



No. 373  
March 2024



# Old Huntsville

HISTORY AND STORIES OF THE TENNESSEE VALLEY

## My Motorcycle Trip from California to Huntsville, Alabama



***Also in this issue:*** WBHP's Man on the Street; Thiokol Memories - The Place;  
Able and Baker - Space Monkeys; The Top Hat Lounge; A Pilot's Bad News;  
A Rebel in Blue; William Sibley was My Cousin; Rocket Science;  
Tanjie Kling Recipes; Pet Tips and Much Much More!

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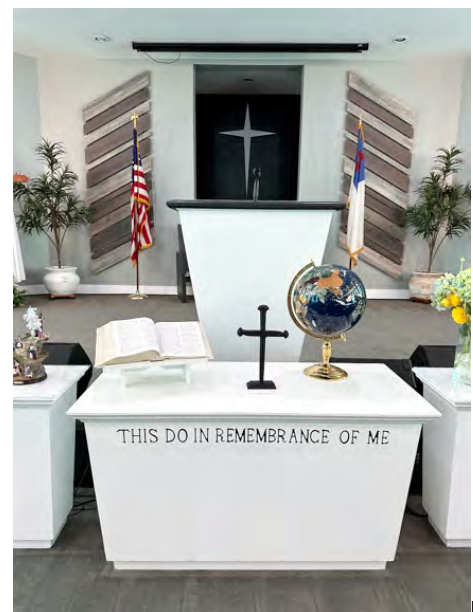
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## My Trip from California to Huntsville, AL



*by Dickie Hale*

When I was a kid there was a weekly TV show called "Then Came Branson" and it starred Michael Parks. It was about a guy that rode a Harley Sportster and traveled across country experiencing life with different people. As a kid I would dream of being Michael and having those experiences. Well, I actually did it. It happened later in life but I'll never forget it.

At age 52 I retired from Chevron/Texaco in California and not sure what I was going to do with my second life. I was riding my 4th Harley, a

very nice Softail Classic that I customized. I thought what better time to do my easy rider run than now. I was still young enough and my bike was in great shape. I had a destination to ride to since I was born and raised in Huntsville, Alabama. So, as a retirement gift to me, I did it. The following are the memories of my trip I would like to share with you.

I mapped out my trip from Walnut Creek, California to Huntsville, Alabama riding on backroads and scenic highways. I rode a lot on Route 66 because I remember that TV show with 2 guys riding in a Corvette. To make this trip more challenging, I decided to work my way back home doing handyman jobs. I took \$2000.00 and 2 credit cards for emergency use only and I never touched either. I packed 1 change of clothes, bathroom needs, bike cover, sleeping bag and a gun. The gun that got me in trouble, I'll cover this later. I put it all in a leather bag and tied it to my sissy bar.

I decided to leave on a Monday morning so needless to say, I could barely sleep Sunday night. When I mapped out my trip, I made sure I included family and friends along the way. It's cheaper and I could visit and live off them. I left home going south on Hwy. 99 to visit my niece Lisa Hale in Vasilia, Ca. Hwy. 99 goes right

**"I stood waving at my neighbor for ten minutes this morning before I realized she was cleaning her windows."**

**Ron Jacobs, Woodville**



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*(in memory)*

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through the central valley and lots of fruit orchards. I waved to all the Mexican picking fruit and they would holler and wave back. That is back breaking work. Lisa is my deceased brother's daughter and we have become very close since my brother's passing. I stayed the night with Lisa and her husband Arnie. They bought me a very nice leather back journal to keep notes of my trip. I'm glad they did that because I'm in my 70s now and the memory is going.

After staying one night with Lisa, I got back on Hwy. 99 south went to my uncle's in Fontana, California. Fontana is just east of LA at the foot of the San Gabriel mountains. Uncle Bill was my mother's younger brother and not a lot older than me. Bill was married to Thelma and they adopted Thelma's grandson Chayenne. He fell in love with my Hog so we went on a couple rides. Bill and I sat up talking about our childhood. We were raised together on Monte Sano mountain. He taught me to swim, how to ride a bike and how to ride a horse at the ranch on top of the mountain. Said good bye to Bill and Thelma and took Chayenne to school on my Hog on the way making sure I dropped him off in front of friends.

Going south on Hwy. 99 I jumped over to I-5 and through LA. There is no good time to go through LA. My son lived in San Diego with his TKE fraternity brothers. I joined this same fraternity with Rich as an honorary member. Went through the formal indoctrination and was an official member. Very special to me.

Spent time with Rich and other TKE friends barbequing, drinking beer, playing horse shoes and just hanging out. It was fun hanging out with Rich and TKE brothers. I've known them so long they feel like my own boys.

Left Rich's heading east to Prescott, Arizona where my cousin Butchie lives. I call him Butchie because he always called me Dickie as kids. Butchie and brother Tommie were raised in Tullahoma, Tennessee not too far from Huntsville. It seemed that Tommie was always sick and unfortunately, he passed just before I got there. Tommie had the worst case of asthma I ever saw. His mom (my aunt Dot) took him to specialists in Tennessee and Alabama but no one could help much. One day she was talking to her doctor about her physical and mentioned Tommie's asthma. Her doctor

was just an old country doctor who used southern remedies in his practice. He told her to do two things to rid Tommie of asthma. 1) To move to a town that is smog free and 2) Get a Mexican short haired Chihuahua that has to sleep with Tommie at night. Well, she moved to Prescott, Arizona and bought Poncho. In 3 months, Tommie had little to no asthma. Seen this myself. It had been a while since I've seen Butchie so we had a lot of catching up to do.

Left Butchie's the next morning heading northeast to Flagstaff, Arizona. Stayed in my first motel. Actually, it was a lodge - Flagstaff Frontier Lodge. Had a huge parking lot where they were having a Frontier Day festival. They had events like knife and hatchet target throwing contests. Bow and arrow contest. Spear throwing and other frontier events. Met and talked to a lot of nice people. I was invited to a barbeque since everyone was staying at the lodge. They cooked elk, venison and other wild game. I helped clean up to pay for my meal. I enjoyed myself so much I stayed 2 nights helping where ever I could and we sat out at night drinking wine and beer and talking about experiences we've had. They couldn't get over



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me doing my easy rider run to Alabama. Loved my bike and I got lots of phone numbers and addresses.

Left Flagstaff heading east on Route 66 to Albuquerque, New Mexico to visit my old military friend Ed Stienner. Ed and I were in Vietnam together and we served 2 tours 1965 and 1967. Ed saved my life in 1967 just outside of Ouyang Nagi in central Vietnam. His was a big black guy from Albuquerque, New Mexico and I was a fair-haired guy from Huntsville, Alabama. In 1965 that was something you didn't see but it never bothered Ed or I. We did R&R together and had each other's back in Vietnam.


When I got to Albuquerque, I was excited to see Ed because we talked on the phone just before I left home. Sometimes life is not what you think it is. Ed lived in a run-down section of town and he was heavy on drugs. His wife and son were the same. She told me that Ed could never get over Vietnam. Ed contracted Agent Orange pretty bad while we were there. I tried to get him to go to the Veteran Administration with me but he flat refused. I think Ed was uncomfortable with me being there so we sat on his front porch and talked. I tried to keep it light and fun because I didn't want to wake up any bad times. Left that late afternoon heading east to Texas.

In west Texas I was on the back roads and I passed an old ranch house with a large wraparound porch. Setting in the front yard under a shade tree were two elderly couples. I stopped to rest and they could ask questions faster than I could answer. A neighbor lady had given them an almost new refrigerator but they couldn't get it up the 6 steps and in the house. I helped and we

did it. Plugged it in and they were happy. Gave me ice tea and a chair under the shade tree. Invited me to stay for a fried chicken dinner and said I could sleep in their camper. They were very simple but nice people that I could have talked to forever. Next morning, I did some very simple quick fix it jobs and Cora was so happy she made me grits and eggs. First time I had grits in a long time. Cora actually cried when I left. Had to give big hugs.

In Louisiana, I stopped at a soul food restaurant that was run by 3 of the neatest ladies. A little large in size and laughed all the time. My Grandmother used to tell me that I never met a stranger. Well, she's right. We got along so good and when they found out I was working my way to Alabama, they immediately took me on a tour of things that needed to be done. I fixed a few things but mainly I was kitchen help. Washing dishes, pots and pans and bus-ing tables.


They started kidding me in




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front of people they knew. Threatening to take me in the store room and told me that I would never be the same. Pinching my behind. All in fun. I stayed there 2 nights eating soul food and sleeping in the stockroom on a cot. Promised them I would stop on the way back home but instead I took the southern route back to California. We sent Christmas cards for a long time.

Traveling back roads in the deep south was an experience I'll never forget. Evenings were warm and people would sit outside on their porches and wave. I do believe southern people are more friendly. Stopped and talked to people and they would bring out food because they thought I was hungry. Next thing I knew neighbors would come over with chairs and snacks and tea, talking and laughing.

Getting close to Alabama now so I'm anxious to get there. No stopping now just focusing on getting to Huntsville. When I got there, I went straight to my brothers in Tanner. Tim had my room ready and notified everyone I was home.

In those days I had a big family; 2 sisters, 1 brother, nieces and nephews and a slew of aunts, uncles and cousins. We had a family reunion at my Uncle David and Aunt Delia's in Gurley. Tried to spend the night with everyone I could so I could do one-on-one visiting. Looked up people I hung out with as kids and talked about old times in Sparkman Homes. Visited my mom's grave and did some cleanup with my brother and 2 sisters. Rode around and saw places and houses I lived in.

I stayed in Huntsville for a week and thought I better get back to California. Danielle had been very understanding from the beginning so I didn't want to push my luck.



## Prisoner Eats \$442 Worth of Food - 1841

In spite of the allowance for food being limited to 40 cents per day, William R. Hunt, jailer, was refunded \$442 for feeding prisoner Jefferson Darcy, a rather large man and a voracious eater, who was housed in the jail for 1,105 days. It took a legislative act to obtain the refund, this being a very unusual circumstance.

In spite of his many days in jail, the prisoner is still waiting to be fined and the food bill of the state will eventually be lessened by the amount of the fine, if any.

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# 1911 News

## City Council Meets Last Night - from 1911 Newspaper

Several important items were discussed last night as a full membership was present.

- An ordinance to prevent the use of screen or colored glass in the fronts of soft drink stands was adopted. A violation of the ordinance carries with it not less than \$10 nor more than \$100.

- The matter of employing a milk and meat inspector was referred to a committee composed of Adams, Oldfield and Wall.

- Several bids were received for the rental of the city's south half of the unused part of Maple Hill cemetery. The city's rental on same was placed at \$80.

- A number of protests were read from property owners against the assessment for paving on Madison Street. The protests were filed but the assessments were sustained.

## Advertisements from 1911

A Royal Washington Range will make happiness in your home. We also specialize in Harness, Buggies, Farming Tools, Cutlery and a general line of hardware. We sell on cash basis but will take GOOD NOTES. Scroggins Hardware Co., East Side Public Square, Phone 18

## Foley's Kidney Pills - What They Will do for You

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## Old Hats

Old Hats can be made new again by sending them to The Electric Pressing Parlor, opposite May & Cooney's.

## Lewter & Young (successor to J. W. Young)

Wholesale Grain, Hay and Mill Products - Agents for Lily White flour and Big 4 Flour. Moved to I. Wind's Warehouse, opp. N. & C. Depot

## Runaway this Morning Could have been Serious

About 11am today the delivery wagon belonging to E.L. Green the grocer on East Side Square was involved in a crash. The horse became frightened and ran away, dashing north on Washington Street and turning east at the intersection with

Clinton at Ezell's Corner. Two ladies, Miss Ellen Weaver and Miss Georgia May Harris, were in the act of crossing at this point and came near being run over and perhaps killed.

They escaped with a fall and slight bruising, being assisted to their home on East Clinton Street by Officers Whitener and Pamplin. The wagon was slightly damaged but can be repaired it is thought.

## Col. A. L. Rison Receives a Seven Passenger Packard Car

Col. Al. L. Rison today received a handsome 7 passenger Packard car, which he will have out in a few days. The car has a dark green body with gray running gear and is a beauty being perhaps the costliest and prettiest car in the city.



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# William Sibley was My Cousin

by Robert B. French, Jr.



Robert Louis Broad, Jr., a certified genius, passed away July 25, 1999. He was a past president of MENSA (The Genius Society). At his time, he was the only student to ever make all A's through the University of Alabama School of Engineering and the School of Law. He rose high in industry and was responsible for a number of patents. I was greatly honored to be asked to deliver the eulogy at his funeral in the Big Cove.

After I had praised his adventurous life and accomplishments, commiserated with his wife and children, I was ready to leave. A stranger walked over to me and we shook hands.

"I'm William Sibley and I think we are related."

"How? My mother was a Sibley. Where do we join the family tree?"

"Your grandfather was Ira Taylor Sibley. He is the son of Mills Jenkins Sibley. Mills Jenkins Sibley is the brother of my Father Romie Sibley. So, your great grandfather is my Uncle Jenks. That makes us kin somehow. We might be third cousins."

"Close enough." I responded. "Did you ever hear the family tale about Mills Jenkins going to the gin with his cotton crop? He sold his crop and quickly went to a creek and hid his money under a bridge. He went back to the gin, hung around a few hours and headed for home. In a dark, out-of-the-way lane, a group of robbers came out of the bushes and threw down on him with shot guns. After a thorough search and being cuffed about, the robbers said he was not worth a shot gun shell. "Hang him."

William interrupted, "I know the rest of the story. They hung him and rode off on their horses. He was so tall his toes reached the ground and some neighbors came by and cut him down. I have a copy of the article that appeared in the Huntsville Times. I'll send one to you."

We talked another hour or so and planned to stay in touch. After that, we wrote to each other at least once a month and usually every two weeks. He printed his letters in long hand. I have saved every one of them.

Although I had the book, "Sibley's In America", William told me things I had never heard. For instance, we have 5 ancestors who fought with George Washington and settled in Big Cove, New Hope or Owens Crossroads.

It turned out that William was

the 7th of 10 children born to my great-great Uncle Romie and Bobbie Sadler. He never told me how he acquired the nickname "Stink" saying it was hung on him when he was 3 years old and still obtains. He was slightly younger, being born in '39 while I was born in '33.

Graduating from Madison County High in Gurley, he earned Bachelors and Master's Degrees in history from Athens State University.

William was a scholar. After college he began a 36-year career as a teacher who taught at Gurley, Owens Crossroads, Brownsboro and others. As a historian he wrote a huge book, "Welcome to Big Cove", where he traced the history of the area from 1807 through 2000. It is a scholarly tome with humor and personal stories sprinkled in. It is really a delightful history of Madison County.

Being an avid horseshoe pitcher, William and his partner won the Alabama Double's Championship twice.

William was considered expert in rural Madison County Cemeteries and overall county history. He was an accomplished pianist, Sunday School teacher, coon hunter, and an avid contributor to Old Huntsville Magazine.

As you might surmise, I miss my cousin.

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# Funnies are Where You Find Them

by Jerry Keel

When you are presented with a chance to have a little fun at someone else's expense it is hard not to take advantage of the opportunity. I had such a chance many years ago. I worked at The Huntsville Times. The Times had a softball team of which I was a member. This story came about one beautiful afternoon while we were having a practice session at a place near the old city landfill.

Several of us noticed a man just over a small hill who was flying a big model airplane. It was a majestic sight to see the plane do rolls and dives just like a real airplane. The man who was flying the plane really was good and put on a show for us. That was not his intention because he didn't know we were even there. He was practicing for a model airplane competition coming up somewhere.

Anyway we were really enjoying his demonstration when suddenly the engine on the plane sputtered and just stopped running. The plane made a dive and crash-landed a few feet from where we were. He was flying the plane several hundred feet in the air and when it hit the ground the plane just disintegrated, scattering parts over a big area. We were able to get a good look at the wreckage and saw it was a large model plane that once was beautiful.

I instantly thought of a good plan for a few laughs. I ran to the wreck site and positioned myself as if the plane had hit me. I started moaning

and groaning like I was really hurt by the plane. Just then the man who was flying the plane came over the hill and saw me lying among the wreckage. He cried out and ran to my side to see how badly I was injured.

As he came running to where the plane and I were I could see the terror on his face. He knelt beside me and started apologizing and crying and telling me how sorry he was. The complete destruction of the plane was forgotten as he tried to comfort me. I thought I had pulled the perfect joke on the man and I began to laugh.

When the man saw I was not hurt at all he quickly became furious. I am glad he didn't have a gun because he probably would have shot me on the spot. The worried look on his face suddenly turned to one of disdain. He showered me with some foul language that would have made the toughest sailor proud.

I became fearful he was going to attack me so I hurriedly began to apologize to him and offered to help him pick up the wreckage. He told me in no uncertain terms what he would do to me if I so much as touched one piece of the debris.

Luckily for me the rest of our softball team gathered around. The man didn't want to take on the whole bunch of guys so he began to tell us he did not think it was funny that he had crashed and completely destroyed a model airplane that cost \$3500.00. I thought maybe (even probably) he had overpriced the plane but I kept that observation to myself. As they say "discretion is the better part of valor."

I began to empathize with him and ended up not thinking my little joke was funny at all. Occasionally you realize what a jerk you were to pull a prank like this. (I still think it was funny but I am glad I kept my mouth shut and the man left after gathering the remains of his beautiful model airplane.)

Then I had my big laugh at the perfect prank I had pulled on the poor guy. Maybe he even got a little chuckle out of this whole crazy thing, I sure hope so.

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## AREA NEWS IN FEBRUARY 1915



### A Bunch of our Good Shingles

Would last a long time in a family with only one child and quite a long time in one having a bunch of kids. They shed water like a duck. It always pays to buy the best because you get best results. We will nail them on well. See us at A.M. Booth Lumberyard.

### Busy Night for the Police

Patrolmen Walter Sanders and Frank McKissack last midnight raided a crap game on Winston Street. They arrested seven men, all of whom were found lodging later in the city prison. These same officers also furnished accommodations for the four drunken men and two others who mixed up in an affray on West Clinton Street. This was one of the busiest nights the police have had since the Christmas holidays.

### Worst Sleet Falls here in Years

North Alabama is beneath a mantle of sleet and snow, making this the worst winter day that has been experienced in this part of the south in many years. Both telephone and telegraphic service are partially crippled and street car traffic is difficult because the trolleys fail to perform their duty. Trees are hanging with icicles and in every way the entire outdoors presents a frightful sight of winter.

**"When I get a headache, I take two aspirins and keep away from children, just like it says on the bottle."**

**Bette Saul, Madison**

### Progress in Huntsville

Yes, it seems Huntsville really is big enough to do more than one thing at a time. She can go ahead bringing in new people, factories, capital, Fair Association, packing plant, corporate limits extension, celebrations etc. etc. and then have time to cooperate in Mussel Shoals development and other worthy undertakings.

### The Decatur Daily Celebrates a Birthday

The Daily Times extends its hearty congratulations to the editors and publishers of The Decatur Daily, which has just celebrated its fourth anniversary. The policy of our Decatur contemporary is sound. It has made a splendid reputation by always taking the moral side of every public question and is today regarded as one of the ablest newspapers in the state. W. R. Shelton is the splendid publisher; H.D. Harkreader, the brilliant editor and T. H. Alexander, the talented associate. Together with all the others who make or contribute in any way to the wonderful journal, they deserve the plaudits of that community. We are proud of The Decatur Daily and wish it a hundred years of usefulness and general public service.

### Man's Foot Amputated

John Murray, of Athens, an aged and well known man, recently agreed to submit to the amputation of his foot and insisted that it be severed without the aid of any anesthetic. The old man gritted his teeth and watched the doctors as they cut thru flesh and bone as they used to do in the old days before the discovery of ether.

The operation was entirely successful and Mr. Murray recovered but a few days afterward he began to have excruciating pains which seemed to be localized beyond the end of the severed limb just where the foot used to be. The amputated foot was dug up carefully, straightened out and wrapped in cotton, then reburied with the result that Mr. Murray is now resting in perfect comfort.

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# Oh, How I Miss You

by Judy C. Smith



It has taken me two weeks to wash all your monogrammed blankets, beds and toys to finally put away. I never thought I'd miss a fluffy white and black ball of a dog so much. When I got you, you weighed just over two pounds and slept in my husband's furry bedroom slippers. You never weighed over six pounds in your nine years and five months. Our Persian cat adopted you and bathed your face and slept curled up next to you as she once did her kitten.

Whenever I felt bad, especially after one of my many surgeries, you were always by my side, never leaving.

Last March I was told your heart and kidneys were failing. Dr. Waite, his staff, Martin, M.D. and I did everything to make you more comfortable.

The first week in December when I fell and lay on the entrance hall floor for over an hour and a half before someone came in and found me, you managed to open the French Door and lay next to me the whole time. It must have been most difficult for you to open those heavy doors, especially since

you had lost down to four pounds. You managed to hold on though thru the holidays with Martin taking you on shorter walks than usual and sometimes even carrying you up the driveway.

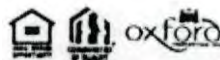
Your last walk was on a Friday. Saturday was a day where I found you breathing really hard, but Sunday you wanted to walk on the patio before bed.

On Monday I became concerned and rushed you to the vet. I keep you warm in your monogrammed blanket as I lay you on the exam table, where I rubbed your head and closed your eyes one last time.

Later that day, I buried my faithful black and white four-pound ball of fluff while tears rolled down my face. Oh, Maggie Two Shoes, better known as Shoes, I miss you so much.

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March is my happy month; the bulbs are starting to bloom, and the days are getting longer. Daylight Savings time starts on March 10. However, it always takes me a week or so to get used to the time change. Changing the clock back an hour in the fall is not nearly the problem as spring when we must get up an hour earlier. Spring officially begins in 2024 on March 19 at 11:06 P.M. EDT. That is the March equinox, with promises of warmer days and eventually swimming. That makes the time change easier to accept.

So many things come with spring and summer. We will have two new grand babies to welcome into the family this year. In a large family, there is always a birthday every month to celebrate. Oh, what fun!

The Easter Bunny will be hopping down the bunny trail a tad early this year. Easter is on Sunday, March 31. I guess we ladies need to start shopping for our Easter Bonnets and better expect a cool Sunday and have a wrap of some sort handy.

I was out today getting one of my antique cars ready for the St. Patrick's Day parade on March 16. St. Patrick's Day is Sunday, March 17, but the parade is Saturday from 11:00 to 1:00 in downtown Huntsville. Bring your folding chairs and a snack, and come enjoy the parade.

I have been going to Steady for Life exercise class for several years. It helps with senior strength and balance, ages 50 plus. They offer classes to all. It was organized in 2014 with nine locations throughout Madison County. There are a variety of class styles and intensity levels at convenient locations throughout Huntsville and Madison, so why not find a class that appeals to you? They also have many travel outings to enjoy, from day and overnight trips to overseas excursions. It is an excellent way to make new friends and get in better shape while having fun doing something good for your well-being.

If I keep up this exercise plan, I will surely be able to fit into my last year's swimsuit; if not, I'll just buy a new one.

Until next month, make your day the best.

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# DRIVE-IN ADVENTURES

by Collins Wynn



I recall at least three drive-in theaters in 1950s and early 1960s Huntsville: Woody's (out on Meridian Street), the Parkway Drive-in which was a bit remote (sometimes a desirable attribute when serious personal matters required attention), and the Cadillac of Huntsville Drive-in's - the Whitesburg.

Of the three, Woody's was first in the hearts of the Dallas/Lincoln neighborhood kids for two important reasons. 1) It was closest to the neighborhoods - about a five minute walk from Rison School up the railroad tracks, and 2) There was easy foot access over the wire fence on the right side of the theater. Before having the authority (but not the ability) to drive we often made the short trek up the tracks to Woody's to climb the fence and lay in the grass catching a good flick. Occasionally someone would chase us off but more often than not we stayed for the entire evening. We each had our favorites but all could agree on the top two or three movies of all times (from a 13-year-old boy's perspective). Russ Meyer was our favorite producer - he specialized in movies comprised almost entirely of nearly naked full bosomed young ladies. His greatest production was "Vixen" which ranks up there near the top of the first of the greatest movies ever made.

Another movie, whose producer has long since been forgotten but whose marketing and advertising guy has been memorialized for all time, was "The Birth of Twins". Can you imagine some guy getting possession of a delivery room film and making mega bucks from it simply through advertising and marketing? I can still hear the pitch - "One

show and one show only - educational and inspirational - see the miracle of birth." And, just to make sure that every male kid 12 and over came to see it, they added an age restriction of "no one under 16 admitted". No one at the ticket booth ever checked an ID that I saw. Some may doubt; just take a look at the advertising archives of the Huntsville Times.

After we started driving, a favorite past time became sneaking in some un-paying attendees. The ruse was that two guys would drive up to the ticket booth, pay for their admissions and drive on in, all the while having

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2, 3, or 4 of their closest personal friends stuffed in the trunk. Having served in both capacities (driver and stuffee) I can assure you it was great fun - it was all we could do keep from giggling out loud and blowing our cover. There was additional fun to be had by the driver if he simply refused to open the trunk and free the stuffee's - he could just sit there and listen to the mumbling, grumbling, moaning, pleading and cursing of the one's most dear to him. It was absolute power in the purest sense.

We were never discovered by the management but we did have an unfortunate circumstance develop once. Our usual band of hooligans was out riding around one night late in the Blue Goose trying to figure out how to get into Woody's when we didn't have enough money between us for even one ticket - which effectively eliminated the "stuffee" guise. A plan was hatched in which we would kill the car lights and drive slowly and quietly into the exit door. Woody's and the Parkway were particularly suited for this maneuver since the exits were well removed from either the concession stand or the ticket booth - the Whitesburg's exit was too well lit, besides they didn't show the really "good" movies.

As we started up the driveway everyone was tense and anxious. On top of that it was difficult to see the road because there was a bright light pointing outward hanging directly over the exit (or, so we thought). Just as we neared the gateway, someone spooked the Goose and we took off like a shot headed directly under the light and into the paradise that was Woody's.

All of a sudden the Blue Goose slammed to an immediate full stop from about 30 mph throwing everyone to the front of the car (these were the days before seat belts and supplemental restraint systems). It seems the light was not hanging over the roadway but was firmly affixed to a 4" steel pole set in concrete off to the right side.

Because of all the resulting noise, smoke, and confusion we had to drop our movie plans for the evening and retreat quickly. We had smashed up the front bumper without even gaining entrance. Oh well, whatever! There was always tomorrow night.

**"Life insurance payments are keeping me broke. But the silver lining to this is when I die, I'll be really rich."**

**Henny Youngman**

## Trees Native to the Holy Land Found Growing on Monte Sano

Local lumbermen have samples of the famous Chittim timber which has been discovered by government experts in Madison County, in the vicinity of Huntsville, and much discussion about the same is being indulged by the lumber people. The timber found is not very extensive, the forest of the same being but sparsely built up. The timber is supposed to be growing only at Jerusalem.

It will be remembered that interior work of the great temple at Jerusalem, told of in the Bible, was built of Chittim wood. It was not believed that there was any of this timber anywhere. Government experts in looking over the Alabama forests investigated trees which natives were calling Chittim wood and they have pronounced it the real article. The timber, of course, will be preserved and an effort made to bring about a growth. The samples of the wood on hand here are prized highly.

Here Chittim wood has been known to exist on Monte Sano since Huntsville was laid out in town lots nearly a century ago. Chittim wood was first hauled to town and sold as fire wood. For the past twenty-five years local mechanics have been working it into walking canes, gavels, police clubs, and many different kinds of furniture.

The Smithsonian Institute sent representatives here during the early 1890s to investigate the wood and extent of growth, and now have a block on exhibition in the Institution at Washington. (1912 Newspaper)

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# MY DAYS IN THE DRY CLEANING BUSINESS

*by Polly Bailey*

I had been working on Drake Avenue at a dry cleaning and laundromat business for Charlie Pierce for 10 years. Benny Medlin from West Huntsville Cleaners had a cleaners open and wanted me to run it. On February 4, 1974, I went to Modern Dry Cleaners on Governor's Drive in the Kennamer Shopping Center. Mr. Kennamer was still alive. After three days, I was ready to leave. I hadn't been around all that dirty talk that high school kids did. They would stop for me to sew up their caps and gloves. I never charged them. I told them to clean up their mouths and they never talked like that around me again.

I made lots of friends from the neighborhood. I sent all their clothes out for HEAVY starch.

The machines were old and needed lots of repair. Benny wanted to sell, so I bought it from him for \$18,000. I borrowed \$20,000 so I fixed all of the machinery. I kept one presser, Carrie Jasper, and one sewing lady, Sugar Lou Davis. Sugar Lou was so much fun. I loved her very much.

My granddaughter Beth Bailey Luft would come and visit. She spent a lot of her childhood in the cleaners. Terry would act like a mean old lady and try to scare Beth. Terry ended up being one of the best parts about growing up in the cleaners. She would always walk to the store at the end of the strip and pass by Slim at Bill and Jerry's Barbershop. They all gave her a hard time and teased her. She came to love them all.

Gene Tuck, aka Quarter Man, would see Beth sitting at the counter when she was little. She was young and shy and would hide from him when she would see him coming. He would always come in and try to get her to talk. By the end of the visit, he would always leave her a quarter.

Business was growing. I got another cleaner's to do the laundry. Sneed's wanted to buy me out. So I sold the business to Bennie Medlin at Sneed's and made a good profit. I still worked all day and into the evening. I was divorced and had two children in high school.

About then I started doing the Huntsville Stars sewing on the uniforms. I repaired and sewed patches.

Six months later, rent was raised. The shop was full with the Baptist bookstore, H&R Block, an ice cream shop, Bill and Jerry's Barber Shop and a grocery store. One time we even had a shoe shop in there. When the

rent was raised Sneed's couldn't pay anymore. He wanted to close it and have me come there.

About a month later in 1990, I rented a space next to the barber shop from Wells Johnson. I didn't do the cleaning there. I had it sent out to Sneed's. All my loyal customers came back. This was my cleaners. I had worked part-time as crossing guard when I was at Drake. I had lots of friends at the police department that would bring me their clothes. Everyone was glad I was back.

I was there 32 years when gas went up so high people couldn't clean their clothes. It was time that I got out. No money coming in, but lots of clothes. I was drowning with clothes. I sold the business to Benny Medlin and I continued to run the cleaners until I retired.

Work was my life. I enjoyed what I did and all of the people that I met. I sure miss it.



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## SPRING SPARROW

*by Gerald Alvis,  
The Poet of Greenlawn*

It's a tradition for me. Perhaps it's my way of wishing Spring would come a little earlier, or it could be nature's nod that it's on the way. About this time each year, I scan the branches of the trees, searching for the first sign of buds that will soon begin producing the leaves and flowers. But on this day, I decided to add another moment of recognition or acknowledgment, a custom of welcoming new life to come.

I went outside this early morning; the sun's warmth greeted me. It was soothing even though there was still a chill in the air. I began sprucing up the backyard a little, and first on

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***Jimmy Sparks, 84***

my list was the remounting of 2 birdhouses. Just a DeWalt drill and three screws a piece, and they were back up and open for business. I admired my work; the spacing and alignment were correct.

I then stepped away just for a moment to remove the covering of the outdoor faucet. This store-bought shroud protected the pipes from the severe cold of winter just a few days ago. I turned and looked back up at my completed project and realized I had a visitor; I spoke a few gentle words to him. I called him the poofy bird, a small sparrow that was now alight on the birdhouse I had just installed. I welcomed him.

He was aware I was there, but he was more concerned about sharing some of that sunlight with me as he fluffed out his feathers, enhancing his insulation.

Continuing with my chores, I glanced up, and my backyard buddy was gone. Transient, perhaps; maybe it was a good roost to recharge his batteries a little. But my next gaze proved fruitful, suggesting that we would be sharing the next few weeks/months together. His tiny head was now peeking out at me. I smiled, believing he was enjoying the comfort of his new lodging and knowing that new life would soon emerge, and this would be their first view of the world.





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# Heard On the Street

by **Cathey Carney**



Well, we have not failed to have winners for our contests that we run monthly. The first person who called about the Photo of the Month for February was **Richard Elwell** of Brownsboro. He guessed that the little guy in the photo was **Cecil Ashburn** and he was so right. Cecil and his company Ashburn and Gray built nearly every city and county road including the Parkway and Hwy. 53 to Ardmore. He was one of the nicest guys you'd ever meet. Richard says he only gets two magazines now - People Magazine and Old Huntsville Magazine. He loves history and congratulations to you for the win Richard!

**Charles Melton** of Huntsville told us he has been reading Old Huntsville now for over 20 years. Lots has sure changed in those years - sending greetings to you Charles!

Then our tiny twig on page 26 was ID'd by **Lorea Day** of Scottsboro. She is a subscriber so she just got a year added to her subscription! Good eyes, Lorea.

Happy upcoming birthday to our dear friend **Hank Miller**! His day is April 9 and he will be 97. Hank was one of the long-serving members of the **Golden K Kiwanis** of Huntsville, before they disbanded, and he lived with his beloved wife **Judy** here at Brookdale. Hank now lives near Knoxville, is very independent and is happy to be near children/grandchildren and great grands! We miss you!

**Mary Ann Blakemore** of Brownsboro turns 85 on March 23rd. We wanted to send her love and wishes for a happy and memorable party with family!

We are hearing more and more about people **being scammed** and losing thousands of dollars by giving away personal information. The rule of thumb is, **NEVER** give any private information over the phone when you get a call, or in response to an email you get. These scammers know that people are generally trusting and we think they are trying to help. If your "bank" calls, or your "Credit Union" asking for passwords, codes, gift cards, your financial in-

formation, assume they're crooks. Hang up and **CALL** your bank back and ask them if they are needing this info from you. You will then find out that you just saved yourself thousands of dollars. And in these days, we don't have a lot of that to spare.

Even better is just don't answer the phone if it's from a number you don't recognize. If it's important they'll leave a message. And remember, if you fall for one of the scams just once, you will be on their radar for **YEARS**. Just don't give them that opportunity.

An only child who grew up to marry and have two kids of her own, **Butch Damson** lived her life to the fullest. She attended Huntsville High School where she made lifelong friends. After graduating in 1957, she attended the University of Alabama, graduating in 1961. She returned to Huntsville where she worked for Brown Engineering for two years.

On February 11, 1963 she married her sweetheart, **Jerry Damson**. Their love and devotion for one another has been an example

## 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 sweet girl worked for Hudson Alpha then went on to Huntsville Hospital Foundation. She is an Old Town resident!



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to everyone. During their 61 years of marriage, they successfully raised two kind, loving and compassionate children, **Deke Damson** and **Susan Damson Park**.

Her father's motto was, "Always leave a place better than you found it." She took this motto to heart and for 60 years many people and organizations have benefitted from her efforts.

Butch passed away Jan. 28, 2024. The volunteer work she did, the clubs and boards she served on are much too many to put here. She loved to give back and her energy and attitude was contagious.

She is survived by her husband, **Jerry Lee Damson**; her two children, **Deke Damson (Danielle)** and **Susan Damson Park (Bruce)**; six adoring grandchildren who affectionately called her "Bush"; **Brandon Lee Damson (Kathryn)**, **James Kohler Damson (JoAnna)**, **Alexandra Day Damson, Patton Park Hammitte (Samuel)**, **Sumter Damson Park**, and **Charlotte May Park**; and her six great grandchildren whom she adored. Everything she touched was better because of it and she will be so missed.

In Honor of our Ice Storm and hoping we never see it again, I have hidden a **tiny icicle** within these pages. If you find it and are the first to call and tell me where it is, you are the winner. That is IF you have not won before.

Did you know that if you put **crackers in your freezer** they stay as fresh as when you bought them? I've been doing that for years cause I like those mini-Premium saltines in chili, and they lose their crispiness in your cabinet. Just leave them in their wax paper bag, fold the top and attach a small binder clip. You'll be really surprised.

Many of our readers are now sending stories to OHM about their family members and events that happened. **Tom Carney** used to say, "If you can tell a tale, you can write a story." But some need help with the process.

We were happy to hear that **MD Smith** is starting up his creative writing classes again at the Senior Center, Studio 60 on Drake Ave. The classes are from 1-3pm every Thursday and it's amazing what you can learn. You need to write your memories down for grandkids and future family otherwise they'll be lost forever! Reservations not needed, just show up.

**Erlaine Born** lives in West Chicago and has been subscribing to OHM for years. She wanted to send out love to her dear friend **Fran Miller** who lives here in Huntsville and has written stories in the past for us. We need more stories from Fran and a few from you too Erlaine. Stay warm in Chicago!

Many people called this man their friend. **Mike Maples**, 83, passed away on January 25th, 2024. To the end, a gregarious, fun-loving man, left shining an eternal ray of warmth on his family and friends.

Mike was the proud owner of Maples Sheet Metal, founded by his grandfather in 1919, until he retired in 2012. Mike also held dear his Huntsville Jaycees, his Huntsville High School Class of 1958, and his people at Olde Town Coffee, who conferred him the title of "Mayor." He had a love for photography and did a great

job at it. He had a special love for all "critters", and photographed them too.

Mike is survived by his daughter, **Cathy Wasserman** and her husband, **Andre**; his son, **Stuart Maples** and his wife, **Deborah**; his grandson, **Gordon Maples**; and his life companion, **Margaret Ann Goldsmith**.

Many of us have bought Ring Doorbells for security and your phone/computer will tell you when the battery needs to be recharged. Rather than wait a day with no service it's a good idea to buy an extra battery pack and have it fully charged. When you get the notice just insert the new battery and charge up the other one for next time.

So happy that Spring is on its way! The Farmers Markets, blueberries. warm days, heavenly. Strap on your comfortable shoes and take long walks through downtown and the historic districts - you'll get exercise and see some beautiful old homes.

Thanks to our City Workers who got out in cold, rainy weather to pick up trash, fix broken transformers, beautify our city, plan new roads, try to control traffic - not easy jobs. THANK YOU! Also we appreciate our USPS men and women as well as other delivery people. Not Easy Work for sure.

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## From the Kitchen of Tanjie Kling

### Zippy Cheese Straws

16 oz. of Cabot Seriously Sharp Cheddar Cheese (regular yellow color)

1 stick of Cabot salted butter

1/2 t. or more of cayenne pepper, to taste

2 c. of King Arthur all purpose flour

Additional cayenne pepper

Salt to taste

Remove cheese and butter from refrigerator and set it out on the kitchen counter to soften. Let cheese set out for 3 hours and let the butter set out for 1 hour.

Using a box grater, grate the cheese and the butter into a medium bowl. You will use the side of the box grater that has the big holes. Grating the butter will make it easier to combine with the cheese later.

Add 1/2 teaspoon of cayenne pepper to the grated cheese and butter. Mix the cheese, butter and cayenne pepper thoroughly with hands.

Add the flour, incorporating a little bit at a time. Mix thoroughly

until all dough has been incorporated.

Check the consistency of the dough. You will need to push the dough through a cookie press with a star attachment. If the dough is really stiff, you may microwave it in 5 to 10 second intervals until the dough is a little bit softer, but not warm. If the dough becomes warm or too soft, it will negatively impact the end result and the straws will not be crisp.

Load a cookie press with the dough, and add the star shaped disc so that you can pipe the strips of dough. Line a cookie or baking sheet with parchment paper. Pipe or squeeze the dough onto the sheet.

Each "straw" should be about 2 or 3 inches in length. Place in the preheated 350 degree oven for approximately 15 minutes.

Immediately after removing the cheese straws from the oven, sprinkle the hot straws with salt and a good shake of cayenne pepper to give the straws more bite. This makes approximately 150 cheese straws, so get at least 2

baking sheets ready!

**Tip:** If you do not have a cookie press and want to purchase one, please make sure it has the star disc included with it. Many cookie presses available now do not include that specific disc.

For best results, bake these on a day with low humidity. They will be crispier. This recipe can be doubled, but the dough will be easier to combine and handle if you just make 2 separate batches.

### Wild Rice Pilaf

This wild rice pilaf goes well with hearty dishes like chicken marsala, pork, steak, or venison. It features Newberry Pecans, a local family business.

1 package of long cooking wild rice; not instant

Beef broth

1 T. butter

1 or more medium carrots, chopped

1 or more small onions, diced

4 oz. Pennsylvania Dutchman Chunky Style Portabella Mushrooms

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A few handfuls of toasted Newberry Pecans

In a large saucepan, heat olive oil on medium high heat, and saute onions and carrots for about 10 minutes. If you are making the equivalent of 2 cups of cooked rice, use 1 medium carrot and one small onion. If cooking a larger quantity of rice, add more carrots and onions according to your preference.

Look at the wild rice package directions. Decide on how much you want to make. Follow package amounts for the amount of rice and liquid that is required, but instead of cooking the rice in water, use beef broth. Add the appropriate amount of rice and beef broth to the vegetables.

Cook according to package directions.

While cooking, toast the Newberry Pecans. Place a handful of pecans in a metal pan and put in a cold oven. Set oven to 350 degrees. Once oven reaches 350 degrees, continue baking for about 5 minutes and remove.

Once rice is cooked, stir in the toasted pecans and serve.

## Chicken and White Bean Soup

*This Chicken and White Bean Soup is quick to assemble. It is great for people that are sick. For those with long term illnesses, it is especially nourishing if chicken bone broth is substituted for the chicken broth. I prefer to use Instant Gourmet Rustic Italiano Seasoning, but it must be ordered online. For lower sodium, use a low salt broth, cook Springer Mountain Farms chicken breast from raw, and cook your own white beans. Alternatively, you can use Bush's low sodium cannellini beans. This is really good served with cornbread.*

- 1 T. olive oil
- 1 large onion, chopped
- 2 large carrots, chopped
- 1 stalk of celery (optional)

6 c. of chicken broth or chicken bone broth

2 Bay leaves

2 baked and shredded Springer Mountain chicken breasts or a shredded small rotisserie chicken  
Italian seasoning blend

1 15 oz. can of cannellini beans, drained and unrinsed

A few handfuls of raw baby spinach, end stems removed

(This is made in a soup pot that holds 2.5 quarts or more.)

Saute onion, carrots, and celery (if used) in olive oil. Add 6 cups of chicken broth and the bay leaves.

Add 1 can of drained and unrinsed cannellini beans., Add the shredded chicken from the 2 cooked chicken breasts or throw in a few handfuls of shredded rotisserie chicken

Cover and simmer the soup for about 20 minutes. Add salt and pepper as desired. Remove bay leaves at this time. Turn off the heat.

Add a few handfuls of raw spinach to the soup and let it wilt. Serve.

## Frozen bananas

4 or 5 ripe bananas

1/2 or 2/3 bag of chocolate chips of your preference

Flaked coconut, chopped pe-

cans, sliced almonds, or other chopped nuts

Parchment paper

Baking sheet

Line a baking sheet with parchment paper. Peel the bananas and cut them in half, crossways. Empty the bag of chocolate chips in a large bowl, and microwave for 45 seconds on high setting.

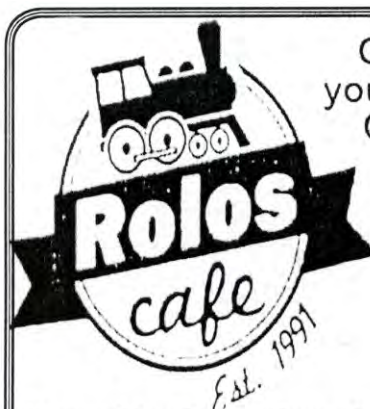
Check on the chocolate chips to see how much they have melted. Stir them, and heat again in 10 second increments until the chips are melted. Remove chips from microwave.

Begin assembly of bananas. Take one half of the banana and coat it in the melted chocolate. Put the ingredients you want to coat the banana with, on a plate.

Roll the chocolate covered banana in the chopped or sliced nuts, coconut, etc. that are on the plate. Place the coated banana on the baking sheet.

Repeat until all banana halves have been coated. Place baking sheet in freezer for an hour or so until the chocolate on the bananas hardens.

Transfer the chocolate covered bananas to a freezer safe storage container with a lid. Freeze until ready to eat.



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# My Very Early Memories

by Linda Hamlin

It's summer 1956 and it's moving day. Daddy has been working nights and weekends building a four room house in Redstone Heights for us. I'm very excited to see my new home. Right now, I'm supposed to stay out of the way.

Daddy and Granddaddy Lang have placed a wide board from the top of the steps to the back of a borrowed blue pickup truck. The truck has high wooden sideboards. My bed goes in last. The furniture is loaded and it's time to leave. Grandma Lang has had her back to us all morning, but suddenly she's hugging us and promising to see us soon.

Mama puts my 6 year old brother Wayne and me in the bed of the pickup truck and tells us to hold tight to the slat. There's no tailgate on the truck.

We ride down Meridian Street and into downtown. Then onto Whitesburg where we eventually pass Lily Flagg Gin and on to the Parkway. Cotton field after cotton field as far as I can see on the right side of the road. A grassy ditch separates the traffic traveling north and south. The east side of the road is lined with lovely shade trees. Each tree was planted to commemorate the war dead of WWII. I wished Granddaddy would slow down so I could look more, but I was anxious to see my new home too. Mama said later he was doing 35 mph! Soon we

turn off the Parkway into a quiet neighborhood very different from my grandparent's in Lincoln Village. I love our house! It's white with a green and white striped awning over a large picture window. There's a sidewalk leading to the house from the road. Granddaddy backs the truck up the side walk to the door. While the grown ups unload the truck, Wayne and I take off running around the house. We both need a pit stop at the outhouse. I'm glad to see we have toilet paper. We have to use corn shucks or the Sears catalog when we go to my Grandparents in Tennessee.

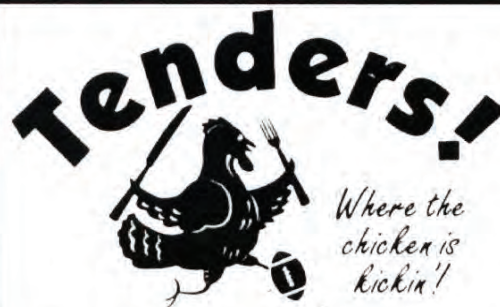
The yard at Grandma's house is postage stamp tiny. We have a huge yard! We can see all the way to the Parkway from the back yard. There's too much to explore though to be curious about the Parkway. There's an enormous pile of rocks to play on and blackberry thickets and wild plum trees! Daddy has started a grape arbor and green grapes are already hanging from the vine. The garden is growing tomatoes, squash, cucumbers, okra, pole beans, corn and muskmelons. We're going to have chickens too. Daddy has already ordered them. The mailman will deliver 100 baby chicks, a feeder and an incubator. It will be my job to feed and water the chicks and collect their eggs when they grow up and start to lay. The lot next door belongs to Grandma and Granddaddy. Hopefully they will move here soon. Right now, the lot's growing Johnson grass as tall as I am. There's a small grove of sassafras trees too. This will be my pretend house for my dolls, dogs and me.

In no time at all, Mama is calling us in to dinner which is at noon every day. We have pinto beans, corn bread, fried potatoes, sliced tomatoes, turnip greens and sweet tea, my favorite meal. We have supper after Daddy gets home, usually about 7 pm. Supper will be the same meal but Mama will add fried chicken or fried pork chops to round out the meal. With our hunger satisfied, we walk with Mama up the street to the nearest house and introduce ourselves to the neighbors. Ricky, Randy and Shelia are the kids who live there and are near us in age. First day and we already have someone to play with! Tomorrow, a man is coming to witch our well.

I can't imagine what a witcher will look like; but it 'll be nice to have running water. I think I'm going to love living here.

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# Mardi Gras

by Bill Alkire



Hurricane Katrina hit New Orleans with vengeance on August 29, 2005. With half of New Orleans 1 to 2 feet below sea level, flooding was of major concern. The storm beat New Orleans for six hours. Major damage was the result. The people in Louisiana and elsewhere did not expect a Mardi Gras on February 28, 2006, but this was New Orleans.

Lacey's Spring (Alabama) Senior Center group wanted to see New Orleans and Mardi Gras and made plans for February 20, 2007. We all had been to New Orleans and Mardi Gras before but wanted to go again. It was decided we would travel in Mr. & Mrs. T's Cadillac which would hold six people comfortably. We made reservations for the three nights we would be in Louisiana.

We were making suitable time until we hit Meridian, Mississippi. We stopped to get gas and discovered the Cadillac's engine was running hot. We added water and proceeded on to Jackson, Mississippi. Reaching Jackson, the overheating problem had gotten worse. Mrs. T called her insurance company and proceeded to rent a small van to enable us to continue our trip. We

only lost two hours.

We spent the first night with our retired minister Ben's sister in Clinton, Louisiana. The next day we went to New Orleans. Our reservations were at the Residence Inn, located on St. Joseph Street. The facility was clean, spacious, comfortable, and provided an outstanding reception in the evening and great breakfast in the mornings. The hotel was a block off the parade route. The group was able to watch the parade on Monday night as well as the main parade on Fat Tuesday.

Tuesday, we had a leisurely breakfast and readied ourselves for the main parade. The Krewe du Vieux Parade began and ended on the corner of Royal Street and Press Street (Homer Plessy Way). The parade proceeded down Royal Street through the French Quarter until it turned left on Toulouse Street. The route continued to Frenchmen Street and one block down Chartres Street, turned left on Homer Plessy Street and up one block. The main parade was the best parade we had ever seen. The crowd was not unruly and quite friendly. Mayor Negan led the procession and came over to my wife, talked to her briefly, thanked us all for coming from Alabama, kissed her on the cheek, and gave her a rose.

Another incident was quite comical. Ben, our retired minister, was dressed like the Joker. He was complete with a white-chalky face and green hair. He had gotten tired and found a metal chair on a side street and sat down. He went to sleep - head back, mouth open wide as if catching flies. A woman with a child in tow came by. The child asked, "Is that man dead?" The woman responded, "No, honey he's a mime."

It was a great trip. Mrs. T's son met us in Jackson with a car. We returned the rental van. Mrs. T's son hauled the Cadillac back to North Alabama on a flatbed-truck.

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# A Private Pilot's Bad News

*by M.D. Smith, IV*

My father and I took flying lessons and learned to fly single-engine aircraft in 1965. By 1967, we had our multi-engine/instrument ratings, and the TV station (WAAY-31-TV) bought a twin-Aztec.

In 1968 I flew my Chief Engineer, Cactus, to D.C. to attend a broadcaster's convention. He wanted to talk to Eimac, the maker of the giant klystron tube in our new transmitter.

About noon on the second day, Cactus had a message at lunchtime — bad news. The new high-power klystron kicked off and the engineers couldn't get it back on the air. We were on low-power with the old transmitter. Cactus took the first commercial flight back to Huntsville. We were back on full power late that same night.

I was ready to return on the fourth day. I filed my IFR flight plan and took off in sunny weather. There'd be a headwind and overcast most of the way, but the ceiling in Huntsville was 2,000 feet, well above the minimum IFR 200-foot ceiling for instrument landing.

Heading southwest at 8,000 feet — scattered clouds underneath. In thirty minutes, a solid deck. My ground speed was about 15 knots slower than my air-speed from the headwind.

I calculated my full fuel tanks, good for at least five hours in the air, longer if at higher altitudes with a leaner mix. The fuel gauges are only a guide.

The deck continued to rise. Request to climb to 10,000 feet. Granted. Pilots should use oxygen above that altitude. I

had a full portable bottle hanging on my seatback. I put on the mask and opened the flow valve — prefer not to pass out.

Darn if the solid cloud deck didn't keep rising. After two hours of flight time, I had to climb to 14,000 feet to avoid "flying in the soup." I had the autopilot on, holding my heading and altitude. At two hours, and not nearly halfway, I had fuel concerns. It was cold at this altitude, and I had the gasoline heater running. The temperature drops three degrees for every 1,000 feet of altitude. Forty-five degrees on the ground equaled three above zero at this level.

If you fly in the clouds below freezing, instead of a harmless mist on warm days, you get white rime ICE that sticks to the cold skin of the airplane. Freezing rain would produce a clear ice buildup.

Aware I will have to descend into the "soup" when I approach for landing, this Aztec is equipped with de-icing boots on the leading edge of the wings and tail. It's not the same as heated rubber boots that melt ice. You must wait until the ice collects significantly on the wing, then inflate the rubber boots. The ice (hopefully) breaks, and the wind carries most of it

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away. You deflate the boot and wait to repeat the process as long as needed.

Two hours and twenty minutes. Still not halfway home. Looks like a long trip. There are two tanks in each Aztec wing. You fly the outboard tanks until they are dry and the engine sputters, then quickly switch to the inboard tank. It rarely happens simultaneously, so you only have to be on one engine for a few seconds before the other kicks in with a full tank. That happened ten minutes later. I should have at least the same amount of flying time. Plus, thinner air burns less fuel per hour.

On full tanks, I had a burning desire to urinate. We always kept a couple of "HERE" (Human Element Range Extender) bottles in the cockpit. I searched desperately. They'd all rolled to the back of the six seats. I'd have to unfasten my harness and go to the back to retrieve one while "Andy" (the autopilot) continued to fly the plane. Perspiration drops covered my forehead as I gingerly stood, humped over, turned, and took a big step toward the back.

The airplane pitched up and corrected itself harshly, caused by a change in the center of gravity. I dashed to the rear and retrieved the bottle while Andy jerked the trim back and forth, scaring me half to death. Finally, back in my seat, I relieved myself to the top of the Gator-aid-sized bottle.

At four hours and fifty-five minutes, I was in southern Tennessee and handed off from Center to Huntsville Approach. "Aztec three-one-tango-victor. Descend and maintain 5,000 feet." Yep, in the middle of the soup.

Entering the freezing mist, it didn't take long to see that telltale white frosting collecting on the black rubber boots. I had to wait. Too soon, and ice might merely expand with the inflation, but not come off. If that happened and you

deflated, leaving empty space, nothing would happen later when it would be thick enough to crack and blow off. If you got too much ice and waited, both the ice's weight and the rime ice's rough surface would bring the aircraft down - not a good option.

Studying approach charts for an ILS approach to Huntsville, changing radio frequencies, talking to approach, and turning to new headings as control lined me up with the outer marker. Next, begin descent on the glide slope and final landing sequence. I sure missed Cactus, who could have assisted.

The ice got heavier. I inflated the rubber boots. It cracked and flew off the wings. Relief. It was the first time I'd ever had actually used de-icing equipment.

Jacket removed earlier, my shirt armpits were soaking. I'd wiped my forehead several times. I headed for the outer marker at 2600 feet and began my descent into Huntsville ten miles ahead of me. I broke out of the overcast at 2,000 feet and saw the runway and strobe lights in the distance. I disabled the autopilot and hand-flew the rest of the way to a smooth landing. I'd been in the air five hours. Were the tanks nearly dry? Upon filling, I had fifteen gallons left that could have gone almost an hour in the thin air at 14,000 feet.

I went home that day, sweaty and exhausted, flopped spread-eagle on the bed, missed dinner, and slept until the following day.

**"There ought to be a support group for women who can't put their dishes in the dishwasher, dirty."**

**Maxine**

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# Able and Baker

by Iolanda Hicks



Able and Baker were two of the 20th Century's unusual veterans: "Space Veterans". Cory, at the Huntsville U. S. Veterans Memorial Museum loves to share unusual stories with me, from time to time. One day, he was telling me some interesting tidbits about two of our first Space travelers, Able and Baker.

I thought those two travelers deserved a little research and their story be told , again, in our time.

Able and Baker were a pair of female, mismatched monkeys. Able was a Rhesus Macaque monkey born in Independence, Kansas at the Ralph Mitchell Zoo. Baker was a squirrel monkey, born in Inquitos, Peru, landing in a Miami pet shop. These two were born in 1957 and considered the first primates to survive spaceflight at that time. Others, before them, had not been successful.

The predawn launch from Florida, on May 28, 1959 carried both primates in a Jupiter Intermediate Range Ballistic Missile (a Huntsville built rocket). This Jupiter AM 18 flight was considered the first mission to "successfully carry animals 'into space and back". The rocket reached an altitude of about 300 miles, traveling downrange 2000 miles for approximately a 16 minute flight which included 9 minutes of weightlessness. On the ship's return, the Jupiter's nose cone landed in the

Caribbean and was picked up by the U.S. Navy's tug, the Kiowa.

Both young ladies survived! In fact, after the successful mission, Miss Baker was such a ham during the press conference held in Washington, D.C., that she took over the whole session for both of the Mon-keynauts. Not only was she a ham naturally, but she had been given the nickname "TLC", earlier in her training, because she was so affectionate.

About 4 days after the successful flight, Miss Able succumbed, to the anesthesia given her while doctors were removing an electrode that had caused infection in her tiny body. The National Museum of Natural History took charge of Miss Able and moved her to her final resting place.

Not too long after the successful landing, Miss Baker retired to Pensacola, Florida, and was taken care of for 10 years by the Naval Aerospace Medical Center. During that time, she got "married" in 1962 to "Big George". They never had any children during their marriage but appeared to be happy together. The couple, in 1971, moved to Huntsville, specifically to The U. S. Space and Rocket Center. They enjoyed a happy life in their own area at the Center, until Big George died in 1979.

Not wanting Miss Baker to be lonely, another mate was found for the widow, and she was soon married to "Norman", in a very nice ceremony. It was presided by Alabama District Court Judge Dan McCoy and was attended by more than 500 children. She and Norman lived a comfortable life together for several years until her death from kidney problems on November 29th, 1984.

Miss Baker had lived 27 years and was considered the oldest



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squirrel monkey to have lived that long, during that time period. During her life as a celebrity, this famous Monkeynaut appeared on over 20 television shows including Good Morning America and even appeared with the Jackson Five. A Memorial Service was held in Miss Baker's honor and she was buried alongside her first husband, Big George, on the grounds of the U.S. Space and Rocket Center, at the entrance.

A stone marker has her accomplishment listed and you may find a banana or two on her grave stone, left as a tribute to her memory. There is also a small statue of Miss Baker in one of the gardens at Studio 60, the Senior Center, on Drake Avenue. Just follow the Path of Honor towards the gazebo on the west side of the Center.

As for Miss Baker's second husband, Norman, he was returned to his home at the Yerkes Primate Center in Atlanta Georgia and lived out the rest of his life. As years passed, there were other Space Monkeynauts on record but Miss Able and Miss Baker were the first to survive and return alive on that space flight of 1959.

What an amazing world we live in and there is so much history at our fingertips. Huntsville is just brimming with history, from the early 1800s to the present day's plans for the journey to Mars.

There are several places in our city where history almost becomes alive and one of my favorite places to visit is the U. S. Veterans Memorial Museum off of Airport Road, open 10 AM to 4 PM Wednesday through Saturday. That one place has so much history inside its walls! Take one day and visit history. You won't regret it!

**You know you're getting older when yellow becomes your favorite color: Walls, Teeth, Hair.**

## History of Barber Poles

The barber pole with spiral stripes is a relic of the days when barbers were also surgeons.

**As early as the fifth century A.D., the barbers in Rome extracted teeth and treated wounds as part of their professional work. When the London barbers were incorporated in 1461, they were the only persons practicing surgery in the city.**

The white area in the barber pole represented the bandage used in bloodlettings and the red stripe represented blood. American barbers added a blue stripe, perhaps to make the colors conform with those of the national flag.



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Such effort has been amply rewarded. For through this organization, the motor car which is contributing in so large a measure toward making life easier, pleasanter and more worth while has been made available to millions.

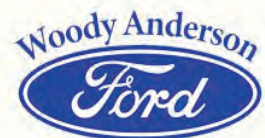
The Ford Motor Company views its situation today less with pride in great achievement than with sincere and sober realization of new and larger opportunities for service to mankind.

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# THE TOP HAT LOUNGE

by Ken Mekoy



I have no way of verifying what I am about to put down in words but I believe it to be true.

The following story was told to me by a barber several years ago while he cut my hair. In addition to his profession as a barber he also managed a small strip mall for a woman who told this story to him. The woman who told him this story was one of the owners of the Top Hat Lounge.

For many years she and her husband owned an establishment located at the southeast corner of Holmes Avenue and Jordan Lane in Huntsville, Alabama named the Top Hat Lounge.

The Top Hat Lounge was a small quiet club that sold beverages and food. It was a landmark located just a few miles from Redstone Arsenal which is the home of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, or NASA as it is more commonly known.

On many occasions the same three or four men would arrive at the Top Hat Lounge for lunch. They didn't like sitting in the dining room because they had private matters to discuss and they didn't want to be disturbed. They all spoke English but their first language was German. Their strong German accent always drew atten-

tion to their conversations which was another reason they didn't like sitting in the main dining room.

These men were allowed to take their meals in the storage room where a table and chairs was set up just for their use. They were planning something big.

They were well educated men, scientists and mathematicians, and most of their discussions concerned solving problems that would eventually achieve one goal. They drew diagrams and mathematical formulas on napkins and beverage cases in the storage room.

The delivery men who delivered the beverages and later retrieved the cases sometimes complained about the graffiti on the cases which made them no longer usable. Some of the writing was in English but most was in German so it made absolutely no sense to anyone outside of the group of men who wrote it.

Over the years many beverage cases and napkins with drawings and mathematical formulas were discarded without anyone outside the group knowing what was written on them.

These men were German scientists who were working for NASA on problems associated with putting the first American Astronauts on the moon. One of these men was Werner Von Braun and on July 20, 1969 their goal was realized. Many problems associated with putting Americans on the moon were discussed, diagrammed and solved on beverage cases and napkins in a back room of the Top Hat Lounge.

It is unfortunate that all of these beverage cases and napkins were discarded without us knowing what was written and drawn on them. If any of these items still exist they would probably be worth a fortune to collectors and museums.

The Top Hat Lounge was a landmark in Northwest Huntsville for many years but no longer exists. The building was torn down and replaced by a convenience store and gas station.

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# Who Was That Woman?

by Anna Lee



I am a careful driver, cautious and polite. I always leave plenty of room between vehicles, and I often let them get into the line in front of me. I hardly ever speed and I take the AARP Safe Driver course every 3 years (mostly for the auto insurance discount but also for the helpful tips).

One day recently I had borrowed my son's car and as I was driving home, trying to stay aware of the heavy traffic, I noticed a large white vehicle that kept going across the yellow line on the left, then weaving back into our lane on the right. Some other vehicles also noticed and honked their horns at it.

Then our line of traffic was stopped for a red light. In front of me, closer than I usually got, was the large white vehicle. At least I was not actively driving at the time. A moment's inattention: I forgot we were on a downward slope, and slowly I rolled into it. A little child in the back window turned and looked at me for a second, with no expression at all, not even curious or scared. Boy or girl? I couldn't tell at that age.

Out of the vehicle popped a young, well-dressed, attractive woman. I rolled down my window. "Is it bad?" I started to ask. She put her hands up in protest. "I'm not going to press charges," she yelled immediately.

I said, "You were driving across the yellow line."

(I don't know why I added that; I should not have done so). Again she threw her hands up and yelled, "You don't get to say anything to me! I told you I'm not going to press charges!"

She got back in and moved the vehicle a bit forward, and I could see a loosened part at the bumper. She returned with a camera and took a picture, not of me or my license plate, just of the bumper. Then she easily pushed the part back into place. She didn't ask for any information. She got back in, and the traffic moved on. She was lost in the traffic. I thought maybe I should follow her and insist on giving her my information, to be an honest person, but she was gone. I drove slowly home.

When I showed my son his car, he checked the front bumper, noticed a small smudge and said something about being more careful next time I borrowed his car. I wondered if he would ever let me have a next time. He added, "When you see someone weaving across lanes, that should make you more alert, not less."

Sometimes, strange things just happen to us even on an ordinary day. Who was she? What did she think about the accident? I guess I will never know, Who Was That Woman?

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**Ethel Quillen, Arab**

# The Day My Life Forever Changed

by Tommy Beal



It was an ordinary Tuesday on September 15, 1953, when my life as I knew it was suddenly taken away. My dad, Edwin Larnel Beal, lost his life in an explosion at Thiokol on Redstone Arsenal. Although I was four years old then, my mind couldn't comprehend what was happening. I remember very little of that tragedy other than what I was told. After that day my mom and I never lived in our home on Vanderbilt Circle. We moved in with my grandparents in Toney, Alabama.

The explosion killed my dad instantly; three other men would live a bit longer but also lost their lives. The other men were James Rodgers, Jr., Kennard Ramsey, and Thomas Marion.

I often wonder about the other surviving children and how this day effected their lives.

*The following is taken from the Huntsville Times Article Dated September 16, 1953.*

James A. Rodgers Jr., 23-year-old Madison County athlete who was employed at Thiokol Corp. for a short time, is still in critical condition today as the result of an explosion at Redstone Arsenal yesterday, which claimed the lives of three fellow workers. The dead have been identified as Edwin L. Beal, 35, of 1018 Vanderbilt Circle. Kennard J. Ramsey, 21, of O'Shaughnessy Avenue. Thomas Marion, 26, of Route 3, Arab.

The exact nature of the material that ex-

ploded and the cause of the blast were not revealed for reasons of security. Yesterday's explosion was the worst disaster ever to strike the local Ordnance Corps installation.

During World War II, a munitions blast at the old Huntsville Chemical Warfare Arsenal claimed the lives of four men listed as "explosives operators". The blast, which occurred at 12:35 p.m. yesterday, reportedly shook nearby buildings and interrupted electric power service on the arsenal as far away as the administration building.

Mr. Beal was killed instantly by the explosion, which tore a jagged hole in the ceiling of the room where the four men were working and scattered burning substances over a wide area outside the building starting grass fires as much as 100 yards away. Mr. Marion died at the Redstone Infirmary about 10 p.m., some hours after the accident occurred, and Mr. Ramsey succumbed early today, also at the arsenal infirmary. Three of four of the victims were burned "from top to bottom," in the words of Foster Haley, arsenal public information officer.

Funeral services for Mr. Beal, the father of one child, were held today at 3 p.m. from Laughlin Service, with the Rev. W. W. Branum officiating. Interment was in Maple Hill cemetery. Final rites for Mr. Marion, father of three, will be held tomorrow at 2 p.m. from the Gilliam Springs Baptist Church, one and a half miles north of Arab on Highway 38. Services for Mr. Ramsey, whose wife is expecting a child soon, will be announced later, pending the arrival of his brother, Billigene Ramsey, who is serving in Japan with the U.S. Army.

Survivors of Mr. Beal include his widow, Mrs. Dorothy Taylor Beal; one son, Tommy Beal; his mother, Mrs. Vera Beal of Gurley; and two brothers, Donald Beal of Huntsville and Charles Beal of Gurley. Arlie League, Albert Hutchens, Robert Harless, Gordon Garrison, Clyde Mitchell, Woodrow Wells, Jerome Fogg, Howard Hall, and C. A. were active pallbearers.

Honorary pallbearers were Dr. M. M. Duncan and the Rev. J. A. Rogers, Ernest Buffalo and employees of the Thiokol Corporation.

Beal, who was manager of the Thiokol basketball team last fall, had been employed by Thiokol for about a year. Before that, he worked for Solvay Processing Co. at Redstone Arsenal for about five years.

A veteran of World War II, he served 52 months in the Army, a portion of the time in Alaska and the European theatre.

He was born in the Paint Rock Valley but spent much of his life in Gurley. He moved here about six years ago. His only child is a son, Tommy, four years old.



## Potpourri from 1867



### Shooting Mule Lands Lowry in Calaboose

Wm. Chad Lowry, an older man charged with shooting a mule belonging to Nash Malone, was up before Squire Figg yesterday, and bound over in the sum of \$200, to appear at the County Court to be held in July.

### Monroe on Drinking Binge; Assaults Innocent Bystander

The attack on Clinton Street upon Mr. Wise by Mr. Charlie Monroe was an unfortunate occurrence and is no doubt a matter of great regret by Mr. Monroe himself, who was on a drinking spree. The matter will be up for investigation before the Mayor.

### Bell Factory Store Reopened

It looks considerably like old times to see the Bell Factory goods at the old Bell Factory Store, on Commercial Row, and to see the smiling face of Mr. Charles Cabaniss behind the counter. Wm. Elgin is also at his old place with the books. The same old loungers may be seen there daily and an hour spent with them carries us back to the good old times of yore.

### Doctor Sick

Owing to feeling unwell, Dr. R. Seymour will be unable to visit Paint Rock until Monday, June 4th and Huntsville, June 6th at which time he hopes to see his patients. Dr. Seymour regrets his not being able to fulfill his engagements this morning.

We suppose, that being unwell, it was impossible.

### Local Boy Shot While Playing War

Johnathan Hobbs was seriously injured yesterday when an old musket discharged and injured him in the leg. The twelve year old boy had been playing in his uncle's barn when he discovered the old gun. He was

playing war, he said, and did not know the gun was loaded. The uncle later stated that he had forgotten the gun was there. He said it must have been there for at least ten years.

## OUR WRITERS

"Old Huntsville" Magazine wants to say Thank You to our writers and contributors for the stories and articles you send to us. Our readers tell us how much they enjoy them.

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**"Why isn't there a mouse-flavored cat food?"**

**Felicia Adams, Athens**

# MY WOODWORKING MENTOR

*by Jim Vann*



Leon Sherrill was an artist with wood. He could make anything he wanted to or duplicate anything he wanted to out of wood. He loved repairing anything made of wood. Some of us that knew him well believed that with some things he made, he would make a mistake on it just so he could repair it

Some of the best reproductions he made were the old southern "Sugar Chests" that were popular during the Civil War era. The chest was used to keep large quantities of sugar inside. Southerners would stash their silverware and money down in the large amounts of sugar and the Union Soldiers would usually never think to look down in the sugar for anything of value. My wife and I treasure the sugar chest that I purchased from him as a Christmas gift for my wife. It is made of cherry wood and has his signature on it. Leon made replicas of antique chairs and tables. He made his daughter's first bed.

Leon was born in 1922, the son of a Tennessee sharecropper. His family moved to Huntsville and started working in the Cotton Mills.

Leon spent much of his last 60 years working out of his garage/shop behind his home on McKinley Avenue.

He made replicas of antiques and repaired originals for the customers that could find him. His daughter and only child said he taught her that if you were to survive in life, you had to make your own way.

It was as a young working man, pushing a broom at the Lincoln Mill that Sherrill first laid eyes on a woman in the weaving room. He began to stop by her house, where they would sit on the porch for hours.

When the United States entered World War II, Leon found himself in a navy uniform on Fiji Island. I found this unusual because Leon could not swim. In 1945 Leon returned to Alabama. That's when he graduated from courting on the front porch to sitting in his uniform on the sofa.

He married Ovalee Busbin in March 1945 at the Madison County Courthouse.

Leon was discharged in October. He bought a three bedroom home on McKinley Avenue for \$3000.00. Leon would later add extra rooms.

He modified his garage, making it his carpentry shop that he would call his place of business for more than 60 years. If you had one chair and wanted a set of four, he could duplicate anything. His sister said he was very talented and he loved doing stuff for people.

His brother said Leon once used a bicycle sprocket to make a saw blade. He used a piston from a compressor to make a jigsaw and made a wood lathe out of bedrails. He built a large shaper from lawn mower parts and a

**Take Care of Yourself. Your good Health can change in a Heartbeat.**



**From Oscar Llerena,  
with special greetings to the  
Huntsville High School Class of 1966**

washing machine engine. He was very creative and would make whatever he needed to complete a job.

Ovalee passed away in 1980. His sister said "he loved her better than anybody in the whole wide world."

Although he mainly worked alone, Leon had many friends. He'd start nearly every morning with a cup of coffee and a well done biscuit at the Hardees restaurant in Five Points. Every morning he would sit and talk with the same group of men.

Leon had a great sense of humor. I remember when a pretty girl would come into Hardees, he might break into a chorus of "Precious Memories". Another quip I remember him saying was, "When he was a young boy, the dead sea was just sick".

I was fortunate to be one of those men. Hardees's was where I met Leon 12 years before he passed.

It was during those times that Leon became my woodworking mentor. In those twelve years, I learned so many woodworking things from him. I think he appreciated my chair caning ability like I appreciated his woodworking.

We would go out to eat lunch at least twice a week. I think I'm the only person outside of his family that he willed anything to. I still have and use his 14 inch planer that he gave me.

I have a 6 inch molder/planer that I purchased from him. I have the collection of molder blades that he handmade to make unique molding. He would make those blades out of old lawn mower blades or anything that fit his purpose.

Like so many others, I grew to love that old man.

I was allowed to speak at his funeral. I have misplaced the remarks I made at his funeral, but when I finished speaking that day, I broke down and cried like a baby.



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# WHEN IRISH EYES.....

by Elizabeth Wharry

I declared my American citizenship when I was 21. Up until then, I had dual citizenship with Ireland and Hungary. I lived in both countries for a short while before claiming my citizenship.

I went back to Ireland several times. The trip in 1994 was the most memorable. In my wanderings, I decided to visit Blarney Castle. I ran into a couple of grounds keepers, and we got to chatting. As we were doing so, we watched a tour bus pull up. On its side was "Mannion tours. Official tours for the Irish American." We looked at each other and chuckled.

The last couple off the bus looked quite... interesting. He wore a Kelly green t-shirt that said "Kiss me I'm Irish", plaid Bermuda shorts, sandals and white crew socks. Her makeup was either done by Tammy Faye Baker or Ringling Brothers. She tottered over to us on backless high heels. She wore a green pencil skirt and a white knit top. The lads and I looked at each other in a mix of disbelief and amusement. We were gob-smacked!

She pointed at us, and slowly and loudly said, "Do you speak ENGLISH?!" Before we could say a word, she pulled her shoulders back. That super carriage was enough to make the Titanic jealous!

She pointed to her name tag, and said, "Stella!" Once again, we just looked at each other. So, she repeated herself, underlining her name with her finger. "STELL-AH!" Paddy looked at her, and said, "Right love. Now what did you name the other one?"

Luck of the Irish be with you!

**"Just when I was getting used to yesterday, along came today."**

**Ken Young, Woodville**

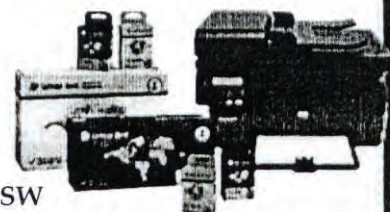
A guy is sitting at home one night, alone, and hears a knock on his door. Two sheriffs deputies are there, and he asks what the problem is. One deputy asks the man if he is married and if so, can they see a picture of his wife. The guy shows them his wife's picture. The sheriff says, "I've very sorry sir but it looks like your wife has been hit by a truck." The man says, "I know, but she's got a great personality and she's an excellent cook."

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# A Summer Job at Thiokol

by Bill Goodson

Last month's article about Thiokol brought to mind my experiences working there for two summers, 1955 and '56, between college terms. Prior to that, I had spent my summers working at the Zesto Drive-In, owned by my father, Houston Goodson, notable not only for his Dipped Dogs, but also for expecting free labor from family members. Yes, I finally swallowed hard and summoned the courage to say, "Dad, I think I'd like to actually make some money this summer."

He readily agreed, and so Thiokol awaited.

The first summer had me assigned to what was called the Cut-back Crew. A few of us were responsible for operating machinery that trimmed the top of the solid-fuel rocket motors, putting the final touches to the process. Interesting at first, but soon becoming monotonous.

But my job the second summer was quite different. Let me ask the reader this question: "What would be the purpose of banging on the metallic outer shell of a rocket motor with a rubber mallet, the motor standing upright in a walk-in oven?"

Well, that's what I did that summer. I had a companion worker, Dick Buchanan, also a Vanderbilt student. We alternated performing the task every half hour of the eight-hour shift.

The twenty or so motors, each about five feet tall and eight to ten inches in diameter, were in final stages of curing, being transformed from a soft gelatinous texture to hardened and rubbery.

So why, you ask, were you pounding on these explosive devices? Didn't that seem sort of dangerous? Well, Dick and I had been assured we were safe.

The purpose of such activity was to bring any lingering air bubbles to the top. Otherwise the rocket would burn unevenly and miss the target, a defect to be avoided if Thiokol wanted to stay in business.

There you have it. A different sort of work experience from dishing out Dipped Dogs and soft-serve ice cream, and...

...It paid well.

## How Do People Acquire Power And Influence?

Power shapes everything and everybody. Unfortunately, it is too often true that power corrupts. So when you acquire power, use it benevolently, not selfishly. Use power for good ends, not evil. You'll come out a winner and everyone else will, too. So much for the sermon, Now, here's how to acquire power:

1. Be intense. Perform every task you have as if it were the only thing that mattered in the world
2. Don't tell anybody everything about yourself. It's not a matter of secrecy, it's a matter of mystery. The powerful person listens. The only time he talks about himself is when he wants to change the subject.
3. Don't waste time. Do two hours worth of work in 45 minutes. Powerful people spend as much time on a project as they need to and no more. Events don't control powerful people; powerful people control events.

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# WBHP's Man on the Street

by Giles Hollingsworth

Radio station WBHP was definitely Huntsville's favorite radio station during the 1930s and over half of the 1940s, because it was Huntsville's only station. It started out as WBHS in 1932 but the Great Depression knocked it off the air in 1935. Then in May of 1937 it re-emerged as WBHP.

During those early years WBHP played enough country music to make a life-long country music fan of me. They did it primarily with their "Sterchi's Jamboree", airing twice daily, thirty minutes in mid-morning and the same in mid-afternoon. Like most other kids I had to call time out from my late afternoon outdoor playing and high-tail it to the radio to listen to high adventure programs on WBHP, like "The Lone Ranger", "Tom Mix", and yes, "Little Orphan Annie".

But my favorite memory of WBHP is how the Hollingsworth brothers caused an employee of the station a bit of frustration one day. Here's how:

WBHP had a program called "Man on the Street". It was literally that, their man on Jefferson Street in downtown Huntsville. There's no trace of them now, but back then, on the east side of the Jefferson Street block between Holmes Avenue and Clinton Avenue were the Double Cola Bottling Plant and the Grand Theatre, next to each other. That's where, on each week day, WBHP did a fifteen minute remote broadcast. The host would chat with passers-by, asking them simple, non-controversial questions: name, home location, purpose of being downtown and chat about the weather, etc. etc. Just the novelty of it was enough to make it a popular program.

I don't have dead certain memory of all the details of the goodies the "Man on the Street" (MOTS) had for those he interviewed, but as I recall, they each got a Grand Theatre movie pass. The grand prize, a six-pack of Double Cola, went to the one who guessed or got closest to a number between one and ten, on a card the MOTS held in his pocket.

That seems like such a trivial grand prize now, a thirty cent six-pack, but back then, in the 1940s, it was pretty good. Fast-forwarding, it would be a \$6 prize nowadays. And as for the movie passes, they were worth eleven cents to kids twelve and under, and I guess about thirty cents to adults.

Now, I had an older brother, Richard, who, at the age of 16, was pretty clever, or crafty. For this story I thought about saying he was sly, but my computer says that word implies deceit, and he had no deceitful intentions in what we did

A man in Gurley says there are two reasons his wife won't wear last year's clothes - She doesn't want to, and she can't.



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on a cold winter day in 1944. I can't remember which school holiday it was, but Richard, my younger brother, Bobby, and I, were all at home, in Madison Heights subdivision, off Governor's Drive.

It wasn't just a cold day, it was a raw day, with the temperature near the freeze point, the wind blowing, and tiny snow flakes trying their best to make it to the ground and stick there, but so far they were so few in number there was little chance of that. The old time expression for such weather was, "It's spit-tin' snow out there". But Richard knew that, nevertheless, the Man on the Street would be right there on Jefferson Street, ready to chat, because he obviously took pride in being like the Postman, who was always there "through rain, or hail, or sleet, etc".

It occurred to Richard that the MOTS might be there by himself because of the weather, so he talked Bobby and me into getting pretty well bundled up and walking the mile and a half to Jefferson Street. By then the threat of snow was less, but the weather was still cold, cloudy and windy.

It was a dreary day, a day to stay inside. Sure enough the MOTS was there alone at program starting time, and I guess at first he was glad we showed up, so he could start by chatting with Richard. That he did, and after about four minutes he ended the chat and talked about Double Cola for a minute or so. BUT, then he came face to face with the problem that to him was probably even more frightening than the weather; in fact a problem that the weather had created: no one else to talk to. No one except me or Bobby. The weather was keeping everyone else away.

I was thirteen but probably looked eleven, being small for my age, so I was not his idea of an interviewee. BUT, I guess he said to himself, "What the heck! It's either talk to this kid or close up shop, and I'm not gonna do that."

So he beckoned me to him, and I'm sure he was not surprised to learn that my name was Hollingsworth, just like that of his first chat-mate. But he was civil about it. He grinned and bore it. Perfunctory questions followed, with the expected answers: same address, same feelings about the weather, etc. A pretty dull interview.

Then at about the end of his four minutes with me, a glimmer of hope: a man walking on

the sidewalk across the street! The MOTS waved to him and motioned for him to come over. But no luck. The man waved back, then entered a store. That was the first time I ever thought I might have ESP. I couldn't make out the words but I was pretty sure the MOTS was silently cussing as he ended our chat and began his Grand Theatre commercial.

My empathy for the man is too deep for me to continue with more details, but just to say that, yes, he then had to stoop to interviewing a ten year old member of the same family he had already spent ten minutes with. I didn't have to read his mind, I could read his face, and body language. But he got through it and wound things up. Richard had achieved his goal, a family sweep of the goodies.

For the record my guess, the number eight, won the six-pack. Richard, being the oldest and strongest, toted it home, where we celebrated the sweep with Double Colas that needed no further refrigeration.

One more thing. Before we left him, while he was packing up his equipment, my ESP had kicked in again. I'm pretty sure our host was thinking: "I made it through all that. Maybe not rain, hail, sleet, etc., but through weather raw enough to keep Jefferson Street deserted, I interviewed three people. I deserve a promotion, or a raise". I hope he got one.

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# The Legend of Monte Say No

In the early 1800s, according to legend, a beautiful Cherokee maiden named Monte lived in the mountains overlooking Huntsville. Two men, one an Indian and the other a white settler, were both pursuing Monte for her affections.

Things came to a head one day when the settler was visiting the Indian encampment and discovered that his rival had proposed marriage.

Distraught at losing the object of his affections, the settler shouted in a loud anguished voice, "Monte, say no!"

The words echoed throughout the mountains and the valleys below and from that day on the mountain was called Monte Sano.

Although the story makes for a colorful legend, it never happened. The story was a product of romantic and wishful fiction.

Huntsville, in its early days, was a community surrounded by marshes, pools of stagnant water and open cesspools. Every summer it became a breeding ground for malaria. In an effort to escape the pestilence, many settlers fled the "demon valley" to the mountains during the hot summer months.

The settlers did not really understand why but the mountains seemed to provide a refuge against the disease.

A local doctor by the name of Thomas Fearn noticed the medical phenomena and named the mountain "Monte Sano." The words are Italian for "Mountain of Health".

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# PET TIPS FROM ANGEL

## Heartworms

Heartworm disease is a serious disease that results in severe lung disease, heart failure, other organ damage and death in pets - mainly dogs, cats and ferrets. It is caused by a parasitic worm. The worms are spread through the bite of a mosquito. The dog is the definitive host, meaning that the worms mature into adults, mate and produce offspring while living inside a dog. The worms are called "heart-worms" because the adults live in the heart, lungs and associated blood vessels of an infected animal.

### How is a Dog Tested for Heartworms?

A veterinarian uses blood tests to check a dog for heartworms. An antigen test detects specific heartworm proteins, called antigens, which are released by adult female heartworms into the dog's bloodstream. The earliest that the proteins can be detected in a dog's bloodstream is about 5 months after it is bitten by an infected mosquito.

### When Should a Dog Be Tested for Heartworms?

Dogs 7 months of age and older should be tested before starting heartworm prevention. A dog may appear healthy on the outside, but on the inside, the worms may be living and thriving. If a heartworm-positive dog is not tested before starting a preventive, the dog will remain infected with adult heartworms until it gets sick enough to show symptoms. Preventives do not kill adult heartworms.

### What are the Symptoms of Heartworm Disease in a Dog?

The severity of heartworm disease is related to how many worms are living inside the dog (the worm burden), how long the dog has been infected and how the dog's body is responding to the presence of the heartworms. The dog's activity level also plays a role in the severity of the disease and when symptoms are first seen.

Symptoms of heartworm disease may not be obvious in dogs that have low worm burdens, have been recently



infected, or are not very active. Dogs that have heavy worm burdens, have been infected for a long time, or are very active often show obvious symptoms of the disease.

There are four classes, or stages, of heartworm disease. The higher the class, the worse the disease and the more obvious the symptoms.

- Class 1: No symptoms or mild symptoms such as an occasional cough.

- Class 2: Mild to moderate symptoms such as an occasional cough and tiredness after moderate activity.

- Class 3: General loss of body condition, a persistent cough and tiredness after mild activity. Trouble breathing and signs of heart failure are common. For class 2 and 3 heartworm disease, heart and lung changes are usually seen on chest x-rays.

- Class 4: There is such a heavy worm burden that blood flowing back to the heart is physically blocked by a large mass of worms. This is called Caval syndrome, is life-threatening and quick surgical removal of the heartworms is the only treatment option. The surgery is risky, and even with surgery, most dogs with Caval syndrome die. Not all dogs with heartworm disease develop Caval syndrome. However, if left untreated, heartworm disease will progress and damage the dog's heart, lungs, liver and kidneys - eventually causing death.

### Can People Get Heartworms from Their Pets?

People cannot get heartworms from their pets. It is only transmitted by the bite of an infected mosquito. In rare cases, people can get heartworms after being bitten by an infected mosquito. But because people are not a natural host for heartworms, the larvae usually migrate to the heart and lung arteries and die before they become adult worms.

**If one of my dogs has heartworms, can he give it to my other dogs?**

No. Again, the only way heartworms are transmitted is through the bite of an infected mosquito.

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# A REBEL IN BLUE

by Tom Carney

Of all the Civil War veterans that called Huntsville home, Maj. S. F. Sweinhart must have been the most unusual.

Major Sweinhart was a member of an Ohio volunteer regiment and had participated in some of the bloodiest fighting of the war. While stationed in Alabama, he was captivated by the warm climate and the natural beauty of the Tennessee Valley.

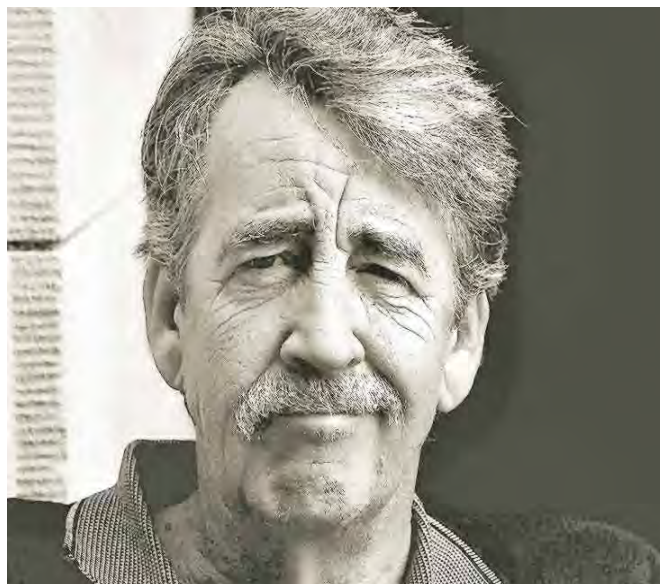
When the war was finally over and the soldiers had stacked arms for the last time, Major Sweinhart moved to Huntsville, determined to make it his home. Feelings were running high at the end of the war, so it is not surprising that he was greeted with scowls and bitterness.

"Damn Yankee," the Huntsville natives would say as they passed him on the streets. "Damn Rebels," the Major would mutter under his breath, while looking straight ahead.

But time has a way of healing all wounds and as the Major grew into old age, he began taking his place on the old Courthouse bench, reliving and re-fighting the battles of his youth. An old Yankee officer and old Confederate veterans, with nothing in common except the blood spilled on battlefields years before.

Slowly the town began to accept the old soldier and the scowls he used to encounter on the streets turned to smiles. Sweinhart became involved in community affairs and became active in veterans affairs. Of course the only other veterans in Huntsville were ex-Confederates. In 1927 Major S. E. Sweinhart was awarded the highest accolade ever given to a Yankee by Confederate veterans. The story can best be told by a newspaper article of the day.

"He was invited this week to attend a dinner given by the Daughters of the Confederacy to members of the Egbert Jones Camp of Confederate Veterans at the home of Robert A. Moore, acting adjutant for the Third Brigade, Alabama Division. He was welcomed with hand clasps and smiles. After dinner, the old veterans invited him to attend their business meeting. When discussions lagged a little, Maj. Sweinhart who had remained in a



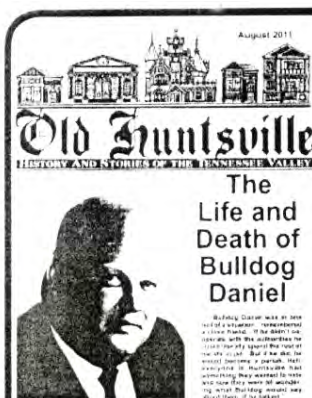
corner deep in thought, rose and stood at attention. 'Men,' he said, with a shake in his voice, 'I've lived down here so long I feel like I belong here.'"

"His voice quivered again as he added, 'And by golly, I want to belong to you.'"

"The Confederate veterans gave a hearty cheer, and one of them proposed Maj. Sweinhart for membership. The proposal was accepted immediately and "the Major" was accepted as a member of the camp by unanimous vote. He now belongs to the Egbert Jones Camp of Confederate veterans and is believed to be the only Union soldier in the country who has experienced such a transformation."

When Major Sweinhart died, an honor guard consisting of Confederate veterans stood guard during the funeral ceremony.

His body is buried in Maple Hill Cemetery, next to the other veterans he had grown to love.



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It's been 32 years now full of great stories. There are just a few of us who are putting this magazine together. We publish very unique articles and are truly a local paper.

Keep sending in your family memories - we need them! We Appreciate You more than you know.

# Stubborn as a Goat



by Kate Watts

One famous legend about St. Francis describes an afternoon when the holy man stopped to preach to the birds of the field, which he called his "little sisters." According to the story, this audience of birds not only listened attentively to his sermon, but stayed put until St. Francis had blessed them and given them permission to fly away.

I didn't hear legends of the medieval saint when I was growing up, but if I had, he might have been my inspiration. For like most children, I believed I had a kinship with animals, and like St. Francis, I considered them my brothers and sisters. Although I had no divine message to preach to the wildlife, I spent an awful lot of time talking to creatures both wild and tame — and I firmly believed they understood everything I said.

This belief probably stemmed from the books I read, in which characters adventured into secret worlds filled with gregarious forest animals. In my child's mind, a horse was the best means of transportation into such a magical domain. Only with a horse — or so I thought — could you enter a realm in which animals talked, deep caves led into forgotten worlds and trees could be climbed into the heavens.

The problem: my family didn't own a horse.

Instead, we owned a goat — Billy. He was no Clydesdale, but to my 7 year old self, he looked horse-like. Surely he could do the

job just as well, so one afternoon I decided to give goat-riding a shot. Manners dictated that I both explain my intentions and get Billy's permission before hopping onto his back. So as Billy ate his feed, I laid out my plan. Then I wrapped up my pitch by asking his permission and guaranteeing his safety.

Billy didn't even look up from his feed, much less indicate he'd given permission. But it wasn't as if he could answer me — at least, not yet — and since I had a way with animals, of course he'd agreed.

So, I climbed the fence and joined him in his pen. Reassuring Billy that he had nothing to fear, I clambered onto his back and waited for him to set off in a trot.

Billy didn't budge.

Undeterred, I tried shouting that universally known command — Yah!

But Billy stayed put. And I was flummoxed. Where had I gone wrong?

I was far too stubborn to en-

tertain the idea that he hadn't agreed to any of this — I had a way with animals! Nevertheless, I was willing to temporarily forgo the journey and try again later. Disappointed, I got down and turned back to the fence.

That was when Billy explained his position to me — forcefully, with his head, right where it hurt.

I can't overstate my chagrin. Billy's rebuke called into question all my notions that I was a budding animal whisperer. He'd wanted none of my nonsense and worse, he was clearly not my biggest fan. He might have butted my backside, but what he'd really bruised was my pride.

In light of that, I decided to tell no one what had happened, though eventually I found the episode more hilarious than humiliating. Still, this little animal whisperer definitely heard the message that day: Animals do talk back. Humans just have to know how to listen.

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# A HUNTING TRIP TO TATER KNOB MOUNTAIN

*by Tommy Gipson, as told to him  
by his dad, Mr. Earl Gipson*

I read an article about Mr. Allen Lynn, who had a garage just off Beirne Avenue, west of Goldsmith-Schiffman field. This prompted me to write this story. He and my dad were good friends, and he did a lot of mechanic work for him. When I was old enough to drive, and got my own car, he was also my mechanic. We also referred a lot of people to him. Mr. Lynn and Mr. Otey would fix it, and do it right.

Mr. Lynn was one who would do what he said. He also liked to go coon hunting. So, plans were made to go on a hunt. My dad, Mr. Lynn and Mr. Bill Boles, who had a machine shop, set a time to go. There were two younger ones who went with them. We can't recall their names. They decided to go on Tater Knob Mountain which is one of the higher mountains in Madison County. They probably went up from the eastside, or possibly the north, either way it is a long trip, and you had better be in good shape to walk it.

So, the hunt started, as they worked their way up the mountain, the dogs treed a couple of times, and a good hunt was under way. As they got close to the top, they stopped because they had not heard the dogs for some time. After they waited a while, Mr. Lynn said they are set down somewhere and have one up a tree. My dad said we can go up on top of the mountain and probably hear them. Well, the last fifty yards or so to the top is pretty much straight up if you don't take the long way around and go up the bench road. You hold to bushes, climb over rocks, and hold to anything you can to get on top.

When they finally got on top, out a way toward the center, they heard the dogs. They were down the other side of the mountain, down in a large hollow, almost to Jackson County. Yes, you can go down the east side,

for a good way, and be in Jackson County.

Well, decide what to do now. Mr. Lynn and Mr. Boles said we came to hunt, and no hunter is ever going to leave their dogs on a mountain miles away from home. Someone said, how are we going to find our way back? Mr. Lynn and Mr. Boles both had good flashlights. My dad said we'll take this lantern and hang it up in a tree as high as we can, and look for it and follow it back. Mr. Lynn said, that's a d--- good idea. The two younger men said they were not going to go. So off they went to find their dogs.

So, they started down the mountain. After maybe a hundred yards or more, they came to a large hollow. They had to go down for a long way and back up the other side to where the dogs had treed. Well, they looked for the longest, and could not find a thing. What happened was the coon had tapped a tree. A hunter will know what that means. The coon will go up a tree for a way, go out on a limb, and jump to another tree. They may do this several times, to confuse the dogs.

My dad got one of the big flashlights and went to several other trees and looked. After a while, he yelled back to the others that he saw the coon. Mr. Lynn said you don't see a coon. My dad said, well then I see a tree limb with stripes on it. Well, here comes Mr. Lynn. He said he is right, the coon is there on top of a tree limb. So, they got the coon,

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and they knew they had to secure the dogs, because if they got after another one, they could have been in another county.

They both turned to my dad, and said you have been on this mountain more than we have, which way would you say we go? He looked around for a while and said we go this way and pointed in a certain direction. I never knew of my dad being lost on a mountain. He had a natural sense of direction. I believe this comes from his Indian heritage. His grandmother a couple of generations back was a full blooded Cherokee Indian. This is a proven fact. One of my cousins traced the ancestry back. But this is another story for possibly another time.

Well, they crossed that deep hollow, and started back up the mountain. After a while, they continued on and came to the bench road and followed it around to the lantern. These two young men had built a fire to keep warm by. After everyone and the dogs got rested and warm, they started back down off the mountain.

From what few times I have been on the mountain, I realize this was probably an all-night event. But, it was a good hunt, and a truly enjoyable time.

This is a true story, exactly how it was told to me by my dad, Mr. Earl Gipson.

P.S. I went by the garage where Mr. Lynn was, and was saddened to see it was no longer there. Even the home beside it where he lived was gone.

One final thought if I may, just as the lantern led those men safely back, if we keep our eyes on Jesus, our true light, we will always be led in the right direction.

**"It's no exaggeration to say that the undecideds could go one way or another."**

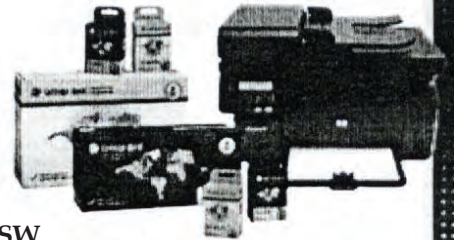
**George Bush**

**"I hate it when I think I'm buying high-fiber dinner rolls and when I get home they've turned into Krispy Kreme donuts."**

**Sam Keith, Huntsville**

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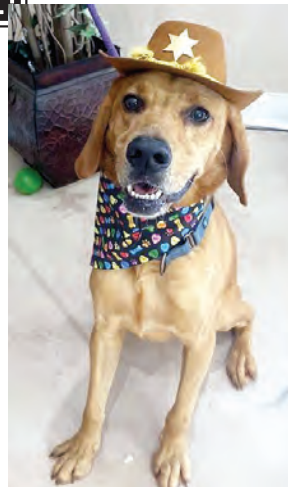
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# Thiokol Chemical Corporation (Huntsville Division)

by *Odysseus*

## The Place

Railroads, ramps, bicycles, boilers and steam lines shaped the 1941 Redstone Arsenal munitions plant that closed in 1946 and became the home of Thiokol Redstone Division in 1949. The US Army operated a WWII military rail line serving all of Redstone; warehouses, production facilities, and those underground earth-covered explosive magazines known as "igloos".

Around 1945, the self-contained 75-mile Arsenal rail system operated seven diesel locomotives and 225 railcars but served a diminishing demand. The rails, crossties and grade crossings were incrementally removed and largely gone by the 1970s, according to the excellent historical resource hosted by US Army AMCOM <https://history.redstone.army.mil/>.

Redstone Arsenal and Thiokol industrial transportation shifted from rail to asphalt roadways with trucks, tugs and dollies. The rail-served buildings and the railroad beds themselves remained, and those provided clues to distinguish 1941-era facilities from those of later construction. Some of the former railroad beds became gravel- or asphalt-paved roads for trucks and equipment. Others remained as straight or gently curved flat-topped earth berms in low-lying areas that served no modern purpose.

Unusual geographic features such as small valleys cutting through ridges had been rail bed leveling cuts that aligned with those berms. Once recognized as such, those abandoned railroad beds enhanced understanding of the legacy of rail transport in the Thiokol plant. Many of the original buildings had odd features that made sense only after the long-gone railroads were imagined back in place.

Some of the WWII Thiokol buildings were seemingly built too high off the ground or had one side higher than the opposite side with floor at normal grade level. The high side of those buildings matched the 51-inch nominal railcar deck height and meant that railroad tracks once ran there, and materials had been

off-loaded or on-loaded from flatcars or boxcars during the war. In some cases, the high side of a WWII building had been repurposed as a truck loading dock with gravel or asphalt pad where a rail spur once ran. In others, safety railing had been installed to mitigate the danger of personnel falling off the edge.

Quantity-Distance is the technical term for the calculations used to determine the separation of buildings used for manufacturing or storing explosives. The WWII Redstone Arsenal spacing of buildings depended on both the types of explosives involved and the amounts each building was allowed to contain. A more-powerful explosive or a larger quantity required more distance between buildings. This meant that hundreds of feet or hundreds of yards separated operations that might otherwise be side-by-side or under one roof. The wide spacing of buildings and separation of operations served to minimize damage in the event of a fire or explosion but created transportation and logistics problems.

The WWII solution to this wide spacing of buildings was the construction of covered walkways known as "ramps". A "ramp" could be described as a roofed sidewalk, either open or walled. An eight-foot-wide continuous concrete pad with 6" x 6" vertical wooden posts spaced about 10 feet apart supported a continuous wooden roof structure. The thick corrugated roofing sheets were constructed of "Transite", a rigid gray asbestos-cement material impervious to fire.

The height and width of those ramps were too small for a car or truck to enter but allowed passage of carts and dollies, small forklifts, and employees on foot or riding bicycles. Those ramps remained in use through the Thiokol era until most of the WWII structures were demolished by the Army.

Those who have traveled inside Europe would recognize and appreciate the use of bicycles at the Thiokol plant. Possibly a carryover from the WWII Army munition plant days, Thiokol operated a fleet of old single-speed bicycles for employee in-plant transportation. The purpose was three or four-fold. Employees riding bicycles could move much faster than walking inside the ramps or outside on asphalt roads connecting various Lines. Thiokol Company or Army vehicles were few.

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Private vehicles were not allowed beyond employee parking lots. A bicycle contained no fuel and had no flame or spark-producing capability.

Into the 1980s Thiokol Motor Pool personnel periodically conducted bicycle Preventive Maintenance operations on weekends. The massed collection of old bicycles was an impressive sight.

Construction materials besides Transite asbestos roofing provided other clues to the origin of Thiokol buildings. WWII-era concrete had been mixed before the availability of crushed limestone aggregate from local rock quarries. Exposed concrete contained smooth rounded brown stones not seen in the white limestone aggregate of modern concrete.

A typical explosive bay consisted of a concrete floor lined with electrically conductive material, and three reinforced concrete blast walls. Concrete blast walls were sunk deep in the ground, 12" thick and reinforced with steel rebar. The roof and one wall were intentionally constructed of weaker materials, with the idea being a weak roof

and wall would become blowout panels in the event of explosion and guide the blast in the least-harmful direction.

Even the WWII masonry materials were different. Original Redstone Arsenal buildings had been constructed with unusual medium-size masonry blocks, somewhat smaller than a standard 8" x 16" concrete block and composed of a red brick-like material. Those blocks were brick-colored but larger than a brick and in the shape of a block.

Not all WWII-era Thiokol buildings were constructed of reinforced concrete, red masonry blocks or asbestos-cement Transite roofing. Many wooden frame, wood-sided, shingle-roofed buildings from WWII remained in use for offices in various parts of the plant.

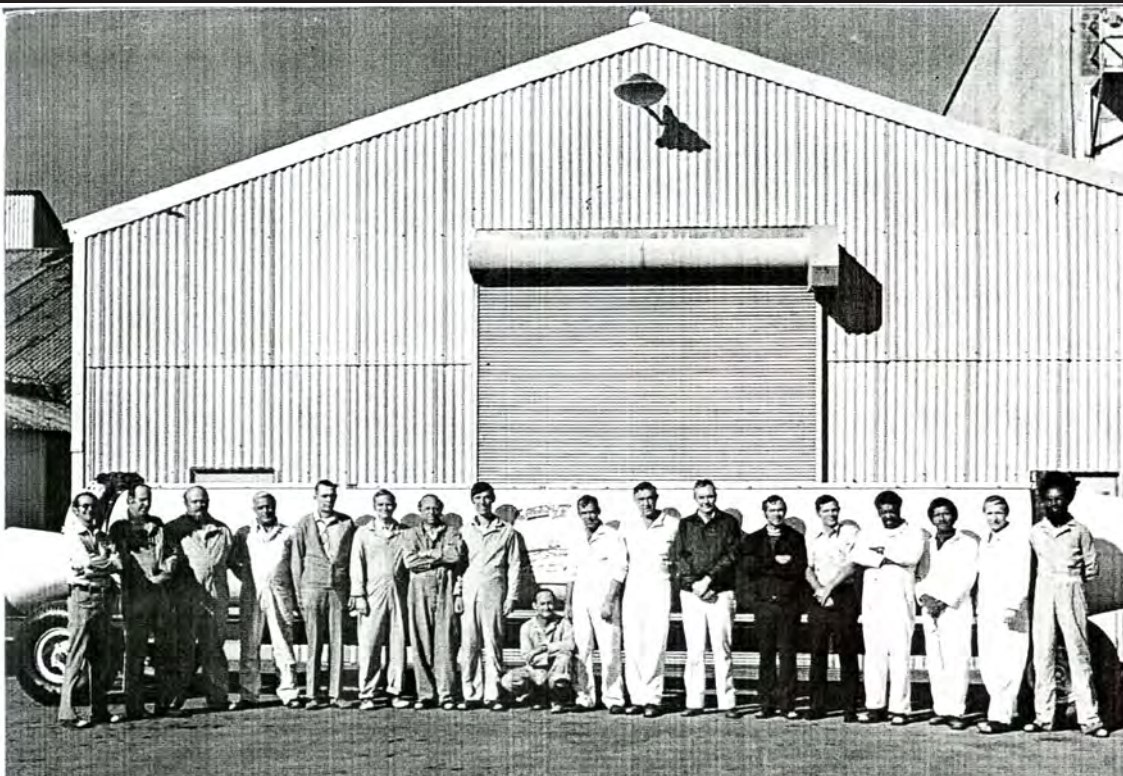
From the 1950s up into the early 1990s the newer office, inert manufacturing and explosive manufacturing buildings had been constructed using modern materials. Each construction era was defined by the changing architectural materials and styles of the time.

**Thiokol Castor IV Photo** taken circa 1975 Foreground left to right:

1. John D. Brown
2. (unknown)
3. Buck Brewer
4. Jim Liddy(?)
5. John Chambers
6. J. Ron Clements
7. (unknown)
8. John DeHaye
9. Charlie Turner (kneeling, below Castor IV poster)
10. Howard Shepard
11. (unknown)
12. Walt Terry
13. (unknown)
14. Mo Price
15. Otis Ford (?)
16. (unknown)
17. Ed Douglas
18. (unknown)

Background: Early Castor IV motor, final assembly, on shipping dolly, for McDonnell Douglas Delta unmanned launch vehicle

Far Background: Building 7368, east side, looking west, Line 1 Thiokol, Redstone Arsenal Alabama Photo from author's personal collection



*Thiokol in 1975 - Can you identify the people who are unknown in the list above?*

# NINETEEN PUPPIES



On December 5, 2015 the world got a little bit sweeter. That's the day that Velma, a 4-year-old Great Dane from Alabama, stunned her owners Josh and Terri. You see, Velma was pregnant and they expected her to give birth to a litter of 10. But imagine their surprise when they learned Velma was pregnant with a whopping 19 puppies!

Averaging a delivery of one puppy per hour, the entire birthing process took about 19 hours in total. Incredibly, all of the puppies are healthy, happy and just adorable.

Velma's brood is nearly unprecedented — it officially ties with the largest known litter of goofy Great Danes!

Keeping one baby fed is difficult enough, let alone a pack of 19 plump and hungry Great Danes, which is said to be the largest dog breed.

Terri and Josh were stunned when the puppies "just kept coming," after a 19-hour-long birthing process. Expecting 10 puppies is a whole lot different when you see 9 more that weren't expected! Even the vet wasn't prepared.

All of the puppies are healthy and happy, and Terri says each one is precious and unique. Velma is also

doing great. She was, understandably, extremely worn out after the delivery but as she was healthy to start with, there were no issues later. However, nursing the brood is a whole other story. Great Danes grow rapidly and so do their food needs.

Velma has proved to be a wonderful mom, but she simply cannot nurse all of the puppies at once without it looking like an adorable yet chaotic game of musical chairs. So, Terri and Josh have stepped in to help feed the puppies every 3-4 hours. Velma's milk supply is supplemented with goat milk and Esbilac formula. Half comes from Velma and half comes from the formula. A very busy new family!



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**"A very large groundhog bit my tire  
this morning as I was coming in  
to work, causing it to go flat."**

***Local employee's excuse for  
missing a day of work***

# Rocket Science

by Glen Brodie

Have you ever met a complete stranger who you decided was a regular person and then later find out that the person was a distinguished VIP? Well, it happened to me one day in my teen years and I still smile when I think of the circumstances of that particular meeting. I was working as a gas pump jockey at a full-service gas station in Huntland, TN - they were all full service in that era.

Huntland is now a bedroom community about 35 miles northeast of Huntsville up Winchester Road. Most everyone there commutes to Huntsville to work. In the early 60s it was a sleepy little town that we (teens) often joked was a suburb of Huntsville since we wore the roads out going there. During the summer we kept the gas station open on sunny Sunday afternoons to catch some of the people who took advantage of

the weekends to head to the lake or to take a drive into the countryside.

One Sunday afternoon I was filling up a nice convertible occupied by three men who were obviously having a great time. Their conversation was primarily spoken in German, which I recognized but could not speak.

My grandfather, an immigrant, used the German language for his expletives - which I have not included in this story.

As they conversed with each other one of the men looked up the road and noticed a white building that sported the large letters "HUNTLAND". Under the name of the city were the words "Gin Company."

Even though the man spoke with a heavy German accent, he asked me in English as to what type of "gin" was produced there? I immediately realized that he was thinking the building was a distillery instead of a cotton gin. I explained to him that he couldn't drink the prod-

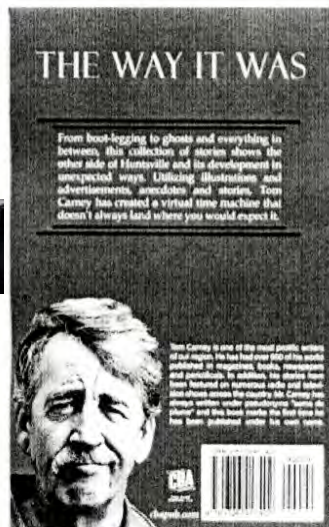
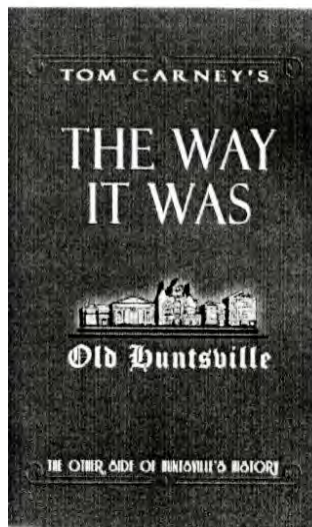
uct produced there as I pointed out the large bales of cotton in the yard area. With a hearty laugh the man then repeated my comments to his friends in German. With a friendly smile he paid me for the gas and gave me an extremely good tip for checking under the hood and cleaning the bugs off the windshield. I could hear the three men laughing about the "gin" as they waved and drove away.

Several years later, I was watching TV when America had its first moon landing. As the reporters discussed what was taking place the scene switched to NASA in Huntsville. A smiling rocket scientist was shown as the reporters stated that the landing would not have been possible without this particular scientist's efforts and dreams.

As I looked at the picture of the scientist my thoughts were that I had met this famous man somewhere before?

At that moment I realized that the smiling scientist was the same friendly German that I had educated about the "cotton gin" several years before. His name was Dr. Wernher von Braun!

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



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