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# Old Huntsville

HISTORY AND STORIES OF THE TENNESSEE VALLEY



THE REAL STORY  
ABOUT

## BULLDOG DANIEL

"Bulldog Daniel was in one hell of a situation," remembered a close friend. "If he didn't cooperate with the authorities he could literally spend the rest of his life in jail. But if he did, he would become a pariah."

"Hell, everyone in Huntsville had something they wanted to hide and now they were all wondering what Bulldog would say about them, if he talked."

**Also in this issue:** "The Thing"; Wheel Barrow Football; Coming to Alabama; Cecil Fain and the Dr. Peppers; Jumping off the Flint River Bridge; "Ranger"; White Crosses; Interview with Jerry Hayes; Recipes, Tips and Remedies, and Much More!

## A LOOK BACK AT HUNTSVILLE HISTORY

# When life was simple...



In 1953 the popular Pub Restaurant was located on Pratt Avenue at the present site of Propst Drugs. That same year the Reverend J. Otis King held a revival at the White Castle, an infamous honky tonk located at the intersection of Meridian Street and Winchester Road.

Citizens were incensed at the newly installed parking meters around the courthouse square and Huntsville Hospital had become so crowded that beds were placed in hallways.

Downtown merchants lobbied the city council to block the proposed Memorial Parkway.

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# The Story of Bulldog Daniel

by Tom Carney

District Attorney Fred Simpson was at home on the evening of July 23, 1977 when he received the telephone call. Breathlessly, the caller relayed the news: "Bulldog Daniel, Chief Deputy Sheriff of Madison County, has been found dead in the park off of Drake Avenue."

"It's too early to know for sure," the caller continued, "but it looks as if he was killed by two shots from a shotgun."

Residents of Huntsville didn't have to wait for the news that evening to learn the details. Bulldog had been a highly popular law enforcement officer and news of his death swept across town like a brush fire. Rumors took the place of details and conjecture became facts as the news was passed from one person to another.

Within days it became almost impossible to separate the facts from the fiction.

**"Too many people spend money they don't have, to buy things they don't want, to impress people they don't like."**

**Will Rogers**

In a city where the vast majority of people had moved here from other places, Marcus "Bulldog" Daniel was a rarity. Born in Huntsville, he played football for Joe Bradley High School and was trying out for the Samford University football team when he received his draft notice in 1951.

Though Daniel took part in some of the bloodiest fighting of the Korean War, it was his assignment as an M.P. that would have the most effect on the rest of his life. His superiors praised him as a natural born law enforcement officer for his ability to control drunk and unruly G.I.s, a feature probably enhanced by his 250 pound muscular physique.

After his discharge, Daniel returned to Huntsville and went to work at Hills grocery store as a meat cutter. Though the position was considered "a good job", Daniel missed being an M.P. One day while cutting a pork roast for J. Lauin Carroll, the Chief of Police, Daniel asked about becoming a policeman.

The chief, after eyeing young Daniel carefully, told him to "go on down, get you a uniform and report in the morning."

"Daniel didn't even wait to wrap the meat or pull his apron off, recalled an old friend. "Fifteen minutes later he was being fitted for a uniform! There wasn't no such thing as police training back then. They just



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put you in a uniform, gave you a gun and told you to walk a beat. If you stayed out of trouble for a few months they would then assign you a patrol car."

"We had some damn good policemen back then," recalls one veteran. "We didn't get paid hardly nothing, the cars wouldn't run half the time but we still managed to keep the law. To be a policeman back then you had to be a stand-up guy, and you had to have honor."

Daniel quickly earned the respect of the other officers on the force. "He was a cop's cop," recalled Bobby Smith. "When he would get hold of a case he just wouldn't turn loose until he solved it. That's why they named him Bulldog."

To some people, however, the name Bulldog had a different meaning. When a fight broke out in the yard of J. B.. Webb, a well known bootlegger, Daniel answered the call. Pulling up in his patrol car, Daniel got out and casually lit a cigarette while watching a half dozen drunks going at it tooth and nail.

"Aren't you going to call for a backup?" asked an incredulous bystander.

"Hell, I am the backup," replied Daniel in a slow drawl as he carefully stomped out the cigarette before wading into the melee with both fists.

Daniel soon found out that being a policeman was much different than being an M.P. In Korea, it was a simple choice to arrest someone breaking the law, but in Huntsville the choice was much more complicated. You had to know who was friends with whom, who supported whom in the last election and who was being paid off.

The fact that bootleggers and gamblers were allowed to operate in Madison County was an accepted fact. "What were we going to do?" asked one old time deputy. "If we closed one place down, another would open up. If we arrested a bootlegger he simply paid a small fine and was back in business the same day. At least, this way we had some type of control over them."

According to one small time bootlegger who ran a shot house in west Huntsville, "It was called having an understanding."

Adding to the troubles of enforcing the law was the fact that the police force was woefully under-manned and underpaid. The county police worked on the fee system, meaning they got paid according to how many arrests they made. Deputies received a 50 cents bounty per arrest while

the sheriff received compensation for every prisoner who spent the night in the jail.

"We spent more of our time arresting drunks rather than patrolling" remembered a veteran of the force. "Oftentimes the sheriff would come in on a Saturday night and check how many people we had locked up. If it wasn't enough, he would tell us to hit the streets and find some more."

Left unsaid was the fact that the political system actually expected the sheriff to supplement the meager funds allocated to the department. As one old time member of the county commission said, "If the bootleggers were going to break the law, why not have them help pay for the law?" Bulldog Daniel, having grown up in Huntsville, was well aware of how the system worked. After all, it was virtually the same system that had been in place, and thrived, since the turn of the century.

Dave Headrick remembered joining the police force. "First thing Bulldog said to me was, 'Get a haircut, get rid of those damn cowboy boots and learn to keep your mouth shut.'"

Headrick later said he would have been better off



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if he had listened to Daniel.

Keeping your mouth shut was an important part of being a policeman in Huntsville and people soon learned that Bulldog never talked.

Within a few years Daniel became an important part of the system. Whether it was a gambler wanting to make a contribution to a politician or a bootlegger wanting a message delivered, he was the one everyone went to. Some people also claimed he was the person to see if you wanted to make a payoff or buy protection.

"He also became a damn good cop," a friend said. "His uniform and badge were the most important things in his life. He was just born into a system that was different than today's."

By 1967, when Jerry Crabtree was elected sheriff, the department was going through a transition. Veteran police officers who had once patrolled half the county by themselves now found themselves riding in a patrol car with a college graduate half their age.

"Used to, if we knew someone had done something, we'd just arrest them and that was that," said one veteran. "Now we had to read them their rights, fill out reports and, if something went wrong, worry about our partners telling the same story. Hell, we had civil rights lawyers crawling out of the woodwork back then trying to make cases against us."

"Huntsville was growing up" as one local put it, "and so was the sheriff's department."

**"I found out it's not good to talk about my troubles. Eighty percent don't care and the other twenty percent are glad I'm having them."**

**Tommy LaSorda,  
LA Dodgers Mgr.**

After hiring Daniel as his chief deputy, Crabtree began trying to modernize the sheriff's department. He successfully lobbied to get rid of the fee system and hired additional deputies. New equipment was purchased and a merit system introduced.

Unfortunately, part of the new equipment included over \$4000 worth of electronic listening devices, commonly known as "bugs." The sheriff's department later justified the purchase by stating the equipment was used to gather information on suspected members of the militant Minuteman organization, as well as organizers of a city garbage strike. In a report to the Alabama Law Enforcement Planning Agency, the sheriff's department stated the devices were used to compile over 200 files on people in Madison County.

Before long, rumors began spreading that certain officers, acting on their own, were bugging the phone of a local judge. Other rumors claimed that a bug had been hidden in the



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room where the Grand Jury met.

"My office was even bugged," said Fred Simpson, "and I was the District Attorney."

The bugs worried Daniel. Although he supported almost anything that would help law enforcement, he thought the officers had crossed the line. "It's going to bring in the FBI," Daniel warned a friend.

Though the FBI never investigated the wiretaps, the State Attorney General did, and with Daniel being the chief deputy he became the focus of most of the questions.

"Bulldog had been a cop for almost twenty years," recalled a fellow officer, "and he was loyal to the force. There was no way he was going to inform on another officer."

"They (the investigators) talked to Bulldog several times but when they couldn't find out anything the investigation just fizzled out. Later on, though, there was hell to pay. Bulldog called the officers into the squad room and cussed them out for almost a half hour. When he got done they (the officers) were more scared of him than the FBI and the Attorney General both!"

During the sheriff's election of 1974, the department was bitterly divided. Most of the newer officers favored Crabtree, who was the youngest sheriff to be elected in the state's history, while the veterans favored Dave Headrick, a long time member of the city police force.

Earl Frazier later described the campaign as one of the dirtiest he had ever seen. "One of the cops had placed a bug on Headrick's phone trying to dig up dirt and Headrick had half the sheriff's department feeding him information about Crabtree."

Daniel had supported Crabtree for almost eight years but now he was starting to have doubts. "The bug on Headrick's phone was what finally did it," Frazier said. "Daniel knew that Crabtree didn't have anything to do with it, but was scared that if things like this went on any longer it was going to leak

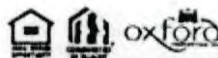
out and cause another investigation."

It was no surprise to anyone when, after Headrick was elected sheriff in 1975, he kept Bulldog Daniel as his Chief Deputy. They had known one another for over twenty years and were best friends. It was an odd relationship for many people to understand, as Daniel was not just the Chief Deputy, he was also Headrick's mentor and sometimes father figure.

"I remember a time when Bulldog came to work one morning in a bad mood," said a veteran of the force. "I was standing in the hallway talking to the sheriff when

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Bulldog came up and angrily asked me why I wasn't out on patrol. Before I could reply he turned and started to walk off when suddenly he stopped and looked back at the sheriff."

"And get a haircut!"

Headrick later said his first day in office was an eye opener. "I had only been sheriff for a few hours when a man, claiming to represent local bootleggers, asked for an appointment to establish payoff prices! I didn't even let him finish. I hollered for Bulldog and told him to get this man out of my office."

"I could just see the headlines in the paper: 'New Sheriff Takes Payoff on First Day on the Job!'"

Whether intentionally or not, that set the pattern for the events to follow. If someone wanted to talk to the new sheriff they had to talk to Bulldog first. Any changes in the department had to be cleared with him as well as any statements to the press. This caused a certain amount of talk in the department, especially among the officers who had supported Crabtree.

And there was plenty to talk about. Everyone, friend or foe, agreed that Dave Headrick was not exactly your typical sheriff.

"Wine, women and song are all right for the person on the street," recalled Headrick, "but once you become sheriff you are supposed to become holy. I got accused of a lot of things but I was never accused of being hypocritical! I liked to drink, I liked pretty women and I liked to play poker but

so did everybody else in Huntsville." "Hell, I thought they were electing a sheriff. I didn't know they wanted an angel."

Before long everybody in town had their favorite story about the sheriff. "He was seen singing on stage with Frankie Lowery at a local nightclub - he lost \$1200 in a poker game - he got into a fight on an airplane when they refused to let him drink his own liquor - he was seen partying with go-go dancers."

Headrick was a talented country music singer and that too often got him in trouble. In one incident, after just cutting a new album, he walked into the Peppermint Lounge and after getting on stage announced that he was the High Sheriff of Madison County and had a new record for sale. "Anybody that wants a copy can pay Chief Daniel who is stationed beside the door and will be watching everyone who leaves." Needless to say, many bar patrons were more than happy to oblige the sheriff.

"We were just having fun and everyone knew it," said Headrick, "but the way the story came out it sounded like extortion!"

Regardless of Headrick's wild antics, no one ever accused him of not being a good law enforcement officer. Several months after taking office he met with Daniel and talked about his plans to "clean up Huntsville."

After listening patiently for a few minutes Bulldog interrupted the sheriff. "Who are you going to arrest?" he asked. Are you going to arrest "XX"? He uses the mayor as a character reference. Or how about "XX"? He was the best man at Judge "XX's" wedding



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**"The cat could very well be man's best friend but would never stoop to admitting it."**

**Karen Maroon, Huntsville**

and is in tight with "XX." You want to go after "XX" ? Forget it! You try that and the people in Montgomery will have your job next week! You better remember that Huntsville's a small town and you have to work with these people"

"I laughed," said Headrick, "but the next day at the courthouse I started looking around. Bulldog was right. They didn't want a sheriff to enforce the law, they just wanted a sheriff to arrest the murderers and keep the riffraff off the street."

To a community used to a sheriff keeping a low profile, Headrick was a radical departure from tradition. Unfortunately he attracted the attention of the wrong people.

The State Attorney General's office, still smarting over the wiretapping episodes a few years earlier, began taking a quiet look at the new sheriff of Madison County and the FBI began questioning friends and associates about possible corruption in the department. Even the Internal Revenue Service got into the act by probing into Headrick's income and expenses.

Probably more dangerous, even though Headrick didn't realize it at the time, was the attention he was attracting to the local gambling and bootlegging industries.

Federal authorities had been working on an indictment of a national brewing company, in Milwaukee, when they uncovered allegations that the company had paid a local beer distributor \$42,000 to promote their beer. Investigators then

began probing beer sales in Madison County and soon discovered it to be one of the "wet-test" counties in the nation.

The tiny town of Triana, AL, with a population of only 228 people, sold 320,064 cases of beer in one 12 month period. That was equal to 1,404 cases of beer for each resident. New Hope, population 1,300, sold 379,265 cases of beer in the same period.

Many people assumed Headrick was being paid to turn a blind eye and as he became the focus of investigations it began to draw more attention to the bootleggers. It would almost be an understatement to say they were not happy with the current publicity.

And then there were the gamblers. Bookies and card games had been operating openly in Huntsville for years but now that authorities were taking a close look at bootlegging and payoffs, they too came under the magnifying glass. The fact that Bulldog and Headrick both were avid card players only made the matters worse.

"Things got so bad," said one bookie in business then, "that the FBI was parked out in front, state investigators parked in the alley, and the Huntsville News was on the telephone all at the same time."

"It wasn't any secret that Dave Headrick had to go. His partying and carousing was bringing the heat down on everyone."

"Bulldog knew I was in trouble before I did," remembered Headrick. "He came in my office one day and after closing the door, told me to sit and listen. He told me that rumors were flying all over town about investigations and that the word on the street was they would continue until something was found to indict me with."

"At first I was incredulous but after thinking about it for a few minutes I realized the seriousness of the situation and asked Bulldog what he thought I should do."

"Just do your job and keep your mouth shut," he replied, "and let me see what I can do!"

If Daniel thought he could make the investigations go away, he quickly learned differently when he himself became the focus of the criminal probes. The investigators had long suspected that Bulldog was the middleman and the only person that could connect Headrick to the alleged payoffs.

The campaign against Daniel was subtle at first. An investigator would call him at work to pass on gossip about which

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

**Karl Peterson, Huntsville**

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of his friends were talking to the FBI and odd things, like the week's menu for Kilby Penitentiary, began arriving in the mail. Strange cars would park in front of his house with the motor running, rapidly driving off whenever someone approached. Try as they might however, the investigators soon realized they had reached a stalemate. No one was going to provide any information about Headrick or Daniel as long as they were in office.

Ironically, it was the sheriff's department that finally provided the authorities with the break they needed. On June 15, 1977, Headrick was involved in an altercation with two young soldiers at a local nightclub. When the sheriff ordered the soldiers to leave and they refused, they were taken to the county jail. What happened next soon became a subject of controversy.

One of the soldiers testified in court that Headrick and another police officer, Lt. Graves, assaulted him in the jail. Headrick claimed that any beating was done by Graves alone, and while Graves admitted his participation, he swore that Headrick, too was involved.

"I know it sounded bad," recalls an old veteran, "but you gotta remember, in 1977, people just didn't cuss out cops and get away with it."

The jury chose to believe the soldier's version of the events and on Nov. 10, 1977, Sheriff Dave Headrick was sentenced to 90 days in jail on a federal misdemeanor charge.

"Getting only ninety days was the worst thing that could have happened to Headrick," recalled a local attorney. "If he had gotten at least a year they would have probably dropped the other investigations."

After Headrick was convicted, Governor George Wallace appointed Bob Eddy as the new sheriff. Immediately after being sworn in he called Herman Daniel, Bulldog's brother and also a long time deputy sheriff, into his office.

"Bulldog's got to go,"

Herman recalled Eddy saying, "My people don't want him and if he stays he's going to be indicted."

"He just wasn't the same after he left the force," recalled Eunice Merrell (of Eunice's Country Kitchen on Andrew Jackson Way). "He used to come by my restaurant all the time and he had always been a quiet person but now he would sit there and drink his coffee and stare into space. He used to carry his gun in his pocket and whenever he sat down he would reach for it and move it out of the way. Now when he reached for it there was nothing there. I thought he was one of the loneliest men in the

world at the time."

"He was in one hell of a situation," remembered a close friend. "If he didn't cooperate with the authorities he could literally spend the rest of his life in jail. But if he did, he would become a pariah. Hell, everyone in Huntsville had something they wanted to hide and now they were all wondering what Bulldog would say about them, if he talked."

With Headrick and Bulldog out of office, it became easier for the prosecutors to find people willing to testify.

"I admitted making payoffs to 'XX' and 'XX,'" remembered one prominent bookie, "but this was ridiculous. I told them I had never given a penny to Bulldog and why should I? I was operating in the city and Bulldog was the county law. If I was paying off the county where was the city supposed to have been? Playing tiddly winks? They accused me of lying and said they were going to call me before a Grand Jury. If I told the same story they would indict me for perjury. I figured this was a good time to take a vacation. A long one. Out of state."

"I heard from Bulldog while I was serving my sentence at Lampoc in California," recalled Headrick. "He seemed almost resigned to what



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was happening. "It's just a matter of time," he wrote.

On June 7, 1978 Dave Headrick and Bulldog Daniel were indicted on felony racketeering charges. The indictment alleged 39 counts of conspiracy and bribery involving organized gambling in Huntsville and Madison County. If convicted they were facing up to 40 years in jail.

"After I got out, I went to Montgomery to talk to 'XX' about the indictment but he wouldn't talk to me in his office," recalled Headrick. "I met him that evening at the Holiday Inn and he told me there was nothing he could do. The whole thing was causing trouble for too many people and someone had to take the fall."

"About a week before the trial was scheduled to begin Bulldog called me and said he wanted to talk. 'XX' had already told me the state was trying to cut a deal with Bulldog to get him to testify against me but we had been friends for too many years for me not to meet him."

"We met on Bankhead Parkway at one of those scenic pull-offs where you can see all of Huntsville down below. Neither one of us spoke about the upcoming trial. We just sat there on the rock wall in silence watching the flickering lights below."

"Several times Bulldog started reminiscing about something that had happened many years earlier and began to chuckle about it. Then his voice would trail off and there would be silence again. I asked him if he remembered my first day on the force."

"Yeah," he replied laughing, "and you still need a haircut!"

"As we walked back to the car we shook hands and he told me good luck. I told him that he was my friend and to go ahead and do what he had to do. I would understand. I never saw him alive after that."

Three days after the death of Bulldog Daniel, Dave Headrick appeared in Federal Court in Florence and pleaded guilty to one count of conspiracy to accept bribes to protect gambling operations in Madison

County and was sentenced to four years. Without Bulldog, much of the government's case had essentially collapsed.

"I believe I could have fought and won," said Headrick, "but it just wasn't worth it any more. My best friend was dead, my career was destroyed and I was broke. All I wanted to do was to go somewhere and crawl into a hole."

Though the Huntsville Coroner ruled the death of Bulldog as suicide, many people refused to accept the ruling. Most people in Huntsville had heard the rumors of Bulldog supposedly implicating prominent people in the rackets and now it was easy to believe he had been murdered to keep him quiet.

"I heard the same rumors and that's why I asked for a Grand Jury," said Fred Simpson. "So many stories and exaggerations had been told, I knew no one would believe it until the facts were laid out. The bottom line is the grand jury, the coroner, the state toxicologist, the attorney general's office, the FBI, the sheriff's office and the Huntsville police all investigated it and they all agreed it was suicide. If it was murder, every one of these offices would have had to conspire to keep it a secret and that's impossible. Huntsville can't keep a secret that well!"

With Bulldog's death officially ruled suicide, only one question remained... why?

Perhaps the best answer was given by Earl Frazier, an old time veteran of the sheriff's department, who when reminiscing about Bulldog several years ago, was asked why he thought Bulldog committed suicide.

Frazier was silent for a long time, almost as if he was remembering his own days of wearing a uniform. Finally after what seemed like an eternity he slowly replied.

"Would you turn against all of your friends?"

In 1985, Dave Headrick was awarded a pardon from the State of Alabama.

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- Lost - a 38 calibre Army Colt pistol, wooden handle. Return to Huntsville Hotel bar. \$9 reward

- An unfortunate incident occurred this past week when a prominent local businessman returned home intoxicated after spending the evening in a saloon. Not wishing to awaken his wife, he proceeded to enter through an open window. The wife, hearing the noise, shot him twice in an embarrassing part of his body.

- Jim Blizzard, a well-known citizen of Jackson County, was arrested by Deputy Marshal Arnold on a charge of retailing whiskey and was brought to the city. Blizzard was tried before Commissioner Greenleaf and bound over in the sum of \$300.

- Remember - Wednesday is the day for the Elk's annual river excursion. \$1 round trip, good boat and barge, good music and a jolly good time.

- Mr. R. W. St. Clair, of Hurricane, was among the visitors to the city Monday.

- A marriage license was issued to Jerry C. Jones and Emma Yarbrough.

- Cantrell & Young, the reliable druggists of Huntsville, are having calls for "Hindipo", the new kidney cure and nerve tonic that they are selling under a good guarantee. It's merits are becoming the talk of the town and everybody wants to try it and if it doesn't work, no money will be paid for it. Try it today.

- John McLane was shot through the leg yesterday by Oakley Harris. The shooting occurred in front of the McGee

Hotel and it was so quick that very few persons saw it. McLane and Harris had a few words in dispute and it is understood that the former struck the latter, who staggered back and drew his pistol, a .41 calibre Colt. Mr. McLane grabbed at the pistol and in the scuffle that ensued, the weapon was discharged, the bullet striking McLane's right leg below the knee. The bone was splintered and it is feared that the limb will have to be amputated.

Harris was arrested on a warrant charging assault with intent to kill and was immediately released on a \$300 bond.

- For Sale - Monte Sano cottage known as the Bob Halsey cottage is for sale at \$750.00.

## Gibson's Books

We have stocked our shop with a general line of used and rare books and ephemera as well as other antiques. Our specialties include Local History, Southern History, Southern Cookbooks and Southern Fiction. We also have postcards, sheet music, advertising, photographs and other ephemera.

We will be happy to answer any questions you have by either email or phone. Our open shop West Station Antiques is in Downtown Historic Owens Cross Roads in Northern Alabama.

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**"People say, 'Don't worry,  
that spider is smaller  
than you.'  
Yeah, so is a grenade."**

**Phil Jackson, Arab**



The heat of summer is with us again. In recent years, as I have aged, I have enjoyed warmth more than cold and must carry a sweater to church and VBC performances because of the AC set for the hotter temperature of young folks.

I've been blessed with two more grand babies recently. One boy is already here from one of my sons and his wife in Birmingham from late June, and the other is a girl baby, due July 1, from my only daughter and her husband. It's not here as I write this article.

I hope you can celebrate the fourth on Thursday or during the following weekend. It's the time I expect watermelon slices to end a fine lunch or

dinner of luscious, tender spare ribs, baked beans and potato salad.

The perfect way to end your evening on the fourth is to watch "A Capitol Fourth" on PBS television. One showing is at 7:00, and a re-play begins again at 8:30. Our family enjoys it the most, ending with spectacular fireworks.

As we age, exercise is important, but harder to do as stiff joints discourage us from doing what we know we should. Swimming pool exercise is enjoyable, you get a bit of sun, and you can exercise with no impact on your joints and gain flexibility that you need. Don't miss the next two great months of summer and warm waters because, like me, you will miss them when they are gone. I know, you're going to mention the city Aquatics Center. It's available year-round with the Olympic-size pool at 81 degrees, and the smaller one that's more my speed at 90 degrees is much better. Still, outdoor pools in summer are the best.

Grandma hasn't been feeling so well the past month with some stomach issues and getting medical attention and tests, but I should get better in the near future. Thus, Grandpa is helping out a bit with the column this month.

July is the time to go shopping, particularly if you have children returning to school in early August. All the summer sales are going on now, the selection is good, and prices are often reduced.

Enjoy what's left of summer. I know I plan to.

*Editor's Note: We're thinking of you Mimi and want you to feel better very soon! We Love You.*

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# "THE THING" (1951)

by Bill Alkire

I will try to start at the beginning or as close as I can. Ronald and I had thumbed a ride with Wilard to see the newest movie thriller, "The Thing". It was filmed in Black and White, which added a more dramatic effect. The movie starred James Arness (Matt Dillon of "Gunsmoke" later in his career).

When you are in your teens you are moldable and naive. A man is not afraid of anything - Right? But at 10 you are afraid of your own shadow - I was not supposed to say that - Sorry! "The Thing" provides a reason to be scared if you need one. I will not go into details about the movie or the plot - but it scared the sniff... out of Ronald and me.

Even now on the back side of 80, I cannot watch movies like the "Thing". I get this rush and...well I just cannot watch this kind of movie. We took too long getting out of the theater and missed our last ride home! It's four miles from the theater to my home. There was nothing between town and home except dark heavily forest laden space.

This night it was the longest four miles ever! It was DARK - if there was a moon, it was too frightened to be out. It would not have wanted to show his face; I think he was in the theater also. It was also damp as well after a couple days of rain - early September foggy and windy. It was a night meant to keep you on edge. Ronald and I were not on the edge, however - we were scared! I mean really scared, perhaps petrified would be a better term.

We started walking and an hour later not one car had passed, in either direction. The night began to get colder, and the wind was increasing and began howling in the trees. Without any town lighting it was now darker than a pitch. The wind rustled leaves and God knows what else. Strange sounds began to emerge from the forest lining both sides of the highway. We moved to the center of the roadway to walk - avoiding whatever was following us in the trees.

"What was that?" Ronald's voice quivered. "There it is again", Ronald's voice trembled, apparently more urgent now.

We quickened our pace, almost to a run. My thoughts were of the preacher and the bear - "Sure hope I can outrun Richard, I mean Ronald" was my thought almost out loud. In what seemed like forever, we finally saw a light in a curve ahead. Then we both got really scared - it must be the "Ghost of a man killed by his jilted girlfriend and left in the ditch along the curve", Ronald said.

When we reached the curve, the light had dissipated. Our pace really quickened now - I knew I should not have waited on Richard - I mean Robert, no, Ronald, was my thought.

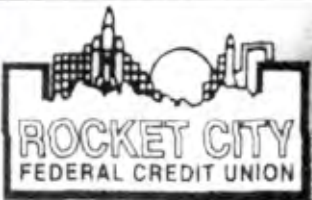
The lights from town began to appear, as

much as they were. We still hurried - even faster - we could see a little better where we were walking. We had made it home. Thanks to God! I went into the one room shed, we called our house and Ronald went up the hill - he lived but a short distance. As I hurried into the house, I failed to see the wash tub Mother had left from bathing my younger brother, EER SPLASH..I went into the tub of water, first my chest, followed by the rest of my body. My Mother awoke and helped me clean up the water and my clothes.

Shortly, my Mother and I heard a loud Ka Boom. The sound of what was apparently a single gunshot blast. We found out the next day that Ronald had made it to the house and to bed - taking his shotgun with him. The Spencer's had a one-eyed dog they called "Ring". "Ring" had lost one eye in an accident as a puppy. The dog entered Ronald's bedroom .... err...err...err- Ronald hearing the door open and seeing only the one eye of the dog in the dark, opened fire ... Ka Boom.

The dog was not hit but ran out of the house and was gone for nearly a week. The bedroom door and door frame were a different situation, however. Spencer's (Ronald's family) moved a few months later to Akron, Ohio to work. The door and frame were never repaired -the legacy remained.

*"The Thing" Movie Review: When scientist Dr. Carington reports on a UFO near his North Pole research base, the Air Force sends in a team under Capt. Patrick Hendry to investigate.... they find a wrecked spaceship and a humanoid creature frozen in the ice. They bring their discovery back to the base. When the airmen investigate, the creature attacks them in the greenhouse, but they manage to barricade it inside ...*



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## A Noble Instance of Devotion

*from 1887 newspaper*



Joe Paige and son cutting wood near Decatur noticed for several days that a number of birds remained constantly upon a tree near them, some going and coming from time to time.

Upon cutting down the tree they discovered a limb with a hollow cavity, two feet in length and three or four inches in diameter, in which were two full grown birds of some goodly sized species.

There was a small aperture through which the birds were supplied with food from their mates. The limb was cut and the birds liberated. They were neither of them able to fly, having evidently never been out of their imprisonment.

How they came inside is the question. It is probable that the mother bird was small and though able to make her nest in the hollow of the tree and rear her young, could not extricate them, and they did not gain strength enough to help themselves until the hollow had so closed that escape was impossible.

Those who examined the birds think they are about two years old. They have been fed from their birth by their bird fellows through the aperture in the limb of the tree. A nobler instance of devotion the human family never exhibited. Mankind could greatly benefit from the lessons of these feathered friends.

## MOODS

**All of us have moods  
- both good and bad.  
When you're feeling  
especially good, make  
a list of what made you  
feel good.**

**Make another list of  
things to do to cheer  
you up when you feel  
low.**

**Then when a bad day  
comes along, read your  
list and see if anything  
on there can make you  
feel better.**

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# A NEW WAR

by Bill Goodson

We hear Lee Greenwood sing, "I'm proud to be an American, For at least I know I'm free." We see our Special Forces troops in action, marvel at their capabilities, their multifaceted missions. We read about and watch on screens large and small, the men at Normandy, the extraordinary bravery of so many.

I was a member of an elite fighting group, the 82nd Airborne, and we were called by LBJ to wipe out the communist-inspired rebellion in the Dominican Republic in 1965. (How a perfectly sane psychiatrist allowed himself to be talked into jumping from a perfectly good aircraft is not a perfectly flattering story, so we won't go there.)

We flew out of Pope Airfield in North Carolina on C-130's, the old cargo plane that now has been retrofitted to become the feared AC-130 gunship. After landing near Santo Domingo, we proceeded to set up a Field Hospital that turned into a mud hole within a few days. Surgery tents began falling in on the operating tables, leading to a change of location and commander, I might add. It could have been an episode from M-A-S-H.

As it turned out, the Marines, who preceded us, had subdued the rebels, so that sending in a 15,000 troop-strong Army division was hardly needed. You've heard of Operation Overlord? How about Overkill? It was an embarrassment, especially when statistics began to show that more GIs were injured fighting over prostitutes than on the battle line. "In harm's way" took on new meaning. And then there was the night I was awakened at 2 a.m. by a corpsman who was shaking me and saying, "Captain Goodson, they want you in surgery."

I opened an eye and told him he must be mistaken, that I was the Division Psychiatrist.

"No, sir, they want you. Captain Lindsay was assisting Major Cain on a appendectomy, but he started vomiting."

"Right on the operating field?" I could picture the worst.

"No, sir, but it was close."

"What about Evans and Martin?" I asked.

"Captain Evans is on R&R in Puerto Rico, and Captain Martin has a staph infection on his arm. He can't go in the O.R. You're the only medical officer left."

It wasn't April 1, so I pulled on my fatigues and boots and followed him. Six years had passed since I was in surgery as a medical student, I was thinking to myself as I scrubbed up. Let's see...the appendix is on the right side of the abdominal cavity. And we don't really need it.

I calmed down when I discovered them already closing the incision, so all I had to do was tie knots, and it came back to me like riding the proverbial bicycle.

Given a choice, the Pfc under the drapes might have preferred a tent falling in to a psychiatrist assisting the surgeon. Fortunately for him, he was never the wiser, and he survived.

"What has this to do with America's New War?" you may ask. Not much, unless you magnify it a thousand times to approach the limits to which some are now being called to perform. We are forced to do more than just "think outside the box," or "stretch the envelope." Indeed, ours must be as the strength often.

We might wonder how we will acquit ourselves when truly heroic action is called for.

Will I be the one to subdue the terrorist?

Will you dive into icy Potomac waters to save an airplane crash victim?

We secretly long for a Walter Mitty opportunity to prove ourselves but often quiver at the prospect.

For most of us, it won't entail mythic proportions of heroism; it's just tying knots in the O.R. But who knows...?



## Thank You!!

This is just a special **THANK YOU** to our readers, advertisers and writers who are keeping Old Huntsville going strong!

When our readers pay \$2 for an issue, we are able to continue this.

It's been 34 years now full of great stories and memories. There are just a few of us who are putting this magazine together and we love our job.

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

# A Few Memories of Yesteryear: Remembering Dr. Burritt

*by Charlie Lyle*



Most everyone has heard of Dr. Burritt and his museum. Dr. Burritt was an odd fellow but very pleasant to visitors.

One day my parents and I were taking a trip to Monte Sano on a Sunday afternoon. We decided to pay Mr. Burritt a visit. He loved to show off his house to everyone. He said that his house was absolutely acoustically correct. He had a piano or key board that could be heard virtually any place in the house.

The doctor was extremely pleased that his house was insulated with straw which he had been strongly advised against doing. One night there was a huge fire on the top of Monte Sano and you could see it for miles. The townspeople were stunned but exclaimed, "There goes Dr. Burritt's house with his straw insulation." The doctor immediately built another house.

Dr. Burritt enjoyed raising goats. His handy man delivered goat milk to many of the townspeople. He claimed that the milk was very good for ulcers.

He married into a family of great wealth, as

I recall, a tobacco fortune. This is how he got his wealth. It is said that his ashes are in an urn at the gateway to his property. He wanted people to think he was a prosperous farmer and did have a live-in lady housekeeper.

Huntsville was not a town of much population; in fact, Decatur and Gadsden outranked us most of the time. It was not a "hot spot" on the map.

Huntsville was known nationally for its watercress. It seems as though the ponds out in north-east Madison County, for some reason, had the perfect water temperature and other factors to grow watercress in abundance.

The owner, Mr. Dennis, was sending watercress, which makes a fantastic salad, all over the country. He was sending it to prestigious hotels and restaurants such as the Waldorf Astoria Hotel in New York City and many others.

**"He was deeply in love. When she spoke he thought he heard bells, as if she were a garbage truck backing up."**

***Seen on recent 5th grade quiz on Analogies and Metaphors***

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# Heard On the Street

by Cathey Carney



Well after a few weeks we finally had a winner for the 2 hidden items in the June issue. **Dawn Gooch Hall** found them and she is a native Huntsvillian who is retired from Huntsville Hospital. She worked there for 32 years! She said when she was little her parents taught her to find hidden items in all kinds of media so they taught her well! Here's where the items were: the tiny power pole was on page 30 in the Downtown Rescue Mission ad, in front of that white car. See it? Then the tiny tornado was on the last page, p. 48, in the picture. See the house to the left? Look just below that house's foundation and you'll see it.

That was a lot of work for our readers so this month I put in our photo of the month (right) as well as a hidden U.S. flag which will make it easier. When you call don't ID both, just pick one and if you're right you will win a year's subscription to the magazine. The flag will be super tiny however. So there will be 2 winners for the July issue. We're feeling generous!

We missed a May birthday that we have to tell you about. **Gladys Chunn Bryant** of Pearland, TX let us know that she had turned 90 on May 23 this year. Her family there had a large party for her with 70 people in attendance. But

the good news is she is traveling to Huntsville in early July for the 24th annual Chunn/Tyler family reunion that takes place every couple of years. It's been 4 years since the last one because of Covid. Monte Sano will be the family's reunion location and it will be cool and beautiful for them. But we wanted to say Happy Birthday with Love to Gladys!

The Mack Yates Agency deals with Life insurance, annuities, etc. and their office is in Old Town. But I didn't realize that this year the agency will be 50 years old. **Mack Yates** is celebrating 50 years in business! That is pretty amazing and we just want to say congratulations to you for many more years to come!

For new people and visitors to Huntsville, what newcomers notice immediately is how lush and green everything is here. If you're coming in from the west or even cold northern states you'll see that right away. We've had lots of rain lately and the plants love it. And have you noticed that there are hundreds of lightning bugs now at night? Last year there were hardly any, at least in the downtown area. Get out and enjoy the fresh air, walk and get exercise.

**Jane Gerdeman** of Truist Bank on Church Street recently told us that she will be taking a July vacation with her 6 sweet sisters, they're heading to Tim's Ford Lake. What a great place to go in the hot summer days. All the sisters get along which makes trav-

eling together that much better. Have so much fun, Jane!

We have seen so many new food trucks in Huntsville and many of them serve really delicious food. This is from Downtown Huntsville, Inc. If you think you have to be sitting down in order to eat a good meal, think again. The Huntsville/Madison County food truck scene offers tasty treats in different districts of

## Photo of The Month

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

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This little lady is no longer with us but ran for Mayor multiple times over the years and was the "City Watchdog".



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the city from transportable locations.

Huntsville loves food trucks so much that we even have seasonal food truck rallies organized by Downtown Huntsville, Inc. Curious? Google Downtown Huntsville to learn more about the food trucks and simply click on their details link.

Happy Birthday to **Felicia Meshke** on July 15th. She is the daughter of our senior editor **Cheryl Tribble** and they both live in Marietta, GA. Hope your day is full of fun and you get to celebrate in style.

Have you ever thought about taking **Cigar Box Guitar Lessons**? Lowe Mill offers them and they're free! Visit The Cigar Box Guitar Store Saturday from 12-2 pm for free guitar lessons, where instructor **Pat Nickel** can teach anyone a song in one minute. No experience required, loaner guitars available and there's no obligation. Come learn how easy it is to make a joyful noise!

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If you're a gardener and have ever bought Purslane you know how beautiful the blossoms are.

And they're actually edible. Anyway I found some at the nursery with gorgeous raspberry blossoms and put them in pots all around my yard. In a day or so they were little stumps sticking out of my pots. It seems squirrels and chipmunks had eaten them up. I actually caught one in the act. So I went to Costco and got a large shaker of ground cinnamon, because I had heard that it is a deterrent. I sprinkled it around what was left of my plants and guess what? They're growing back and looking pretty good. So the cinnamon definitely works if you have critters that are nibbling on your expensive annuals. I heard that ground cayenne pepper is good too. So try it and let us know! The price for any kind of plant has skyrocketed this year and we sure don't want to provide pricey salad for our yard critters!

When you get an email from your friend and she says, **I need you to send me a gift card to Amazon/Walmart** because I am having a hard time doing it - DELETE that message. Scammers now have people's email addresses and your name and they are sending out messages that are fraudulent. If you ever get a request for a Gift Card you should assume it's a scam. Protect your money and assets and be vigilant.

**Ken Owens** has a birthday on

July 31st and he is my only sibling, a year younger than I. He turns 75 on that day and it's hard to believe we're in our 70s! Which actually is middle age these days. Happy Birthday with love to my little bro!

Those of you who do gardening get your nails in the dirt pretty frequently, those **nailbrushes** you buy are really hard on the fingers/skin/nails especially when used multiple times a day. I found that a child's nail brush has softer bristles and still gets your nails clean - it works!

**M.D. and Judy Smith** just celebrated their 63rd wedding anniversary on June 8. They could write books about their lives and actually have! With 8 children and greats and great-greats arriving currently, the family is really growing. Looking forward to writing about your 64th anniversary next year!

Remember that **Greene Street Market** is happening now on Eustis and Greene Streets and goes from 4-8 every Thursday til end of October. Google Farmers Markets in Huntsville and you will find them in every part of our area - too many to put here!

**THANK YOU to the City of Huntsville workers** who continue to work so hard for our Huntsville residents! All departments are outstanding. We appreciate you!

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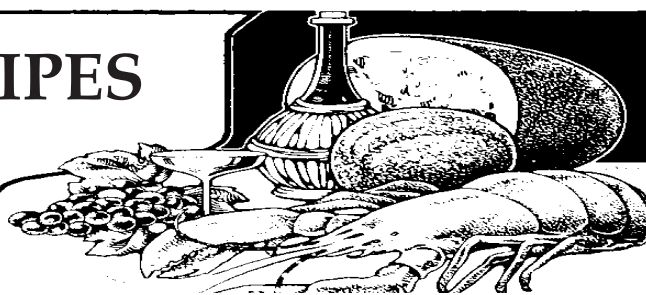
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## RECIPES



# Louie Tippet's Mom's Recipes

*Vera Tippet was Louie Tippet's Mom and was a great cook. These were some of her favorites.*

### Gobblers Knobb Pie

4 eggs, well beaten  
2 c. milk  
1 c. sugar  
1 t. vanilla extract  
Pinch salt

1 - 9" unbaked pastry shell

Combine eggs, milk, sugar, vanilla and salt - mix well. Pour into pastry shell and bake at 425 degrees for 35-40 minutes. Serve slightly warm or cold, do not over-bake or custard will become watery.

### Sweet Coconut Cake

1 box yellow cake mix  
3 eggs  
3/4 stick butter  
2/3 c. water

Mix & bake in greased rectangular pan. Let cool. Punch holes in cake with drinking

straw so filling can soak in.

#### Filling:

Mix 1/2 can Eagle Brand milk with 1/2 can cream of coconut. Pour this over the cake, then spread 1 medium tub Cool Whip over cake. Sprinkle one can of coconut over it.

Keep cake in the fridge and serve cold.

### Delicious Slaw

5 lbs. cabbage  
1 green pepper  
Jar of pimentos  
1 t. mustard seed  
1-1/2 t. celery seed  
4 T. dry onion flakes  
1 pt. white vinegar  
3 T. white sugar  
1/2 t. tumeric  
1/2 t. salt

Grate cabbage & pepper. Mix rest of the ingredients and heat mixture til it comes to a boil, then cool and pour over the cabbage mixture. Store in covered jars in refrigerator.

This tastes better after it sets for a day and will keep several weeks in the fridge.

### Best Ever Meatloaf

1 can Cream of Mushroom or Golden Mushroom soup  
2 lbs. ground beef  
1/2 c. fine dry bread crumbs  
1/3 c. finely chopped onion  
1 egg, slightly beaten  
1 t. each salt & black pepper  
4 T. water

Mix 1/2 cup of the soup, beef, bread crumbs, onions, eggs, salt and pepper and shape into loaf pan. Bake at 375 for 1 hour and 35 minutes. Blend remaining soup and 2 tablespoons of water, warm in pan and pour over hot meatloaf.

Serve immediately.

### Cheesy Onion Bread

1/2 c. chopped onion  
1 T. butter  
1-1/2 c. all-purpose flour

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1-1/2 t. baking powder  
1/2 t. soda  
1 t. salt  
1 c. grated Cheddar cheese  
1 egg, beaten  
1/3 c. milk  
2 T. butter, melted  
Garlic powder

Preheat your oven to 400 degrees. Melt butter in saucepan, add the onion and saute til light brown. Combine the flour, baking powder, soda and salt.

Add the onion and half of the cheese to the flour mixture. Combine the egg and milk and add this to the flour mixture. Stir til the dry ingredients are moistened.

Spread the dough in a greased round cake pan (8 inches) and sprinkle with the rest of the cheese. Drizzle the melted butter over all, sprinkle with just a bit of garlic powder. Bake about 20 minutes or golden brown. This is best served hot.

### Vera's Carrot Cake

1-1/2 c. Wesson oil  
2 c. sugar  
4 eggs, separated

4 t. hot water  
1-1/2 c. finely grated carrots  
2-1/2 c. self-rising flour  
2 t. cinnamon  
2/3 c. pecans

Crack eggs and separate out the whites, set aside. Mix yolks with other ingredients. Beat 4 egg whites til stiff. Fold in the whites to the carrot batter. Pour into 2 layer pans or 3 small layer pans.

### Icing:

1 pkg. cream cheese  
3 c. powdered sugar  
1 stick butter  
1 t. vanilla extract  
1 c. pecans, chopped

Mix cream cheese, sugar, butter and extract with mixer at low, then turn on high to blend. Frost when cake has cooled. Sprinkle with pecans, cut and serve.

### Hot Fudge Cake

3/4 c. sugar  
1 c. flour  
2 T. cocoa  
1/2 c. milk  
3 T. margarine  
1 t. vanilla

Mix ingredients together and pour into greased pan. Do

not heat the pan before you pour the batter in.

### Topping:

1/2 c. sugar  
1/4 c. cocoa  
1/2 c. brown sugar

Mix topping ingredients and sprinkle over cake batter. Pour 1 & 1/2 cups water over mixture. Bake in pre-heated 350 degree oven for 45 minutes.

### Cream Cheese Candy

1 8-oz. pkg. cream cheese  
1 box powdered sugar  
1-1/2 c. pecans, chopped  
1 t. vanilla extract

Melt cream cheese in double boiler. Mix in sugar, nuts and vanilla extract.

Drop by teaspoons onto sheets of waxed paper. These will harden and are delicious!

### Orange Delight

12-oz. cottage cheese  
1 large can drained, crushed pineapple  
1 pkg. orange jello, sugar free  
4 T. Cool Whip  
Mix all together, refrigerate & serve.

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



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# Coming to Alabama

by Suzanne Bell Bolton

"Right now the temperature is 93° and it's expected to continue warm", said the voice on the radio. Warm? I thought, I wonder what these folks think is hot! As a native Californian, I'd never been so hot in all my life. The heat and humidity was making my hair curl and frizz faster than usual.

In the little strip mall near the intersection of the Parkway and Governor's Drive, the Piggly Wiggly was on fire, flames leaping from its roof as the firemen tried in vain to get the blaze under control. "They have Piggly Wigglys back here!" I thought. Mother had shopped at the Piggly Wiggly in Santa Barbara, but it had never occurred to me that that was a chain; I thought it unique to Santa Barbara.

Thus it was on September 10, 1963 that we were introduced to the Rocket City, Huntsville, Alabama. Thus it was that our cross-country trek from California ended and our new life in the Deep South began. I confess I was ill prepared for the culture shock I was about to undergo, although I'd had a tiny preview of what lay ahead when, as we drove across the country. George Wallace took his stand in the school doorway and declared Alabama would never be integrated.

We found lodging at the Holiday Inn on South Parkway and remained there for two weeks while I hunted for a place to live and my husband went to work. Bill had transferred with Lockheed from Sunnyvale, California in what would later become known as Silicon Valley. Lockheed was opening an office here in Huntsville, and

Bill was charged with the responsibility of setting up their computer lab.

Finding a place to live proved to be more of a challenge than I would have dreamed. In California there were endless ads in the newspapers for apartments to rent; here there were two inches of column space devoted to possible rentals. I drove around town trying to get my bearings while searching for housing and eventually settled on a small house in the Holiday Homes area.

We were happy to find a house and I felt a sense of adventure as the movers brought our furniture and I unpacked our belongings. I had never lived this far from home and as comparative newlyweds we were beginning a new chapter in our lives. How exciting!

Our excitement began to dim a little as we watched the civil rights activists in Birmingham on evening news on WHNT, one of only 2 TV channels in town. What??? There was only two



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TV channels here? (WAAY was the other one). Yes, that was it, but the comforting voice of weatherman H.D. Bagley as he closed each Friday's broadcast with the reminder, "Be sure to go to church on Sunday" helped me adjust. California stations would never have allowed a broadcaster to make such a bold statement.

As the Civil Rights Movement gained momentum and the national media ramped up the story, Channel 19 showed frightening pictures each night of police and state troopers restraining German shepherds and aiming water cannons at defenseless African Americans. I was horrified!!

Having grown up in a multi-ethnic society in Santa Barbara, California, I couldn't comprehend what was happening in Birmingham. I was also frightened. We had shipped one of our two cars from California and we had to pick it up in Birmingham. What would happen to us when we went there? Would we be attacked by angry blacks? I'd had close friends in Santa Barbara who were African Americans, and I realized that they would be treated as second-class citizens if they came to Alabama. That infuriated me. Fortunately, there was little unrest in Huntsville.

The first Sunday we were in town was our first anniversary. It also was the day the 16th Street Baptist Church in Birmingham was bombed and four little girls were killed. Where on earth had we moved that such horrors could happen? I'd thought the Klan was long dead; how wrong I was! So for 61 years, September 15 has reminded me that as we began our married life, one year later on that same day, four little girls' lives ended.

Culture shock or not, we grew to love Huntsville and living in the South. When we moved here we thought we'd be here a year until Lockheed got its Huntsville feet on the ground.

But we love living here and definitely don't want to return to California. We love the beautiful blossoms of a southern spring, the vibrant colors of a southern autumn and yes, even the warm summers. We have air conditioning now, and I've gotten used to my hair frizzing in the humidity. I've even grown used to the thun-

der storms and staying vigilant during tornado watches and warnings. After all, every place has its own disaster issues; in California they happen to be earthquakes and fires. I guess it just depends on what you're used to.

The newlyweds settled into life in the south, raised two sons and now have retired here. Things have calmed down on the civil rights front, although I guess they may never be completely settled. And now we have multiple TV stations from which to glean the news.

But H.D. Bagley has passed away and no one cautions, "Be sure to go to church on Sunday".

## **Traffic Lights Installed Downtown**

### **1925 Newspaper**

In a highly controversial move, the city of Huntsville has installed traffic lights at the corners of Jefferson and Clinton, Holmes and Washington, Washington and Clinton and Randolph, Greene and Holmes.

Merchants are outraged at the novel experiment and have vowed to form a coalition to remove them. Their anger comes from the fear that drivers will spend less time looking at the window displays of the various stores.

"The streets will be filled with Zombies." Mr. L. D. Carruthers said, "Waiting in lines and staring at the lights."

A citizens group has joined in the merchants protest claiming that red and green lights will be confusing to everyone. Adding to the lights were whistles, electric gates and crossing police.

The majority of people seemed to be in favor of crossing police but the cost seemed to be prohibitive for Huntsville, a city already deeply in debt.

The first accident was reported yesterday while the lights were still being installed. Mr. Orville Roberts of New Hope lost control of his car and ran into the ladder of a workman installing the light on Clinton and Jefferson.

"I never saw a green light before," Mr. Roberts said later.

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# Wheel Barrow Football

by Bob French

For years Huntsville High School and Decatur High School faced off on the football field. Before the advent of Huntsville Arsenal, the cities were almost equal in population, + 21,000 each. The competition between the two towns was sometimes bitter, never more fashionably aggressive than a high school football game.

The year was 1950. Huntsville was out growing Decatur, making the competition, although now one-sided, a bit more caustic. The big game was set for Friday, October 27th at Decatur High Stadium. Both teams had winning seasons. The bragging rights and sports aggression were at a fever pitch.

Although Decatur was "dry," some enterprising soul went to Ardmore, Tennessee and brought back a near pickup load of beer for several football parties Thursday night before the game. At one such party, perhaps on Prospect Drive, the alcoholic memories and braggadocio got a little out of hand and some bets were made.

A rather large, inebriated, red-faced fan stood up, called for attention and said, "If Decatur loses to Huntsville tomorrow night, whoever will take this bet may ride in a wheel barrow, that I will push him in, from Keller Memorial Bridge back down Highway 20 to Huntsville Saturday morning. That's how confident I am in victory."

There was great competition to accept the bet from the rowdy beer-soaked Huntsville guests. Finally, upon a nice contribution committed to the Huntsville football program, a participant was agreed upon.

With the match set, rules were hastily arranged. If Decatur lost, the push would begin at the Keller Memorial Bridge over the Tennessee River at 8:00 a.m. Saturday morning. If Huntsville lost, the push would leave the railroad track crossing

Highway 20 in Huntsville bound for Decatur at 9:00 a.m. The loser had to bring his own wheel barrow for the winner to ride in. Then a couple of hundred bucks were added, "To make the cheese more binding." A penalty was substantial for the loser if he could not push as agreed - he had to buy his way out from the passenger.

Decatur lost 10-6 in a very closely played game. It was sad. A DHS student, your scrivener, was selling popcorn at the heart-breaking game.

Saturday morning, a crowd of winners and losers gathered at the Keller Memorial. As bets were paid and money changed hands, the winner put pillows and a blanket in the red metal wheel barrow of the loser. Competitive football cheers rang out as the push began.

There are reports that as many as 25 or 30 fans showed up to witness the push. The winner mounted the wheel barrow, leaned back on his pillows, and pulled up his blanket. When not talking with bystanders, he listened to WMSL on his new portable radio. With music turned up, he encouraged the loser to push faster and, "Stay on the pavement."

Some say the loser only pushed to the Athens split, less than a mile, before he paid his way out of the bet. Others claim he made it almost 8 miles to Mooresville. Part of the buy-out was giving the red metal wheel barrow to the winner from Huntsville.

Several times they say the bet was considered again, but apparently there were no takers. Both cities were then wet and perhaps the participants in pre-game parties were more familiar with beer talk. Or simply, didn't let their humming bird mouth overload their elephant butt.

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# News from Here and There



## Lady Swallows Snake

From 1913 newspaper

Miss Mamie Nolan, of Holmes Avenue, has been in the habit of drinking water directly from the aqueduct by putting her mouth to the tap. She will not do it anymore, however, for she had an experience today that showed her the folly of such a course.

While she was drinking, a water snake about ten inches long passed through the faucet, and went halfway down her throat.

She could not yell, but she managed to attract attention by throwing herself down on the floor and kicking. The snake was pulled from her throat, and she fully recovered from her fright in an hour, but her throat is still sore.

## The Great Earthquake

On August 6, 1961 at exactly 1:20 in the afternoon, a radio station in Birmingham interrupted its programming to broadcast news of an earthquake.

The amount of damage was not known yet but there were reports of windows rattling and dishes being knocked off the shelves all across North Alabama. Within a few minutes other radio stations began broadcasting the same news and civil defense sirens began blaring in Gadsden and Anniston.

Robert Snider, a reporter for the Gadsden newspaper, was on his way to Birmingham when he heard the news. Immediately, he stopped at the next phone and called the radio station that had first broadcast the report.

The radio announcer repeated the information released over the air.

**"Don't let worry and stress kill you off - let our church help!"**

***Seen in local church bulletin***

Playing a hunch, Mr. Snider next called the Marshall Space Flight Center In Huntsville. "Yes," said the space flight official, "There was a test firing of the Saturn today. It took place at 1:00 p.m. this afternoon."

There had never been an earthquake. The earth tremors that had been reported were the test firing of the Saturn Rocket, the most powerful engine in the world.

Even today, there are still people who remember the powerful "earthquake" of 1961.

## Bicyclists Helping Budget

From 1888 newspaper

The city is now realizing a nice income from parties who are making it a habit to ride bicycles on the sidewalks.

In the past few days not less than fifteen or twenty cyclists have been arraigned in the city court on this charge, the fine they receive for the first offense being one dollar, the second two dollars and so on. The riders seem not to care that they have to pay, and continue this practice, leaving our walkers in danger.

But the police wish to thank the bicyclists who are doing their part to help maintain the department's budget.



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# Letters to Buddy

by Buddy as told to Margaret Anne Goldsmith



To My dear readers and admirers,

I have heard from so many of you that it will take several issues of Old Huntsville Magazine to publish all the responses to my request for advice that I have received. In addition to hearing from "people," I have heard from a cat and a number of dogs including one letter sent from Doggie Heaven. Your letters have been humorous, complimentary, and some of you identified with me and my problems. Several of you shared personal stories about your life experiences. I was surprised to have received such a variety of letters and realize that some people found it therapeutic to write through the voice of their dogs in ways that they were unable to express themselves when talking to other people.

The following letters were received from Maggie's friends including Charlotte's mom who is Maggie's childhood friend, her friend Joe from New Orleans, M.D who is Shoe's dad, Tiffany's mom, Maggie's dear friend who moved to Galveston, and Stony Siemore's mom who is an author and Maggie's dear friend.

Be sure and look for more letters in the August issue of Old Huntsville Magazine.

With my fond regards to all of you,  
Buddy

#1 Oh my, Buddy. You have told an interesting story. I keep wondering what has happened since you wrote and published your tale. You might even get to be an accomplished writer and have lots of stories printed. I should know since I have succeeded in becoming one. That would be just fine with me. Since I am an old Shih Tzu, I spend most of my time listening to my big friend's radio. She is so fond of me that I could probably be naughty without getting in trouble.

I have a soft and comfortable rug to lie on whenever I want, and I want to quite often. If you like, you can visit me and try out my special rug. It is a dandy.

It might surprise you that I have been writing about my different partners for several years now. Such a pleasure. My writing is excellent. My partners have even sent it to the New York Times. One time it was on the front page. Since I have so many more years of experience, I will be happy to edit your written work. I won't even charge you. Just send it on. I am sure that I could be helpful to you.

Madame Romancier Supreme

#2 Dear Buddy. I'm on your side. You're my kind of person, and I want to be like you when I grow up. I'm 87, but I haven't grown up yet. If I lived in Huntsville, I'd adopt you in a second and I'd make sure you got to see Margaret Anne every day. But I live in New Orleans in a building that doesn't allow pets. Best of luck, my friend Buddy. Keep in touch.

Your friend, Joe

#3 From Shoes to Buddy: I'm "Shoes" and lived my entire life from a puppy with Judy & M.D. Smith. After I drifted into "Puppy Heaven" this past January, I've learned your story, Buddy. What a ride you've had in your life and still going.

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Shih Tzus were bred in China as companion dogs to the rich and sat on a pillow next to kings, queens, and royalty. We all love attention, and I bet Buddy agrees, it's still more fun to train our owners than the reverse.

Buddy, from where I sit these days, and my perspective is broader than yours, you've got your elder years made. All the activity you could wish for and two loving owners. Ah...a dog's life.

Love, Shoes

#4 Dear Buddy, This airmail letter is sent to you from Doggie Heaven. It is to tell you that you will only be adopted by wonderful people, because only wonderful people love and learn to respect a dog with our breeding. They learn from us as much as we learn from them. Believe it or not they will risk their lives to save dogs like us.

That's what my owner did the chilly night she brought me home for the first time. As we were getting out of the car, I jumped out of her arms to chase a cat who ran up to the swimming pool, (which I did not know was there) took a quick right turn to skirt the swimming pool while I at full speed splashed directly into the cold water over my head and would have drowned had my brand new mother not jumped in to save me.

Parents who adopt us will do most anything to make us happy, so chill out Buddy, you'll live a charmed life.

Love, Tiffany

#5 Dear Buddy,

My name is Charlotte Cat, I enjoyed reading your memoir. I've never known a dog, but with your outgoing personality I think we could be friends. I'm happy for you that you have experienced loving owners and have adjusted so well to changes. Wishing you a long and happy life filled with Joy!

#6 A letter to Buddy From his psychiatrist, Sigmoid Fraud

Dear Buddy,

You've been missing too many sessions lately, since you've been adopted by Laura and Devin. And I know why. When I told you last

time that I wanted them to come in to the session with you next time for a little dose of family therapy, you've been avoiding the inevitable.

"The inevitable" is the fact that you have successfully conned the heck out of them. That your so-called "chronic anxiety" has been a clever ruse you have used for special nurturing. So you get your shoulders rubbed by Laura, huh? And Devin lets you sleep with him like Mike used to, huh?

You've become addicted to the Xanax, so you have to keep taking it. And what comes next? Will they rent you a condo on the Gulf coast so you can sunbathe all year long?

Maybe you don't believe in Karma, but you certainly could if your mom and dad finally realize the truth. That is, if they have the fortitude to look you in the eye and sentence you to a month in solitary confinement. I sort of doubt they will, though. They seem to have codependency tendencies, which could lead them to denial and enabling behaviors.

Oh, well, Buddy, (sigh). You'd probably just raise Cain if they offer to sit in with you for that family therapy session. I can just see you cowering in the corner and whimpering.

I am prepared for you to discharge me as your psychiatrist. But you see, we shrinks are sometimes forced to employ "tough love".

However, should you decide to face the music, I will look forward to seeing you again. Provided, of course that you settle your outstanding bill with me. I do charge for missed sessions, you know.

Yours truly, Sigmoid



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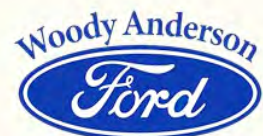
The Ford Motor Company views its situation today less with pride in great achievement than with sincere and sober realization of new and larger opportunities for service to mankind.

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# REMNANTS OF WAR

*from 1891 newspaper*

From a reliable source a Mercury reporter was informed that on last Saturday at a point in the vicinity of New Hope, but on the Marshall County side of the river, an explosion occurred that has recalled the war and nearly scared the life out of an honest old man.

It seems that John Roberts was burning logs for the purpose of clearing up, and he had set fire to a heap which ignited a large dead tree. Suddenly a most terrific explosion occurred, one that was heard for miles, and the old tree was shivered and scattered to the winds. Roberts, who was a hundred yards distant, took his departure without troubling himself with an investigation.

A party who finally visited the spot where the tree once stood and made an investigation found from the surroundings every evidence that the explosion was that of a bombshell that had been imbedded in the tree during the war. It is known that there was a good deal of firing from cannon loaded with shell at this point during the war, a point that commanded the river.

The circumstances can admit of two theories; one that the shell became imbedded in the tree by being fired from a cannon and failed to explode. The other that it had been left in the hollow, if there was any in the tree, as a sort of keepsake, hoping at some future day that it would get in its work.

The first theory, however, is the most probable. The report was heard far into Madison County and occasioned considerable wonder.

**"Sure, there have been injuries and even some deaths in boxing, but none of them were really that serious."**

***Boxing Analyst***

## Robert E. "Jack" Moore, Jr.



Robert E. "Jack" Moore, Jr. 88, passed away on Monday, May 27, 2024, with his loving wife of nearly 70 years by his side. He cherished his family and friends.

Jack was an avid Alabama fan. After he retired from Norfolk Southern Railroad, where he worked for 64 years, he and Earline would pack up the motorhome when the season started and follow the team all season.

Jack was also an avid golfer. He belonged to the Florence Country Club for many years until it closed, and was known as the Iron Man because he drove with a 9 iron instead of a wood.

A huge moment came on April 25, 1986, when he made a 270 yard hole-in-one on the 9th hole.

Jack coached Muscle Shoals Little League. He was a member of Muscle Shoals Band Boosters and president and chairman of the Colbert County Exchange Club. He also served on the Muscle Shoals Electric Board. His contributions and commitment to the community were greatly appreciated. He loved helping and giving back.

Jack's smoked bar-b-q chicken was without doubt the best to those who had the privilege to try it out. His smile and laughter brightened up the room. He dearly cared about others. He will be so missed.

Jack is survived by his wife, Earline; cousins; nieces; and nephews.

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## Coach Cecil Fain and the “Dr. Peppers” Semi Pro Women’s Softball Team



**by Larry D. Layne, Chaplain,  
Col. (Ret) USAF/ANG.**

Some of the fondest memories of my mother, Doris Pike Smith Layne, were the years she spent playing and traveling (1937-1946) with the Dr. Peppers Softball team. The team was based out of Dallas Village and Optimist Park. It was made up of around 18 - 20 players largely late high school and young adult aged women.

The Dr. Pepper Bottling Company, at 901 N. Meridian Street from the late '30s to the late 50s paid the team's expenses and bought their uniforms, white blouses and red and white satin shorts. The teammates came from rural Madison County and the hard-working Dallas Mill Village area of Huntsville.

This collection of spirited athletes was the product of their renowned coach and educator, Cecil Vincent Fain. Mr. Fain was passionate about the welfare and quality of life of his students, sports teams and his beloved Dallas Mill Village community. He had the gift of organizing and empowering both students and sports teams like no other. His skills in coaching and recruiting his players was as crafty and convincing as those used in later years by coach Paul “Bear” Bryant.

Mr. Fain knew the key to recruiting young people, especially young women in the 1930s-40s, was to first convince their parents of the value of playing softball over working and contributing to the family's well-being. In my mother's

case, his recruiting skills were textbook.

Mother said Mr. Fain drove out to her house on Balch Road one Sunday afternoon (late 1930s). He had seen mother play on a Capshaw team in the rural Monrovia community. Mr. Fain asked my grandfather if he would let my Doris play on the Dr. Pepper team sponsored by the local Dr. Pepper distributor in Huntsville. My grandfather, Mr. Richard Pike, ran an active farming operation in the Capshaw/Monrovia area. Mr. Fain offered my mom and a few other softball players in the community transportation to practices and games at Optimist Park.

Though hesitant to lose the workforce of my mom for games and practices, he agreed to allow her to give the Dr. Peppers a shot. Unbeknownst to granddaddy the other 5 of his children were none too happy about sister Doris getting out of work to play softball. Not counting all the free Dr. Peppers she would consume before and after the games. Soon my granddad decided that on game days the family could go into town, and everyone enjoy some time off and consume their portion of Dr. Peppers.

Mr. Fain died early in 1992 at the age of 96. For almost a century his life and legacy was as productive as anyone one man could be. In August 1992 The Huntsville Times wrote a feature article on the Dr. Peppers women's softball team. Several of the team's former players, now in their late 60s and early 70s, were invited out to Joe Davis Stadium to share and relive old memories of their young and innocent days of playing on Mr. Fain's team.

The following teammates: Doris Pike Layne, Gertrude Hoover Satterfield, Aileen McGinniss Elledge, Inez Hillis Thompson, Druce Hoover Barnett, Mildred Hunt Newby, and Bessie Hunt Dunham all shared these quotable memories of each other and their beloved coach, Mr. Ce-

cil Fain.

"The Dr. Pepper team must have started in 1937," says Doris Pike Layne, 69, a shortstop/short fielder for the team. "Mr. Fain organized the team with the Rison team and county champions."

"It was an independent team," said Gertrude Hoover Satterfield, 73, a catcher. "We played in the summers."

"In the 40s, local teams were either high school or independent," says Aileen McGinnis Elledge, 70, a catcher and shortstop.

"Girls' teams used to be as popular as boys' (teams) are now," Inez Hillis Thompson, 70, who played left field. The Dr. Peppers were in their teens and early twenties. Many were still in high school when they joined the team. Others were out of school. Some were married. A few had children.

"This was at the end of the Depression years," Druce Hoover Barnett.

"Everybody was poor, but nobody knew they were poor," Mildred Hunt Newby, 70, left fielder.

"We lived out in the country," said Mrs. Thompson. "Back then, we didn't have any money to play ball. If we didn't like sports, we'd never have gotten out of the cotton field."

"Those was some of the best years of my life," says Bessie Hunt Dunham, 67.

"When I got married, I was always telling Garnett (her husband) that I could play softball," said Mrs. Thompson.

"I lived and breathed sports," says Mrs. Elledge. "Like the other girls, too. My parents always said and I still believe it, 'If you can keep your children in sports, you can keep 'em out of meanness.'"

"We were good," says Mrs. Barnett. "Yeah, strong in the county."

The team learned at Optimist Park to run fast and throw hard.

"We were a short team," said Mrs. Newby. "Most girls were 5-feet to 5-feet-3. We were fast, and if you didn't hustle, you got put out on the bench."

"We played fast pitch," said Mrs. Layne. "We had some teammates who could throw as hard as a man."

"Mr. Fain had pep talks," said Mrs. Satterfield. "He would tell us to get out there and play fair. He was a winner."

"Every day of my life I think I use some advice that he gave us girls through schooling and sports," says Mrs. Newby. "He taught values. You didn't hold any grudges. You didn't bicker."

"One thing he always told me was to keep my temper," said Mrs. Elledge. "He always told us to win the game. We were there to win the game."

"He picked up on every trick that was used on him. Once an opposing team pulled a fast one on them. The batter ran slowly to first base to pretend that she was stopping there. Then she sped up as she rounded the base and made it to second."

The opponents did it only once. "Mr. Fain taught the Dr. Peppers to use that trick," said Mrs. Layne.

"I met my first husband Sanford Smith in 1939," said Mrs. Layne. "He was working for Dr. Pepper. That's how I learned to like Dr. Pepper."

And yes her children and grandchildren loved coming to her house knowing a Dr. Pepper or "Diet" Dr.

Pepper was usually available in the back fridge. Now they keep a good supply on hand in their refrigerators.

"We always had plenty of Dr. Pepper to drink," said Mrs. Satterfield, grinning. "I've been drinking it ever since."

"You're lying," said Mrs. Barnett.

The women loved being together and loved playing the game they once cherished. The same enthusiasm that fueled their fast pitches and stolen bases now fueled their memories.

Today an official Alabama Historical Association marker stands at Optimist Park symbolizing the role of Optimist Park in the Dallas Mill Village and northeast Huntsville. It commemorates many teams that played ball on the hallowed field during the 20th century.

The bottom of the first side of the marker (1928-1949) documents the significance of the Dr. Pepper ladies softball team and their mark upon women's sports in Dallas Village and Madison County sports history.

"The Huntsville Dr. Peppers, a women's semi-pro softball team coached by Cecil Fain, also played here."

"Thank you, Mr. Cecil V. Fain, for your role in changing the lives of thousands of young people as an educator, coach and influencer. You shaped a Mill community in northeast Huntsville for the good of generations to come. You helped advance the place of women's sports in Huntsville AL and gave a group of young women's confidence to achieve skills for life and relationships they passed along to their generation."

"As a representative of their children I also offer a hearty "thank you" from my present generation. Mindy Black." Field Of Memories". The Huntsville Times", 9 August, 1992, p. G4



# Memories of a First Responder/EMT

by Elizabeth Wharry



July 4th is meant to be a day of celebration and fun. This particular long weekend occurred while I was living in Ohio.

I was working over the July 4th holiday weekend. Second shift is really busy on long weekends. We were all "at the ready". One crew was already out on a pediatric case. A child had been burned while playing with sparklers. They burn anywhere from 1800 to 3000 degrees Fahrenheit.

The tones went out for the crew I was training with. As a trainee, my job was to take statements from witnesses.

We arrived on scene to find two guys in their mid to late 20s in agonizing pain. Adam had a wet towel over the side of his face. Bob had his hand wrapped in another wet towel. It was obvious that they had been drinking. While the lead medics were busy assessing and treating injuries, I got their information from their wives.

It started out as a game of chicken. They would shoot bottle rockets at each other. It pro-

gressed from there. They were trying to outdo each other.

Bob sat down on a lawn chair for a few minutes. Adam decided it would be hilarious to light a string of firecrackers under Bob's chair. Once Adam sat down. Bob, not to be outdone, lit an M80 and held it next to Adam's head! When the medics looked, Adam's ear and Bob's thumb and forefinger were missing.

(Names have been changed. I don't remember their real ones). Back at the station, I asked one of the medics if either one would be able to hear again. He said that was an unknown. The other lead medic wise cracked about Adam's ability to wear glasses in the future. (This is our way of dealing with the job stress.)

Have a safe and happy 4th! And please remember, fireworks and drinking don't mix.

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# Tarantula Tales



by M. D. Smith, IV

Of all my seven sons' strange pets, my third son, Brent, liked the odd and strange. This story took place in 1980, when he was twelve.

As we browsed a local pet shop, we came across a group of small aquariums with snakes and gigantic spiders. Reasonably priced. Today, in 2024, you can mail order a Texas Brown Tarantula, with guaranteed live delivery, for only \$30.00. Granted, this palm-sized arachnid is not to everyone's taste. It's the largest of the spider clan, with a 5-inch leg-span, filling an adult size palm. The female can live 25-30 years fed a diet of live mealworms and crickets, their favorite food.

Immediately my son said, "I want one of these. This would be great to show my friends."

The pet store owner demonstrated how docile they were and put his hand in the glass container after removing the perforated wire top. As he crept his hand next to the furry brown legs, the spider slowly crawled into his palm, and he lifted it out of the cage and put it close to us to admire.

"Move slowly and go ahead and pet him on the back," he said. Both my son and I did as instructed and the creature's body dipped slightly at the stroke. It felt like petting a short-haired cat.

"He has ten legs," I said.

"No, all spiders have a total of eight legs. What looks like shorter legs in front are 'palps,' and they use them for holding food, among other things."

"Do they bite?"

"They are very non-aggressive and the venom in most is not harmful to humans. Worse case, no worse than a bee sting. They'd have to lower their body to get their mouth touching the skin and then make a bite, like they do when they are trying to inject a fluid that dissolves the insides of crickets and mealworms. Later, they suck out the juice and that's how they feed."

We bought one and took it home in a small cardboard box. We got ten crickets, with the understanding we could buy all we wanted from a local bait shop.

Brent and I tamed the one we took home in less than a week. He named him Harry, because of the hairy legs. Anytime one of us would put his hand in the cage and hold it still next to the spider, he'd crawl onto it and we'd lift him out. If you put it on your lower shirt sleeve, it would slowly crawl up, coming to rest on your shoulder — a bit like having a parrot there, but a lot stranger. Made a perfect photo.

The two older brothers were not nearly as fascinated with the new pet as Brent. They were old enough to be thinking about girls. Not surprising, my wife Judy wanted no part of our new playmate at all and refused to put her hand in the cage, much less stroke the creature's back.

The demise of Harry, our Tarantula, came a few weeks



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later when I found a cricket in the water overflow drain of our swimming pool. I picked it up, thinking I had a fresh, lively meal for our arachnid, and put it in the cage. The spider immediately went to it and began to feed.

The next morning, we found our new pet dead.

"What killed him?" Brent demanded.

Reluctantly, I admitted that I'd used a cricket from the pool, and the chlorine that must have saturated his body killed Harry.

The next day we got another one. This time a more expensive Mexican Red Knee Tarantula. Gorgeous red legs at the knee. That one lasted many months until one day I had a friend, Mardis, visiting from Birmingham for a single night. Brent and I took him down to show him the spider in the basement workshop room.

Mardis was astounded at the size of the spider and had never seen anything like it up close. I gently took off the top of the glass cage, let the spider climb on my hand, and lifted him out of the pen.

Mardis was full of "ooohhs" and "aa-haass" while he smiled and looked closely at our pet. Then I told him about them being basically harmless, no matter how fierce and creepy they look. I asked him did he want it on the top of his hand.

He said, "Yes, but he won't bite me or anything, will he M.D.?"

I assured him "No."

Brent was amused at Mardis' antics as I put my hand holding the spider, cupped up next to his hand that was backside up. The spider slowly and gently crawled over on top of his outstretched hand.

Brent and I were saying, "See, they are harmless and friendly," when Mardis screamed.

He yelled loudly, "He Bit Me," and with that, slung his backhand as hard as he could outward, casting our tarantula against the wall hard, killing him.

I knew it was not true, because he'd have to squat down on all eight legs to have his mouth come in contact with the skin to bite.

No matter, Mardis swore it did, but we could not even find a red mark. I think it was just unnerving and a reflex action as the spider moved. Their legs do have tiny claws to grip food and trees for climbing. He might have felt a tiny prick.

I had spent enough money on Tarantulas for a while, and it didn't take Brent long to get fascinated with the next pet, and that's another story.

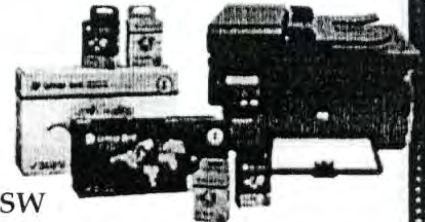


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# MORE ABOUT THE HUNTSVILLE TIMES

by Jerry Keel

I am sure by now everyone knows The Huntsville Times is no longer available in the printed form. The Huntsville Times was established and the first edition printed on March 23, 1910. Of course I was not around to witness that event but I did see many editions in the 44+ years I was employed at The Times.

Over the years one of my jobs was to prepare the datelines that went at the very top of the pages. The pages were first set up in lead type and were transferred into a large semi-cylindrical plate that was attached to the printing press. The paper used to print the pages on was delivered to The Times in the form of big rolls of newsprint which weighed between 1200 and 1500 pounds.. The rolls were sent to Huntsville by train from the various paper mills The Times purchased the paper from.

From the railway office the paper was delivered to The Times building in an enclosed trailer. One time there was a little excitement when the delivery was being made. At the back of The Times parking lot there was a sharp turn in the street. The driver of the truck came into the turn a little too fast. The newsprint rolls shifted in the trailer and caused all the weight to go to one side. When the load shifted all the weight transferring to the side caused the trailer to turn over and slide down the street on its side. Many of the rolls of paper

spilled out of the trailer. Thankfully no one was injured but the driver was surely frightened!

After that episode another driver was assigned to drive the truck. The original driver suffered much humiliation from that fiasco. Almost all of the employees at The Times enjoyed a good laugh at anything even remotely funny since we had all worked together for years.

The Press Room of the paper was a fascinating place. When The Times was located downtown the press at that time was old, very old. When a roll of newsprint was used up the press had to be completely stopped so a new roll could be put on the press. A pressman had to manually glue the end of the new roll onto the tail end of the old roll.

All that changed when a new press was installed in the new building on Memorial Parkway. This machine was much larger than the old press. The number of pages which could be printed was much higher than the old press. I will try to describe some of the functions of the new press as well as I can.

As I said, the old press had to come to a complete stop for a new roll of newsprint to be installed. The new press had a system in which 3 rolls could be loaded onto each unit of the press. The new rolls were pre-glued with a particularly tacky glue. When an

old roll was almost empty a new roll rotated into position for the transfer to be made. The press was slowed slightly as the new roll came into position. Then the new roll began to turn until the speed of the old roll and the new roll were the same.

When the new roll was moving at the same speed a large arm dropped suddenly onto the paper. This arm cut the paper from the old roll while at the same time it pressed the paper from the old roll onto the pre-glued end of the new roll. Then the press went gradually back up to its former speed.

I realize I did a poor job of describing the process but that was just one of those things that needed to be seen to be fully appreciated.

Occasionally the transfer failed and the press stopped very quickly so the paper from the two rolls could be joined by hand. This was an anxious time for the pressroom guys but thankfully it didn't happen very often.

Some of the pressroom personnel I can remember were Cliff Wilkerson who was foreman for many years. After Cliff retired Jimmy Stolz became foreman. Some of the other pressmen were Tillman Hill, who quit after being elected as County Commissioner District 1, which covered the Hazel Green-Meridianville area.

After Tillman passed away a branch of the Huntsville-Madison

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County Library located in Hazel Green was named in honor of Tillman.

Others were James "Jim" Winston, whose brother was T. A. Winston. Mike Anzek, Ronald McDonald, Jimmy Musick, Jeff Bell and others I can't recall made up the pressroom roster, I'm sorry to leave anyone out but it was not done intentionally.

The Composing Room boss was Mr. T. A. Winston, a long-time employee there. T. A. acquired the nickname "Boogerman". One day Mr. Jack Langhorne, the publisher, saw T. A. pull in to work in his car. T. A. wore his hat cocked to one side, a dapper gentleman. Mr. Jack saw him from a second-story window of The Times Office Building and remarked to someone "Look at him. He's a booger isn't he?" Well the name stuck and he became "Boogerman".

I recall others who worked many years and had nicknames, some of which were bestowed for unknown reasons. One was Paul Phillips, who liked his hair cut in a flat-top style. He acquired the nickname of "Flat-top". Many of the others had nicknames that came from who knows where. Nelson Allen was "Hong Kong", Richard Dahlke was "Sow-belly", Don Irwin was "Flat Rock", Puryear Johnston was "Doc", E. W. Logan was "Dub", Bobby Westbrook became "Silly Rabbit". Many more had nicknames but I can't recall some of them.

I cannot leave out our proofreaders who had to read all the articles which went into the paper. Sally Nance, Virginia Bowers, Marguerite Owens and others whom I cannot recall made up the group who tried to keep the typographical errors out of the paper.

We were all one big happy family. Each portion of the Composing Room had their respective jobs. Some were typesetters while others put the advertisements together. We all worked together to provide a newspaper with as few mistakes as possible. We took pride in our newspaper and wanted the community to be proud of it also.

Those days are long gone, never to return. Progress has taken one more victim. What will be next? Who knows. The building which housed The Times was torn down and replaced by a big glass-front building which now houses doctors' offices, several eating establishments and more.

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**Oscar Llerena**

# A Story of One Soldier

## Part 2

by Iolanda Hicks

After a few months of rest, it was time to leave Norristown. William's next assignment was Fort Monroe, Virginia. The young soldier had to find a place to live for his wife and soon-to-be child since there were no on-post quarters available. He was successful in renting an upstairs apartment from a local family. Mafalda studied English with the help of that family and became a Naturalized American Citizen after a short time in Virginia. She was so proud of her American citizenship! Yearly, William and his family continued to visit those special people, after the Army sent William over 700 miles away to the Southern State of Alabama. It was 1950. His assignment was Redstone Arsenal, Alabama.

Finally settled in Huntsville, the small town at Redstone, Mafalda became pregnant with their second child. William was scheduled to leave for duty in Korea. American Air, ground and Naval forces had been committed by President Truman to assist the Republic of Korea with preventing the invasion of North Korea and Communist aggression. William couldn't see leaving his young, pregnant spouse, who did not communicate well or have any close friends. He had to make a choice. His dream of being a career military man was put aside and he soon found a job with the George C. Marshall Space Flight Center, working as a millwright with NASA.

As time passed, his family grew. In 1954 William began the process of bringing Mafalda's twin from Italy to live with them. He knew his wife was lonely for her twin. With the help of Alabama Senator Sparkman, William got the government's green light. Mafalda's twin was to leave Italy on the Andrea Dora in July of 1956, her ticket was bought and most of the gifts for

family were already on board. The twin was approached by a gentleman who had been too late to purchase a ticket on that passenger liner. He had approached Mafalda's twin before she boarded and begged her to please let him buy her ticket. He had to get to America and was willing to pay her double for the ticket.

She sold her ticket to him and took the next liner out of Genoa, Italy to America. God had a plan for her. The Andrea Dora sank on the voyage she was to be on, colliding with the Stockholm, off the coast of Nan-

tucket in the Atlantic Ocean. Forty-six people on the Andrea Dora lost their lives. The ship still rests today, in that Ocean's graveyard.

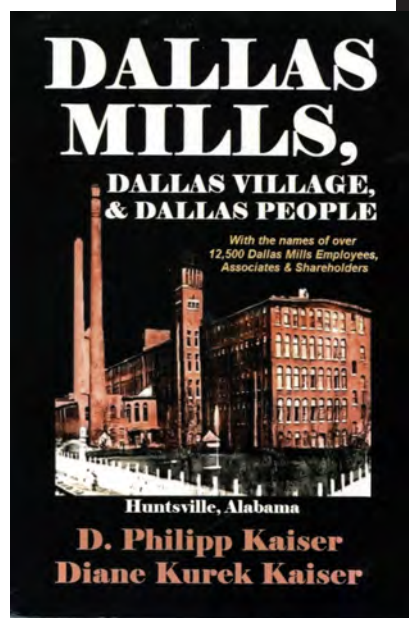
William had several positions with NASA over the next 29 years. He served as a member of the crew that built the Historic Test Stand located on Dodd Road at Redstone Arsenal, which was eventually declared a National Landmark in 1985. He was one of the crew members who maintained the buoyancy tanks used to train Astronauts, training to deal with weightlessness. William was one of the many individuals given a "thank you" for the success of

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Apollo II, the landing of man on the moon, July 20, 1969. He now had three children, a wife and a sister-in-law. His family seemed complete.

William retired from NASA on June 30, 1970, but could not live a sedentary life. He soon became a part-time guide and tour bus driver for the Space and Rocket Center, newly opened. Dr. Wernher von Braun had helped to launch a permanent display of "hardware of the Space program" with the creation of the center with the Army donating the land. William enjoyed his work with the Space Center and met many interesting people from all parts of this country.

During the later part of the 70s' and early 80s, William became a Huntsville City School bus driver and became a familiar and popular face with many of his young riders. For several years, William enjoyed this job until health issues got the best of him. In the late 80s William suffered a massive heart attack, survived and with the loving care of his wife and family, got his walking routine on track again.

He began doing regular daily activities, determined not to let a heart attack get him down! Later, during a regular physical checkup, William found out he had colon cancer which had already metastasized to his liver and lungs. He wasn't going to let that get him down either. William was a fighter. His several chemo sessions along with a multitude of radiation treatments slowed him down but he would not give up.

William's health crisis almost marked the beginning of the Gulf War. Operation Desert Shield and Operation Desert Storm were two phases of that war, being televised almost as it happened. William could be found immersed in what was happening on the television screen. He was heard sev-

eral times by family members to say, with determination: "If I were able, I would be one of the soldiers, over there, fighting this war!" William died in the arms of his wife on December 29th, 1991. He lived a good life, loving God, his family and country. Our country's flag was always present and flying at his home while he lived and after his death. This was a story of the life of a veteran and a soldier of our country.

There are so many more stories out there of past and living veterans. Please remember to say thank you whenever you see a service member, both present day military and our veterans. We owe them so much! Visit Huntsville's U. S. Veterans Memorial Museum at 3650 Alex McAllister Drive SW or 2060 Airport Road. William's name is listed on a small, framed plaque at that museum, along with several of the World War II recipients of the Purple Heart. Had he lived long enough, William would have been a very familiar face at the Veterans Museum. I can just imagine seeing that 5-foot 7-inch veteran soldier, smiling and greeting visitors, recanting stories of history and past wars. How proud he would have been!

The Veterans Museum is open Wednesday through Saturday 10 am until 4 pm each day. You'll really enjoy this walk through history.

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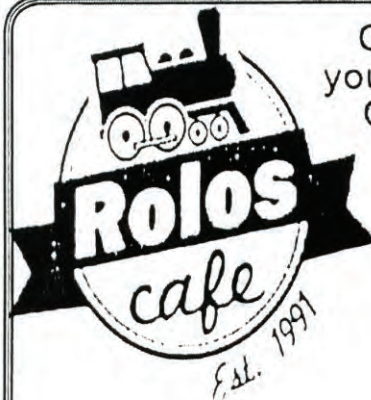
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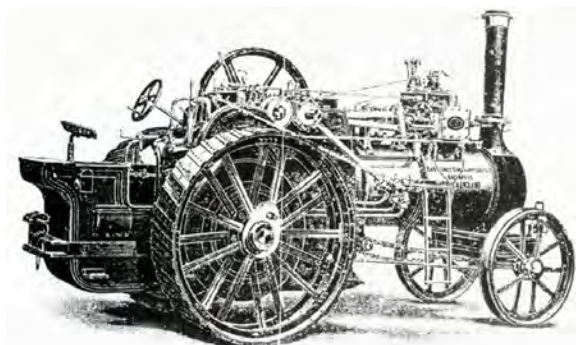
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# THE PAVING OF LOCUST STREET



by Walt Terry

dream of heaven. A sure 'nuff, really and truly steam roller!

Across the street lived another four or five year old miscreant named Wells Stanley. As Wells and I watched together this marvel-

ous process, we ran across a treasure almost equally fascinating: a brown paper bag with huge biscuits containing between their halves a greasy white substance we'd never seen before in its purest form (we learned later it was called "fatback") Not totally innocent of what we were doing we retreated to a "secret" place under Wells' porch steps and proceeded to feast on this strange and delicious banquet.

Along about 1925 or 26 I was fortunate enough to live on Locust Street when it was being paved. (Since that was back in what my children refer to as, "The Dark Ages," I'm not sure whether or not it was the initial paving, but my fading mind tells me it was.) To see and hear that beautiful smoke belching monster rumbling and clanking along its way over the newly poured, steaming asphalt was a small boy's

We were, of course, caught. The street department man, on missing his lunch come noon-time, somehow tracked us down (crime didn't pay even at that tender age). The man was as black as the asphalt he worked with but had a heart of gold, and I've never forgotten his kindness. He told our mothers that he reckoned we had "mistook" his lunch for ours.

But with our mothers, we both were in disgrace though we passionately blamed each other for being the instigator. Our mothers, to make amends to the worker, prepared a feast of fried chicken for him and his fellow crew members. Under these circumstances, we were more than forgiven for our sins by them, if not immediately by our mothers.

I haven't seen Wells Stanley in probably forty or fifty years, but I'm convinced he'd still be quick to say Walter Terry put him up to that thievery.

And I'd be just as quick to deny it.

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# PET TIPS FROM ANGEL

## *Caring for Your Parakeet*



Parakeets make for fun and entertaining pets, without requiring a lot of maintenance or cost. Given the proper care, parakeets can live as long as 10 to 14 years —nearly as long as cats and dogs. Here are a few ideas you can use to raise a happy, healthy bird!

### **1. Parakeets like Company**

If you have a single bird, a mirror is practically a must. A lone parakeet will enjoy your company, but a mirror helps him feel less alone when you are not around.

Consider getting a second bird for ideal level of companionship for your parakeet. However, you may want to keep multiple birds separate when they are young so they will learn to bond with humans rather than just other birds.

### **2. Be Sure to Vary the Food**

Plain old bird seed gets old fast. Pet stores and most supermarkets sell a range of birdie treats, from clip-on treat sticks to millet sprays and birdie biscuits. You can also give your birds small pieces of fruit as a special treat. Also, parakeets love cilantro and celery leaves!

### **3. Parakeets Love Toys**

Parakeets are playful creatures. There are many toy options you can get for your bird, from rings to swings to bells and beads. Parakeets are drawn to shiny things that make noise, and objects they can move around with their beaks or feet. Just take care that any toy you give your parakeet does not have small parts which can come off and become a choking hazard. Don't over-clutter the cage, either, but rotate through several different toys for variety.

### **4. Earn Their Trust**

With parakeets, trust may take months to build. He will likely be very shy when you first bring him home, but his personality will emerge within a few weeks. Build trust by placing your finger in front of your bird. Do this every day until it gets the courage to hop on.

After a few days of this, try coaxing your bird by gently nudging your finger against its lower chest. With patience, you will build trust in this way. Do not worry if your bird is slow to trust you. Eventually it will be climbing all over you. Just remember the next tip...

### **5. Never Grab Your Parakeet**

To a small bird, few things are more terrifying than an open hand reaching in and grabbing it against its will. Trust between bird and human can evaporate quickly if you grab the little guy. Your parakeet might frustrate you in the beginning by refusing to sit on your finger. But resist the urge to grab. I've found it very helpful to buy a cage with a top that detaches — this allows you to easily let your birds out without grabbing and pulling them through the cage door.

### **6. Parakeets Love to Sing**

In fact they can be quite loud! They will chirp, sing, and squawk on their own, but they love to sing along to music or even your own singing. If you're not vocally gifted, try playing some music near your birds and see how they react. If you are away all day, consider leaving the radio on for them at a moderate volume.

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# ABOUT WRITING

*by Tom Carney,  
written in 1992*

Most people think writing is easy. Buy a typewriter and a dictionary and you're on your way down the journalistic path to fame and fortune.

A few writers, if they are lucky and become well known, may get a review in some other publication, or possibly, receive a few letters complimenting a particular story. For a writer, that's the ultimate accolade.

But for most of us, it is a life of anomaly, sitting glued to a word processor day after day. Your throat becomes parched from too many cigarettes, your back is killing you and you are fighting a constant deadline. The commas become periods, and Joe Blow appears on your screen as Joe Bleu, while the copy editor stands behind you screaming, asking if you ever heard of "spell-check".

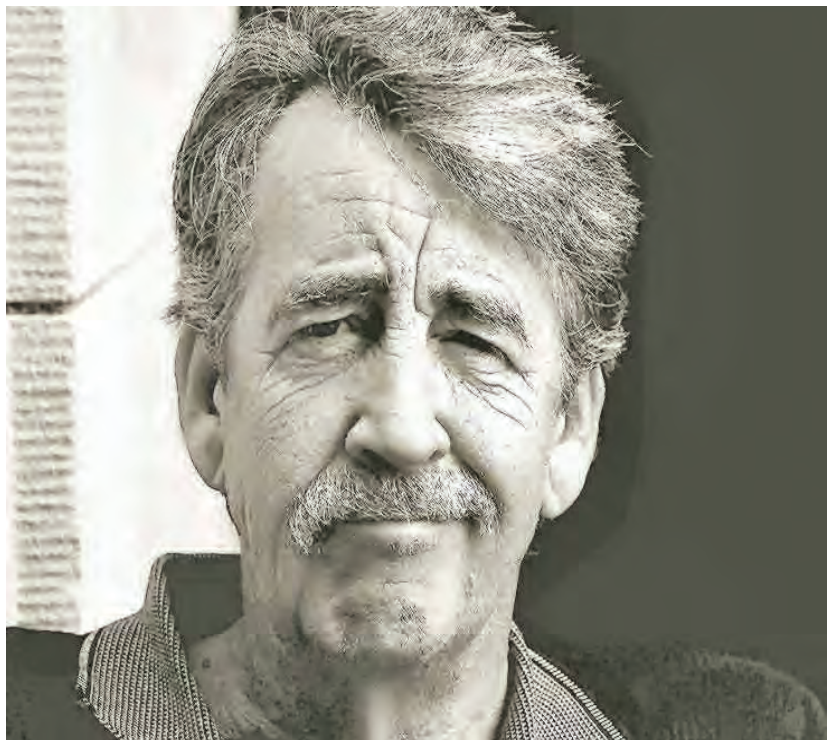
A writer's life is a strange existence.

You see an old couple, possibly in their nineties, dancing at the Officers Club. Their joints are crippled by age and their heads are snow-white. They move slowly about the dance floor to the melody of an old-time waltz.

And you sit there, nursing another drink, marveling at the years and the love this couple must share. You go home late that night, its always late when a writer gets home, and try to recapture some of those feelings on a piece of paper before the hangover sets in. You don't think about the fact that a hundred thousand people will probably read the story; you just want other people to feel the same emotions you did that night.

**"If God had wanted me to be able to touch my toes, he would have put them on my knees."**

*Pat Riley, Huntsville*



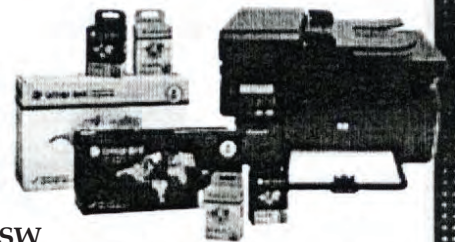
Even the best of writers, deep down in their hearts, are never sure if they do this well.

And you wonder if it's worth it. Does anyone ever read these stories?

Then someone calls you or comes by and talks about one of your stories with tears in their eyes. That someone remembered one of their loved ones and wrote a story about her. That's when you realize it's all worthwhile and you hope people will remember.

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# White Crosses

by Gerald Alvis,  
*The Poet of Greenlawn*

Gerald let's go; we are leaving my wife shouted to me. I paused for a moment longer, watching the surf rush up again to meet my feet. High tide had limited my walk on this famous beach. I looked out to sea one more time, still trying to capture and absorb the historical moment that had occurred here. The docks that had been placed, making it a harbor, were still partially intact, and I tried to see in my mind's eyes the obstacles the Higgins boats (LCVP) sought to avoid. The museums were good, but it was different from standing where brave men once rushed ashore to defeat tyranny.

My pace was slow, almost hesitant, as if I was reluctant to leave. It felt disrespectful to rush through a place where men had once sprinted for their lives, just a generation from me ago. Yet, the next stop beckoned, and I knew it was time to move on. With a nod and a silent salute, I wiped the moisture from my eyes and bid farewell, my heart laden with gratitude and respect for what they did 8 decades ago.

Over a hundred thousand troops passed through this very spot, in an invasion that reshaped the world. The sheer scale of the operation was mind-boggling, with supplies of equipment, fuel, food and medical aid pouring through this portal.

The next stop on our journey was a stark reminder of the high price paid for this victory.

If you've ever deployed, you come back differently and with a new respect. Everything changes. This doesn't fade but intensifies because, with time, you begin to understand its importance. Getting off the tour bus, my eyes scanned the pathways until we finally crested a small, slightly rolling

area. Ann has learned to give me my distance at times like this; oh, she was there alright, usually just behind and to my right, ready to assist and comfort. White crosses dotted the landscape, all perfectly laid out in a row. It was as quiet and beautiful as Arlington, overlooking a stunning beach view a stone's throw away. I sat below our nation's flag, which was gently moving in the breeze; it's interesting how it had a calming effect on me in a place so far away.

Veterans view Normandy, its cemeteries, and other places like them differently. These are our brothers and sometimes our buddies. What I see are the men who are now interred here, the night before, scouring letters and photographs for comfort. Many were written as well, expressing love, devotion and thoughts about the future. Their hopes, dreams and lives were put on the line, going to a place they had never seen and where they would rest for eternity. The worst is almost never talked about, as they shared care packages, plans, jokes and horseplay to let off steam and reduce anxiety. Seeing these places was on my bucket list and the tour guide was thorough. I could spend a lot more time at the various stops she narrated on our trip.

Our last leg on the cruise was across the English Channel to England. I thought about the armada that traveled across the waters and the supply ships that had crossed the Atlantic as we did under very different circumstances. So, finally, the last item on my itinerary. I spent a quiet moment on the fan tail and said goodbye to the six people we lost in "81" and others we had lost during the shakedown cruises. This acknowledgment relaxed and relieved my feelings about leaving them far from home. But each year, on this holiday weekend, I lift my glass and thank all veterans who paid the price for my freedom, those who never got to see their grandchildren.

Cheers, brothers and sisters, and thank you!

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# An Interview with Jerry Hayes

*by John Michael Hampton*

With the retirement of Jerry Hayes, Huntsville has had the end of an era that has lasted for many years. Jerry Hayes has been a part of News Channel 19 from the late 1970s all the way until 2024, when he retired. His retirement has prompted me to tell of the time that Jerry Hayes interviewed my mother-in-law, Linda Gurley, on live television.

For many years, WHNT TV 19 had a "Tools for Schools" school supply drive to collect school supplies for local nonprofit Kids To Love, which assisted foster children and adopted children. Each year, the drive would end in a "Blitz Day" that featured news anchors, meteorologists, and reporters live from selected locations during the newscast. Several years ago, (I want to say it was around 2012-2014), Jerry Hayes announced that he would be anchoring Blitz Day coverage from the Hampton Cove WalMart Supercenter, with live reports beginning with the Noon News Broadcast.

Now, I do want to say that my mother-in-law is a BIG fan of Jerry Hayes. She has even said that Jerry reminds her a lot of my late father-in-law. So, she seemed to be listening intently when Jerry announced the day before Blitz Day his location and times he would broadcast from during the event.

The Wednesday of the Blitz Drive was bright and sunny. My mother-in-law left the house about 10:30 am. She would not tell us where she was going, but did state that she was going grocery shopping.

So, my wife Charlotte and I tuned into News Channel 19 at noon, just like we did any other day. The first story was the Blitz Drive for "Tools for Schools." They read an introduction in the studio, then cut away to a live shot at the WalMart in Hampton Cove.

Jerry Hayes started by telling how much donations in cash and school supplies that his location had received so far in the day. He then said, "We have had lots of wonderful people out here donating today, including Linda Gurley."

The camera panned out to show my mother-in-law standing next to Jerry. Jerry asked her what had motivated her to come out and donate, and she stated, "I worked in the school system in the lunchroom for over 25 years, and I also have a grandson. I understand how important it is for school students to have the proper supplies they need for school."

Jerry thanked her for her donation and for speaking to him on air. She replied, "You're welcome!" Jerry wrapped up his live shot by reminding people that he would be at the WalMart at Hampton Cove until 7 pm.

Either Jerry or the news producer must have loved the interview with my mother-in-law. It aired again at 6:00 pm., 10:00 pm., and on the morning news the next day.

Local anchors appreciate being able to communicate with the community they serve. It was indeed what happened the day my mother-in-law, Linda Gurley, got interviewed by Jerry Hayes on live television.

When the Smith and Wesson Company opened a golf driving range in 1984 in Springfield, Massachusetts, they didn't consider the sea gulls in the area. The driving range was forced to close a week later after flocks of the birds began bombarding company executives, motorists and neighbors with hundreds of golf balls they would pick up, fly into the air with, and drop.

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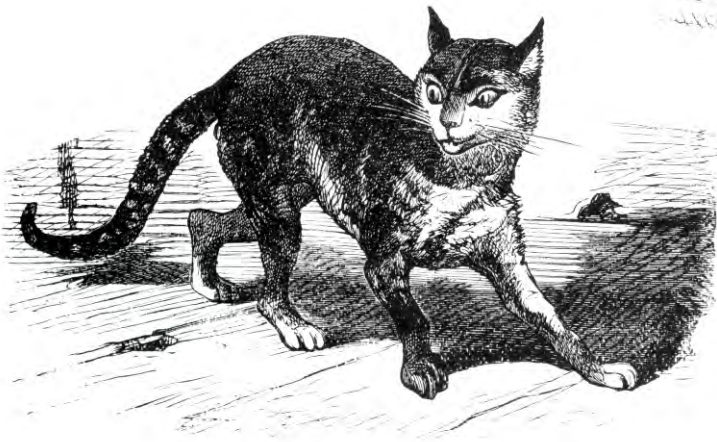
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# A Cat Tale



by L. D. Rogers

Bobby Coleman was a good friend and we worked together at the Ford dealer in the parts department. Bobby lived in the same neighborhood as I did. One day I went to see him and he was out on his front porch taking it easy. When I drove up I noticed there was a grey cat on his front porch. About that time his wife came out the front door and said, "Bobby, when are you going to take that cat off?" He said, "I'm going to take the cat off soon."

He told me that it was a stray cat that had come to their house and he made the mistake of feeding it and now it wouldn't leave.

Bobby said, "Come on and go with me and we will take it somewhere." I asked him if he had a cage to put the cat in. He told me he didn't, but I could hold it because we wouldn't be going too far. That was my first mistake.

We got in his car and started off down the road. We hadn't gone very far till the cat extended its claws and started to put them in my leg. I said, "Bobby, this cat is scratching me."

He said, "Just hold on. It won't be too much longer, and we can let it go."

The cat kept sinking its claws in my leg. I said, "Bobby, this cat is scratching me pretty bad."

He said, "Let it go. It can't hurt anything in the car."

So, I let it go and that was my second mistake.

The cat took off running around the inside of the car hitting every window and windshield trying to get out. All that time Bobby and I were trying to dodge the cat as it went by screaming and scratching, trying to find a hole to escape.

As the cat was running around the inside of the car it decided it was time to "use the bathroom". That went on for a long time or at least it felt like it. Bobby finally found a place to pull off the road.

When he opened door, the cat shot out like a bullet and ran up in the woods.

Bobby said, "Well, we took care of that."

We took our time going back home. We pulled in his driveway and there sat the cat on the front porch. The cat looked at us and I know it was thinking, "What took y'all so long to get here?"

I don't know what happened after that. I got in my car to go home and left Bobby and his wife to deal with their cat and stinky car!



## BROWNIE

Hello, my name is Brownie. I am 3 years old and a male mixed breed dog. I am a chocolate brown color so people here at the Ark Animal Shelter decided to call me Brownie. I came from a hoarder situation but was rescued and came here to stay until someone comes to adopt me. I am about knee high and am so happy to meet everyone who comes here to look at the dogs. I get very excited initially but calm right down when I am one on one with the volunteers here. I have been neutered, have had all my shots and I've been micro-chipped. I love to get attention from the volunteers and go on walks. If you are looking for a new member of your family please come to the Ark Animal Shelter and ask to see Brownie, that's me. I will be so happy to meet you!

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# Locust Grove Baptist Church

by Kate Hopkins

Twenty-four members took on a labor of love to organize a church in 1867. The original name was the Baptist Church of Christ but it is now called Locust Grove Baptist Church. The earliest minutes are dated June 1867 and they give a valuable insight into the life and times of the early settlers.

Thomas H. Bayless was one of the early farmers to settle in north Alabama. He deeded one acre to the church for only \$15.00 dollars and later deeded an adjoining 1/2 acre for a cemetery at the current location on County Lake Road.

In March of 1873 the construction of the first church building began. In 1918, according to the History of Riverton School, the church bought the one room schoolhouse that was located where the old Paul Lawler house still stands. The purchase price was \$150.00 dollars, and it was moved to join the original church building.

Over the years many additional buildings were added to the site. Shortly after World War II Pastor Howard McGehee led an effort to build a new meeting house. The project was a community effort. Maurice Lawler donated logs for framing, Boyd Ayers and Homer Fears were carpenters and only \$3,000.00 had to be borrowed.

The building fund had a zero balance in the beginning but after two years the new stone sanctuary was paid for. In a creative solution to help raise the money to pay for the new building the members went into the farming business. Brother W.G. Cornelison provided a ten-acre field to grow a cotton crop. Men, women, and children were involved with planting, chopping, and picking cotton.

The practice of tithing was another means of fund raising. A tithe is a portion of the members' income to be given to their church and is usually 10%. After more than 150 years the Locust Grove Church continues to be a pillar of the New Market community.

An excerpt from the church minutes concerning the death of Thomas Bayless at age 73 reads: "He had those attributes of character that called for the affection of every heart that is capable of appreciating true manly worth. He has fought the good fight and kept the faith and has won a crown of righteousness."

## Brown Bread Pudding

- 1 c. brown bread pieces
- 2 c. milk
- 3 eggs
- 2 T. pure maple syrup
- 2 egg whites
- 1 T. sugar
- 2 T. whipping cream

Soak bread pieces in half a cup of the milk for 20 minutes, then make a custard of the rest of the milk, eggs, and maple sugar by just cooking them together over medium heat til thickened.

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

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# Ranger



*by Austin Miller*

Ranger was a big red, short-haired dog with a long tail. He was half boxer and half red bone hound. Ranger belonged to Dwight Everett, the oldest child of Grady and Avon Everett. The Everetts moved to Ryland from Maysville when Dwight was in the first grade. That's when he met my brother Berns. They soon developed a friendship that has lasted to this day.

The house they moved into was referred to as "the house behind the gin". It was only about 75 feet behind the Ryland cotton gin, about 300 feet south of the store, Post Office and Ryland Pike. Part of the road to their house is now named Ryland Gin Road. Grady and Avon had four children besides Dwight; they are Carolyn, Pete, Joyce and Roger.

All still live in or around Ryland with the exception of Dwight who lives at Leighton, Alabama. He is pastor of the First Baptist Church in Leighton. Grady died about ten years ago; Avon still lives at the home place. Avon has been heard saying that when she saw the land at Ryland she told Grady that she had found her home and it was where she wanted to live until she died. That was almost sixty years ago.

The Everetts lived in the house behind the gin for several years. It was a plain frame house with a front porch, brick siding and a tin roof. Many Ryland families lived in the house before the Everetts to include Jim Barnett, Robert Miller and my Grandparents, Hugh and Hettie Meford. I still have a scar on my chin from a cut I got playing on a wagon tongue in the back yard when Uncle Robert lived there. Grady was a hard worker who worked two jobs. He worked at the Stove Plant in Huntsville and farmed. In the early sixties, they built a nice new brick house out on the road from the old house.

Always of great interest to me was the fact that Mr. Everett was a decorated Navy veteran of World War II. He was in the Navy when Pearl

Harbor was attacked and still in when they signed the surrender in Tokyo Bay. His first job in the war was to ferry Marines ashore in the invasion of several Pacific Islands; one of those was Guadalcanal. After his transport ship was sunk, he served on a destroyer and saw more action.

Grady Everett was not only a good neighbor; he was also a real war hero. My heroes were never ball players, movie stars or anybody I didn't know personally; they are all people like Grady Everett.

Ranger roamed the roads, fields and yards of Ryland for nearly twenty years. In his prime, and he had a long prime, he was the undisputed king of the dogs. He was the Bull of the woods feared by all other dogs. He was not vicious or aggressive toward people but when it came to other dogs, he was a holy terror. Dogs that challenged him did so at the risk of their lives.

Joyce tells the story of how Ranger saved her life when she was ten years old. She was walking home from the store one day when a known vicious bulldog ran up from behind and started growling and snarling. She knew she was in great danger until she saw Ranger coming. Without slowing down he ran past her and attacked full force. When she looked back the bulldog was running for his life with Ranger in hot pursuit.

In their growing up years, Berns and Dwight spent untold hours hunting, fishing, boating, exploring and swimming. One of their favorite things to do was spend the night with each other. Berns loved to go to the Everett house and hear Mr. Everett tell about his war experiences. Dwight told me recently that one of his favorite memories of coming to our house was Daddy popping popcorn. He said Daddy would cook up a big batch in a big skillet on our old coal heater, put a newspaper on the floor and dump it all out on the newspaper and they would eat pop corn and drink Double Colas until they were full enough to pop. When Dwight came to spend the night Ranger came too. He slept on the front porch under the window next to the bed where Berns and Dwight slept.

When Dwight went to the Air Force in 1966, Ranger couldn't figure out what happened to him. For weeks, he came at night and slept under the window on our front porch. Berns still talks about waking up to find Old Ranger peering through the window looking for Dwight. Daddy would run him home every morning but as soon as the sun went down he was back. I am told that this really got next to Daddy and he would try to explain to Ranger that Dwight was gone but to no avail. He thought a lot of Dwight and made the statement that he knew there was at least one good boy in the Air Force.

By this time Ranger was getting on in years. He was not as quick as he once was and didn't have a tooth in his head. He was getting by on his reputation. Other dogs feared him so that they left him alone for a long time after he was no longer able to fight. Finally, as was bound to happen, another dog took him on. With no teeth, slow reflexes and stiff joints, Ranger didn't stand a chance and was killed.

It says in the Bible that if you live by the sword you will die by the sword. It is my guess that Old Ranger wouldn't have wanted it any other way.

# THE FLINT RIVER BRIDGE

*by Mack Vann, Nov. 2012*

"Where in the world's the ground?" is what I was thinking when it came up to knock the stuffing out of me.

Before then I had been thinking: "Roll, Mack, roll. Remember to roll." Of course, that was if I hit ground. I didn't know what to do if I hit water. Would the water be 2 inches deep, 1 foot, maybe 10 feet deep?

The night I jumped off Flint River Bridge was a matter of have-to: what was below and how far down, I didn't know. One thing for certain, I sure couldn't stay on the bridge; Joe Ed felt the same way. The two cars racing toward the five of us didn't see our two cars parked on the bridge. My father, Joe Ed and I were trying desperately to get a tire on my car while our wives, Margaret and Mary Glenda, were doing their best to signal traffic with two cell flashlights.

It was a death trap waiting to happen.

We almost got away with it. Dad had just lowered my car back to the pavement. Now all we had to do was put the tools in the trunk, get in our cars, and all of us get the heck off the bridge. We almost made it.

Seemed you could hear 'em before you could see 'em: two 8-cylinder passenger cars, a '56 Pontiac and a '56 Oldsmobile. Both cars packed with teenage boys bound and determined to be first to get to Huntsville. Coming out of Gurley, it's a 3 mile straight stretch to Flint River Bridge and once across another 3 miles. The cars were doing all they could do. The drivers, driven by whatever it is that drives teenagers, never saw us frantically signaling, never saw us until it was too late.

I remember the first car fish-tailing even before it came onto the bridge, its brakes locked, tires screaming, and right behind the first car: the second. They would have hit us even if their braking had been controlled, but this was anything but. We were going to be hit. That was certain and the first car, after it hit

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us was going to be creamed by the car right behind it; that car, too, hopelessly out of control. Traffic in the oncoming lane had stopped, but stopped too close to keep from being involved in what was happening.

There wasn't time to worry. I'd like to think that as I jumped, I said a prayer for all; but I don't remember. All I knew was there was going to be a huge pile up; and if Joe and I didn't move from between the rear of my car and the front of the car pulled up behind, Joe and I would be sandwiched between. We'd be killed, or lose our legs at best. Our only chance was to get to the bridge railing, jump up on top, and stay there until we heard the impact. That's what we did.

Dad never made it. Margaret saw what happened. Dad was caught between the two cars. When Dad's car was struck from behind, his car was knocked into my car and both cars jackknifed straight up with Dad in the middle. He was unconscious as he went flying over the bridge, falling like a rag doll to the ground 25 feet below. He was thrown so hard that later when we went to the bridge we found pieces of Dad's trousers embedded in the concrete railing.

Dad wasn't killed, but he was severely hurt. Miraculously, he recovered. I thank God. Joe Ed and I got off reasonably light. I twisted my back but recovered in a month or so. The left side of Joe Ed's face hit an iron pipe lying on the ground. In time, Joe healed too, but he took a beating with that pipe. I remember a boulder about the size of a suitcase. I missed it by 5 feet, a miss as good as a mile. To this day I'm thankful for missing that boulder.

The two carloads of teenagers, ten of 'em at least, I believe twelve, had combined injuries of one broken nose and one broken little finger.

The cars coming from Huntsville had stopped. The first car was hit and knocked back into the car behind. These passengers were shaken but uninjured. That night ten, twelve, fifteen people, possibly more, could have perished. Thank God none did!

But where the miracle of miracles occurred was back at the rear of the two cars. Margaret and Mary Glenda, holding hands, jumped up on the bridge curb and leaned over the railing, their backs to the action. The crash went by them. My wife and sister weren't touched.

I suspect God's Angels are always busy. That night, it was just more obvious.

**"It's hard to wait for something you know might never happen, but it's harder to give up when you know it's everything you want."**

*Unknown Lyric, Musicians*

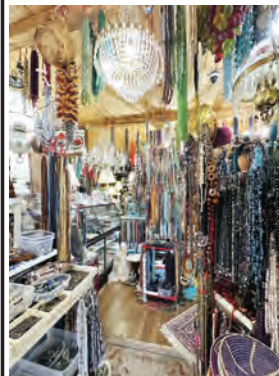


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