



No. 372

February 2024



Old Huntsville

HISTORY AND STORIES OF THE TENNESSEE VALLEY

“Don’t Ever Leave Me!”



Also in this issue: Hurricane Valley Events; Remembering Thiokol Chemical Corp; Miss Louise; A Skein of Yarn; Linzer Cookies; John and Bertha Tate; Buried Gold of Hog Hollow; Jamie and Gloria Cooper; A Memorable Valentine’s Day; Recipes from Huntsville Hospital; Pet Tips and More!

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"Don't Ever Leave Me!"

by Tom Carney

Lucille leaned tiredly on her hoe in the cotton field and watched the mailman come to a stop in front of the mailbox. Lucille and her husband, Kenneth, rarely received any mail so whenever the mailman stopped it was a cause of great anticipation.

In this case, as Lucille looked at the official-looking envelope, she felt a sense of gloom descend upon her. Although Kenneth and she had talked about it almost every day, it had done nothing to lessen the impact of actually receiving it.

Though a war was raging in Europe and almost every able bodied male in the community of New Hope had received his draft notice, Lucille had still held the hope that her husband would not be called.

Silently she placed the envelope in her apron and walked back to their home. It was a typical share cropper's house; two rooms, heated by a wood burning stove and an outhouse

in the back. Regardless of their surroundings, Lucille and Kenneth still considered themselves lucky.

1943 was promising to be a bumper year for cotton and even after giving the landowner his share and paying the bills, hopefully, there would be enough left over for the down payment on their own land.

Lucille stoked the fire in the stove as she thought about what to fix for dinner. Kenneth would still be in the fields for another couple of hours and she wanted to prepare something special for him.

When they married she had thought her husband was the kindest and best man in the world. Now, a year later, she was even more in love with him. Several times she had wondered what life would be like if he was gone, but the thought was so horrifying that she immediately put it out of her mind. Life without her husband would be unbearable, so she refused to think about it.

That evening, after they had completed dinner, and she was clearing the table, Lucille took the envelope out of her apron and placed it on the table in front of him. The look on Kenneth's face after he hastily read the notice confirmed her darkest fears.

He was being called up and had to report for induction in ten days.

That night, lying in her husband's strong arms, would be

"The only reason I would take up walking is so that I could hear heavy breathing again."

Ray Thornton, Gurley



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HISTORY AND STORIES OF THE TENNESSEE VALLEY

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the most memorable of their brief marriage. They talked of their dreams and of their love, and of how soon the war would be over. Two young people, madly in love, dreaming of the future but with a fear of the unknown lurking in the back of their minds.

Kenneth had always been a hard worker but the next ten days saw him working harder than ever. Up hours before daylight he would already be in the fields when the first glimmer of a new day began to peek across the mountains. And every evening, after working in the fields all day, would find him chopping wood for the upcoming winter by the light of a kerosene lantern.

Often, late at night, Lucille would carry a fruit jar of tea out to the woodpile where he was working and implore him to quit for the day.

Laughing, Kenneth would take her in his arms and tell her that he wanted to be sure that his wife would be warm that winter.

The morning Kenneth was scheduled to appear for induction they got up even earlier than usual. After preparing breakfast they began the trek to town. Not owning an automobile and declining to ask neighbors for a ride, they chose instead to walk.

They had already talked about his departure and both had agreed it would be easier if she did not accompany him all the way. Two blocks from the bus station, they paused and after setting his bag down, Kenneth took his wife in his arms one last time to tell her that he loved her. Then abruptly, while choking back tears, he grabbed his bag and was gone.

During the long walk back home Lucille's mind was a frenzy of plans and ideas. She would finish the cotton crop and save every penny she could so they could buy their own farm when he came home. She would write every day and send pictures and clippings from the newspaper. Everything would be all right. She just knew it.

After returning home, Lucille spent the day working in the fields hoeing cotton. As she thought about the cruel war that had separated her from her husband, she attacked her work with a vengeance. The young cotton plants became Nazis and her hoe became the instrument of their destruction. Unfortunately, the hard work was only a temporary relief. When she returned to the house late that evening she was instantly confronted by silence. The kind of silence that only one who lives alone can understand.

And Lucille did what millions of other wives did that summer of 1943, she sat down on the edge of the bed and cried.

Although she worked from daylight to dark it was impossible for her to keep up with the growing cotton by herself. Where there had once been neat orderly rows, more weeds began appearing weekly. The harder she tried, the farther behind she got. It quickly became apparent that she would be unable to finish the crop.

Late one evening, as Lucille trudged tiredly home, she saw the landlord sitting on the porch waiting for her. Apologetic and with hat in hand, he told her that he was going to have to take over the crop. He had too much money invested he said, to take a chance on losing it.

"Of course," he said, "if you can get someone to help you, maybe we can do something."

Lucille knew there was no hope in hiring any farm help. Even Redstone Arsenal, where they were paying top wages, could not find all the hands it needed.

Reluctantly, she began to make arrangements to move. During the war, with gas rationing and over-



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crowded conditions, even a simple task like moving became a major chore. Finally after days of trying, she found a neighbor who was willing to move her to town in his horse and wagon in exchange for some farm implements that she no longer had use for.

Lucille went to work at the Cotton Mill and after several months of living with a relative, was fortunate enough to be assigned a house in the Mill Village. The previous occupant had been fired for allowing Arsenal workers to board with him, a practice the mills discouraged for fear of losing workers to the Arsenal.

Lucille's life soon settled into a regular routine. Up at 5 o'clock every morning, work all day, and back home by 6 that evening. Run to the mailbox to look for a letter from Kenneth, and then write another letter describing her day. Although a slow reader, she forced herself to read the newspaper every day to keep track of the war news. On her kitchen wall she had taped a map of Europe and every week or so she would laboriously trace the advances of the Allied Army. Every foot the Allies advanced meant the sooner Kenneth would be coming home.

Finally after almost two years, Lucille received the letter she had been waiting for. The war had been over for months and the army was beginning to discharge its soldiers. Kenneth wrote to say that he would be arriving home by bus in a couple of weeks and that he missed her terribly.

A friend later said that she had never seen Lucille look so lovely and radiant as she did when she received the letter from her husband.

Two days before his scheduled arrival Kenneth called a friend to say he was in Fort Benning, Georgia, being discharged and would be home in

a few days. "Tell Lucille," he said as he hung up, "that I love her."

On the appointed day Lucille was at the bus station. Busload after busload of soldiers arrived to be welcomed home by their families, but Kenneth was not among them. Late that night after being assured that no more buses were scheduled to arrive that evening, Lucille finally returned home, only to return at first light the next morning.

Again, buses arrived and buses departed all day long but Kenneth was not on any of them. The same routine was followed for almost a week until she was threatened with losing her job if she did not return to work. Kenneth and Lucille had been given a lamp when they first married and now she placed it in the window so he would be able to find the house if he arrived home at night. Every night she would rush home after work to wash, do her hair and change clothes and then spend the evening sitting on the edge of a chair next to the



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lamp, waiting patiently for her husband who never showed up.

Her neighbors began to grow concerned and finally talked her into writing the War Department. Several months passed until she received a reply. Kenneth had been discharged at Fort Benning and given a travel voucher to Huntsville. The department was sorry but it had no further information.

Neighbors began to speculate on the fate of Lucille's husband. "Surely," they reasoned, "something must have happened to him. And it's not normal for a woman to keep waiting for so long and acting like nothing is the matter."

Finally a delegation of neighbors approached her. "Lucille," they said, "we've known you for a long time and we just want to help. It's time you realized that maybe your husband is not coming home."

For what seemed like an eternity, Lucille stared silently at them, as if she was looking through them. When she finally spoke it was with a deliberate calmness. "My husband said he would come home and I believe him. Now if you will excuse me. ..."

Weeks turned into months, and months into years and every night the lamp was turned on, a silent beacon to a long ago memory.

Periodically, over the years, friends or neighbors would take an interest in the fate of Lucille's husband and try to discover what had happened to him. Letters were written to various organizations and inquiries were made of police departments and hospitals. The answer was always the same. "I'm sorry but we have no information."

Whenever someone would relay the latest inquiry to Lucille, she would scornfully re-

ply that they were wasting their time with such foolishness.

"My husband," she would always reply, "is on his way home." In 1956, some of the mill homes were torn down and Lucille moved to a small cottage at the foot of Chapman Mountain. Immediately, before her belongings were even unpacked, the lamp was once again placed in front of the living room window where it continued its lonely vigil.

When she lived in the mill village most people had been familiar with her story and had been sympathetic. Many of the residents, probably having seen enough suffering of their own, went out of their way to be nice to her, always asking if she had any word from her husband.

"No," she would reply. "He's on his way home and probably hasn't had time to call."

Now, living in a new location, she soon became known as "the crazy woman." The neighbors knew nothing about her except that she still believed her husband was coming home and turned the light on for him every night. That was enough to make her different.

She rarely ventured out of her house and when she did, she was often greeted by taunts from the neighborhood children. At Halloween her yard would be rolled with toilet paper and rotten eggs would be thrown at her front door. Every few years some neighborhood woman would visit for a few minutes, more to satisfy her curiosity than anything else.

Ignoring her neighbors, Lucille continued to live in her dream world, turning the lamp on every night and waiting for a knock that never came.

More time passed and the friends who had sympathized with her began to die off. Every year there were fewer people who knew the story behind the lamp in the window. By this time, Lucille had become a virtual recluse and though able to take care of herself, her family still decided it was a good idea for someone to check on her every day.

In 1992, almost a half century after Kenneth had left for the service, Lucille's nephew stopped by one evening to see how she was doing. After knocking several times and not getting an answer, he used his key to enter the house.



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After searching the rest of the house first, he discovered Lucille crouched in a corner of the bedroom, with a sheet wrapped around her, sobbing. Looking up and seeing her nephew, she began to cry again.

"He's not coming home is he? Kenneth's not coming home."

It was all the nephew could do to not cry himself. Sitting on the floor he wrapped his arms around his aunt and tenderly assured her that everything was all right.

"Don't worry Aunt Lucy, he's on his way home. He'll be home any time now."

Carefully he tucked the frail old woman into her bed. As she drifted off to sleep, a gentle smile played on her lips, the smile of a woman who still believed that love was forever.

Sometime that night, in the wee hours of the morning, Lucille died. Her body was found on the living room sofa, fully dressed and with her hair done up neatly.

It was apparent from the calm and serene look on her face that she was finally reunited with her husband.

As the hearse pulled out of the driveway a group of small children, probably no more than 5 or 6 years old, began to chant; "Crazy woman, crazy woman, the crazy woman's dead."

At the family's request, we have refrained from publishing Lucille's last name. The mystery of what happened to Kenneth has never been solved. Though it was later established that he definitely boarded the bus in Columbus, Ga., for the trip to Huntsville, he was never seen again.

"For those who don't want Alexa listening to their conversations, there's a male version - it doesn't listen to anything."

Mary Dugar, Huntsville

A Penitentiary Romance: Innocent Incest

There is now in the State Penitentiary an aged couple who are serving out a term for the crime of incest, they being brother and sister.

The story is this: At the age of twelve years, the male left his father's house to seek his fortune and to never return. He, in time, came West, grew to manhood and married, raised a family of children, and in time his wife died.

His sister grew to womanhood and was married, and with her husband came West, and then to Iowa. Her husband died, and in time she received an offer of marriage from a man who was a widower. She accepted the offer and they were married. Her husband was wealthy, and after a time one of his sons wished to have the father give him some property, but the father refused to accede to his demands.

The son, one day, while looking over the family record of the stepmother, which had been laid aside and forgotten, discovered that there was a kinship between the families, and further investigation proved that his father and stepmother were very own brother and sister.

To avenge himself for his father's refusal to give him the bulk of his property, he brought suit against them both for incest. They were tried and convicted and sent to the penitentiary for one year. They are both over sixty years of age. and as innocent of intent to commit crime as the new born babe.

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Jamie and Gloria Cooper (Never a Night Apart)



by John H. Tate

Mention to someone the names WAAY Too Early, The Country Rover, Cooper and Company, and Local and Lovin' It, and then watch the person's face light up as they almost scream the name Jamie Cooper. Gloria and the Country Rover himself, Jamie Cooper invited me into their lovely home for a little chat. As it turns out, there is more than meets the eye to this power duo.

How about their private personas? Are they still the same people behind closed doors? Their public profession of love for each other, is it real? The Coopers were gracious in inviting me in for a little behind-the-curtain talk. The big news recently has been about Jamie Cooper, after thirty-one years away, he has returned to 31-WAAY TV.

A friend is God's way of telling us he doesn't want us to walk alone.

I think all of the headlines are burying the lead. In my opinion, the top news story should be that after twenty-six years, Gloria and Jamie Cooper are still together and are madly in love with each other; and that they've never spent a night apart while they have been married, twenty-five years this April 2024. What are the chances that a country boy from New Hope, Alabama, would fall for a girl from Chicago, Illinois?

Gloria first came to Alabama when she was fifteen, and then she returned to Chicago. After graduating from high school, she moved back to Decatur, Alabama. While Gloria was working for Telestar Communications, Inc. in Decatur, Jamie was in the process of getting Telestar to become one of the sponsors for his T.V. show Cooper and Company.

There is no other way of putting it, once Jamie saw Gloria, he felt as if he was back wrestling the bear from a story he did as The Country Rover. Just like when the bear had body-slammed him, he fell hard for Gloria from the jump.

Gloria, on the other hand, would not have anything to do with him. Jamie was going through a divorce at the time, and Gloria reasoned that a man wouldn't leave his wife for a girlfriend. The divorce came through, and

Jamie showed the papers to Gloria, and they have spent every day together ever since.

Jamie did not ease Gloria into television. As he put it, "She was thrown into the frying pan of television, two hours a day, six days a week. It turns out that she was a natural, and she did a very good job." The two of them fared well together, and their love grew stronger with each passing day.

Although she was a natural, it was not easy being in front of the television camera. Her challenge also included the fact that she married into a blended family, to a man seventeen years her senior with three ex-wives.

Gloria was also called a gold-digger because of the age difference. They shared with me the amount of money Jamie had when they got married, Gloria would have had to loan him the gold to dig. As if all of this was not enough, Jamie was a well-known North Alabama celebrity, with attractive women around him constantly.

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They were constantly being hugged in public, because they spent so much time in people's homes, by way of the television, everyone felt as if Gloria and Jamie were family.

One of the first things she learned about Jamie was how smart he was. Because of his accent and his crazy antics, some people made the mistake of thinking Jamie would not be successful. By the time they figured out they were wrong, he was well on his way.

In 2018 Jamie and Gloria felt she was ready to expand her community involvement by dipping her toes into politics, so she ran for Limestone County License Commissioner. The move revealed the dark underbelly of some people, including within their circle of friends, and some members of their own extended family. However, the very negative experience brought Jamie and Gloria closer together, because it made them examine themselves, and their commitment to each other after so many others turned out to be fair-weather friends.

The love Jamie has for Gloria is displayed each time he talks about her. He can't help but cradle her name in love, as he did when talking about her and their church. "We are members of Lindsay Lane Baptist Church, here in Athens, and people love being around her."

"The people at Lindsay Lane are also partnering with Gloria and her charity Lunches of Love, which is used to feed hungry children."

Getting Jamie to quiet down long enough to share his inner thoughts was well worth it.

When asked to explain what Gloria meant to him and their relationship, he paused, and one could see the emotions behind his eyes.

"She adds control to my life, and she provides the extra voice that is needed sometimes, that allows me to take a breath and maybe not say something I wanted to say but shouldn't. I am the most blessed person on the whole earth. She is my family, she is my everything. I couldn't imagine doing anything without her."

Jamie didn't say this, but I saw it as we were talking and having fun. In my opinion, Gloria represents peace and calm to Jamie also. By the nature of his personality and his chosen career, there are always balls in the air. Gloria provides the peace and calm needed for him to catch and launch the right ones at the right time.

Gloria's elegant grace is apparent as she states, "Jamie brings a lot of love and laughter to our relationship, and we just get along so well. After all, we are together twenty-four-seven. He also gives me unconditional love."

There you have it, Gloria and Jamie Cooper, with unconditional love for each other, and with God being an important part of their marriage. Jamie ended our wonderful afternoon with something another television personality said to him, and he took it to heart. "If you don't have God in your life, what have you got? Your money and fame don't mean squat."




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"Life isn't about waiting for the rain to stop. It's about learning to dance in the rain."

Barry Key

My Black Cat

by M. D. Smith, IV



We'd only been married for six months, and wife, Judy, began talking about a baby. Living in the student apartments and attending the University of Alabama, I didn't think that was a good idea. So, the day she came home with two baby black and white kittens, I was relieved. She had something to occupy her motherly instincts. We named them "Pete and Gladys" after the popular TV sitcom of the day in 1961. Shortly after 1962 rolled around, Pete got run over by a car, and we were heartbroken. Buried him in the backyard. Judy said Gladys was lonely, as I guess we both were, and she went shopping from a "free cats" want-ad. She brought home a young solid black cat and we called him Pete, as well.

Pete came from a woman's house that Judy said must have had 15-20 cats lounging on floor-to-ceiling shelving, and they competed for food when dinner time came. Pete allowed Gladys

to share cat food, but if we cooked spaghetti, noodles often fed to them at the cattery, he'd growl and want it all to himself. He never grew out of that taste.

In 1963, we had our first son, Dee, and I graduated from University of Alabama two months later. We occupied a new Hunter and Mitchell small 3-bedroom home (\$15,300) on Dawson Terrace in a brand-new neighborhood bordered by the Parkway on the west and Highway 72 just north. We had a spacious backyard of undeveloped lots that mainly were bare ground. If you recall, on New Year's Eve of 1963, Huntsville had one of its heaviest snowfalls ever. It was 15.3 inches officially at the airport. It snowed more after midnight, so we got a total of about a foot and a half of snow.

Both cats were out of the house when the snow started, but Gladys soon returned, waiting in the carport to come inside. But there was no sign of Pete, no matter how much I called and walked from the street to far into the backyard area. He didn't show up that night. The next morning, from drifts, the snow was up to my knees, and I used rubber wading boots to traipse around looking for and calling our Black Cat. No luck.

I had horrible thoughts of Pete being buried in the deep snow and frozen to death. My fear increased over the next few days. On the fourth day, with the thaw melting most of the snow, he just showed up in the carport, looking clean and healthy, but was ready to eat. I was so happy to have him back. Judy and I agreed he'd used up one of his lives on the excursion. We will always wonder where he holed up for those days and nights.

Then, the following year, we moved to a house we built on a lot on Monte Sano. It was a larger three-bedroom house.

"When I worry about how old I look, I just find a happy hour and by the time I leave I look great!"

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We also built a chain-link fence six feet tall, interwoven with wood-colored aluminum slats for privacy. That was to contain a new poodle dog Judy got when we moved to the mountain. But the fence never stopped Gladys or Pete from scaling it like a lumberjack climbing a pole in a contest. So, they continued to wander the neighborhood and only occasionally stayed inside the fence.

The fall of 1968, leaves were off the trees, but it wasn't yet cold winter time, and Pete went missing again. It was rare when either cat didn't show up for dinner and the night inside the house. I worried when he wasn't back the next day or night. Each morning, afternoon when I got home from work, and night, I called for him and became increasingly concerned that he was not home. Saturday arrived, the fifth day, and he still was not back.

For some reason, I decided to search the backyard to see if maybe he'd come back injured and possibly died. We had an old wooden doghouse for Mike the dog, that he never used. He was an inside dog. I walked over to the corner of the yard and looked inside carefully. Nope. Not there.

Then I noticed the heavy 100-pound structure was slightly askew on the four bricks that kept it off the ground so the wood wouldn't rot. Two of the vertical bricks on one side were lying flat. That was odd. On nothing but a hunch with some fear and trepidation, I pushed the dog house backward, exposing the underside. When I did, a black cat staggered to his feet and stumbled out from beneath the flooring. Somehow, Pete had crawled under it and brushed it just enough to have it partially collapse on him, penning him, and he could not get out. I'm sure he must have meowed some the time he was missing but must have given up because he wasn't making a sound when I found him. I carried him into the house, gave him food and water, and within a short while, he was walking normally and acting like nothing had happened.

Pete had used life number two.

Two more years. It was 1970, and Pete was eight years old. Gladys was nine. At the vet's request, who was tending to the dog, Judy took both cats to him for some 'routine treatment.' Judy called me at work later that day, crying. She said Pete was dead at the vet. I came home. She explained the vet had decided to give our cats worming treatment, and he was sorry to report that "Pete just didn't make it." He had died from the treatment. I called the vet for a further explanation. He said that some cats just have an adverse reaction to the oral medicine, and my cat had vomited and choked to death. But the reaction showed he needed the worming treatment and likely would have died in the near future anyway from worms. I never found that a satisfactory answer, but whatever it was, it wouldn't bring my black cat back.

We buried him in the backyard, and he's still there at 3003 Crescent Circle. And so is that same chain-link fence after nearly 70 years.

Gladys has a different story. She moved again with us in 1973 to a house we bought in my parent's neighborhood of Covemont, where we stayed for the next 26 years. Gladys continued being an outdoor cat, occasionally catching a mouse or chipmunk. Still, with the number of small children growing in our house, pulling a tail sometimes, she took up residence with my grandmother just two doors up from us. Gladys would occasionally visit, but her abode was in grandmother's house. It was 1978, and Gladys was 17 years old. She was still perky, but she had fleas. So, with the

help of her housekeeper, my grandmother sprayed Gladys with flea spray, Gladys went outside, licked it off her fur, and died that afternoon. I don't know how old that cat may have lived to be if that hadn't happened.

Pete was my cat, liked me the most, and because the other Pete was so short-lived, he was truly like my first cat, similar to my first dog I wrote about a few issues ago. You just never forget your first cat.



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Friday, February 2nd is Groundhog Day. If the furry, plump prognosticator emerges from his hole on a clear day and sees his shadow, he will retreat, and there will be six more weeks of wintry weather.

But, if he emerges from his burrow and does NOT see his shadow, then early spring weather is right around the corner.

We are now having a massive Covid spike. Having Covid isn't much fun and can last a long time.

If you haven't gotten your fall booster adjusted for the current strain of the virus, it's not too late. Get it ASAP. And if you did get one last September or October, consider getting another booster this April. You'd better head to your doctor or pharmacy and get one right away.

Now, we all know Cupid comes on February 14th. If you have a sweetheart, you better consider making dinner reservations weeks in advance because restaurants fill up fast on the 14th.

The same goes for flowers and sweets. They can sell off fast. You don't want to get on your sweetie's wrong side.

Walmart and Dollar General stores started putting out Valentine's merchandise two days after Christmas. They don't waste any time, do they?

Also, be sure to check the batteries in your smoke and carbon monoxide detectors. There have been several terrible apartment and house fires. Be very cautious of space heaters that can set nearby items on fire. Carbon monoxide can overcome a person very fast because it's odorless. Also, know where your fire extinguishers are in several places on each floor of your home and how to use them. If you have a wood-burning fireplace, hiring a chimney sweep to clean at least every year or two is recommended. The chimney will build up creosote that will cause a chimney fire that can spread to your roof.

The Greater Huntsville Humana Society is a no-kill shelter. Their primary fund raiser is the Dog Ball on February 3, 2024. If you can't attend, they would greatly appreciate a donation this month.

Oh, I hope you readers are ahead of me. I just found a pack of spring bulbs in the vegetable keeper in the spare fridge. If you have failed to plant yours, you better get started this week so you will have a beautiful spring garden. Spring is just around the corner on March 19th. I look forward to that date. Until then, stay warm and plant those bulbs.

Oh, one more anniversary to remember. February 8 is National Kite Flying Day. Take the advice of the work-obsessed father from Mary Poppins – go out and fly a kite.

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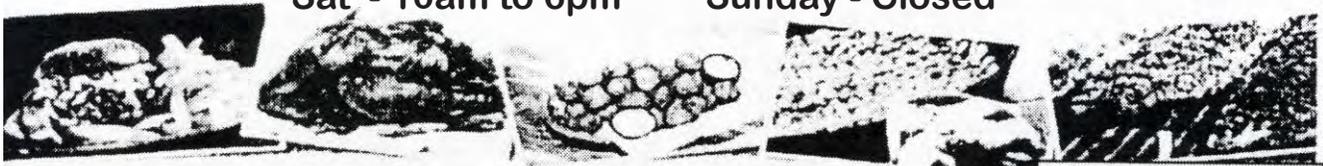
Happy Valentine's Day to you and Those You Love!

Hours: Thur - 10am to 7pm

Friday - 10am to 7pm

Sat - 10am to 6pm

Sunday - Closed



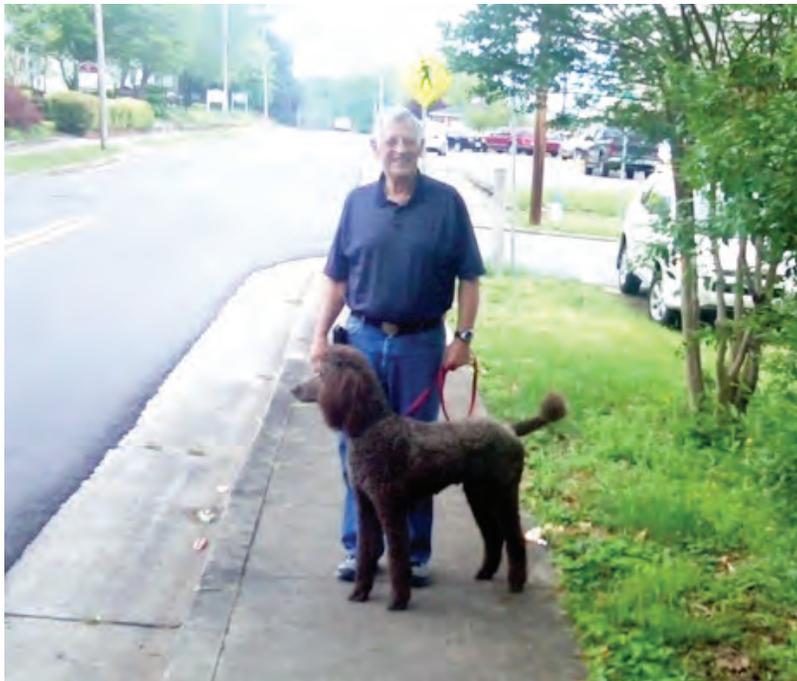
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GOOD DOG DAN

by Robert French,
April 2019



"In football, when you win,
nothing hurts."

Joe Namath

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In 1957, while a student at the University of Alabama, I read a book, "Training You to Train Your Dog." My wife and I began to breed Doberman Pinchers and I read another book, "Dog Training Made Easy." With puppies all over the place, dog training became my hobby.

Through the years, I trained Golden Retrievers, German Shepards, English Bull Dogs, Pit Bulls, even a temperamental Afghan Hound, a Great Dane and a Pug, among others.

Any Vet will tell you that there is a difference between dogs and champion dogs. Accidentally, I became the master of a Champion Standard Poodle with a name a block long. So, I named him Dan. My wife had passed away and friends said that I needed company.

Dan became my companion. He was smarter than I was and looked down his nose at most everyone else. Dan had no interest in being petted, unless he wanted to be petted. And, he didn't eat, he dined.

Being as smart as he was, Dan was a pleasure to train.

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With little effort, using the repetition and reward techniques, I trained Dan to heel, sit, stay, beg, roll over, play dead and fetch. He was a natural guard dog.

Dan's very favorite activity was fetching a tennis ball. For hours, I would throw the ball in the front yard and Dan would chase it down and bring it back, ready to go again.

One Sunday, after church, I was greeted by Dan needing to go out. I let him out the front door and waited until he had done his business. He returned with the tennis ball that he dropped in front of me.

"Oh, you want to play tennis ball, do you?" I picked up the ball and the game was on. To change the usual, I began throwing the ball up in the air and Dan would catch it. We had done this before and he loved it.

On one throw, pretty high, he ran and jumped in the air and twisted to get the ball as he had misjudged it. When he came down, he ignored the ball and began to cough. He staggered over to me and fell down at my feet.

Still dressed in my Sunday clothes, I called the vet at home. He was a friend who had treated Dan all his life. I told him what had happened.

"Meet me at the hospital. I'm on my way."

We put Dan on an examining table. He was breathing laboriously.

After an examination, the doctor said, "These big dogs have large vacant chest cavities. Frequently, if they twist really quick, they will throw an intestine over other intestines. There is very little chance of recovery. That's what has happened to Dan."

He took a long instrument and ran it down the unconscious dog's throat. Time and again he tried to dislodge the blockage without success.

Finally, he looked at me with a tear in his eye, "Dan has died."

Both of us silently sobbed for a few minutes. Dan had been such a good dog. The vet said he would take care of the body.

I don't train dogs any more.

"Love is when your puppy licks your face and jumps on you even after you left him all day alone."

Chris, age 7

Op' Heidelberg

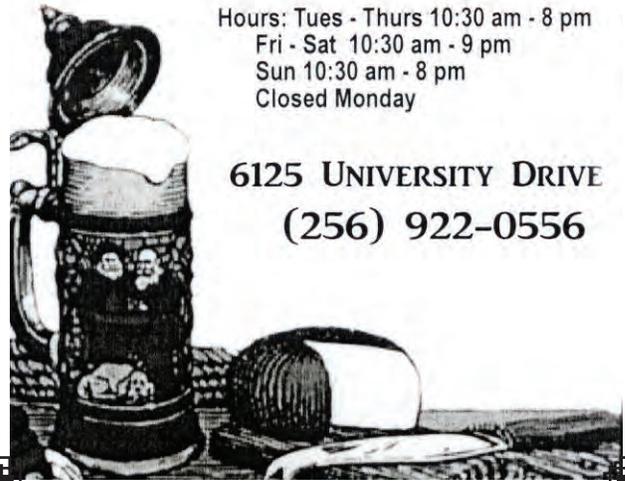
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MY MOST MEMORABLE VALENTINE'S DAY

by Tanjie Kling

Valentine's Day holds different memories for everyone. For some, it could spark memories of romance, a wedding, an engagement, or even heartbreak. I had a particular experience that was memorable, but not for any of the aforementioned reasons. My story begins the day before Valentine's Day.

My mother graced the world with her presence on February 13. On that day, in the year 2018, she was going to celebrate a significant birthday. Since she was also a hospice patient in her home, I really wanted to spend the entire day with her as well as spend the night at her home. I did not know if we would celebrate the next year, so every moment with her counted.

We had a great day together, and her two sisters-in-law visited her for birthday lunch and cake. The day passed quickly, and soon it was nighttime. If you have taken care of anyone elderly in the nighttime, it is possible that you may have experienced a sleepless night. That night, my mother was waking up every hour or so needing something, and I did not get much rest.

On February 14, I returned to my own home. My husband Bill and I discussed our evening plans. I was tired and he wasn't feeling 100%. A few weeks prior,

he had minor back surgery and his doctor gave him instructions to significantly restrict his movement. We did not feel like going out to eat. It was a situation of it being easier for me to throw together a quick meal at home versus going out, waiting for food and driving home.

I believe I threw together some pasta and a salad. Later, we were sitting in our living room. I told Bill around 8:30 that I was really tired and was going to relax and turn on the massage chair. At the time, we owned a zero gravity massage chair that would also vigorously squeeze or massage your legs and arms. Since the chair was zero gravity, it actually would periodically lift your legs well above your head - almost to the point of being upside down.

I proceeded to situate myself in the chair, and pushed the controls on the chair to begin the zero gravity massage program. After about 5 minutes of sitting in the fully operational chair, we had a power outage. It was the absolute worst timing. The massage rollers were digging into my upper back. I was literally upside down. My arms and legs were locked within the chair.

We immediately called Huntsville Utilities to report the outage to their automated system. I remained calm, but didn't know whether to laugh or cry. I opted for laughter, because this was such an unusual predicament. What are the chances that this would happen?

I called a dear friend, whose husband served on the Huntsville Utility's Electric Board, I relayed my story to her of being stuck upside down in the chair, but was laughing so hard that she thought it was a joke. I finally convinced her that I was very serious. I was pinned in this chair!

Bill couldn't physically help me get out of the chair due to his back procedure. The doctor directed that he not lift anything that weighed more than 5 pounds. I couldn't climb out of the chair because the sides of the chair were too high to crawl out of it. There was no emergency release on this chair. I was just stuck.

Someone from Huntsville Utilities called us and said their estimated time for restoring electricity would be anytime between three hours to eight hours. Oh, dear! Could I stay in this position that long? What choice did I have? Huntsville Utilities personnel asked if HEMSI should be called since Bill couldn't even help me get out of the chair. I waited it out, and fortunately it was only about 3 hours until our power was restored.

It was a memorable evening, and one I will never forget. The moral of this story is to never sit in a chair without having an escape plan.

That Valentine's Day, I received the greatest gift ever from the dedicated employees of Huntsville Utilities. Our electricity was quickly restored. Those hard-working employees braved the cold, nighttime temperatures to restore our electricity in a timely fashion ... and I got out of that chair!

Seen in the Newspapers, 1907

- In the recorder's court this morning Stephen Peters, arrested for disorderly conduct for throwing rocks at Mayor Smith, was fined \$5 and costs.

- John Williams, an old man who was arrested a few days ago for drunkenness, was ordered released and directed to leave Huntsville at once. Williams is quite an old man, being 72 years of age, and Mayor Smith took pity on him.

- By reason of an open switch on the Southern railway freight train No. 306, it collided on the side track on Meridian Street late yesterday afternoon, wrecking and derailling two cars of the regular train. No one was hurt.

- Mrs. Thelma Wesley died of gunshot complications. A long time resident of Merimack Village, she was accidentally shot by a neighbor three months ago and never recovered. She left three daughters.

- T.M. Craft was arrested yesterday for placing dynamite under his neighbor's home. The incident is but one more chapter of an ongoing feud that began nine years ago when Craft's hogs strayed into a neighbor's garden.

- J.M. Lowell is once again back in the lockup. Witnesses say that Lowell refused to pay for a hair cut and an altercation ensued, ending with Lowell attempting to shave the barber's head with a razor.

- Elbert Hood displayed a monstrous catfish at the city market yesterday. It is said to weigh 137 pounds and is supposed to be the largest fish ever caught locally. It was caught on a snag line above Ditto's Landing.

- Sheriff Mitchell reports the seizure of an illegal still that was operating in the back room of a retail store on Washington Street. Perhaps this explains why so many of the young blades around town have been sporting new neck ties recently.

- Sheriff William Mitchell is in correspondence with various parties for the purpose of buying a pair of pet deer for the county court yard. They will make the yard look more attractive. The unsightly pathways will soon be obliterated as the sheriff has placed a number of signs up bordering the pavement forbidding anyone from walking on the grass. Whomever violates this rule in the future will be arrested and fined.

- For Rent - two rooms, only one block to town, use of telephone. Telephone 158, party 1 or apply in person to home at 206 Green Street.

- Return - John A. Royal is offering \$5 for information that may lead to the return of his wife. He is offering a reward of 2-1/2 cents per pound and says she weighs in at 200 pounds and is 38 years old. She is 5 feet 3 inches tall. She disappeared last Wednesday.

- Collision - Architect E. L. Love, with his automobile and the driver of John Scott's florist wagon this afternoon at 2:30 experienced a collision at the Holmes and Greene Streets crossing. No one was hurt.

- The other night when the heavy bolt of thunder and lightning came, McFarland's dairy on Meridian Street north of town suffered the loss of five valuable cows. The weather had looked threatening but no one expected the amount of severity.

Other damage was done but fortunately Mr. McFarland and his family escaped serious injury.

"My tolerance for idiots is extremely low these days. I used to have some immunity built up but obviously there's a new strain out there."

Joe Weber, Gurley



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Heard On the Street

by *Cathey Carney*



Sitting in my downstairs office in 10 degree weather looking at the snow around my house. Luckily we have had little icing so our power is doing fine right now and not terribly windy so no downed trees. I think the older we get the more important it is to have light and heat, and we're lucky in Huntsville to have our Utilities workers who will get out 24 hours a day in any kind of weather to repair lines and poles. Thank you from us to those dedicated workers.

Also while I'm thinking about working in cold weather we don't give enough props to our mail men and women who get out in hot and cold and rain and snow to deliver our mail to us. They do work that

we don't even realize and they are soooo appreciated too, along with our **package delivery people like UPS and FEDEX.** Thank you.

We had a winner for the hidden toothpick I put in the January issue! It was on page 25 in the Veterans Museum ad, do you see it? I thought no one would find it but there were multiple sharp eyed readers. The first caller was **Earl Pool** from Fayetteville, TN and he found his copy at Honey's Restaurant on the square in Fayetteville. He has been trying to win for 7 years so congratulations to you Earl!

Then the photo of the month for January was our City Councilman **Bill Kling.** Now who would have recognized him sitting at Green Bus Brewery on Eustis Street with that Grinch hat on? It needed a good hint for sure, and **Joe Taylor** said that the hint was what made him call because he knows that Bill Kling has been pushing for sidewalks and road improvement as a City Councilman for YEARS. Congratulations to you, Joe.

Jimmie Musick passed away on Jan. 4, 2024. He began his education in Alexander City and later graduated from Huntsville High School. In 1964, he embarked on a remarkable career at the Huntsville Times, where he served as a press foreman for over 40 years. Jimmie's dedication earned him numerous accolades, including a prestigious Publisher's Club Award in 1995.

A man of faith, Jimmie was a devoted Baptist who found strength in his spiritual beliefs. He was an active member of the Elks Lodge, and loved to demonstrate his culinary skills by winning local BBQ compe-

titions. He could "fix" anything and was a positive inspiring friend to all who knew him. He loved Auburn football and auto racing.

Jimmie leaves his wife and soul-mate of almost 60 years, **Stella Musick;** his sons, **Glen Musick and Charlie Musick;** his sister **Mary Kaufmann;** and his grandchildren **Kelsey Musick, Courtney Musick, CJ Musick, and Joey Musick.** His life was further enriched by his great-grandchild, **Dawson Bell.** He was so loved and will be remembered always.

Lynn Johnson's mom, **Joyce Richardson** of Athens, will be 95 in February. We hope you party in style and we wish you a beautiful birthday celebration!

During this cold snap when my house stayed colder cause the heat couldn't keep up, I discovered how valuable my goose down comforter was. When you wrap yourself up in one of those, you are NOT cold. I even bought one months ago for my old cat Pumpkin, to put in his bed, and he loved it immediately. (His comforter is toddler size I ordered from Amazon).

We have an important Ground Hog Day Birthday - Feb. 2 - Hunts-

Photo of The Month

Normally we run pictures of youngsters but the below photo is that of an adult whom we all know.

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This little guy is no longer with us but he built most of the roads in Huntsville with the exception of the one that's named after him.



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ville High class of 1955 **Thomas Blakemore** of Brownsboro. He will be 89 and Happy Birthday to you, young man!

A very special Hello to **Kathleen Vaughn** of Harvest - she has a story in this issue about making hundreds of Tobaggan hats and giving them away - we need more good stories from you.

Bobby W. Eades, 69, of Madison, Alabama, passed away on Wednesday, December 20th, 2023. He grew up in Fulton, Missouri, and graduated from Central Missouri State University. Bob soon joined the Army, where he specialized in Air Traffic Control, Aviation and Public Affairs. During his service, Bob was awarded several decorations, medals, ribbons and badges. Some of his most notable achievements include the Meritorious Service Medal, the Army Commendation Medal (2nd Award) and the National Defense Service Medal.

Following his retirement from the Army, he became a Senior Systems Acquisition Manager with the Assured Airspace Access Systems Product Office at Redstone Arsenal. This job allowed Bob to travel all to places all over the world, including Germany, Hawaii, and Kwajalein Island.

In his spare time, Bob enjoyed hiking, traveling, good wine, and most of all, his beloved pets. His family will always remember his love for planes, history and dad jokes.

Bob is survived by his beloved wife and travel companion of 12 years, **Amy Eades**; daughter, **Lauren McKenzie** and husband, **Nicolas McKenzie**; son, **Andrew Eades** and wife, **Kimberly Eades**; granddaughter **Savannah Eades**; grandson, **Kenneth Eades**; stepdaughter, **Megan Hartigan** and husband, **Braden Hartigan**; brother, **William "Bill" Eades** and wife, **Lynda Eades**; cousin, **Barbara Alexander** and husband, **Terry Alexander**; and several nieces and nephews. Bob Eades made a huge difference in the lives of all who knew and loved him and will be so missed.

Sharon McClanahan fell off a step in June and broke her ankle. Those who've had foot injuries of any kind know how long it takes to recuperate. She is making progress but slow. We hope you'll be back to normal soon! She told us that her sweet husband **Will** will be 69 on February 17th - so Happy Birthday to you Will!

I have hidden a **tiny twig** photo in this issue - to commemorate the storms and winds we experienced this past month. IF you think you spot it, be the first to call and win a free subscription for a year to Old Huntsville!

Some February events coming up:

Judy Collins in Concert,

Friday Feb 2 from 7:30 pm to 9:30pm at Mars Music Hall (VBCC) Von Braun Civic Center.

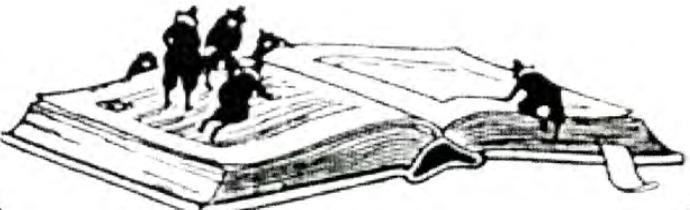
Von Brewsky Festival on Saturday, Feb 3 from 2pm to 4pm at the Propst Arena at the VBCC. Must be 21 with ID to attend.

Lowe Mill always has something going on. Located at 2211 Seminole Drive off Governors Drive, they are a 190,000 sq. ft. textile mill covering 18 acres that has been converted to an arts and entertainment center. Open Wed-Sat and check their website www.lowemill.art/event-directory for times, events and more info. Here are a few dates:

- Feb. 6 - WERQ Dance Fitness Class
- Feb. 8 - Group Oil Painting Classes
- Feb. 10 - Kids and Youth Fashion Design & Sewing
- Feb. 16 - Adult Sewing Class
- Feb. 17 - Free Cigar Box Guitar Lessons
- Feb. 24 - All Ages Death Metal Show
- Feb. 27 - Improv Comedy "Open to Suggestions"

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Hot Sausage Dip

1 lb. hot sausage
 1 lb. Velveeta Mexican cheese, cubed
 1 10-oz. can Rotel (tomatoes & green chilies)

Brown sausage in skillet, stirring til crumbly and drain. Combine the sausage, cheese and Rotel in microwave-safe dish and mix well. Microwave on high til melted, stirring occasionally. Serve with tortilla chips.

Lora Vinyard

Wassail

3 sticks cinnamon
 6 whole cloves
 1/2 t. ground nutmeg
 1 small orange, sliced
 1 c. rum
 2 qts. apple cider
 1 pint cranberry juice
 3/4 c. sugar

Combine all in a slow cooker and cook, uncovered, on low for 4-8 hours, stirring frequently. Serve warm. Good during cold winter days!

Diane Ingram

Rose's Cheese Soup

4 medium potatoes, diced
 2 T. butter
 1 c. milk
 1 16-oz. jar Cheez Whiz
 Salt & pepper to taste
 Chopped green onion or garlic to top
 1 c. hot water

Put your potatoes in a soup pot with enough water to cover them, boil til tender and drain. Combine the butter, milk, Cheez Whiz and spices in a soup pot. Add 1 cup hot water; mix well. Add potatoes and simmer for 10 minutes and cheese melts.

Joanne Caudle (This recipe is her grandmother's, who was 80 in 1995)

Marinated Roast

1 thick chuck roast
 Adolph's Meat Tenderizer
 1 lg. onion, chopped
 1 T. sesame seeds
 2 T. butter
 1/2 c. strong coffee
 1/2 c. soy sauce

1 T. Worcestershire sauce
 1 T. vinegar

Sprinkle roast with meat tenderizer in bowl. Brown onion and sesame seeds in butter in skillet. Add coffee, soy sauce, Worcestershire sauce and vinegar; mix well. Pour over roast. Marinate in refrigerator for 12-24 hours. Place roast on gas grill rack, grill over medium hot coals for 10 minutes and turn roast. Grill for 5 minutes longer for rare or 10 minutes longer for well done.

Sue Terry

Crispy Cajun Chicken

4 skinless chicken breasts
 1/2 c. mayonnaise
 1 t. ground cumin
 1 t. onion powder
 1/2 t. ground red pepper
 1/2 t. garlic powder
 1-1/2 c. crushed sesame crackers

Rinse chicken, pat dry. Combine mayo, cumin, onion powder, red pepper and garlic powder in bowl; mix well.

Brush chicken with the mix-

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ture. Coat with cracker crumbs. Place in baking pan and bake at 325 degrees for 45-50 minutes and chicken is tender.

Doris Williams

Green Chili Rice

- 1 c. chopped onion
- 1/4 c. butter
- 3 c. cooked rice
- 2 c. sour cream
- 1 c. cottage cheese
- 1 bay leaf, crushed
- Salt & pepper to taste
- 3 4-oz. cans green chiles, whole
- 1 c. shredded Cheddar cheese
- Snipped parsley

Cook onion in butter in skillet til tender. Combine onion, rice, sour cream, cottage cheese, bay leaf, salt and pepper in large bowl. Cut green chiles lengthwise into quarters, rinse and seed. Chop half the chiles. Stir chopped chiles into rice mixture and spoon into a baking dish.

Place quartered chiles diagonally over top. Sprinkle with cheddar cheese. Bake, uncovered, for 30 minutes and sprinkle with parsley.

Renee Fabian

Marinated Pork Tenderloin

- 2-1/2 to 3 lb. pork tenderloin
- 1/4 c. soy sauce
- 1 T. brown sugar
- 1/4 c. good bourbon

Marinade:

Combine soy sauce, bourbon, and brown sugar; mix well. Place tenderloin in 1 gallon plastic storage bag and add just mixed marinade. Marinate in refrigerator for 12 hours minimum, turning over 3 or more times.

Remove tenderloin from plastic bag and place in Pyrex dish; save marinade. Bake at 350° for 1 to 1-1/4 Hours and baste tenderloin 2 to 3 times with remaining marinade.

Sauce (optional):

- 1/3 c. sour cream
- 2 or 3 green onions, chopped

- 1/3 c. mayonnaise
 - 1 T. dry mustard
 - 1/2 t. cayenne powder
- Jeanette Henry*

Roasted Sweet Potatoes

- 2 or 3 medium sized sweet potatoes
- 2 T. olive oil
- 1 T. sugar
- 1 t. chili powder

Preheat oven to 425 degrees. Slice potatoes. Mix olive oil, sugar and chili powder in a mixing bowl. Add sliced potatoes to mixture and toss til coated. Roast potatoes about 15-20 minutes.

Sheila Teague

Spicy Santa Fe Soup

- 2 pounds ground turkey or beef
- 1 onion, chopped
- 1 (0.5 oz) package Ranch dressing mix
- 1 package taco seasoning mix
- 1 (16-oz.) can black beans, undrained
- 1 (16-oz.) can pinto beans, undrained
- 1 (16-oz.) can diced tomatoes with chilies
- 2 (16-oz.) cans white corn, undrained
- 2 cups water
- 1 can chopped chiles

Cook meat and onion together til meat is browned. Drain any fat.

Stir Ranch dressing mix and taco seasoning mix into the meat. Add the remaining ingredients with juices from all.

Add the water and simmer for 2 hours. If the mixture is too thick, add additional water.

Garnish each serving with sour cream, shredded Cheddar cheese and sliced green onions, if desired. Serve with tortilla chips.

Frances Ford

Cream Pecan Pie

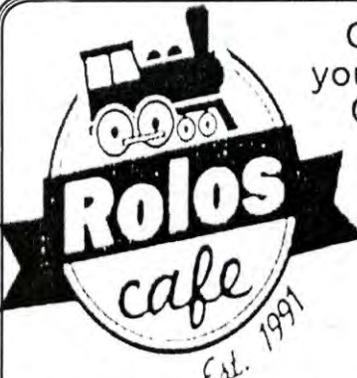
- 1 c. sugar
- 1 c. chopped pecans
- 1 c. finely ground butter crackers
- 4 egg whites, stiffly beaten
- 1 c. whipping cream
- 1 t. almond extract
- 1 t. vanilla extract
- 2 T. sugar
- 1/2 c. broken pecans

Fold 1 cup sugar, chopped pecans and crackers crumbs into the stiffly beaten egg whites. Pour into a pie plate and bake til light brown. Cool.

Beat whipping cream, flavorings and 2 tablespoons sugar in mixer bowl til stiff. Spread over the cooled pie.

Sprinkle broken pecans over the top. Refrigerate til serving time.

Jeri Pierce



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The Buried Gold of Hog Hollow

by Charles Rice

A fortune in antique gold coins lies awaiting a lucky finder about thirty miles west of Huntsville. At least, there is if you can believe an old local legend. The fascinating tale of lost treasure does have some verifiable facts to it. The story dates back to the War Between the States, a time of tragedy and turmoil in the Tennessee Valley, as indeed across the entire Southland. Just how much truth there is in the tale, we leave it up to you to decide. The story takes place in Hog Hollow, a small valley not many miles below the town of Riverton, known in those days as Chickasaw. In October 1984, Mr. Cecil Hayes, who had grown up hearing the tale, recalled it for the Cherokee News of Cherokee, Alabama.

"This is all part of an old legend dating back to the Civil War," wrote Hayes, "and is kept alive in this region by an occasional repetition." The story tells of a keg of U.S. gold coins - \$5 half-eagles, \$10 eagles, and \$20 double eagles. Just one of the coins would be worth at least hundreds, if not thousands, to collectors today."

Local tradition tells that the Rosses settled there in the in the early 1840s. "They bought vast tracts of timberland in a beautiful pastoral valley," recalled Hayes, "surrounded by wooded hills and divided by a winding mountain brook, later known as "Ross Branch."

"They cleared the land, sold the valuable timber and built a large two story house, barns and other outbuildings," continued Mr. Hayes. "They planted their crops and orchards and vineyards. The Rosses were good farmers and hard-working people, and after a time their farm was one of the most productive in the county.

The Rosses became wealthy in a region where many other people had failed to make a living.

Through careful and selective breeding, they produced the finest of livestock. Their sheep and cattle and horses were all thoroughbreds. And they raised such vast herds of hogs that their beautiful valley took on the rather odious name of Hog Hollow."

The Rosses were a quiet family, remembered Cecil Hayes, and kept pretty much to themselves. "When the family went to Riverton or Cherokee for supplies, they made their purchases in silence and silently departed."

It was this that probably caused people to speculate about the Ross family. In the absence of knowledge, people perhaps began to make up stories about their reclusive neighbors. Since the Rosses seemed to spend so little, some

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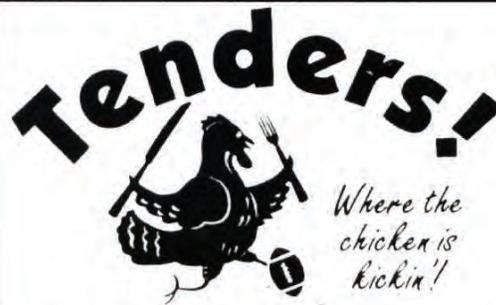
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"How do you expect me to remember your birthday when you never look any older?"

John R., upon forgetting his wife's birthday



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folks naturally must have imagined they had a lot put away somewhere.

"As the income of the Ross family increased (so the old story tells us), they began tossing money into a new nail keg kept in one corner of the large living room," wrote Hayes. "The money was all in gold; five, 10 and 20 dollar gold pieces."

This continued until one day it was discovered that the keg was nearly full. Then they took the golden treasure out and hid it, presumably somewhere about the farm. And where they put it, there it remains to this day. Why didn't the Rosses retrieve the treasure?

The simple reason appears to be that the Civil War caught up with them in the form of the invading Union Army.

The Rosses seem to have sat out the War Between the States, determined to take no part in the fierce struggle between North and South.

However, the war eventually did come to the Muscle Shoals area, and no one was exempt from the death and destruction that came with it.

One bright spring day, Union foragers came into Hog Hollow seeking the Ross' fabled pigs and sheep. In rather un-Quakerlike fashion, the Ross men objected to this blatant thievery. A gunfight broke out, with the outnumbered civilians naturally getting the worse of it.

"Some say two Union soldiers were killed," wrote Hayes, "but the Ross family were all killed. Then the house and all the other buildings were set on fire. The girl, by some unexplained miracle, escaped both the barrage and fire. Days later she was found in the woods."

That the gunfight did happen seems evident. Certain it is that John Ross no longer appears in the U. S. Census of 1870. Furthermore, while the tombstones on five of the six graves in the Ross family cemetery are now broken and illegible, the sixth is still intact. It reads: "James J. Ross, Son of John & M. A. Ross, Oct. 11, 1840 - May 29, 1864."

The latter date presumably

records the day of the fatal encounter with the Yankee raiders. But what of the treasure? Was such a keg of gold possible?

Unfortunately, it seems highly unlikely that John Ross was ever wealthy enough to have accumulated so large a fortune. His real estate - 80 percent of it in untouched woodlands - was valued at only \$200 in the 1850 Census. It had risen in value to \$1500 by 1860. Ross' personal estate in 1860 was listed at a modest \$500. Ross was not a slave owner though he did raise enough cotton in 1860 to make seven 400-pound bales.

So, is the treasure tale only a harmless old legend? Well, maybe yes, and maybe no. Once the truth is sifted out, what remains is a half-forgotten story of an American tragedy.

Quite likely, they did hide away their money - perhaps not in the gold coins of legend, but probably in the more common silver and copper.

"Some people today believe the old Ross story was just a kind of local fairy tale, a myth," recalled Cecil Hayes. "But my grandfather, John Carrithers, who was born in 1854, believed every word of it."

"He spent most of his life searching for the hidden treasure. With our modern equipment, he might have been more successful."

Like John Carrithers, we all have our dreams. So why not get out your metal detector and head for Hog Hollow. Just be sure to get the landowner's permission first! (There are laws against trespassing.)

Who knows, you just might discover John Ross' legendary keg of gold. Most likely you won't. But then again... you never know!

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Thiokol Chemical Corporation

by Odysseus

Prologue

Thiokol Chemical Corporation Huntsville Division was an anachronism from the mid-20th century and a quintessential Defense plant of the Cold War. Opened at the invitation of the US Army in 1949, Thiokol sprang out of nowhere, then became Huntsville's largest employer by the late 1950s. Spanning six decades from the 1940s to the 1990s, Thiokol waxed, waned, waxed again, then vanished as suddenly as it had appeared 47 years earlier. Nothing remains.

Theion is the ancient Greek word for the element Sulfur, and Kolla, a Greek word meaning Glue. Two Greek words combined into Thio Kol, Sulfur Glue, describe the chemical reaction of a 1920s American synthetic rubber discovery. Thiokol polysulfide synthetic rubber was petroleum-resistant and gained widespread use as sealant for US aircraft fuel tanks during World War II.

Postwar US Army-sponsored solid fuel rocket research at the California Institute of Technology led to the substitution of Thiokol synthetic rubber in place of an existing asphalt binder. Thiokol synthetic rubber polymer became the breakthrough for post-World War II solid fuel rocket technology. The introduction of synthetic rubber as rocket propellant binder increased both physical strength and chemical energy, allowing larger and more powerful solid fuel propulsion units.

The Greek name, the arcane chemistry, the rocket product, the Redstone Arsenal location, and the small, tightly closed society of Thiokol fit squarely in the tradition of the ancient Greek city-state, Greek mythology and ultimately, of a Greek Tragedy.

It sounds like a trite expression, but you had to experience Thiokol to know what it was like. For many, there has been no other place of work

comparable to that solid fuel rocket motor plant. The hard part is understanding what those differences were and even tougher is finding the words to express them.

When then-named Thiokol Redstone Division opened in 1949 it preceded the arrival of Wernher von Braun's German V2 missile team from Fort Bliss Texas. The von Braun team specialized in liquid fuel rocket propulsion, notably the Army's Redstone Missile of 1953. The Army operated both solid-fueled and liquid-fueled rockets, some missiles using both types in different roles and on different stages.

Solid fuel research and development at Thiokol Redstone involved metallic fuel additives, oxidizers, polymers, burn rate modifiers, processing techniques, igniters, motor cases, insulators, nozzles and safety improvements. A new synthetic rubber molecule, polybutadiene acrylic acid (PBAA), was created at Thiokol Redstone and became the next binder improvement from polysulfide polymer.

In its peak, circa 1958, Thiokol at Redstone Arsenal employed over 2,200 people, more than any other entity in Huntsville and Madison County. Thiokol Redstone was the birthplace of solid propulsion for Sergeant, Falcon, Pershing, BOMARC, Nike Zeus, Thor Delta and hundreds of lesser-known missile designs. Those were the boom years of Rocket City USA, the Space Age and the Moon Shot.

But the mounting costs of the war in Vietnam necessitated a reduction in military Research and Development and cutbacks in weapons production. Missile programs were scaled back or cancelled. Thiokol's first big layoffs came in the 1960s and preceded some lean years through the 1970s. The number of employees was halved from the peak then cut again to one-third. Thiokol Huntsville Division survived producing civilian space launch boosters and as a member of a corporate Conglomerate with non-Defense and non-Space products. Thiokol products from other Divisions included household cleaners, chemical intermediates, specialty chemicals, Snowcat tracked vehicles and a new automotive safety device called the Air Bag. Those product lines helped the



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larger Corporation weather the cyclical ups and downs of Huntsville Division and two other Divisions producing solid rocket motors (Elkton Division in Maryland and Wasatch Division in Utah).

The Defense build-up of the 1980s required new missiles for US Army, US Navy, US Air Force, plus space boosters for USAF, NASA, and allied foreign governments. The year 1984 brought a resurgence in demand for solid fuel rocket motors. Thiokol Huntsville Division hired and prospered once more with production of Patriot, Maverick, Mk70, TOW, Hellfire, Mk36, Castor IV, Castor IVA, and Castor IVB. The Thiokol plant expanded south across Redstone Road, renovated older facilities and constructed new buildings. At this second peak circa 1989 Thiokol Huntsville was spread over two or three square miles with 280 buildings and around 1200 employees. But this time the boom-and-bust cycle became the final one.

Thiokol Huntsville Division closed in 1996 after the Iron Curtain had fallen, the Berlin Wall was torn down, and the Soviet Union ceased to exist. Gone was the need for rockets. The Cold War was over. We won. A common term of the time was "Peace Dividend", meaning the previous outlay for National Defense could be spent on other things.

Until the day those gates shut for the final time, Thiokol remained a time-locked walled city from 1941. Of course, Thiokol was modern in the ways that counted, with then up-to-date 1990s laboratory equipment, computers, data processing, engineering design, technical analysis, chemical research, x-ray inspection, static firing test stands, explosive test areas, plant machinery, manufacturing controls and maintenance operations. But Thiokol occupied the US Army's World War II Redstone Arsenal munitions plant that had been constructed in 1941 and abandoned in 1946. Hence the conundrum of new mixed with old.

One example of many was the 1980s installation of Thiokol's first industrial robot into an original World War II explosive bay of Line 2. Thiokol was a continuum of past to present in a form rarely seen.

"Women sometimes make fun of men, but most guys are the do-it-yourself types."

Patti Justice, Arab

William Faulkner wrote "The past is never dead. It's not even past. All of us labor in webs spun long before we were born, webs of heredity and environment, of desire and consequence, of history and eternity." Faulkner's words also described Thiokol. A surreal analogy might be that of watching an old black-and-white movie from the 1940s or 50s but seeing your co-workers in place of Gary Cooper, Audie Murphy or Gary Grant and observing yourself playing a bit role. At Thiokol the old co-existed with the new at the same time and space. Sometimes the role of employee seemed more of the docent at a museum or curator of a classical exhibit: the heavy responsibility of preserving a valuable and irreplaceable object.

Undoubtedly the main contributor to Thiokol plant culture was the inherently dangerous nature of solid fuel rocket motor production. Thiokol of the 1950s was the forefront of the new solid rocket industry and high-energy propellants, in an era that preceded national safety standards and workplace regulation entities such as OSHA and EPA. Many of the hazards of solid fuel rocket production had been previously unknown and were discovered the hard way. Co-workers at Thiokol included hundreds of career employees who had hired on in the early 1950s and held first-person knowledge of each mishap, fire, and explosion, the victims, and the survivors. Lessons were learned and not forgotten. A quiet sense of grim responsibility lay just beneath the daily camaraderie. Such was the Zeitgeist of Thiokol.

Thus begins a series of short essays in which your author attempts to describe the place, the rockets, the work, the people and the culture of Thiokol.

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GINGERBREAD COOKIES

by *Bill Alkire*

Let us talk about something I enjoy, eating. Looking at me, you would assume I like to eat and you would, of course, be right. I am talking about a special treat. I like Key Lime Pie and anything Lemon, and I never met an oatmeal raisin or fruitcake cookie I did not like.

I want to tell you about something incredibly special. My Aunt Lucille's Coconut cake with seven-minute frosting and bananas in the middle - that was something that could never be duplicated, it was a classic! What I want to tell you about is another of those classics.

I have always been in awe of Williamsburg, Virginia. I attended William & Mary College my first years of college, before completing my coursework at Christopher Newport College. In the restored area of Williamsburg there is the Raleigh Tavern. It is a wonderful place to eat...I highly recommend their menu.

Behind the Tavern is a small building where the servants did the cooking during the Colonial period. This building is where the baking takes place. This building is small and always quite warm, the wood-burning ovens are always burning. When not baking, the heat helps the dough rise for bread, rolls and pastries. This is where the Raleigh Tavern's famous gingerbread cookies are created.

I will admit that these cookies may not be famous to anyone but me. They should be...they are that good. I am not sure what makes them so great. They use

sifted graham flour, fresh grated ginger, molasses, nutmeg, allspice and a touch of cinnamon. I have watched the sweet Black lady put the ingredients together and I have tasted the results. Amazing!

Freda got to know me and when I would be coming by, she would save the broken cookies just for me. I accused her of breaking whole cookies just to save them for me. She would just smile a big grin and say "No Sir." The twinkle in her eye gave her away and she always had a big hug for me. I loved that lady and not just for her cookies. We could talk freely about our God and how we both had received more blessings than we deserve.

I left Virginia in 1977 and moved to Tennessee. I went by to say goodbye and to get one last hug. I returned in 1988 with a tour group. I went to the little building behind the Raleigh Tavern hoping to see Freda. She was standing with her back to the patrons mixing ingredients. When I called out her name she turned and shouted "Lil Billy!"

With flour all over her she ran to me, we hugged with tears in our eyes. We had a great reunion. Some people stared. We did not mind. We were Brothers and Sisters, children of the same God. Our reunion was short.... I held up the tour group. We ended our reunion with a prayer for each other.

Blessings are everywhere and we must accept them. I am a better man for knowing and loving Freda.



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Memories, Past and Present

by Judy C. Smith,
2018

I'm sitting on my son Owen's front porch and it feels like I am in the country. The house is so far from Whitesburg Drive I can't see any cars passing but in reality I know it is a busy street and they are whizzing by. My son has lived in one of the servant's houses for the Flemings for four years

Each time I go sit on his porch, I'm reminded of when I was six years old and Mother would take me to the Flemings farm to play with Sally. I remember Mother saying it was just too far out in the country. Now I drive past it at least twice a day and sometimes four times a day.

Sally was only five days older than I was, so we both learned to drive about the same time, which was across the street from the big house and was a sheep pasture in the fifties. What fun we would have in her father's big truck going up and down the make shift roads until it was time for me to "return to the city" as Mother would say.

I remember one Christmas Eve when Martha, Sally's mother, was about to deliver her seventh and last child, Mary Jane. We walked over to the Whitesburg Drive-In, sat in benches up front and were told we had to stay out of trouble because Martha was having a baby and couldn't see about us.

It was so much fun visiting and being with a big family. I couldn't imagine having such a

big family and even a child born on Christmas Eve.

Well, when I grew up and I outdid Miss Martha by having eight children and the last laugh was on me. My last child arrived on Christmas Day. Owen got his eviction notice last month and all the Fleming farm has been sold and everyone has to be out by October 31st. Owen will stay until the last minute and I will swing on the big swing one last time remembering how much fun it was visiting on the Fleming farm.

"What's that," Owen says, "running down your cheek, a tear?"

I can't help it, I wish I could turn the clock back for all the kids and have one last party there.

"Good Bye, Old Friend Farm!"

"In the 1960s people took LSD to make the world look weird. Now the world is weird and people take Prozac to make it normal."

Art McVay, Decatur



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WILLOW AND HER BIG BROTHER

by Ted Roberts, 2018



In Spring, when we look down at the newly rejuvenated grass, trees and baby bushes, instead of up to find the Creator of all, nature lovers like to tell the story of Willow.

Once, many years ago, a young tree named Willow grew in the forest. The wind that cooled the forest in the summer and carried the gossip of the blue jays had brought her seed to this shady spot in the forest.

It was not the best location, since it was next to a much older oak tree who towered over Willow like a big brother. He was so high and leafy and strong that most of the birds chose him as a nesting place; Willow only had a couple of caterpillars who lived in one of her leaves. But what bothered her most was that this Jolly Green Giant blocked most of her sky.

"If I had three wishes like you get in fairy tales, I'd wish for an open spot on the meadow, an open spot on the meadow, an open spot on the meadow," murmured Willow when

the wind blew through her leaves. This little tree didn't want any big brother blocking her sun and rain.

All summer long Willow twisted and bent to find the sun. Trees need sun, like we need love, or they dry up and die. But that tall oak decorated with birds' nests blocked the direct rays. Only pale yellow fingers of light touched Willow. And when Fall came and most of the trees began their six months of rest, Willow slept poorly because huge acorns rained down on her from the heavy limbs of the oak. Like hail they fell. Each one could rip off a leaf. After this hailstorm of acorns, she dozed. But not for long, for soon a blizzard of leaves from the giant Oak overwhelmed her. They piled up on the forest floor almost taller than her. She could barely breathe.

What bad luck, thought Willow. If only my seed had landed in that open spot over by the brook, I could have all the sun I wanted and only the sweet rain, not acorns with pointy ends, would fall upon my leaves and roots.

But what Willow didn't know was that every tree needs a big sheltering friend just like children need brothers, sisters and friends. The young trees who tried to grow in the open places were often washed into the brook by the rainstorms. And when it didn't rain, the sun burned them up and turned them into dead, dry sticks. And without a big tree to shield you from the wind, one wild blast and you could lose every leaf you own.

But Willow continued to doze the Fall away and wish for the rain and sun and wind she wanted. One day she awoke suddenly from her favorite dream in which lightning had toppled the big Oak, bird nests and all, and left a big, blue empty space in the sky. She heard voices - happy, laughing voices of children.

Well, before Willow was fully awake, these children, with the help of a sharp shovel, had pried her roots from the earth and dumped her in a wagon.

What an experience. Lying on her side. Her roots all exposed. And the movement made her dizzy. Soon she was well out of the forest - even past the brook.

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And now the children put her back into the earth, only her new home was their back yard.

She was the only tree in the yard. The sun and the rain and the stars at night were all hers. At night she could look up and see every star in the sky twinkle down on her. Better yet, during the day no leafy branches blocked her sun. "This is living," thought Willow, smiling up at the warmth. "If only I had a few bird nests, life would be perfect." That's what she thought at first.

But soon she began to miss the big Oak - because the sun was awful hot. And when the clouds came to block it, that meant rain would follow. A little rain tasted good, but sometimes the rain turned the backyard into a swamp that suffocated her roots. She was scared. It was no fun being the only tree in the backyard, thought Willow.

It was lonesome, too. There was nobody to talk to except the telephone pole on the street. And he just made a silly shrill noise in the wind. What could a dead telephone pole say to a young tree? But when the breeze from the forest fanned her branches, she could almost hear the gossip of the blue jays and the news of her old friends.

Then as the years passed something happened that the other young trees in the forest had whispered about. Willow grew seeds, and the willing wind soon carried them away. One of them happily arrived at the very spot where Willow had lived - beneath the giant Oak.

He would have looked down and said hello if he'd known how. Instead, he kept the sun from burning her up; and gently filtered the rain and never let the wind pull at the little sister that lived under the shelter of his limbs. Big brothers aren't all bad.

The humor of "Ted, the Scribbler on the Roof", appears in newspapers around the US, on National Public Radio and websites.

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Family Gatherings and Events in Hurricane Valley

by Tommy Gipson



My dad, Mr. Earl Gipson, was the youngest of nine children. Every year at Christmas or Thanksgiving, or maybe both, several of these family members would get together for a visit or family reunion or whatever else you would call it. One year comes to mind. It was in the early 1950s. This year it was at Mr. Ed Rogers' which at the time was the last house on Sharp's Cove Road. It is now at the Sailer's place. Now there are several more houses behind that house, more on the road past there, and several roads off that road. There are even some roads and houses on the side of the mountain.

Of course the day would start with a rabbit hunt. There would be myself, my dad, his brother, uncle Walter and his son Ken. Also his bother-in-law, George Wallace.

No, that's George B. Wallace, and there was his nephew Roy West from Tennessee. There were prob-

ably others that I do not recall. Remember, this is well over 60 years ago. There were some of the men who did not hunt. They would sit around the house, or outside if it was nice weather.

The hunt would start at Sharp's Cove Road and Neal Drive. Of course there was no Neal Drive then, and no houses down that way. Someone would let us out there, and the hunt was on. We would stay on the left side of Sharp's Cove Road and there were not a lot of houses on the road then.

It was about two or three miles to where uncle Ed lived. About 200 yards down the road, we went by Mr.

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Lee Griffin's house. His black and tan hound wanted to go on the hunt too. So he went along with us and our beagle hounds, and it was a good hunt. We would walk along until the dogs got a rabbit going. Then you would stop and wait. The rabbit would always come back to where it was jumped up from. Then you watch and when it gets close enough, you take it. Never go and pick up the rabbit. Let it stay there until the dogs trail up to it and see that the race is over. They would not try to chew it up. That is the way we trained them. They would leave it alone and go get another one up.

If you have never heard a pack of beagles run a rabbit, you have missed a great thing. It cannot be explained, you have to hear and experience it for yourself to fully appreciate it. It is a great experience if you have well-trained dogs, and we did.

So the hunt continued. We went across fields, around the edge of the mountain, and we had several good chases by the Beagles. We made it to everyone (and to where the food was). There were tables inside the house and some outside. It was a nice day and many ate outside. There was a great abundance of food there.

If you left hungry, it was your fault. There was pork, beef, chicken, ham, meat loaf, sausage, about any kind of meat you wanted. There was about any vegetable you wanted. There were several kinds of cakes and pies. Practically every thing there was raised on the farm. People had their own animals for meat, almost every home had a large garden and folks would render out their own lard. Of course, the dogs got food and water too.

After lunch, all would sit and talk and rest up to get ready for the afternoon hunt. Yes, we made a day of it. For the afternoon hunt, we would go back on the other side of Sharp's Cove Road. As we

went by Mr. Griffin's house, we left his hound with them. Soon, we were back to where we started from. Someone would always pick us up.

I do not know how they knew what time to get us, but they did. This was before phones, CB radios, and other new equipment. There was probably a pre-arranged time agreed on.

On the afternoon hunt, there was some low-lying land. The dogs would get up two or three swamp rabbits. They were a lot larger than a cotton tail. Some of them were actually larger than the smaller beagles. The day ended with everyone having a good time and a good visit.

P.S. This is one part of the "Good Old Days" I would like to see return. No one was in so much of a hurry that they could not take time to visit and enjoy time with another, especially family. Now it seems to be Hurry Up and wait. Hurry to get there, stay a few minutes, and go.

Alright, I'll get off my soapbox and close now. More stories to come later, hopefully.

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"I had to leave my husband - the cat was allergic.

Jenna Barden, Athens



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LINZER COOKIES

by *Tanjie Kling*



Linzer Cookies - The Recipe

- 3 cups of all purpose flour
- 3/4 cup of almond flour
- 1 and 1/2 teaspoons of ground cinnamon
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 1 and 1/2 cups salted butter
- 1 and 1/4 cups granulated sugar
- 2 large eggs
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1 jar of seedless raspberry jam
- Powdered sugar for dusting

In a large bowl, carefully whisk or stir the flours together with cinnamon and baking soda.

In another large mixing bowl, beat softened butter and sugar on medium high using an electric mixer. Mix until the mixture is light, fluffy and pale. This takes about 2 or 3 minutes. Scrape down the sides of the bowl as needed. Add eggs one at a time, beating after each addition. Add vanilla extract and beat until well combined. Scrape down the sides of the bowl. Add the dry ingredients all at once and mix on low speed until just incorporated.

Divide dough in 2 equal pieces. Pat out into 2 round shapes about 1/4 inch thick on 2 pieces of parchment paper. This will require you to roll out both discs. When you do, sprinkle some powdered sugar on

the dough and onto the rolling pin. This causes the dough to not stick to the rolling pin. Stack rolled out dough on top of each other, with each layer separated with parchment paper. Refrigerate for about 2 to 6 hours. Best results are achieved if chilled for 6 hours.

After chilling dough, cut an even number of cookies using a 2 and a half inch or three and a half inch diameter cookie, biscuit cutter, or Linzer cookie cutter. For half of the cookies, cut out the middle using a 1 inch cutter. Roll out remaining scrap dough and repeat the cutting process. If dough gets too soft, chill it again.

Pre-heat oven to 325 degrees. Transfer cut cookies to parchment lined baking sheet, placing them 1 inch apart. Bake for 12 to 15 minutes, until edges are golden brown.

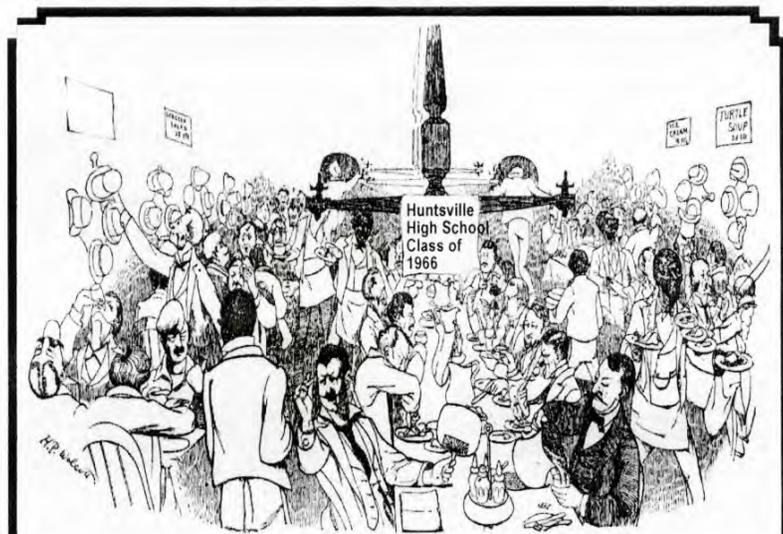
To assemble cookies, dredge top layer of "holey" cut-out cookies in powdered sugar. Spread raspberry jam on the bottom layer of cookies. Place the top powdered sugar cookie on top of the jam covered cookie. Repeat until all cookies are assembled.

Refrigerate or freeze until ready to eat. These are great directly from the freezer, and freeze very well for several months. To store cookies in the freezer, place one layer of cookies in an air tight container. Top with parchment paper before adding another layer of cookies.

Alternatively, the cookies can be wrapped individually in wax paper and frozen in an air tight container. Either method keeps the powdered sugar from disappearing.

Yield: 14 cookies if using a 3 and 1/2 inch diameter cookie cutter.

My family requests these every holiday.



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

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

WHEN YOU KNOW YOU'VE MARRIED A GREAT WOMAN

by Gerald Alvis,
The Poet of
Greenlawn



The internet is a great place to argue with total strangers about religion, politics, and, well, pretty much any and everything!

But I may have found an exception! Few women will argue with the fact that their husbands can't find anything in the house. Ann will ask me why I opened another jar of strawberry jelly. My reply was "that there was not any in the fridge".

She opens the door and points to the two other jars I've opened previously that somehow appear in plain view. It used to scare me, but I just accept it now!! It's almost like she can complete my sentences...have you seen my...? Yes, you left it on the night stand. This goes for belts, my Bible, and the number one most asked question by men are... (in my best Richard Dawson voice) Where are my car keys?

Well, it is cool that she is and has always been there for me, and that alone is a solid reason for saying she's the one, but this morning, she gave me yet another!

I have been missing my key FOB to her Ford Expedition for about two weeks. Since it didn't appear out of thin air, I felt I should go look for it. So, Ann sees me running around with my Dewalt flashlight and inquires about my obvious search.

Still willing to blame it on car key gnomes, I told her I was going to go look in her vehicle. Well, she went around the other way, and we met each other at the entrance that goes out to the garage.

We paused at this mutual impass. I didn't budge either,

but I noticed she slowly raised and tightened her grip on her flashlight. She stared at me patiently and deliberately...waiting.

I pointed my light upwards, making my best light saber noise and she never blinked, clicked hers on, accepted the challenge, and it was on. You got to keep it fun, folks!!

Today's pics are of our futuristic weapons; they also serve as flashlights and are centered to show off her decorating in the Formal Dining!

I did find the FOB (all by myself)

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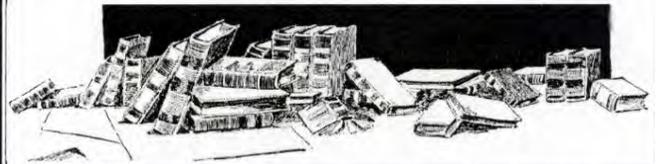
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FIRST KISS

by Iolanda Hicks

The summer of 1957 was unforgettable. I was nine years old and undeniably head-over-heels "in love" with my beach-boy hunk: curly hair, crinkled forehead; thoughtful eyes and so TALL!!

I was born in Virginia in 1948. Dad was in the Military and had been sent to Ft. Monroe. There was no base housing available so Dad searched for a place to live. One was found: an upstairs apartment, three blocks from Buckroe Beach, belonging to that hunk's mother (the hunk being six months old at the time).

Soon after Mom and Dad moved in, I was born. We lived there for a few years when Dad was transferred to Redstone Arsenal, Alabama. My parents faithfully went back at least once; sometimes twice yearly, since they had made close friends with my hunk's parents.

Dad's hometown was not far from Virginia so many times we extended our trips and drove there for a visit. That suited me fine since my life breathed "David" all my young years of growing up even into becoming a full-blown teenager. I remember all the fun David and I had when I finally arrived each and every time. Walking along the beach, finding shells and diving into the Chesapeake Bay's waves was an everyday activity for us. I never ever remember it raining while I was visiting.

The beach and the amusements at Buckroe Beach Park were our two main hangouts, the latter having rides of all kinds. One of those rides was The Dips known to be the oldest roller coaster in the U.S. at that time and the second oldest in the world. What rides we had on that one!

It was a nine acre park with a wonderful carousel (that was later saved and located to Hampton, Virginia). The park had a ferris wheel which David and I would ride.

It was on one of those rides that I got my first kiss, after we got stuck high up in the sky. Crazy as it may seem and as young as I was, I have always remembered that kiss. I was with David and I felt safe and protected. As the months passed, I couldn't wait to see my sweetheart those once or twice trips a year. Even though letters to one another kept us up with what was going on, it just wasn't the same as being able to laugh, walk together and hold hands.

As time got closer to high school graduation, for the both of us, my Dad stopped going to Virginia. I couldn't understand why he stopped those yearly trips. Then something clicked: Dad's Mom had recently died. It was then I remembered that when we went to Virginia, we would also go visit my Grandmother and Grandfather in Pennsylvania. Dad was not close to his Dad but he loved his Mother so very much. It was too sad for him to see the home of his youth without his Mother there, so our trips stopped.

Time passed, and much happened in our separate lives over the years. I know it was in God's Plan for David and I to be together.

Well, David found me again, after sixty-plus years. My beach-boy "hunk" and I had come full circle. We got married on November 17th, 2017 and that first kiss continues to be renewed every day.



"I recently got into swing dancing. Not on purpose, some parts of my body are just prone to swinging."

Roni Jackson, Woodville



Chautauqua

by Kate Hopkins

This is the name for an institution that provided adult education and entertainment in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. In the 1890s both Chautauqua and Vaudeville were very popular forms of entertainment. One had roots in the church and was considered wholesome family entertainment. The other grew out of minstrel shows and was considered vulgar but appealed to the working-class men. Over time vaudeville became more refined and the difference between the two became blurred.

Many entertainers got their start performing in these stage productions but who could forget Gypsy Rose Lee? She became "the most famous and the most likable stripper in the world". In her act she emphasized the Tease in STRIPTEASE.

How does this unique/historical word link to Huntsville, you might wonder. After the Civil War, Madison County was growing. In 1900 the population was 43,000 and approximately 8,000 people lived in Huntsville. Along with the growth came an increase in the number of crimes but the citizens were really shocked when they heard about the murder of Probate Judge W.T. Lawler in 1916.

Murder, political corruption, man hunts, jail breaks, conspiracy, bootlegging and suicide

were also words associated with this crime.

"The night that Judge Lawler was murdered in Huntsville, his wife had gone to a Redpath Chautauqua held in the East Clinton Elementary School and she had expected him to join her. When he did not show up, she filed a police report."

The Judge had been shot and killed during an argument with his political rival and his body was thrown off an iron bridge into a slough near the Tennessee River.

The details of this crime can be found in the book "Murder In The Heart of Dixie" and today that same iron bridge can be found in the Sharon Johnston Park in New Market, Al.

Seen on local bumper sticker:
 "Make Love, not War."
 See Driver for Details."



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Our Love Story

by Jim Vann

In 1962, I was sent to Fort Jackson, South Carolina to go thru 12 weeks of Army basic training. That 12 weeks was the most maturing experience of my life. After those 12 weeks, I was sent to Fort Belvoir, Virginia to undergo training for my Primary MOS (Military Occupation Specialties) which was "Construction Drafting".

We designed roads, bridges, and buildings and drafted plans for construction of such. When I completed that training, I came home and did what every soldier does when he gets out of training. I came back to Huntsville and went to the Redstone Federal Credit Union Office to secure a loan to buy myself a new car.

It so happened that my Dad worked at that Credit Union.

He kept telling his secretary that when "son" gets home from the Army, I want you to meet him.

His secretary would go home and ask her mother how she was going to get out of this situation. She told her Mom that this short, fat, baldheaded man that she worked with wanted her to meet his son when he got out of the Army.

I think she was quite relieved when I walked in the Credit Union Office that day, standing six feet, two inches tall weighing about 180 pounds and had a full head of hair.

My Dad introduced us to each other and I must say that I was impressed with this statuesque lady (six feet tall) with blond hair.

I found out where she lived and drove by her house which was on a dead end street. She was out in her front yard and saw me passing by. I stopped and she asked what I was doing on this street. I said something dumb like I was just in the neighborhood passing through.

We started dating shortly after that. We got pretty serious in a short amount of time. She had a great family consisting of her Mom and Dad, two sisters and a younger brother. I got along with all of them very well.

I gave her a ring and proposed to her without getting permission from her Dad. I don't think he ever forgave me for not asking for her hand but I didn't know I was supposed to ask him.

She accepted my proposal and we married on August the 24th, 1963. That marriage has only lasted 60 years as of last year 2023 and is going strong. Like most other couples, we have had good times and bad, mostly good.

One of the things that has kept us strong for each other is our Christian faith. God has blessed us with two wonderful children, and one grandchild that we adore.

I'm often thankful for the Redstone Federal Credit Union for my happily married life.

"I don't have a beer gut. I have a protective covering for my rock-hard abs."

Bubba Giles, Madison



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John and Bertha (First Date and God's Sense of Humor)

by John H. Tate

Sunday, May 5th, 1997 held the promise of a wonderful day. Lisa, my teenage daughter, invited a school friend and his mother to visit our church. However, Lisa worked at Party City and they had required her to work that Sunday. That was my first disappointment.

When I called the boy's mother Sunday morning, waking her up, it was quickly apparent she and her son would not be joining me for church. That was my second disappointment.

I decided to ask one of the ladies in our congregation out to lunch. That became my new plan, I would ask one of the ladies out to lunch. But which one?

One lady had given me the "come-hither" signs and so I thought I would ask her out. I looked forward to spending some time with her. However, when the Holy Spirit asked me why her, no answer I had would pass the smell test. "Fellowship" was not at the top of the list. Once again, another disappointment.

Bertha came to mind. I was attracted to her, and she had a good spirit around her. I hesitated, feeling she might be out of my league a little, but the Holy Spirit nudged me on. So I decided I would ask her out. I devised a simple plan, what could go wrong?

I managed the controls for the church cameras at the back of the church, located between the lobby exit doors. Bertha usually exited through the doors to my left, I planned to greet her there after service.

Once the Pastor dismissed us at the end of service, she seemed to have put on roller skates, the way she was out of the doors before I could get to her. Feeling a little flustered, I ran to the exit doors to my right, hoping to catch her in the lobby. Finally, some good luck - she was there browsing the tape/book table.

My new plan was to stand by the wall to her right, which was at the end of the table. But she took too long, and I ended up looking like an idiot standing up against a blank wall for no reason. So I modified my plan again. I walked over and stood beside her, hoping she would look up to see who was there. But nooo, she didn't look up at all.

Then Pastor Robinson walked by behind the table. "Brother John, how are you?"

"I am fine Pastor, just looking for someone to take to lunch." Pastor did the strangest thing, he stopped and looked at me, looked at Bertha, lowered his eyes for just a second, and said, "I think you found the right one." Then he just walked off. Bertha still hadn't looked up.

Finally, I said, "Bertha, I'm talking about you." "Who, me?" She agreed to go to lunch, and she loved Chinese food. We decided to go to the Chinese Buffet on University Drive. But I had a plan. I didn't want to be known as someone who dated different women from church.

So my plan was for us to get seated in the back of one of the side rooms of the restaurant. That way we were less likely to be seen, and if the date didn't work out, no-harm-no-foul.

The restaurant was packed, and the only open table available for us was the table at the very end of the buffet bar. I thought, "We probably won't be noticed because of the crowd."

Throughout our meal and conversation, I kept scanning the room to see if I saw anybody from church. We were enjoying good food and some wonderful conversation. I thought my plan was working, but then it happened.

I looked up in time to see one of the ladies I had considered asking out. She was headed right for our table. When she got to the table she said the strangest thing. "There you are."

To this day I have no idea what she meant.

She and Bertha talked a little and seemed to enjoy seeing each other. All I could think about were my busted plans for that day. Inside I had a little laugh and thought, "Lord You do have a sense of humor."

April 29th, we will have been together twenty-seven years, (It took me three years to convince her to marry me) and married for twenty-four years.



"Once during prohibition I was forced to live for days on nothing but food and water."

W. C. Fields



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Hearts and Flowers

by Elizabeth Wharry



February, a time for love, romance, hearts and flowers. When did we get so preoccupied that we have forgotten to love and romance ourselves?

Being kind to ourselves need not be expensive or extravagant. It can easily be as simple as shutting off the electronic noise and taking stock of our accomplishments. It can take as long as one is comfortable sitting quietly. Take a minute and reflect on the joys friends have brought into your life. Now, turn that around! Think of the joy you have given them.

Despite February being the shortest month, sometimes it feels longer than all the months with 31 days. This is the month than I will schedule a hair cut with my stylist, take time to get a manpedi and schedule a massage. Are they luxuries? You bet!

They are necessary for self care.

Um...Elizabeth...I'm on a limited income. I really can't afford that! Dear reader, there are a couple of beauty schools in the area that offer hair and nail services at very affordable rates. But, but, but...a massage! That's REALLY expensive! Not necessarily, my cherished reader...it can be reasonably priced. There is a massage school in the area. There is also a place in the mall that is fairly affordable. You are well worth the time and cost!

There is nothing wrong with a little self love or care. As adults, we all need that down time...me time is what I call it. Sometimes, that self care/love brings out a forgotten better self!

Happy Valentine's Day!

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PET TIPS FROM ANGEL

Fear of Storms



Loud crashing. Intense flashes of light. No wonder some dogs and cats feel anxious during a storm. It's a natural reaction that many humans feel too, but we shouldn't have to watch our furry family members suffer.

Whether your cat or dog becomes clingy, hides under the nearest upholstery cushion or tears up the carpet, try these strategies to help keep them calm.

1) Maintain the status quo

Just like children, our furry companions tend to pick up on our emotions. If you're overly protective during a storm and cuddling them more, your dog or cat will notice and possibly feel more anxious.

Instead, behave as if nothing is wrong and your dog or cat will have more reason to keep calm and carry on as normal.

2) Shelter from the storm

If your dog or cat typically hides in places like under your bed or in tight, cramped spaces, encourage him to retreat to his own safe haven. This can be set up with a comfy bed and his favorite toys. Safe havens should be easily accessible whether there's a storm or not.

3) Comforter

Swaddling blankets often calm crying babies and can do the same for our furry friends. Purchase a pressure blanket you can wrap around your dog or cat any time they become stressed. The pressure from the blanket can provide a sense of security and protection.

4) Drown out the noise

Use "white noise" such as fans and humidifiers to distract from booming thunderclaps. TVs and radios tend to help because it's good background noise.

5) Positive Reinforcement

Once your furry family member shows signs of calming down, be sure to reward them. Just as you would give them their favorite treat or toy for a trick well done, reinforce their new, calm behavior by petting and giving them a tangible reward.

6) See the Vet

If your pet has extreme reactions to storms, talk with your veterinarian. He or she will be able to offer more specific suggestions based on your pet's personality and may also prescribe anti-stress medication to calm them.

7) Shelter

During severe storms it may be best to take shelter in a basement or small interior room like a bathroom. Make sure pets are acquainted with—and comfortable in—that area of your house and will go there with you easily if need be.

8) Poisons

Make sure the shelter inside your home is free of dangers for pets. Many people keep pest poisons in the same basement where they may be sheltering during the storm. Unfortunately, pets are very good at finding baits and many are all too eager to eat it.

9) Anxiety

Many pets have storm or fire-work anxiety and may be prescribed medications to help them cope. It's always best to give pets a dose of the medication prior to a storm to see how he or she will react—and pets should always get trial runs of medication during

periods when the veterinarian is available in case questions arise.

Summary

Again, it is important to reassure the dog that he is fine and to not exaggerate the situation. Thunderstorms are a constant presence in most areas and seasons, leaving little time to desensitize a dog in between episodes. If he needs a dark room, let him have it. If he wants to lean against your leg, let him do so. If he follows you from room to room, accept his presence without overreacting. If you have successfully been using mild tranquilizers, continue treatment until reconditioning is complete.



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ALMOST FAMOUS

by Tom Carney

It was an old dilapidated nightclub on Holmes Avenue in the 1940s. The air was thick with cigarette smoke and fumes of stale beer. There were only a few people sitting around the tables, bored to death, while on the small stage was an old gray-haired man, trying to coax one more song out of his memory, as his knarled fingers gently stroked the strings of a guitar.

The old man had been almost famous at one time. Years earlier he had been known as "Crying John," a name he had acquired because of his soulful renditions of the Blues. But with the new popularity of the radio, time had passed him by.

Now he was just another broken down old man, playing in clubs for whatever tips people might decide to give him.

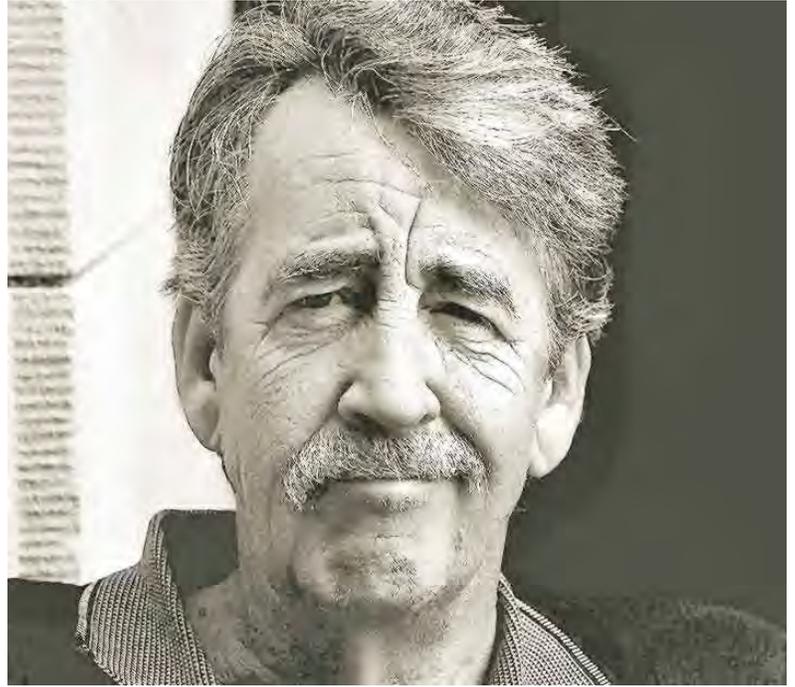
No one really noticed the stranger when he slipped in the door and pulled up a chair at a table in the back shadows of the room. He sat there for almost an hour, listening to the old man and drinking, never saying a word.

Finally, when the old man was done playing, the stranger invited him to sit at his table and have a drink. They talked in voices so low that no one else in the room could hear them. Not that anyone cared, of course. The old man had long ago become the butt of all the jokes told in the bar.

When it was time for the old man to begin playing again, the stranger joined him on stage. With the old man taking the lead, the stranger hesitantly began to follow.

Slowly and awkwardly at first, they began singing the songs of the cotton fields and of the poor people. Their songs told of empty whisky bottles and heartbreak, and lost loves.

Two men; one, an old broken down shell of his former being, and the other, a tall, young gangly lad, together on the makeshift stage, staring into one another's eyes as they blended their voices while singing the songs that most people had forgotten.



When they finished the last song the stranger told the old man it was time for him to leave, and handed the old man a handbill. They stood there silently for a moment, and then the stranger reached out and embraced the old man.

After watching him leave, the old man paused, wiping a tear from his eye, and then looked at the handbill the stranger had given him. Carefully he smoothed the paper and with a piece of old scotch tape, taped it to the wall behind the stage.

He stood back and looked at the stranger's picture on the handbill and read the words, "Hank Williams -Appearing in Concert."



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Thank you to our
Police Officers,
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appreciate all
you do to keep us
Safe Every Day.

A Skein of Yarn

by Kathleen Vaughn



This story begins in November of 2014 when I came across a shopping bag full of toboggans (caps) that I had Knitted. When I saw them I wondered what to do with them. I had already given them to many people I knew and their brothers! So I set them aside until later. That evening on the local news there were two ladies taking donations of blankets for the homeless. A light went on and I thought, "I can do that." But now? I didn't know where they were.

My son David called me later and I told him what I wanted to do, but I didn't know how to start. He said, "Mom, I know where they are." David works for the City of Huntsville in the Traffic Engineering Dept. He agreed to take the toboggan caps.

Later in the week he called and told me that he had given all the hats away and all the recipients were so happy to get them and said to tell me "Thank you". He also told me about a little girl who came up to him and asked if she could have one for her mama. He told her to pick one out for her mom. Hearing about this little girl, I decided that I would make some more and David agreed to help me give them away.

My daughter and I went to Walmart in Madison and as I was placing my yarn and other items to be checked out a lady

behind me asked if the yarn was on sale, I had so much of it, over a dozen skeins. I told her NO and explained what I was planning on doing with the yarn, and about the little girl who needed a toboggan for her mama.

My daughter paid for her item and went out to the car as the checkout lady was totaling my items. As I was about to pay, a voice behind me said "I'll get this." It was a gentleman standing behind me. I said, "No, it's too much, but thank you anyway!" He would not take no for an answer and told the clerk to add it to his bill.

I looked at the clerk, she looked at me and I started to cry. I looked at the man behind me in line, I didn't tell him my name and I didn't ask his, I just said "Thank you."

I went out of the store crying. My daughter saw me and asked "What is WRONG?" thinking someone might have been mean to me in the store. I told her what had happened and SHE started crying.

I made nearly 200 of the toboggans and with the help of David, Brenda and Tracy we gave them out. I thought many times of the generous family who had paid for the yarn to have those made, to keep so many warm in cold weather. This past March I decided to make some more toboggans and David again agreed to help me. I want to make them until late in October or early November when it starts to get cold. So far I've made about 100 for my project.

I wanted to again say "Thank You" to the family who was so kind to me that day in Walmart. Thank you doesn't seem enough so also God Bless You. I don't know their names or where they live but maybe they'll read this little story and remember.

You would be surprised at what joy a skein of yarn can bring.

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The Radio

by Austin Miller



It was in the late forties and I can still see Daddy bringing it up the drive after a visit to town to see my grandparents. I went to meet him and asked, "Whose radio is that?" He said, "Aunt Lucy gave it to us." I wanted to make sure I was hearing right and said, "to keep?" It was a dull brown oval shaped early thirties model Philco about eighteen inches high and a foot wide at the base. The face had two knobs, a recessed tuning slot about a forth of the way up from the base and a stationary tuning gage set against a recessed lighted dial. The dial moved up and down against the gage when you turned the right knob. The left knob turned it on and off and controlled the volume. The symmetrically designed face was about half wood with an inlaid light brown fabric that permitted the sound to emit from the speaker. The word Philco was printed just under the tuning dial.

It is impossible to measure how much this radio improved the quality of all our lives. I was soon hooked on the old radio programs. Some of my favorites were the Cisco Kid, Sergeant Preston, Sky King, and the B-BAR-B Riders. As time went on, I woke up on an untold number of cold

winter mornings to a roaring coal heater fire and the sound of Ernest Tubbs on WSM singing his theme song, "I am walking the floor over you."

I could always temporally lose my troubles and get lost in the stories by identifying with the heroes who always won out over the bad guys. I think radio was more entertaining than television. The only boundary to the characters, plots and scenes were the limits of your imagination.

Mama and Daddy liked Lum and Abner, The Shadow, The Great Gildersleeve and Amos and Andy. I enjoyed those too but I liked the adventure stories better. There were soaps in the afternoon; one I still remember was, "Just Plain Bill."

Of course on Saturday night there was the grand Old Opry on WSM. A few of the entertainers I remember were Roy Acuff, Ernest Tubb, Little Jimmy Dickens, Milton Estes, Hank Snow, Kitty Wells, Hank Williams and Eddy Arnold.

My favorite program of all was the Lone Ranger which came on Huntsville radio station WHBS every Monday, Wednesday and Friday at 6:30 P.M. I was intrigued by the stories and always felt a sense of relief at the end when the Lone Ranger and Tonto caught the bad guy and rode away with a hardy hi-old-silver. In the summer when there was daylight left at the end of the program, I would play outside and pretend that I was the Lone Ranger. I imagined many an Indian at-

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**"My mind not only wanders,
sometimes it leaves me completely."**

Jimmy Fortner, Arab

tack coming over the hill at the north-west end of our cotton field.

One Sunday afternoon in Vietnam in 1966, while I was on CQ, Gunsmoke was on Armed Forces Radio. A soldier in my Battalion named Gerald Bullard, who I didn't know at the time, came in to the tent that served as an orderly room and asked me if I liked those old radio shows. I told him that I did when I was a child but I hadn't heard them before now in a long time.

He said, "Man they all come on; the Lone Ranger, Sky King, The B-Bar B Riders, the Cisco Kid and I know the schedule; why don't you come and listen to them with me?"

Gerald was in charge of the Battalion's ammunition and weapons. Because of this, he was able to live alone in the armory (a big tent surrounded by sand bags). I took him up on his offer and soon learned that he was a newly married rancher from West Texas. He wrote his wife two or three times a day and got at least that many letters from her.

He was one of the best men I ever knew. We soon became good friends and spent many hours talking and listening to the same old radio shows that we heard as children. The programs made me wonder what ever happened to our old radio.

When I got home, nobody knew where it was, Mama said it wore out and was thrown away years ago. I looked for it anyway without success.

I still wish that I could have found it. The old radio may be long gone but the memories and joy that it brought me during my young years are still fresh in my mind.

"When you're leaving the zoo and there's a large crowd, start running to your car and yell, 'Run for your lives, they're loose!'"

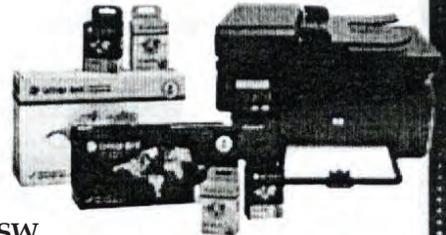
How to have fun once you're retired

"Don't know where your kids are in the house? Just turn off the internet and they'll show up quickly."

Brenda Day, Scottsboro

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ready to go to a forever home. I am a very sweet girl that loves to be with people and likes to sit on a lap whenever I have the chance. I talk to the volunteers and love for them and visitors to pet me when they come into my room. People are kind to me here but I need a home of my own. If you are looking for a friendly and talkie cat that will give you a lot of attention and sit on your lap for petting, please come and see me at the Ark Animal Shelter. Ask to see Nutmeg that's me.

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OL' TYME CURES AND SUPERSTITIONS

Please Note that this is written solely to present folklore medical remedies and cures only. Any remedy - from any source - should be employed with caution, common sense and the approval of your doctor.



- Cough - Mix one teaspoon of whiskey with a pinch of sugar, heat over a fire, and drink. Eat a mixture of honey and vinegar. Put some ground ginger from the store in a saucer and add a little sugar. Put it on the tongue just before bedtime. It burns the throat and most of the time will stop coughs. Take some rock candy with tea. Dissolve four sticks or horehound candy in a pint of whiskey and take a couple of spoonfuls a day.

- Cramps - To cure cramps in the feet, turn your shoes upside down before going to bed.

- Car sickness - Suck on a lemon while in a car to cure car sickness.

- Croup - squeeze the juice out of a roasted onion and drink. Add a

little vinegar, lemon, or onion to honey and eat. Put a drop of turpentine in a spoonful of sugar and eat. Drink a thick syrup made of onion juice and honey. Boil an onion, some turpentine, and some lard together. Pour the juice on a cloth and put it on the chest.

- Earache - Dissolve table salt in lukewarm water and pour this into ear. This dissolves the wax which is causing the pain. Pour castor oil, or sweet oil into ear. Break apart a Betty bug at the neck, and squeeze one or two drops of blood into ear. Warm a spoonful of urine and put a few drops in ear. Put a few ashes in an old rag. Dampen it with hot water and sleep with your head on it.

- Headaches - Bind wilted beet leaves on the forehead. Tie a flour sack around your head. Put several ginseng roots in a piece of brown paper and tie to your head. Put turpentine and beef tallow in a bandage and tie it tightly around your head. Smear brow with crushed onions. Rub camphor and whiskey on head.

- Hiccups - Take a teaspoon of peanut butter, add a drop or two of honey and suck it off the spoon. Put half a teacup of dried apples in a teacup of water in a pot. Bring to a boil, stirring occasionally. Strain out the remains of the apples, drink the hot juice.

- Pain Killer - Roast some poke roots by the fire. Scrape them clean with a knife and grind up. Make a poultice out of the powder and apply to bottom of the foot. It will draw pain out of anywhere in the body.

- Toothache - Put drops of vanilla straight from the bottle on the tooth. Hold whiskey or turpentine on the tooth.

- Hangovers - the next morning, take 1/4 teaspoonful of cayenne pepper in a glass of water - drink it all down. A cup of ginger tea will help settle a stomach caused by an all-nighter. For pounding headache, massage each thumb, just below the knuckles.

- Eyewash - Mix 1 drop of lemon juice in 1 ounce of warm water and use it as an eyewash. It's really effective when your eyes have been exposed to dust, smoke, harsh lights and compounds in the air.

"Sometimes I lie awake at night and wonder, 'Where have I gone wrong?' Then a voice says to me, 'This is going to take way more than one night.'"

Charlie Brown, Peanuts

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13 Things Your Burglar Won't Tell You



1. Of course I look familiar. I was here just last week cleaning your carpets, painting your shutters, or delivering your new refrigerator.

2. Hey, thanks for letting me use the bathroom when I was working in your yard last week. While I was in there, I unlatched the back window to make my return a little easier.

3. Love those flowers. That tells me you have taste... and taste means there are

nice things inside. Those yard toys your kids leave out always make me wonder what type of gaming system they have.

4. Yes, I really do look for trash piled up on the driveway. And I might leave a pizza flyer in your front door to see how long it takes you to remove it.

5. If it snows while you're out of town, get a neighbor to create car and foot tracks into the house. Virgin drifts in the driveway are a dead giveaway.

6. If decorative glass is part of your front entrance, don't let your alarm company install the control pad where I can see if it's set. That makes it too easy.

7. A good security company alarms the window over the sink. And the windows on the second floor, which often access the master bedroom - and your jewelry. It's not a bad idea to put motion detectors up there too.

8. It's raining, you're fumbling with your umbrella, and you forget to lock your door - understandable. But understand this: I don't take a day off because of bad weather.

9. I always knock first. If you answer, I'll ask for directions somewhere or offer to clean your gutters. (Don't take me up on it.)

10. Do you really think I won't look in your sock drawer? I always check dresser drawers, the bedside table, and the medicine cabinet.

11. Here's a helpful hint: I almost never go into kids' rooms.

12. You're right: I won't have enough time to break into that safe where you keep your valuables. But if it's not bolted down, I'll take it with me.

13. A loud TV or radio can be a better

deterrent than the best alarm system. If you're reluctant to leave your TV on while you're out of town, you can buy a \$35 device that works on a timer and simulates the flickering glow of a real television.

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MISS LOUISE

by Tom Carney

Her name was Louise Shenefield but for thousands of people she was known simply as Miss Louise, a hardworking lady who had a smile for everyone and who cooked the best dip dogs in the world.

Miss Louise was raised in the cotton fields of Macon, Georgia before moving to Huntsville in 1962. After working in the cafeteria at Huntsville High for several years she went to work at Zesto's on the corner of Russell and Pratt Avenue.

Zesto's was one of those small neighborhood restaurants that specialized in hot dogs and fries before the advent of fast food chain restaurants put most of them out of business. It was a place where politicians, construction workers and small kids lined up for hot dogs or milk shakes.

Miss Louise had always loved cooking and meeting people and the combination soon made her a popular fixture at the small hot dog restaurant.

"Miss Louise was never just an employee," remembered a friend, "She just took over. What ever she decided was what you did!"

Marie Thigpen, owner of Po-Boy Factory, remembers when she started working at Zesto's as a young girl. "Miss Louise had a great sense of humor. When a new employee was hired she would tell them to go down the street to Star Market and bring her back a "bag stretcher". Of course, there was no such thing as a bag stretcher, but the people at Star Market always got a big laugh out of it."

Although she loved a good joke, she would not tolerate insults to others. Many in the downtown area remember the "Flashlight Man," who used to stand at the 5 Points Intersection and wave a flashlight at all the people driving by. People laughed about him but Miss Louise found out by talking with him that he was a decorated veteran in World War II. She always went out of her way to be kind to him.

Even though she was just an employee,

Miss Louise insisted everyone had to look professional. She sewed all the uniforms that were worn by employees at Zesto's - red with white stripes and a bandana for their hair - and wearing hair nets before other restaurants had even thought of it.

It was during this time that Louise came up with the famous Dip Dog recipe that became famous throughout the entire city. There were ingredients in the recipe that she never told anyone about, but that were rumored to contain marmalade. Whatever it was, the corn dogs were a huge hit with the restaurant patrons.

As the years passed, Miss Louise became a very popular fixture for the patrons. Many people whose diets would not allow Dip Dogs still went in just to talk to her. Grady Reeves, Joe Davis, Bulldog Daniels, and Chick Russell were just a few of her good friends.

When Zesto's closed she went to work for Marie Thigpen at Po-Boy Factory until her death in January 2006. Other co-workers had to tell her to take breaks and she was always the last person to leave, even though she walked two miles a day back and forth to work.

Louise's son Frederick, who also worked at Po-boy Factory, said that she was a great mom. "She was the one who disciplined us kids, but she showed us so much love. When people came to our home to ask for help, she'd do anything she could to help them." His sisters Barbara Daniels and Patty Suttles agree. She took care of everyone. Louise knew the names of every bird she fed in the back yard, and loved all animals.

Louise Shenefield was one of those rare individuals who really enjoyed working. She rose each morning at 4, worked 12-14 hours every day and loved every minute of it. She is missed by everyone who knew her.

Bertie: "My memory is getting so bad."
Mary: "How bad is it?"
Bertie: "How bad is what?"



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Hermit Dies in Athens

From 1916 Newspaper

Hermit who Claimed to be John Hunt's Grandson Dies in Athens



Alone he lived, alone he died -the Limestone County's man of mystery, whose charred body was found in the ruins of his cave home, east of Athens on the Nick Davis road.

The recluse was called John Hunt, when he went to Athens a quarter of a century ago and bought 25 acres of land near Athens. He dug his home, rather than having built it. Into the

earth he bored and excavated a large room, over which he built a roof and called it home. In later years he added two more rooms, both underground.

Hunt claimed his grandfather settled Huntsville and from the family name the city received its name. His pathetic death last week, under mysterious circumstances, brought to light the weird story of the hermit's life.

Hunt had been a federal army man during the Civil War and he received a pension from the government. Together with the money he received from selling a few farm products, he eked out a meagre existence.

One of the strange features of the hermit's life, now being related by Athens people, is the fact that Hunt never sold a chicken, though he raised hundreds in the woods above his home. On the other hand, he treated them much as he would a human being.

At noon he frequently rang

a big bell to call them to be fed. The fowls would jump upon his shoulders and he made pets of all of them. "They are too near and dear to me to be sold," he explained to curious visitors, who visited his dugout by the hundreds.

The recluse treated them all with civility, but never claimed their friendship. When he first moved to Limestone, the section in which he settled had few people in it. Later it built up, but he continued to keep himself withdrawn from human companionship.

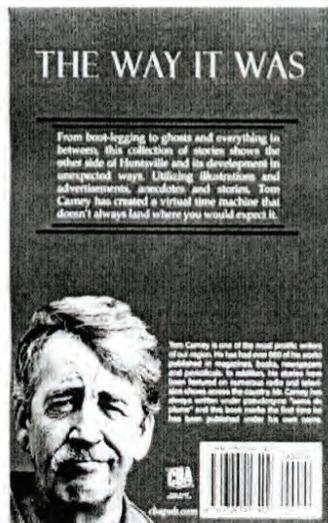
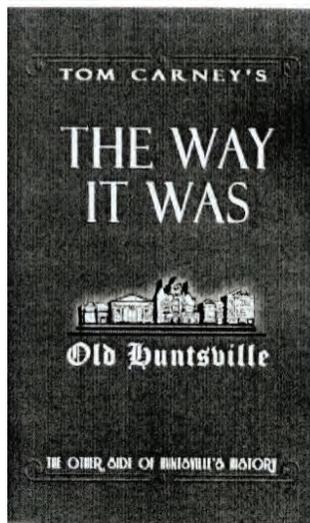
Recently, a group of men passing by the hut found only the smoking embers left. A hurried investigation was made and in the ashes the body was found.

It was buried by the people of the neighborhood in the Athens cemetery.

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When life was simple...



These Dallas Mill employees probably did not have much reason to smile when they posed for a photo in 1907. A law passed that year limited the work hours of youngsters, ages 12, 13 and 14, to sixty hours per week. That same year the Colored Infirmary opened on Oak Avenue and all saloons in Huntsville were ordered to close. The city also passed a tax on dogs and hired it's first dog catcher to enforce the ruling.

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