



No. 370

December 2023



Old Huntsville

HISTORY AND STORIES OF THE TENNESSEE VALLEY

Mail Your Child Home for Christmas?

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San Francisco Examiner on
February 22, 1914 said:

“Babies sent by Parcel Post must be
delivered to someone at the address.
Do not leave them on front doorsteps
or in the mail boxes in rural districts.

Feeding is optional, but it is not
advisable to give babies frankfurters
or boiled dinners.”



Also in this issue: Christmas in the 40s; Electricity Shines in Huntsville;
The Baracca Room; Remembering Oscar Dreger;
Honoring Kenny Anderson; Santa Forgot; Frank James in Huntsville Prison;
Tales from Redstone Arsenal; Pet tips, Recipes and much more!

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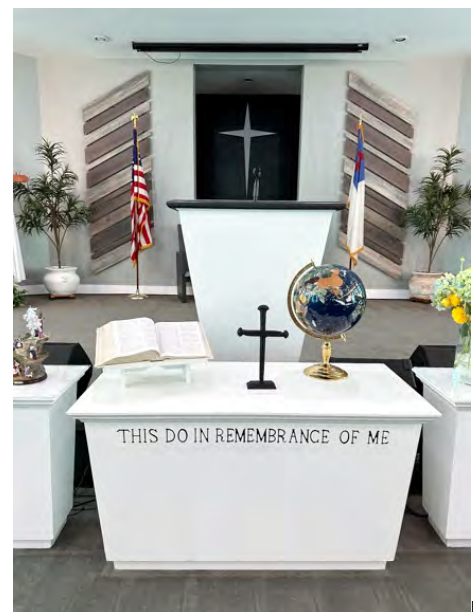
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Mail Your Child Home for Christmas?

by M. D. Smith, IV

In 1910, the U.S. Postal Department passed the Parcel Post rule, allowing for shipping almost any package via the new service as long as it didn't weigh over 12 pounds. A few years later, the weight limit was increased to 50 pounds. Virtually all packages were shipped via train in those days because it was the quickest and shortest way. There was almost always a Post Office at the train station. On the other hand, train tickets for people or children were quite a bit more expensive.

Here are some authentic stories that ran in newspapers over a span of ten years until shipping humans was prohibited.

One article printed in the San Francisco Examiner on February 22, 1914 said:

"TO MAIL CLERKS, RAILWAY SERVICE — Babies by

Parcel Post should be fed every four hours at the expense of clerks. Do not stick stamps on baby's face. All railway mail clerks must pass an examination to qualify in the art of dressing babies, and also in the knowledge of handling safety pins. Feeding is optional, but it is not advisable to give babies frankfurters or boiled dinners. Babies sent by parcel post must be delivered to someone at the address. Do not leave them on front doorsteps or in the mail boxes in rural districts. If the addressee refuses to accept such mail, wire Postmaster General for instructions."

Here are some examples of babies and children traveling cross country by Parcel Post.

From the Sauk Centre Herald, September 2, 1915. "Fargo, N.D. — Railroad officials are glad that the limit of dimensions and weight for Parcel Post packages are not great enough to include adult human beings, and while they are not worrying, they are, nevertheless, wondering when the practice of sending children in the state is going to stop."

"Recently, several children have been sent by the Parcel Post from homes on rural routes to persons in towns out of which the routes run, but probably the first instance of sending a child from one town to another by mail occurred

"It isn't necessary to see a good tackle. You can hear it."

Knute Rockne/Notre Dame



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P.O. Box 4648

Huntsville, AL 35815

(256) 656-5321

Email - oldhuntsville@gmail.com
(Website) www.oldhuntsvillemag.com

Publisher - Cathey Carney

Advertising - (256) 656-5321
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here when Freddie Colby, a 2 year-old son of Mr. and Mrs. Fred Colby, was shipped to the home of his grandparents at Valley City from Fargo."

"The mother was unable to accompany the boy to Valley City, and as Freddie came within the limit in weight and dimensions for Parcel Post packages, she took him to the Post Office, weighed and tagged him, and he went through without accident."

Multiple photos from 1910 to 1920 show proof of mailmen delivering babies in their mail sacks. Here's another printed story when the weight limit had been increased to 50 pounds.

"Savannah, Ga., March 29, 1919 — Little 6 year-old Edna Neff, who weighs under the 50-pound limit, wearing a placard bearing her name and destination, and 50 cents in parcel post stamps, passed through terminal station here on her way from Pensacola, Fla., to Christiansburg, Va."

That was in The Public Ledger from March 30, 1915.

Another story in the Pine Bluff Daily Graphic in July 1914 related: "Danville, ILL, July 18. — Eight-year-old Austin Kimball, weighing just under fifty pounds, was offered at the Parcel Post window of the local Post Office for transportation to Coal City, Ind., and accepted and 'mailed.' Attached to his arm was a tag bearing the address and stamps."

I know. I know. If we didn't have printed proof of this and photos of deliveries, you would find it hard to believe. But there are more stories. Here's another.

"Girl Sent By Parcel Post — Phoenix, Ariz., Oct. 23, 1919 — Audray Lenore Christy, six years old, arrived here today from Los Angeles, the first human Parcel Post package ever sent to Phoenix. When the little girl was met at the station by her parents, she said she liked the trip all right, but wished 'they hadn't stuck those ugly tags on my new dress and sweater.' Audray traveled by Pullman." Printed in the Albuquerque Morning Journal on October 24, 1919.

Another newspaper story told of one child who made the trip in a railway mail car: "Five year old May Pierstorff was sent from Grangeville to Lewiston, Idaho, to visit her grandmother on February 19, 1914."

"May was just under the weight limit at

48.5 pounds, and her parents realized that sending her by mail would be much cheaper than buying her a train ticket. They attached the postage — 53 cents in Parcel Post stamps — to May's coat, and she rode in the train's mail compartment all the way to Lewiston. She was personally delivered to her grandmother's home by Leonard Mochel, the mail clerk on duty."

Now, while I didn't find any specific stories of a baby or child delivered around the Christmas season, there is no reason they could not have been until after 1920, when the Postmaster General issued a general decree that humans could not be sent via Parcel Post. The practice turned out to be impractical and significantly more expensive to the Post Office department than wrapped packages, which Parcel Post was designed to do.

Sources:

<https://rarehistoricalphotos.com/mailling-babies-postal-service/>

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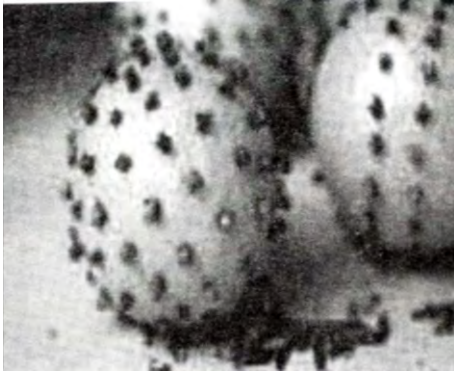


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Generally speaking, the more your fruit is covered in cloves, the longer it will last. Simple clove studded fruit can last a month or so. But if you want it to last longer, you'll find directions below for making pomanders that last months, even years!

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 each ground nutmeg and allspice

1/4 cup powdered orrisroot (this ingredient will help the pomanders last extra long.

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.

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!







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A CHRISTMAS SURPRISE

by Bill Alkire

Winter had arrived in 1968, with holidays fast approaching. Thoughts about what we should have bought and for whom for Christmas was on our minds. It had been cold and rainy for the last five days. The meteorologist had promised a sunny forecast for the next two days.

It was Friday, 20th of December, 1968. It was also our last day of work until Monday, 6th of January, 1969. Six of us engineers decided to treat ourselves and go out to eat. The downtown area had anything you wished to eat from hotdogs, country cooking and gourmet meals with vintage wine to excite your pallet.

I liked a good steak and went with a group that preferred steak without a lot of fanfare. The place we chose was Darryl's, it had picnic tables covered with butcher paper, and sawdust on the floor. Doug from Structural Design joined us. Doug and I had 1968 Mustangs and had started the local chapter of the Society of Mustangs. Doug's Mustang was a Meadowlark Yellow, GT Convertible, black custom bucket seats interior, Shelby Wheels, Air Conditioning, White Lettered Firestone Wide-Oval tires, 390 cid high performance V8, with a four-speed manual transmission. It was a beautiful car.

We finished our lunch and walked back to our office. When the whistle blew at 4:30 pm, as was our routine, we all walked out together to where we parked our cars. To our amazement and

Doug's surprise his Mustang was missing! Doug was petrified! He was planning to go to his home in Lumberton, North Carolina for the holidays. All the Christmas presents for his entire family were in the trunk of his now missing Mustang.

What was he going to do? A few of us stayed around to console him and wait for the police to arrive. Company security arrived before the police and made a report. The parking lot security cameras were not working. Convenient! The police took down everything and gave Doug a carbon copy for his insurance. Our friend Charlie took Doug to his apartment. It had to be a bleak Holiday for Doug and his family.

We all came back to work the 6th of January 1969. Sixteen days had passed, and Doug had not heard anything about the plight of his stolen Mustang. He called the police station each Monday in January and the first two weeks of February. Still nothing.

Charlie had his 1964 Impala Super Sport wheels stolen the year before and the thieves were never caught, or the wheels recovered. Charlie had more than a little animosity towards the police. Charlie continually encouraged Doug to call every day to aggravate the police.

This Tuesday, 18th of February, Doug at lunchtime realized he had not called to check on the status of his stolen Mustang. He had received notice the day before on Monday the 17th that the insurance would pay him for his stolen car, but not the gifts that were missing. When Doug called, a dispatcher answered the phone, everyone was out for lunch. The dispatcher asked Doug about the car, color, year, condition and model. She responded quizzing him more about the color. Doug told her once more that it was Meadowlark Yellow with a Black Vinyl convertible top. She asked if it had white lettered Firestone tires? Yes! Doug answered. The dispatcher requested Doug to supply the vehicle identification number which he did. She put him on hold. In about 3 minutes she came back on the line, his car was sitting outside the office and had been there since the 20th of December. The car had been towed from a Bus Zone that day.

Doug had driven his Mustang downtown for lunch. After a couple of beers, he forgot he had driven and walked back to work. Most of the presents were okay. The ham, however, was not - it had rotted and was full of worms. The insurance paid to have the car deodorized and Doug paid the fine, towing and the storage charges.

Doug gave up drinking that day. He had two DUI's; this incident stopped him "cold turkey." All of us involved never forgot about Doug's Christmas surprise.



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News Here and There - 1870



Young Girl Scalped Alive!

- While Emelia Grinnell, a young girl, was working last week in a shingle mill near here, under a shaft which was going at the rate of 200 revolutions per minute, her hair, which was very long, got caught in the knuckle joint, and in an instant was torn completely from her head. It took with it all the flesh and muscles, as well.

"From a line," says a local paper, "drawn around from each eyebrow, her skull was left white and bare, without a trace of blood or flesh." The strangest part of the accident is that she felt little or no pain, declaring that while it was being torn off all she experienced was a tickling sensation of her head. She coolly walked out of the room and waited patiently for a buggy to take her home.

The scalp, with its beautiful long locks of brown hair, was curled and entwined around the shaft at the joint, and when the mill was stopped it was taken down, but no one had the presence of mind to place it back on her head. It was nearly perfect, and the doctors have determined to tan it with the hair still on, so that when the girl recovers, it may be used as a wig. The case is one of the most remarkable on record.

- A local leader of the Scottsboro Temperance Society was unable to attend the meeting last week. He had been arrested for public intoxication.

- The city of Guntersville has a ladies' society called the "Sisters of Silence." It has two members, and they are both deaf and mute.

- A farmer near Hazle Green is advertising for a wife. The last four did not work out.

- A fight broke out at Maple Hill Cemetery when it was discovered that the deceased was wearing a new suit which the widow had stolen from her brother.

- A Huntsville minister was dismissed when it was discovered that he did not believe the warning against the wages of sin did not apply to him.

- A father near New Market is preparing to send his daughter to Nashville in search of a husband. All the eligible local beaux are cousins.

- A home near Gurley was destroyed when its owner used dynamite to get rid of rats.

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vice as a driving instructor. The lessons quickly proved disastrous. She would yell for the car to stop, blow the horn instead of shifting gears and turn the steering wheel in the

"Women like men who are quiet, they think they're listening."

George Carlin

Aunt Thelma Parks

by Bob Everest

My family never lived in Huntsville, but we often went there to visit my mother's only sister, Aunt Thelma, when I was a child.

Aunt Thelma was the most unconventional person I have ever met. She was born in 1900 and lived all her life on a small farm about five miles outside of Huntsville. She never married, saying "There ain't a man on this earth I could put up with for very long."

One of her passions was fighting roosters. She never fought them herself but every Sunday morning she would inspect her roosters, telling her hired hand, Rums, which ones to take and how much to bet. She would then go to church and pray for the sinners.

Aunt Thelma never learned to drive and always depended on someone else for a ride. In 1934 she decided the time had come to learn how. She sent Rufus to town with a wad of cash and instructions on exactly the kind of automobile she wanted.

Rufus was pressed into ser-

vice as a driving instructor. The lessons quickly proved disastrous. She would yell for the car to stop, blow the horn instead of shifting gears and turn the steering wheel in the

wrong directions. Finally, after several weeks, Rufus informed Aunt Thelma that he did not believe God ever intended for her to drive. He also threatened to quit if he had to give another driving lesson.

The car was consigned to the barn and once a month Rufus would drive it to the front of the house where Aunt Thelma would sit in it and wave at the neighbors who passed by.

Once a month Rufus would wax the car and once a year he would change the oil, even though the longest trip it ever made was to the front driveway.

In 1987 Aunt Thelma died and I went to Huntsville to settle her estate.

Most of her property was sold or given away but I had one item shipped to my home in Arizona where it remains as one of my prized possessions.

A 1934 black Ford with 163 miles on it.

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Angie, age 11

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Cardboard Sleigh Ride

*by Gerald Alvis,
The Poet of Greenlawn*

The crispness in the air and this time of year brings out the kid in each of us! The way we felt back then surfaces, bubbling up in remembrance and anticipation, surfacing to be enjoyed with the crunch of the leaves, the hope of snowflakes, and a visit including reindeer and a sleigh.

There is something that makes it more special, causing even the most bitter curmudgeon to yield to a smile. I hear it now in the distance as my wife and I complete our daily walk. A half dozen or so neighborhood children have gotten together with cardboard boxes (do you remember all the things we could make out of those?). They've opened them up to create makeshift sleds.

One by one they glide down the steepest yard in our neighborhood. The ones up top waiting their turn laughing as much as the cardboard rider himself. I mean I can't help but smile and chuckle. The joy and friendship they are sharing will be remembered for years to come.

It's a reminder why we are here and why we celebrate. It's joy, joy we share with each other, and joy to the world!

Merry Christmas!!

**"Love comes quietly,
without banners or flashing
lights. If you hear bells,
get your ears checked."**

Eric Segal

THE NICKNAME

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 Service, and where Eunice's Country Kitchen used to be on the east side of Fifth Street.

The Fifth Street Baptist Church (now Jackson Way Baptist Church, on the west side of Fifth Street) 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 to 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 decided to nickname the man and after that date **his name was officially "Santa Claus"**.

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



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Mama's Helper

by Ted Roberts

The saddest words a man can hear from a doctor is: "Your wife needs rest after her procedure, you'll have to assume most of her household duties." You never know how much they do until YOU have to do it. Washing, cooking, cleaning, etc. It's a heavy load, as we say every time we approach the washing machine.

And washing is one of the bittersweet curses. It's NOT automatic. Soggy, soaking wet sheets and shirts - like serpents have to be reluctantly yanked from the washing machine and thrown into the dryer. Some genius put them side-by-side but still there are complications. So many clothes - we must have an invisible roomer. And why are there basketloads of shirts weekly when I wear the same one weekly? Why not stretch a line across the yard and pin each soggy piece to it. Talk about solar power. Why not let the sun do the work and save electricity. I had so many creative thoughts like this, including: why not throw this slimy package in the trunk - and drive down to the river with a bar of soap?

Anyhow you get the idea. Washing with madam instructor standing over me was far from fun, even the cats sympathized. They knew something was amiss. The male two-foot who was usually sitting on the couch reading a book was crouched over those two

white boxes, too busy to scratch their head.

And did I tell you they had a litter box, which I thought was automatically emptied and refilled every three or four days? With my wife's temporary retirement, I found that she did it. As I assumed the job I calculated that efficiency demanded only a weekly change and that only a half bag of litter did the job. The cats proved me wrong when they mistook the bathtub for the litter box. Feeding them was another problem. Why not a bucket full of cat food once a week instead of the twice a day burden of filling up the bowl?

Meanwhile the house became a junk yard. Who knew that dirty dishes had to be walked from the dining room table to their home in the kitchen. Why not just leave them on the table for the next meal. I had many labor-saving inspirations like this. The wife was non-responsive. Why are bold, daring new ideas so hard to sell to practitioners of antique ideas?

Other household items never found their way to their allotted home. It became hard to move around without stumbling over a beer bottle or tripping over a stack of mail. You couldn't recline in a chair without puncturing yourself with a fork left over from breakfast. The instructress, comfortably resting on the couch, shouted commands from her couch headquarters and I obeyed.

Soon she recovered and life returned to the "old normal". But just so we'd never forget my attempted assistance, I continued to fill the litter box, but only halfway. Who knows besides the cats and they can't tell on me.

I reflected: Look how domestic life has improved for homemakers. My grandmother had to go down to the river to wash her family's clothes; my mother had to walk out to the backyard in all kinds of weather to dry them.

And now my wife steps into the garage to both wash and dry the family's dirty laundry. So simple and easy.

Life is NOT like a box of chocolates - more like a jar of jalapenos. What you do today might really burn you tomorrow.

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CHRISTMAS IN MY HEART

by Iolanda Hicks



My favorite season of the whole year is Christmas. I love Christmas! It's not the gift giving or the colorful sparkling lights that make me love it so. It's the feeling of kindness and gratitude that the season brings. People seem to be so much more considerate and giving: definitely nicer. I have so many memories of Christmas through the years. Not just one comes to mind but glimpses of all of them do, because they were all so special.

I go back in time and like an imaginary time machine, visions of past Christmases float through my mind. The 1950s brought lonely Italian soldiers stationed at Redstone Arsenal, and far from home, to my childhood home in Mayfair, to a Holiday celebration. Christmas carols were played on a piano, by me, while those young men stumbled to pronounce words to the songs in English. My Mother and her twin sister, recent to America, were Italian and able to make these soldiers feel more at home.

Time moves along and I see myself helping Dad, grabbing boxes of ornaments from the attic, then realizing he had disturbed a spider nest! Spider babies were crawling all over me, as I frantically tried to shake them off.

As time moves forward, I see the joy on my middle sister Dianne's face, as she found her beautiful doll that Santa had remembered she had asked for, under the tree. I can even smell that wonderful tree scent, a sign that Christmas is here.

Time continues to pass and the 60s arrive. I see my younger sister, Melissa, ecstatic, holding something, I can't quite see, in her hand that had been left under the tree.

As the 70s appear, I see my young son Jason pretending to be a cowboy in his new cowboy hat, chaps, boots and a shiny cap pistol, sporting a red roll of caps. The 80s and the 90s pass as more memories are made. My Mom, my aunt, my sisters, my son travel with me as the next century arrives.

My wonderful grandchildren are here: three grandsons!

I see the first born, Joshua, looking up in awe at a life size Christmas Grinch, a surprise from Santa. A few years pass and I see Kyle, the second born, pointing at the Christmas tree, jumping up and down, saying one of his first words, "twee". The lights on the tree sparked that excitement as was learned in later years. Colorful lights triggered that word "Twee".

Time continues in my memories and Logan, my third grandson, is whispering in my ear, telling me that he is Santa's Secret Elf. I see all three of them helping to decorate my tree and having fun at Grandma's house. Time passes and there are glimpses of celebrations with friends, Christmas surprises and then my first Christmas with my new husband David, 2017. We are celebrating Christmas quietly together, with contentment and happiness on our faces.

Our home stays filled with Christmas memories 24/7. Opening up the front door, a wooden manger with baby Jesus, a reminder of the true meaning of Christmas, greets anyone that enters. With a slight turn of the head, one sees small Christmas trees lit up with colorful lights and creations of Santa, snowmen and elves all around a small living room.

My Christmas memories are always with me and are alive in my heart, as if Christmas were today. Keep Christmas and love always in your heart. Merry Christmas!

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Fall is such a beautiful time of the year. Pests love it, too, especially mice, rats and wood roaches. They are looking for warmer quarters in the winter. If you spot any of these in your house, take precautions immediately because they multiply quickly. It is better to catch the pest early because if you put off taking care of the situation, it becomes a much bigger problem quickly.

Watch out for scams, especially with credit cards. The holiday season abounds with scam offers on phone, email, and texts. Don't use credit cards unless you can pay them off at the end of the month. The interest rate is way too high these days. Be sure to check your bill to see if all charges are yours. If you see charges that aren't yours, call the number on the back of your card immediately and report it. Not only do scammers love the holidays, they really search out the elderly. For Charity scams, beware and only pay on their website to be sure they receive your donation.

With electric heating bills on the rise, try these suggestions to lower yours.

1. Open drapes to let the sunshine in.
2. Close the damper on the fireplace when not in use.
3. Set the thermostat to 68 degrees. (Or as low as you can stand it.)

Look online and check out all the fun holiday things to do in Huntsville. Here are some to check out.

1. Burritt Museum
2. Christmas Parade on December 5 at 6:00 p.m. It will begin on Clinton near the Post Office and proceed down Clinton into town. VIP viewing in Mars Hall at VBC.
3. Galleries of Lights
4. Tinsel Trail
5. Madison Christmas Tree Display
6. Living Christmas Tree at the First Baptist Church on December 14-17.
7. The Christmas Festival Huntsville Concert Band on December 5 at 7:00 p.m.
8. Concert at the Library, December 9 at 6:00 p.m.
9. Christmas PJs Fun Run December 21 at 6:00 p.m.

There is so much to look forward to in December. It is always so busy that maybe these suggestions will help you get started in the festive mood for you and your family.

Grandma would write more, but she just got word that her precious Shih Tzu is in kidney failure, and if any of you know how hard it is to lose your pets, we are never ready to see them go.

So, until next year — Enjoy your friends and family and have a MERRY CHRISTMAS AND HAPPY HOLIDAYS.

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Christmas in the Forties and Fifties

by Austin Miller

In the forties and fifties Christmas was always lean for the Joe Miller family. We got something under the tree every year but it was very little. One year I got a BB gun that was so cheap it lost all its strength before the holidays were over. That was probably a good thing because two or three days after Christmas my cousin Howard accidentally shot me with okra seed a fraction of an inch below my right eye. I couldn't afford BB's and okra seed worked just fine, we had plenty of those left from the summer garden.

I always wanted a Lionel electric train but the closest thing I ever got to one was an off brand wind-up. Like the BB gun it didn't last until the first of the year. Our tree was not much to brag about either, we cut about a three foot tall straggly cedar from somewhere on the place that was decorated with icicles, a few ancient balls, a well worn strand of garland and one string of large multi-colorful oval shaped electric lights. Mama always took it down before Christmas day was over. My parents didn't get any gifts at all; I don't remember either of them getting anything for Christmas until I bought presents for them after I was grown.

Despite the meagerness of gifts and celebration, Christmas was my favorite time of the year. I loved the season. It was a good time for me. Mama always had fruit, nuts, and baked several cakes; these were things we didn't have the rest of the year. We usually had chicken sandwiches on Christmas day and at least once during the season we had hamburgers with a Double Cola.

I normally didn't like to go to church but I enjoyed the Christmas program at Shiloh Methodist Church. Hearing the congregation sing "Silent Night", "It Came on the Midnight Clear" and other old favorites lifted my spirits and

reminded me of what the season was all about. I would leave with awareness that this was a very special time of the year. Even today, my favorite church service is the annual Christmas Eve candle light and communion service at Holmes Street United Methodist Church.

But the best part about Christmas in my youth was the week off from school. It was my only vacation all year. We had split sessions so we could chop cotton in the summer and pick in the fall. From one Christmas to the next we were either in school or working in the field, sometimes both because much of the year there was work to do after school. We worked on the fourth of July unless it came on Sunday and Thanksgiving Day unless the weather was bad. The first time I got off for holidays was when I went into the Army in 1965. We only got one week for Christmas and in my early years school we didn't get off for New Years.

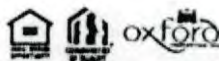
In those days Madison County, east of Huntsville, was rural from the city limits to the Jackson County line. Almost everybody farmed and having children out of school to work in the cotton fields as many days as possible was a necessary way of life.

My life now and the way I celebrate Christmas have changed considerably since my growing up years. When I look back the good old days were not so good. But there are things I miss. My father, who could not sing a lick and usually didn't, would sometimes stand on the front porch on Christmas Eve and bellow out a few bars of "Silent Night". Mama would always have some special treat, usually candy that she passed out on Christmas Eve. Doing that for us seemed to delight her and be the highlight of her Christmas.

I did learn an important lesson from those days. I learned that it's not what you get for Christmas, what you have to eat or even having time off; the real joy of Christmas comes from family, friends and being with the people you love. During each Christmas season, I try to contact every person that is special to me no matter where they live.

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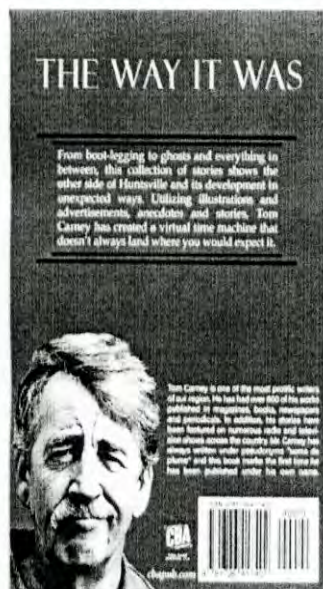
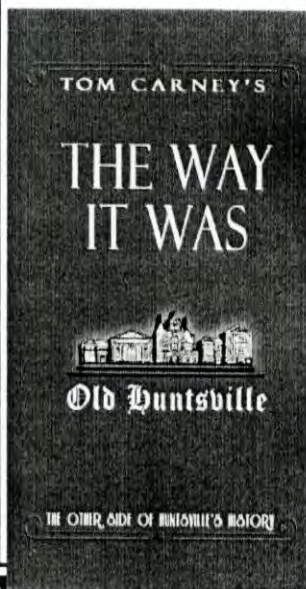
THE TYPHOID HOME IN HUNTSVILLE

From 1892 Huntsville Newspaper

In the 1800s typhoid was one of the most deadly diseases in much of the South. No one knew what caused it or how to treat it but that did not stop many newspapers from printing what they believed to be sound medical advice. The following is from a 1892 Huntsville newspaper.

- Typhoid is a disease which runs a definite course. It cannot be stopped or cured by medicines.
- The chief thing to be done at the outset of an attack is to send the patient to bed, so as to have strength from the beginning.
- Cocaine can relax the patient and make him receptive to treatment.
- As the fever develops, and the strength grows less, light food should be taken at short intervals - water, toast water, barley water, milk and water, light broths not made too strong or too gelatinous.
- If the fever settles in the brain then it is helpful to have the patient repeat his name, and the names of his family, at regular intervals to prevent a complete loss of memory.
- The restlessness or wakefulness in fever is best remedied by the careful giving of wine or spirit with the food, or in water. No more than one quart a day is to be administered.
- The bed room is to be kept at a temperature of 62 degrees. (They did not explain how to accomplish this in the age before air conditioning.)
- Great care should be taken to keep the bed clean and sweet. This is most easily done by having a second bed in the room, to which the patient can be removed for two or three hours daily, while the other is thoroughly aired and the linen changed.
- All fatigue is to be sedulously avoided. No visitors are to be admitted and no other person but one nurse and one attendant to help her.
- Patient's room never to be left unattended for a moment, as in delirium of fever patient might jump from the bed and injure himself.
- All fireplaces should be carefully cleaned and floors scrubbed with lye ashes.
- All windows in the sick room should be kept closed and shuttered to prevent the night air from entering the patient's lungs.

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



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More Tales from Redstone Arsenal

by Tom Rathz



So, another day begins at the 36-story Dynamic Test Stand in one of the test areas at NASA. The University of Alabama/Huntsville and part time students are working with a Research Scientist from a major university trying to get all his work done in one day's time. A lot to do. We ended up finishing when a storm came upon us around 7pm. A BIG lightning storm.

If you don't know the Dynamic Test Stand (DTS), it is a large metallic building that is a great conductor for lightning. Inside the building is a large open area within which the Saturn V and Shuttle were assembled for vibration tests. Around this 36-story void are metal walkways at every level with 4-foot-high rails and that's it. No internal walls of any kind.

The Research Scientist's research, however, is done inside a small one-room building built inside the DTS on the uppermost floor. As we are trying to finish up... the power goes out. Now we are 36 stories atop this building with no elevator in the complete dark! The only way down is the metallic stairs with flashlights.

As we are running down the stairs to get out of the building, and trying not to touch the railings, you must understand that this is a building that has very little stair traffic. All the way down we must knock the huge

spider webs out of our way, if we see them, so we don't become Spider Man by getting a bite.

We finally make it down, say goodnight, and adios. Unfortunately, I left my windows in my car down all day.

No problem: I was under the roof of a shed when it rained. So, as I am driving happily home, going over the speed limit on the Arsenal to reach the Martin Road gate before it closed for the night, which you should NEVER do, when I feel something crawling up my leg under my pants leg.

Just so you know, I have arachnophobia. Fear of spiders. Spiders should be left to eat mosquitos or under my boot. I throw the car to the side of the road. Now remember, it is dark, it is very dark on the Arsenal. As far as I can tell no one is around.

I proceed to get out of the car and... pull my pants down. Either that spider is dying or I'm getting naked. And lo and behold, immediately an MP is behind me with lights flashing. Just my luck. Well, I just hold my position with pants down to explain what is going on to the male MP. You know, *mano a mano*.

The MP tells me, "Sir, please get back into the vehicle."

Now I know from the sound of the voice, I'm in trouble. It is a female MP. I explained my situation and she let me go with a warning. Speeding, not exposing, thank goodness.

I bet that was one funny story she had to tell that night to the other MPs.



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THE BARACCA ROOM

by Nolan Myrick



When I was about six years old my family started going to Fifth Street Baptist Church. The Rev. M. G. Wilson was the pastor and Mr. Ralph Bagwell was the song leader. We met in a little stucco building next to what all of east Huntsville called the Big Ditch. At the back of the stucco building we had a small two story building that was full of classrooms. Connecting the two buildings was the Baracca room which was mostly in the stucco building behind the auditorium.

The Baracca room was used by small groups so they wouldn't have to heat the big auditorium. I believe everyone in those days was more conservative, or maybe we just didn't have a lot of extra money. Sometimes at prayer meeting on Wednesday nights when they had business meetings I remember it would get pretty hot in the auditorium and the heater wasn't even on. We had those big old ceiling fans that moved real slow to keep cool in the summer. I used to go to sleep during the preaching service by watching the fan above me go round and round.

I've been thinking about the Baracca room all week so I decided to write and maybe someone else might remember something I missed.

I took piano lessons up on Oakwood Avenue on Tuesdays and learned to play one song, "How Great Thou Art." We had an old upright piano at home that we got for fifty dollars and

everyone that came to see us had to listen to me play that song. My father even made me go one Thursday night and play for the brotherhood meeting which was held in the Baracca room. That night I started and closed the meeting with my version of "How Great Thou Art". I never did get asked to play for the brotherhood again.

The Baracca room always held a special treat for the holidays. It could have been on Christmas Eve or the night before, I don't know for sure but everyone was encouraged to come to the church.

We all met in the heated auditorium. We had drawn names maybe a month earlier and you had to bring a gift for the person whose name you had drawn. After they gave out all the gifts, Clarence Carroll or one of the other deacons would open the door to the cold Baracca room and bring out a big box full of paper sacks.

They had enough sacks for every kid in the church. Inside the sack was a big cold red apple. It wasn't the scrawny kind grown in Huntsville, it was the kind they had at Star Market at Five Points that we couldn't afford to buy. The sack also contained a big orange and some hard candy. I really liked the candy because it was in a lot of different colors and sizes.

I remember I spent a lot of time looking at the back of the Christmas catalogs that Sears and Montgomery Wards sent us with pictures of the candy you could buy. Love those days!

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Heard On the Street

by **Cathey Carney**



If you looked on p. 28 of the November issue on the Metro Painting ad, you found my hidden turkey! See it now right side of the roof? Our first caller to ID it was **Jeannie Worthey** who lives downtown. Jeannie has lived in the Russel Erskine building for 11 years now, and currently on the 12th floor for the best view in town. Jeannie had a birthday in November and turned 54 years old so Happy Birthday to you!

Then **Norma Ricketts** of Jackson Way Styling Salon was our winner for the photo of the month. The little guy in the photo was **Mike Kaylor**, whom so many

remember as the best restaurant reviewer in town. Readers of the Huntsville News and Times looked forward to his honest reviews. Norma is a hair stylist at the Salon and has been working there for 34 years. She has lived in Huntsville for 52 years so she's seen lots of change for sure! Congratulations to both ladies for winning a year's subscription to Old Huntsville magazine.

Also I have hidden a very teeny **candy cane** in the December issue. It will be VERY difficult to find. So if you think you've discovered it, call the office and you might be the winner!

Catherine Cameron just had a birthday on Nov. 22 and she turned 90! She loves reading and history. Her sweet daughter **Gail Zeigler** arranged a celebration at the Kennemer Cove Trading Post in Woodville, AL and her friends and family were there celebrating. Happy happy birthday to Catherine and here's to 20 more!

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. Luminares this year are happening on Dec. 9, Saturday.

Joann and Ron Copeland of Huntsville recently celebrated their 65th wedding anniversary, on Oct. 11th. That is impossible to believe as Joann looks like she might be 70. Married at 5! Happy Anniversary to the lovebirds.

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 phone 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. My Siri actually calls it a torch, not a flashlight.

Happy Birthday to our dear friend **Oscar Llerena**, Huntsville

Photo of The Month

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This youngster wrote a column called "Potpourri" for the Huntsville News many years ago.



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High Class of 1966, who has a Dec. 24th birthday! He was the best present his parents could have wished for! Oscar currently lives in Miami but likes to visit Huntsville and see old friends and school-mates on occasion - come see us soon!

Special greetings full of love to **Ianthia Bridges**, whose family has lots of important December dates!

Her **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 has non-stop parties in December!

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

Our recent story written by **Giles Hollingsworth** about growing up in Redstone Park got tons of responses. Giles would love to hear from you and your experiences living there, and many of our readers would too. If you lived there and have memories you'd like to share please reach us by email at old-huntsville@gmail.com and maybe see them published! Or just to share with Giles - we sure hope to hear from you.

We wish you a Merry Christmas no matter how you celebrate and please remember that many have sad memories around the holidays and not all feel as joyous as we're supposed to be. Just try to make every day the best day you can.



SHERIFF BLAKE DORNING

**June 18, 1962 -
November 14, 2023**

Many hearts were broken on Nov. 14th when we learned of the passing of Sheriff Blake Dorning after a courageous battle with cancer. He was only 61 and left a legacy that will never be forgotten. His 4 decades with the Madison County Sheriff Department spanned roles from overseeing jail operations to becoming a reassuring presence in community patrol and excelling in crime scene investigations.

In January of 2003 he was elected Sheriff of Madison County, then serving four terms and holding the longest total time serving just over 35 years in the Madison County Sheriffs Department.

Sheriff Dorning is survived by his wife, Jan Daly Dorning; children Whitney Blake Dorning, Meghin Marie Dorning and Austin Lee Dorning (fiance Kayla), parents, Evelyn Marie Dorning, Wallace and Margie Dorning; siblings, Cindy Dorning Shields (Kevin, nephews Tyler and Bryant), Mitchell Daryl Dorning (Elizabeth, nephews Anthony, Mike, Ryan, Evalynne).

He loved his community and the people in it. He was a member of the Huntsville First United Methodist Church, past President of the Huntsville-Madison County Historical Society, and Maple Hill Cemetery Stroll volunteer (Leroy Pope and Kibble Harrison).

Blake was a humble, kind man who was fiercely loyal with family and friends. He was a man of faith and integrity, and one hell of a cook. He could BBQ like none other! No one turned down anything Blake grilled.

Blake will forever be a role model for others following in his footsteps.

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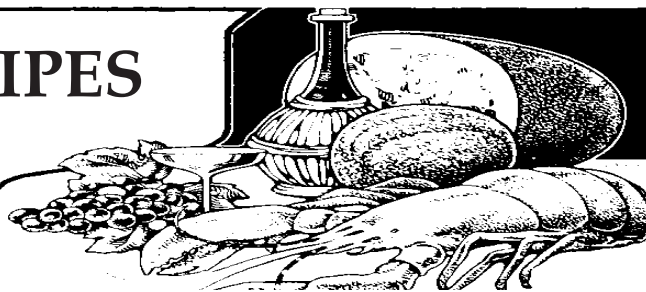
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RECIPES



Cooking with Nancy Holliman

These recipes are from Nancy Holliman's cookbook, "Cooking with Nancy Plain and Fancy"

No Bake Christmas Cake

- 1 lb. golden raisins
- 1 lb. toasted almonds or pecans
- 1 lb. shredded coconut
- 1 lb. vanilla wafers, crushed
- 2-1/4 c. half-and-half
- 1 c. white corn syrup

Mix all ingredients together well to distribute fruit and nuts. Pour into small loaf pans which have been lined with waxed paper. Refrigerate for 2 days before slicing to serve. I use vanilla wafers flavored with pure vanilla extract. Most brands use an artificial vanilla flavor which isn't as good.

Old Fashioned Pecan Pie

- 1 c. sugar
- 4 extra-large eggs
- 1/2 c. melted butter

- 1/2 t. salt
- 1-1/3 c. dark Karo syrup
- 1-1/3 c. broken pecans

Mix together first 4 ingredients. When smooth add the Karo and pecans. Pour into a 9" deep-dish pie shell. Bake 40 to 45 minutes at 375. Double this recipe for 3 (9") regular pie crusts or 2 (9") deep dish crusts.

This was our Grandmother Holliman's pie - our favorite.

Pepper Jelly

- 3/4 c. chopped bell pepper
- 1/4 c. spicy red peppers, chopped
- 1 sml. bottle Certo
- 6-1/2 c. sugar
- 1-1/2 c. apple cider vinegar
- Rubber gloves

Mix sugar and vinegar and bring to boil. Put in chopped peppers and stir for 2 minutes. Remove from stove and let cool for 5 minutes. Stir in Certo and pour into jars. Wear gloves when chopping red peppers to protect your hands.

Amaretto Cakes

Make 1 box yellow pudding cake mix, substituting 2/3 cup Amaretto or other almond-flavored liqueur for the cup of water called for on the box. Bake in a Bundt pan according to instructions.

Glaze with the following:

- 1 c. confectioners sugar
- 1 stick melted butter
- 1/2 c. Amaretto

Pour 1/3 of the glaze over the hot cake and reserve the rest. When cake has cooled, remove from pan and pour remaining glaze evenly over cake.

Pecan Meringues

- 1 egg white
- 1 c. brown sugar
- 1 t. vanilla
- 1 T. flour
- 1-1/2 c. pecan pieces

Beat egg white, gradually adding sugar and vanilla. Sift flour and salt over the mix-

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ture, then add pecans. Drop by teaspoonfuls on cookie sheet. Cook at 275 degrees for 30-35 minutes. Check occasionally after 20 minutes for progress.

Chocolate Pecans with Almond Paste

Spread almond paste on a pecan half and press another half on top. Dip pecans halfway into melted chocolate. Use perfect pecan halves for prettier candies, and dry on waxed paper.

Beth's Mousse Brownies

Family-size Duncan Hines brownie mix

3 eggs

3 lrg. Symphony candy bars

Mix brownies per package directions but use 3 eggs rather than the 2 the mix calls for. Pour 1/2 batter into a greased 9x13" baking pan. Lay candy bars on top of the batter. Pour remaining batter over the candy bars.

Bake per package directions. The candy bars will melt into a mousse-like center. Expensive but yummy.

Consider using 2 (9x9") cake pans & saving one!

Sally's Peanut Butter Pie

Soften 1 quart good vanilla ice cream. Spoon it into 1 graham cracker pie crust. Swirl in 1 cup of peanut butter, but don't stir. Freeze. When frozen spread 1 jar hot fudge sauce over ice cream. Peanuts can be sprinkled over fudge if desired. Freeze again, before serving.

Bourbon Macaroon Delight

2 doz. almond macaroons

2 jiggers bourbon or cream sherry

2 c. whipping cream or Cool Whip

1 qt. coffee ice cream

1 can toasted slivered almonds

Soak macaroons in whiskey. When they are crumbly, stir in the ice cream and almonds. Place in silver bowl or cake pan.

Freeze for 30 to 40 minutes. Whip cream and spread over top before serving.

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.

Mix:

1 c. sour cream

1/4 c. sugar

1/4 t. vanilla extract

Preserves (your 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.

Deep South 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.



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Home Demonstration Clubs

by Kate Hopkins



The early roots of 4-H and Home Demonstration clubs go back to tomatoes!

The "Tomato Club" movement was short lived but in the early 1900s it was part of the story of southern food and agricultural clubs. The idea was to help girls pass new canning techniques to their mothers. In 1910 the girls picked the name tomato club because the plants are easy to grow, require little space, are very useful in recipes and they are nutritious. Organized through schools, the members included girls between the ages of 9-18 and they were expected to do all the work of growing tomatoes, except for plowing the one-tenth acre of land. The programs had numerous benefits that included leadership and increased confidence which led to other careers in teaching, nursing and social work.

The "Tomato Clubs" and the boys "Corn Clubs" evolved into the High School 4-H Clubs and the Home Demonstration Clubs for rural women.

In the early 20th century, the U.S. government funded a program through the Department of Agriculture Cooperative Extension service that provided a homemaking resource for women who lived in the country. The purpose of the clubs was to teach rural women how to improve methods of nutrition, canning, gardening and sewing. Paid agents worked with local clubs to assist with many different types of skills and to help the members with charitable causes. Examples of their projects: improving school lunches, beautification by collection and disposing of garbage, plus quilting. During the Depression (1929-1941) mattresses were made with surplus cotton.

In 1938 a Home Demonstration Club was organized in New Market, AL. Monthly meetings were held in the private homes of the members. The meetings were called to order, a devotional was given and then there

was a short business meeting. Following that a program was presented. Topics of the programs varied and might include things like how to can meat, how to make candied fruits or how to upholster furniture. After the program a more social time was enjoyed.

In December 1940 a Christmas event was held by the New Market Home Demonstration Club. The ladies served a holiday dinner for their husbands at the school's Home Economics building. The invocation was given by Rev. J. Leonard Fisher and forty plates of fried oysters with all the trimmings were served. The tables were decorated with red candles. Games and the singing of Christmas carols were enjoyed by all. The Home Demonstration agent, Mrs. L. M. Alexander, was a guest speaker and she gave many compliments to the club for their hard work and cooperation during the past year.

"Our Father, who does art in heaven, Harold is his name. Amen."

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We Hear from Our Readers Regarding Past Stories

A Story about Redstone Park - By James Vann

I had several friends who grew up in Redstone Park or nearby in Farley. All of the units in Redstone Park had identical floor plans. Each unit had a switch box on the back side that controlled the electricity going into that unit.

Some of my friends had gathered outside of this one particular unit when they decided to pull a prank on the residents of that unit. Upon a signal from the fellows in the front, another one of the fellows in the back pulled the switch and turned the electricity off inside the unit. Another fellow (Robert Womack) entered the darkened unit and proceeded to run through the unit from the front door, through the house and out the back door.

The residents who were all just sitting around listening to the radio were startled and just looked at each other as the electricity was restored and the lights came back on. No harm was done but the fellows got a lot of mileage out of that story that they retold many times to their friends.

Memories of Mr. Fanning - by Eddie Allen

What a wonderful recollection of Mr. Fanning at Monrovia School. I started school there in 1954 when it was still Monrovia High School, grades 1-12, and included areas all the way to Holmes Avenue as the city limits stopped around what is now Jordan Lane but the city limits were expanding and University Place School was just being built. Mr. Fanning ("Pop" behind his back) was a gentle giant who believed in making sure we knew we were there to learn and not be entertained. With all those students there, he could still call most of them by name and would stop and ask about family members when they were sick or had problems. When he left his office, no matter how hot it was, that suit coat came on as he quietly exuded authority.

Monrovia in the 50s was still a poor community with a few have's and many many have not's. There was no Pre-K or K and there were kids that showed up for first grade that had no at home learning in knowing their ABC's or even counting to ten.

The kids that were advanced had to spend a half day catching up the others. As very few people had phones, he had to depend on Ms. Lawler, the Madison County Truant Officer, to go out to see why students were not in school. We were lucky to have a phone but had to share a four party line. (Remember those? Operator? J-647 please). One of Mr. Fanning's statements that was overheard before paddling a high school student for fighting was "You're here to learn, not fight. Doing this really hurts me more than it hurts you." The second part of that was debatable to the person bent over taking the licks!

Jeff Rhodes was there in 65-72 and respected the fact that Mr. Fanning was still totally dedicated to educating students. Great article choice.

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The Cab Ride

by Ben Lowe, Scottsboro



Many years ago, I once had my own passenger for my cab ride. After living in Scottsboro a few years, I was invited to address the Jackson County Chamber of Commerce Early Bird Breakfast on missile technology at Redstone Arsenal.

You should have seen the look on the face of Chamber President, Mike Ellenburg, when he read my bio which said I'd graduated from the University of Tennessee. He hung his head and said, "I didn't know you went to THAT school" which brought a chuckle from the attendees. It was a funny scene.

However, one elderly lady by the name of Sarah Betty Ingram came forth after the presentation and told me she was so glad to have a fellow alumni in the community. Sarah Betty went to my church, so when the UT Alumni announced their annual alumni dinner in Huntsville, she asked if she could ride over there with me since she didn't drive at night. Truth be known, she shouldn't have been driving in daylight either, but no one in Scottsboro had the gumption to tell her she couldn't.

So, it became an annual event for us to have our yearly date to go to the alumni banquet together, even if I did have to leave work in Huntsville, drive to Scottsboro to pick her up, drive back to Huntsville, and then take her back to Scottsboro before going home to Skyline. When she asked if it was out of my way, I told her "Not at all."

Once she asked me if I thought it would make my wife mad with us going out together alone and I told her it wasn't a problem. My wife eventually started going to Scottsboro to pick her up and bring her to Gurley where I'd meet them as I came from Huntsville, which relieved me from driving quite so far to pick her up.

Of course, once we'd get to the alumni dinner, I'd always get her a glass of wine which she made me promise not to tell anyone in Scottsboro, although she thoroughly enjoyed it.

A few years ago one of the church ladies phoned to say Sarah Betty was in the Scottsboro Hospital and would not last much longer. I went by to see her, and we talked about the good times we'd had.

Later that evening after I'd left, she told some of the church ladies that the reason she was in the hospital was because Ben Lowe had kept her out too late the night before and she drank too much wine. All this, of course, was in her imagination since she'd been in the hospital for weeks.

I was proud that she thought of me and the good times we'd had. Later that night, she slipped away into peace. She had requested that I be one of her pallbearers, along with an attorney in our church, Steve Kenamer. My friend Cactus knows all the folks. Steve told me to be sure to have my cell phone turned on as she was lowered into the grave as he knew it was programmed to play "Rocky Top" for the ring tone.

For the funeral precession, the organist Grady Bennett had played the Tennessee Waltz. Now, a block over from Cactus, there's a street name Sarah Betty Lane.

BAD WEATHER - 1877
In 1877 Huntsville suffered some of the worst weather in its history. The temperature got to 14 degrees below zero. There was a 15-inch snow on the ground. Icebergs were seen floating in the Tennessee River.

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Tips from Earlene

* Did you know that fidgety people lose more weight than people who sit around? You burn more calories by being more active and moving around more. Makes sense, doesn't it? Start fidgeting!

* If you don't sleep that well and notice dark circles under your eyes in the morning why don't you try raising the front of your bed up by 1-2 inches? You can put a board under the two top legs (under your head) or get casters that fit under them. It makes a difference.

* When traveling, always put a towel in the tub before you take a shower. Oftentimes the tubs are very slick and the towels will prevent you from slipping.

* If you put all the stuff you want to take to work with you in the morning in one "to-go" spot, you will begin checking that spot every morning and not forget things.

* If you get chilled at night invest in a good goose down comforter - you wouldn't believe how warm and cozy you feel under one of those.

* If someone you don't know calls you to tell you to move your money to a bond fund in preparation for an emergency, DON'T do it. This is the latest of frauds intended for older people and they are using fear to defraud you of your money. Remember to NOT give anyone information about your money or credit cards over the phone, ever.

* When you're shopping or in an area not familiar to you, make a habit of being very watchful of your surroundings and if someone follows you in a parking lot, go back inside.

* Put your bathroom light on a dimmer - that way you don't blind yourself in the middle of the night when you use the bathroom.

* A very good marinade for steak is lemon juice, Dale's sauce and Worcestershire with a bit of garlic powder thrown in. Measure equal amounts in a Ziploc bag, throw in your steak and let it marinade in your fridge overnight. Cook over hot coals on your grill and your friends will come over to see what you're cooking!

It's no accident that "stressed" spelled backwards is "desserts".



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KENNY ANDERSON AT CITY HALL - FIGHTING FOR YOU

by John H. Tate

We have all been told, and may have said it ourselves, "You can't fight City Hall." With the city of Huntsville growing so fast, there may be some people who feel this axiom to be even truer today than it has ever been before. Yes, the Mayor, City Council, and the Huntsville Police Department are supposed to fight for you. But suppose you are someone who doesn't feel your voice is included in the conversations of the power brokers of Huntsville?

Senior citizens, the physically challenged, minorities, persons for whom English is not their primary language and persons who have religious questions about the city government all want to be assured their voices are heard. Who has the responsibility to ensure that your voice can be included in the overall conversation?

Kenny Anderson is your advocate in the Mayor's office, as the Director of Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (DEI) for the City of Huntsville. Mr. Anderson agreed to spend some time with me so that the readers of Old Huntsville Magazine get to know him, and his role in ensuring that all of the citizens of Huntsville have an opportunity to be part of the conversation.

According to Mr. Anderson, when he entered into his role as the DEI Director, he was well-received by people both in and out of city government. Most people embraced the mission of the office, but some occasional skeptics had questions like, "What does that mean? What is he going to do for me?" Or had a reflective attitude of "City Hall never done anything for me anyway, so he is going to be more of the same."

What prepared Kenny Anderson for the position of Director of Diversity, Equity & Inclusion? Mr. Anderson has been preparing for the DEI Director position, which requires him to engage and listen to people, for most of his professional life. The most important thing he is involved in daily is listening and teaching others to listen to invested participants.

When he was appointed to his current position, he was the Multicultural Affairs Officer for the City of Huntsville. Previously he developed his leadership and listening skills as the Executive Director of Leadership Empowerment Enterprise, President/CEO of Maximum Life En-



ORIGINAL HUNTSVILLE TOWN HALL

hancement Inc., and Host/Producer of his live radio show, "2nd Chance" on WJOU 90.1 FM.

His experiences also include time as a formal instructor. At Calhoun Community College he was the Dean of Humanities & Social Sciences for five years and Department Chair/Psychology Instructor for five years. On the fun side, he is the Co-coordinator for Jazz In the Park in Huntsville, AL.

But who is the man? In starting our interview, I asked Ken-

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ny Anderson a Southern question, "Who's your people?" His professional expression changed into a warm, reflective glow. Not only did the smile radiate from his face, but it was in the warmth of his voice.

"My parents were Jack and Annie Anderson, they are the most significant people in my life. They provided me with an incredible foundation for the journey of life. Born and raised on the Lower East-side of Manhattan, New York, I grew up and lived there for twenty-one years." The one thing that stuck out with Kenny was that he loved learning and seeking out new experiences. He loved learning about people and what things interested them.

The only boy in the family of three sisters, Kenny is quick to point out that he is not the spoiled one. Everything that makes Kenny Anderson the man he is today started with his parents. They allowed him the freedom to discover life while they maintained a protective hedge around him and his sisters.

In his own words, "I grew up in a home where we were loved. I never came home a single day bemoaning the fact that I grew up in public housing. Our parents loved us, they were there for us all of my life, and I was very appreciative of that."

As Kenny set out to discover life, he did so knowing he had support. "I found my way, it was not because I discovered it by myself, it is because my parents poured a lot into me, and they supported me every step of the way. Our family embraced spiritual values. We had morning and evening worship in the home, we went to church every week. My parents, lay ministers at one time, were always involved in the church and always committed to giving their children a good solid spiritual Biblical foundation."

"Our house was a house of love, curiosity and exploration. My dad took me to games at Yankee Stadium, which means I'm a big Yankee fan today. On my birthday, last month, September 19, I went home just for a Yankee game."

Kenny said that everything he has accomplished can be traced back to his parents. "My parents gave me a strong center in terms of life in general, accepting people, so-

cially engaging and helping other people. They led by example that way. I wanted to emulate, I wanted to be like my parents."

So, this brings us full circle to the person who is your advocate in City Hall. Of all of the accolades held by Kenny Anderson, he sums up his best qualification for his job in this manner. "One of the best things we can do when engaging other people is just listening. By listening we learn, and we discover points of common ground. We also discover points of difference and it is those differences I believe that expand our ability to be in the world."

According to Kenny Anderson, we are surrounded by people, "Who are not like us, do not look like us, do not have our same values, our same experiences, our same interests, our same customs; but man, how fascinating those things are."

Kenny Anderson, the DEI Director of Huntsville, leaves us with this quote from Stephen Covey's "Seven Habits of Highly Effective People". "Seek first to understand."

He continues, "Don't allow your perceptions of things to drive your decisions. Have an opinion but seek to understand. Reach out, engage, become a part of, invite and have a mutual responsibility to building the bridge of communication in the community."

So, who is your advocate in the Mayor's office, who can ensure that your voice is included in the overall conversation? Well, that advocate is YOU. However, you have Kenny Anderson there to aid you.



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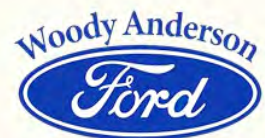
The Ford Motor Company views its situation today less with pride in great achievement than with sincere and sober realization of new and larger opportunities for service to mankind.

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ELECTRICITY SHINES NEW LIGHT INTO HUNTSVILLE

by Bob Baudendistel

It comes through land and title research with a variety of corridor studies such as rail, highway and public utilities where we often uncover some of the more hidden data pertaining to the history of a particular area. The City of Huntsville saw some of its first-ever electricity back in 1887 when the Huntsville Electric Company was founded. The Huntsville Railway, Light, and Power Company then bought this business in 1913 while working to expand its local coverage area. Eventually, the Alabama Power Company stepped in to purchase everything by 1915, continuing to re-invest in overall system improvements.

The following story takes us back through a unique area within Southeastern Madison County where sections of a new transmission

line were being run through the rural countryside, bringing reliable electric power into Huntsville.

Continued growth within this city brought such notable increases in electricity usage that additional outside sources of power generation were needed to meet demand. This in turn, prompted the urgent need for having an integrated transmission grid.

Alabama Power completed its new coal-fired steam plant near Gadsden in 1915 to service the power needs throughout much of the state. Bringing their service into Huntsville required some 63 miles of newly installed overhead transmission line. First surveyed in 1918, a new

line was run from the plant there in Gadsden tying into a substation just on the outskirts of downtown Huntsville.

In 1920, following the acquisition of any required property and/or prescriptive easements, construction with the new transmission line commenced, entailing a three-phase process starting with the effective clearing of land followed by layup of wooden power poles and stretching of the lines. Field crews definitely had their work cut out for them, especially out in the more remote areas farthest away from any city conveniences.

Teams of linemen were typically assigned to work within a prescribed area. A line foreman named Jake and his crew of at least 10 workers were tasked to run the new lines over an interim survey distance of 6+ linear miles working off the southern edge of Wallace Mountain continuing over sections of Southeast Madison County mostly

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within Township 6 South, Ranges 1 & 2 east. Their work zone encompassed a fair amount of mountainous terrain including the Painted Bluff as it overlooked the river. Low lying flood prone areas adjacent to the Flint, Tennessee and Paint Rock Rivers presented another unique set of challenges as well.

Transporting of raw material for the new power lines relied heavily upon rail services, river barges and the use of mules for dragging poles furthest out through the fields and up the mountains. Working out of an office in Huntsville, Andy was a logistics engineer with Alabama Power whose job was to oversee the pre-ordering, incoming delivery and out-going distribution of new poles, cables, anchors, insulators, tools and any other hardware needed by the crews. Andy also employed a team of couriers who delivered any mail, payroll, or legal correspondence to and from the linemen working abroad.

It is worth noting back at the time that overland travel was still mainly done by horse and/or buggy as very few public roads were yet open to early vehicular traffic much outside of the city. Each week as the mail was being delivered, the foreman with each crew was required to send in a status report informing Andy and his upper management as to how far the work had progressed. Per a verification sent in by Jake about mid-summer that year, he and his crew were about to clear what was described as a "rocky terrain heading over the final ridge nearest the river."

After reading up on the report, Andy seemed a little miffed as to how Jake and his team were proceeding at a rate so much faster than everyone else. "After all," he

thought while studying the survey maps, "They have to be working through one of the most difficult environments spanning at least three rivers and countless mountains!" After giving it some thought, Andy decided he needed to ride out to visit the site and get a first-hand look for himself.

Early one day at the break of dawn, Andy tag-teamed with one his couriers while riding south out of Huntsville. Around mid-morning as they rode past Lily Flagg, Andy could see some progress where axe men had started clearing a path for the new lines running southeasterly over nearby outlier ridges. Down by the river, he found further evidence of some clearing across the highest mountains



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In the weeks prior, Andy reached out to a Mr. Meeks who lived and farmed near Elon, a community located about 5 miles out between Taylorsville and New Hope. Through their letter exchanges, Mr. Meeks offered to take Andy out for a close-up look at where the "mystery crew" had evidently been working so well. Riding out in the late afternoon, Andy went alone to Mr. Meeks' place after sending his courier back into town. Andy anticipated taking a trail ride back into the seemingly hidden and remote area where Jake and crew were ideally working. Instead, Mr. Meeks insisted on taking a boat down the Flint River before nightfall to reach a safer landing area nearest the "activities." Shortly before sunset, Mr. Meeks and one of his farm hands carried a wooden boat (skiff) by wagon down to a river ford where he and Andy would soon depart.

Using oil lanterns for navigation with nightfall quickly approaching; Mr. Meeks and Andy arrived at the landing site tying the boat off beneath a tall leaning sycamore tree well rooted against the shore. Out on dry (wet) land after treading through some heavily wooded area, they reached an open field where Andy was impressed by the height of some corn growing well over 6 feet tall. Mr. Meeks described this crop as "the sweetest tasting corn one could ever find!"

As the full moon started to rise over the eastern mountains and temperatures started to cool down, a light dew began to form across the ground and any low-lying vegetation. Further out at the edge of the field against a heavily treed fence line was a small rise in ele-

vation. Being whisper quiet, Mr. Meeks asked Andy to look out over the cove, to listen, and try to catch a whiff of the smoke that filled the air.

Over the sound of crickets singing into the night with bullfrogs deeply chirping over the nearby ponds came the not-too-distant echo of some fiddlers and at least 10-15 men carrying on, laughing, yelling, and screaming; all in their quest of having a good time. Not sure what to make of it at first, Andy whispered softly to Mr. Meeks, "Reckon' I oughta' just let them be!"

Mr. Meeks replied firmly, "That's probably a GOOD idea!" Just as they turned back heading toward the boat, Andy concluded, "If it ain't broke, Don't fix it!"

Back at shore preparing to relaunch, both men took one last look over toward the "holler" as wolves and coyotes began howling at the neon moon. No words were spoken as both men knew that "Wherever there's a cheer without a cloud in the sky, be careful what to look for, because there's more than meets the eye!" Heading down past the mouth of the Flint, Mr. Meeks piloted the boat across the smooth starlit Tennessee waters toward Greenbriar Cove over in Marshall County where he had access to a hunting cabin owned by his friend Benny from up in Union Grove.

Arriving at the cabin site, Andy got an outdoor fire pit going while Mr. Meeks headed down by the riverbank to catch some fish. Back inside the cabin just before calling it a night and getting some much needed rest, Mr. Meeks showed Andy over to a concealed basement entrance hidden beneath a dusty ornamental rug draped over the creaky wooden floor. Down inside the

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cool, musty space amidst cobwebs was a room bordered by cemented limestone rocks with mason jars full of clear liquid sitting atop hand-made wooden shelves.

"Try this!" Mr. Meeks suggested while offering Andy a sip. "Good Lord Almighty!" said Andy while gasping for air, "That's some smooth, sweet tasting stuff!" Back outside, the campfire had started to smolder down as Mr. Meeks looked up at the lunar halo suggesting, "Looks like we may be gettin' some rain here soon!" Through the spirits of the land, storms did in fact roll in overnight, mostly south of the river with gusty winds, heavy rain and frequent cloud-to-ground (white) lightning.

For what it's worth: Very early the next morning, things were noticeably calmer with rain cooled air and light fog drifting in over the mountains. After tidying things up around the cabin, Mr. Meeks and Andy were soon back out over the water plotting to head straight across the Tennessee River and up the Flint.

After clearing the mouth of Cane Creek Branch from back within Greenbriar Cove, Mr. Meeks spotted an incoming barge loaded down with new power poles. Per the request of Andy, Mr. Meeks reluctantly changed course following the barge up to a landing area owned by Mr. Clark, who had been helpful enough in allowing for its continued use as a staging area with the off-loading of incoming material (among other things).

Out ashore,, Foreman Jake came over to meet with his boss Andy shortly before all hands were soon on deck unloading the new poles for transfer out into the cove. After the work was complete, Mr. Meeks, Andy, Jake, his crew, and several neighboring property owners who just so happened to be nearby

while curiously watching; all gathered around the upper bank of the river.

Speaking before everyone on a celebratory note, Andy thanked Jake and his men for their continued great work commending them as the "Highest Ranking Linemen throughout the company!"

Heeding to the advice of Mr. Meeks however, Andy stuck to his guns of "Don't Ask, Don't Tell." Before climbing back aboard the boat, Andy called Jake over in private pleading. "Say, not sure what your secret is, but y'all just keep up the good work!"

In the wink of an eye, Jake suggested, "Never know, maybe it's just something in the water!" Pushing the boat out for relaunch, Andy fired back claiming, "More Power to Ya!"



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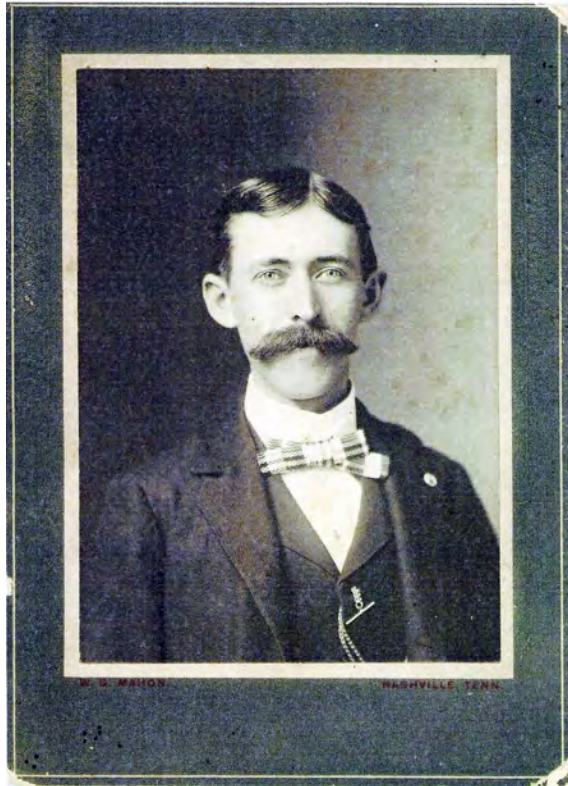
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Oscar Dreger

Made his Mark in Huntsville

by Patricia Dreger



Dec 28, 1868 - Nov 6, 1950

Oscar Dreger was born in Mayville, Wisconsin, in 1868. In 1895 he moved to Chicago to supervise the installation of the mosaics in the Chicago Public Library. The July, 1973 Chicago Public Library News article, "Son of Early Artisan Visits CPL", states, "The man seen photographing the mosaics at the south end of the Central Library on June 21 was Alvin Dreger of Huntsville, Alabama. Mr. Dreger is the son of the late Oscar Dreger, the contractor who supervised installation of the mosaics designed by the famous house of Tiffany."

The elder Dreger was a skilled sheet metal worker and found steady work in Chicago. His talents extended to all sorts of ornamental crafts, and it was he who hired the men who painstakingly set each piece of stone and glass in place in the south stairwell and in the Humanities Department.

The feat took a year and a half. In 1900,

three years after the job was finished, Dreger moved to Huntsville, where his son Alvin was born.

Upon coming to Huntsville, Oscar Dreger worked at the Hutchens Company and met Edna Evans, of Elkmont, daughter of Augustus Franklin Evans. Edna was running a boarding house at that time. They were married in 1901.

Oscar soon established his own shop as a roofer and tinner. He was a manufacturer of galvanized iron cornices, metal skylights, smoke stacks, iron, tin, steel, slate and tile roofing, and a contractor for all kinds of metal work.

In 1917 the Dreger family moved to 610 Holmes Avenue, in Old Town, Huntsville. They needed more room because grandfather Augustus Franklin Evans, the father of Oscar's wife, Edna, had come to live with them. Edna's brother, Brice, a traveling salesman, actually purchased the home from Mary Lou and Dr. C. W. Kranz.

Oscar installed the GAF asbestos roofing shingles, popular at that time because they were fire retardant and long lasting. Whether this was the original roof, installed by him because he was a fine Huntsville roofer, or done soon after purchasing the home is not known. He and Edgar Love were both born in 1868, came to Huntsville around the same time and married local girls.

Oscar Dreger was granted a U.S. Patent #1747663 February 19, 1930, for a sheet metal roofing design. Both the patent and the legal correspondence with Washington D.C. law office of Lacey & Lacey are still in the home at 610 Holmes Avenue.

He was a Mason when in Chicago and upon coming to Huntsville joined the Masonic Helion Lodge #1. Oscar Dreger, Edgar Love and Augustus Evans all belonged to this Masonic Lodge. Augustus was Master in 1904, his portrait hangs in the Lodge.

"Brother Edgar Love" was chosen to design the new building in 1917, the same year the Kranz-Dreger Home was built, and Oscar did metal work in the new Lodge building.

Oscar and Edna Dreger had five children. Oldest son Oscar Evans became a dentist, Dorothy worked for many years as a bookkeeper at the Chase Nursery, Edna married Harry Dill and had four children (the only one of the 5 Dreger children to have children). Shirley was killed at the age of 20 in a terrible car wreck coming down the mountain.

Alvin was to become a cellist, dealer in fine string instruments, and founder of the Huntsville Symphony. Sometimes in the evenings Oscar, who played violin and mandolin, and his wife, Edna, who played piano, would play music together. It is said that when Alvin was a baby he was so happy to hear the music he jumped up and down for joy in his crib.

When Edna died in 1940, Oscar was so heartbroken he did not come out of his room for 7 years. The family were all members of Central Presbyterian Church for many years.

A Mistake

From 1897 Newspaper



An item appeared in the Democrat recently which should have read as follows: "Mrs. Haskins has the largest and nicest plants in town."

In making up the form the "L" dropped out in the word plants, and the mistake was not noticed until the paper was printed.

When the paper was distributed and many of Huntsville citizen's were reading it with their cup of coffee, they noticed the error.

The whole town was in an uproar and when the lady's husband read the item he armed himself with a shotgun and started for the printing office. But the editor saw him coming and escaped through a back window.

The editor of course deemed himself totally innocent and blamed one of his workers. The source of the error was never discovered but residents were laughing about it for months.

"I get no respect. When I was little and played in the sandbox, the cat kept trying to cover me up."

Rodney Dangerfield



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ROBERT THE ROBOT



by Tommy Towery,
published in
Old
Huntsville
magazine
Dec. 2004

"Robert the Robot" was manufactured by Ideal Toys and was one of the first plastic toy robots to be introduced to kids of my generation. I wanted him from the moment I first saw him in the Sears Wish Book that year. I made sure that I let everyone who had me on their Christmas list know of my desire.

Robert was no ordinary robot. Robert had special powers. He had a little record player inside his back and when you turned the little handle attached to it, he would say "I am Robert Robot the mechanical man. Drive me and steer me, wherever you can." His hands had clips that would hold toys and his eyes lit up. He also walked. "This robot can walk," would be part of the explanation of why I had to own him. He had a long silver cable coming from the back of him leading to a handle where there was a control knob attached. You turned the knob and he would start moving. He could be steered by squeezing a trigger. He could even walk backwards if you turned the knob counterclockwise.

I am not sure if he was a gift from my mother, my grandmother, or if he came from Santa himself. Back in those days, it really didn't matter much where gifts came from. I knew he came from someone who loved me very much. That love

"No diet will remove all the fat from your body because the brain is entirely fat. Without a brain you might look good, but all you could do is run for public office."

Covert Bailey

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made Robert appear, wrapped in Christmas paper, under our Christmas tree in 1954 or 1955. It was a wish come true for a little kid growing up in Rocket City.

I'll never know the number of miles I put on him as we walked and steered all over the house. I'm sure my family could hear him talking in their sleep; I turned the knob on his back so much. Robert was too valuable a toy to play with outside so he stayed indoors and he only walked on the hardwood floors or rugs. He was even kept in his original box from that Christmas morning until the day that he picked it up in one of the clips on his hand and left home.

I know Robert ran away, because I would have never thrown or given him away. He was just too neat. He might have been off to see the world; it was a changing time back then. I really think he was kidnapped, because I know he had as much fun with me as I did with him, and would never run away. All I know is that one day he was gone. He had been in the back of my closet for a long time, his company replaced by that of girls who found their way into my life. All I know is that one day I went to visit with him, and Robert and his box were gone. Perhaps he got his feelings hurt. He was like Puff the Magic Dragon, I suppose.

I searched my closet, the other closets in the house, and even the pantry. Robert was not to be found. I finally had to give him up for lost, but through the years I would always speak excitedly of him when anyone talked about their early childhood toys.

It was 40 years later that Robert came back into my life. Like a photo of a missing child on the side of a milk carton, one day Robert's picture showed up on an eBay auction. I know there were other robots, and not just the one I owned, but I didn't care. I put in a bid, and in the next week, my friend Robert the Robot came home again.

Robert now sits atop my desk, looking at me with his red, light-up eyes. He still can walk and he still can talk. He still possesses the spirit of the love that someone in my family had for the little boy who first opened his box on that fateful Christmas Day. He will stay with me this time; at least until I can share his love with my own grandchildren and he can walk and talk with them. Robert loves to play with kids.

"My ruthlessness terrorized the competition and can sometimes offend."

Seen on Gurley job resume

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Be Careful When Thinking

by Jerry Keel

Sometimes when I start remembering things from the past I get carried away and end up with a first-class pity party. Instead of thinking about the things I can still do I tend to dwell on the things I cannot do now. My kids try to remind me of the fact that I can do so many things but I just don't want to hear it.

I recently received a Christmas card from the daughter of the best friend I had at The Huntsville Times. Don Irwin passed away earlier and she informed me that her mother had passed away also. Don had a favorite line he always said to me when I started kidding him about something. He would say "You don't have but one friend and you're skating on thin ice with me." I miss some of my former co-workers but Don always had a special place in my life and work. Miss you, Flatrock!!

Things like that remind me of my vulnerability and the fact that I will soon depart this old world. I think back in time when I was much younger and try to remember what Huntsville was like then. Sometimes I ride around in my car and look for the old Huntsville of my younger days but I can't find it.

So many things have changed since those days. Now I have to be careful or I will get lost. In the past almost everything was located downtown. Now downtown only has the Courthouse and several lawyers' offices. I was able to walk to downtown Huntsville then but now the urban sprawl has changed all that. Huntsville is now a very large, metropolitan area and growing bigger every week.

Spring was a time to enjoy some of the beautiful scenery in and around Huntsville. Many

people went to Monte Sano to hike on the trails or ride horses which could be rented there. Also several people would wash their cars and then drive up to Monte Sano to polish and wax the cars, taking advantage of the plentiful shade and cooler temperatures there.

Fishing, swimming, pick-up softball games, touch football games – so many things to herald the arrival of Spring. Now it seems people are too busy enjoying other things to take advantage of the things we did back then. Now people think you have to get in a car and drive many miles to have fun and enjoy the Spring weather.

In those days Meridian Street was the center of the automobile trade. When you left the downtown area and the old men sitting around the Courthouse shooting the breeze or maybe whittling on a piece of cedar to make some kind of toy and went North you would start to see many different things. The first car dealership was the Stockton Motor Car Company, then Smith Pontiac. Further down was American Legion Post 237, then Bill Penney Nash-Rambler (which was later changed to the Toyota franchise). Across the street was D. G. Foster's Mule Barn, which catered to the farmers who frowned on the tractors and mechanized farm equipment which was beginning to take over the farming industry.

Then Geron Lumber Company, Herbert Ray Ford, Doug Ray Lincoln-Mercury, the original Star Market, Mason-Brown Ice and Coal Company and other businesses as you made your way north on Meridian Street. My Mom and Dad ran a small sandwich shop located on the side of the railway tracks. Across Meridian Street was the Dixie Queen and Joe Gunn TV Repair.

Across the tracks Ward's Grocery, then the BonAir Restaurant where the food was always delicious. On up the street was the BonAir Motel, Grady Nichols Barber Shop, Harold's Market, Bill Thrower's Texaco, John Hicks Produce, Roger Williams' Books and Magazines and Lincoln Park, where many baseball games were played. Also wrestling matches were held there. None of the businesses remain, nor does the park. The old Lincoln School is still there but that is about all of the old structures that remain.

Almost all of the car dealers moved to University Drive, where they still remain. Other businesses have located on University Drive along with several additional automobile dealers. North, South, East and West - anywhere you look buildings are being torn down to make room for many new businesses. That is, I suppose, what is called PROGRESS.

I sometimes long for the old days when things moved at a much slower pace and people had time to stop on the street and say hello to a friend. Unfortunately those days are probably gone for good.

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Never Judge a Book.... Store

by Elizabeth Wharry

At the ripe old age of 21, I moved out of my parents' home. My apartment was on Vine Street in another Cleveland suburb. Every day after work, I would pass a business called Vine Street News and Bookstore. Back in the day, bookstores and news stands were common place.

Oftentimes bookstores carried far away newspapers...The San Francisco Chronicle, the Los Angeles Times, the Sunday edition of the New York Times, etc. It was not uncommon for newsstands to carry a few paperbacks either. To an avid reader, the choices were staggering! I would see all kinds of monthly magazines. Anything from Ladies Home Journal for women to Popular Mechanix for men, to Jack and Jill for the youngsters. There were gossip magazines and the latest teenage heartthrob magazines...so many choices, so little money!

One day after work, I decided to spend my evening reading. I stopped at Vine Street News and Bookstore. As I approached the building, I noticed a sign on the door. It read, "You must be 21 to enter".

I was puzzled...21 to enter a bookstore?! It didn't make sense! Nonetheless, I continued and entered. The first thing I noticed was the dull lighting and walls. Now I was really confused!

The two guys behind the counter noticed my confusion. I could see the "wink wink nudge

nudge" between them. This didn't look like any bookstore I was used to. Magazine fronts were covered with only the titles showing. I started to look around hesitantly. Then it dawned on me! Vine Street News and Bookstore was NOT the kind of news stand or bookstore I was used to!

It was the kind we were warned about going into, in high school and at church. Back then, we referred to them as "dirty" bookstores or "those kind" of bookstores. What was I doing in here!?!

As I beat a hasty retreat, I could hear the two guys behind the counter go from snickering to outright belly laughs. I could feel my face turning 50 shades of red from my collar bones to my hairline! I slunk home like a whipped puppy. I recently looked for it online.. Vine Street News and Bookstore is long gone.

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CHRISTMAS OF 1920

*by Newman Ward,
Published in Old Huntsville
magazine Dec 2004*



It was the Christmas of 1920, or thereabouts. I think that I was about four years old, 84 years ago. I was in bed with the croup, feeling low, and this was not the first time that I'd had the croup. Daddy had been to Birmingham on business, and he had found a toy that he thought I would like. When he returned home to Huntsville and gave the boxed toy to me, I hopped out of bed, opened the box, and got bug-eyed finding that it was an electric train. I had never seen an electric train except in Sears Roebuck catalogs.

We got the small oval track together quickly and put the locomotive and passenger car onto the track. Then we plugged in the transformer with switch, and Hot Dog! Wow! The train ran around and around like magic. Christmas was a few days away, and this was my present, but since I was sick, Mom and Dad thought it might help me feel better to give it to me as soon as possible.

Boy, did it do me some good. That poor train got no rest for a couple of days, and the effect on me was almost magical. My croup evaporated, and that event must have developed such an immune system that croup has not bothered me since then. I guess that we never grow up. "When" I win the lottery, I'll have a room full of railroad tracks, hills, buildings, signals, lights, and whistles, and will no doubt have as much fun as ever. I hope that it happens this Christmas.

B&W AUCTION

Merry Christmas & Happy New Year!!

NO AUCTION IN DECEMBER

We currently have no auctions scheduled for the month of December, but keep an eye on Old Huntsville Magazine, Facebook and www.auctionzip.com for Dates and Listing Details of our Annual New Year's Sale Coming in January of 2024. You won't want to miss it!!

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PET TIPS FROM ANGEL

Winter Care

Exposure to winter's dry, cold air and chilly rain, sleet and snow can cause chapped paws and itchy, flaking skin, but these aren't the only discomforts pets can suffer. Winter walks can become downright dangerous if chemicals from ice-melting agents are licked off of bare paws. To help prevent cold weather dangers from affecting your pet's health, please heed the following advice from our experts:

- Repeatedly coming out of the cold into the dry heat of your home can cause itchy, flaking skin. Keep your home humidified and towel dry your pet as soon as he comes inside, paying special attention to his feet and in-between the toes.
- Never shave your dog down to the skin in winter, as a longer coat will provide more warmth. If your dog is long-haired, simply trim him to minimize the clinging ice balls, salt crystals and de-icing chemicals that can dry his skin, and don't neglect the hair between his toes. If your dog is short-haired, consider getting him a coat or sweater with a high collar or turtleneck with coverage from the base of the tail to the belly. For many dogs, this is regulation winter wear.
- Bring a towel on long walks to clean off stinging, irritated paws. After each walk, wash and dry your pet's feet and stomach to remove ice, salt and chemicals – and check for cracks in paw pads or redness between the toes.
- Bathe your pets as little as possible during cold spells. Washing too often can remove essential oils and increase the chance of developing dry, flaky skin. If your pooch must be bathed, ask your vet to recommend a moisturizing shampoo and/or rinse.
- Massaging petroleum jelly or other paw protectants into paw pads before going outside can help protect from salt and chemical agents. Booties provide even more coverage and can also prevent sand and dirt from getting lodged between bare toes and causing irritation.
- Like coolant, antifreeze is a lethal poison for dogs and cats. Be sure to thoroughly clean up



any spills from your vehicle, and consider using products that contain propylene glycol rather than ethylene glycol.

- Pets burn extra energy by trying to stay warm in wintertime. Feeding your pet a little bit more during the cold weather months can provide much-needed calories, and making sure she has plenty of water to drink will help keep her well-hydrated and her skin less dry.

* Make sure your companion animal has a warm place to sleep, off the floor and away from all drafts. A cozy dog or cat bed with a warm blanket or pillow is perfect.

* Remember, if it's too cold for you, it's probably too cold for your pet, so keep your animals inside. If left outdoors, pets can freeze, become disoriented, lost, stolen, injured or killed. In addition, don't leave pets alone in a car during cold weather, as cars can act as refrigerators that hold in the cold and cause animals to freeze to death.



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THE MAYOR OF HURRICANE CREEK

by Tom Carney

It was scorching hot the day they buried the Mayor of Hurricane Creek. People fanned themselves with pieces of cardboard as preachers lined up to tell us what a kind and gentle man J.B. Tucker had been.

But we already knew that. Anyone who grew up on Hurricane Creek could have told you the same thing.

At one point in the service the preacher asked anyone who wanted to share their memories to come forward. A few people got up and talked about him singing in the church choir and about his love for his family and football.

Most people, however, remained silent, their gaze directed at the floor. Their memories were personal, private, earned by decades of friendship.

The title "Mayor" was an honorary one. There were no duties or functions to attend. Just shake hands and greet your neighbors with a smile. Living on Hurricane Creek for over three quarters of a century qualified him for the job.

J.B. Tucker was born 1922, the only son of a hard-working and religious couple. He was raised in the cotton fields and the mountains; picking cotton for two cents a pound and working in a sawmill for three dollars a day.

In 1942 he was drafted and sent to England with the Army Air Corps. He talked about seeing airplanes returning from Germany, all shot up and with dead and wounded crew inside. You could tell he didn't like to talk about it.

He was later sent to Germany where he served as a guard at a POW camp. Years later he would be tormented by horrible nightmares of what he had seen.

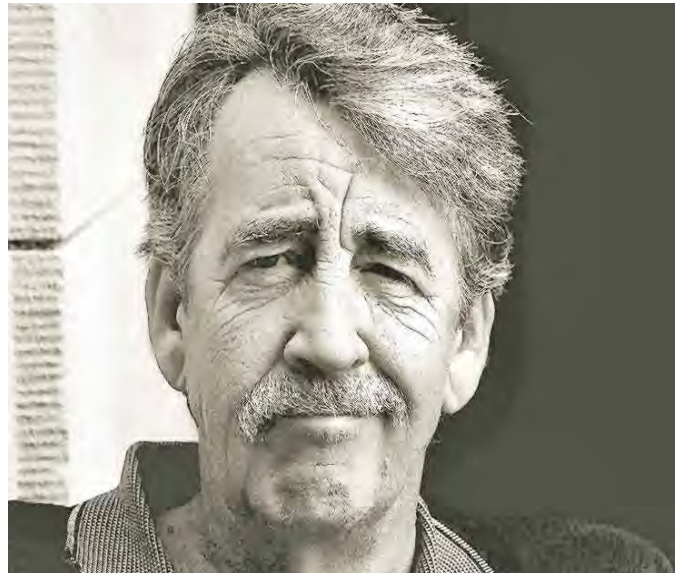
He didn't like to talk about that, either.

He came home in 1946 and married his sweetheart, Margaret Frazier. A few years later they purchased a piece of land and built a home only a few hundred yards from where he was born. The house cost almost three thousand dollars.

He raised a garden and two daughters there, although he used to chuckle and say raising the garden was easier.

If J. B. Tucker was the Mayor, then Bobby Bragg's store was the community seat of government. It was a place where politicians would campaign while drinking Double Cola and where you would vote at election time.

J.B. was a die-hard Democrat and his wife was a staunch Republican. At every election they would both walk down the hill to the store and nullify each other's vote.



Politics were not discussed very often in their home.

In 1946 his brother-in-law helped him to get a job on the Arsenal. Although he continued working there until his retirement, his heart was always in Hurricane Creek. On his off days he could always be seen helping a neighbor in the fields, working in his garden or cutting wood.

Once when he was asked where he thought the Garden of Eden was located, he paused in thought for a long moment before replying; "It's right here on the Creek. Where else would it be?"

Retirement was good to him. He lived the life we all should wish for. He had his tomato plants, the fishing lake was only a few miles distant and he had a chair in the front yard where he would sit for hours whittling on a piece of wood and waving at neighbors who passed by.

He didn't worry much about what happened on the other side of the world. Everything he wanted; his family, friends and church, were within a few miles of home.

A football or basketball game was all the excitement he wanted.

Whenever the church doors were open you always knew he would be sitting in his regular seat on the right hand side of room, three rows back.

And when the singing began, his rich baritone voice would fill the room. He didn't have to look at the song book; he knew them all by heart.

Somehow it was appropriate when the funeral service for the Mayor was closed with a song. Looking around the room you would have seen many people with their eyes closed. They were all thinking the same thing.

"We can still hear him leading the choir."



Huntsville News - Early 1900s

Sleepwalker Takes Tumble Out Of Hotel

from 1913 Huntsville Democrat

Anderson Hammer of New Hope walked out of a second story window in the Hotel on Washington Street early Sunday morning while asleep and was seriously bruised about the head and body. Hammer had retired only a short time before and after about an hour got up and walked about in the room, finally going to the front window, out of which he stepped and tumbled head first to the concrete pavement.

Hammer is subject to somnambulations and has been known to take nocturnal rambles before.

Bordellos in Huntsville to Close Tonight

from 1913 Huntsville paper

The so called red light district of Huntsville will go out of existence tonight at midnight and by tomorrow, practically all of the occupants of "the houses of our midst" will have departed from the city or changed their mode of making a living.

When the question of abolishing the district was brought before the City Commission in November by a committee representing the Men and Religion Forward Movement, proprietors of the houses agreed to close up quietly and get out provided they were not molested before the first of January. The commissioners entered into this agreement and the action of the police will not be necessary. The women declared their intention of keeping their promise to move away.

Several of the inmates of the houses have already left the city, but a majority are still here. A few will go to the homes from which they have long been absent but most of them will make their way to other cities and continue their lives.

Occupants, as well as patrons, of the houses will face hefty fines in our city court after today.

Other cities have driven the red light districts out before this and the

outcome of the experiment in those cities as well as here will be watched with a great deal of interest.

Don't Waste A Good Hand

From 1875 Newspaper

A pious father entered a Huntsville saloon the other night with a horsewhip and found his son playing poker. He tanned the young man's jacket and sent him home, and then sat down to finish the game himself.

The son was reported to have been holding aces over kings.

Infidels of the Dark

from 1907 newspaper

Missing are nine hogs of a reddish nature. The hogs are the property of J.D. Kendall and were last seen on the streets of Huntsville on the corner of Clinton and Jefferson. The above person already, this year, has lost 33 hogs and two milkcows to the infidels of the dark who seem to be continuously preying upon the trusting manners of our townspeople. A liberal reward will be paid.

Lemonade Medicine

from 1904 newspaper

Dr. Hall of this city relates the case of a man who was cured of his biliousness by going without his supper and drinking freely of lemonade.

Every morning this patient arose with a wonderful sense of rest and refreshment and a feeling as though the blood had been literally washed, cleansed and cooled by the lemonade and the fast.

As other examples, he cures cases of spitting blood by the use of salt, epilepsy and yellow fever by watermelons, kidney afflictions by celery, poison by olive or sweet oil; hydrophobia by onions, etc.

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Santa Forgot

by Malcolm Miller



The year I believe was 1961. I was working at the Post Office and barbering part time at Taylor's barber shop on Governors Drive. My oldest son Tommy, now known as T.A. by his music fans, was really wanting a new bicycle for Christmas. I mentioned this to Mr. Collier the postmaster and he said that he had just what I needed.

It seems that his wife, a teacher at Lincoln School had saved enough Blue Horse writing tablet covers to win a shiny new Schwinn bicycle and I could have it for forty dollars. So then I managed to get the bicycle moved from his home on East Holmes Street into the back room of the barber shop and keep it there till Christmas Eve night.

Finally Christmas Eve arrived and it was on a Saturday night and since Christmas day would be on Sunday both the Post Office and barber shop would be closed till Tuesday. After we closed the shop I got James Taylor to take the bike to my house and we very quietly slipped it around behind my house and unloaded it in the dark.

Up to this point everything was going great, now all I had to do was wait until the kids were asleep then slip outside, get the bike and put it together. Simple, right? No, every thing was about to change dramatically. When the

kids finally did get to sleep near midnight I go out with a flash light to get the bike.

Guess what? No peddles and no handlebars, they had been left in the station wagon and Taylor lived all the way across

the river on Brindle mountain in the Union Hill community. I wouldn't see him again until Tuesday, furthermore I didn't know where his house was. So off we go - my brothers Gib, Frank and I - to try to locate where he lived.

To this day I still remember the problems we encountered on that trip. Remember we started out after midnight meaning it was already Christmas day and believe me there was nothing open back then on that day. When we finally crossed the river and reached the top of the mountain it got really hairy. The fog was so thick in places you could hardly see and I really didn't know where I was going but I must have covered every road and pig trail on that mountain looking for Taylor's fifty-two Ford station wagon.

I ran upon three or four couples who weren't to happy to see me on those mountain back roads and I recall pulling into one drive-way and breaking up a card game. You should have seen them running out back with their bottles of liquor. Morgan County was dry back then and I suppose they thought they were being raided.

So about three o'clock Christmas morning, my gas tank nearly empty, we finally gave up the search. I slowly drove back down the mountain all the while asking myself, what will I tell Tommy when he wakes up this morning?

Finally I decided to tell him the truth - that Santa was so busy with so many toys and so many kids that he simply forgot the peddles and handle bars but I was sure he would get them to him the next Tuesday and sure enough he did.

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**"There is a very fine line between a
"hobby" and "obsession."**

Dave Barry

The Saga of Harry Coons

by Charlie Lyle

My friend Harry Coons was born about 1928-29. Harry was a happy, jovial, care free and well liked individual. His father was a well known and respected dentist. Harry had two sisters, Sue and Viola. Dentistry had come a long way from whisky and pliers. When I knew I had to go to the dentist I was terrified of the needle and the drill. Harry lived on the north east corner of Williams and Gates Street, just a couple of blocks from where I lived in an apartment house.

Back during the early forties and World War II citizens were asked to plant vegetable gardens and other food products. So Harry and I had a vegetable garden and we bought some little yellow chickens. We worked on our project after school and later sold our goods for spending money.

One day I was looking at a catalog and something caught my eye, it was a device that had a microphone and a small electronic box that could break through a radio frequency very quietly.

I was over whelmed that such a thing was possible. I saved my money and ordered the device unbeknownst to my parents. When I told Harry about it the wheels started spinning. People in those days kept their radios on all the time for soap operas and war news and so on, so we came up with an idea to scare Mrs. Coons, Harry's mother.

We planned to get in a secluded place in Harry's house. We said ladies and gentlemen there has been a terrible earth quake and tide wave in California the whole coast in

chaos. Many experts say it is the end of the world. We made crashing wave sounds with our mouth.

Harry's Sister Sue was in town - she was a lady announcer. Mrs. Coons could be heard saying, "I've got to call Harry Sr. at work." We immediately announced, please by all means do not use your telephones as they are needed desperately. Can you imagine when our plot was discovered what happened. Dr. Coons sat us down and gave us a terse sermon on what we had done. He said it frayed Ms. Coons nerves and one could have a heart attack with such disturbing news. You could tell he was not to happy about the whole thing.

The wheels were always spinning with Harry. Harry's great passion was to be a magician. I was to be Harry's sidekick and announcer. After all Harry was older than I. Well a big show was advertised and to be held at West Clinton grammar school. The big day finally came.

Harry had a special introduction I was supposed to say so I stood out in front of the curtain and announced with a strong voice, "Ladies and gentlemen I present to you the fantastic, the wizard of magic, Professor, Harry, Josua, milky way mars bars and forever yours Harry Coons." Well, Harry, like most magicians, did his card tricks, coin tricks and the old shell game trick. But every one was so excited about how he was going to make a man float. Harry had perfected a float trick that used two wooden golf clubs with shoes and socks and a sheet over the person who's torso was embedded in sheets so when the person raised the shoes on the clubs up in the air and swayed back and forth, he looked just like a person floating and made his exit at the other side of the stage. The kids could not believe their very eyes they were ecstatic. He must be a person with great magical powers.

Harry Coons passed away a few years ago. Harry may be gone, but never forgotten. Harry may have magical powers that we are not aware of..

This article is dedicated to the family of Harry Coons.



MICKY

Hello, my name is Micky. I am a two-year-old gray and white Tabby cat. I was found in a neighborhood where an Ark Shelter volunteer lived. She found out I was a friendly boy and brought me here. The cat volunteers say I am very sweet and loving and want nothing more than to be petted and loved on. But I have a problem. The vet says I have Feline Immuno-deficiency Virus (FIV). That means that I am a special needs cat because FIV cats suffer from immune deficiency and I can get sick from normally harmless bacteria and viruses that wouldn't bother other cats. FIV is not transmitted to people or dogs but can be passed on to other cats mostly through biting. Cats with FIV can live a long time as an only cat in the household. I am currently healthy, but please talk to your vet about FIV and if you think you can manage my condition please come and see me at the Ark Animal Shelter. Ask to see Micky, that's me.

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*Childcare ad seen in
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CHEERLESS CHRISTMAS

by M. D. Smith, IV



It was the month before Christmas, and all were happy and busy at Santa's North Pole workshop, not long until the big night.

Elves on the assembly line whistled and hummed as they worked on the toys for the good little girls and boys.

All was well until — Mrs. Claus, accompanied by Cookie, the head kitchen elf, rushed to Santa with distress painted on their faces.

"Santa, we have a problem," Mrs. Claus said.

That got the jolly old man's attention, who paused reading his "naughty and nice" list.

Mrs. Claus nodded to Cookie. "She's right, sir. It's been so long since we ordered any, I didn't notice until the pinch dispenser was empty. It's the pinch of Cheer we add to all the cocoa for everyone here at the North Pole. There was none for this morning." Cookie rubbed his wrinkled brow and shook his head.

"How long before it will matter?" Santa said. "After all, it's only a pinch."

"The withdrawal should start — probably tomorrow."

"Can't your order some more? Overnight delivery?"

Cookie drooped his head. "It's on back-order from China until March. That's the only place that makes it."

"Maybe it won't matter. After all, this is the happiest place on Earth where we spend most of each year making toys and games for children, even though it is a lot of work."

Santa got his answer the following day when he approached assembly line #1, making toy trains. One elf bumped the arm of another, who barked out, "Watch what you're doing, numbskull."

To which the other replied, "You're the donkey. I barely touched you. What the devil happened to your cheery attitude?" They both put their arms on their hips, and it looked like they might come to actual blows.

Santa rushed over and interrupted them. "Boys, boys. Take it easy. This is the toy workshop where everyone enjoys what they do year-round."

"I've been meaning to talk to you about that, Santa. We need shorter hours and more playtime," the first elf replied.

"Just take it easy, fellas. I'll see what I can do. Where's your usual jovial attitude?"

"I don't feel like that very much today."

The other elf nodded his head in agreement.

Santa retreated to his office and summoned Cookie on the intercom. He arrived quicker than you could lick a candy cane. Before Santa could speak, Cookie said, "I know, sir. Everyone is out of sorts today. I had no idea how much that pinch of Cheer would be missed."

"I'm afraid if it gets any worse, we'll have a full-scale mutiny and work stoppage. Children worldwide will be terribly disappointed, and this will no longer be the happiest place on the planet." Santa rubbed his forehead, thinking for a few moments.

"Cookie, get ready to take a trip to the factory in China. Use the reindeer dust to get there in a blink and talk to the person in charge of our special formula. We've got to do something immediately. This is a crisis."

"I'm on it, sir. I'll be there in two shakes to see if I can fill our highest priority order."

"Hey, Where you come from?" said factory manager Chang in Chinese. All elves speak every language, so Cookie understood. "I'm Cookie from your special customer at the North Pole. Our order can't be delayed. It's causing chaos at our factory."

Chang turned to his computer, whizzed his fingers on the keyboard, and read the screen. "Aaah. We missing one tiny ingredient for your formula — used in microchips and currently worldwide shortage. You not imagine the pressure from

chip manufacturers. I'm sorry, Mr. Cookie, but nothing I can do. Maybe push shipping to early January. Best I can offer. Very sorry."

"Oh, that'll be too late. Okay, I gotta get back and report." Cookie dusted himself and vanished.

Chang looked puzzled. "Where he go? Strange customer. Move fast."

Back at the North Pole, Cookie delivered his news to Santa and Mrs. Claus and shook his head. "I wish I could've done more."

Santa blew out a gigantic breath, and Cookie's long hair fluttered in the breeze. "Work stoppage is everywhere. Even a few fights have broken out. Who'd have thought just a 'pinch of Cheer' crystals would have such an effect on everyone here? I'm not so jolly myself. I hardly have a ho-ho left in me."

Meeting over, Mrs. Claus went to her small personal section of the kitchen, where the elves prepared another batch of cocoa and added ingredients. Naturally, there was a lot of milk being used. Seeing the white liquid pouring into the kettle sparked an idea in Mrs. Claus' mind. That condensed can I've kept for so long. I wonder?

She opened a high cabinet door and looked toward the top shelf. She could see part of a dusty can, but others were in front. Stepping on a stool, she moved them aside, took the gallon container in her hands, and put it on the counter.

The label read Milk of Human Kindness — Highly Condensed. Mrs. Claus never thought she'd need any, but if ever there was a time, this was it. She unscrewed a small metal top, put in an eyedropper, then extracted a small amount and put ten drops into the new ten-gallon kettle of cocoa. She hurried off to tell Santa what she'd done. The two watched from the office window as the elves drank their mid-afternoon cocoa. They bit their nails.

Thirty minutes later, tension eased throughout the workshop. In an hour, the results were miraculous. Everyone was smiling, singing, or whistling as they worked. They paid compliments to one another and patted each other on their backs.

Santa turned to Mrs. Claus. "Sweetie, you've saved the day and saved Christmas." He gave her the biggest kiss on her rosy cheek she'd had in decades.

Frank James in Huntsville Jail



From 1884 Newspaper

The latest accession to the list of our local sojourners is the last of what is known to the history as the James Band - no less a personage than Frank James himself. He was brought here last Thursday, from Missouri by two United States Deputy Marshals and turned over to Marshal Hinds.

He looked travel worn and when seen several days later in his cell at the jail, there was a marked difference for the better in his appearance. He is rather pale, but by no means a cadaver standing in stockings ready to jump off into the great elsewhere in a jiffy. His extreme pallor is suggestive of a want of sunshine. Since October of 1882, he has not enjoyed the bounding, buoyant life of a dashing freebooter, but has sickened over with the damp of prison walls. His life has undergone a change.

A glance reveals the fact that his chest is his weak physical point, but he is not yet on the perilous edge of the grave. He informed our scribe that his natural weight was not over 140 pounds. He has a dry, comfortable cell at the jail and thinks he is stronger than he has been for some months past.

He thinks he would like Huntsville, whose beauties of scenery and charming air were already familiar to him. He had been to Huntsville several times before, but had not tarried here for more than a day or two at a time. He had likewise traveled through on the Memphis and Charleston road several times and had admired the mountain views of Jackson County.

Concerning his case, of course, we did not expect him to say much. He said that he had employed Gen. L.P Walker as his local attorney

and expected that Governor Charles P. Johnson, of Missouri, would be on hand to attend his trial. His habit was to get the very best counsel to be had, and then leave everything to them.

Yes, he always slept well; slept as easy as an infant, went to bed about nine o'clock every night and did not get up until half past ten next morning. He found that sleep had all the health-giving powers so often ascribed to a thousand and one nostrums.

He would not try to make bond, he reckoned, as it was but a short time till the April term of the Federal court and his friends had already been exceedingly kind to him. He could make it easily if he chose to. He did not wish to tax his friends any more than he found actually necessary. He hoped the local press would at least, not go out of its way to pound him and prejudice his approaching trial.

Every man is entitled to an unprejudiced trial. With quite a merry twinkle he said that he thought the entire press owed him a large bounty, for he had furnished them food for gossip and reflection for twenty years, and they had often taken the privilege of placing him a thousand miles distant from where he really was.

When the scribe bade him "Good morning," he extended a cordial invitation to the scribe to call again as he had always been a good friend to the "quill-drivers" and had never interfered with one of them. The scribe has a vague suspicion that there was another twinkle in his eyes this time, as he said he had never "troubled" any newspaper man.

We would not charge him wrongfully, but unless we are on a false trail, there was in this last mentioned, laughter of his optic which arose from a knowledge on his part of the impecuniosity of the journalists' guild, as much to say: "Frank James knew where to find what he wanted."

Alas! What great mistakes even the greatest among us sometimes fall into.

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A REAL JOB

by Judy C. Smith

It's Christmas Eve 1985 and mother, M.D., Scott, Brent, Creighton, Allison, Warren, Martin and I are going out to our annual Christmas Eve dinner (I only cook on Christmas Day and it takes two weeks to prepare). This year Dee is in California because he's in the Army and also having to have his gall bladder taken out on Christmas Eve. Mother and Brent will fly out to visit him a few days after Christmas, but we can't go with the family out of school and a new baby likely to be here.

After dinner, we are all at our house, mother asks me if I will get her a glass of water, and here I am four days past my delivery due date, have gained forty pounds and I'm doing good just to walk around and still obliging everyone on their wants.

It's 9:45 p.m. and Oh My God, my water breaks, which means the baby is on the way. I say, "Guess What, M.D.?" as he is preparing toys and since we just got all the kids to bed, "We need to go to the hospital." "Can't you wait?" he replies, "I have got to get the stuff put out before the kids wake early in the morning." I asked him which was more important, delivering toys or delivering a baby. He got the point.

Being nearly done, he was able to hurriedly finish in fifteen minutes and we were at the hospital shortly after 10:00 p.m. With my mother home to keep the kids through the night as well as Scott who is now 21 years old, we can depend on him to get the rest of the Christmas work done and even handle the next morning when the kids wake up if necessary.

"His work group would follow him anywhere, but only out of morbid curiosity."

Seen on city of Athens employee report

You might not think the eighth child would take nine hours to arrive, but Owen is not known for being on time. He was 8 pounds and 13 ounces and 22 inches long, and came screaming into this world at 8:10 a.m. and was a Christmas Day Angel. The nurses gave him a red elf hat to wear for Christmas. Happy Birthday, Owen.

Each year we will put up his Merry Birthday Tree, and I tell him only angels are born

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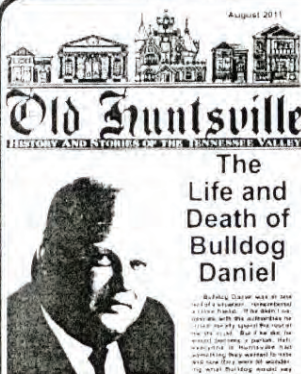
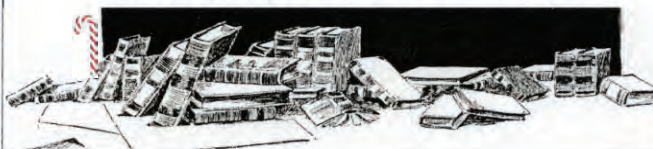
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on Christmas Day, but he says he'll never get to have a birthday party on my birthday, like everyone else does, so we pick his 1/2 birthday for June 25th and that will be it. It worked for awhile, having swimming birthday parties while he was little.

In the past I did some artwork for Sears, taught dancing, both in Huntsville and Tuscaloosa, organized the kindergarten at the First Baptist Church on Monte Sano mountain, owned and ran a vending machine business, taught swimming for twenty-three years, ran a day care in my home with six additional children each day for thirteen years, and cooked supper every night for eleven people, including the house keeper, Ida Mae, who couldn't cook.

Well, time passed. I've had a child at home for forty-two years. Owen is twenty and going off to the University of Alabama. My, how time flies when you're having fun. It's time to "put a table cloth on the stove," cover it up and no more big dinners at night with silver candle sticks, cloth napkins and a milk pitcher (no carton on my table). Now it will be Hardees, McDonalds, and Steak-Out and paper products all the way. Just throw them in the garbage when finished or maybe a flash back and wash a few plastic forks and cups to use, just in case.

The other night I had company over for dinner, the works, on the patio. I used place mats, cloth napkins, silver, china, flower centerpiece of coordinated flowers, home cooked meal and it was really good. I thought maybe I could still pull off a decent get-together again, when Warren walked in from Birmingham Southern, where he is now a true Southern Gentleman.

He says, "Mom, the place looks great, just like Martha Stewart would do. Have you been in jail?" So much for patio parties, I'll try something else.

I did buy and run an embroidery business, which is great fun.

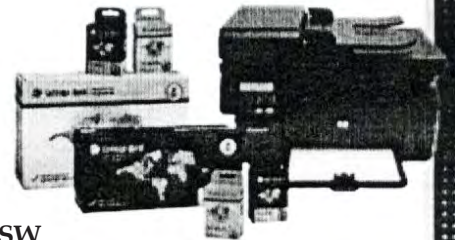
M.D. says I'll monogram anything that will sit still long enough, including my cars.

Now Owen is twenty and left to attend the University of Alabama where M.D. and I went to school. He turns to me and says, "Momma, why didn't you ever learn to do something and get a real job?"

So now, if my friends can't find me, I've gone in search for A REAL JOB. You inspire me, Owen.

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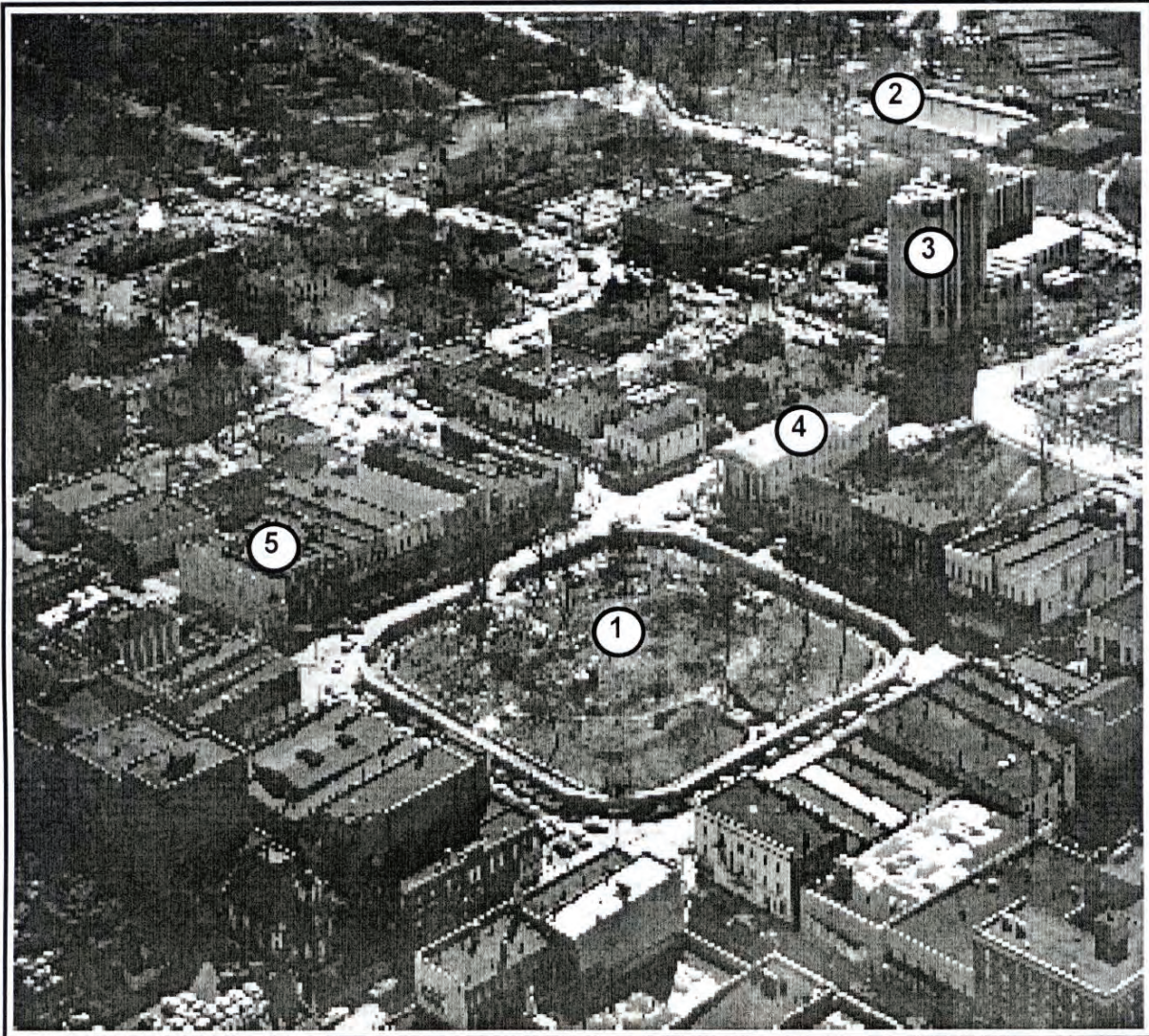
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