and an array of home-baked cakes that included caramel, coconut, chocolate, and fruitcake.

Santa usually brought each of us an inexpensive toy (pick-up sticks, kaleidoscopes, piggy banks, jacks, marbles, yoyos...) and lots of nuts, oranges, apples and candy. One year my mother learned about a boy in our community who got nothing for Christmas. My mother filled a box with a toy,

apples, oranges, pecans and candy, and had my brother Bob and me deliver the gift to the boy, who was overjoyed.

My mother fixed meals for the Yugoslavian immigrants who lived on our place. Nothing pleased her more than cooking for family and friends, so she probably enjoyed Christmas more than anyone else in Big Cove.

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A DOG NAMED CHRISTMAS

by Elizabeth McKinney

Many years ago, we went to my parents' house for Christmas Day. Dad told us he'd been to the lake just above their home and found that someone had abandoned a small puppy there.

Dad had taken the dog some food, but he worried that the puppy would die in the bitter cold weather. He couldn't bring it home to his place; he was afraid it would grow into a big dog and chase the neighbors' cattle.

When we left that day, our daughter wanted to go see the puppy, so we drove to the lake. That pup was a sorry sight, so cold, sad and alone. But my husband told our daughter we couldn't have a dog.

When we left, our daughter couldn't stop crying. My husband finally relented and told her we'd go back to get the dog, but it

would be her responsibility.

She named the puppy Christmas, Chris for short. He grew into a large dog, as Dad had predicted, but he was a loving creature and the whole family adored him.

When we went to church near our home, Chris always followed us. He'd lie on the church porch during services, then go home with us.

When my father became ill, we couldn't always get to church. But our minister told us Chris never missed a service. He would lie on the porch, just as he always did; then Rev. Pope would come out and tell him church was over, and Chris would come home.

The minister began calling him the church dog. The name stuck and most of the people in our small community called him that.

Chris has been gone for many years now and our daughter is grown, with a daughter of her own. But she still keeps a picture of our beloved church dog on her dresser.

Sweet Nut Snackers

- 1 egg white
- 3/4 c. brown sugar
- 1/2 t. vanilla extract
- 2 c. pecan halves

Heat oven to 250 degrees. Beat egg white til it stands in soft peaks. Mix in vanilla and brown sugar. Fold in the pecans. Spread over large cookie sheet covered in parchment paper. Drop pecans with fork, do not let halves touch. Bake in oven for 30 minutes. Turn oven off and let pecans stay in the oven for 30 more minutes. Store in airtight container. These can be frozen and are SO good.

A New Feature in "Old Huntsville" Magazine

In January 2023 there will be a new feature for you to love. It will be called "Snapshots in Time" and we need you to help us. We need photos from years ago, black and white or color, showing a moment in time that you loved.

It can be:

- Funny
- Sad
- Unusual
- Memorable

Along with the picture, send a very short (1-2 sentences) description of what is in the picture. If it's a large group of people we won't have room to put the names, 1 or 2 max.

Send jpeg picture and text to oldhuntsville@knology.net, with a short description. We need date, place and subject. There will be 4 chosen per month!

"Snapshots in Time"



Judy Chandler Smith, far left, at Miss Irene Jones' Dance Studio Recital, June 1958. Judy's mother would only pay for dance lessons in the 3rd and 4th grade, and said that was all. Judy went down to Miss Jones' studio and talked her into teaching the little kiddies dance as an instructor, and got her lessons free. She did a work trade-out for her lessons.

One Christmas During WW II

by Lois S. Miller



World War II, 1939 to 1945, was a tough one for many families. My Father was farming, although he did not own his own land, so he was one of the last men to be drafted. I was about seven when he was called just before Christmas 1944.

Because he was in the business of farming, there was very little money in the family when he had to go away. Daddy moved us from the country to a little house in a very small town.

My Mother had a teacher's degree and found work as soon as she could, teaching at the nearby school. However it was quite sometime before her first check arrived and it was also quite sometime before she received an allotment from the Army.

When we moved into the little house there were old things left behind by the former residents. My sister, Lavon, (2-1/2 years older than me) and I began to investigate around the house and in adjacent lots. We found some old glass doll dishes and we gathered them up and washed them as best we could after we played with them for awhile.

We were afraid Mother would not like us bringing in dishes from the adjacent lot so we hid them under the front porch. My Mother wanted Christmas to be special although it was our first Christmas to ever be apart from our Father.

She cut a tree from the adjacent lot and we cut rings from paper, glued them

in circles, joined them and made a beautiful string of paper rings for the Christmas tree. We also strung popcorn and made beautiful popcorn strands and our tree was so pretty to us. Lavon and I were really enjoying decorating the small but beautiful tree, and Mother seemed pleased.

Come Christmas morning there were very few presents under the tree. There were oranges, candy and believe it or not there were the dishes from under the porch. The present of dishes were from Santa to me and Lavon.

These were the very same dishes that Lavon and I had hidden under the front porch earlier. Apparently even Santa was having a tough year.

I didn't totally understand the significance of this until my sister explained things to me and suggested we should not mention the fact to Mother that we had put the dishes under the front porch earlier.

We did not want to put a damper on Mother's Christmas joy.

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Goldsmith Schiffman Field

by Johnny Johnston

It's on the way from where Mullins used to be, where I would meet some friends on Monday morning. I still drive by on occasion to stir my memories. Memories, like paint and vegetable soup, have to be stirred sometimes, that keeps the best coming to the top.

My preacher told me once that I should think in the future, that thinking of the past was a waste. Maybe so, but it's more fun to remember things that will never happen again; not in the future, not in the past, they are gone.

There was that day during WWII when I was 5 or 6 years old and Dad took us to see a demonstration of "War Battle" being displayed at Goldsmith Schiffman Field, west of Five Points neighborhood.

There were several small buildings resembling a coal house, out-house or chicken pen. A clown dressed in an Army uniform traveled from building to building and each time he left, that building exploded with dynamite. Other events of the day are dim but I do remember some tanks and other Army units on display and some folks marching on the field with musical instruments.

Then there were the other times at Goldsmith involving football games, concession stands where I volunteered while in high school. Football in the '50s involving Huntsville High and Butler High were held at Goldsmith. Butler was a fledgling school just a year old when it fielded a band to play at the games. A field marching band was not yet developed however they did play the two or three tunes they knew from the stands.

Grady Reeves called the games on WBHP or maybe WHBS. The first night, he made a statement that got him in hot water with Butler and especially J. Homer Grim, the Principal. He said during half time, "Huntsville has a good

show on the field with their band, but I only hear a bunch of noise from the Butler Band." Monday morning found Grady Reeves at Butler High apologizing over the public address system.

Our football team was not weak with Glenn Nunley, Jimmie Butler and others playing. They were a powerhouse. On one occasion the game was tied 7 to 7 by Huntsville when they were the underdog. That Monday we arrived at Butler to see 7 to 7 written on the side of the building. I am told that the same week all the Huntsville trophies were painted green and gold. I was told that, I never saw it.

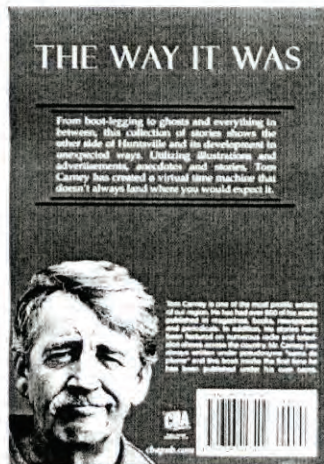
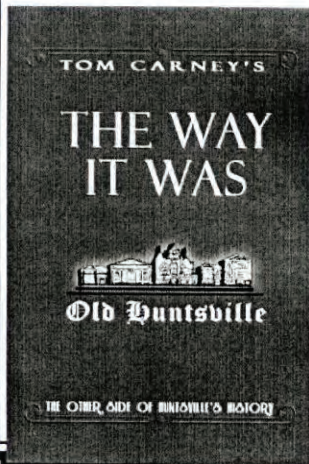
The last game I remember attending was the Butler /Huntsville football game of 1958. The stands were overflowing and people were standing several deep all around the fence.

My, have things changed.

"I hate to advocate drugs, alcohol, violence or insanity to anyone, but they've always worked for me."

Hunter Thompson

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



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Generally speaking, the more your fruit is covered in cloves, the longer it will last. Simple clove studded fruit can last a month or so. But if you want it to last longer, you'll find directions below for making pomanders that last months, even years!

You will need:

Oranges, Lemons, Limes
Whole cloves

Wooden cooking skewer or thin knitting needle

Optional ingredients for longer lasting pomanders:

1/4 cup ground cinnamon

1/4 cup ground cloves

2 tablespoons ground nutmeg

2 tablespoons ground all spice

1/4 cup powdered orrisroot (this ingredient will help the pomanders last extra long - find it in stores like Fresh Market and Whole Foods.



Instructions: Take the wooden skewer or thin knitting needle and poke holes in the fruit where you want the cloves to go.

You can make patterns (like the swirled orange or other designs) or just randomly stud the fruit with holes. Insert a whole clove into each hole, firmly, with the pointed end into the fruit.

In a large bowl mix the optional spices (If you have more than 2 oranges increase the amounts).

Carefully place your pomanders into the dry spices and cover with the mixture. Leave for a week or so and you're ready to display or hang with ribbons or other decorations.

The good smells will put you in the Holiday Mood!

"When I'm bored I like to go outside, look up and smile for a Google Earth picture."

Pat Riley, Huntsville





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WORDS OF WISDOM (?)

by Jerry Keel

If you feel down and out just take a look at the trees outside. The leaves are so beautiful in the fall and early winter months as they go through their yearly transformation from green leaves to their splendor while the trees rest for a spell. While some will be amazed at the beautiful colors on display others will see the leaves as just another thing to become upset about.

The leaves falling are beautiful but when they hit the ground they become a chore to be reckoned with. If you live in the city the leaves have to be raked and bagged to be picked up. For residents in the county the process is somewhat similar. You have to get the leaves to the side of the street but they must be put in garbage bags. The county sanitation department then picks them up and hauls them to the county landfill. City or county pickup can become quite a chore especially for the elderly residents. Raking is great exercise but is just too much for some folks.

The city leaves are then carried to a dump site where they will stay while they go through the decomposting process. When the leaves finish the composting, the end result is a wonderful compost which can be added to the soil. The decaying leaves add many beneficial ingredients to the soil making the soil very fertile.

Now, finally, after all the stuff about how good the compost is when added to the soil I will get to the real reason for this story. Almost every subject has its pro's and con's. While I am by no means qualified to discuss this subject I can pass along some thoughts that came to me. The point I would like to make is how each person has the freedom to choose his or her individual way to address any subject that comes along. The glass can be half full or half empty. The leaves can be beautiful to look at or just another job that must be taken care of.

The sun can be beautiful or it can be bad because of its ability to burn the skin if you are exposed too long to its rays. When observing another person they can be too short or they can be too tall; too loud or too quiet; too lean or too fat; and on and on. The idea for me is to try an answer that causes a smile to come to my face.

Don't get me wrong – I frown quite a bit. But I try to choose happiness over sadness with each opportunity. Very few people can go through life with a big smile on their face all the time but we can strive for happiness in every situation that pops up.

Try it sometime – you might be surprised!!

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PET TIPS FROM ANGEL

Holiday Pet Safety



The holiday season is upon us, and many pet parents plan to include their furry companions in the festivities. As you gear up for the holidays, it is important to try to keep your pet's eating and exercise habits as close to their normal routine as possible. Also, please be sure to steer pets clear of unhealthy treats, toxic plants and dangerous decorations.

Be Careful with Seasonal Plants and Decorations

- **Oh, Christmas Tree:** Securely anchor your Christmas tree so it doesn't tip and fall, causing possible injury to your pet. This will also prevent the tree water – which may contain fertilizers that can cause stomach upset – from spilling. Stagnant tree water is a breeding ground for bacteria, and your pet could end up with nausea or diarrhea should he imbibe.

- **Avoid Mistletoe & Holly.** Holly, when ingested, can cause pets to suffer nausea, vomiting and diarrhea. Mistletoe can cause gastrointestinal upset and cardiovascular problems. And many varieties of lilies can cause kidney failure in cats if ingested. Opt for just-as-jolly artificial plants made from silk or plastic, or choose a pet-safe bouquet.

- **Tinsel-less Town:** Kitties love this sparkly, light-catching "toy" that's easy to bat around and carry in their mouths. But a nibble can lead to a swallow, which can lead to an obstructed digestive tract, severe vomiting, dehydration and possible surgery. It's best to brighten your boughs with something other than tinsel.

- **That Holiday Glow:** Don't leave lighted candles unattended. Pets may burn themselves or cause a fire if they knock candles over. Be sure to use appropriate candle holders, placed on a stable surface. And if you leave the room, put the candle out!

- **Wired Up:** Keep wires, batteries and glass or plastic ornaments out of paws' reach. A wire can deliver a potentially lethal electrical shock and a punctured battery can cause burns to the mouth and esophagus, while shards of breakable ornaments can damage your pet's mouth and digestive tract.

Avoid Holiday Food Dangers

- **Skip the Sweets:** By now you know not to feed your pets chocolate and anything sweetened with xylitol, but do you know the lengths to which an enterprising pet will go to chomp on something yummy? Make sure to keep your pets away from the table and unattended plates of food, and be sure to secure the lids on garbage cans.

- * **Leave the Leftovers:** Fatty, spicy and sweet human foods, as well as bones, should not be fed to your furry friends. Pets can join the festivities in other fun ways that won't lead to costly medical bills.

- **Careful with Cocktails:** If your celebration includes adult holiday beverages, be sure to place your unattended alcoholic drinks where pets cannot get to them. If ingested, your pet could become weak, ill and may even go into a coma, possibly resulting in death from respiratory failure.

- **Selecting Special Treats:** Looking to stuff your pet's stockings? Stick with chew toys that are basically indestructible,

Kongs that can be stuffed with healthy foods or chew treats that are designed to be safely digestible. Long, stringy things are a feline's dream, but the most risky toys for cats involve ribbon, yarn and loose little parts that can get stuck in the intestines, often necessitating surgery. Surprise kitty with a new ball that's too big to swallow, a stuffed catnip toy or the interactive cat dancer.

Plan a Pet-Safe Holiday Gathering

- **House Rules:** If your animal-loving guests would like to give your pets a little extra attention and exercise while you're busy tending to the party, ask them to feel free to start a nice play or petting session.

- **Put the Meds Away:** Make sure all of your medications are locked behind secure doors. Be sure to tell your guests to keep their meds zipped up and packed away, too.

- **New Year's Noise:** As you count down to the new year, please keep in mind that strings of thrown confetti can get lodged in a cat's intestines, if ingested, perhaps necessitating surgery. Noisy poppers can terrify pets and cause possible damage to sensitive ears. And remember that many pets are also scared of fireworks, so be sure to secure them in a safe, escape-proof area as midnight approaches.

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Alabama Birdman

by Tom Carney

An amazing part of Huntsville's early history can be found inscribed on a brass plaque at the Smithsonian Institute in Washington, D.C. Oddly enough, though millions of people a year see and read the plaque, few people in Madison County know the facts.

The inscription tells the story of how the first airplane flight in Alabama (and possibly the world's first monoplane) took off from a farmer's pasture in Madison County around 1909. This flight signalled the real beginning of the aviation industry as we know it today.

William (Will) Lafayette Quick was born near Shiloh, Tennessee, in 1859 and later moved his family to a small community outside present-day New Market which became known as Quick's Mill. An industrious man, he set up a grist mill, blacksmith's forge, saw mill, and machine shop in the late 1800s and began to dream of flying.

Quick had begun talking of what he called aerial navigation before the turn of the century. Although he had never heard of anyone trying to fly before, he decided to attempt to build a flying machine.

He was convinced by his study of the birds, bats, insects, and other flying creatures that man-made flight was possible. Although Quick had no formal education, he had the vision, skill, and drive needed

to fabricate a machine that would fly. He was adept in carpentry and had a thorough knowledge of machinery and propulsion.

Around 1900, Quick began what would become an eight year design and construction project. With meticulous attention to detail, he built his first prototype of a monoplane, then chose his son, William, to fly the plane.

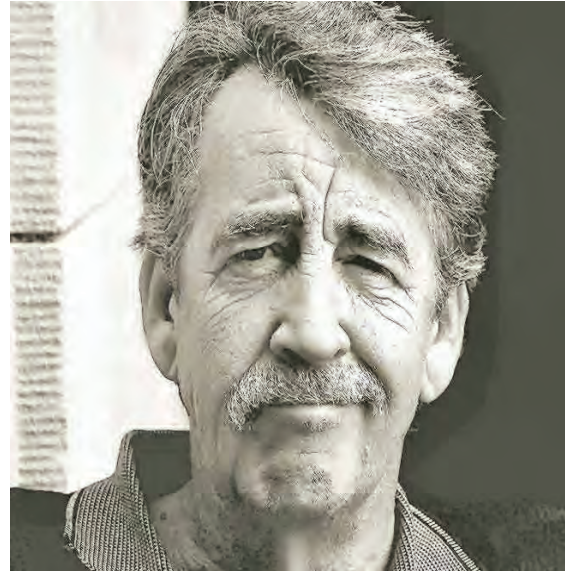
The flight lasted for only a few seconds. William achieved an altitude of a few feet, but then ran out of pasture. Unfortunately, while trying to turn the monoplane, he clipped the ground with a wing. The wing was damaged, the propeller broken, and the landing gear torn off, but the plane remained mostly intact.

Quick took the plane back to his shop and there it stayed for some 60 years, gathering cobwebs, forgotten by family and friends alike.

That event marked the beginning of the Quick family's career in aviation. Eight of Quick's children became pilots. Some were barnstormers and others were pioneers of the crop dusting industry.

In 1970, the Experimental Aircraft Club discovered the remnants of the dilapidated monoplane in Will's old shop. After the club obtained the consent of the family, the plane was restored to its original condition with almost all original parts. It is now on public display at the Huntsville Space and Rocket Museum.

Although the flight lasted only a few seconds, it was a major accomplishment in aviation, and Huntsville history.

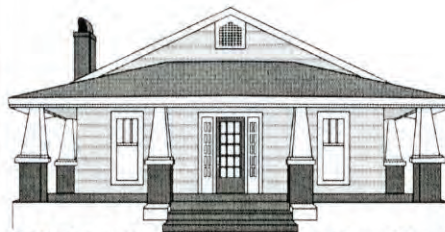


"Why is it when a woman tells a doctor she's all tired out, he immediately looks at her tongue?"

Karl Peterson, Madison

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A GERMAN CHRISTMAS

by Annelie M. Owens

Weihnachten means Christmas in German. As a youngster, growing up in Berlin, I recall many times when I happily celebrated Christmas with my family. It was a time when my 3 brothers and I, as well as all children in Germany, looked forward to with great anticipation.

In my family, my parents closed off one room about three days before Christmas. We knew why the room was closed to us and knew that we were not permitted to look into this room - and we made sure that we did not.

On Christmas Eve, after patiently waiting, we finally heard the tinkle of the Christmas bell which my mother rang. It was the signal for us to go into the room to see all the presents and the decorated tree. This room had our piano in it and the first thing that we did was to gather around the piano to sing Christmas carols as my mother or brother played.

We thought that the Christmas tree was beautiful and a work of art. My father was in charge of the tree. The tree was fully decorated and in addition had numerous lighted candles, real ones. The candles had to be placed such that they would not be in contact with any of the branches and cause a fire.

Following the singing, we went to the table to pick up our toys or gifts. Each child had a specific place on the table for his or her gifts.

These were fond memories with much fun and laughter. Sometimes we had friends and relatives with us to share this enjoyable evening. After the festivities in the Christmas room we all went to the dining room and sat down to our traditional Christmas dinner.

Carp was (and still is) considered a delicacy in Europe and was the usual main course in Germany and in other parts of Europe, just as turkey and ham are in the U.S. My mother prepared this dinner with all the trimmings and it was delicious. The children drank a fruit drink and the adults enjoyed their wine.

Later on we had more singing until we were all ready to call it a day and go to bed.

Cathey's French Onion Soup

4 onions sliced
1 T. garlic powder
3/4 stick butter
4 cans beef bouillon
3 bay leaves
4 T. flour or corn starch

In a large frying pan heat the butter over med/high heat. Add garlic powder. Add onions and stir, turn heat to higher and cook onions about 8 minutes and they're a bit caramelized. Turn down the heat and add the flour, mix well. In a large sauce pan pour the 4 cans of soup, then 2 cans of water. Pour the onions into the soup, add the bay leaves and cover. Heat til boiling then turn down and simmer for about 45 minutes.

To serve, pour into bowl, top with toasted bread and 3 slices of your choice cheese. Put under a broiler til the cheese is browned.

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"To be without some of the things you want is an indispensable part of happiness."

Bertrand Russell

A Bearden Christmas Tribute

Celebrating the Christmas Spirit of Dad
James O. Bearden, Sr. 2/12/1931 - 12/27/2021

I dedicate this Tribute to Those Whose Loved Ones
Will be Absent this Holiday Season

by Rosetta Bearden



The renowned, smooth jazz guitarist George Benson coined the song, "Everything Must Change." Lyrics go something like this: "Everything must change, nothing stays the same. The young become the old, mysteries do unfold, 'cause that's the way of time, nothing and no one goes unchanged." Similarly, the Word of God firmly declares, "For everything there is a season, a time for every activity under heaven." There is a time and season for it all, and each of us will at some point along this journey called life, experience those different seasons and changes.

For my family, the Bearden family, the Yuletide Season is definitely our most favorite time of the year! Magic seems to fill the air. Kindness and sharing abides, even in the hearts of strangers. We marvel at the

innocence and twinkle that permeates the eyes and faces of children. There's great anticipation and expectation as recipients eagerly wait for the unveiling of special gifts. Suddenly, a must-do surge sweeps over us to reach out and touch those for whom circumstances have otherwise prevented contact with over the past three-hundred and something-days. Gatherings abound everywhere! And, last but certainly not least, it's the Birth of our Savior and soon-coming King, Jesus Christ.

Contrary to popular opinion, life wasn't a bed of roses or crystal staircase for us, but tough times were more bearable by having God-fearing parents who put God first and kept Him at the center of all we did. They worked hard and were honest, salt-of-the-earth type people who treated others just like they wanted to be treated. They held themselves to the standard of having servant's hearts and cultivated a habit of praying through challenging situations early on in their marriage. Consequently, they arrived at a place of peace, that peace that surpasses all understanding, during their moments of quiet time, worship and reflection. That peace is what sustains us to this very day.

Hailing from humble beginnings and shanties made of brick and mortar wasn't obvious to us as children, because our parents exuded such a richness of spirit, heart and soul. They gave us confidence, stability and such a solid foundation, that we actually thought we lived in castles! They entrusted all they had into God's hands and He multiplied it one-hundred fold! Masterfully, they transformed our house into the warmest abode and made it a safe place where everyone felt welcomed.

At Christmas time and any other time, visitors quickly captured the essence of their genuine, inviting, nurturing spirits and unconditional love.

Mom was the quintessential homemaker whose gentleness, charm and elegance accentuated her immaculate decor, causing passersby to exclaim, "Rosetta, I just love going by your house to see the beautiful decorations!"

Her demeanor, combined with Dad's undeniably larger-than-life



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personality, made them a "match made in Heaven." From the get-go, Daddy was this cool, calm, collected, chivalrous, jovial and bubbly guy, and as the two of them meshed, it made our home a place everyone loved to congregate. Especially during holidays! Come one, come all and the more the merrier was Dad's motto! Friends would flock from far and near to our home and festive tables. Invitation, or not!

Our parents ensured the Christmas spirit illuminated with the brightest glow, and flowed into every nook and cranny of our home. From the mailbox, sidewalk and front door, tinsels trailed all over the perimeter of our property. They'd deck the halls with holly, trim a multitude of trees with amazing ornaments - of course their most beloved were the ones Mom put our pictures in. And, a collection of different types and sizes of angel's wings opened and closed as they sweetly sang Silent Night. Jolly Ole Saint Nick's robust arms were either waving or beckoning you to draw nigh. Trinkets softly chimed, as carousels, embossed in ceramic and gold, twirled. Skaters dazzled our guests as they elegantly glided across ice rinks. Rudolph's red nose blinked, as monogrammed stockings for everyone spilled over with Christmas candies. Gorgeous poinsettias adorned nearly every room. And, we always left notes for Santa and his reindeer and made hot chocolate and baked cookies and ginger bread for their Christmas Eve arrival, when we were toddlers.

That awesome aroma of traditional soul food cuisine that Mother prepared was at the heart of Southern life at Christmas time in our home. It so infused the air and stimulated one's senses that it'd literally hypnotize you once you indulged. It would more often than not cause commuters to come to an abrupt and screeching halt on that historic and always-busy thoroughfare running alongside our home,

and just pop in! They'd say in the most hilarious fashion, "We were just following our nose!"

No problem, welcome to our Winter Wonderland!

Our parents had an open-door policy anyway, so it was always "Open House" at the Bearden's. They'd roll out the red carpet and began spreading Good Cheer from Thanksgiving until.... Friends and neighbors alike spontaneously called because they knew they were assured happy times, a festive feast fit for a King, or at the very minimum - Daddy enthralling them as he shared old stories, during a wonderful "chat and chew!"

Mom hung the prettiest Mistletoe each year that she and Dad never failed to christen. They were such a handsome couple and sight for sore eyes, and were included on everybody's holiday guest lists. I recall them both dressing to the nines, ever so elegantly and dashingly and in all of their finery, as they attended the most beautiful Christmas balls. Daddy and my only brother, and eldest of the three of us, James, Jr., would assemble toys and make delicious homemade ice cream when we'd have one of those rare White Christmases. Then, we'd bundle up to play in the snow, build snowmen and invariably face-off in a snowball fight.

Other mandatory family rituals included attendance at all of our church's Christmas rehearsals, programs, plays, recitals and cantatas. When our church wasn't in session and after I started driving, I, as the self-proclaimed event-planner, would fill up our calendar and map out routes so we could see as many other wholesome activities as possible. My schedule would entail packing Grab-N-Go holiday snacks, warm beverages and loading the car to capacity to joy-ride all over looking at decorations, the Nutcracker, street and boat parades, being serenaded by melodious sidewalk carolers, crashing plays of other congregations and partaking of Christmas Eve Candle-

light Communion services, and the like. What a joy and marvelous, memorable time we had!

Another absolutely beautiful and precious adult-memory etched upon our hearts, was the birth and gift of my parent's first grandchild, who was born on Christmas Day. Make no mistake about it, God gave us the greatest gift ever given to mankind when He sent His Only Begotten Son, Jesus Christ, on Christmas Day! He also graciously blessed us with our lovely niece, Brooke Danielle, on Christmas, too. Boy, what a shocker that was!

My sister Deborah and her husband, Keith, called during the wee hours of the morning, after we'd been up ALL night long finalizing finishing touches and perfecting everything, and said, "Well, y'all, it's time!"

"Time for what?" I asked, rhetorically? I then said to myself, "You've gotta be kidding me! Don't you realize it's Christmas Eve and we're getting ready to celebrate Christmas?!" Silly me. The news media obviously swarmed in to interview the beaming parents, but of course, Daddy, being the ham that he always was, stuck his chest out and totally stole the show! You would've sworn no other granddad existed, but him. He was definitely one proud Papa.

Brooke and her brother, Blake, were Dad's most prized possessions.....after his baby girl, of course, me. After all, I am not only Daddy's baby forever, I was named after my Dad's mother. Now, how about that?

Sharing was the theme in our home, not just at Christmas but always. We were taught sharing is caring so we gave abundantly, not only to family, but to those less fortunate. Dad and Mom also took great pride in being grandparents to five foster children. Equally rewarding was the tireless work we watched Dad perform as a lifelong member of the Fraternal Club, a civic organization.

We'd pack food baskets, toys

and monetary gifts alongside Dad, then, load up the car and spread joy all over town to the less fortunate. It was fun and satisfying too to race each other to drop donations in the Salvation Army's supply, upon hearing the bells ringing as the Red Kettle volunteers solicited help for the under served.

It is so true that parting is such sweet sorrow. Those familiar sights, sounds, smells, sparkle and everything about Christmas time will be quite different for us this year. Just as every other brutal first thing we've had to encounter in 2022, the upcoming holiday season will be yet another one of those hard first things to face. And, perhaps for some of you, too?

Yes, sharing our journey down through these past decades of joyful, cheerful and celebratory holidays with Dad has ceased, here on earth. We're so grateful to God that all of those times were as close to perfection as they could get. They were timeless moments, unforgettable memories and treasures that we will carry in our hearts forever!

For those reasons, and, so many more, and for the rest of my life, I will always remember Christmases spent in our home with our Dad as we continue to celebrate his spirit and legacy!

For this year, Mom says in Dad's honor, our home will shine no less bright than it has in the past. It'll glow and glitter as brightly as bright can shine as we pay homage to his memory, with every candle and light known to man. Love, and tables full of her delectable cuisine, shall continue to be centerpieces of our festivities and the precious memories of Daddy that we hold near and dear to our hearts, shall always and forevermore be the backdrop.

God lovingly gave our Mom, Georgia, my brother, James, Jr., my sister, Deborah, as well as me, the benefit and good fortune of Dad's love, his wisdom and provisions, his kind and generous heart and soul and we are forever grateful.

George Benson goes on to say, "Rain comes from the clouds, sun lights up the sky and humming birds do fly. Winter turns to spring. Wounded hearts will heal. Never much too soon, everything must change."

The seasons of life, and change, are inevitable. In Ecclesiastes 3:1-8, the writer affirms - "There's a time to be born, a time to die, a time to plant, a time to harvest, a time to cry, a time to dance, a time to grieve and a time to dance....." Amen.

The link in the Bearden chain broke when Dad's golden heart stopped beating at 7:18 a.m., December 27, 2021.

He transitioned from labor to reward, crossing over The Great Divide on that sad, somber, sobering, cloudy and chilly Monday morning. That "Sweet Chariot" swung low and summoned Daddy to his Heavenly Home.

And, though it was SO hard to see the Bearden patriarch go, and our hearts shattered into a million tiny pieces (and continue to break), as the undertaker removed his mortal remains from our home, and though we've had our fair share of meltdowns, have grieved and experienced unannounced crying spells (which are far from over, I'm sure!), we do not, I repeat, we do not mourn as those who have no hope.

Daddy fought the good fight,

he kept the faith and he finished his course. His work down here is done. So, we take heart! And, we want to encourage you too to know that we have the blessed assurance of knowing we shall see Dad, and you'll see your loved ones again too, in their resurrected new bodies and in that gloriously Sweet By and By.

In closing, and on behalf of my darling Mother and beloved family, I'd like to express my profound gratitude and thanks to Mrs. Cathey Carney for requesting a glimpse into past Bearden Christmases. Composing this piece for Old Huntsville Magazine has most certainly been therapeutic and overwhelmingly healing for me.

Blessings upon you and yours this Christmas Season, Mrs. Carney, and all the readers of this phenomenal publication! May those of you who've lost loved ones be comforted, and may you all experience happiness, health and wealth, and peace and prosperity of mind, body, spirit and soul in the New Year!

Merry Christmas Blessings to our Dad, and all of those whose loved ones are gone on to The Great Beyond!

Lovingly Submitted, Rosetta Bearden



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Local News in the Year 1875

A frightful mistake

An interesting case of death from careless use of poison lately occurred. A blacksmith named Wilder after a week of drinking went into a drug store and called for an ounce of chloral hydrate, which was properly labeled and given him. He went home, put the entire ounce into a glass of water and drank it down with a view to having a good sleep and to recover from the effects of his drinking.

Hardly had he touched the bed where his wife lay, she noticed a strange look upon his face and hastened to his side. He said, "Sally, it's no use, I've made a mistake and am a dead man."

In twenty minutes from the time he took the mixture he was a corpse. Five grains of chloral hydrate is a safe dose for a person wishing sleep, but this man took an ounce, four hundred and eighty grains at once and paid the sad penalty. His funeral will be held today.

Missing

A local farmer, upon opening his chicken house today, missed two of his birds; but then on the other side of the cage he found two fingers in the trap. They haven't been called for yet.

Lost

Either at the Opera House or on the street between the Opera and Dr. Dement's residence, a Porte Monnaie containing a purse with forty dollars - three ten dollar bills, the balance in small change. The finder will be rewarded by leaving it at the Independent office.

Moved

Drs. Binford and Dement have moved to the office on Franklin Street, third door from the east corner of the Public Square in Huntsville.

Strayed or Stolen

From J.A.B. Allison in New Hope, Ala. about six miles northeast of Vienna on the Paint Rock Road, one dark brown mare mule medium size about ten years old. Saddle marks on back, rather heavy set, a knot on each shoulder point. Any information in regard to the whereabouts of the mule will be rewarded.

Girl 5 years old chews tobacco in court

Grace Murphy, a five year old child, while sitting on the lap of her father in the crimi-

nal court, where he is on trial for the killing of J.T. Myrick, in the western part of the county several months ago, startled spectators by taking a big chew of tobacco, which was offered her by her parents.

The mother of the child, who was sitting just to the rear of the husband and father in the courtroom, with all five children of the pair, admitted that her little daughter was used to chewing tobacco and did not think anything of it. The little girl herself laughed when she heard inquiry being made about her chewing.

The father took the big chunk of tobacco out of his pocket and deliberately handed it to the little girl, who bit off a piece and began chewing on it.

Husband Carved Wife's Outline on Mattress

Mobile, Al According to the story of Julia Fortner, who is suing for a divorce, her husband John G. Fortner used her as a model for his experiments in sculpture, but his methods were very objectionable to her.

"My husband was in the habit of sleeping with a razor under his pillow," she said. "One night he came in late, took the razor and with it cut the outline of my figure out of the mattress and left me lying on an island of excelsior with only a tiny margin about me. I woke up during the procedure and he told me that if I moved he would cut my throat."

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THE NICK NAME

by Doug Martinson



My grandfather Claude E. Barnes owned the Claude Barnes Grocery Store, that was located on Fifth Street (now Andrew Jackson Way). The store was in the middle of the block between the current location of Hill's Lawnmower Sales and Eunice's Country Kitchen.

The Fifth Street Baptist Church (now Andrew Jackson Way Baptist Church) had a Christmas program on Christmas Eve night around the year 1941.

At 2 a.m. on Christmas morning Willis Routt, the Constable of Dallas Village, was making his security rounds in the Village when he heard someone holler "HELP".

When Willis walked in the alley between Carroll's Grocery and Barnes Grocery he discovered that a man had attempted to break in the Barnes store by climbing down the chimney. Of course, the burglar was stuck tight in the chimney.

Willis called the authorities and the Dallas Village Fire Department answered the call and pulled him out.

The Village people nicknamed the man and after that date his name was "Santa Claus".

The above facts were given to me by my mother, Annetta Barnes Martinson, who was the oldest daughter of Claude E. Barnes.

Christmas Encore

by Anna Welikonich Lee

When I was a girl growing up in Pennsylvania in the 1940s, Christmas was full of fun, food and family time. My parents and my three younger sisters and I celebrated with grandparents, cousins and the many other relatives and friends who lived nearby.

We considered it a very special day.

And then...and then...13 days later we did it over again!

It happened that way because my father belonged to the Ukrainian Catholic Church, which followed the Byzantine liturgy and the old Julian calendar that was established in 46 BC, instead of the more prevalent and current Gregorian calendar. All of the holy days happened twice.

In those days, stores did not have constant marked-down sales, so my father's family members would wait until after the regular Christmas and then splurge on gifts for us. We got a lot! One year I got a red velvet dress. Almost every year I got a baby doll.

The food was special, too. In order to honor the 12 apostles of Jesus, 12 foods would traditionally be served. Among them would be honey, broad beans with bits of prune, a loaf of round bread, mushrooms, pierogi and poppyseed rolls. Every member of the family had to take at least a taste of each food. My father would then put a touch of honey on our foreheads, for sweetness.

Looking back, I am grateful for the joyful Christmas my family enjoyed every year. And every year we did it twice!

BUTTERSCOTCH



Hello my name is Butterscotch. I am a male kitten and I'm not sure how old I am. I was found fending for myself outside the Ark Animal shelter about a week ago. The volunteers saw me by the outside dog kennels carrying a mouse. They managed to catch me and brought me inside where I was very scared. But after a few days and a few good meals I settled down and became the friendliest and sweetest cat here. I am a beautiful orange color and have a sort of half size tail that makes me look different than the other kittens. Soon I will be ready to be adopted. Would you like to come and see me? I am a very friendly lap cat and would love to have a home where I can live inside and be taken care of and never have to be scared again. If you come to the Ark, will you ask to see Butterscotch? That's me.

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Lacey's Senior Center Remembers Those Who Made It to Over 100

by Carol Barnette

The Senior Center in Lacey's Spring remembers celebrating three important birthdays in the year 2020. Mrs. Edna Mae Peck would be 101, Mrs. Bettye Fuqua would be 100, and in December Mr. Rubin Carroll would be 99.

Mrs. Betty recounted a delightful story recently. She said "One of my neighbors bought a brand new model A about a 1935." I heard a Crash, Bang! "He drove it right into Cotaco Creek. He never was a good driver." The men pulled it out of the creek, but it was what you'd call totaled. The men salvaged what they could. I mean, what you'd call a chassis, was all that was left. They fixed it so it'd run and that's how we all learned to drive. They had to put a big rock in the back rumble seat to keep it from bouncing around."

"We ran all over with as many kids as possible to hang on as long as they could. When we weren't driving it the little kids used it to play in." Well wouldn't you know, as soon as Mrs. Betty finished, Mr. Rubin chimed in. He had a good story too.

Mr. Reuben was stationed at March AFB in Riverside, California in 1945. He was a mechanic on the B-24 air plane and had to fly on it several times. He said, "I got leave to go home to Arab, Alabama, but didn't have much money, so I hitch hiked from the base to Flagstaff, Arizona with a man who was driving a Packard Rancher, no heat. Then I about froze at the bus station in Flagstaff, where he dropped me off.

I finally caught a ride to El Paso, Texas with an Army Officer, who was driving a Dodge. The Officer said he bought a new car for his wife, but she didn't like the color so he took it back. He said he never got the new car as the government took it for the war effort. This Officer let him drive all the way to Dallas Texas.

In Dallas, Reuben hitched another ride to Monroe, Louisiana where he

caught a bus to Birmingham. The entire trip took him 2 days.

"I remember on April 12, 1945 President Franklin D. Roosevelt died of a stroke. That's when I was to go to mechanic school for the B-29 in Seattle, Washington."

"In 1946 I made it back to California just in time to see the Rose Bowl game before going on to March Air Reserve Base." This base was established as an Aviation Museum in 1979. "The Rose Bowl game was between the Crimson Tide and the Trojans of USC. We beat the Trojans 34-14."

Reuben said, "I was discharged in February 1946 after reporting to Fort McPherson in Atlanta, Georgia. I had 35 points and you had to have 36 to go overseas. So I took the \$200 mustering out pay and \$7 for bus fare and got out."

Edna Mae added to these stories. She said, "On the 19th of June 1938 I snuck out of my grandmother's house, where I lived, without telling my Grandmother or my Father. I was going to get married."

"Our wedding was supposed to be at 1:30 in the afternoon, but Russell, my fiancée, didn't show until well after 5:00. He was driving a 1935 Chevrolet and had 4 flat tires. Each time he changed a tire he pinched the inner tube and got another flat. This all happened in a terrible rain storm. We had to get another preacher to marry us as the one we got left. Then we stayed all night in Priceville, because the thunderstorm was so bad. We got up the next day to leave and had another flat."

Now you can see why these birthdays are so important. Mrs. Bettye and Mrs. Edna Mae are no longer with us, but Ruben is. He will be 101 in December 2022. They were some of Lacey's Spring best Rook players, and always interesting to listen to.

"Horse sense is what keeps horses from betting on people."

Will Rogers



August 2011
Old Huntsville
HISTORY AND STORIES OF THE HUNTSVILLE VALLEY



The Life and Death of Bulldog Daniel

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