



No. 376  
June 2024



# Old Huntsville

HISTORY AND STORIES OF THE TENNESSEE VALLEY

Quietly.....



1921 – 1964

*Also in this issue:* B26 Crashes Near Huntsville; A Cat Named Sambo; Zesto's and the Kwiki Man; Old Pence; Mrs. Gilbert and Helen; Keeping your Cat Safe during Hot Summer Days; The Kildare Mansion; Recipes, Tips and Remedies, and Much More!



## A LOOK BACK AT HUNTSVILLE HISTORY



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# Quietly.....

by M. D. Smith IV

*Huntsville Quietly Integrates Public Schools. The chief reason for "quiet" is now revealed.*

When Huntsville city schools finally opened and accepted four black children, "Quietly" was the word used in the headline of the Times about the events. There is an untold reason contributing largely to that, and I was there. At age 22 and recently graduated from the University of Alabama, I worked at WAAY-Radio as Merchandising Director and covering news. My part of the story will surprise you.

An attempt to integrate four of Huntsville's schools on Tuesday, September 3, 1963 failed. Governor George Wallace sent the Alabama National Guard to close, lock and stand outside Fifth Avenue, East Clinton, Terry Heights and Rison (lower and junior high) schools. He

**"Eight new choir robes are currently needed due to the addition of several new members and the deterioration of some older ones."**

*In Decatur church bulletin*

vowed to defy a national court order to integrate Alabama schools and directed state and city schools to ignore the order. (The University of Alabama already accepted two students in June of that year.)

After the four students were turned away on Tuesday, September 3, the newspaper reported they would open on Friday the sixth. Another bust, and when they didn't, the crowds were smaller.

But when they did open and accept the four students on Monday, September 9, it was very quiet, with a bare minimum of crowds that might otherwise have been jeering and protesting the integration.

Here's why. Huntsville's plans to integrate on September 3 failed. After Wallace stepped in with Guard troops to prevent it, at least one of the student parents, Dr. Sonnie Hereford III, sent a telegram to the federal judge who'd ordered the Huntsville Board of Education to desegregate, complaining about the closed schools. After the new scheduled opening on Friday didn't happen, the four schools were quietly set to open on Monday, September 9, but a media meeting was called on Friday before that happened.

I was the person from our radio station to attend a meeting of the city leaders. Newspapers, radio stations and the



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lone TV station were asked to attend.

Our leaders at the time involved with city integration were Dr. Raymond Christian - School Superintendent, Mayor R. B. Searcy, Homer Whitt - City Council President and Police Chief Chris Spurlock. We gathered in a large room and were told that what we were about to hear was confidential. They got understanding nods from everyone present.

They asked the media to keep it completely quiet about integrating the four schools on the coming Monday. They said after attempts to open on Tuesday, September 3 after Labor Day (as was traditional in those years) and several days after including a final attempt on Friday the 6th, it appeared there would be no troops to block the way on Monday the 9th. Knowing this, the city wanted to keep the real opening and any ugliness from the crowds to a minimum. If it wasn't a banner headline on Sunday and all the media hyping it, our city might not have ugly headlines around the nation.

Keeping it very low key was to keep crowds and protesters down and ensure a quiet and orderly event.

I think the initial reaction of our group was surprise or even shock. Telling the media to restrain reporting the news was something few of us had ever heard. As the meeting continued, we realized it was for the good of Huntsville and would avoid unfavorable national publicity that would come if an ugly mess happened on Monday.

Everyone there agreed. There was minimal reporting over the weekend. The Sunday edition in the Huntsville Times merely stated, "School Monday? Gov. Wallace Won't Say." It appeared with the same size headline that said, "JFK May Issue New Cuban Policy to Save Treaty."

Of course, the Times knew the schools would open and had photographers at each location. The radio stations said nothing about the plans until after it happened on Monday. There was no Sunday news on Channel 31 at the time. Hardly anyone knew about for sure what was to take place until it finally began to happen, with staggered attendance times, the following Monday. Hereford was first at 8:30 am and the last was David (Piggee) Osman at 9:56 am.

I drove to Rison School (built in 1921 and named for Dallas Mills GM, Archie L. Rison) near the radio station at the intersection of Oakwood Avenue and Andrew Jackson Way, parked at a gas station and waited to watch. There was a tiny crowd when Veronica Pearson, age 13, showed up to enter Rison. I learned later that Federal Marshals in plain clothes were there that day to mix with the crowd and blend in, but ready to react if there was any trouble. There was not. The tiny bit that occurred was taken care of by the Huntsville police.

The Huntsville Times reported in their full, front-page story that afternoon that there was a white couple near the door at Rison who said to Veronica, "Why don't you go where you belong? You're not wanted here." She proceeded into the school. The families and children had been coached on the importance of the events to be nonviolent. Importantly, not to react to racial slurs and insults - this had to be ignored — no response physically or verbally.

As I mentioned, with some police at each school location, and another reason for the small crowd, many got orders to "move on." Two men refused,



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and Chief Chris Spurlock reported, "They were a little reluctant to go, so we provided them with transportation. We put them in a police car, took them down the road and told them to get lost."

The first event at Fifth Avenue, where Sonnie Hereford, IV, accompanied by his father Dr. Sonnie Hereford, III entered, nothing of note from the crowd was reported in the media.

Last year, speaking to the media on September 10, 2023 and in comments aired on WAFF, Channel 48, Sonnie said, "We had to plan well. We had to work hard. We had to make sure the thing stayed non-violent. We had the right leadership to make sure those things would happen." (Ref: Martin Luther King and his father meeting a year earlier in King's visit to Huntsville). "Because if we had a lot of violence and property being destroyed, I doubt that our movement would have been successful - at least not as early as it was."

Here are the comments the four city leaders said to The Huntsville Times in 1963:

Police Chief Chris Spurlock: "As Chief of Police, I am delighted that the citizens of Huntsville are being very mature in this change in our social patterns. We are trying to be intelligent rather than pursuing a course that does not adapt to inevitable change."

Dr. Raymond Christian - School Superintendent: "I think the people of Huntsville have conducted themselves in

a most exemplary manner, and they are to be complimented upon their conduct during this time."

Mayor R. B. Searcy: "I am delighted that things worked out in the manner they did."

Homer Whitt - City Council President: "I knew that the people of Huntsville were able to take care of this situation by themselves."

At Rison school, where I watched at a distance that day, I only got a glimpse of Veronica. I didn't realize she was the only older student to attend out of the list, and the other three boys were starting first grade. Here's the list:


Sonnie Hereford, IV 8:30 (age 6, 1st grade, Fifth Avenue)

John Anthony Brewton 8:50 (age 7, 1st grade, East Clinton)

Veronica Pearson (9:20 age 13, 8th grade at Rison)

David (Piggee) Osman 9:56 last (age 7, 1st grade, Terry Heights).


The most famous of the four students is Sonnie Hereford, IV, presumably for his father's



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work meeting and being selected to drive Dr. King around Huntsville in 1962. His continued work for equality in the school systems resulted in a recent new school, named Sonnie Hereford Elementary on Wilson Drive just north of Holmes Avenue and bordered by the Parkway and University Drive.

There were lots of good photos taken at an event where a historic marker was placed at the location on Governors Drive where Fifth Avenue School once stood. On the day of that official event, Sonnie III and IV appeared for numerous photographs. That was several years before Dr. Hereford died on July 7, 2016.

You can read much more about Sonnie Hereford, IV who still lives in the area. His father died in 2016, but the school in his name broke ground two years before and Dr. Hereford was aware of the school in his name nearly finished. It's the Sonnie Hereford III Elementary. It keeps the memory of that September alive when he took his son to school on that "quiet" day in Huntsville, thanks in large part to the cooperation of the town's media to "keep it quiet."

September 9, 1963, the day "Huntsville Quietly Integrated Public Schools."



## Poor House Closed - 1935

In a surprise move by the Welfare Board yesterday, the County Poor House located at the end of Hermitage was abolished.

Spokesman Lawrence Goldsmith explained that with the Welfare Department now taking care of the indigent there is no longer a need for an Alms House. By the end of the year the poor house is expected to be empty as new homes are found by the present occupants. Alabama currently has 63 poor houses. Many of the residents are veterans.

The recently passed bill authorizing state pensions should help alleviate the sufferings of the people affected.

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## June Weddings, 1882 Style

Married at the Decatur residence of the bride's father, at 3:00 o'clock Thursday afternoon by the Rev. John S. Friereson of the Presbyterian Church, were Mr. Ben Lambert and Miss Minnie Lou Grubbs. The bride is the eldest daughter of Rev. and Mrs. L. Hensley Grubbs of Decatur, Alabama.

The romantic marriage ceremony over, congratulations of friends received, the couple left by the 3:30 eastbound train for Huntsville where they will make their home.

Among the presents received by the young couple were an ingeniously hand-wrought bedroom lace set, by the groom's grandmother, Mrs. H. Easley of Huntsville.

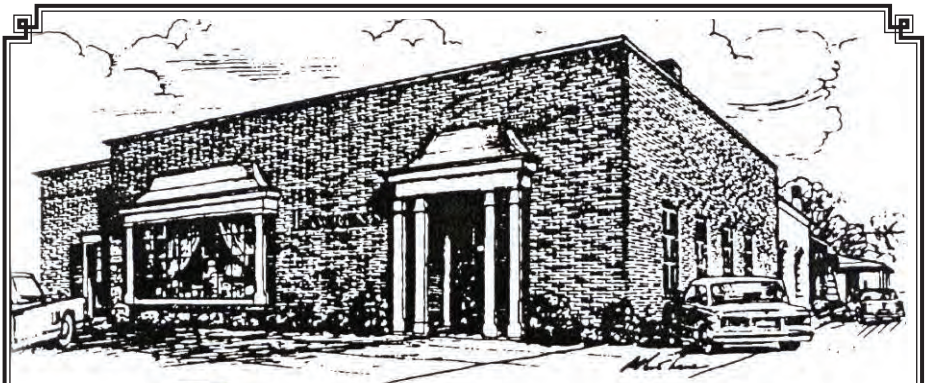
They received beautiful snowdrop tulle, from Mrs. R. D. Horton of Decatur,

An elegantly polished brass and cut-glass lamp with ornamental Egyptian shade, from

received from Walter and Lelia Grubbs of Decatur. An elaborately embroidered black satin parasol was given by Thomas Grubbs of Decatur.

Then there was a silver knife and fork set (100 pieces); gilt French China; black walnut heavily carved chamber set; large bevel board and an illustrated family Bible, all from the parents of the bride.

It was heard mentioned that after a wedding, all the father has left to give away is the bride.



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and they meet at the bar."

Drew Carey, Comedian

# Luke and the Blowout

## Thiokol Chemical Corporation/ Huntsville Division

*by Odysseus*

Good-paying jobs at Thiokol Redstone/Huntsville Division attracted people to Madison County from every surrounding county. Many employees from Marshall and Morgan counties commuted to Thiokol crossing the Tennessee River on the Hwy. 231 Whitesburg Bridge. The original Hwy. 231 was a two-lane road as was the first bridge constructed in 1931. A second two-lane bridge opened around 1965 as Hwy. 231 widening to four lanes progressed southward.

South of the river, parts of the original Hwy. 231 had been paved with concrete instead of asphalt.

One oddity of concrete highway construction was the need for joints to allow thermal expansion. Expansion joints prevented concrete cracking and buckling but interrupted the smooth con-

tinuous ride provided by asphalt roads. The evenly spaced joints had two effects on traffic. The first was a staccato slapping noise as each tire crossed each expansion joint.

The second was a slight pitching motion on a car because each joint amounted to a tiny bump. Depending on speed, car wheelbase, spring stiffness, worn shock absorbers, etc., an unpleasant fore-and-aft rocking could develop. The combined effects were akin to the clickety-clack of a train on rails accompanied by the rocking horse motion of a child's toy.

Luke M was a real person who worked on the Line and became the heroic figure of several Thiokol legends. It was said that if Luke were to fall into a metaphorical manure pit, he would emerge smelling like a rose. Suffice it to say Luke had the uncanny natural ability to be at the right place at the right time and provide the right answer. In a much later era, Luke might have been inspiration for the protagonist in a Winston Groom novel.

The carpool to Thiokol on that fateful morning consisted of four men and Luke was driving. They were northbound on Hwy. 231 descending Brindle Mountain and approaching Lacey's Spring. Suddenly, BAM, came the unmistakable sound of a tire blowing out.

The blowout occurred on the steepest part of Hwy. 231; the long downhill straightaway followed by a left-hand turn. Luke struggled to maintain control of the car. Oncoming traffic, deep ditches on both sides, and the steep downgrade presented an existential threat to four lives or more.

Luke fought the wheel while daring not to release the throttle or brake too suddenly. Excessive braking might cause another tire to blow or lock a wheel and put the car into a skid. The rhythmic slapping sounds quickened, and the pitching motions intensified as the car sped up, accelerated by gravity.

Somehow Luke averted head-on collisions and avoided both ditches. Luke gently slowed the car, then steered it to a halt on the shoulder. All four men felt the relief as danger passed. His three passengers thanked Luke for saving their lives and complimented his emergency driving skills and cool demeanor under pressure. They all got out and looked at the car. It was undamaged. Both front tires held air. The rear tires looked good. As Luke opened the trunk a cloud of dust wafted out.

The spare tire had blown.



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Chicago got started. A  
bunch of New Yorkers  
said, 'Gee I'm enjoying the  
crime and the poverty, but  
it just isn't cold enough.  
Let's go West.'"**

**Richard Jeni**

00508041



## BUDDY'S STORY – CONTINUED LIFE WITH MY NEW FAMILY

*by Buddy*



My Dear Friends and Admirers,

I know you are wondering what happened to me after reading my last story in Old Huntsville Magazine. You will be happy to hear that I am "super happy!"

So many friends wrote to me after reading my article in the May issue of Old Huntsville Magazine which I appreciated. For your information I heard from several dogs, a cat, my psychiatrist, and many friends. My responses also included a request from my dear friend, Lara, and her son Devin who knew me from Old Towne Coffee where Mike (Maples) met his friends every day. Devin was a barrister at OTC and often took me for walks while Mike visited with his buddies.

I met Devin's mom, Lara, at several potluck dinners when I was invited to join the group. Lara had been on Mr. Horace's list for a Shih Tzu puppy. When she and Devin read that I was looking for a new home, they decided they would rather have a mature dog instead of a puppy and asked Maggie if they could adopt me. It did not take long for her to agree. She had met Lara and Devin and knew they understood Shih Tzus because they had had one and wanted another since our breed is lovable, smart, and absolutely adorable.

Maggie also knew that Lara and Devin would love me and provide a good home.

I have adjusted quickly to my new life. To tell the truth, during my seven years, I have observed

that dogs, as well as most animals and birds, are more adaptable than people and make necessary life transitions easier, because we do not carry the baggage of our past with us. We are smart enough to accept the changes that happen and move on. After all, life is full of challenges and changes, and we have no alternative but to accept them.

As for my new family life, one change that has taken some adjustment for me is that Lara and Devin are VEGAN and now I too have become vegan. They feed me what they eat along with some of my kibbles so that I get enough protein. Lara serves me on her gold rimmed china and warms my lunch in a microwave oven. You would not believe how well they are treating me. They love to spoil me.

Every day I go to work with Lara who manages the Greenhouse at the University of Alabama Huntsville where I keep her company in her office. After lunch, we go to the Greenhouse and work in the afternoon. In case you are wondering, I have been hired as a junior biologist. Everyone knows me by name. They speak to me and often stop and pet me. I am the only dog who visits the UAH campus regularly and have become quite a celebrity.

Sometimes President Karr brings his Shih Tzu, Trudy, but she does not work at the University and only visits campus occasionally. After reading my article, President Karr may bring Trudy more often so



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she can play with me.

As for my exercise, Lara takes long walks every day in the Huntsville Land Trust near our house and to the Big Spring, which is my favorite park and where I used to go with Mike. The first time Lara took me, I was so excited because I remembered the ducks and fish and ran to the spring immediately. I haven't caught a duck or a fish yet, but I know I will. Lara has warned me that if I do, the ducks will put up a fight and peck me. I think I can win that battle and will keep trying to catch one.

Sometimes Lara walks further on our hikes than I can, and she picks me up and carries me. She plans to get a baby sling that will be more comfortable for both of us. It is interesting when she carries me because I can see the high things. Since my legs are only about three inches long, I have only been able to see the low things.

I have discovered that the world is much larger and more interesting when I see it from up high. Because of our daily walks, I am building my stamina and will soon be able to keep up with Lara.

Devin also takes me for runs in the evening in the Dead Children's Cemetery on the hill above Maple Hill Cemetery. I have heard that on Halloween kids go there and say that they can hear children laughing and that the swings move by themselves. I can't wait until next October because Devin has promised to take me. I am sure, being more intuitive and sensitive than people, that I will be able to communicate with the spirits that hover there.

You may be wondering about my emotional adjustment. When I lived with Maggie and Mike, they were with me all the time and seldom left me alone. I developed a condition diagnosed as chronic anxiety syndrome by my psychiatrist because I am anx-

ious when left alone. He prescribed a calming medication for me.

When I moved in with Lara and Devin they had to leave me alone sometimes. Once I was so anxious, I jumped through the screen door and ran all over the neighborhood looking for them. A neighbor picked me up and brought me home. Lara had been so worried when she returned and found the screen door broken and me gone. She was greatly relieved when she saw me being carried home by our neighbor.

Since then, once I jumped over the piano and through the screen and the open window when I saw Devin coming home because I was so happy to see him. As a result of my anxiety episodes Lara has been giving me therapy. I lay on my back next to her and she rubs my shoulders to relax me and talks me through my anxiety before she leaves me alone. Her therapy is helping me deal with my emotional problems. However, to be extra sure that I won't get lost, she bought a special identifying collar for me with my name and phone number just in case I wander off again.

Every night I sleep with Devin in his bed because I like to stay close. He says I need to keep in constant contact with him and sleep on his feet. That is exactly what I used to do with Mike.

Maggie visited me a week ago and I was ecstatic to see her and ran all over the room, jumping on the furniture, licking her, and bringing her my favorite toys. When it was time for her to leave, Lara picked me up and I was satisfied with Maggie leaving because I knew I was at home. Before she left, I promised to visit her when she moves into her new house this summer and maybe spend the night with her sometimes.

I have been fortunate with my life and am enjoying my third family experience as I enjoyed living with Ms. Janie and with Mike and Maggie. I have learned from each family experience about training my people or letting them train me. I have decided that this time I will let Lara and Devin train me because it is much easier and less stressful not being responsible for my family. Life teaches many lessons, and I have learned from my experiences. Maggie's father used to tell her, "A wise man (or dog) can change his mind, but a fool never does."

I have grown up quite a bit since I wrote my first story, "Training My People", that was published in 2022 in Old Huntsville Magazine. I know that it is best to let my people train me and to be a sweet lovable dog rather than act like a spoiled brat. I am thankful for the attention and love I receive and am changing my ways to show my people how much I love them.

Be sure and look for my next article in the July issue of Old Huntsville Magazine. All the letters I received from you, my dear friends, as well as my psychiatrist and several dogs and a cat will be published for you to read and enjoy. In the future you might hear from me again as I know you will want to know what happens to me. I too wonder what will happen next.

With Fondest Regards, Buddy

**"I know I drink too much. The last time I went for my physical and gave a urine specimen it had an olive in it."**

**Rodney Dangerfield**

**Photo - Mike Maples with Buddy**





# Tips from Earline

\* Judy Smith sent us a good tip for a super glass cleaner; Mix 2 cups water with 1/4 cup vinegar and 1/2 teaspoon of liquid detergent - works great!

\* Use bread crumbs instead of cracker crumbs to cover anything that has been dipped in egg. Cracker crumbs do not brown as well.

\* A small sock filled with coffee beans under your car seat will make your car smell really fresh.

\* Use the peels of those little Clementines to toss into a pot of water along with ground cinnamon & cloves - the smells in your kitchen will get raves from everyone!

\* If you just hate those dark circles under your eyes, consider using an extra pillow at night. Also, freeze a baby's teething ring, wrap it in soft cloth and place over your eyes for a few moments.

\* Want long, luxurious lashes? Try a nightly brush of olive or castor oil, slow but sure results, or snip a capsule of vitamin D oil and put the contents over your lids and lashes. Fantastic results have been reported after just 3 months of this treatment.

\* A French woman's secret for beautiful skin - mix a tablespoon of honey with a teaspoon of strained lemon juice - apply to a clean dry face and leave on for 10 minutes, rinse with tepid water.

\* Face lifting exercises - Pretend you're biting an apple - tense up your neck and hold this for 5 seconds. Repeat. Or, push your tongue up to the roof of your mouth as hard as you can - hold for 6 seconds and repeat several times. Push your tongue to either side of your cheeks and finally, lift your eyebrows one inch and hold them there.

\* Oil of almonds softens the skin and is essential for your complexion.

\* For wrinkles, bathe the skin where they appear with a mixture of alum and water. This will tighten the skin.

\* To soften hands, keep a dish of oatmeal near the washstand and rub freely on hands after washing. This will cleanse and soften the skin.

\* A 93-year old lady we know who has the most beautiful skin washes her face each evening, then adds a light coat of olive oil.

\* The best way to clean your broom is to soak it in a bucket filled with hot water, a little ammonia, and soap suds. Rinse well and let it dry, upended on the broomstick before storing it away.

\* Club soda is very good for cleaning & shining appliances & counter tops.

\* For fridge odors, soak a cotton ball in pure vanilla extract and place in bowl in refrigerator. Your refrigerator will smell like fresh cookies.

\* Peppermint tea is good for moodiness. Drink it warm and strong - it will relax you.

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

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June 20th is the first day of summer but most of us feel like it starts much earlier. In the South, the humidity and heat build up fast. When out in a big box store where you have a good choice of fans and small air conditioners why not buy one for someone who is having trouble with keeping cool. It will help them and you will feel better knowing you helped someone out.

1. Madison Gazebo Concerts Mondays in June. Enjoy music in Madison, bring blankets, chairs and a picnic. There will be food vendors for those of you who don't have time to get a picnic together.

2. Dog Days of Summer at Early Works Museum.

3. Stories under the Stars at the Burritt on the Mountain. Take lawn chairs and a blanket, then enjoy the sunset, live storytelling and music. There is a \$10.00 admission.

4. "Acoustic Squared" is free 5-8 pm Thursday nights on North and Southside Square until October. Two acoustic arts artists will perform. Feel free to take your purple cup on a walk.

5. Summer Smart Play at the U.S. Space and Rocket Center. You can tryout a working storm shelter, experience the sounds created by an earthquake. Special kids programs May through August. Check for activities and times. There is an admission fee.

6. A fun activity is the annual Twelfth Cigar Box Guitar Festival. It will take place at Lowe Mill Arts and Entertainment June 3, 11:30 am to 8:00 pm. The event is free but there is a \$2.00 suggested parking donation.

7. Healthy Saturdays in the park is held in Big Springs on Saturdays at 9 a.m.

8. Nature Explorer Club at Hayes Nature Preserve. The theme this year is how we can all help the world to become greener and a healthier place. These 1-2 hour free sessions provide a theme-based learning/exploring time. Check for dates and times.

9. Concerts in the Park take place on Monday evenings. It features rock and roll, pop, country, bluegrass, Celtic and jazz. You can bring your pets. The time is 6:30 to 8:00 and there is no charge.

10. The Library has free concerts on June 7th and June 21st. Check times. If you have a large family, it is nice to be able to take the kids out for a fun time and not costing a fortune to try Tuesday's on the Trail. Learn about the unique geology and wildlife of North Alabama.

11. Friday Night Art Walk is free on June 10th.

With all of these fun outings to do and some at no charge, there is no excuse not to get out and enjoy June. Let's not forget Father's Day on Sunday June 16th. Do something special for good old dad. I know he would appreciate anything you could do for him.



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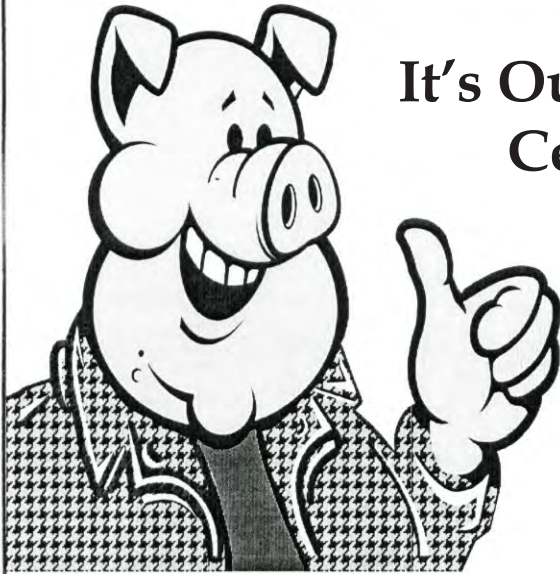
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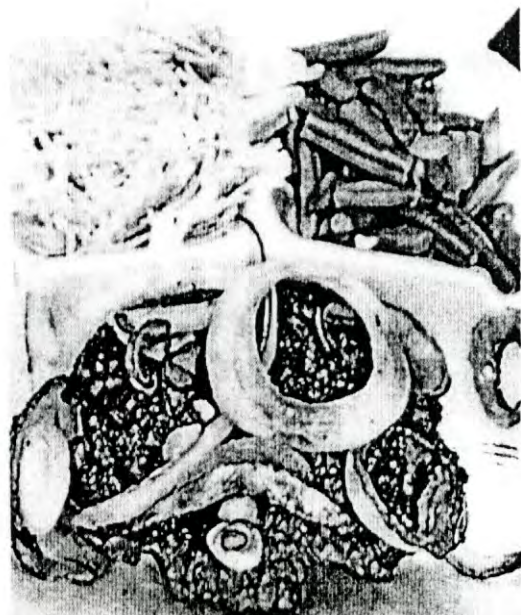
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# HARDROCK, THE NEXT CHAPTER

by Johnny Johnston

Old Huntsville republished an article in March 2023, about the life of Hardrock, my brother. He had been living alone in Clanton, Alabama at the age of 95, and not doing too well. I had been making almost weekly trips to take care of his business and ensure his health was OK. That was a little too much so I brought him to Huntsville for better care and closer supervision.

Our family gave him his 96th Birthday party in Nashville in December, 2022. He said it was the first birthday cake he had ever had. He was sitting in a chair reading the Old Huntsville - Hardrock article in January, 2023. He was very proud. Huntsville Hospice was able to care for him during his demise and death in March of that year.

He always had his dog "Sasha" sitting in his lap while he told stories of the old days and I made notes and tried to capture the tales. One of the people who came to care for him wanted and was given the dog after Hardrock's death at 96.

Hardrock told me stories about our dad trying to log while living in Lacey's Spring in the 1920s and 1930s. Hardrock was born in Lacey in 1926, so he remembered most of the Depression. He was about 5 or 6 years old when Dad cut logs all day on top of Brindlee Mountain and took them by wagon and mules down the Mountain to Lacey for a Sawmill owned by Walton Bartee. It took all day to cut and load them onto the wagon then haul them down to the sawmill. Hardrock rode on top of the logs. At that time the road wound down the side of

the Mountain fork which ran to the northwest. The dirt road was still visible for many years while driving on Highway 231. His pay for working all day, hauling the logs down the dangerous road to Lacey, was one shovel full of feed for the two mules.

That road also came into play about the same time when Mother was given a milk cow from a farmer on Brindlee Mountain who witnessed the hunger of the Johnston family at Lacey. Mother walked with Hardrock from Lacey to the Farm on Brindlee and led the cow by rope back to Lacey. That was an all-day trip.

Also, during the Depression, he witnessed an event which remained in his memory the rest of his life regarding hard work and determination to get the work done. He was riding with Dad on one of his logging trips in a very old and weak truck while hauling railroad crossties into Madison County from Lacey's Spring. The motor would not power the loaded truck up some hills with the heavy load of ties. He witnessed his Father unload the ties at the bottom of several hills, drive the truck to the top of the hills empty and hand carry the ties up the hill and reload the truck. This took many trips up the hill with the heavy ties but he did it and completed the trip to Madison County.

Mostly Hardrock remembers the hard living in Paint Rock Valley. He tells of a tool shed which the family lived in for a while. The tool shed was just big enough for one bed, one small table and two chairs for the family of 5. It had no heat or utilities. Mother washed clothes for hire on the banks of the Paint Rock River to help feed the family. Hardrock's job was to gather blocks of wood from the Stave mill and keep the fire under the kettle going. With no heater in the shed and crack's all around where the boards did not meet, it was cold.

He continued to ride the trucks from Princeton to Tren-

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ton to visit his Grandparents on occasion. He actually was placed on payroll at age 7, to restock and carryout at the local grocery store. His pay was ten cents per day.

One of the strangest stories he tells happened at NASA when they were experimenting with liquid nitrogen for rocket fuel. He had an assistant by the name of Shorty Touchstone, who was afflicted with numerous warts on both arms. On one occasion the two of them were moving containers of the gas from one area to another when a container spilled onto one arm of Shorty. No harm, no injury, however the next day when he came in to work the warts on that arm were gone. Hardrock said "Well let's do the other arm."

The next day that arm was also clear of warts.

After Shorty visited his doc-

tor and told him the story, doctor's came often to NASA holding a thermos bottle asking for some Liquid Nitrogen for their patients.

When patients go to their doctor now to have warts removed, they get the same gas only in a different form.

After the Apollo Program, NASA turned most of the functions over to contractors so there was a new role for Hardrock. He was reassigned to The Defense Department in Washington. His new job was to visit contractors throughout the country looking for quality control and safety infractions.

He was not a normal staff person who dealt with quality control. Contractors never saw him when expected. He never wore a suit or tie and never accepted the special things that were set up to impress him. Several contractors were shut

down for safety infractions by Hardrock. He was not out to make a friend.

I now find myself the only person left in my generation. At 87, (in July, 2024) I am active and blessed to be still hanging around. I am also available and love to talk to groups about several stories.

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# OLD DOGS AND WATERMELON WINE

by Billy Joe Cooley

Lewis Grizzard was an excellent writer, but he couldn't sing worth a flip. Couldn't carry a tune in a bucket, but he tried.

That was the general consensus the other Sunday as some of us were remembering our old friend who had just died in Atlanta.

Lewis had been in love with Huntsville for many years, long before he became famous with all those books. He would drive over from Atlanta, dine at the old House of Mandarin on South Parkway and sip cider with a few of us at Tony Mason's nightclub, which was on University Drive across from Red Lobster.

Now and then there would be famous people in the place who didn't know who Lewis was. Sometimes Lewis didn't even know who Lewis was. Those were high times. But, as I said, he was not yet the famous humorist that he later became.

One night we were sitting in Tony's when astronaut Buzz Aldrin entered with a group of friends. That impressed Lewis, so he sent word to Tony on the stage that he'd like to sing a song. He wanted to sing "Fly Me to the Moon," which would have been appropriate, but none of us knew the words.

Lewis got up, walked up to the microphone and announced that, "I'd like to sing a song written by my dearest and truest friend in all the world, including Georgia, Tom T. Hall." With that he launched into a strange version of "Old Dogs and Children and Watermelon Wine." He put notes where there had never been notes and gave all the credit, just and unjust, to Tom T.

On other nights he would just sit quietly, sip and socialize and watch "the passing parade," as he called it. The passing parade included such country singers as Alabama's Jeff Cook (with his local pal Steve Shelton), George Jones and Vern Gosdin.

"I'd like to hear you sing 'He Stopped Loving Her Today' before you leave,"

Lewis said to George Jones one night. But George, who had apparently made a few other bar stops before sloshing into Tony's lounge, just grinned like a 'possum, winked at Lewis and asked Gosdin to drive him home to Florence.

One day Tom T. drove down from Franklin to visit while wife Dixie shopped for antiques. We were having coffee in the Hilton lobby when I remembered Lewis's lounge performance.

"Ever hear of Lewis Grizzard?" I asked.

"No," was the reply. Then after a brief pause, he added: "Yeah, ain't he that guy who writes stuff in the paper?" I said he was.

"Met him once," Tom T. said. "Why? Did he promise to write a column about you?"

I said yes, he had indeed mentioned it once or twice.

"He promises everybody he's gonna write about them," said Tom T., "but he never does. He did write a column one time about 'Old Dogs and Children.' I guess that counts for something."

You couldn't help but like Lewis, though his language sometimes got pretty salty in his stage routines. I said so in print once and he just looked at me blankly. Some people had walked out, covering their children's ears, during a Grizzard performance at the VBCC.

Lewis was not an outgoing person. He would have breakfast in a booth at Eunice's and try not to speak to anybody. But, he did write a nice blurb about her breakfasts in one of his columns.

**"Father's Day is alot like Mother's Day, except the gift is usually cheaper."**

***Jim Sims, a dad in New Market***

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# The Kildare Mansion

by Dirk Bauerle



Located on Oakwood Avenue, the Kildare home has long stood as a historical landmark, reflecting the days when Huntsville was the home of rich, and often eccentric, socialites. The Kildare house was built as a summer home for Michael O'Shaughnessey, a wealthy northern capitalist who had many investments in Huntsville. Due to the home's huge dimensions and unusual design, it took almost thirty years for the house to be completed. Unfortunately O'Shaughnessey never occupied the home.

As the home neared completion, it was purchased by the McCormick family, who had become extremely wealthy through the manufacture of farm equipment. It was one of four other homes that Mr. McCormick owned. The others were located in Chicago, Toronto, Maine, and San Marino. When this family came to Huntsville via train, they created so much excitement and curiosity with their wealth that the schools actually closed to allow the townspeople to watch the unloading of their opulent furnishings.

Mrs. McCormick resided at the Huntsville Hotel until Kildare was completed to her satisfaction. With other homes to choose from, according to the season, Kildare became the summer home for the McCormick family. A staff of twenty, many imported from northern states, worked full-time just to maintain the house for her visits. Large gardens were planted in a way so that plants would bloom profusely only when she was there. The house, even by capitalist standards, was massive and eccentric.

It looms four stories high, with 23,000 square feet contained in its four levels, including the basement. It features a central stairwell - so family eyes wouldn't have to be distracted by servants moving back and forth. There were many rooms dedicated to specific functions, such as a plant room, in addition to the traditional living quarters.

The McCormicks introduced Huntsville to the trappings of wealth. They brought the first electric car to the city and housed it in a carriage house built in the same massive proportion as the main house.

Mrs. McCormick's Easter egg hunts became legendary, with real gold and silver eggs

awarded for first and second prizes. In her later years, Mrs. McCormick became more and more eccentric, giving away parts of her house and its contents to any visitor who might express an interest in a particular piece.

Following her death, Kildare declined, passing through several owners and serving many functions, including being both a "hair salon and a "head" shop run by "hippies." In the latter part of the 20th century, it was a rooming house with as many as twenty families living in it.

In recent years there has been a great interest in restoring the home to its former grandeur.

After all, how many people ever have the opportunity to live in a 23,000 square foot landmark?

**"At age 20 we worry about what others think of us...at age 40 we don't care what they think of us...at age 60 we discover they haven't been thinking of us at all!"**

*Ann Landers*

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# Heard On the Street

by Cathey Carney



Well, we had two items hidden in the May issue for more of a challenge but we still had a winner! **Stephen Webster** of Priceville called and said it took him about an hour but he was not going to give up. The little heart was on page 42 bottom picture and the leaf was on page 11 in the Southern Comfort ad. Stephen is retired but worked many years in construction in Decatur. Congratulations to you Stephen!

About 9pm on May 8 many of us were in our safe places because **tornadoes** were headed our way. They bounced and twisted their way from the west til they got to Huntsville and hit the downtown, Five Points, Old Town and Blossomwood areas. They hit our historic Maple Hill cemetery. One of the things we love about our historic areas are the beautiful 100+ year old trees that have shaded us for all these years. Many of them were uprooted and most avoided hitting any homes. But the landscape sure changes when these beautiful old trees are gone. They were home to many little critters too. Maybe when replacement trees are planted and begin to grow it will be a different landscape, but so many will miss the huge old trees.

**Linda Scates** called us to say her sweet brother is having his

81st birthday on June 7. His name is **Wayne Schaefer** and he lives in New Market. In addition, Wayne celebrates his 57th wedding anniversary to his love **Geneda**. I know there will be some partying going on and we want to wish Wayne the happiest of birthdays and a great anniversary.

I had a fall recently where I hit my face on the cement. There was alot of blood of course with facial injuries so I used my cell phone to call 911. And found out something interesting. When I said "Hey Siri, call 911" he responded "Calling emergency services and turning AUDIO ON." That meant I didn't have to look for the little speaker phone icon - Siri did it for me. That allowed me to hear and speak to the dispatcher immediately. I had never had to do that with my phone but thought it would be useful for you to know.

We couldn't let this issue pass by without saying Happy Birthday to **Billy Lenox**! His day is June 5 and he and wife Gale will be celebrating. Billy has worked on many company websites including Old Huntsville for many years, and is retiring from that to try some new adventures. Happy Birthday young man!

Like many of you, I have lights and lamps that I turn on every morning and off every night. I decided to save time by connecting them to a power strip in each room. 4-5 lamps are all plugged into one power strip and in the morning I just flip the power strip switch to ON and at night it gets switched to OFF. Now the best part of this is

I do it with my toe. Very easy to do and I don't have to bend over. Sure makes it faster and easier on the back!

**Jane Doris Barr**, 92, of Huntsville passed away Saturday, May 11th, 2024. She was a resident of Huntsville since 1950 when she moved with her husband, **Tom Barr**. While Tom was involved with putting man on the moon, Jane was involved with family and community activities. Tom passed away on February 7, 2018.

What Jane did for the history of Monte Sano and her many contributions to the people of Huntsville would never fit in this column, and there will be a feature story on her in the future. Jane was feisty, determined, adventurous, a lover of Huntsville history, so much more. A dear friend to those she loved. She will be so missed. Jane is survived by her three children; **David Barr**, **Gary (Debbie) Barr** and **Suzy Barr Moody**; brother, **Ron Jones**; grandchildren, **Shannon Stapler**, **Adam (Lacie) Barr**, **Shawn (Chelsey) Fann**, **Michael (Shasta) Fann** and **Matthew (Andrea) Barr**; nine great-grandchildren; and nephew, **Todd (Kelley) Jones**.

Jane wrote for Old Huntsville magazine in past years and told us what we didn't know about Monte Sano mountain. The story of her life will be in an upcoming OHM.

Special hello to **Bill** and **Genie McCoy** who relocated from Huntsville to Pensacola. This happened about a year ago but they miss Huntsville and our area alot. Bill was a **Golden K Kiwanian** of-

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ficer for so many years. He and the club distributed Old Huntsville magazine to all the honor box locations for nearly 28 years as their only fundraiser and all the money collected went to the Food Bank, Boys and Girls clubs, Downtown Rescue Mission, Heals, Free Dental Clinic and so many other good agencies who helped children and families in need. \$650,000 was collected and given away over the years. Thank you **Bill, Hank Miller, Bill Grunald, Richard Peters, Ken Owens, Clarence Golson, Ray Weinberg and Jesse Hopkins** and so many other members who were committed to making life a little bit better for these kids and their families.

Hiding 2 items in May issue was so much fun we're going to do it again. Many of you noticed that we're not running the baby photo of the month - it was not nearly as popular as the hidden items so we've discontinued the baby photos for now. In this issue I have hidden 2 items - one is a tiny tornado and the other is a power pole to honor our electrical linemen who worked so hard to get our power back up in such a short amount of time. If you find BOTH, and you probably won't, call me and you MIGHT be the winner of a \$50 annual subscription to OHM! Get out your specs!

Those kneeling benches you see advertised are not just for gardening outside. Many older folks

I talk to tell me they use them inside for anything that requires getting down to look in cabinets or pick things up. As you get older it's nearly impossible to just jump back up like we used to do and this "bench" has metal supports on both sides that you hold to get back up. Flip the bench over and it can be used as a seat. Look for these because many tell me they one inside and one outside!

**Cory Kellar** was born February 15, 1961. He passed away April 30, 2024 at Huntsville Hospital with his brother at his side. He was only 63 years old. Cory was a 1980 graduate of Lee High School in Huntsville. At Lee, he was in ROTC which was his main interest. After high school, he enlisted into the Army and began his military life, initially serving with the 4th Infantry Division in Ft. Carson, Colorado.

Cory was honored to have been selected by and served with the Army's 3rd Infantry Regiment -- "The Old Guard" in support of Arlington National Cemetery. After his Army active duty, Cory served with the Alabama National Guard's Combat Engineers.

Later, he enlisted in the Navy Reserves and became a "Seabee", working on many construction projects and deploying to Kosovo. Cory retired from the Naval Reserves with 22 years service. Cory loved the military. His dad was in World War II and was very proud

of Cory for following him in military service.

Cory took care of his dad when he became ill and was an active member of Trinity Presbyterian Church where he did all types of support work for the church.

He was a key volunteer at the Veterans Memorial Museum for many years, serving as the Administrative Specialist and he was present every day that the Museum was open. He loved the Museum and was prepared to talk about everything there. Cory wanted to know all he could about the displays in the Museum. He gained much knowledge from the Museum staff. Cory is survived by his brother **Jim** of Huntsville and sister **Karen** of Ohio. The people in Cory's life were lucky to have known him and he'll never be forgotten.

With the influx of many more people moving to Huntsville we have noticed drivers are running red lights. It may save your life to wait a second or two when you're at an intersection and the light changes to green - look both ways like your parents taught you!

We love our dads and cherish the ones who aren't with us anymore. **Happy Father's Day** on June 16th to the ones we still have, and the ones who are gone are in our hearts. Have a good month!

Keep an eye on your older neighbors in this summer heat that'll be here in no time!

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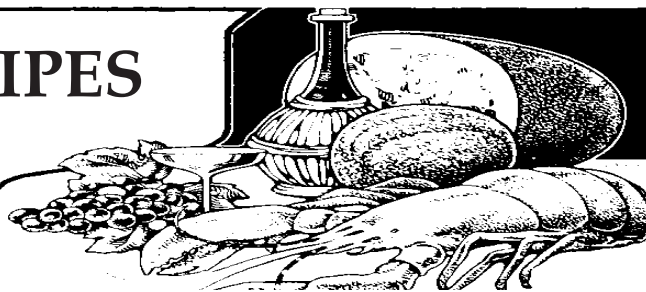
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## RECIPES



# Local Favorites from Old Cookbooks

### Cheddar Curry Spread

3 oz. shredded Cheddar cheese  
3 T. chopped black olives  
1/2 c. finely chopped green onion  
1/2 c. mayonnaise  
1/2 t. curry powder  
Party rye bread

Mix all except for the bread and put in fridge overnight. Spread on party rye bread, bake in 400 degree oven for 5 minutes and garnish with parsley or sliced black olives. Serve while warm.

### Lemon-Spiked Broccoli

1 lb. fresh broccoli  
1/2 c. chopped green onions  
1 T. plus 1 t. fresh lemon juice  
1/4 c. butter  
1/4 c. chopped celery  
1/4 t. grated lemon rind  
Cut tough ends off the

broccoli, wash well and steam for about 7 minutes. Melt butter in a small saucepan, add the onions and celery.

Cook til tender and stir in the lemon juice.

Place broccoli in a pretty serving dish. Pour the onion mixture over the broccoli and sprinkle with lemon rind.

### Hot Cabbage & Potatoes

1 large slice cooked ham  
4 medium potatoes  
1/2 head cabbage, chopped  
Salt and pepper to taste

Cut ham into large pieces and boil in water til it appears to have oil on it. Peel potatoes, quarter them and add this to the ham/water mixture.

When the potatoes are almost cooked, add in the chopped cabbage.

Do not overcook the cabbage. Add salt and pepper to taste.

### Cajun Catfish

Mix equal amounts of hot sauce and mustard. Dip catfish filets in the mixture, then dredge in yellow cornmeal. Fry in hot oil til brown.

### Potatoes in Cream Wine

4 red potatoes, sliced and cooked  
2 T. melted butter  
1 large sliced onion  
2/3 c. milk  
1 c. shredded mozzarella cheese  
1/2 cup white wine

Saute potatoes in butter for 10 minutes. Add remaining ingredients except for the wine. Cook for 5 more minutes, add the wine, heat and serve.

### Grandma's Sunday Casserole

Boil 4 potatoes and whip them with butter. Chop a cou-

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ple of green onions and mix in. Add 3 tablespoons sour cream. Whip 2 eggs with fork and add. Add two cups grated Cheddar cheese.

Put in buttered casserole, sprinkle garlic and black pepper on top, bake at 350 for 45 minutes. Can be frozen.

### White Chicken Chili

4 chicken breasts, cooked & cubed

2 cans great northern beans, drained

1 can Rotel sauce

1-1/2 c. chicken broth

1 medium onion, chopped & sauteed in butter

2 t. minced garlic

1/2 t. thyme

1 t. ground black pepper

1 t. salt

Mozzarella cheese, shredded

In a saucepan, mix all ingredients except cheese. Heat to boiling, reduce and simmer for 20 minutes. When serving, top with mozzarella cheese and sour cream dollop.

### Brown Bread Pudding

1 c. brown bread pieces

2 c. milk

3 eggs

2 T. real maple sugar

2 egg whites

1 T. sugar

2 T. whipping cream

Soak bread pieces in half a cup of the milk for about half an hour. Make a custard of the rest of the milk, eggs, and maple sugar by cooking them together over medium heat til thickened.

Pour it hot over the bread. Beat egg whites with a tablespoon of the sugar and the cream. Fold into the custard, then bake at 350 degrees for 30 minutes.

### Vanilla Cafe

Prepare pot of hot coffee. Drop in 1 teaspoon of real vanilla extract and let sit for 15 minutes. Add 1 jigger of Bailey's Irish Cream Liquor to each cup, top with whipped cream & serve.

### Huntsville Chess Pie

8-inch unbaked pie crust

1/2 c. butter, room temp

1 c. sugar

2 eggs, separated

1-1/2 t. white corn meal

2 T. heavy cream

1/2 t. vanilla extract

Dash salt

Pierce pie shell with fork and bake in hot oven (400 degrees) til baked but not browned. Cream butter, sugar and egg yolks together. Add cornmeal mixed with the cream and vanilla. Fold in egg whites beaten with salt til stiff. Pour into pie shell and cook at 400 degrees for 5 minutes. Reduce heat to 350 and bake 10-12 minutes longer and filling is just set.

If top browns too much put a piece of foil over top and finish baking. Serve pie while warm.

*This is the actual recipe from an old Huntsville restaurant that was here in the early 1900s. It was reported that people would make special trips to Huntsville for it.*

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# What Was Your Neighborhood Like Where You Grew Up?

by Jim Vann

The neighborhood I grew up in was very common back in those days. Discipline was very strict. All my neighbors had permission to punish (spank) me if I misbehaved.

We played in the street and watched out for each other. Most everybody my age rode their bicycle everywhere they went.

There were vacant lots that turned into our ball fields. There were City provided playgrounds with ball fields and equipment for sports of all kinds.

Everybody got along. There were a few bullies that you either avoided or taught them a lesson by confronting them and sometime whipping their butt.

My grandfather built me a wooden basketball backboard and my Dad got a pole like a small telephone pole to put it on. We dug a hole the size of the pole and a man from my dad's workplace brought out a small wrecker that we used to lift the pole and backboard into place and put it in the ground.

This turned out to be the neighborhood Gymnasium. You could always tell when it was basketball season because there would be no grass on the lot that made up the basketball court. There's no telling how many millions of shots I made toward that goal. Basketball turned out to be my best sport and I was honored to be elected co-captain of my high school team my senior year.

We played outside at night when weather permitted. We played "hide and seek", "red rover" and "kick the can". We played cork ball in the street with a straight stick and a cork that was wrapped in tape. It was like baseball but the cork didn't go far and we had bases like in regular baseball. Everybody got along well even though there was heavy competition in all the sports activities.

We had a clothesline across our backyard where my Mom hung out clothes to dry on sunny days.

One time one of the neighborhood boys rode through our yard and my dog ran after him. He was standing up peddling trying to outrun the dog. The clothesline caught him, turned him a flip and he landed on my dog. The dog squealed and although I was about 5 years old, I ran out and jumped on the 12 year old and started beating him because I thought he had hurt my dog.

We raised rabbits, chickens and ducks for food. A lot of people in the hood had animals and gardens for raising food to eat. If we ever had a rabbit for dinner, we had to tell my sister Sarah that it was chicken because she loved all the rabbits.

Our next door neighbor was Mr. May Ray. He was the Assistant Chief of Police. He was very creative and developed several toys for his grandchildren. He had some apartments on his property that he rented out and we had some interesting neighbors from that arrangement.

One couple was Ted and Betty Finley. Betty had several miscarriages so they adopted twin boys through the state system. Of course she became pregnant again shortly after that and had a healthy baby boy.

My wife Michael (Mike) and I visited them a few years after that and those 3 boys were really a handful.

The boys had bunk beds and Ted had nailed them to the wall because they would push them away from the wall as somebody was always falling out of bed. The boys were really rambunctious and Betty, who was always the tense one, was as calm as she could be with toys flying overhead constantly. Mike and I had to keep ducking.

We played outside in the evenings and no telling how many jars of "lightning bugs" I caught. My jar would just light up. We caught June Bugs. I would tie one of the legs with a piece of thread and let it fly around like it was my airplane.

I could catch bees in my cupped hands. As long as you didn't mash them or let any light in your cupped hands, they would not sting.

I built all sorts of things out of scrap pieces of wood. We made "rubber guns" using a gun shaped piece of wood and a clothespin. We would cut slices of rubber from an old inner tube and tie them in a circle. We'd hook the rubber band around the end of the "gun" and secure the other end in the clothespin. When you released the clothespin, the rubber band would fly off the end of the "gun" barrel at what ever you were aiming at.

These are just a few of my remembrances of my childhood neighborhood.



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# Heard Here and There



## Poker Game on Houseboat Robbed

In true Western style late last night, unknown men, fully armed, with their faces covered by masks, made quite a rich haul on a houseboat 30 miles up the Tennessee River, on which a game of draw poker was in progress.

It is said that something like \$400 and several watches and diamond rings and studs as well as numerous bottles of whiskey were secured by the robbers, who made good their escape under the cover of darkness.

It is believed that a gang of well organized thieves is operating in the county. Recently several stores have been broken open and goods taken. Another poker game was robbed near Hazle Green last week under similar circumstances.

1905 newspaper

## A Cause For Divorce

Bundy had been married two weeks when he left his wife. Bundy was a little man, and his wife weighed two hundred and forty pounds, and was the relic of the late Peter Potts.

After ten days of marriage Bundy was surprised, upon awakening in the morning, to find his better half sitting up

in the bed crying as if her heart would break. Astonished, he asked the cause of her sorrow, but receiving no reply surmised that there must be some secret on her mind that she withheld from him, that was the cause of her anguish.

So he remarked to Mrs. B. that as they were married, that she should tell him the cause of her grief, so, if possible, he could avert it, and after considerable coaxing her, elicited the following from her:

"Last night I dreamed I was single, and as I walked through a well-lighted street I came to a store where a sign on the front advertised 'Husbands for Sale.' Thinking it very curious, I entered, and arranged along the wall on either side were men with prices affixed to them. Some for \$1,000, some for \$500, and so on down to \$150. As I had not that amount, I could not purchase."

Thinking to console her, Bundy placed his arm lovingly around her and asked, "And did you see any man like me there?"

"Oh, yes," she replied, drawing away from him. "Lots like you — they were all tied up in bunches, like asparagus, and sold for ten cents a bunch."

Bundy got up without another word, and that day went to see his lawyer to see if he had enough grounds for a divorce.

1873 Publication

**"Congratulations on your wedding day!  
Too bad no one likes your husband."**

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# A Story of One Soldier, Part 1

by Iolanda Hicks

It's 1920 and the world was still adjusting to the repercussions of the end of World War I. William McNamee Jr. was born in Norristown, Pennsylvania to Grace (Heaton) and William McNamee Sr., both born of immigrant parents. The McNamee's were blessed with five children in total, three boys and two girls. William was number three. Grace stayed home while William Sr. worked with the Philadelphia and Reading Railroad Line.

At that time in history, there were over half a million men and women working for the various railroad companies, the time considered the "zenith of classic railroading". Five years after William Jr. was born, thousands of miles away, twin girls were born to Armida Antonelli and Giacomo Petrucci in Camaiore, Italy (Tuscany). The twins were named after two Italian Royal princesses, Mafalda and Yolanda, daughters of King Victorio Emanuele and Princess Elena of Montenegro. Armida was a strict mother and Giacomo was more lenient. The couple had eighteen children with twelve surviving, seven boys and five girls. The twins were the youngest of the surviving dozen.

For the McNamee and Petrucci families, the years passed on separate continents, through the 1929 crash of the American stock market, the Great Depression, and the Fascist economy of Italy, led by Mussolini. These two families, thousands of miles apart and unknown to one another, survived life's adversities and hardships.

William had perfect attendance going to school for twelve years and was a cross country running star for Norristown High, winning a partial scholarship to Michigan. On another continent, the twins had already finished their eight years of education requirements and were happily involved in dance and theater activities. Then the threat of

war raised its ugly head. When Adolf Hitler invaded Poland on September 1, 1939, Great Britain and France declared war on Germany, the beginning of WWII.

William joined the military after graduation, enlisting on September 1, 1939, and was trained as a Submarine Mine Planter. He left his home, his girlfriend Mary and that athletic scholarship behind. He was stationed in Panama with the Coast Artillery, focusing on the Panama Canal, doing the job he had been trained to do. In his off time, he loved to participate in the boxing matches his fellow soldiers would line up for him, many against Navy personnel stationed in Panama. At 5 foot, 7 inches and 160 pounds, William built a reputation of knowing how to deliver a powerful punch. After this stint in Panama, William returned to the states. He was transferred to field artillery stateside and became a soldier assigned to the 66th Panther Division under General George Patton. London, England was his next duty station. It was 1944.

In December of 1944, there was a feeling that the war would be over after Christmas. Unbeknownst to the Allied forces, "Adolf Hitler was secretly massing a surprise attack" that would allow German troops to march through Belgium. The ensuing battle was later called the Battle of the Bulge because the Germans created a Bulge around the Ardennes Forest. The offensive line of Hitler's Army was created by 3 German armies spread across a 75-mile front with more than 1 million soldiers. The Battle began on December 16.

Allied troops soon began making their way to the area. The S.S. Leopoldville, a Belgium, passenger ship, converted to a transport carrier, left South Hampton, England on Christmas Eve, carrying over 2000 troops, for the Battle of the Bulge: including soldiers from the 66th (Black Panther) Division. William was supposed to have been on that ship but was held back from getting on board that night.

About 5.5 miles from the coast of Cherbourg, France, not long after the Leopoldville got underway, a German submarine U-486 torpedoed the Leopoldville taking over 800 lives. The ship sank by her stern and became one of the worst tragedies in U. S. history. In 1984, Clive Cussler, author and shipwreck hunter, found the Leopoldville in 150 feet of water, not far from that French Port of Cherbourg and there it remains.



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The soldiers who fought in the Battle of the Bulge dealt with brutal winter conditions. The Battle was one of the deadliest single battles of World War II. Approximately 19,000 men died, 47,500 wounded and 23,000 missing. Patton's U. S. Third Army reached Bastogne from the south, ending the bloody siege on December 26th.

William had become one of the wounded, convalescing in a Belgium Hospital until he was released for home. Pieces of shrapnel that could not be removed safely from his body, left with him. Of the medals he received, The Purple Heart and Bronze Star were reminders of lives lost by the Allied forces. The cost of freedom was high. Less than 4 months after this battle, Germany surrendered to the Allied forces. WWII ended on September 2, 1945.

The twins in another part of the world did what they could to help. Life had become scary and its future unknown. The twins lived in Tuscany, bombed repeatedly by Allied Forces, one of the most war-damaged areas in Italy. The villagers feared the bombing, and the Nazi troops taking refuge in their small town. The women and children hid in the hills when these soldiers appeared, and they never knew how long they had to keep hidden. Apples from the trees were their only food until they could return home.

As young as the Petrucci twins were, they grew up fast. Both getting wounded by shrapnel did not stop them. Well known to be trustworthy, the twins helped the Italian Resistance when they could. It was the resistance fighters that killed Mussolini in April 1945, leaving a divided Italian society: a society in which there was anger against the monarchy (Victor Emmanuel III) for allowing the Fascist regime to last 20 years.

After recuperating stateside, William returned to Europe. This was peacetime and he was stationed in Italy. His assignment, as a United States Army First Sergeant, was to keep supplies available and stocked, for a restaurant in one of the hotels located on the Italian Riviera, where Army personnel could enjoy R and R. It happened that the young Petrucci twins were working at the same hotel. Mafalda took care of the owner's children while her twin was on the housekeeping team.

William did a superb job in stocking the storeroom with hard-to-find foods and his service contacts helped him locate those special items. Walking around the hotel daily, William kept seeing this good-looking Italian

woman. She seemed to appear in different locations of the hotel almost simultaneously! He did not realize that he was seeing the Petrucci twins. One caught his eye and William fell in love with her at first sight. He got an interpreter and searched for THE one: Mafalda. When she was standing in front of him, he asked the interpreter to tell her that he was going to marry her.

Mafalda looked at William and told the Interpreter to tell this stranger that he was a crazy American. He could forget that idea! Months passed but William won the heart of the Italian twin and her family. On June 12, 1947, William and Mafalda, along with one of her sisters, married in the church of Maria Assunta, Camaiore, Italy. William's tour in Italy was soon up and this time William had a bride. She was carrying his child and home was just across the Atlantic Ocean. Goodbyes were said to family and friends. Mafalda waved to her twin, who she might not see again, as the ship left the shores of Italy. When the Statue of Liberty came into sight, William knew home was near.

Clearing the immigration processing through Ellis Island, Mafalda joined her husband and his family who were waiting to take them home to Norristown, Pennsylvania. What will life have in store for this soldier? It was 1948.

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# Tales about Tobacco

by L. D. Rogers

When I was growing up back in the 1940s just about everyone I knew used tobacco in some form. There were people that smoked cigarettes that were already rolled and ready to smoke called tailor made. Then there were cigarettes that people rolled on their own and they carried a little sack of tobacco and some paper to do that. I have even seen people roll cigarettes using newspaper. There were cigar and pipe smokers and a world of people that chewed tobacco and even ladies that used snuff.

There were several different types of chewing tobacco. Some of it came in what they called a plug and some came in a twist. Then there is snuff. It was a powder that they put between their bottom lip and gum and used by some ladies. My grandmother dipped snuff and what she would get came in glass jars. The jars made very good drinking glasses so she got a nice drinking glass in the deal.

My daddy smoked until my brother was born and then mother put her foot down and said he needed to quit. He did and he said that was the best thing he could've done.

I was born in 1937 and the US went to war in 1941 when Japan attacked Pearl Harbor. Things became hard to find because everything was going to the war effort so the government came out with ration books.

You had to use the coupons in the book to buy certain things like coffee, sugar, tobacco, cigarettes, and gasoline. I can remember when we got our coupon books and the neighbors would get together and trade coupons. Mother would trade our cigarette coupons for sugar or other things. You also had a sticker that you put in the right hand bottom corner of your windshield that told how much gas you could buy. An "A" sticker was for a regular passenger car and farm trucks and commercial vehicles had a different class sticker. The gasoline used on the

farm had dye in it so you better not have farm gas in your regular car.

My granddaddy always said that tobacco was a year long crop. You started in the spring burning the plant bed and planting seed. When the slips got big enough you set them out in the field for the tobacco to grow. Every farmer that grew tobacco had an allotment of how much they could grow. It might be a half acre or quarter acre. Anything over that the government would cut down when they came to inspect your crop.

You had to worm the plant by hand and sucker them to keep them healthy. You couldn't spray them. Then it came time to cut the leaves off the stalk and take them to the barn. The next step was to stack several leaves on top of each other and wrap a leaf around them to hold them in place. You would call this a hand of tobacco. Then you put the hands on a stick and hang them up high in the barn where a fire would be built to smoke and dry the leaves. By that time it would be close to November and when all the tobacco was dry it would be loaded on the wagon to take to town to sell.

I remember my granddaddy telling me about the time he took his tobacco to the sale in the 1930s during the Depression. They offered him two cents a pound for his crop. He said he told the man he would take it back home and fill a ditch with it before he would sell it for that. He brought it back home and gave most of it away.

Hope you have enjoyed this little story about tobacco.

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# The Drunk and the Amazon Woman

by Elizabeth Wharry



Drohedra, Ireland is a charming town that I visited in 1994. I didn't notify my relatives that I was going to Ireland that year. I found a quiet AirBnB in this charming east coast town. Little did I realize it was run by the wife of a Garda (policeman). I asked her if she could recommend a pub. Naturally, she recommended the one where the "lads" hung out at. (Local cops bar)

I sat down at the bar and ordered a pint of cider. The barman, Jim, said, "so you're an American." I asked what gave it away. He said that my accent did. I said, "I don't have an accent, you do!" This led to a good natured crowd gathering and asking all kinds of questions. One local kept trying to grab onto me, so I gave him a shove. He fell off his barstool, and hit the stone floor. He was

unconscious. I looked at Jim, and said, "I'd best be calling the embassy. This could get ugly." Jim said, "Nay lass...he's always in his cups...lads...ye ken what to do."

Two of them dragged him out by his heels! I left the pub at closing and walked back to my BnB. It was about 11 pm.

The next morning, there was a knock at my door. The hostess said that there were two Garda in the lounge (parlor) and what mischief did I get up to last night? I grabbed my passport, and the phone number for the American Embassy. I went into the lounge, and there were Christopher and Kevin from the night before! "Come with us, the Watch Commander and the

Captain want to meet this Amazon woman who tossed Brendan out of the pub." (Remember now, I was 5'6 and 130 pounds) We walked to the station, and Kevin told me to get behind him before we walked in.

The Captain and Watch Commander were waiting. I heard a male voice demanding to know where this 7 foot, 450 pound Amazon was. Kevin said, "She's right behind me, sir".

He stepped aside, and the Watch Commander said, "This wee slip of a lass?!"

Both Christopher and Kevin confirmed that I was the "Amazon woman". A good laugh and breakfast was had by all.

Cheers!

**"Make sure the end justifies the jeans."**

**Seen in local women's store**



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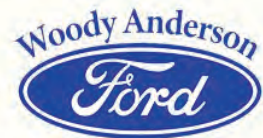
The Ford Motor Company views its situation today less with pride in great achievement than with sincere and sober realization of new and larger opportunities for service to mankind.

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# CRACKER JACK PRIZES

by Gerald Alvis, The Poet of Greenlawn



It came in two different sizes! If memory serves, one box was a dime, and another was; gasp, 33 cents! Though the sizes have become smaller (or perhaps I've become bigger), kids today can still enjoy this sugar-coated popcorn treat with a few peanuts thrown in as a bonus. But some of you remember the real prizes that once came in Cracker Jacks! They were miniature but real toys you could play with while consuming this confection. You'd be digging down and shaking that cardboard container while you chewed.

I kept my little treasures I harvested on "What Not" on the wall. It was a good place for all your "Doodads"

We were so resourceful then. We supplemented our often-meager preteen budget with coke bottles gleaned from the kitchen and the side

of the road. Three cents a piece was the deposit on those things, cashed in at the local grocery store. A carton or flat of cokes can be remembered by a few here and revisited at flea markets and antique stores. The cardboard carton held six, and the flat was a wooden crate that held 24. I can still hear the bottles rattle as I carried it inside.

I never misplaced or lost my phone because it was permanently attached to the wall. Party lines weren't an illegal substance, just a less expensive way to have phone service. But our telecommunication devices weren't without features. Some had that extra-long curly cord that facilitated walking around the room while conversing. The next level had that anti-knot device on the base of the receiver. It spun as you turned and rotated the phone so the cord wouldn't get tangled. That was our Rubik's cube, trying to get the phone cord back to its original shape. And by the way, am I the only one wondering where Superman changes clothes these days... haven't seen a phone booth in decades!

To you and I, this is common knowledge, but our time and world of youth have vanished. But I tell you what; it makes for great bedtime stories! Those daring days of riding your bike to school by yourself, going swimming in the local river or creek, or just walking over a hill or small mountain just for the view of what was on the other side.

Not only times gone by and adventures but another item as well. They need to hear of the challenges we've faced and what we overcame. They look at us old folks and can see we got through it! Those following us will face issues we can't imagine, and the world is changing at an increasing pace. But we can help prepare them the way the greatest generation prepared us. We are not only living history and examples; we are survivors! Despite the difficulties, WE ARE STILL HERE!

They will believe and overcome as well.

Talk to your children and grandchildren! Keep a journal, and video your stories. These are priceless as one day they will search back into the roots of their family tree.

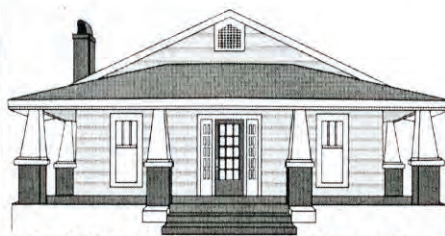
These are their good ole days, these little ones. They will reflect back on this, their time, and then dream of what it must have been like living in another century.

"I told myself I should stop drinking. But I won't listen to a drunk who talks to himself."

*A Simple Paradox*

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# What's In a Name?

by Hartwell Lutz

As a District Court Judge it was my job to listen to interesting stories of life experiences, told by ordinary people, who often didn't recall events the same way.

One of them is about the case of a man we'll call "K.P.", who was charged with "harassment," which is a Class C misdemeanor, not the most serious crime on the books. Many such cases involve cuss fights and the like, most of which are resolved without coming to court, but not the one of K.P., not this one anyway. He did have others.

K.P. had some problems, one being that he was, as they say, "bad to drink." Another was that he had both a wife and a girlfriend. Everything considered, a situation fraught with problems.

One day K.P.'s wife listened in on a phone conversation between him and his girlfriend, "Susie", the gist of which was that he was leaving shortly going to Susie's house. The wife knew where Susie lived, so she left home before her Romeo husband did, headed the same way, got there first and parked her car cross-ways to the narrow road in front of Susie's house, blocking it to traffic.

Our hero, when he saw his wife's car across the road, attempted to go around it and in the process ran off the road, turning him upside down in a large ditch, hanging by his seat belt. Many minutes later, he emerged mad, covered in mud and spitting out teeth, into the yard of a very dignified elderly couple who had the misfortune to live next door to Susie.

The old gentleman, having seen and dealt with K.P. on previous occasions, and having a good idea about why the car was parked in the road, addressed K.P., saying, "Boy, I done told you befo'; I don't want no trouble outta you. Now git outta my yard 'fo' I call the law."

He testified that K.P. shook his fist at him, and said, "Get back in your hole, you ole ground hog, you ole skunk or I'll whip your 'a—." If true, that definitely fits the legal definition of harassment.



K.P. was represented by a now deceased lawyer, who himself had been a judge. He put K.P. on the stand, which I guess was about his only hope. Strutting around as lawyers tend to do when they are questioning witnesses, his first question to his client was: "K.P., did you call that man a skunk and a ground hog?"

K.P.'s response was an immediate and clear denial of the complaining witness's testimony. He said, "Naw. I didn't call him no skunk, and I didn't call him no ground hog. All I called him was a m.....f....s.o.b." (Language modified somewhat here to make this appropriate to a family publication).

We have to wonder what K.P.'s wife was doing, most likely enjoying it, while all this was going on. But at least she had thirty days that she didn't have to put up with him.

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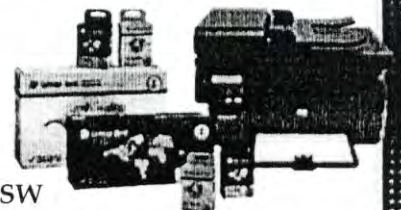
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# MY ALABAMA BRIDE



*by John Michael Hampton*

I stood there in the Circuit Court Judge's chambers, smiling at the woman of my dreams. I was about to be married to the most wonderful woman in the world, Charlotte Ann Gurley. The road to marriage for me had taken me to both highs and lows, from a springtime engagement to the death of the grandfather who had raised me.

On that Wednesday morning, June 9, 2004, Charlotte and I were sitting in the front yard of my mother's house on Padgett Drive in northwest Huntsville, making wedding plans. It was a bright, sunny day, and we felt full of life. Charlotte and I both agreed we wanted to get married as soon as possible, with very little pomp and circumstance, as her first wedding took forever to plan and cost a lot of money.

I had never been married, but I trusted Charlotte, because I had seen the costs involved when several of my friends got married, and in this day and age, having a church wedding does not guarantee a perfect or godly marriage any more than one performed by a Justice of the Peace or Circuit Court

Judge.

I called the Circuit Court Clerk here in Madison County, but was told that Charlotte would have to wait a certain number of days, as she had just been through a divorce not many weeks prior to that date in time. We understood the waiting period, but wondered if we could get married in Tennessee, where there was no waiting period on the law books at the time.

The first Tennessee county we called was Giles County. We explained our situation to the Circuit Court Clerk. She replied, "We would love for y'all to get married in Giles County, but our Justice of the Peace is not here today, and we do not know which day he will be in the office, so please call before you come."

I asked Charlotte, "Do you want to wait and call them back later in the week, or do you want to call another county?" Charlotte replied that she would like to call another county to see if we could get in quicker,

My mom, Patricia Vargas, suggested that I call Davidson County, because my hometown of Nashville is in Davidson County. So, I picked up the phone, looked up the number for the Davidson County Circuit Court Clerk, and dialed the number.

I told the Davidson County Court Clerk, "I live in Huntsville, Alabama, and have met someone here that I want to marry. Are there any restrictions on marrying in Nashville?"

The clerk told me, "We can perform the ceremony today! Bring fifty dollars for the license, and twenty-five dollars to pay the Circuit Court Judge to perform the ceremony. The money paid to the Circuit Court Judge is a donation, and is used for charities in the Nashville area."

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afternoon. It was nine o'clock in the morning when we hung up the phone. We immediately got in the car and left, heading for Nashville. We did have to stop twice before leaving Huntsville: first, to get some money from the ATM at the Union Planters Bank on Moores Mill Road; and second, to get Charlotte's driver license from her parents' house in Ryland. My mom was driving us to Nashville in Charlotte's blue 1989 Oldsmobile Cutlass Supreme car.

The drive to Nashville took two hours on Interstate 65. We got off the interstate at the 2nd Avenue/4th Avenue exit in Downtown Nashville (exit 210C). We turned left on 2nd Avenue, and traveled one block to the Howard School Office Building (which was where a lot of government offices were housed in 2004 and most of them still are to this day).

When we entered the building, we went to the left where licenses were sold. The clerks took our information, checked our identification, and collected our payment. Ten minutes later, we had a marriage license in our hands, and were headed to the other side of the building to the Circuit Court Judge. We sat outside his office for about ten minutes before he called us to come into his office. He read the traditional marriage vows, and we both said, "I do." Of course, we were smiling and giggling at each other the entire time—I bet the judge wondered if we were okay.

After the ceremony, my mom had Charlotte and I pose on the front steps of the building, holding our marriage license. That photo is one that I will cherish

until the day that I die.

Leaving Downtown, we decided that we wanted to find a good place to eat before heading back to Huntsville. I had a very good friend, John Arriola, whose family owned a meat-and-three type restaurant, Norman Couser's Country Cooking, that was located across from the Nashville Zoo on Nolensville Road.

We ordered our food. I had country fried steak with green beans and fried okra, Charlotte had country ham with green beans and mashed potatoes, and my mom had salmon croquettes with slaw and French Fries. While we were eating, Mr. Arriola came out to talk to us. When he found out that it was my wedding day, he smiled and said, "Dinner is on the house. Consider it my wedding present to you."

After we got through eating, we thanked Mr. Arriola for his hospitality and headed down Nolensville Road to Harding Place to Interstate 65, where we headed south toward Alabama.

When we arrived back in town, my mom went by a local store to buy herself some beverages to celebrate the occasion, and we arrived back home in Huntsville. While my mom celebrated, we went to the Walmart on Sparkman Drive to let our co-workers know that we had been married. One of our friends even got on the in-store speaker system to congratulate us on getting married.

As I sit here writing this, we are approaching the twentieth wedding anniversary of Charlotte and me. I am more in love with her today than I was twenty years ago, and I pray that God gives us at least another twenty years together.

Happy anniversary, Charlotte, and thanks for loving me just the way that I am.

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# Zesto and the Kwiki Man

by Bill Goodson

There was nothing illegal about what we were doing, but at the conscience-driven age of fifteen, it had that feel to it. When the tall man in the dark suit approached the service window at Zesto, I instinctively suspected something. Not that we never served well-dressed businessmen, but nearly never.

Fast-forward: I am often asked about my dad's famous Dipped Dogs, the trademark staple of East Huntsville's Five Points that put me through medical school in the 50s at fifteen cents a pop. How do you make them? Where'd you get that name? I have to explain that the recipe is under an ironclad family trust, that I'd have to kill them.

The name is a different matter. Many have forgotten that the original name of the hotdog-on-a-stick was Kwiki Dog, a franchise that distributed the flour mix and collected royalties. Possessed of an acute sense of cents, it took Houston Goodson only a year or so to decipher the ingredients of the batter. He ditched the trade name, coined Dipped Dog, and cut off the monthly check to the Kwiki company.

It was a few months later that I found myself saying, "May I help you?" to the suspicious-looking character.

"I'd like a Kwiki Dog," he replied matter-of-factly.

Then, in perhaps the keenest moment of insight in my young and naive life, I cannily parried the question. "Do you mean a Dipped Dog?"

"No," he persisted, "I want a Kwiki Dog. Don't you serve them here?"

"No, sir," I said emphatically, shaking my head and looking him straight in the eye, more sure of myself by the moment, "We don't have those anymore."

He shuffled and frowned, finally accepting the dog-by-any-other-name. With mustard. I watched him disappear around the corner before notifying my dad of the encounter.

"Well, I guess we've been visited by the Kwiki man," he said. "They warned me about continuing to use their name." Then he chuckled and congratulated me on the way I'd handled it.

We went on selling deep-fried dogs and

burgers and greasy onion rings, bucking the trends of an increasingly cholesterol-conscious citizenry, until Dad retired and sold the business in the 70s. Others kept the traditions going for years.

Then I looked up one day and saw a bar where the restaurant sitting area used to be. A BAR!! In FIVE POINTS!! Where crew-cut and bobby-soxer kids used to come after school and ball games! What would Dad say if he were alive? Now, make no mistake, Dad could bend an elbow and throw his head back with the best of them, and it mattered little whether the stuff was bonded or not. But right out in the open? This is different. "Oh, friends, we got Trouble, right here in Rocket City! With a capital T and that rhymes with B and that stands for Bar!" Meredith Wilson would have loved it.

Then the fire came. Sodom and Gomorrah all over again.

Now, out of those ashes a new edifice is taking shape, and, by the time this piece is published, a new era will have begun for Dipped Dog, and who knows what sort of company it will be keeping.

I could be spiteful and publish the recipe.

I could sic the Kwiki man on them.

Time marches on. Nothing stays the same. The Bear retires and then dies. Target comes to Jones Valley.

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# Old Pence

by Malcolm W. Miller



His name was Pennsylvania Jones, however everyone that knew him referred to him as "Old Pence." He was a very old black man. How old was he? I doubt if he really knew himself; but suffice it to say, he was very very old.

Old Pence just seemed to kind of drift in and start living with an old black lady who lived just down the road a piece from us. Her preacher husband had just passed away about the time World War II started and no doubt she needed help around the house carrying in wood and doing chores.

Since Old Pence did not have a radio and did not get the paper he would stop me as I passed by the little two room shack where he was staying.

As I recall he would always ask, "Well, son, how is the war?" I would always stop and chat with him awhile. We would talk about everything; the war, the weather, the crops, friends, etc.

I would always leave Old Pence and walk on down the dirt road feeling better than I did before I had talked to him. I felt better about people, the war and life in general.

My family was poor as were many others during these times but this old gentleman really had nothing. His shoes had long since fallen apart and were tied to his feet with wire and twine. His baggy clothes had been patched so many times that they looked like a quilt.

During this time there were no Government welfare checks for the poor and other people looked after the poor as best they could. I know from talking to him that there were times when he was hungry, however he seemed to always look on the bright side.

Almost every day when the weather permitted you would see Old Pence going

down the lane past our house headed for the river, loaded down with fishing poles, a burlap bag to put his catch in, and a homemade chicken wire dip net.

If he saw me outside he would always say in his very optimistic way, "I am really going to catch a bunch today."

It didn't seem as though he caught any big fish, but whatever he caught he took to his home and it was cooked for dinner, whether it was a carp or a turtle. He was always happy regardless of the catch of the day or anything else that was going on.

Many times, even today, when I really get depressed and life seems to be really bad for me, I think of Old Pence and remember our conversations and it makes me realize that I have much to be thankful for. There are always so many people who have it much worse than you think you do. Pence taught me lessons that I'll never forget.

Thanks to an old black man who lived many years ago I learned to look on the brighter side when things are rough. It is amazing to me which people make excellent long lasting impressions on the young.

**"When your kids become teenagers, be sure and get a dog so that someone in the house is happy to see you."**

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# BEASTS OF THE SOUTHERN WILD

by Bill Alkire

It began as a simple trip to Louisiana, near Baton Rouge, to see friends. In Louisiana, a celebration does not take long to start. When people sit down to have Community Coffee, a party will quickly start. I have seen twenty people assembling to have coffee at my friend's house. Everyone brings something to snack on and Bingo, a party.

I am digressing. When Reverend Ben, my wife and I arrived in Clinton, Louisiana at Ben's sister Sue's house, it was already coffee time. During the Coffee and Conversation, it was mentioned that Sue's son Levi, an actor (who lived in New Orleans) was in Houma, Louisiana shooting a new movie. Sue asked if we would like to go and watch them film, the answer was, "Why not?"

The four of us left the next morning and headed to Southwest Louisiana, arriving just before noon. The director of the movie, Benh Zeitlin, invited us to have lunch with everyone. We had a great visit and Benh asked if we could be extras for the next day's filming. The decision was made for us, Levi Easterly and Dwight Henry offered to give us their rooms if we stayed.

Levi worked up an excursion for the late afternoon. The

"I ask people why they have deer heads on the walls. They always say because it's such a beautiful animal. There you go. I think my mother is attractive, but I have photographs of her."

Ellen deGeneres

four of us went on a boat ride, while they cooked a Cajun dinner. We met up with "Fa'Fa" whose home was Bayou Cane, Louisiana. Fa'Fa's nickname was "Swamp Guy" he had the responsibility to transport the film crew shooting the water scenes in the movie.

Fa'Fa took us to look for alligators at Pointe Au Chien, an abandoned oil farm nestled in the Bayou. Fa'Fa had a small fishing pole he had bought at Walmart; he attached marshmallows to the end of the line and cast it out. The smallest alligators would attack and devour them.

When it was time to head back, a storm arose on the Bayou. The wind and rain began pelting us hard. Fa'Fa could not get the boat motor started. He removed the motor cover and repaired it before he could get it started. The alligators began to circle the boat searching for dinner, they already had dessert. It was raining heavily as Fa'Fa got the motor started. I was positioned on the bow to hold it down, as we swiftly began our trek out of the

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swamp. Ben went to sleep in the stern of the boat; my wife held on to Fa'Fa, and Sue continued talking (do not take that woman fishing or hunting!).

We made it back in time, the Frogmore Stew was done - cooked with corn on the cob, sausage, shrimp, fish, okra, and red-bliss potatoes. Additionally, we had garlic-parmesan bread and salad. The meal was delicious, they topped it off with Creme Brulee for dessert. Levi had worked in a kitchen restaurant and Dwight owned the Butter Milk Drop, Bakery and Restaurant, in the 7th Ward in New Orleans, Louisiana.

The next day we went through wardrobe changes and makeup. My wife was put in front of the ensemble. The group was to walk from the bayou village, along a causeway that ran from the island to the mainland. The Director took three takes. The temperature reached 103 degrees before we finished. We left after lunch. I drove back to Clinton, Louisiana. Everyone was tired.

Dwight Henry was the main character. Along with Quvenzhane' Wallace, a young Black girl of seven. The film was nominated for an Academy Award. Both Dwight and Quvenzhane' were nominated as supporting actors. The film was released in 2012 and won accolades at the Cannes Film Festival, where it won the Camera d'Or Award; it was said to be "among the best films to play at the festival in two decades."

The film was also a winner of the Grand Jury Prize at the Sundance Film Festival. Dwight and Quvenzhane went on to perform in other awarded films; Dwight (2013), *Twelve Years a Slave* and Quvenzhane (2014), *Annie*.

The film debut was shown to all the cast at the Montegut, Louisiana Fire station, on June 24, 2012. We were privileged to attend, a party that followed. "Beasts of the Southern Wild" was based loosely on Lucy Alibar's book titled "Juicy and Delicious". Quvenzhane Wallis was only five years old when she auditioned for the part of Hushpuppy. She beat out 3,500 other applicants.

The film reflects the way of life of those in the bayou, and the vast imagination of a child.

## I Named her Pearl

by *Scottie Sikerski*

She was alone on a train platform. Her joy just being there made me uneasy. She had her tattered suitcase and her dress in a plastic bag which she watched carefully.

She asked me if she could borrow a quarter for the phone, her friend who was supposed to pick her up had not arrived. The girl moved her belongings again, several times, up and down the platform.

I got the information I needed to leave. We said our goodbyes, she waved her hand at me as to say she was okay. As I started my car I looked back at her and she was moving her things again, anxiously looking over her shoulder. I saw this. I felt it in my heart. Had it been possible, I would have stayed with her until I knew she was safe.

## Treat Yourself!



**Treat yourself when you go out to eat with friends. But remember your waiter or waitress depends on the tips they receive. If you get good service TIP WELL.**

You will feel good about that.

With special greetings to the Huntsville High School Class of 1966

**Oscar Llerena**

# Mrs. Gilbert & Helen

*by Bill Miller*

My story begins in 1948. This is when I first met two of Huntsville's most memorable citizens, Mrs. Gilbert and her daughter, Helen.

I had run an ad in the local newspaper to sell my car, a 1947 DeSoto. Mrs. Gilbert answered the ad and asked that they be picked up early Sunday evening for a test drive. That afternoon my wife and I drove them throughout Huntsville and much of the County. As we finally got near their home I asked Helen if she would like to drive and get a feel of the car. She said yes. Within a short distance I realized she was not an experienced driver. She made it into the driveway but only after side-swiping the shrubbery beside it. As they got out of the car, Mrs. Gilbert remarked that it was a nice car and Helen answered, it sure is and I would like for us to own it. Mrs. Gilbert said they would call Monday afternoon and give me their decision. Monday morning I went by Bentley Oldsmobile where Monroe Williams was a salesman. Monroe had promised to help me sell the car so I told him about the prospect I had. He began to laugh uncontrollably, picked up the phone and started calling his friends and telling them that Mrs. Gilbert and Helen had landed another sucker. Needless to say, everyone who knew them and me enjoyed my misery. I was thankful when another poor soul took my place.

As the years passed and I reminisced with friends about the Gilbert women, other stories of their antics were told.

Mr. Cecil Hicks told me that he had put a lot of extra miles on his car going the long way to town just to keep from passing by their home. One time they approached his car

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*Created by Deane Dayton, who has been working on these collections for over 10 years.*

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at a traffic light. Seeing them coming, he locked his doors just as Helen was trying to open one. Mrs. Gilbert began hollering and making gestures. Finally, as the light changed, Mrs. Gilbert told Helen to let him go, because he was deaf and dumb.

Mr. Hicks' son, also named Cecil, says he had known of them to go shopping at the Hill's grocery store. After the groceries had been bagged, the two women would go to the parking lot, look for a car that was not locked, put their groceries in, then sit in the car and wait for the owner to come out. They would then direct the car's owner to take them home. There were times that they had additional stops to make before going home and the luckless driver, not sure what else to do, chauffeured them on their errands.

Another victim of the Gilbert's was the Roper family who had a number of problems with them getting in their delivery trucks. On one occasion a driver's delivery took a couple of hours. When questioned he told them that he had to take Mrs. Gilbert and Helen around to various places before they would get out. It was a real challenge not to get caught.

Yet another story was told by Monroe Williams. We had a scheme to set up the Locke brothers who were operating a Gulf service station that was located where the Medical Arts Pharmacy is now. The Locke's were known for their first class service at the station as well as on the road, and deliveries.

Monroe got a woman to call the station and identify herself as Mrs. Gilbert and ask for one gallon of gas for her lawn mower. She told them that they were in a back room and might not hear a knock so it would probably be best to kick the door to ensure that they heard him.

One of the brothers got a gallon of gas and went to the door. First he knocked, then after a short wait he decided to kick the door as instructed. As he was making a second kick, Mrs. Gilbert opened the door, started cussing, and charged at him. He ran backwards, fell off the porch into the shrubbery losing the gas can, ran to his truck and back to the station. It wasn't long until Monroe showed up laughing. He had been hiding in the shrubbery next door watching and listening.

After things settled down and the laughing slowed there was a promise to get even.

If there are others out there with stories of Mrs. Gilbert and Helen I would sure like to hear, or read, about them.

**"You know how to tell if your teacher is hung over? Movie Day!"**

**Scott Davis, 7th grader**

**Worrying works. 90% of the stuff you worry about never happens.**



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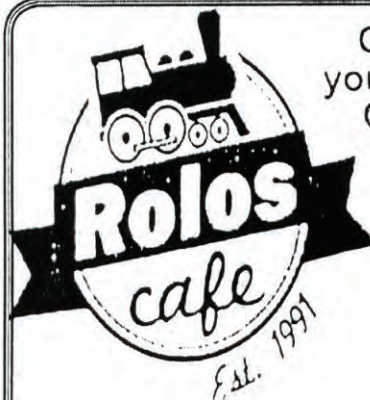
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# THE CUP OF COFFEE THAT MADE HUNTSVILLE FAMOUS

by Tom Carney



It was a hot day in June, 1941, when Colonel Charles E. Loucks and his assistant checked into the old Russel Erskine Hotel. In the past month they had spent time in Florence, Tuscaloosa, Kansas City, St. Louis and Memphis. Anyone that has traveled much can imagine how tired they must have been.

After taking a shower and changing clothes, Colonel Loucks walked down to the hotel's restaurant. Deciding he wasn't very hungry, he ordered a cup of coffee, when to his mortification, he discovered he had left his wallet in the room. When the waiter returned with the coffee, the Colonel explained his predicament, promising to return with the money. "Aw, don't worry about it. Sit back down and drink your coffee."

Amazed, not used to Huntsville hospitality, the Colonel sat back to enjoy his coffee when the waiter reappeared with a slice of apple pie.

"This ought to go good with your coffee, Sir."

The whole story might have ended with that free cup of coffee, if Colonel Loucks had not been so impressed by Hunts-

ville that he went back to Washington and recommended the city to his superiors.

One month later the War Department announced that Huntsville had been selected as the site for a chemical weapons manufacturing plant, upon Colonel Loucks recommendation. This plant would become Redstone Arsenal.

Of course many other factors affected the choice, but for years afterwards, Colonel Loucks would tell the story about the free cup of coffee that so impressed him.

**"My Grandma was a very tough woman. She married and buried 3 husbands, and two of them were just napping."**

**Rita Rudner**

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# PET TIPS FROM ANGEL

## Hot Weather Cat Tips



All cats can suffer from heatstroke, but some may be at higher risk than others. Cats with one or more of the following may be at higher risk:

- Obesity
- Respiratory difficulty or disease
- Neurological disease
- Being a young kitten or elderly cat
- Heart or cardiovascular problems
- Flat-faced breeds: Persian, Himalayan or Burmese
- Strenuous exercise

Consulting with your veterinarian should always be the first course of action if you're concerned your cat is suffering from heatstroke. But if immediate help isn't possible, there are steps you can take to help your cat cool down:

• **Take Your Cat's Temperature:** Check your cat's temperature every 10 minutes. A normal cat temperature should be between 100.5°F and 102.5°F. Temperatures of 104°F and above are cause for alarm.

• **Make Cool Water Available:** Cool water can help bring down their body temperature and help them rehydrate if they have become dehydrated.

• **Move Your Cat to a Cool Location:** At the first sign of trouble, take your cat to a cool, air-conditioned area indoors.

• **Just Add Water:** One slightly counter-intuitive approach is to use warm water to wet your cats ears, paws and abdominal region and place them close to a fan. This will create a cooling effect similar to sweating.

• **Apply Wet, Cold Towels:** If your cat's temperature is above 105°F or if your cat's gait appears to be unsteady, drape them in wet, cold towels or, if they allow it, put them in cool water until their temperature drops to 103°F, then discontinue. You can also put the cool washcloths in their armpits and groins as that is another area of large heat exchange. Adding a small amount of rubbing alcohol to the water can also help as the evaporation can create a cooling effect.

Remember, even if your cat seems to have recovered, it is still vital that a veterinarian check them out.

### How to Prevent Heatstroke in Cats

The best way to battle heatstroke is to prevent it from happening in the first place. The good news is, if you take the proper precautions, your cat should be able to stay cool, comfortable and safe on even the hottest of days. Here are some preventive steps to take:

- Supply your cat with plenty of cool water.
- Try giving him wet cat food for a little extra hydration on hot days.
- Allow your cat plenty of shade to lay under if they're going to be outside or in a sunny indoor area.
- If he spends most of his time indoors, make sure he's in a climate-controlled, well-ventilated location.
- Help your cat avoid hot pavement, which can cause them to overheat and can burn their

paws.

• **DO NOT** ever leave your cat in a parked car.

It is often difficult to tell when your cat is in pain or suffering and may not know how to communicate they're becoming overheated. So keep a close eye on them as the temperatures soar so you both can have a great summer together.

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## FRIDAY, JANUARY 31, 1958 THE BIRTH OF HUNTSVILLE, ALABAMA

*by Tom Carney*

Many people will argue that Huntsville had its beginning when John Hunt founded our fair city way back in 1805, while others will claim the cotton mills were the actual beginning. But for the people that lived and grew up here, the start of prosperity began with the launching of our first space satellite.

Times were hard in Madison County. There were few jobs, and even fewer opportunities. Outhouses were still common in many homes, and a large percentage of people still cooked on a wood-burning stove. The county schools closed for two weeks in the fall so the children could help pick cotton. Without their labor, it would have been impossible for many small "cotton farmers" to survive.

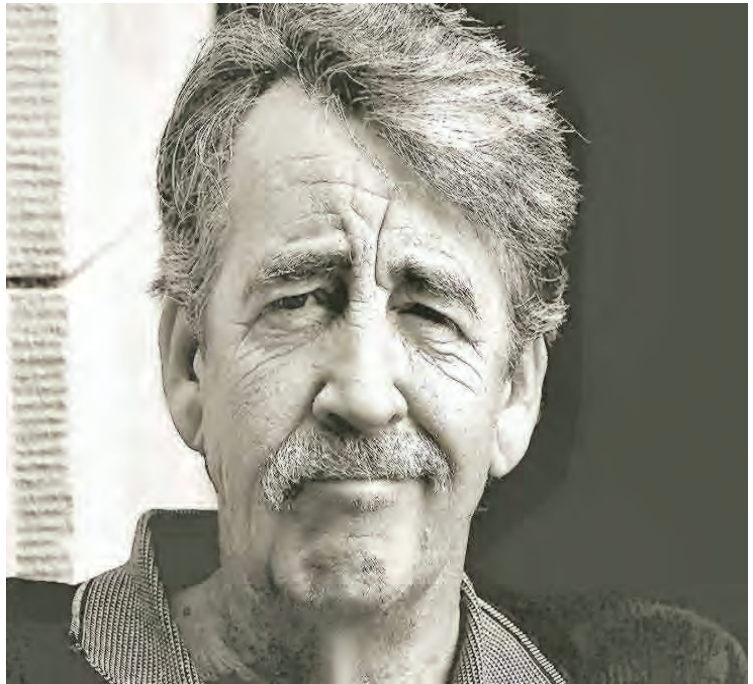
By 1950 the Government started transferring the rocket scientists to Redstone Arsenal. A few companies started opening up offices in Huntsville to take advantage of the government contracts that were being awarded for research and development. While this created new jobs, the majority went to people who had been transferred here.

A few natives were lucky enough to secure "good paying" jobs on the Arsenal. J. B. Tucker and his wife Margaret felt like they had struck gold when he was hired. With their home on Hurricane Creek, they were considered "Well off, especially when they bought a new car and began building a new home."

Mr. Tucker hired on at 80 cents an hour.

Huntsville continued its slow growth up until the late fifties when the Soviet Union, under Nikita Krushchev's leadership, launched the first satellite into space. World attention was focused on Huntsville, Alabama, as the rest of the world held their breath to see what we would do.

On the night of January 31, 1958, a Jupiter-C rocket was launched at Cape Canaveral, carrying an 18-pound satellite. The citizens of Huntsville and Madison County anxiously stood by their radios as word was relayed from Missile Control. Finally, late at night, the word was received. The satellite was up. Huntsville would never be the same.



Instant bedlam broke out downtown. Folks from all over the County began congregating on the Square, with more people arriving every second. Car horns were blaring and firecrackers were set off. One resident, caught up in the excitement, even showed up in his pajamas. Huntsville's representatives at the Annual Decatur Chamber of Commerce Banquet left in a mad rush when a waiter whispered the news to one of the members. The banquet hall was empty in a matter of minutes as the representatives formed a convoy to Huntsville, noisily blowing car horns the whole way.

Telephone switchboards were jammed as reporters from around the world relayed word of the celebration going on downtown. The next day The London News carried a picture on its front page of Mayor R. B. "Spec" Searcy setting off fireworks as jubilant bystanders cheered him on. The Huntsville Times sent its staff home and was shut down for the night when J. M. Langhorne, the publisher, received word. Immediately he ordered an "EXTRA" and employees began streaming in. A linotype operator was pressed into duty as a proofreader while another employee was assigned the task of making enough coffee to keep everyone awake through the night. Huntsville Times photographers, without even contacting the office first, rushed downtown upon hearing the news in

**"Why does Sea World have a seafood restaurant? I'm halfway through my fishburger when I suddenly think, what if I'm eating a slow learner?"**

***Lynda Montgomery***



an effort to capture the historic celebration on film.

Barely two hours after the Huntsville Times received word, the first "Extra" copy rolled off the presses.

Observers would later comment that though the celebration was in honor of launching America's first satellite, in reality it signaled the end of old Huntsville.

Within days, Huntsville became the focal point for the United States space program. High-tech businesses began pouring into town, setting up offices in converted cotton mills and anywhere else they could find room.

Men who had made a living picking cotton the year before suddenly found themselves helping build rocket components.

One man, a house painter at the time, later boasted that he was offered seven jobs in one day, with each employer out-bidding the other.

Of all the stories told to describe Huntsville's explosive growth after the success of the satellite, probably the best one is given by Leroy Hodges.

"There used to be this big cotton field up there in North Huntsville, surrounded by briar patches. Place was covered up with rabbits. About a month before rabbit season opened I went up there to look around, walk the fields and kinda get a feel for it."

"Opening day of rabbit season, I got up way before light, loaded my dogs on the truck and went on up there. Well, it was still dark, so I had to sit there and wait for a while 'fore I could see anything. Bout the time the sun starts coming over Monte Sano, I got a good look at the cotton field. Only it weren't no cotton field no more. In the past month they had done built a subdivision, complete with roads and all."

## Wishing My Friend Well

by Jim Vann

I heard from one of my old golfing buddies last week.  
He has prostate cancer and it has now gone into his bones.  
He is classified as stage 4 currently.  
He grew up at Hazel Green.

He has a memory like a steel trap and has one of the funniest senses of humor that I have ever known.

He grew up out in the county and told everyone he was from "re-sume speed" Alabama. That was the nearest sign to where he lived.

He told a story about his daddy. When their turnip green crop came in, he said his dad had to take turnip green sandwiches to school for lunch for weeks. He got so tired of them that one day he got out for lunch a little early. He proceeded to the bench where everyone placed their brown paper bag lunch. He went down the line there picking up each sack until he found one that was rather heavy. He thought that would be a good one.

He went out behind a tree to open it and said somebody was worse off than he was. The contents of the sack were 2 hickory nuts and a claw hammer.

I wish him well as he struggles with his health.

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# B-26 Crashes Near Huntsville

by Charles R. Wells



On an early summer morning in June of 1944, I decided to go fishing. With Mama and Daddy's permission, I found my fishing pole, dug a can of worms, got my new (to me) bicycle and got ready to leave. I had celebrated my fourteenth birthday about three weeks earlier (June 2nd), and Daddy had scrounged together enough money (\$6.00) to buy me a Hienz 57 used bicycle. By this, I mean it had oversize handlebars, no chain guard, a 26-inch wheel in the back and a 24-inch in the front. I was always going downhill. I rolled up my right overall leg to keep it from being caught in the sprocket and headed over to one of my favorite fishing holes on Indian Creek.

After traveling about three or four miles, I had gotten to the hill on the west side of the creek and the north side of 72 Highway. I was pushing my bicycle along a cow path that ran about halfway up the side of the hill. As I was nearing the highway, I heard a huge explosion to the south and looked that way. It appeared that the whole end of Rainbow Mountain was gone. There was fire and a lot of smoke, and I could see trees falling from the sky.

I looked up and saw a plane (B-26 Marauder) coming toward me. It was on fire and smoke was coming out of the cockpit and the bomb bay doors. It was losing altitude rapidly as it passed over me and headed toward a cultivated field at the top of the hill. Its nose was down at a very steep angle and did not flare out before impact. Upon impact, the nosewheel collapsed, the

nose of the plane dug into the ground, the tail went up into the air and a matter of seconds later, it blew up. The pilot had apparently dropped part of his bomb load on Rainbow Mountain.

I made my way closer to the crash site. The pilot must have radioed the base that he was in trouble because only minutes after the crash, the area was crawling with MPs, police cars and ambulances. Within minutes, they had formed a circle of guards around the site. There were several planes flying around the area. Curiosity seekers began to gather on the highway but were not allowed to approach the crash site. No one questioned me as to what I may have seen. I was told to leave the area immediately. I guess a freckled face, barefoot boy dressed in overalls, carrying a fishing pole and holding on to a weird-looking bicycle could not tell them anything they wanted to know. An article in the Huntsville Times stated that the only witness to the crash was a woman who could not tell them very much.

Besides myself, the McMurtrie family, working in their field across the highway, were also witnesses to the crash.

For whatever reason that I never understood, none of us were ever questioned about the event.

I had seen the plane many times before. Almost daily, depending on the weather, it would come over the farm several times; always approaching from a southeasterly direction, pass over and then go on to the southwest. A few minutes later, we would hear the report of exploding bombs dropping on a mock village on the Arsenal. Sometimes it would be flying low enough that we could clearly see the pilots. We would wave and sometimes they would wave back or dip their wings to let us know that they had seen us.

The crash site is now occupied by Huntsville Memory Gardens. Perhaps a fitting tribute to the three men who perished there.

**"My husband used to be my most prized possession. Now I have a Mercedes."**

**Ginny Patterson, Arab**



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Fire-fighters,  
Paramedics,  
EMTs - We  
appreciate all  
you do to keep us  
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## Huntsville News through the Years

### News from 1875

Someone broke into the smoke-house of John Giles and stole all the meat he had, except just enough for one day's rations for his family. Not long ago some villain killed one of Mr. Giles' cows, skinned her, took the hide and left the meat. The culprits will most likely meet their fate one night when they rob the wrong person.

- Huntsville was left in total darkness last night, because of the flooded condition of the gas works.

- Building lot for sale - one of the most desirable lots in the city, adjoining the City Brewery and one block from the Huntsville Hotel. 80 feet front by 190 back. Price \$700. Well fenced, good stable, fruit trees and grapes on the lot. Terms -1/2 cash, balance in 12 months. Contact Christian Fromm at the City Brewery

- Public Library - S. D. Cabaniss Jr. has supplied a need long felt in Huntsville - a public Library. It is an elegantly fitted up room in the rear portion of his book store, in Col. Hundley's new building, opposite the Huntsville Hotel.

- Halsey's Carriage shop, corner of Green Street and Meridianville Pike, has an elegant display of Phaetons, Rockaways, Spring Wagons and buggies.

- We hear of a couple living in Guntersville who have thirteen children, the oldest of whom is ten years old. Six pairs of twins are among the number, and all the thirteen are girls.

- D. B. Young will open an English and Classical School for boys at his residence on Franklin Street on Monday. Terms: \$4, \$5 and \$6 per month, payable monthly. Strict discipline applied.

### A Horrible Accident 1875

We have heard of a very disturbing story near Scottsboro. It took place during a "House-raising." As is customary on such occasions, chickens had been killed by chopping off their heads. Two little sons of the owner of the house

to be raised saw the chickens thus guillotined and during the day repeated this operation. It was just at a time when the men were lifting a heavy log onto its place. The father, who was holding one end of the log, casting his eyes toward the little fellows, saw that one of them had an ax raised to sever the neck of his brother, much like what they had seen happen to the chickens. The father let go of the log to save his boy, and it fell, killing six men, two instantly, the others living only a few hours. The ax fell before the father could reach the scene, severing the neck of one of his sons. Thus seven persons were hurled into eternity in a twinkling.

### Huntsville in 1812 - Grand Jury Reports on Conditions in Huntsville

- Bootlegging is alive and well in Madison County. It exists in every part of the county, especially in the city and outlying areas, with the exception of Merrimack. Most of the county officers and city commissioners offices are bought and sold outrageously.

Night hacks and omnibus lines help supply the bootleggers. Two

restaurants, one near Southern Railway Station and one near the N.C. St. L., are termed "dens of vice." Near one of these a man, carrying \$40 he had gotten from the sale of his cotton, had been reported murdered during the past year.

The city has been asked to revoke the licenses of the cafes, one of which was selling five barrels of illicit whisky a week..

- The jail situation is a pitiful one. The old portion of the jail that is still in use is a "horrible reminder of the dreadful dungeons of the Dark Ages" and the removal needs to happen speedily.

- The poor house is in condition of neglect and its 23 inmates, white and black, run out of food regularly at different intervals and are unable to obtain any doctors services when required.

- The Courthouse is a positive disgrace, with the Grand Jury room a germ-laden hole. It is the recommendation of the Grand Jury that this Courthouse be torn down.

The only reason that the county commissioners have not been indicted was because of the pleas of the solicitor.



## OZZIE

Hello, my name is Ozzie. I am a little over a year old and had my first birthday in March 2024. As you can see, I am a beautiful black and white male cat. I have intelligent dark eyes and medium length hair. Since I came to the Ark Animal Shelter in April I have been neutered and have had all my shots and been micro chipped. I came from a home that had children, dogs, and other cats but for some reason my family couldn't keep me so they brought me to the Ark Shelter. I am very happy to see the visitors who come in to my room and I greet everyone. I am a friendly and talkative cat and love to be petted and to play with toys. Are you looking for a cat to join your family? If you are, please come to the Ark Animal Shelter and ask to see Ozzie, that's me.

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# A Cat Named Sambo

by Cathey Carney

Published in OHM in the 1990's

Never in the history of Huntsville or perhaps the whole state of Alabama, has there been a cat as famous as a Siamese named Sambo.

For, in the late fifties, Sambo started out as a pampered pet of Joyce and Tom Jones and became a well known photographic model, rising to the position of the city's chief endorser of civic drives.

Sambo's mistress, Joyce Jones, was a photojournalist for several metropolitan newspapers. Since cats are always good copy, it wasn't long before she found a way to press him into service.

His career started when he was staring down a hole in the kitchen baseboard. Since cats have weaknesses for concentrating on a possible mouse exit, the pose was a natural. The pictures were published in the Birmingham News and were seen all over the state. (The joke was on Sambo. It was not a rat hole into which he gazed, but an un-repaired hole from which a piece of metal had been removed.)

Then, the Jones embarked upon a repainting and re-papering session in the living and dining rooms, another golden opportunity came to cash in on a cat's natural curiosity. The camera followed Sambo as he unrolled wall paper, dabbled in the paint, climbed a ladder and generally made a nuisance of himself until he was "fired." This picture story, entitled, The Little Helper, appeared in the Nashville Tennessean Magazine.

Sambo's pictures with captions continued to appear in the Chattanooga Times, Birmingham Post Herald, Birmingham News, Nashville Tennessean and the Huntsville Times. Altogether, he appeared in print fifty-two different times.

Then, the state editor of the Birmingham News, who had been looking for a continuing model, chose Sambo to appear from time to time in a series of pictures.

Throughout the year pictures of Sambo appeared as he celebrated Thanksgiving, Halloween, Valentines Day and Christmas. In fact, in observance of the Yule season, Sambo became a poet, (with apologies to Samuel Moore), writing a holiday poem which appeared in many newspapers.

As Sambo increased in popularity, Joyce had him insured by the famed insurance company, Lloyd's of London, as a photographic model. And, naturally, a picture story of the event appeared in the print.

In addition to metropolitan newspapers, including the Associated Press, Sambo began appearing in his hometown newspaper, The Huntsville Times, more often. When the city observed its Sesquicentennial, Sambo proudly "grew" a beard as all the males were asked to do. He was made an honorary member of the Huntsville Chamber of Commerce. As a result an account of this event and other activities, he was published in a book commemorating the Sesquicentennial.

Since Sambo was such a well known character, the photographer was asked to let him sponsor civic drives. So, he appeared in print for the Red Cross, Huntsville Symphony Orchestra, Civic Defence, Blood Bank, Community Chest, Crippled Children's Clinic and the Huntsville Humane Society.

As a matter of fact, when a heart drive did not succeed, the chairman said woefully, "It was probably because Sambo was not asked to endorse it." Through the years as Sambo's fame grew, from

time to time people from throughout the state would stop by to see him and to sign his guest book. As an added honor, the Puss 'n Boots Company sent him an unsolicited medal and certificate for "contributing to human happiness."

When Sambo passed from his first life, the late Reese Amis, editor of the Huntsville Times, published a long obituary reviewing the life of the famous cat. When the Courthouse was being decorated, then Commissioner James Record asked for a portrait of Sambo to be hung in a prominent place. For, he said, "Sambo is one of Huntsville's most outstanding citizens and deserves his share of recognition."

As a lasting tribute to the famous feline, the portrait hangs today on the third floor of the Madison County Courthouse.

Now, Sambo's "pawtobiography" brings him into his ninth life. His mistress, Joyce Jones has compiled a photographic account of the cat's rise to fame and his interest in helping civic causes.

The book is entitled "The Cat With A Thousand Faces," and was available by mail from Sambo Books.

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# Vacation Bible School

by Claudia Gates Hill



**"The most terrifying words in the English language are: 'I'm from the government and I'm here to help.'"**

**Ronald Reagan**

Thinking back to my childhood years in the 1950s and 1960s, a lot of fond memories come to mind. One that stands out above many others is Vacation Bible School at our church. Back then, the week before VBS was to begin, parents volunteered to drive their cars loaded with kids up and down the Dallas Street/5 Points neighborhood streets with the kids hanging their heads out the windows yelling, "Come to Vacation Bible School, Second Baptist Church!"

The following Monday morning at 9:00, all us kids would gather and be ushered into the sanctuary. We would recite pledges to the flag of the United States, the Bible and the Christian flag. A short time later, we were herded into age-appropriate classrooms.

There were several teachers for each class. One teacher would tell the Bible story of the day. Another would lead us in singing songs, sometimes teaching us a new one. Most times, a third teacher prepared a fun craft for us to make to take home at the end of the day.

She also prepared another craft that involved several steps to complete. We would work on it, little by little each day, and take it home on Friday, the last day of VBS.

Around mid-morning, we were allowed a short recess and served cookies and Kool-Aid. Funny, how I remember that mid-morning snack tasted so good! By the time the class ended at noon, we were tired and ready to go home.

A lot has changed since those bygone days. There is no longer an option to parade up and down the neighborhood streets inviting kids to attend VBS due to safety issues. Bible school is called by its chosen 'theme'. The hours have been extended into the afternoons and include more activities.

They still have a short recess with cookies and Kool-Aid, but one thing will never change: the Bible stories.

**"You know you're getting older when you go bra-less and it pulls all the wrinkles out of your face."**

**Sue Jacobs, New Hope**

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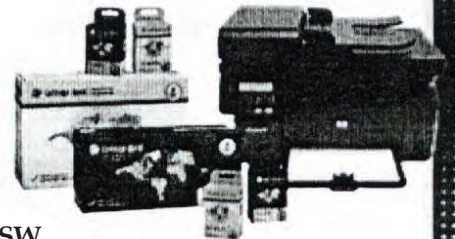
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# CITY NEWS 1911

## Mother of 13 dies from Paralysis

Mrs. Francis Limbaugh, 67 years old, died at 6 clock last evening in Patton Grove as a result of a stroke of paralysis suffered yesterday morning. She was the mother of seven sons and six daughters. The remains will be carried this morning to Monrovia, her old home, for interment today.

## Death caused by Rubber Snake

J. F. Holder dashed in front of train when frightened by companion. Frightened by a rubber snake in the hands of a companion, J. F. Holder, Sr., a young boy of Athens, dashed in front of a swiftly moving passenger train and was killed instantly. Jeff Tomlinson, 18 years old, and young Holder were standing near the railroad tracks, when suddenly Tomlinson drew the imitation snake from his pocket and shoved it towards Holder, who in attempting to escape from the supposed reptile, dashed in front of the train and was literally ground to pieces. Tomlinson was arrested.

## Woman Starts Panic at her Own Funeral

Decatur, Al Stretching out her hands toward those who had assembled about her coffin, Mrs. Jane Pitcock, an octogenarian, caused a panic at her funeral here according to reports. The funeral sermon had been preached and the lid of the coffin was removed to permit friends and relatives to take a last long look at what they believed to be a corpse. It was then that Mrs. Pitcock regained consciousness. She remained alive for several hours.

**For rent** - six room cottage on East Clinton Street - apply to C. F. Bost.

**For sale** - genuine O.I.C brood hogs and pigs, just the thing for quick money and best meat production. Address Bruce Moring, Ryland, Al or phone 522 Ring 2.

**Wanted** - gentleman boarders at 326 Randolph Street For rent - 5 room cottage with all modern improvement on East Clinton street - apply to Horace M. Layman

**For rent** - the Iberta Taylor residence on McClung Street. The house is handsomely furnished and possession can be given at once. Apply to Mrs. E. E. Ezell

**"I put my scale in the bathroom corner and that's where the little liar will stay til it apologizes."**

**Bonnie Fain, Albertville**

**Lost** - handsome Maltese kitten strayed from premises on Second Avenue. Finder return to Capt. and Mrs. Peter Simmons for reward.

**Wanted** - ladies who want sales positions - call Miss Kate Acklin at 202 Eustis Street.

**Money Found** - someone left an envelope containing \$4 in paper in the office of the Ideal Laundry Co.. owner pay for ad and recover same.

**Found** - two fine Jersey milk cows who have taken up at my residence on Meridian Street. Owner can have same by paying for this ad and their keep.

**Anyone remember this place? This ad ran in 1992 issue of Old Huntsville magazine**



## The Chicken Shack

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Friday & Saturday




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(owner)

Lisa Parcus  
(Club Mgr.)





### Man Arrested for Killing Dogs

Thos. Hooper, the surveyor, called at the Daily Times office to explain why he killed the two fine dogs about which the Sunday Morning Times had referenced. Mr. Hooper claims that the dogs had been killing his geese, which he valued at \$5 a piece and had also, he said, bitten a fine bull belonging to him.

He was fined \$15 in the Mayors court for shooting fire arms in the city limits and appealed his case to the law and equity court, where he also has a case against him. One of the dogs belonged to Miss Margarette Wellman, the other to Frank E. Murphy, who had the warrants sworn out for the arrest of Mr. Hooper

### Accidental Killing of a Man in Decatur

Woody Kirby and a man named Pigg engaged in a friendly scuffle which resulted in death to the former. They were in the round house when Pigg turned an air hose on Kirby's body, almost blowing out his vitals.

### Saturday at the Courthouse

Huntsville Saturday afternoon was a busy place, especially around the Courthouse where the warm weather brought the farmers in

with their mules and hogs for sale. Traffic on Washington and Jefferson street was blocked with the crowd and their vehicles in attendance on the old-fashioned livestock auction sale that took place this afternoon.

The Square was crowded but the streets were lined with shoppers. The spring weather surprised many out of their homes and the merchants were seen brushing up their windows with spring stock. Huntsville, from its appearance this afternoon, is certainly taking on a metropolitan appearance.

- For Sale - One Everett piano, bed stands, chairs, gas stove, air tight heater, one double set of harness, one saddle, one refrigerator, kitchen safe and few other household articles; also one lot cedar posts and kindling. Can be seen at my home on West Clinton Street for the next few days. - Mrs. C. E Suggs.

- Walker & Sitz, Washington Street - For soft drinks and lunches; also the place "across the corner." Both for Gentlemen only.

- Take your clothes to the Electric Pressing Parlor - old ones made good as new. Jefferson Street - telephone 66.

- Mr. and Mrs. W. W. Newman left yesterday on a business and pleasure trip to their silver mines in Canada.

- Miss Willie Harris is reported to be quite ill at her home on Adams Avenue.

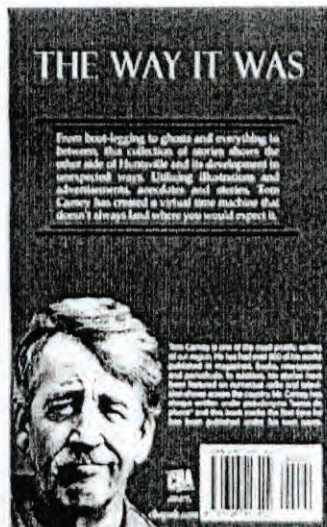
- E. R. B. Martin and J. K. Mahan, millionaire natural oil operators of Pittsburgh, PA and who have options on more than 20,000 acres of oil lands in Madison County, left this afternoon for their home after spending a few days here in the interest of their probable local operations.

The trip was secured by a prominent business man and friend of the gentlemen present, that within a very short time they expect to simultaneously start the drilling of 5 to 10 wells near Huntsville. The gentlemen made a visit to the Hazel Green and West Huntsville wells of the New York-Alabama Oil Co., and were pleased with the prospects.

**"My boss's idea of an unnatural act is giving someone a raise."**

**Lily Schmit, Gurley**

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



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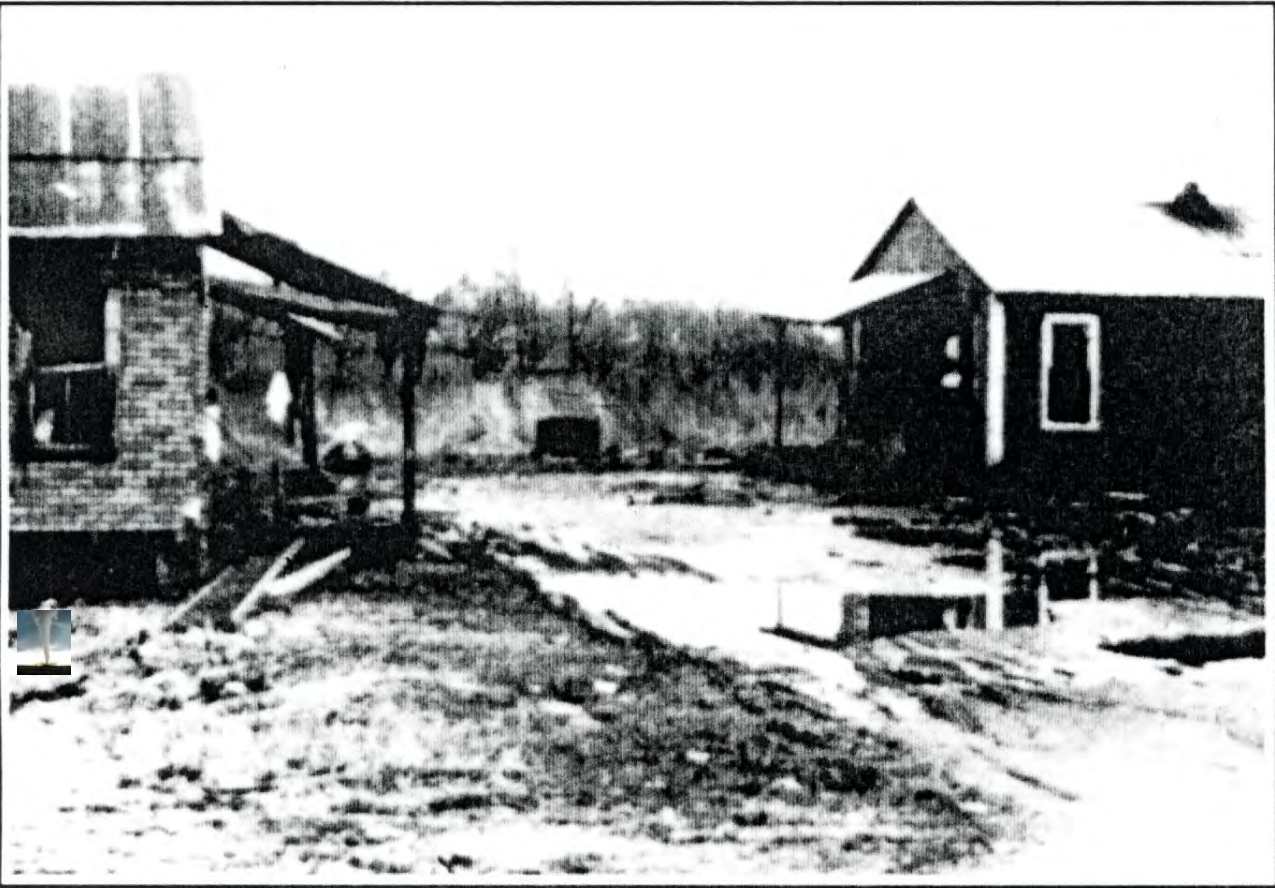
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# HUNTSVILLE HISTORY THROUGHOUT THE YEARS



West Huntsville's Booger Town, although a poor community in 1946, was home to many people who were hard working and proud. That same year the city sold their last mules and wagons to C.A. Floyd for \$200 and Lawrence Brock amazed everyone with his new television set. It only had a seven inch screen but it was the first in Huntsville.

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GONE, BUT THE FOLKS AT  
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