



No. 378
August 2024



Old Huntsville

HISTORY AND STORIES OF THE TENNESSEE VALLEY

Phil Bentley's Enco Full Service Gas Station



Also in this issue: The Rebel Yankee; A Dangerous Intersection; Remembering Downtown Huntsville in the 50s and 60s; Ticklebelly Hill; The Old Brick Pond; Sonic Boom?; Kmart's Act of Civil Disobedience; Old Superstitions; Summertime Recipes and Much More!

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*Cathey Carney, Publisher
Old Huntsville Magazine*

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Author, John H. Tate

Phil Bentley's Enco Full Service Gas Station

by M. D. Smith, IV

Built new in 1969, Phil Bentley Jr. owned the Enco full-service gas station at the corner of Governors Drive and Franklin Street. A rebuilt Exxon stands there today. But in Phil's era, full service meant a lot of things. Phil had a photo of the ribbon cutting of the new station with several executives of Enco; his father, Phil Sr., Phil and his wife Betty, and in the center, Mayor Joe Davis, assisting with the ceremony.

My family moved to Huntsville in 1958 when WAAY-Radio was purchased, and I married in college and settled with my wife and first child in 1963, the same year we bought Channel 31. For both personal and the station's vehicles, we'd bought gas at several places, but when Phil opened his Enco station, the service was so much better, and our TV & radio stations had a monthly charge account. They'd bill us

at the end of the month, and we'd pay by check.

By full service, let me remind those who can remember. It was washing front and rear windows (all if you requested), checking under the hood for cooling fluids and battery water levels, checking tire pressures and filling if needed, and, of course, the oil. They'd check if it was low and bring the dipstick to the window to show you, or if it was dirty and black, then they'd tell you it was time to get an oil change from them. My wife remembers the extra service of removing floor mats and brushing them off with a hand whisk broom.

Of course, an attendant would fill your gas tank up or the dollar amount you wanted. Five dollars bought over ten gallons of gas in those days. You had your choice of regular or high-octane grades.

Do you remember the free road maps? Inside the office area, they kept an ample supply of city, state and U.S. road maps you could have for free. That was why all cars had large "door map holders" back in those days, and most still do, but you are not likely to find maps there. You are more likely to see tissues and hand sanitizer in those side pockets presently. But back in the 70s, one would not make a trip to a new place or city without full maps of the route. Often, we'd mark the route with a pencil or pen and circle the highway

"One day a guy pulled a knife on me. I could tell it wasn't a professional job - it had butter on it."

Rodney Dangerfield



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numbers along the way. These were published by Humble Oil Company/Enco in those days.

Phil told me recently in an interview that it was a small added cost of doing full-service business, and his station was happy to provide them. Another big bonus for many customers was that Bently Enco offered Green Stamps with any purchase. You remember them, don't you? My wife was a big collector and filled book after book with them for gifts and merchandise from the S&H company. You got green stamps in numbers that matched whatever purchases you made at the station. I cared little about them, but sure took them home to my wife, Judy, who loved them, as did millions around the country. Judy remembers a redemption store in Huntsville from those years. She didn't remember anything specific that she redeemed.

That was another customer cost Bently paid to attract business. I asked Phil if these stamps significantly contributed to his costs and he said, "No, we bought them in vast bulk, and they weren't all that much." In the night photo, you might be able to see the big S&H sign in front of the two gas pumps.

He had three big garage doors to the service bays. The third door was the wash bay, where you could get a full car wash (and wax) by hand. Two doors had car lifts inside for oil changes and all kinds of maintenance work. Phil kept two certified mechanics on duty. They did brake work, sold and installed new tires, electrical fuses, head lamps, bulb replacements, and most light-duty parts replacements like generators or alternators. Short of a significant transmission or engine failure, they could repair almost anything.



Shortly after Bentley's Enco changed to Exxon, I remember a campaign about "putting a Tiger in your tank." The Tiger was the gas company's logo from the days of Enco, and someone in their marketing department got the zany idea of a simulated tiger tail available at many stations for a time (don't remember if it was free or maybe a charge). Still, seeing just a small tiger's tail peeking out of the gas port door was a sight. Kids used them to adorn bikes and other fun places. I think Auburn picked up on the idea for their football team for a while. What a hoot.

I asked Phil about the one thing he thought helped the success of his business the most, and he said both his own and his guys' friendliness with customers. He noted that many loyal customers of that 10-year franchise ownership are still automobile dealer customers today at his Cadillac, Buick, GMC and Hyundai dealerships.

Phil related a story about his son Trey (actually Phillip Wynn Bentley III who now primarily runs the dealerships these days) when he was ten years old. Phil's wife, Betty, asked him to let Trey spend time at the station while she ran some errands. He had recent-



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ly had a new tire rack arrive in many pieces. He told his son to spend his day putting it together. It surprised Phil when Trey finished in about two hours, and wanted to know what else he could do. Phil said that, unfortunately, his son couldn't assist the guys in doing full service to the cars because the boy was too short to reach much of the front windshields to clean them. Thus, he did other odd jobs around the business.

GASOLINE PAYMENTS:

Back in the 70s, the most popular payment methods were oil company credit cards or cash. Bently would take a personal check if they knew you. He said honesty was never a problem with employees, even with sizeable sums in the register at the end of each day. Many customers use the cards, and do you remember how they would lay it in a machine, put a three-layer carbon over the card, and run the pressure roller back and forth? It made the receipt for the customer and the ticket for the gasoline company's reimbursement.

I asked Phil if he then mailed them in and he said they never had to do that — because he paid the gasoline tanker truck driver with those tickets. He gave an example that if a month's fuel delivery was \$8,000.00, he'd usually have those "tickets" worth \$7,000.00 of the bill. He'd simply give the driver those cards and pay the balance in cash, and all the other cash income went into his bank to pay employees and other business expenses (plus a decent profit, Phil admitted).

A celebrity is someone who works very hard all his life to become known and then wears dark glasses to avoid being recognized.

GAS PRICES & WARS

We talked about the most vivid memories Phil remembered from his years operating the gas station, and he said one was in 1972 when the "Gas Wars" took place. He noted that gasoline sold for around 45 cents per gallon in the early seventies. But the competitive fires between gas brands fueled price cutting to see who could match or come lower than the competition, and he remembers selling it for an all-time bottom of 29.9 cents a gallon.

By extreme contrast, two years later, in 1974, there was an extreme gas shortage because of national circumstances. Phil said if he'd stayed open selling gas all day, it would have depleted his monthly allowance, and he might go two weeks with no gas at all to sell. So, he decided he'd only sell gas for two hours daily in the afternoon. The lines waiting for gas spilled from one side onto Franklin Street and then backed up to Longwood Road for a block or two. He said



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since there was an average time it took per car, he could calculate the number of vehicles when they would hit the time limit to stop, so he'd send one of his men up the street and put a sign on the last car for the day. Others were advised to go home.

That prevented people from waiting an hour or more for gas, only to get to the pumps as they closed and be mad,

Furthermore, you could not buy gas if your tank indicator showed half-full or more to prevent hoarding. I clearly remember the attendant looking into my car window to verify that my gauge was under half a tank.

That practice continued even when they could stay open much of the day to prevent all the vehicles from driving around with nearly full tanks, limiting the supply.

Bentley always kept his grounds clean and attractive with greenery and glistening white river rocks. In 1975, his station won the City of Huntsville Service Station Beautification Award.

Nothing was allowed to be a turn off, and this Enco (Exxon in 1972) station proved attractive in every way.

Phil sold the franchise to his right-hand man over the nearly 11 years of ownership, Buddy Goodwin. The location was Goodwin's Exxon for another 6-7 years. To the

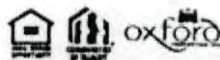
best of my memory, Buddy ran as fine a business as Phil did.

The photo of Phil Bentley, Jr. was taken at the end of our meeting in early May of this year. He's just as spry and lively as ever and involved with several other boards these days, including Huntsville Hospital. While he is at the GMC dealership office every day, he said his son Trey runs most of the everyday operations at the dealerships.

I sure miss those "full-service gas stations" of fifty years ago. How many times have you checked your oil lately? Yeah, I didn't think so.

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VERY OLD SUPERSTITIONS



* You should never hand a hot pepper directly to a friend — superstition has it that it will bring discord into the friendship. If you want to give your friend a jalapeno, put it on the table or counter and have them pick it up.

* Eggs symbolize fertility, so farmers would scatter broken eggs into their fields hoping they would bring forth an abundant crop. Also, if you break open an egg and find two yolks, that means someone you know will be getting married or having twins.

* When you're cracking your egg, make sure to crush the eggshell afterward: otherwise, legend has it, a witch will gather up the pieces, set sail and cause terrible storms at sea.

* Cure leprosy and the plague by swallowing a spider rolled in butter.

* If you cut open a loaf of bread and see a hole (aka a large air bubble), that means somebody will die soon. The hole in the bread represents a coffin (spooky!). You should also cut a cross into the top of your loaf before baking, otherwise the devil will sit on it and ruin your loaf. Now "hot cross buns" make more sense.

"A James Cagney love scene is where he lets the other guy live."

Bob Hope

* If you eat cabbage regularly, you will grow larger breasts.

* Tea, also used in divination (we won't get into that), has lots of superstitions connected to it. For instance, you should never put milk in your tea before the sugar, or you may never get married.

Seemingly contradictory, undissolved sugar at the bottom of your cup means someone is in love with you. Spilling your tea means a stranger is about to visit you.

* Let only one person pour the tea — it's bad luck if the duty is shared.

* To stir the teapot anti-clockwise will stir up a quarrel. If two women pour from the same pot one of them will have a baby within a year. There is a lot of belief in reading the tea-leaves to predict the future.

* A sneezing cat is the sign of future wealth. If the cat is a calico, so much the better.

* An acorn at the window will keep lightning out.

* If you spill black pepper you will have a serious argument with a good friend within the day.

* When the wind is out of the east, fish bite the least; when the wind is out of the west, fish bite the best.

* APRON: accidentally put one on inside out - lucky; if it falls off suddenly for no apparent reason - unlucky (European superstition).

* If a loaf of bread crumbles in your hand as you are cutting it there is going to be a quarrel before very long.

* Drop a slice of buttered bread, butter side up and a visitor will arrive.



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Moments When Technology Made A Difference

Page 6 HUNTSVILLE NEWS FRIDAY, JULY 19, 1974



Wedding Anniversary Celebration
Mr. and Mrs. Tom Berry

by Lynne Berry

My parents had similar childhoods. My dad's parents, the Berrys, farmed and had a country store in northeast Madison County in a little community called Bell Factory out toward New Market. My mom's parents, the Millsaps, farmed and had a country store in the more eastern part of the county in a little community called Maysville out near Gurley.

Telephone service came to Huntsville in 1883 but out in the rural areas there were no telephones until around 1930. Even then, phones were rare and most were in community gathering places like stores. Both of my parents grew up at a time when the only telephone in their community was in their parents' store.

My dad was fascinated by the telephone. Every now and then the phone would stop working. Service would be down for quite a while until a repairman made it out to that area. When he

did, my dad would watch, and ask a lot of questions and after a few such visits, my dad became pretty good at fixing the phone himself.

My mom's parents' store was only about five miles away but that seemed a lot further than it is now. The telephone at their store would have the same issues but no one there was intent on learning how to fix it.

One day the repairman mentioned that Thomas Berry at the Berry store in Bell Factory knew a lot about fixing phones. He suggested that the next time the phone went out at the Millsaps' Store, they should get word to him and he could come over and try to fix it. If he did, they could get the phone back into service faster than waiting on the repairman to make his circuit.

So predictably after a while the Millsaps' Store phone went out and they did just that.

Fast forward about forty years. I was home from college, sitting at our kitchen table. It was my favorite time with my parents. After supper many times I would pick up the dog and sit back and get my parents to tell stories. My dad was really great at it, he would paint funny, descriptive pictures of the characters who hung out at the store and the things people would do for entertainment.

On this particular day, my dad told me about how he was called to the Millsaps Store in Maysville to fix their telephone.

He said, "And that was the first time I saw your mother. She was so fat I didn't know if she was going to walk or roll because they had ice cream at their store. We didn't have ice cream at our store."

Needless to say, my beautiful, fit and trim mother was not too happy with that story but she was a good sport. She had to be. He was always poking fun at her little hometown, maybe deservedly so. According to him, there were a lot of bootleggers in Maysville in the 1930s and things could get pretty rowdy from time to time.

A few months later, I went to my mailbox in the University Student Center and there was an envelope from my dad. That was rare! He was a storyteller but not a writer.

Inside was an article that had recently appeared in the morning newspaper. It mentioned an incident in Maysville back in the 30s when two drunks got in a fight and one bit off the other's ear. My dad had attached a note that read, "Honey, this is your mother's hometown."

But back to technology. From the wall-mounted phone to the desk phone to the iPhone, the technology has evolved and I'm glad. But I'm also very glad that a glitch in the technology led to a meeting that resulted in my being here today!

"My high school teacher told me not to worry about spelling because in the future everything will be done by Auto-Correct and for that I am eternally grapefruit."

Russ Yarbrough, High School Senior

Tips from Earlene



- Make a list of all your favorite fat outfits for the days you feel heavier than usual.

- Simplify your life to get rid of unwanted stress, and that might include relationships, too.

- For great ice tea, brew it strong, roll a lemon and add it, cut up, to the pot. Add sugar to taste and drink!

- For beautiful landscaping, try to stick to one or 2 colors, then look for that exact shade when picking out plants.

- Love those really dainty choker necklaces? Look in children's or babies' departments, then find one to fit your neck.

- If you want really healthy, long lasting plants for your flower and vegetable garden, I've found that nurseries are much better than large discount stores. My favorite is Bennett's because the staff is knowledgeable, they serve Starbucks coffee and soft drinks (as well as grilled chicken on occasion), play classical music while you shop, and have the largest, healthiest stock I've seen anywhere.

- Want a cup of Cafe Latte but don't have an Espresso maker? Simple, just brew a very strong cup of coffee, then add a large spoonful of real vanilla ice cream. Add a dash of nutmeg and you're in heaven!

- If you are wanting to exercise but don't have the time, just get up a half hour earlier in the morning and walk briskly around the block. You'll love the quiet and solitude, as well as the pounds melting off!

- If you do a lot of traveling, like I do, carry some scented candles or incense with you to make it feel like home. You can light them while in the hotel room at night.

- If you're really trying to lose weight but lose all sense when you're hungry, carry a bag of raisins mixed with dry roasted peanuts to munch on during those hunger pangs.

The peanuts have fat but they fill you up, and give you energy from protein.

- A sprinkle of ground cinammon in your morning coffee tastes good and prevents cancer.

- Have you noticed that people are wearing less perfume? If you want to smell good but don't want it to be that strong, use a scented soap and follow it up with lotion in the same scent. You get layers of scent that way, much more pleasant to others than a strong, overpowering perfume.



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Mysterious Photograph Appears After Lightning Storm

From 1836 Huntsville Newspaper

During a heavy thunderstorm that visited Sand Mountain the evening of July 18, Miss Lillian Paul was in the dining room of her father's house when she noticed a gleaming tray about which reflections from the lightning flashed incessantly almost like a flame.

Reaching for the tray to remove it, there came a flash of extreme brilliancy when she placed the tray under the table and left the room. The next morning it was noticed that the tray bore upon its centre a profile of the young lady's head and face.

Mr. Leo Doft, the inventor of the electrical motor which bears his name, holds that "the picture was printed by light and not by heat, and that the flash was reflected from the face to the inside of the opposite window pane and thence thrown upon the tray, producing an actinic portrait."

However curious this may be, this result is not peculiar to Alabama lightning, as the following incident, related by a northern newspaper:

"We have heretofore published an account of a portrait supposed to have been photographed by lightning on a pane of glass in the window of an old farm house in this county."

Another instance of the same curious phenomenon has been found in the window of the Mansion House on the "Mount Eagle" farm, more generally known as the "Gentry Place."

The portraits of four persons are plainly discernible - two men, a woman and a child. The faces are not all on one pane, that of one of the men and the woman being on adjoining glasses, the face of the other man on another, and that of the child on one of the lower panes; and the theory is that the

party were all looking through the window during a thunderstorm, when a sudden flash of lightning, by some mysterious process, instantaneously fixed their features on the glass.

The existence of the portraiture is of comparatively recent discovery, and have attracted many visitors as well as experts from across the Southern states who all express their bewilderment.

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Caving Dangers

by Elizabeth Wharry

There are 3 types of people who love caves. The professional geological explorer, the amateur who belongs to a grotto, and the tourist/visitor. The cave tourist is usually in a guided tour. This is the safest way to appreciate caves and caverns. It's also a great way to find out if one has a passion for caving. Wait..what's the difference between a spelunker and a caver? A spelunker is a visitor on a guided tour. A caver explores new passages.

I belonged to a grotto back in the 80s. A grotto is a group of cavers guided by professionals. We explore little known passages or places that are not open to the general public. Caving requires a great deal of stamina. The grotto I belonged to had roughly 2 dozen members. Three primary rules are: take only pictures while leaving only footprints, the buddy system, and following orders to the letter! Caving can be exhilarating, but it is not without its dangers.

This particular incident took place in southern Ohio. It was supposed to be a day trip. Because of a member's stubbornness, the trip turned out to be much longer. We were in the cave. Our equipment had been inspected by our guides.

We were warned about a certain passage that became very narrow. Our guides flat out told us that if we had a body circumference over 40 inches or were truly claustrophobic, to stay with the one guide. This particular passage was dubbed "fat man's misery". One had to crawl on one's belly to get beyond into the next room. I don't remember how long it was.

One of the member's had a girth of 56 inches. Somehow, he was able to keep up with us. About half the group had made it through the passage, including a 75 year old professor emeritus. She had taught college level ge-

ology. Sam (not his real name) was determined to squeeze through this passage! About halfway through, he got stuck. He couldn't go forward nor could he back up.

The guides tried to get him out...to no avail. Finally, one of the guides took the rest of us top side and called rescue. We all went back down to assist. The squad leader was nicknamed "Weasel". He was able to shimmy in the passage and attach ropes to "Sam". It was a team effort, but we finally pulled him out! He was rather embarrassed, especially since his jeans ended up around his boots.

As we came topside for the second time, the professor pulled "Sam" aside. None of us knew what was discussed, but he soon resigned from the club.

There are several beautiful public caves in the area. If you go, please do not touch any of the formations unless the guide says it's OK. Doing so will cause a stalactite to stop growing. Those cling tightly to the roof. A stalagmite stands mightily on the floor. Happy caving!



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Mothers of children always look forward to August coming, because school starts early this month for most area kids. Huntsville City Schools start August 1st and students stay all day. If you haven't already, the back-to-school specials are almost gone, so shop early if you have needs. Also, watch for the crossings and school buses. You stop when they do.

The no-hands cell phone law for the city has been active for a month now. Hope you haven't been caught. The little hands-free devices that fit in the cup holder are ideal if you don't have a car that connects to your phone via Bluetooth.

Besides avoiding a ticket, you might prevent an accident that can happen in

a second of your eyes off the road to dial a phone — or worse yet, text.

It's been a hot and exciting summer for Mimi with the arrival of two new grandbabies. One of my sons and his wife welcomed a second child into their life, a little boy born on June 20, and my daughter and her husband welcomed a baby girl on July 1, whose name is Elizabeth Lee, to be called Ellee, combining the first and middle names. That brings our blessings up to eleven grandchildren and three great-grandchildren.

I mentioned how hot summer has been so far, but pools are open through the Labor Day weekend, so take advantage of these hot days because summer's not over quite yet. It's great, relaxing, and fun, and it is an exercise with no impact on aging bones and joints.

Another thing to look forward to at the end of this month is Alabama Football, Roll Tide. It starts on Saturday, August 31 at 6:00 p.m. in Tuscaloosa against Western Kentucky and will be televised on ESPN. For you Auburn fans, they also play on August 31 against the Alabama A&M Bulldogs. It'll be on the SEC Network starting at 6:30 in Auburn.

Thinking of watching football games, my family loves to have some chips and dip for the game. A favorite of ours is so simple with:

- 2 Cups Sour Cream
- 1 Package of onion soup mix
- 1 tbsp of dried parsley
- 2 tbsp of bacon bits or artificial bacon bits

That's it. Put it in the fridge a few hours before you want it ready, and serve with your favorite bag of chips. We like the Fritos Scoops at our house.

Until next month, stay cool and drink lots of fluids until cooler weather comes.

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WAS THAT A SONIC BOOM? (1969)

by Bill Alkire



My neighbor across the street was an accident looking for a place to happen. I saw things that frightened my neighbors and me. Example, he never put anything away and accidents seem to happen; he walked through a glass door and only received a small cut on his left hand.

His wife always fussed and yelled at him about something. I thought she was nagging, but once when he was backing out of his garage, I heard her yell for him to watch where he was going - and he drove right through the garage door. How could that happen?

I am compelled to tell you what I saw one Saturday. Einstein had been mowing the grass. He came around to the backyard (his patio faces the front of my house). As he made the turn the mower sputtered, coughed, and quit. Removing the gas cap, he checked the gas tank; it was out of gas. His wife yelled from the back door to get started grilling, his parents were on their way.

He pushed the mower to the end of the cement patio laying the gas cap on the mower deck. He went in the garage's rear entrance and pulled out the grill. He opened it up, turned on the propane and went back into the garage. He came out with a gas can in one hand and a bottle of beer in the other. He sat the beer down on the end rack of the grill. He went ahead to fill the mower gas tank with gas; gas overflowed and dripped onto the mower deck. He went back into the garage with the gas can.

He came out with a rag and wiped up the gas that had spilled on the mower deck and concrete. He carried the rag back with him to the grill. He tossed the gasoline-soaked rag onto the corner of the patio about four feet away. His wife came out with franks and burgers asking if the grill was hot. He shook his head no. She positioned the plate of raw meat next to his beer and walked away, asking why there was such a strong gasoline smell? He said that the mower had quit and that the motor was flooded.

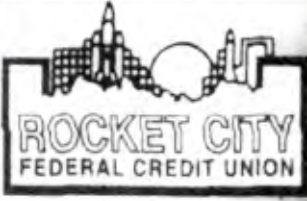
As his wife entered the door to the house, Mr.

Spaced Out hit the ignition button on the grill. The igniter popped - he pushed it again and as he did, a massive explosion took place. Pieces of his lawnmower flew into the street and into my yard. The top of the grill went onto the roof of his garage, slid down the incline, and landed in front of his house on the driveway.

The grill continued to burn, the meat plate and beer were missing. My neighbor's glasses were missing as well as his eyelashes and eyebrows. His hair was singed inches back on his head. His shirt was blackened as was his lower facial area. The hair on both of his arms was also singed. The smell of gasoline and burnt hair filled the air. The blast had broken the glass on the storm door leading to the garage.

Fire trucks arrived, and the emergency squad treated his burns. The blast injured his right ear drum, he was not going to lose any brain matter, there was none. Burns on his right cheek required skin grafts (from his buttocks, appropriately). The house never caught fire! Mower and the grill were history. His wife never let him get another mower or grill. The boy down the street began mowing for him. He regained much of his hearing. The burns left scars on his face and upper body.

A Pressure Washer Company came, sprayed the patio, and brick on the house. Most everything was cleaned up. The saying that God looks after little children and fools must be true. What I saw that day, his children, wife, parents, and he could have been injured or killed. We never saw much of him while we lived there. I heard he had lost a finger from the explosion. I never got close enough to see.



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A Father's Role

by Gerald Alvis, The Poet of Greenlawn

A Father's role is to protect and provide. The most challenging thing in being a Dad is knowing how much to let go when! This varies with each child and circumstance. This is the pause we each saw many times as he made his decision.

A father's hands are both strong and gentle. The wrinkles near his eyes speak of the focus and intensity with which he approaches his responsibilities, yet there is a warmth when these etchings smooth with laughter or when he gazes your way.

There is an unspoken moment, not known to most ladies, between a father and son. The day they square off, and each knows the younger is now stronger and faster. It's bittersweet for both.

What takes the most intestinal fortitude is a celebratory event for a Dad: the day his daughter takes his arm and they slowly walk down the aisle to her future.

My generation's Dads come from a difficult moment in history. They are often referred to as the Greatest Generation. I mean, those men could stare down a bulldozer, and they made the way for us during arduous years. But as I now look back, it was not that they were just tough—they loved us that much!

Brown Sugar Butter Sauce

1 stick butter
1 cup packed brown sugar
1 cup warm light cream
1/4 cup bourbon or brandy
1/2 cup chopped nuts

In a small heavy sauce pan cream the butter and sugar. Gradually add the cream. Stir over low heat until the mixture boils. Remove from heat and stir in nuts and brandy.

This is good over baked custard or bread pudding.

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THE OLD BRICK POND

by Calvin Lee "Jabbo" Holder, Sr. in 2012

It's strange how much things can change in 60 years, for example from young to old and old to new.

I was born in 1942 at Huntsville Hospital. I was one of the first six babies delivered when they started delivering.

I was raised at 721 East Avenue, which was a gravel or dirt road then and now is called Pleasant Row. The only house left on those first two blocks from University Drive down is the one stucco house of the Rev. David Townsend. I lived where the "Ozz" Club now sits. The vacant lot beside Central Health Care is where Joe Humphrey lived. Where Central Health Care is located is where my step-grandmother Emma Campbell lived. I remember One-Leg Charlie who lived across the street.

We rented from the Shankley's who lived on Pulaski Pike above us. We had a 4-room house and big porch across the front of it. We paid \$7.50 a month for rent. We didn't get electric lights until the 1950s. We had to walk a path to an old outside pit toilet. We had a vegetable garden and well water. My grandmother washed clothes in an old black iron pot in the back yard with a tub and rub board and hung them on a clothes line and punched the clothes with a wood stick.

We had to walk to go to Huntsville and pay bills until the buses started running (if we had the 10 cents to ride the bus). My step-grandpa would tote a block of ice (from Clinton Street or Meridian Street) to the house on his back in toe socks to keep my milk cold. In the winter time they put it and other stuff out on the back porch.

If you're going at the speed of light, what happens when you turn the headlights on?

My grandmother worked on the WPA and in the sewing room in the basement of the old Elks Building on Eustis Street or the "Old Bug House" theatre (where we went to when we could afford the 10 cents. My grandmother worked on the WPA in Maple Hill Cemetery. I remember hearing her say she paid two cents for a pocket handkerchief.

I fished at "The Old Brick Pond" which Frank Mannings owned at that time where Shoney's Restaurant's rear parking lot is. I remember John Wade who had the Horse and Wagon; Sergeant Petty and Florence Stewart, who lived on Wheeler Avenue. Wheeler ran from Church Street to Pulaski Pike.

My uncle ran a grocery store on the corner of Wheeler Avenue and Pulaski Pike for years called Crownover Grocery. My great aunt Mary Dollar would walk from Gardner Street to Huntsville and back. My grandmother could of bought the last block on Pulaski Pike from Holmes Street back for \$500 at one time. Yes, I remember Columbus Moore who had the drug store there, and T.T. Terry's, Dobson's, I Winn, and the coal yards there used to be in Huntsville, like City Coal.

I went to first grade at Saint Mary's on Holmes Street. I went to school at Rison, the county school, to give Mr. Fain the job of keeping me straight. I ended up marrying the only 12-toed girl there, and she still can play softball and keep me straight. I also went to East and West Clinton schools. Ms. Laymond was my teacher there. Then Huntsville Junior High in '55-'57. No, Mr. Jones wasn't my teacher but I still have a set of Red Back encyclopedias my grandparents purchased from him. Mrs. Broom was my last teacher there in the 8th grade. Mrs. Nagel, Mrs. Henderson, Mrs. Bradford and Coach Ben Berry with the wooden paddle that was as long as he was tall, right? Then I went to the 9-10th grades in Decatur, AL.

How many remember when the Dallas Streets were dirt roads and the Tick Tock Skating Rink on



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.

O'Shaughnessey, the White Castle on Meridian Street, Mullins ten cent hamburgers and five cent Cokes and eating lunch at Baltimores Store on Andrew Jackson Way? How many remember the "Clean Kitchen" Cafe that Woody Harbin ran on Jefferson Street across from the No. 1 Fire Station downtown?

Me and the Lewter boys, Hall Bryant at H.C. Blake, Jerry Braisure at the barber shop on Governors, Gene Bailes' wife Charlotte, retired fire chief Jimmy Tolan and Doctor Bibb's two daughters, to name a few, all went to school together.

Do you remember when the funeral home Spry's and Mutual was at 5 Points and Laughlin was on Jefferson Street? Do you remember the Old Southern Cafe, Pullman, Golden Eagle, Bills' Drive-in, Old Rebel Inn?

I worked at Huntsville Mfg. Co., operated the quill machine. I remember the old city buses, the Fairground, Lincoln, Huntsville Park, Arsenal, Drake, Crescent, Checkered and Yellow Cab and United.

My grandparents walked with me to and from school to keep me out of trouble. I had to walk from the Depot to the school on Randolph there and back. Also from Pleasant Row to Saint Mary's on Holmes, rain or shine, cold or hot. I didn't have no car.

I've walked from Oakwood over to Burger King on Whitesburg where Sno White Drive Inn Restaurant used to be, worked 8-10 hours and walked back, and people nowadays can't go anywhere without riding. I'm not the only one that did this, others did too.

I remember if you needed to see someone all you had to do is go up to the Courthouse and hang around a few minutes and they would pass by.

Not everyone had telephones. We didn't get our first TV until in the late 50s. We went up to my uncle's and watched his nine inch black and white.

How many remember Booger Town and Chinch Row and Trash Pile Road? We played ball and didn't even have a bat and used just a stick of wood.

I got my school lessons by lamp light or fire place light. No, we wasn't poor, the poor didn't have anything. I remember when it wasn't but 5 blocks to downtown Huntsville in any direction.

**"They cut us up like boarding house pie.
And that's really small pieces."**

Darrell Royal, Texas football coach

Old Interesting News

- In the late 1950s, NASA realized that they needed a way for astronauts to write in space, and that gravity-fed pens wouldn't work in zero gravity. A task force of engineers developed a pressurized pen that would work in space. All the research and the initial run of 60 pens cost just over a million (1960) dollars. The Russians realized they had the same problem. They solved it by giving their cosmonauts pencils.

- Howard Dell of Cullman purchased a pistol to commit suicide with. When the gun misfired, he sued the manufacturers using the argument that the defective gun deprived him of his rights.

"I asked my wife where she wanted to go for our anniversary. 'Some place I've never been before,' she said. I said, 'OK, how about the kitchen?'"

Jeff Rob, right before his divorce

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Heard On the Street

by Cathey Carney



Our winner for the Photo of the Month for July was so easy! Of course it was city government watchdog **Jackie Reed** whom so many knew and remember. Jackie attended every City Council meeting in Huntsville and only missed those days when she was sick and couldn't make it. She ran for city Mayor multiple times. I had so many calls on her photo and NO ONE missed it. But only the first one wins and this time it was **Margie Webster** of Madison. Margie came to Huntsville weekly for a ladies group who met at a restaurant where they would always see Jackie. Jackie passed away in July 2022 and is dearly missed.

Our flag that was not so hidden was on the Veterans Museum ad on page 26. **Billy McAlister** of Athens was first to call to ID it and

he is a Navy vet, so very fitting!

This month I have one hidden item and it is a **teeny tiny pencil** in honor of kids going back to school. It will be nearly impossible for you to find. So good luck! Remember if you find it and are the first to call you win a \$50 year's subscription to the magazine. Good luck because you'll need it.

Bill and wife **Pat Arnold** live in Woodville, Al and have been reading OHM since the beginning. He has a birthday in September that we don't want to forget - Bill turns 90 on Sep. 30! We know it's a bit early but happy birthday to you Sir and we hope there's lots of cake involved. Some may remember him as a football star at Butler High School; he said he played against **Bulldog Daniel's** brother who outweighed him by about 100 pounds! Sending love to you and Pat. They have been married for 71 years, marrying on May 30, 1953.

Happy Birthday to **Larry Long** who recently turned 80 on July 15th. We know he had a great day with family and friends. Larry worked for years with his dad at the Big Cove Feed and Seed store starting in the 70s. He currently still works with the Goldsmith-Schiffman Wildlife Sanctuary. Before the land there became a sanctuary Larry hunted as a young man and knew every inch of that area. His sweet little sister **Peggy Long** works with the school system and helped him celebrate his important day!

With the bad storms we had going through our area recently we saw just how hard our city employees work. The tornadoes that hit Maple Hill, Blossomwood,

Old Town and Twickenham near downtown Huntsville bounced and twisted, rather than just staying on the ground. So we ended up losing a large amount of old 100+ year old trees that in most cases were healthy. The twisting winds tore the top halves out of many of the really tall trees and just uprooted many others.

Some of the neighborhoods lost power as many utility poles were brought down by the trees. All the city departments came together with communications from **Mayor Tommy Battle** to let our residents know what was happening day to day. Huntsville Utilities got our power back on with poles replaced and those folks work 24 hours a day. Then our city's Public Works kicked in - Director **Chris McNeese, Patrick Gamble and Jay Wagoner** are just a few of the city employees who work nonstop to make our city one to be so proud of. The debris was cleaned up in just days. Don't ever take this kind of response for granted - just watch the news and look at other large cities who aren't as lucky as we are to have the city employees and management staff we have. Thank You and we Appreciate you!

Happy Birthday to **John Troup** on August 15, same day as his wedding anniversary to **Steph Troup**! **Hayden Troup** has an August 25th birthday and so much love to all three!

Truist Bank staff on Church Street has some important August dates! **Ianthia Bridges** has a few. Her sister-in-law **Missy Bridges** of Camden, Al has an Aug. 25th birthday. Her sweet husband **Frazer Bridges** celebrates his

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birthday on Aug. 26th. Her brother **Carl Ramsey** has an Aug. 4th birthday. We send lots of love out to Ianthia.

August 1st is the birthday of **Jane Gerdeman's baby brother John Joseph Gerdeman**. They always called him JJ and he is the youngest of 11 children! Happy Birthday to you JJ!

Also at Truist is **Susan Coulter**. Her birthday is Aug. 21st and her grandson **Beau** celebrates his on Aug. 8th. Her granddaughter **Vivian Clair Santos** turns 11 in August! And **Coulter T. Clark** turns into a teenager (12) on the 24th - we wish him a super happy birthday!

Remember this is a good time to take a video of your assets in case you are affected by tornado, floods, fire, etc. It's so easy to do now with the new phones. Just take a video of your things, put it on a flash drive and bring that to another location to be stored. Or maybe in a safe deposit box. Hopefully you'll never need it, but if you do, then you've got it. It's amazing what you forget after a traumatic event like a tornado or fire.

My ongoing battle with the squirrels and chipmunks eating/uprooting my new plants is ongoing. I've tried all your good suggestions and here's what has worked pretty well: Garlic powder sprinkled, cayenne, cinnamon powder. White vinegar with water sprayed on plants. My latest is collecting pine cones to put in the soil on top - must hurt their little feet. Keep sending those great ideas!

Lots of summer activities going on now and a few good sites to check out for upcoming calendars/events are www.huntsville.org, www.lowmill.art, www.historiclowryhouse.com and www.wearehuntsville.com. Just Google Huntsville events and you'll find so many for you and your whole family to get out and enjoy.

Congratulations to **Mayor Tommy Battle** on securing another four years, his fifth term, as our Mayor. We're very proud of all you've accom-

plished so far and there'll be lots more in the future. Sure is an exciting time.

There are so many more scams now that even the smartest of people are falling for them. It should be a red flag to you if ANYONE calls and wants you to send money or give any financial or personal information. It's unfortunate that we have to be so skeptical these days but this is the world right now. And many of these callers are not even originating in the U.S.

Stay cool this August and drink water! Most people don't get enough. Be aware of your surroundings and if something looks strange to you don't ignore it. Watch out for your neighbors. And that's it for Dr. Carney's advice column!

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Zesty Cold Vegetables

1 cup each:

Broccoli
Cauliflower
Squash
White mushrooms
Carrots
Red, yellow and orange pepper
1 bottle Kraft Zesty Italian

Dressing

3 T. chopped parsley

In a large bowl break up the washed vegetables into bite-sized pieces.

Pour the bottle of dressing over them and mix well. Sprinkle parsley and mix.

Seal and let sit overnight in fridge, turning at least once. Drain and serve cold with toothpicks. You can add/change other vegetables per your taste.

Savory Ranch Mix

Pretzels
Pecan halves
Cheerios
Rice Chex
Corn Chex
Cheese-its

1 reg. env. Hidden Valley ranch dressing mix (dry)

1/2 btl. butter popcorn oil

In a large bowl, mix about two cups each of the listed dry ingredients. Pour 1/4 bottle of the oil over the cereals and mix well. Sprinkle half the ranch dry mix and mix well. Repeat with the remaining 1/4 bottle oil and ranch dressing mix. Toss and stir very well.

This can be served immediately, stored in an airtight container or frozen.

Deviled Mushrooms

2 lb. mushroom caps (no stems)

8 oz. pkg. cream cheese

6-1/2 oz. can deviled ham

2 t. garlic powder

Mix cream cheese, ham and garlic powder. Grease a casserole dish with butter and place the mushroom caps in, cavity side up. Spoon the cheese mixture into the caps and bake at 350 degrees for 20-30 minutes.

Spicy Cheese Bites

2 sticks butter

2 c. self-rising flour

2 c. grated sharp Cheddar cheese

2 c. Rice Krispies

1 t. cayenne pepper

This Old Ad ran for many Years in Old Huntsville Magazine. We sure miss you, Gibson's BBQ.

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1 t. garlic powder
Mix all ingredients together, will be very stiff. Roll the mixture into small balls - about the size of a large pecan - and flatten gently. Bake on greased cookie sheets at 300 degrees for 30 minutes or so. Be careful not to burn. These are good warm but also freeze well.

Barb's Hot Shrimp Dip

1 lrg. onion, chopped
3 cloves garlic, crushed
3 mild banana peppers, chopped
3 jalapeno peppers, chopped
2 tomatoes, chopped
2 lbs. cream cheese, cubed
1/2 lb. cooked shrimp, chopped small
Salt and pepper to taste

In a large crock pot, add all the vegetables. Add the cheese and slowly heat til the cheese is melted. Mix well. Let simmer for a few minutes then add the shrimp at the last minute. Stir well and serve with hot crispy tortilla chips. Delicious!

Artichoke Dip

1 c. mayonnaise
1 can artichoke hearts, drained and chopped

12 oz. mozzarella cheese, grated
1 c. Parmesan cheese, grated Triscuits

Mix all except for crackers and pour in a baking/serving dish. Bake at 325 degrees for 25 minutes. Serve hot with Triscuits or crackers of choice.

Mini-Cheesecakes

3 8-oz. pkg. cream cheese, softened
5 eggs
1 c. sugar
2 t. vanilla extract

Mix the above ingredients til smooth and pour into foil cupcake liners (regular size) that have been placed in the cupcake tins. Fill the liners 3/4 full and bake at 325 degrees for 25 minutes. While still hot, top the cheesecakes with the following:

Topping:

1 8-oz carton sour cream
1/4 c. sugar
1 t. vanilla extract

Mix together and put 1 teaspoon of the mixture on each cupcake while hot and back in oven for 3-5 minutes.

Top each with maraschino cherry.

Rolled Tortilla Bites

8 oz. pkg. cream cheese, softened
4 oz. can chopped green chilies, drained
4 oz. jar chopped pimento, drained
1/2 c. chopped black olives
10 6-inch flour tortillas
Salsa & sour cream

In a small bowl combine first 4 ingredients and mix well. Spread a heaping tablespoon on each tortilla and roll it up. Place, seam side down, on a plate. Cover and refrigerate for 2 hours. To serve, cut each roll into six 1" pieces and serve with sour cream and salsa.

Mint Julep

Chill or freeze glasses or julep cups. Chop fresh mint coarsely and add equal parts of simple syrup, (same amounts of sugar & water). Refrigerate several hours. Fill glasses 1/2 full of crushed ice.

Add 1 tablespoon of the crushed mint mixture and 1-2 jiggers of bourbon. Stir and fill glass with crushed ice. Garnish with large sprig of mint.



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A Tour Through Memories of Old Huntsville

by Bill Goodson
August 2023

On a hot summer Thursday I found myself with a little loose time.

Daughter Cindy Holliday was visiting Huntsville for a few days to celebrate birthdays of her grandson, Mark Holliday (3) and daughter-in-law Lauren Holliday (?). She and my wife Elise were shopping while I was doing some errands and visiting with Bob Stewart. We were to meet at Walton's for lunch at noon.

As it turned out, I completed my duties early and had time to kill. Bob lives on Eustis Avenue, so I was already downtown. Without really planning to do so, I proceeded to tour that old section of East Huntsville, beginning with a look at what was happening to my old Huntsville High School.

And, WOW, is it happening! After the building, situated between Randolph and Eustis, was abandoned as city school administration headquarters, it had lay dormant for several years, only a fond memory for those of us who had been lucky enough to have attended high school there. Dormant, that is, until city officials decided it should be sold and put to good use.

Thus it came to pass that private developers made an offer, with plans to convert the historic building into a private apartment/condo complex. And as I left Bob's house and turned east on Eustis I viewed the early site work. Twickenham Historic District regulations will

not allow the structure to be revised without approval. So what I saw was the stark back side of the old high school, the later additions (gym, workshop, and wings) having been approved for removal. I almost shed a tear, surveying the bare, red earth and recalling my glory days (!!) playing basketball in that gym.

Ah...progress... (sigh)

I turned on White Street to see with relief that the front of the building was, by regulation, intact; long, wide stretch of concrete stairs leading to the front door.

Only a little further, covering an entire city block, stood East Clinton Elementary School, just as it was in my early years. Of course, it is no longer a public school, but functions as a private Christian school. Through grades 1 to 7, this was the seat of my education, as it was also for my two sisters. We lived at 1308 East Clinton Avenue, an easy walk or bike ride away. (Interestingly, until the 1950s, our address was 1205 East Clinton Street. Then the city modernized, renumbering the blocks, and renaming the North-South roads as Streets, and East-West roads as Avenues.) Ah...progress...

White Street ended at Holmes Avenue, and I found myself in the Old Town Historic District. Turning right, Five Points was only a few blocks distant. That renowned section of Old Huntsville held a host of memories for me. The main thoroughfare is Andrew Jackson Way, the north-south street whose earlier name was Fifth Street. The others that converge are Holmes and Pratt Avenues.

That intersection became home for some of the iconic businesses in that part of town: Star Market, Propst Drugs, Service Cleaners, Goodson's Variety, and Zesto Drive-In (my dad's establishment famous for Dipped Dogs, Zestoburgers, and tall tales.)

Moving north on Andrew Jackson, past Ward Avenue, I came to Bierne Avenue.

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There stands a white, wood-frame building that is the original Goodson's Trading Post, my dad's first venture into business. Houston Goodson had decided that he couldn't raise a family as he would like to on a teacher's salary or working for someone else. Small neighborhood grocery stores were common in those days, before A&P and Kroger appeared on the scene. The Trading Post competed with Star Market for business, Dad enjoying the friendly competition with Chick Russell and Delbert Williams, owners of Star.

That same building was originally L-shaped, but the arm of the L is no longer there. It was in that space that we called home for two or three years - my mother, father, sister Mary Lou and I. This was very close to what was known as the Dallas Mill village, where both of my parents grew up. We attended the Epworth Methodist Church, which has since moved farther away.

As the family income grew, we moved to our "permanent" home on East Clinton. I was five years old. I turned left on Beirne and stopped at Goldsmith-Schiffman Field, home to many high school football games. On the Ward Avenue side, I recognize nothing. Huge apartment buildings and parking garages are rising from the ground where once stood neighborhood houses. DO NOT ENTER signs everywhere, Ah... progress...

Leaving that behind, I traveled east on Ward, across Andrew Jackson and into the heart of the Five Points Historic District, the last of the three such residential districts to be so designated by the city. Early owners of these homes are named on the historic markers in the front yards, making it easy to look for familiar names. There are some names that are well-known, like Cummings and Lewter. I looked for the Laughmiller house, but didn't find it. (Not all of the houses have markers.) Linda Laughmiller was a brief flame of mine at about age twelve.

I toured through those streets - Ward, Pratt, and Clinton - spotting the homes of Marshall Keith and David Turner, two of my best buddies. Marshall had a crush on

my sister and would find any excuse to visit us. David had a basketball goal in his back yard, and I would ride by bike there to shoot hoops with him. He and I were the only freshmen to make the team.

I had to pause in front of my old home at 1308 Clinton. The huge pecan tree still stands in the side yard. Later that day, I took Elise and Cindy on the Tour, and as we came to that place, we saw a lady coming out of the front door and walking down the sidewalk. We stopped to talk, and found that she is Claire Purinton, current owner of our house. Elise and I had met her several years ago, not long after she and husband Dave had bought it from my sister Pat.

Claire was eager to re-aquaint with us and we swapped stories. She is emphatic that she will never live anywhere else. She loves it, even though the pecan tree loves to shed limbs.

I concluded the tour with Elise and Cindy with an excursion into neighborhoods closer to the center of town. Elise's memory for details - people and places - is much better than mine. She was able to point out where Buddy and Sue Kinzer, Willa and Poppy Brown, the Crowsons, and many others lived. The downtown area has changed so much over the years, but the First Methodist Church, where we were married and Cindy was baptized, stood tall. As did the Episcopal Church of the Nativity, our current church.

This turned out to be a memorable day, brought about by the happenstance of my having time on my hands, waiting to have lunch with Elise and Cindy.

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WHO HAVE BEEN YOUR FRIENDS THROUGHOUT THE YEARS?

by Jim Vann

After High School I started college at David Lipscomb College in Nashville. I made many new friends there.

Will T. Vance was one of the closest. He was a guitar player, good singer, basketball player and grew up in Madison, TN. He went to the Madison COC where a lot of the Grand Old Opry performers attended. He knew on one weekend that Kitty Wells was out of town.

I went with him to the back door of the Ryman Theater where the Opry was held.

He told the guard on the back door that he had talked to Kitty Wells at church last Sunday and told her that he had a friend visiting from Alabama who loved Country Music. She told Will T. to ask the guard if we could come in the back way and sit back stage.

He let us in and it was an amazing evening. We rubbed elbows with a lot of different stars and had a great time. I remember that the 9 pm show was sponsored by Coca Cola and they had a big Coke cooler on rollers. Before the 9 pm show, several of the performers would help themselves to a Coke from the cooler, pop the cap, drink a few swallows from the bottle then replace the missing cola with a beverage of their choice.

I attended the Opry a lot because it cost 50 cents to get in and that fit my college budget very well. I was sitting on the back row in the balcony one Saturday evening. A

couple with children of stair-stepped ages was covering the entire bench in front of me. About 7:30, the lady pulled a cardboard box from under the seat and started passing fried chicken down the pew for each child. It smelled so good, I thought about stealing a piece of chicken from one of the kids, but I didn't.

Jim Camp (who was my roommate my sophomore year) was and still is a very good friend. We call each other occasionally and he sends me articles about the Tokens Show for which his son Lee is the Producer.

Jim loves hard core country music and every time we are together with instruments, he insists that I sing Knoxville Girl which is about as hard core country as you can get.

After two years at DLC, I transferred to the University of Tennessee. I joined the Lambda Chi social Fraternity because they had less people that drank and I was one of those. Of course I made a lot of friends there at UT, a lot of them Frat Brothers.

Seven of us formed a "Rock and Roll" band that played together for 2 years. We were the "Bonnevilles" like the Pontiac car and one of the most popular bands at UT. Our band was booked almost every night on weekends for 2 years. Of course we all became close friends.

Our drummer was from Memphis and he got us "Gigs" in Memphis on several occasions. We played at the Peabody, Chisca, King Cotton and other famous hotels there in Memphis.

It seems a little unusual to me that after all these years, I still have friends from DLC and have no idea where any of the brothers or band members are now. After UT, I came back to Huntsville and started working. At every place I ever worked I developed friendships with many and varied people.

One of my best and favorite "Friendships" happens to be with my wife of now 60 years. We have developed many friendships in these 60 years and even went to dinner tonight with Carl and Brenda Barton, a couple of our best friends. Many of our friends nowadays are from the church



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we attend. Those are too numerous to list but we are really blessed to have so many good friends.

We have lived in the same house here in Huntsville for 56 years. We have developed many good friendships with our neighbors over those years. One friendship that I will list here involves Brad and Holly Hall. They have moved out of our neighborhood but are still what I would call good friends.

I will never forget when their two girls were young. I came home from work one day and noticed that they had a canopy set up beside their house. I walked over and the girls were having a "Tea Party". I asked if I could participate and they invited me to sit down in one of those little chairs. I did exactly that and they offered me a cup of tea. Those girls are both grown now but every time I see one of them they bring up our "Tea Party".

Another couple of special neighbor friends would have to be Jeff and Elizabeth Weitenbeck. They visited us just a couple of evenings ago. When Jeff was going to attend his Senior Prom, he had never worn a tie before. His mom brought him and his tie to our house and I tied his tie for him. I couldn't tie it on him but rather tied it on myself then took it off and put it on Jeff. They are super neighbors. As I've gotten older, Jeff brings my garbage can around back every time the garbage truck runs. I really appreciate that.

We have new neighbors next door now. They moved here from Colorado. They are Mark and Marie McDonald. I think they are the nicest neighbors we have ever had. They help this old couple out a lot. Mark is a bike rider and on the weekend rides for 30 to 40 miles. Marie is a super nice, sweet lady that really runs the show. She was born and lived on a farm in Canada. They have 3 beautiful very independent girls that visit occasionally.

We have been very blessed over the years with our neighbors and this neighborhood.

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Hot Summers at Age 21 and 83

by M. D. Smith, IV



My wife and I were married when I turned 21 and still married when I turned 83 late last year. With this recent sweltering heat, we reminisced about when air conditioning was rare. Our first summer was in our student apartment in Tuscaloosa. They were old WWII Army Barracks with black-top roofs, no insulation and made into four-plexes, not air-conditioned. Trying to get the single kitchen window exhaust fan to pull hot air out of the 2-bedroom apartment in the afternoon resembled a flea trying to suck all the blood out of an elephant — totally useless.

After suffering a few weeks trying to sleep drenched in sweat, lying on our backs, and the mattress wet from our backs and a single oscillating fan to cool, my parents mercifully bought us a gigantic window AC unit. It was so powerful it would cool both our master and the other spare bedroom, which was my office, down the short hall once I put up an old door (I found underneath the building), closing off the living room and kitchen. At least we could sleep and have a cool respite in the heat of the day, where I could study.

Of course, we were both outside at other times, perspired, drank water and thought little about the hot summer days. Our skin was pliant. Moisture kept it damp and evaporating for a cooling effect.

I compare my skin today, and since I spend almost no time outdoors, my body and skin are not heat acclimated at all. That is a term I knew back in my Triathlon days when I had to train in the dead of winter for an early February Iron Man in the heat of Kona on the Big Island of Hawaii. I had to go ten days early and work out in the heat or I could never have done that event. (That's why they changed the Iron Man to October next year, so stateside triathletes could train all summer.) My body had to get used to the heat in a hurry, like we all do when the summer season comes, and learn to sweat because it's not needed in the wintertime, so we don't faint from heat stroke.

Recently, I have been able to go from 74 degrees inside to 98 degrees outside and take a short walk. When I return, I'm hot but not sweating — two reasons. I'm not heat-acclimated, and my body is old. Yep, my paper-thin skin cannot perspire like it could in my twenties (or forties).

I am sure that is why you often hear heat warnings for cities hitting 100 degrees or higher in "feel-like" humidity; it's always for the very young (babies) and the elderly.

Now, I'm not thrilled to think of myself as "elderly", but if the shoe fits.... well, you know the saying. I prefer octogenarian. Regularly, I have sons who do heavy work outside these days, one with outside home repair and the other with stump-grinding, and they both report no matter how much water and Gator-aid they drink, some afternoons they get to feeling faint and listless. Fortunately, they know how to get in a cool area to lower their core temperature and let fluids infuse their bodies.

For me, yeah, I mostly avoid that stuff — might water my tomatoes for five minutes, but that's it. If I had to live today like I did when I was twenty-one, I wouldn't last to Labor Day, which, barring the unknown, I plan to do.

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K-Mart's Act of Civil Disobedience

by Ken Mekoy

Thousands of vehicles pass by the building located at 1401 N. Memorial Parkway every day. Most of the occupants of those vehicles don't realize that an historic event took place in that building in the early 1970s that changed a State law and the habits of most people in the State of Alabama.

The first K-Mart store in Huntsville opened at 1401 N. Memorial Parkway in the year 1970.

Like many States in the United States, Alabama had what was known as Blue Laws that were strictly enforced. Sunday Blue Laws required businesses to be closed on Sunday. It was nearly impossible to find any business open on Sunday including gas stations.

Large retail stores were normally open between the hours of 10:00am and 9:00pm Monday through Friday and 8:00am to 12:00pm Saturday. Smaller businesses were open even fewer hours that did not include Saturday or Sunday.

ATM machines did not exist so if you needed cash on the weekend you simply had to wait until the banks opened on Monday.

Shoppers wanted to be able to shop on Sundays and businesses wanted to improve their sales figures but Blue Laws prevented it.

Business managers who decided to challenge Sunday Blue Laws were usually warned that they would be arrested if they

persisted in defying the law and consequently the laws stood unopposed for years.

Sometime in the early 1970s the management of K-Mart decided to defy the Sunday Blue Laws. The local newspapers and TV news departments were notified in advance and the K-Mart on North Memorial Parkway opened its doors for business on Sunday afternoon.

Most people believed that K-Mart upper management gave prior approval to the Store Manager to commit this act of disobedience. The store manager refused to close his store when the police arrived and was promptly arrested. The event was filmed and documented by local news outlets according to plan.

This act of defiance by K-Mart's store manager was the beginning of the end of Sunday Blue Laws in the State of Alabama. Before long retail businesses were allowed to open on Sunday throughout the State of Alabama.

Years later K-Mart declared bankruptcy and changed its name to BigK.

The K-Mart store located at 1401 N. Memorial Parkway was the last K-Mart store in Huntsville to close in 2015. Ironically that was the same year that Alabama officially repealed the Blue Laws prohibiting retail businesses to open on Sunday.

The building located at 1401 North Memorial Parkway is now occupied by the decorator store named At Home.

"My wife asked if she could have some peace and quiet while she cooked dinner, so I took the battery out of the smoke alarm."

Phil Posey, Madison



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THE STORM

by Iolanda Hicks



I recently received a text message from Oscar, a friend from my High School days. He had influenced me to write several years ago and was checking on me and hubby to make sure we were OK. This was right after an EF1 tornado, May 8th 2024, ravaged its way through downtown Huntsville, 5 Points and Maple Hill Cemetery. This tornado began 3 miles northeast of Huntsville, touching down in the Old Town area near Walker Avenue, around 9:28 PM. It ended about 4 minutes later, 4 miles east, northeast of Huntsville. Winds were clocked at 105 mph.

An observational bike rider, David Nuttall, mapped the downed trees, showing hundreds uprooted. It is very sad to know that years of tree-growth were wiped away in just minutes! At the end of Oscar's text, he types "How about a short story on the storm?" Well, Oscar my friend, you brought back memories of other storms, including the ones with ice and snow! I had to do some research to help with those memories and decided to share with you and readers, a few of the memorable storms of Huntsville. Hopefully, I have gotten the facts right.

I have lived in this always-growing city since 1950. As a youngster, I never realized that we lived in Tornado Alley. Here, in North Alabama, we have the distinctive pleasure of living in what is called "Dixie Alley". This tag gives us the notoriety of being in a part of the country considered the most deadly area for tornados in the United States. Doesn't that just give you a nice, warm, fuzzy feeling or maybe a feeling of impending doom?? Putting joking aside, tornados are bad, really bad. I have been around for several of their visits over the years. Those unpredictable, swirling wind tunnels left lasting scars in this one Alabama valley.

Before my time, the first documented tornado in Huntsville struck in 1822. In 1884, an EF2 Tornado was recorded on the ground for 82 miles, continuing through 5 counties. It was April Fools Day. In 1967, 3 tornados came through Huntsville: an EF2 on November 24th, striking the Big Cove area and the Eastern edge of the city; an EF2 on December 18th, staying on the ground for 20 miles, leaving 4 dead and 29 injured; and on December 21st, an EF1 that struck in the early morning hours.

April of 1974 was scary. We were living in Parkway Estates at the time. My Mother had called me about the forecast of bad weather. She knew I was alone with my 4 year old son, Jason and told me to come to her house where it was "safer". Safer?? One of those tornadoes came so close to my parents house that it tore part of the roof off and sent their lawn mower flying, among other things! I can remember telling her no and thank you. My 4 year old son and I stayed buried under pillows in our windowless hallway until we got an all-clear from the radio station we were listening to. We were just fine and "safe"! This was the first tornado outbreak on record that produced 148 tornados across 14 states from Michigan to Alabama. It was the most violent outbreak ever recorded, with 335 deaths and at least 6 thousand people injured. August 16, 1985: 2 tornados during Hurricane Danny, came through Huntsville in the early afternoon. One, an EF1, lasted for 8.5 miles and the second one, an EF2, lasted for 13 miles. These both came through the western edge of the city which today is referred to as Cummings Park.

On November 15, 1989, around 4:35 PM, an EF4 tornado came through Huntsville, demolishing and damaging businesses, apartments, restaurants, churches and medical facilities. 21 people died, with 463 injured. Its course took it east up Airport Road towards Whitesburg Drive, then over Walton's Mountain, moving northeast, through Jones

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Valley and onward to Brownsboro. It layed out a path of 18.5 miles, destroying 259 homes, 80 businesses, 2 schools and over 1000 vehicles along the way. That evening, it took me over 4 hours to get home from work. May 1995 brought another EF4 tornado to this city destroying and damaging many of the Anderson Hills homes off of Highway 53. A tornado has no discriminating values!

On April 27, 2011, an EF5 tornado came through Madison County. Power was knocked out for many. I stayed with my son for a week since he was equipped with a generator. We were some of the fortunate. That was the time that 62 tornadoes visited the state of Alabama, killing over 250 people and wiping out the towns of Phil Campbell and Hackleburg. Winds were estimated as high as 210 mph with the tornado's path of three-quarters of a mile wide. Meteorologists called this a generational tornado event and it was only "rivalled by the 1974 super outbreak".

My hubby David has said that he had much rather experience a hurricane than a tornado. Hurricanes he was familiar with, living near the Atlantic Ocean for years, but never had he experienced weather such as is present in this valley. I have told him we are special here in North Alabama. We can have all 4 seasons hit us in a few days!

Next, let me share some of those wet but colder events that Huntsville has had over the years. The largest, biggest #1 snowfall was on New Years Eve 1963. 17.1 inches of that cold, white stuff fell and lingered into 1964. It was said that this snowstorm was the worst since 1899. Of course, I can still remember waking up on that New Years Day, as a teenager, to such a beautiful scene. It was not a bad thing!

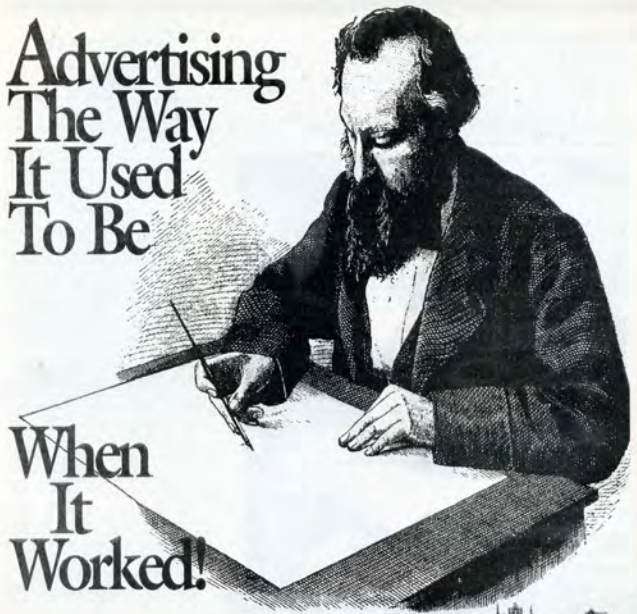
If I am not mistaken, M. D. Smith's family's WAAY 31 TV Station held a best snow sculpture contest. My friends and I worked hours on creating a gigantic Mr. Magoo. It was a LARGE piece of art. WE were not winners!

Our 2nd largest snowfall was January 7th - 8th 1988 when over 9.5 inches fell. Schools were closed and of course, probably no speeding tickets were issued. We did have a touch of snow on Christmas Day 2010.

About 2 to 4 inches of wet snow fell. January 10th, 2011 brought 8.9 inches of snow, making this the 3rd largest snowfall around these parts. Snowmageddon or maybe Snowpocalypse happened January 28th, 2014. This was a round of winter that turned our city's roads into

ice rinks! We have had all kinds of weather around here over the years but lately it's been more hot than cool. Mother Nature has been fickle. Thank you to my hubby for the touches of humor added to this article, here and there.

A little note to my friend Oscar: Move back to Huntsville. You have a ton of friends here and just think of all this variety of weather that you can experience. What an adventure it would be and never a dull moment!!



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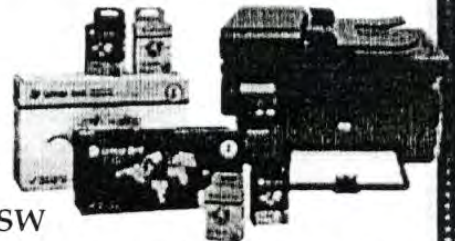
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Remembering Billy Lawrence

by Phyllis Lawrence

Robert William (Billy) Lawrence
Aug. 26, 1944 - Aug. 30, 2023

This story is about my husband and best friend Billy Lawrence. We were married for 47 years when he passed away and our 48th anniversary would have been April 27th this year.

But my Billy passed away last year, Aug. 30, 2023 at 79 years old.

We had been reading Old Huntsville magazine for years and each time we had an anniversary or birthday or just a story, we'd send it in to be published. So I felt it was appropriate to commemorate my first year without Billy in this way.

Billy was born Aug. 26, 1944 and attended St. Mary's of the Visitation Catholic School. He then went to Butler High School where he played football along with his brother Frank. Many remember his football playing years, and Billy always said that those games at Goldsmith-Schiffman Field were some of the happiest days he had. He went on to attend University of Alabama/Huntsville, Baldwin Wallace U., and Middle Tennessee State University. We married and had one son.

How I met Billy in March 1971

It was my first year teaching. They had just built a new YMCA in downtown Chattanooga. My brother liked racquetball and I liked swimming, so I stopped by one day after school. I paid seventy-five dollars for a family membership. I went home, had supper, and picked up my friend Yvonne. We went down to tour the facility.

We enjoyed a leisurely stroll around the building and ended up in the racquetball/handball courts. In a flash this handsome boy playing handball came over and introduced himself as Bill Lawrence and asked me if he could call me.

I was going to Florida for Spring Break but I'd be back in a week. I said to call when I returned. I never went back to the Y and he never played handball again. I think he was afraid to!

We married and our son, David Lawrence, was our pride and joy.

Dave and I miss Billy more than we can explain.

He was our rock and will forever be in our hearts.

OUR WRITERS

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

We couldn't do it without you!



Billy and Phyllis Lawrence - 1975 first anniversary



Billy in 1956



At 18, a Senior at Butler H.S.

A Depression Memory

by Robert French

The three cousins were playing out near Bean's Dairy Barn, Pulaski Pike, in 1938. The sun was shining, the weather was clear. It was a beautiful very warm late spring day. I was approaching 5 years old, wearing a sun suit, with white shoes, i.e., short pants with a bib and shirt - typical little boy clothes of the thirties.

My mother's sister, Pauline Baker, and her family, lived on the dairy farm as we did during the Depression. She had married Eddie Baker of New Hope. They had 4 children, the oldest, Ira George Baker was born in 1930, Earl was born 2 months after me in November, 1933. Marie and her sister came later.

Two of our Uncles, Arnold and Ira Sibley, lived in the big house with their sister Mildred and their parents. They worked for their father, Ira T. Sibley running the dairy with 32 milk cows.

In their spare time, what little they had, the uncles made a fishing boat. Once completed, they filled it with water, "to swell the green wood and make the boat tight enough to float without leaking."

As cousins we always played around the dairy barn. It was the cleanest place on the farm. On this day, we noticed that the new empty boat, up on three wooden horses, was filled with water about chest high. We began to find small sticks and have boat races in the water.

Our sneaky uncles ran up behind us and put all three of us in the water filled boat. Earl was mad as his new clothes and

white shoes were water logged. Ira George and I screamed, but gave it up when our uncles laughed at us uproariously.

I immediately slogged home and told my mother, who also laughed and said it was good for us as it was a hot day. She let my sun suit dry on me. "Sit out in the sun."

Our uncles soon went off to war and both were in the Navy. Uncle Arnold was shot in a naval battle by the Germans off the Coast of Greenland, while Uncle Ira was shot on the invasion of Iwo Jima. After a long convalescence at 331 West Clinton Street, both survived and returned to work at Huntsville Glass until they retired. They have purple hearts on their tomb stones. The three cousins served later.

The last time I saw Earl was in the early 1950s. He was dressed in a suit and seemed to be in a hurry. I noticed he had a pair of handcuffs hanging on his belt.

"Why do you have handcuffs hanging on your belt?"

"I'm a COP, C-O-P."

I never could understand whether he was a policeman or if he was the Chief of Police. He was something to do with the Huntsville PD. He was fancy in the expensive suit with the handcuffs, but I remembered him when he was soaking wet.

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"I saw this guy at Starbucks today. No iPhone, no backpack, no laptop. Just sitting there drinking coffee. So weird."

Local Millennial

Ticklebelly Hill

Monrovia School 1965-1972

by Jeff Rhodes

Residents younger than about age 30 missed the experience and newer arrivals would be unaware that Madison County once operated a public thrill ride in the Monrovia community. This ride was open day and night, weekends, holidays and never closed. There was no need to visit an amusement park or wait for the county fair. Admission was free for anyone riding a car on Jeff Road, provided the driver kept the wheel straight ahead and foot on the accelerator pedal.

Ticklebelly Hill really wasn't much of a hill at all. It was one of many bumpy elevation changes on Jeff Road as the old narrow country two-lane ran due north between Highway 72 and Highway 53. In my time Jeff Road has always been paved with asphalt, but photographs and memories exist of a dirt or gravel Jeff Road into the 1940s, possibly the 1950s.

The most abrupt elevation change occurred as Jeff Road intersected Capshaw Road/Old Monrovia Road. Jeff Road was the primary road, so Jeff Road traffic didn't have to stop. That intersection had flashing yellow caution lights for Jeff Road and flashing red stop lights for Capshaw/Old Monrovia. Capshaw Road and Old Monrovia Road had been built along the crest of a minor ridge, while Jeff Road ran up and down the natural contours in a straight line.

The higher elevation of Capshaw/Old Monrovia provided Jeff Road a rising ramp effect in both directions. That big bump in the road was a whopper and known to all as Ticklebelly Hill.

In those days the Jeff Road speed limit was 45 mph so cresting the Capshaw/Old Monrovia intersection provided a momentary ski jump ascent for every car. At 45 mph or less a car did not actually become airborne, but it sure felt like it. The car suspension would compress on approach then extend on the opposite side, with less than a second of semi-weightless sensation. Upon landing the suspension would compress again, completing the sequence of heavier/lighter/heavier sensations.

Ticklebelly Hill was thrilling but could also be dangerous. That ridge ob-

scured the vision of drivers on Jeff Road and cars on the opposite side could be out of sight below the horizon.

I don't recall my first ride on Ticklebelly Hill, but it must have been around 1962 or 63 when an older sibling started First Grade at Monrovia School. We rode the ride, and we all went "Whee" countless times in cars and school buses. Even though you knew it was coming, that momentary weightless sensation had a way of grabbing your attention.

The nose-high climbing attitude and immediate nose-down descent might provoke a daydream of F-4 Phantom catapult launch coupled with arrestor-wire landing. Next time you might be Alan Shepard, Jr. or Neil Armstrong riding a rocket to glory: 3,2,1/Liftoff/Orbit/Splashdown, all in five seconds.

Many lucky Monrovia School kids got to enjoy that "Whee" butterflies in the stomach effect two times a day. Alabama state law required 180 school days per year; that would amount to 360 trips across Ticklebelly Hill. Multiplied by 12 years, a high school graduate could have enjoyed 4,320 Ticklebelly rides, for free. Ticklebelly Hill was a lesson in Geography, Physics, and Flight Simulator pilot training all rolled into one. City schools and private schools have never been able to match the educational value provided by Madison County and Monrovia School.

The Ticklebelly Hill effect was greater going north because the roadbed dropped even lower on the north side with a slight tilt downward to the east. This prolonged the momentary "Whee" weightless sensation as the car or school bus came down leaning slightly to the right.

My most thrilling ride on Ticklebelly Hill came 10 or 15 years later and in the opposite direction. By then I was a senior at Sparkman High School on the corner of Carters Gin Road. School let out and I was driving south in a 1967 Camaro. From age 16 I had worked part time at Kwik Chek grocery and saved the \$650 purchase price of that well-worn Camaro. Approaching the ski ramp of Ticklebelly Hill a man's head and shoulders were visible above the asphalt horizon in the opposite lane.

As I crested Ticklebelly Hill the head and shoulders became a farmer on a tractor in the northbound lane. The helpless driver was slowly moving north struggling to control a wide farm implement hitched behind his tractor. The implement spanned all the northbound lane and extended over the centerline. The wide swaying implement was blocking a couple feet of my

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southbound lane. I made the slightest of swerves to the right, missing the implement and getting two wheels off the asphalt but avoiding the ditch. No paint was exchanged, and no harm was done. I felt like James Bond, after my pulse returned to normal.

High school kids in Monrovia had been jumping Ticklebelly Hill for years before Hollywood created the Burt Reynolds Trans-Am "Bandit" and "Dukes of Hazzard" car-jumping characters. I never tried it, but I'll bet that jumping Ticklebelly Hill on a motorcycle would have elevated the thrill to the Steve McQueen level.

The next year my interests shifted south and east toward better-paying jobs, UAH, and Redstone Arsenal. Trips across Ticklebelly Hill dwindled from twice daily to infrequent to never.

Possibly 20 years passed before I returned to find Jeff Road had been modernized. The changes were gradual, incremental, and irreversible. A convenience store had appeared on the northwest corner where the old white frame farmhouse once stood. The low places in Jeff Road had been filled and raised which eliminated all the mini roller coasters. Both lanes were smoother and seemed wider. The narrow bumpy creek bridge became a wide modern bridge.

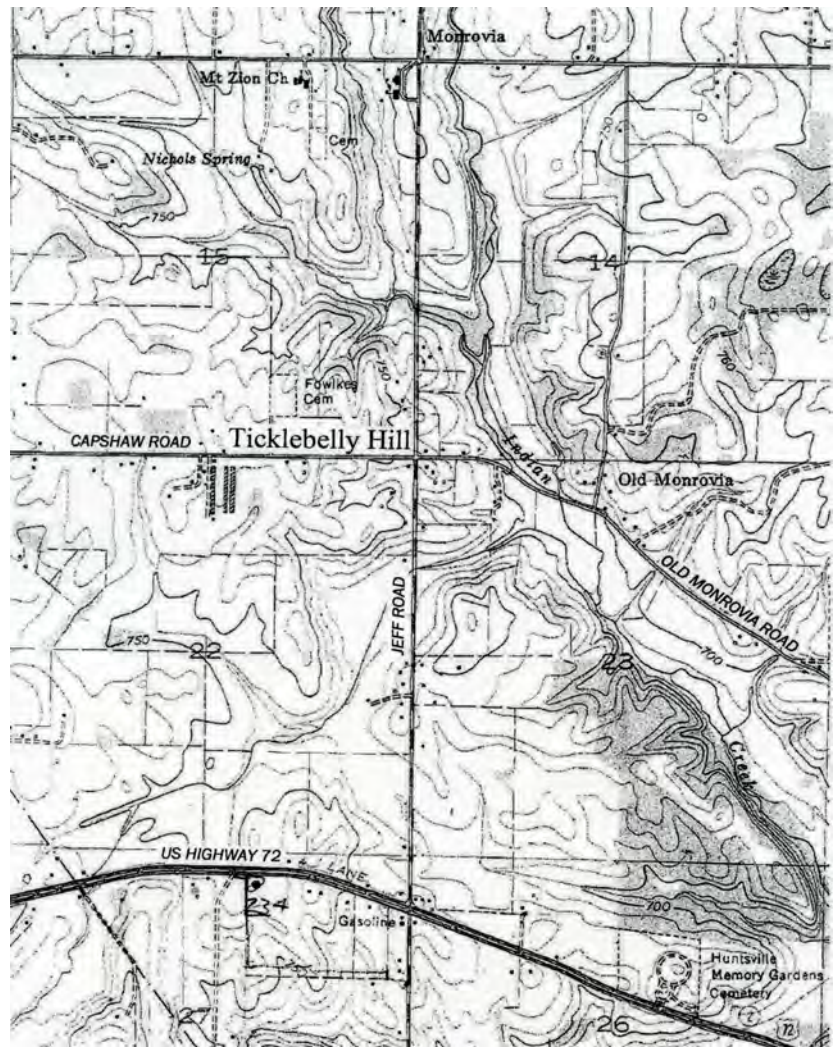
Worse, both Ticklebelly ski-jump ramps had been filled in and the road surfaces elevated, creating more gradual approaches to Capshaw/Old Monrovia. The flashing yellow caution lights had been replaced by red/yellow/green traffic signals, turn lanes added, and the speed limit lowered to 40 mph.

Ticklebelly Hill was reduced to a common urban street intersection, the thrill ride gone forever. But as Fats Domino lamented, I found my thrill on Ticklebelly Hill. I just can't sing or hammer the keys on a piano like he did.

The next time you are stuck in traffic at Ticklebelly Hill, waiting for the light to change, do what I do. Observe the multiple feet of fill dirt below the asphalt on Jeff Road. Imagine the Jeff Road approaches were several feet lower, both ski jump ramps and flashing yellow caution lights were still in place, and no turn lanes.

Daydream of yourself age 17 in a '67 Camaro, jumping Ticklebelly Hill without a care in the world. Maybe "Blueberry Hill" will come in on the radio. But stay alert: that light can't stay red forever.

(Map top right)



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THE GOOD OLD DAYS

by Barry Key, June 2018

Every generation has had its "good old days". For the purpose of this story, I'm referring to the 1940s and 1950s....my good old days.

Every child should have had the experience of growing up in the late 1940s through the 1950s. WWII was over, the economy was still strong and the majority of the population seem to be faring well. Children and preteens had all the freedom to roam and play outside (even after dark) without fear of being harassed or abducted. Young adults of driving age could cruise the popular hangouts in Huntsville and Guntersville to show off their favorite jalopies.

Don't misinterpret what I'm saying, life was still a struggle for many people, but on the other hand, life seemed simpler, more carefree and less stressful. No one cared if your pants and shirt colors didn't match, or if your black tennis shoes had holes in the toe. Sometimes the top of your old stretched out socks would slip down to the top of your shoes in a rumbled mess. So what, no one really cared.

The mind is an amazing thing. While growing up it seemed I was always doing home chores, working in some

farmer's field, mowing lawns, or delivering newspapers.... anything to make a dime. Now that I'm thinking back, those things have become obscured. The things that are still clear in my mind now are what I would consider the enjoyable moments in my life, i.e., playing ball, hunting, fishing, water sports, visiting family, and of course hanging out with friends.

When you met a friend, or a stranger, on the street, there was eye contact, a nod of the head (or tip of the hat) or "a raised arm with a friendly salute with the pointed index finger".

Casual greetings, even to strangers, seemed to be the way of life in our rural town of New Hope, Alabama.

It was that period in time, in the rural areas, when baseball and basketball were the sports of choice....we had no other choice. I don't think any kids in the south had ever heard of hockey or soccer. If some guys had said let's go play sock-her, I would have thought they meant let's go down the street and beat up Peggy Sue or Mary Jane, or let's play hockey....I'm not even going there.

Our ball teams weren't chosen by a committee at the Town Hall or YMCA (we didn't have either), but usually by the two

best players in the group. They by default were the captains and alternated picks from the rest of the group. Yes, there was always someone picked last, usually the youngest and smallest, but everyone got to play. I can't remember anyone traumatized as a result of being picked last. We all went through it at one time or another.

We had no referees or umpires; calls and plays were on the honor system. We had disputes, but no instant video replays. Disputes were settled by the flip of a coin. When a coin flip was challenged, the dispute was usually settled by the best fighter on each team standing on either side of a line drawn in the dirt.

After several minutes of "pecking" each other's shoulder with clinched fist and daring the other to step across the line, physical negotiations finally started. The first one with a bloodied nose or black eye usually conceded the decision. A minute later the game was under way as if nothing had ever happened.

It was a period in time when most rural families lived off the land as much as possible. Nearly every family had a garden, or access to one. In addition to our garden, my dad raised a calf

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and hog each year for our pork and beef. We always carried our animals to a processing house for preparation for the freezer or to be cured. My grandparents around Thanksgiving, or a little later depending on the temperature, would have (sounds crude) "hog killing". The men would slaughter a pig, cut it up and salt it down for the "smoke house". The women would render the lard and make the cracklings. The lard would be put in a shiny new 6 gallon "lard stand" to be used as cooking oil for the rest of the year. The cracklings were used for snacks and in corn bread. Old lard stands were used for storage.

The old saying about a pig, everything was used except the "oink".

My mother cooked with lard for years. I guess it's what you become accustomed to but I have never eaten any food, fried or baked, that tastes as good as food cooked with lard. It would have been sinful to cook a pot of pinto beans or green beans without a big chunk of fatback floating in the pot. And a pie crust cut-in with homemade butter, or lard, man oh man!!

Your doctor today would have a stroke if you told him you used lard for cooking. I know all the research that has been done says that animal fat is harmful to your heart and veins. I think a person's activity level has a lot to do with how well their circulatory system handles nutrients, good, or bad.

The agricultural generations, before my generation, that cooked with lard for their entire lives were manually active from before sun-up until sun-down. The use of lard may have provided the energy that kept a person going 12 to 14 hours per day, six days a week.

Before I conclude my story, I would like to tell you how I came up with the idea and title. A couple of years ago, a high school classmate and friend, Jerry, invited me to go squirrel hunting. Since then we have gone hunting and fishing several times. Now, before I get any further, I've got to tell you this story.

This winter Jerry and I had gone squirrel hunting. The temperature

had been below freezing for a couple of days. While walking through the woods we came to a creek that was covered with ice. Thinking it was too thin to walk on, Jerry decided to jump across. He didn't make it to the far bank but hit right at the edge.

When his feet hit the ice they started slipping and sliding back and forth almost in a blur, his arms were swinging in circles as if he were attempting a vertical liftoff. Trying to maintain his balance, Jerry went through all sorts of body contortions that would make an Italian Ballerina proud (You have to be visualizing Jerry's animation).

One of his feet hit the bank and the other slid out from under him in the opposite direction. The splits he did would have scored a perfect ten at any Olympics. All this took place in a matter of a split second. My immediate thought, he was going to break through the ice into the frigid water. Somehow the ice held. After we determined Jerry was alright, no broken bones or pulled muscles, we both had a good laugh....as I am doing again as I write.

Now, back to how I came up with the story and title. When Jerry and I were going hunting or fishing, we mainly traveled the country roads. It didn't matter if Jerry was the driver or the passenger, when we met a car or passed someone standing in their yard, here comes the "raised arm with the index finger salute". I think his gesture comes totally unconsciously, a consequence of our yesteryears. (Yes reader, it's OK to try the salute, no one is watching).

Watching Jerry's cordial greeting brought back memories of my youth, memories from....."THE GOOD OLD DAYS".

**Put those phones down and get
out in the woods or the beaches.
Enjoy what has been created
for us!**



**Love to the Huntsville High Class of 1966
From Oscar Llerena, HHS class of 1966**

Home



by Claudia Gates Hill

Do you remember the house you grew up in? Do you remember all your childhood friends you played with and sometimes going to their house to play, and sometimes them coming to your house to play?

Do you remember the cute boy you spotted as he and his family moved into the house across the street?

Do you remember what your bedroom looked like and how comfortable you felt within those four walls? Do you remember all the family gatherings that filled the house with love and laughter?

Most can ride by the house where they grew up and reminisce about their past. Most can picture in their minds the way each room looked and smelled. They can feel a sense of comfort when they think about their old bedroom.

How would you like to return to that house? How would you like to live there? How would you like your old childhood friends to return for visits occasionally? Have you ever wondered what it would be like to be married to that cute boy you spotted when he and his family moved into the house across the street? How would you like for family members to continue to come by to reminisce about all the fun celebrations, especially Christmases, shared in past years?

One special lady still lives in the house where she grew up. In fact, she was born in this house on March 5, 1941. She married the cute boy that she spotted as he and his family moved into the house across the street. They married three years after their first hello on July 1, 1963.

Although most of her childhood friends

married and moved away, they frequently come back to her house for visits. Nieces, nephews and cousins still gather often to reminisce about all the fun times.

The house, itself, has seen several structural changes through the years to accommodate modern necessities and a growing family. All the changes were made by this special lady's dad, Robert Gates, Sr.

This special lady is my beloved aunt, Frances Gates Smith. She has just celebrated her eighty-third birthday in the house where she was born and has lived sixty-one of these years with her cute boy from across the street, Raymond Jackson Smith.

Many kinfolks have stayed many a night in this house through the years, but none can compare it to the growing up years with their precious sons Brent and Barry.

No matter where her adventures take her, she can always come back home.



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SHE FED MANY HUNGRY CHILDREN

by John Michael Hampton



Linda grabbed the spoon, and asked, "Which vegetable do you want?" The child answered that it wanted the corn. She dipped a helping of whole kernel corn on the plate and passed it down to the worker at the next station.

My mother-in-law, Linda Gurley, was born in June 1950; she had a twin brother named Larry. They were born in their parents' farmhouse in rural Madison County near the community of Ryland. Doctor Jordan was the doctor present at their birth. Her family also included an older brother, Rayburn.

Rayburn and Larry are no longer with us, but Linda continues to live in the same area where she was born as Linda Faye Mefford.

She married James Alva Gurley, Jr. of Gurley, Alabama. James worked for the city of Huntsville, first in Sanitation, then later on in Parking Division. He also was a member of the Signal Battalion for the Alabama Army National Guard. He was also a minister: first as a part of the United Methodist Church, then as an independent minister.

Linda and James had two children, Charlotte and Johnnie. James passed away from a blood clot following knee replacement surgery in 2006.

Linda worked for twenty-six years in the Madison County School System as a Nutrition Coordinator - a fancy name for a lunchroom worker. She fed hundreds of hungry kids every day for those twenty-six years.

In those days, school lunch programs had more options than they do today, because dietary restrictions make it harder to put a menu together than it did back in the unrestricted era.

She has become an amazing grandmother to John Robert, my son. She is also a wonderful mother-in-law. She is also a good pet grandmother to our fur children (cats).

They say to give the roses while a person is still around to enjoy them. I want to honor her while she is still here, and pray that God gives my wife, my son, and I many more happy years with Linda, as she is very special to us.

If a bottle of poison reaches its expiration date, is it more poisonous or no longer poisonous?



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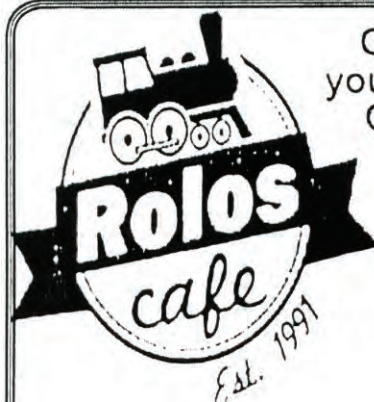
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A DANGEROUS INTERSECTION – HELP!

by Nim Stevens

A free-standing Emergency Department, part of the Crestwood Hospital system, is now open at the northwest corner of Highway 53 and Burwell Road in Harvest, AL. Rural areas need Emergency Care and this recent addition will be a boon to these local residents, saving needed critical time and traveling long miles to get care.

Ironically, this ER is well placed at one of the most dangerous intersections in Northern Alabama, an intersection without a stop light, without painted lanes and carrying citizens heading at 55 to 65 MPH to their jobs in the morning and their homes in the late afternoon.

Traffic from four directions hurry into the intersection, indicators merrily flashing, or not, and try to guess where to place their cars to wait for an opening to dash across or onto the highway.

Here's my thought process as I near the intersection. The car in the middle of the space has no indicator flashing. Does that mean it wants to proceed across to Burwell? Or did it just fail to put on its light? Should I position my car to the left or right of it? Will I make a left, to be right in its path as it attempts to cross over?

Both eye contact and psychic readings are utilized freely to assist the motorists to safety. I am certain that the good health care designers did not choose this site to assure that emergency services would be required at its very doorstep.

ALDOT (Alabama Department of Transportation) can construct traffic lights with turning lanes at the request of Phil Vandiver, who is our County Commissioner. He can be reached at his email which is dist4@madisoncountyal.gov. Please prevent any future accidents!

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To avoid harming butterflies, which are insects, be careful when applying chemicals on or near plants. You can handpick some pests, such as beetles. A regular hard blast of water can remove plant pests, such as aphids, that cause unplanned plant damage.

Another advantage of decreased garden chemical use is the presence of other garden helpers, which pesticides can kill. These are beneficial critters, such as spiders, lace wings, ladybugs and ground beetles that eat the plant pests. There are also other pollinators, such as honey bees, that benefit from reduced chemical use.

Location

Butterfly gardens should be in full sun. All insects are cold-blooded. Their body temperature is dependent on the environmental temperature. Enhance the sun's warming energy with stepping stones or a gravel path. Butterfly adults will bask in these areas to warm themselves from the radiant heat. Your garden will also benefit, because most of the plants used by butterflies grow best in full sun.

Shelters

Include a few blooming shrubs in your butterfly garden or have evergreens nearby for shelter. Butterflies will hide in these areas on cloudy days or at night and find protection from the rain and wind when needed. Your garden might even be located near the garage, gazebo, or garden shed. These permanent structures also give shelter and protection.

Puddles

Male butterfly adults need to puddle. They obtain water and minerals from the shallows of the wet places. To make a permanent puddle, bury a shallow pan of wet gravel or sand to its rim. Fill it with liquids, such as fruit drinks or plain tap water.

Flowers

Flowers provide the nectar food adult butterflies need. Butterfly season in Alabama is early spring to late fall. Choose a variety of plants, including annuals, perennials and woody shrubs, to have flowers continuously through the seasons. This plant diversity also attracts a greater variety of butterfly visitors. Many of our native butterflies more often visit purple, red, orange and yellow flowers.

How many insects have you noticed flying in straight lines? Remember, butterflies are insects. Their compound eyes have poor vision for distinguishing tiny details. Large sweeps of each flower are most attractive to these near-sighted creatures.

Also, consider their mouth parts. Butterflies suck liquid food with a straw-like mouth. Tubular-shape flowers are ideally suited. Butterflies prefer clusters of tubular or flat-topped flowers, but remember to have a variety. Different species have different preference for flower size. Compound flowers such as verbena, daisies and butterfly bushes offer numerous nectars; containers for sipping in a single stop.

Nectar

Butterflies have a highly developed sense of smell in their antennae. They seek flowers with rich nectar. Surprisingly, some of our newer plant varieties have little sugary nectar due to the breeding and selection process for other plant traits.

Choose open-pollinated, fragrant, flowering plants with a single petal row rather than double. Fragrance is sometimes a nectar signal that you can easily detect.

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THE REBEL YANKEE

by Tom Carney

Of all the Civil War veterans who called Huntsville home, Major S. F. Sweinhart must have been the most unusual. An ex-Yankee soldier who moved to Huntsville after the war, he earned the respect of his former enemies and was accorded an honor unique in Huntsville's history.

Major Sweinhart was a member of an Ohio volunteer regiment and had participated in some of the bloodiest fighting of the war. While stationed in Alabama, he was captivated by the warm climate and the natural beauty of the Tennessee Valley. At the time he wore a Yankee uniform, so it is doubtful that he was exposed to the legendary "Southern hospitality" our region has become famous for.

When the war was finally over and the soldiers had stacked arms for the last time, Major Sweinhart moved to Huntsville, determined to make it his home.

Feelings were running high at the end of the war, so it is not surprising that he was greeted with scowls and bitterness.

"Damn Yankee," the Huntsville natives would say as they passed him on the streets.

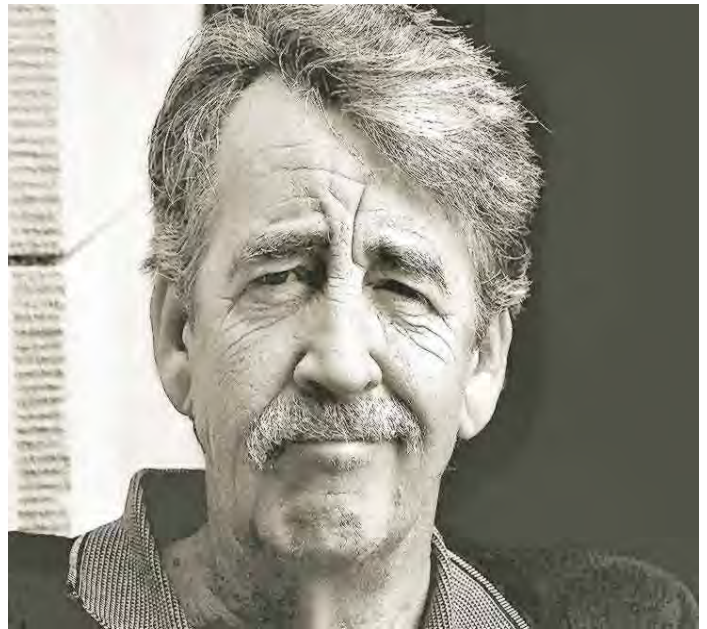
"Damn Rebels," the Major would mutter under his breath, while looking straight ahead. But time has a way of healing all wounds and as the Major grew into old age, he began taking his place on the old Courthouse bench, reliving and refighting the battles of his youth. An old Yankee officer and a group of old Confederate veterans, with nothing in common except the blood spilled on battlefields years before.

Slowly the town began to accept the old soldier and the scowls he used to encounter on the streets turned to smiles. Sweinhart became involved in the community and became active in veterans' affairs. Of course, the only other veterans in Huntsville were ex-Confederates.

In 1927, Major Sweinhart was awarded the highest accolade ever given to a Yankee by Confederate veterans. The story can best be told by a newspaper article of the day:

"He was invited this week to attend a dinner given by the Daughters of the Confederacy to members of the Egbert Jones Camp of Confederate Veterans at the home of Robert A. Moore, acting adjutant for the Third Brigade, Alabama Division."

"He was welcomed with hand clasps and smiles. After dinner, the old veterans invited him to attend their business meeting. When



discussions lagged a little, Major Sweinhart, who had remained in a corner deep in thought, rose and stood at attention."

"Men," he said, with a shake in his voice, "I've lived down here so long I feel like I belong here." His voice quivered again as he added, "And by golly, I want to belong to you."

"The Confederate veterans gave a hearty cheer and one of them proposed Major Sweinhart for membership. The proposal was accepted immediately and the Major was accepted as a member of the camp by unanimous vote."

"He now belongs to the Egbert Jones Camp of Confederate veterans and is believed to be the only Union soldier in the country who has experienced such a transformation."

When Major Sweinhart died, an honor guard consisting of ex-Confederate soldiers stood guard during the funeral ceremony. His body is buried in Maple Hill Cemetery, next to the other veterans he had grown to love.



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True Love

by Judy C. Smith

True Love, a 1937 Black Chevrolet, was the most beautiful car that I have ever owned. She, and I say she because there was a certain feminine appeal about her, was given to me on my seventeenth birthday. I had been in the car a year earlier at my grandmother's when it was painted grey and it was 19 years old at the time.

So, I awakened to find "True Love" that day with her new fresh coat of black paint, sparkling in the sun. Her white sidewall tires new and clean and hub caps that were polished so brightly that I could see myself in them from at least twelve feet away. It gave her an air of dignity. Inside, there was a new set of seat covers, clock, radio and a heater.

True Love had something special that set her apart from all the

other cars in our neighborhood and that was a rumble seat. All my friends used to toss a coin to see which ones would ride in this seat.

True Love was in every parade, and always won the prize for the best decorated car. Everyone looked forward to parades just to see what True Love's decorations would be. Last but not least, I must mention her unusual sounding horn, there was nothing like it. The sound was a cross between the whistle of a train and the toot of a bus. One could hear her coming long before she was in sight.

Finally, True Love had to be sold in order to purchase a newer model car for college use, but I shall always remember her new and shiny on that perfect seventeenth birthday.

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Remembering Downtown Huntsville

by Louise Manning, in 2012



Recently, I read in the newspaper of the plans and efforts to revitalize "Downtown Huntsville" and bring more people into the "Downtown" area.

As I sit here in my "rocking chair" and close my eyes, I see a very busy "Downtown" with people everywhere! You see, I am 86 years old and, in my mind, I can see the "Downtown" as it was in the 1940s, 1950s and early 1960s. The streets were so crowded that at times you could not find a parking space. But, parking spaces were not as important then as they are today, because many people walked to "town" or rode a bus.

As I recall, Downtown Huntsville was the "hub of the business world" for the citizens of Madison County, as well as the citizens of Huntsville. Situated around "The Square", and adjacent streets such as Washington, Jefferson, Holmes, Clinton, Madison, Greene, etc., were businesses of any kind you can name: hardware stores, department stores, five-and-ten cent or variety stores, cafes and/or restaurants, shoe stores, gasoline or service stations, a newspaper being published, grocery stores, banks, hotels, movie theaters, drug stores, specialty clothing stores, dry cleaners, jewelry stores, furni-

ture stores and, at one time, a funeral home. What did I miss?

There were also doctors' and lawyers' offices, the YMCA located on Greene, the old Carnegie Library located on Madison, City Offices and the Police and Fire Departments on Madison, the Post Office on Holmes, people living in apartments over some of the stores and beautiful churches that brought people "Downtown."

And, of course, people always had business at the Courthouse; some just to sit on the benches under the shade of the trees and visit.

Today, the churches still remain, but I can only remember two businesses that remain today, Harrison Brothers and Lewter's Hardware. (Do you recall any others?) Even the Courthouse that I remember during this period of time is no longer there.

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LULU

Hello, my name is Lulu. I am a female 5-year-old cat. I was adopted as a kitten from the Ark Animal Shelter in 2019. I don't know why but I lost my home and was brought back here to the shelter. I am a beautiful tabby and white color and am a sweet and talkative girl. I love to play and to be petted by the volunteers and by visitors to the shelter. All my shots are up to date and I've been spayed and micro-chipped and am ready to go to a new home. If you are looking for a loving and friendly kitty won't you come and see me? I would love to have a home again and be a member of a family. If you are looking for a cat with a sweet disposition, come to the Ark Animal Shelter and ask to see Lulu. I will be so happy to meet you.

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The Courthouse I am picturing was torn down in 1964. It was a two story building with columns on all four sides and a tower on top containing a four-faced clock that could be heard all over "town" when it struck! One thing that does remain is the Old Soldier on the Courthouse lawn. He did have an accident between leaving the grounds in 1964 and being placed on the lawn of the present Courthouse, but that is another story.

On Saturdays, "Downtown" was usually crowded. Many farmers brought produce and other farm products to "town" to sell and to conduct other business while here. The "Farmers Market" (or what most people referred to as the "curb market") was located somewhere between Gallatin Street and the Von Braun Center in what is now Big Spring Park.

The Courthouse stayed open until noon and the stores stayed open later on Saturday nights. Many working people were off on Saturday so it was the time to go "Downtown" (or "Uptown" as some of us called it) to shop, meet friends and neighbors and "visit." It was fun to just window shop!

In the summer, most of the stores closed on Wednesday afternoon. All the stores closed on Sunday except the drug stores and movie theaters (in the afternoon and evening). Here again, people often came "Downtown" on Sunday just to window shop or enjoy Big Spring Park. As long as I can remember, we have had a Big Spring Park, just not as large as it is now.

There were ALWAYS people "Downtown."

I worked in offices around "The Square" for many years. Some are still standing, but a row of old buildings where I once worked on the West Side of the Square was torn down so that Big Spring Park could be seen and entered from "The Square."

When Huntsville started to grow, "Downtown" became very congested and, with more automobiles being driven, parking became a problem. It became difficult to conduct business. When Memorial Parkway was built, there was land along the sides that were ideal for stores to be built with their own adjoining parking lots. This was the beginning of businesses moving from "Downtown." As businesses moved, so did the people!

Some of the more "personal" things that I remember are: ice cream cones from City Drug, hamburgers from Sno White,

the lunch counter in Grants variety store, the row of old buildings on the West Side of the Square in which the cotton brokers had their offices thereby giving that block the name "Cotton Row," the cotton patch in the side yard of the Bank building on the West Side of the Square, Alfred Clark's concession stand in the lobby of the Courthouse, shopping on my lunch hour, working upstairs in a building with a cafe beneath that had a "juke box" and the fire department across the street (we had music and excitement).

Also the giant sign above T. T. Terry's Dry Goods Store proclaiming "Great is the Power of Cash," water cress salad at the Russel Erskine, going to the movies, running out to put another nickel in the parking meter so you would not get a ticket, but most of all I remember the nice people I met on the streets and those working in the stores and offices!

Well, I "reckon" I have done enough remembering for this time. There is so much history connected with this area of the country. Those who take the time to study the history of Huntsville, the surrounding towns and all of Madison County are pleasantly surprised!

I realize that the "Downtown" that I remember would not fit into today's lifestyle. From what I have read in the newspaper and seen, it seems that those given the responsibility of revitalizing "Downtown" are planning and working hard and are making progress! My sincere hope is that they continue to be successful in bringing more businesses and people into the downtown area and make it the BUSY place it once was!



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More Letters to Buddy



*by Buddy as told to
Margaret Anne Goldsmith*

My dear Friends and Admirers,

Many of you have been following my stories in Old Huntsville Magazine. My first story appeared in 2022, "Training My People By Buddy." In 2024 my story continued in the May and June issues of the magazine. Last month you heard from five of Maggie's friends, some of whom wrote in the voice of their cat or dog.

More fan letters that I have received follow. As my popularity grows, there may be additional stories. I am open to your ratings and comments. Please send them in care of mag@schifinc.com. Currently I don't have my own email address. If I can find a source of income, I might be able to create my own web site.

The following fan letters were received from Lynda who is an editor/author, very good friend John O. and Lucky, Buddy's new Mom Lara, and "Stony Siemore" and Miss Bo.

Dear Buddy,

I love hearing your stories! You are one lucky pup!

I am an editor/author and met Maggie when she was writing her own memoir. And then she showed me your incredible story! I think there is a book here. You have done such a good job as a trainer, and perhaps you might think about writing a manual for your friends so they can have the benefit of what you have learned. My own daughter has two dogs, one a great big St. Bernardoodle and one a small Welsh Corgi. My daughter has tried to teach them good manners, but they still beg for food and bark at strangers. And they, too, have escaped from her home. I think that her household, like yours, is not sure about the pups being their pet or their friend.

I really think you could make a huge difference in the lives of all who live there if you would teach these pups the advantages of good manners... and then you could train them to train their family!

I think these granddogs of mine already know your wiggly worm training trick, but I bet there are other dogs who haven't learned that yet. I do think my daughter is trained a bit, because she does work hard to be a good pet owner. The dogs have trained her to give them treats, especially peanut butter or cheese, so they have clearly been lightly trained. But you could make a huge difference!

Even if you don't write a whole book, I look forward to hearing about more of your adventures!

Best, Lynda

Dear Buddy,

I just got your notes about your life and think that we all have similar events as we grow older. You do not know me, but my name is Lucky, and I am seven years old, so we have been around about the same amount of time. The first year after I was born, I was living with some very mean people. They liked to hit me and kick me all the time. I do not want to remember much of that first year but after those things got better. I was taken by a group of people who care about animals, and they put me up for adoption.

I am a mixed breed light brown dog with some scars on my head from my first year of life. I was outside a pet food store and a nice couple came by and petted me. A little while later they came back and adopted me. I was so happy that they took me home and petted my scarred head a lot. I was so happy that I became very protective and would not allow anyone to come near my home. I only wanted to protect my mom and dad and be sure they never got beaten like I did.

My mom, Kate and my dad, Jon, did a decent job trying to get me to calm down and even hired a trainer to help but I did not want to. I just wanted to keep bad people away from them. So after some time, mom decided that I couldn't stay with them since no one could come into the house unless I was put in a room. I know they spent a lot of time trying to find me a different home and even the pound would not take me. They tried the humane society, Leash on Life, and anyone else they could. But no one would take me and at that time my mom got sick with Cancer. She died just four months after discovery, and I miss her very much. I guess my dad did not want to lose two loves, so he decided to keep me.

It has been four years since I lost my mom, but dad and I have been really comforting each other. I am finally realizing that this family loves me, and I do not need to be so protective. My dad says that for many years my eyes showed suspicion but now they seem to be getting brighter and I have calmed down a lot. I know that the loss of a loved one is pretty hard for humans and just as hard for us. All I can say is that we need to be grateful for humans who take care of us so we can comfort them.

Take care, Lucky

Dear Buddy,

We have enjoyed having you join our family, you have quickly become a blessing to us. You have adjusted well and really seem to love our long walks, as long as we take a backpack to carry you. You also love your new vegan food, if we serve it to you warm. You love going for rides on the electric bike with the wind blowing through your hair; your entire body seems to melt with pleasure while we ride.

You love having lots of people around, the more the merrier! You are also a great protector and keep the chipmunks and squirrels in their place....AWAY from your porch! You chase them into the woods every time! We put up a gate on the back deck so you can lay in the sunshine and sleep, because you really love being outside. I have noticed that you love being on the trails and close to water.

You also seem to believe that you are human, so now you have a chair at the table where you sit and occasionally get up on the table... then you are in trouble and get right back down on the chair. We have discovered that one of your new favorite things is Belvita Crackers, and will fight for them!

You love your adventure time, but also your down time as you continue to work on your endurance. What your new habit is now is waiting patiently, lying on your back and staring at me until I give you your evening massage.

Buddy, You are a delight to our entire household!

Love Mama Lara

Dear Buddy,

My name is Stony Siemore. I'm an Australian Shepherd. I'm rather proud of my appearance. My eyes are beautiful blue, my coat is medium long and silky gray and white with subtle touches of brown and black. I tell you this because when I saw your picture in Old Huntsville Magazine, when my person, Miss Bo, was reading your story aloud to her granddaughter, I could see that you are handsome and proud also.

Your story reminded me of my own experiences when I was very young. But first I'll tell you about my original home with Mr. Sam, my mother's owner. I was born in Phoenix, Arizona, one of eight beautiful, chubby, little puppies: four sisters and three brothers. We had such fun in our big box climbing over our mom and each other, playing puppy games, and exploring Mr. Sam's big back yard when we were old enough to go outside.

I was very happy in those days, and I was never, never alone. But when I was about eight-weeks old, Mr. Sam gave me to a new person named Miss Bo. When I first met her, I liked her very much. Her touch was gentle and her voice made me feel calm. But I was really frightened when Mr. Sam put me into a cat carrying case and gave it to Miss Bo. None of my brothers and sisters were put into the case with me. I was all alone. I cried out for my mom, and she whined, but she couldn't get me back.

Miss Bo put the case beside her in the car and talked softly to me as she drove away. Miss Bo's voice made me feel a little better. Soon we were at her house and she carried the case, with me in it, into a big room. Miss Bo let me out of the cat case, and sat down on the floor and held me in her lap. I could see that there was a basket with a cushion in one side of the room, a dish of water, and another dish with puppy chow. But I wasn't hungry. She put me down and stood up. She looked down at me and smiled. Then she said, "follow."

I toddled after her as fast as my puppy legs would go, as she went about the house. She said I should get familiar with my new home. That night, I went to sleep in her lap while we watched TV.

After two days, I was just beginning to feel better, although I missed my mother and my siblings very much. Then it happened – the thing that still causes me to pant and run around my yard and bark. That first Monday morning, after filling my puppy bowl and putting fresh water in the water bowl, Miss Bo went out and closed the door. She left me in the big room and went away for a long time.

I barked and cried, and cried, as loud as I could with my puppy voice. I was so anxious about being left alone that I ran around and around the room; I shredded some pages of newspaper that I found in a corner. I cried until I had no voice, and then I gnawed the wood that bordered the door frame until my mouth was injured. My puppy teeth prints went as high as I could reach when I stood on my hind legs. But Miss Bo didn't come. Finally, I climbed into the basket and fell asleep on the soft doggy bed. Time went by, but I don't know how long.

Then I heard a noise. The door opened. It was Miss Bo. She was back! She picked me up and said something about being home from work. I was so glad to see her. I licked her face and wriggled with joy when she hugged me. I tried to bark, but my voice didn't work. I could only cry like a puppy. Miss Bo cried, too. I think she was very sorry I had had such a bad day.

Every day after that when Miss Bo left for work, I felt anxious and sad, but eventually I became accustomed to being alone with my toys, puppy chow, water, mat and a soft doggy bed. I learned that Miss Bo would always come home every evening and ruffle my fur and hug me.

Now that I am a grown up dog, Miss Bo and I go outside and for long walks, and on weekends and summer evenings, we explore the desert and look for funny, long-legged birds that live in deserts. Miss Bo said they are roadrunners, and that they would follow us around if we scare up insects for them. I am very good at running around and scaring insects. I love to discover new and exciting things. I love Miss Bo!

I still feel anxious when Miss Bo leaves every day, but I know she will come back home and go with me on great adventures. I wanted to tell you my story in case it might help you to not feel so anxious and alone when your people have to be away.

My very best wishes, Stony Siemore

"As I fold my fourth load of laundry, I contemplate becoming a nudist. Then I remember what I look like naked and keep folding."

Janie Davis, Woodville

THE TIMES REMEMBERED

by M. D. Smith, IV

The printed Huntsville Times no longer exists.

Do you remember the headline of The Huntsville Times on Friday, March 16, 1973? Let me refresh your memory.

It read, "Flash Floods Hit City After 6-Inch Rain."

Do you recall that day? The Parkway starting at Governors Drive going south was underwater. So was the road over the bridge at Big Springs, or 'the Duck Pond' as our family calls it. About fifty feet of the road were underwater.

But wait, there was something else about that edition of the daily newspaper selling for just 5 cents (35 cents per week), it was printed entirely in blue ink. That's right, the basement where all the black newsprint ink was stored was underwater, but they had enough blue ink to get the paper out that day. I still have that faded edition of the newspaper. Two regular writers, Don Chapin and Peter Coburn, got front-page stories that day about the flooding. Long-time photographer Dudley Campbell went up in a helicopter and got terrific aerial shots of the Times Building and the Parkway underwater to Drake Avenue. The Heart of Huntsville Mall (now the Medical Mall) was underwater. It's nice to have a printed record of that day and the event.

No more printed daily newspapers in our area or other major Alabama cities, as the Alabama Media Group closed print operations in Huntsville, Birmingham and Mobile on Sunday, February 26, 2023 - the final print edition.

The Huntsville Daily Times (the word Daily dropped in later years) printed war stories in 1918. On January 21, the headline proclaimed, "Ex-President Roosevelt Classed As the Kaiser's Potent Agent."

The cost of the newspaper was 15 Cents per week (7 editions).

In the old days, it took a newspaper a long time to set the lead type for the presses for all

the pages that were to be printed, particularly the Sunday edition. As a result, the edition for Sunday morning had to be "put to bed" shortly after midnight so that the thousands of copies could be printed, cut, folded, and ready to be delivered to the route carriers before daylight for home delivery.

So you can understand why on Sunday morning, December 7, 1941, the day the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor, the headline in the Times read, "Roosevelt Writing Jap Emperor; Moscow Peril Called Gravest Yet" because the bombing happened way after printing time for the newspaper. The cost of the daily newspaper had risen to 20 cents per week. The attack occurred just before 8 A.M. Hawaii time, which was noon Huntsville time. It was immediately on radio stations worldwide shortly after. The next edition on Monday afternoon said, "Congress Votes On War Quickly; FDR Gives Reports On Losses." Big time gap.

Breaking news and newspaper deadlines were always a problem. However, radio, and soon TV, were much more immediate for the significant news stories locally and worldwide.

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**"It's OK to sit on your pity pot every
now and again. Just be sure to flush it
when you are done."**

Sue Jacobs, New Hope

Here's an interesting sidebar to this fact. Smith Broadcasting bought WHBS from the Huntsville Times Corporation in 1958 and promptly changed the call letters to WAAY Radio and the format from Classical Music to Rock and Roll. I suppose the newspaper got all the complaints about lovers of that type of music. The Times published several negative articles about previous listeners not liking the new sound from 1550 Radio.

My father, M.D. Smith, III, didn't take kindly to those articles and began the radio newscasts with a recorded opening that said something like, "WAAY Radio - Breaking news as it happens, and not yesterday's old news you wrap your cleaned fish guts in or line the bottom of the birdcage with."

After that, I think the battle was on. Anything WAAY-Radio did that had a negative aspect, like the "Dollar ' Drop" promotion where we dropped one-dollar bills off the Russel Erskine hotel, got a harsh story. It caused gridlock around the city, and the Police Chief said he would ban WAAY's remote broadcasts if anything like that happened again. Well, you can imagine what the Times reporters did with that story.

But my father's reaction was that of his mentor, P. T. Barnum, "Just spell my name correctly." Free press coverage was always good coverage as far as he was concerned, but he still liked to jab barbs at the Times when their stories ran about the station. The Times was not in competition with WAAY Radio and TV (Channel 31) for news as much as advertisers.

The print media in the old days got 95% of the ad budget for department stores, car dealers, and most businesses that could afford it. Broadcast media had to fight each other for the scraps left over.

And it was advertisers leaving the print media that caused the shrinkage of the Huntsville Times, both in the physical size of the paper, and the number of pages, then going to only three days a week of print, and finally out of the print business altogether.

The younger generation had gone elsewhere for their news aided by the internet growth of the past twenty years.

That issue of young readers is not so much of a problem for Old Huntsville Magazine because of the median age of its readers. They will be around enjoying this magazine's print edition for many years. But, publisher Cathey Carney is not ignoring the digital age. You can have a digital .pdf version of the entire magazine subscription for even less than the print copy. Another benefit of the digital subscription is that many photos are in full color and so sharp and clear on your computer or tablet.

Thus, the local daily newspaper for our city, and many more now and in the future, will not have a physically printed paper in which to read news stories of the day.

Yeah, I sure will miss the printed Huntsville Times. What am I going to line the bottom of my birdcage with or wrap fish guts in?

**For some reason,
insomniacs can benefit
from a 30-minute nap
in the afternoon. Re-
searchers say nappers
may be less desperate
to sleep at night, so
they don't worry about
it so much at night and
therefore sleep better.**



**"I don't like making plans for the day.
Because then the word 'Premeditated'
gets thrown around in the courtroom."**

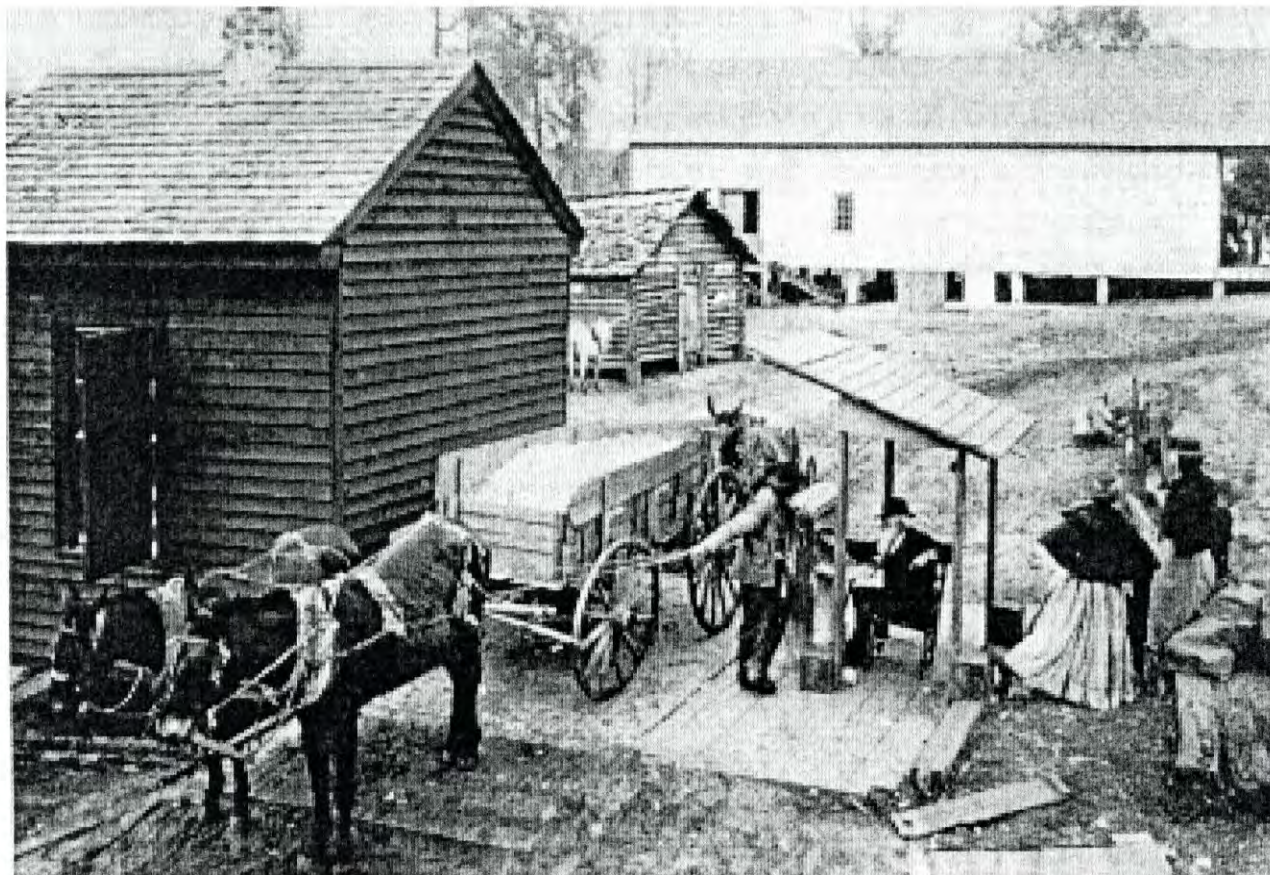
Larry Jenson, Retired and loving it



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appreciate all
you do to keep us
Safe Every Day.**

When life was simple...



In 1903, this cotton gin near Madison was a popular place as people eagerly waited to see how much their cotton would sell for. That same year Dallas Mills employed nearly two thousand people and it was announced that a wagon factory was moving to Huntsville. Grant Younger caught a 116 pound catfish below Ditto Landing, while nearly 10,000,000 pounds of cedar used to make pencils were shipped from Paint Rock.

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