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Old Huntsville

HISTORY AND STORIES OF THE TENNESSEE VALLEY

War Time Rationing: Using Food as a Weapon



“Rationing of some foods is the best and fairest way to be sure that every American gets enough to eat.

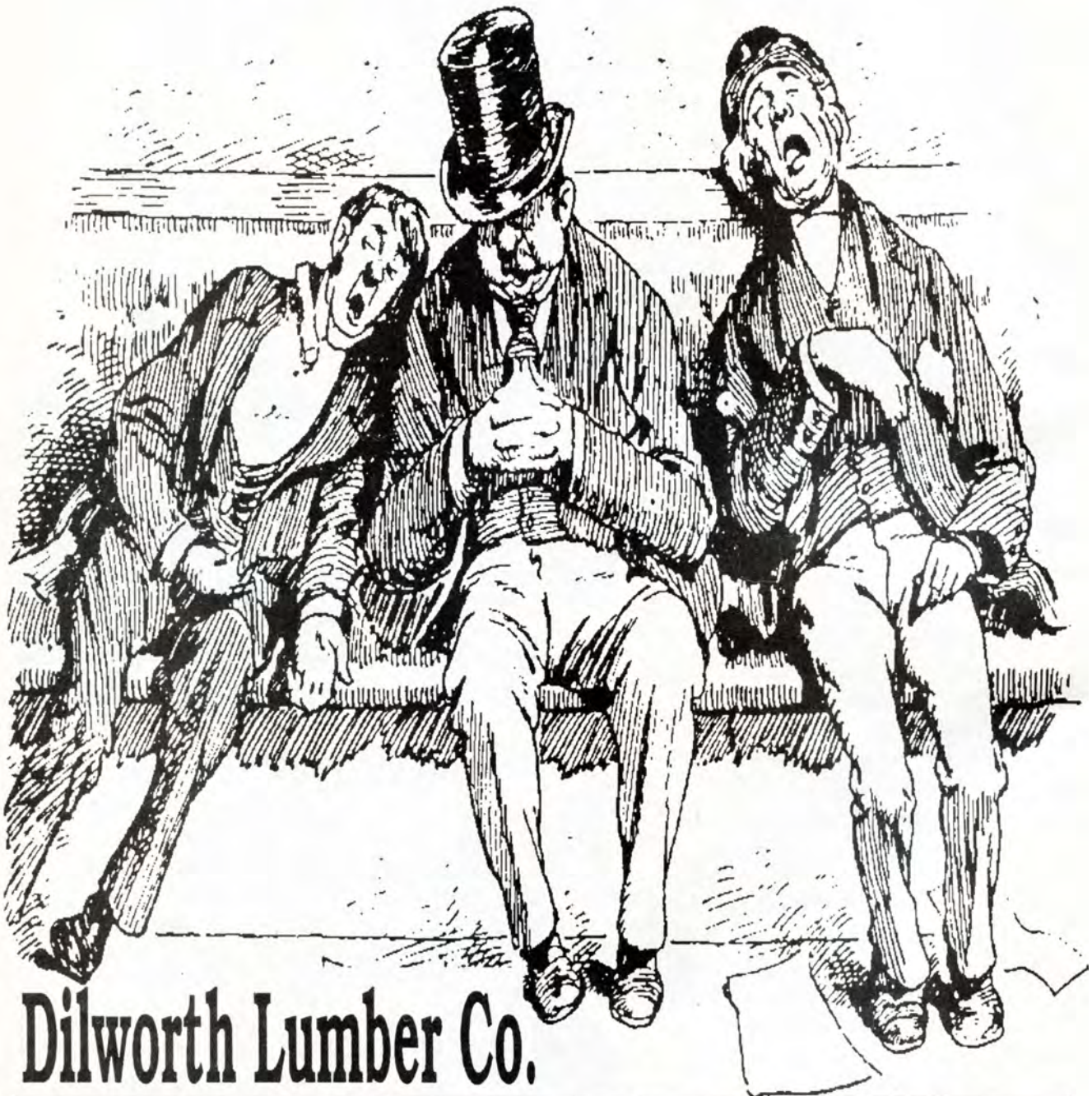
In such instances, rationing is the way to get food back on empty shelves in crowded defense areas. It is a way to assure the health of our children. It is a way to keep people strong and healthy for their war job.

It is a way to make food a stronger weapon for winning the war.”

***Also in this issue:* Living Through the Depression; Rosa Parks; Maria von Braun; My Affair with the Washing Machine; John Wayne; Our Trip to Alaska; Great Filling Station Holdup; Dog Trivia; Tanjie Kling recipes and much much more!**

(1994 AD RUN IN OLD HUNTSVILLE MAGAZINE, ISSUE 43)

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Wartime Rationing: Food as a Weapon

by M. D. Smith IV



I was only a kid living in Birmingham during WWII, but I can remember rationing and the talk my parents had after the war was over about the "lean" days. During a world war, gasoline, rubber, and steel shortages are easily understood for pro-

"My weight loss goal - to be able to clip my toenails and breathe at the same time."

Fran Jeffers, Arab

ducing all kinds of ships, aircraft and ground equipment, with the fuel to power them. But there were other shortages and specific products in high demand, like sugar—soon most foods were rationed. That meant you could buy some, assuming it was available, but only in limited quantities. The most common way was rationing coupons—something like Green Stamps of later years. Why some foods and other products were in short supply may surprise you.

Let's begin after the war started, and metals like steel and copper were already in short supply. Still, it was just after Christmas, on December 27, 1942, when Elmer Davis, Director of the Office of War Information (OWI), made a national radio address to the nation in prime time. He first apologized for pre-empting so many popular radio shows of the time but said this information was critical.

"While it would be best not to announce any food rationing until it was ready to take effect, it would be best if we could wait. But the new system of point rationing, which you will find explained in tomorrow morning's newspapers, will require the cooperation of thousands of wholesalers, hundreds of thousands of retail grocers, and of the million and a half of the local OPA volunteers. It takes time to train them."

"Now it is perfectly true that this interval from December to some time in February when



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rationing goes into effect gives chiselers and hoarders a chance to stock up, if they are so inclined—and if they can get away with it. But I am confident that the overwhelming majority of the American people are patriotic enough, and sensible enough, not to try to do that, for it would injure the workings of a system which seems, so far as it can be seen now, to be the best that can be devised, to make sure that our food supply is fairly and evenly distributed."

Food is a weapon

Davis went on to say: "Food is a weapon in all wars, but in this one more than usual. The enemy has used it as a weapon, negatively—looting the conquered peoples of their food supply, and giving back to them just enough to keep them alive—indeed, not always even that much; hoping to break their spirit, and when that endeavor failed, hoping to weaken them physically so that they could make less resistance to their oppressors. We are using our food supply as a weapon, positively, so distributing it that the American Army and Navy, and the American people, will be well nourished; yes, and so that the armies of our allies will be kept strong, too."

"Fortunately, food is a weapon that we have more of than anybody else; but that doesn't mean that we can afford to waste it. This isn't a new idea. In the case of some other commodities, the American people have thoroughly accepted it. Steel, for instance, is also a weapon of which we have more than anybody else; but that doesn't mean we waste it, or let anybody at all have as much of it as he wants. There are plenty of civilian needs for steel; but everybody has accepted the principle that our steel production must be controlled and rationed, so that it can be an effective weapon for winning the war."

"All products and foods must be used to serve the interest of all of us, to serve the national interest, whose first demand is complete and total victory in a war which we shall all win together or all lose together. It only makes sense, to use our national assets in the way that seems most likely to win it as soon as possible."

Regarding food for Russia, Davis said, "This war can be won only by killing enough Germans to discourage the rest of them. Now,

the Russians, so far, have killed more Germans than anybody else put together, and that is why it makes sense for us to send food to Russia."

"Russia is a great food-producing country, but some of the richest farming areas have been occupied.

"We send food to the Russian army, because every German who is killed by a Russian is a German whom we won't have to kill, or for that matter, a German who



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You know the economy is bad when the parents in Hollywood fire their nannies and have to learn the names of their children.

will never have a chance to kill American soldiers. The food we send our allies is a direct contribution to the winning of the war—to winning it more quickly and at less cost in American lives.”

We all know what can happen if a big snowfall is forecast for our town. There is a rush for certain products, and bread and milk shelves quickly empty. Since there was a shortage of steel for the war effort, as you can imagine, canned goods enclosed in steel would have been an easy product to buy in large quantities and hoarded because of its very long shelf life, so canned goods purchases were also limited for reasons seen above.

Quoting from the same Dayton Herald of December 28, 1943, the day after Davis’s national radio address: “Rationing of some foods is the best and fairest way to be sure that every American gets enough to eat. In such instances, rationing is the way to get food back on empty shelves in crowded defense areas. It is a way to assure the health of our children. It is a way to keep people strong and healthy for their war job. It is a way to make food a stronger weapon for winning the war.”

“Of course, we won’t need to ration all foods. We have so much wheat, for instance, that it is hard to imagine that we ever will need to ration bread.”

(Noted elsewhere in the article was the reference to supply and demand affecting prices if all food were unrestricted. If there is no rationing and foods are in short supply, those with the most money will buy them, causing prices to rise and high inflation to result. With rationing, everyone can buy all kinds of foods but in limited quantities.)

There were signs in store windows noting: “This store is pledged to conform to the sugar regulations of the U.S. Food Administration.” Sugar was limited to 2 pounds per month and sold in smaller quantities, and hoped you’d buy only what you needed. Some stores sold not only a one-pound bag but an 11-ounce bag.

“If you don’t swear while driving, you are not paying enough attention to the road.”

Jeb Cook, Scottsboro

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"Food is a war resource. We are already sending more food than the average fighting man can use — far more than they needed in civilian life. Wherever they go, large food reserves must travel with them."

The Dayton Herald further addressed segments from the previous night's radio address.

"Our men who landed in North Africa, for instance, had large emergency food supplies. American food has helped win the support of the inhabitants of North Africa. It will help win the support of other peoples of liberated countries, and thus will save the lives of thousands of American boys. The food we are sending to the British is helping to keep their armies strong and to keep their war production going at full speed. General Montgomery's men who chased General Rommel across North Africa ate a lot of American food."

After rationing went into effect, the American people were encouraged to plant "Victory Gardens" throughout the spring and summer, then harvest and can as many fruits and vegetables as possible, in glass containers, of course.

The only steel was the lid and tightening ring.

One of the war posters seen in those years showed an empty jar with tomatoes and peppers in the background, and the label on the quart jar said, "CAN ALL YOU CAN — It's A Real War Job!" Besides saving money and the pride of growing and consuming your own harvest, you left more canned goods for the war effort.

Small "victory" gardens sprang up in every suburb in America and were considered a patriotic action. Neighborhood vacant lots were put to use.

They were sectioned off into small rectangular plots, and neighbors grew their own area of tilled-up soil with a rope border around each individual's garden.

Davis said, "The OPA, which is handling the rationing program, will never be popular, but they aren't in there to be popular, they are in there to help win the war."

The war lasted four years, but after VE day, the need for food worldwide didn't stop, and even when Japan surrendered in Sep-

tember 1945, food rationing continued to be an issue for a short while.

(Source: *The Dayton Herald* from UPI, December 28, 1943)

<https://www.newspapers.com/image/412255718/?match=1&terms=rationing>



Actress Mary Anderson:
"What's my best side, Mr. Hitchcock?"
Alfred Hitchcock:

"You're sitting on it, my dear."



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News in 1812

Grand Jury Reports on Conditions in Huntsville

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

Night hacks and omnibus lines help supply the bootleggers. Two restaurants, one near Southern Railway Station and one near the N.C. St. L., are termed "dens of vice." Near one of these a large man, carrying \$40 he had gotten from sale of his cotton, had been reported murdered during the past year. The city has been asked to revoke the licenses of the cafes, one of which was selling five barrels of illicit whisky a week..

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

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

The Courthouse is a positive disgrace, with the Grand Jury room a germ-laden hole. It is the recommendation of the Grand Jury that this courthouse be torn down. The only reason that the county commissioners have not been indicted was because of the pleas of the solicitor.

News in 1911

Mother of 13 Dies from Paralysis

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

Death Caused by Rubber Snake

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

Woman starts Panic at Her Own Funeral

Decatur, Al Stretching out her hands toward those who had assembled about her coffin, Mrs. Jane Pitcock, an octogenarian, caused a panic at her funeral here

according to reports. The funeral sermon had been preached and the lid of the coffin was removed to permit friends and relatives to take a last long look at what they believed to be a corpse. It was then that Mrs. Pitcock regained consciousness. She remained alive for several hours.

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THE ROPE SWING AND BEING A KID

by David Kirby

I grew up in a small town nestled in the hills of north Alabama in an area known as Sand Mountain in the town of Albertville which is known as the heart of Sand Mountain. Being a kid and growing up on Janet Street is what I'm writing about.

The Rope Swing:

Behind my parents house was a patch of woods. To all of the kids on Janet Street it was like a Sherwood forest. We spent hours and hours running through the woods that were not more than 3 or 4 hundred yards wide and no more than 1/2 mile long, but it seemed a lot bigger than that to us.

There was a holler that ran the full length of the woods with Turkey Creek running through the bottom of the holler. The sides of the holler were steep in places and right behind our house was a big elm tree about half way down the side of the hill that emptied into the holler. We obtained an old barge rope from some where, and tied it off on a limb that stuck out from the tree a ways. Then the fun began.

We built a small stand to swing off from and when we swung out as far as we could we were at least 30 feet off the ground.

When the girls of the neighborhood showed up, us boys would go through our repertoire of rope tricks, like turning upside down, hanging on with one hand, climbing the rope while we were swinging just using our hands, no grabbing the rope with our feet.

There was one game we played where someone would swing out holding on to the knot on the end. Then, as they came swinging back

in, someone else would jump onto the rope above them. The fun in this was trying to hold on to the end of that rope as it popped like the end of a bull whip. Many a kid was slung off and rolled down the hill. That old retired barge rope brought many hours of enjoyment to the kids that lived on Janet Street. The old rope has long since gone but that Elm tree is still there and with it remains memories of days gone by.

The Ball Field:

Two house up the street from my parents house lived Ray and Linda Jones.

Their place sat on about 1/2 of an acre with a very big yard to the right of their house. This is where we played many football games. Behind all the houses on the left side of Janet Street was a sage grass field over grown and mixed with blackberry briers.

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"Friends come and go like waves in the ocean, but the true ones stick - like an octopus on your face."

Joey, age 8, in English Exam

00508041

One year we, (us kids) decided to clear out the field to make a baseball diamond.

We must've worked for days chopping with machete's, sling blades and garden hoes to clear the field.

Someone said, "Wouldn't it be great if we could get this bush hogged?" God must've heard this because after about 3 days of working in the summer heat, somehow Mr. Lamar Greene, one of Albertville's policemen who did bush hogging on the side, heard what we were doing and brought his Ford tractor and mower over and mowed the field for us.

Funny thing is, we never did play a game of baseball on that lot.

The Huts:

The woods behind our house where we spent most of our summer days were filled with trails we had made. Off one of the trails, just about 50 feet from the edge of the woods my older brothers and their friends the Gilliland boys and maybe Bud Smalley dug shallow pits in the ground. (I'm not sure exactly who dug the pits, but they are still there today.) The biggest of the pit was probably 10 feet in length and maybe 6 feet wide. After the pit was finished, long limbs were cut off trees and laid across the top of the pit to form somewhat of a roof. Then pine straw and leaves were scattered around on top of the limbs and it made an underground hut, or fort.

When one generation of boys outgrew doing these type of things, the younger group of kids would come along and build underground huts. At least that's what we called them. I guess those same holes in the ground have been the pass-time for kids on Janet Street for a span of 15 years or more.

The Huts and the Tree House:

Highway 431 runs through our town and Janet Street is just one block off the highway. On the end of the street that my parents live, right before their house is a curve. Coming off the highway as you go around the curve, the woods we played in would be on your left. There were two huge oak trees at the edge of the woods right by the road. These trees were about 30 yards apart. The first of these two trees had four trunks growing up out of the ground and they spread out wider as they grew upward. It was in this tree Lavon Mikel and I built a tree house.

We brought in old boards and planks from anywhere we could find them. Pulled out the nails, straightened them and reused them until we had enough to build two platforms in the tree. The upper served as a roof for the lower. We never built any walls for the structure because old scrap wood was hard to come by.

We had also found a 100 ft. length of cable and made a zip line from the top of the tree house going down into the woods.

Now, 13 and 14 year old boys by their selves don't get into much mischief, but two or more together is trouble waiting to happen.

We would gather apples from Mr. Honea's yard and climb into the tree house at night and hit cars with the apples as they drove around the curve. If the people got after us, we would wait until they climbed the tree before we would zip down to the ground on the zip line and make our getaway.

One night Lavon and I was walking around the curve when 3 older teenagers drove around the curve and got out to chase us. We ran into the woods at top speed.

The trail we were on split into two different directions. Lavon took one and I took the other. He dove into a patch of honeysuckles to hide and I ran down the trail where the pits were dug. One of the

pits was about 3 feet deep and 8-10 feet round and had become a hole for old bicycle parts, a car rim or two, some barbed wire and broken glass.

Two of the guys were chasing me and when I came to the pit, knowing it was there even though it was dark, I ran around it.

The first guy was about 20 ft. behind me and fell into the pit. As he yelled out, "Stop, there's a hole," the other guy fell on top of him.

I, of course, got away to throw apples another day. The next day Lavon and I went back down there to see if the two teenagers that chased us had done any damage to the things dumped in that hole.

We saw some pieces of torn shirt, some blood drops and what might have been some skin on the barbed wire. We laughed about that night for many years.



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April

by *Iolanda Hicks*



"March winds and April showers bring forth May flowers" the phrase, first originated in England and was recorded in 1886. We know this phrase as "April showers bring May flowers". These words serve as a symbol of nature and spring's renewal. April is considered to be 5th in line for being the wettest month in some areas of our country and kicks off the spring, growing season.

April is one of my special months with many special days to be remembered: One April Fools joke (the 1st) has lasted me a lifetime; my Son Jason was born (6th); a marriage proposal

(the 8th); my sister Dianne got married (17th); my Son's Baptism (on the 27th); at least a half a dozen special birthdays sprinkled throughout the month and Easter, with its special day (April 20th this year). This month, in the Bible, we are reminded of Passover, the crucifixion of the Son of God, His burial and resurrection. It is the fourth month of the year, usually representing rebirth and known as the National Month of Hope.

Wow! This is truly a very special month not only for being the second month of Spring, but for other special days honoring awareness groups and the heritage of some of our sister countries.

Some facts about Alabama and April: From April of 1798 to March 1817, Alabama was part of the Mississippi Territory. In 1817 it became the Alabama Territory, which Congress created from the Eastern half of the Mississippi Territory. Alabama became a state in 1819.

In April of 1825, the Marquis De la Lafayette came through Alabama, who was a hero of the French Revolutions. On April 11, 1862, Union Troops

captured Huntsville and took over many of the larger homes in the city. They wanted to interfere with the Confederate rail communications.

On April 14, 1955, Wernher von Braun, a top notch scientist, plus 102 other Germans were sworn in as American citizens at Huntsville High School. This team led by von Braun, built the Redstone Rocket and later, by modifying it, creating the Army's Jupiter C. Because of the developing space program at this time, Huntsville, known in the 50s as the Watercross Capital of the World, soon became a technology center giving birth to this space program.

April is a great month for "we" bird lovers! These summer residents are coming in for the nesting season and then the actual resident birds are nesting. I get to see more of my two favorite birds who are in the various stages of nesting: hummingbirds and cardinals.

So be ready for early morning chirping and for those many, colorful flying critters. They are back in full glory, blending in with the multitude of tulips, cherry blossoms, daffodils and azaleas. Spring has truly sprung in April!

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TALES FROM THE ROCK

by Don Stanley

The Rock was a concrete curb that separated a sidewalk from a parking lot in front of the playground of Joe Bradley School. It was across The Merrimack Pike, now Triana Boulevard, from the Merrimack Mills company stores. The stores are now called Merrimack Hall. The only remaining chunk of the rock is owned by Elmer Howard and Gene Benson.

The rock was an outdoor hangout and gathering spot for those mostly living in Huntsville Park. At almost any time of the day or night and any weather you might find someone hanging out at the Rock or sitting in their car at the parking lot. The rumor was you could turn your butt to stone on the rock.

This story was in the summer time during the afternoon or early evening. Since almost no teens in Huntsville Park had any money in the late 50s or early 60s, hanging at the Rock was what was happening. It was not unusual for there to be 10 to 20 young males at the Rock.

This particular afternoon Eugene "Fat Cat" Collett went around asking if anyone had a dime. Someone gave him a dime and he crossed the intersection of Triana & Cedar Ave to the boarding house. The boarding house had a pay phone booth on the side porch and Fat Cat went in and made a call. When he returned someone asked him who he called. His answer was "The Police". The obvious question was why in the hell would you call the police. His answer was I'm bored.

Asked what he told the police, his answer was that a bunch of teens were hanging at the rock and some were fighting, drinking, and drunk. Then he hung up.

Well in less than 20 minutes, 2 or 3 police cars topped the hill with 2 or more Huntsville policeman in each car. Back then the rule for police officers was to wear your hat and carry a billy stick when leaving your car.

So the police cars pulled to the curb and slowly opened the doors. After getting out each officer put on his hat and slipped his billy stick in his belt holder.

We looked at them and they looked at us. Since no one was drinking or fighting they looked puzzled and we looked innocent (almost). No one spoke but one of the officers took a step toward us and that triggered a flush similar to a covey of quail.

I did not know until later what happened because I hit the alley behind the boarding house and up the alley through a yard and down Alpine Street to our house.

No one knew for sure what the police did but no one got caught for being young & bored. So we will call this the "Rock Flush".

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Turn to the experts



Who doesn't like April? I've just returned from running a few errands and couldn't help but smile as I noticed the purple in some of the trees about to bloom. By the time you read this, all the early bloomers like the Bradford Pears should be in full bloom, or maybe some of the white and colored petals blowing around like snow.

It's a colorful announcement that winter is gone for another season. Now, if we can just get through "Tornado April" without any local twisters to mess up the neighborhood and cause power outages, we'll be doing just fine.

While driving, I took the time to drive through some neighborhoods to enjoy the pretty yellow flowers, the ones that always pop up their heads in late February like buttercups, daffodils, forsythia, yellow jonquils, and primroses.

I just happen to have two close friends who are rotating between hospitals and extended care facilities and they can't enjoy the spring and don't have much of a view from their windows. Maybe I'll just take some of these pretty yellow flowers blooming in my yard to them in a small vase to share.

Another thing you might share, is to take your copy of Old Huntsville Magazine to them so they can enjoy the local stories like

I do every month. I especially like stories by that Smith fellow.

Easter is late this year and not until the 20th of this month. Good chance the Easter Bunny will be bringing more plastic and candy eggs this year, since the price of real eggs has soared into the heavens. It'll keep dye off of the grandchildren's clothes, too.

The churches always have lovely Easter services, and some offer sunrise editions, but that's a bit too early for me to make these days. Check your local service listings.

Another happening this month is the Historic Twickenham Walking Tours. They are a 1-2 hour stroll by some of the most beautiful antebellum mansions in town. Your guide will share stories about the owners, history and distinctive styles. Leashed pet and strollers welcome. They begin at 10 am, departing from Alabama Constitution Hall Park downtown. Right now, only the first two Saturdays, April 5th and 12th, are definite, but depending on turnout, some future Saturdays may be added. I'd suggest you pick one of these two.

The last event to mention is Panoply, the weekend of April, the 25th to 27th in the downtown Big Springs Park area. It's a premier event, where Huntsville's innovative spark shines through in the festival of art, music, and more.

I suppose I better get out my vacuum, broom, rags, and mop for spring cleaning.

Not really, April Fools!

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Sneaky Snake (1977)

by Bill Alkire



Spring seemed to come early. The mild weather supplied those inclined to do yard work in early spring had the opportunity. I personally completed my yard work in October and November. There's always yard maintenance to do.

Mr. Wilson next door had asked if I could take his wife Maddie to the Lawn and Garden Center on Saturday. He was going to the Mountains to hike with the boys. I agreed to take her. I should have asked more questions! I bought a new 1976 Chevrolet Blazer in 1975. There were neighbors that functioned as though I had bought it for their use. Three neighbors had asked me to borrow my Blazer and were upset at me for saying no.

At 8:30 Saturday morning Maddie Wilson was ready to go. She had an extensive list of things to buy. Her list included: 8-8-8 fertilizer (4 bags), bales of Pine-Straw (4 bales), various lawn chemicals, seeds, onion sets, and of course tomatoes and pepper plants. The sale was to start on Saturday. The crowds were beginning to arrive; we obviously came too late. I reluctantly loaded up the Blazer with what she had on her list and the things she picked up.

When we got home, of course, the opportunity to unload everything Maddie had bought was mine. She was going to start mulching and had me stack the pine bales on the driveway. I had not eaten before leaving and went home, I cleaned the Blazer and went in to eat.

Our children were eight and five. I sat down to eat with them. My wife asked where my wire cutters were. Maddie had called before I came into the house needing cutters to open the pine straw bales. I went into the garage to get the cutters. Returning, my wife said she would take the cutters to Maddie.

She left. The children and I finished eating and cleaned up the dishes. My wife was gone about 30 minutes. She appeared at the door in a panic. She told me to stay with the kids. She called for the Emergency Medical team and an ambulance.

Maddie had pulled pine straw from the bale. As she extracted a handful, she experienced a sharp painful stinging on her right hand.

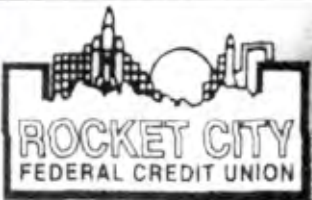
She dropped the bundle to the ground and inspected the incision on our hand. Glancing at the pine straw, a snake's head was visible, locked in the bail of pine straw. The snake was obviously not paying attention to his surroundings, encapsulated by the pine bale.

A large copperhead had bitten Maddie. The medical crew arrived quickly and supplied treatment. The police arrived soon on the scene. Animal control arrived in time to extract the snake and check if there were any more imprisoned in the pine bail. None was found.

Maddie received treatment by the emergency technician and did not require hospitalization. Her right hand looked worse than it was. She became blue-black to her elbow. God only knows how long the snake had been imprisoned in that pine straw bale; the snake was angry.

Maddie never laid pine straw down again





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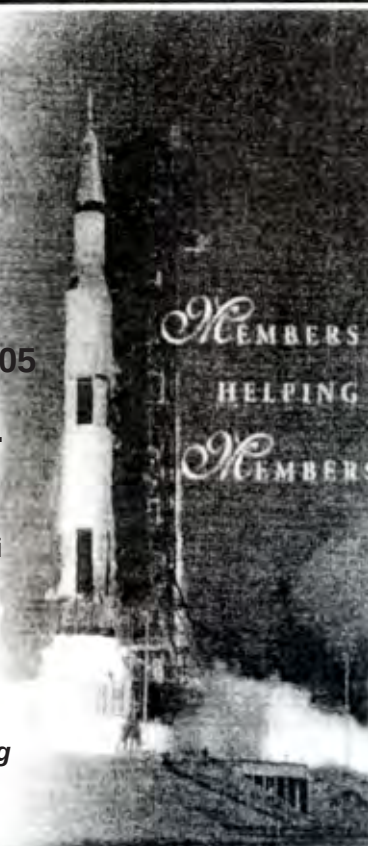
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Living Through the Depression

by *Tanjie Kling*



Last month's article, "Surviving the Depression," caused me to reflect upon my parents' childhood during that time. Even though I am in my mid-50s, many people my age have or had parents that are or were much younger than mine. I was born when my parents were in their 40s, and have siblings that are considerably older than me. My parents were born in the 1920s. My father would have been 4 years old when the Depression began, and my mother would have been one year old. Their childhoods were spent in rural Madison County, and like many living in rural communities at the time, life during the Depression didn't seem too different from their everyday life.

Those who could really tell the difference seemed to live in urban and less agrarian communities.

Fortunately, my maternal and paternal grandparents knew their way around a farm, and were able to raise the food they would eat; however, the success of the crops that were grown was at the mercy of God. One would pray and hope for no drought, disease, pestilence, or floods.

Back then, this was a way of life. There were no big grocery stores like there are today. My mother told me that a peddling truck from the J C Brown Store in Huntsville would often make its way to New Hope to sell goods. My mother remembered trading an egg with the peddler so she could get a lollipop.

My father, Andrew, spent his formative years in the New Hope community. His father, Lorenzo Lyon, was a carpenter, but the family had a garden that provided their food. When Andrew was about 10 years old, he left his home and moved in with two single uncles and an aunt to help them work their farm, in the same community.

By the time World War II began, Andrew was living with his parents. My father's sisters always told me that during the Depression, my grandfather became leery of banks and he refused to put any money in them. This would especially be tragic, as their home caught fire on April 1, 1941 and it was a total loss, including the money he had hidden in it. Both my grandfather and grandmother were working in their fields when the fire broke out. My grandmother was able to run into the house, but could only save a bedspread that she had crocheted. My aunts told me that they got on the school bus that afternoon, and were told that they did not have a home to go to. They thought it was an April Fools' joke, until they arrived at their home - stunned to find out they had lost everything. Members of the Bethel Primitive Baptist Church pitched in and provided clothing and other necessities for the family. Relatives took in my father and his family.

My father was young during the beginning of World War II (towards the end of the Depression), and was employed by Dr. Carpenter of New Hope, to work on his farm. As the years passed, my father proved to be an indispensable agricultural employee of Dr. Carpenter's, and was deferred from military service until 1946. During that year, Andrew began his military training to become a ball turret gunner on a B-17 plane. He served in the Pacific Theater.

By the time my father returned from World War II, my grandparents had saved enough money to put towards a house and some land on Poplar Ridge Road in New Hope. It took them six years to recover from the fire, and about nineteen years to recover from the Depression. My mother, Libby, was the daughter of a preacher and tenant farmer, Joseph Frank Jenkins. During the Depression, 65% of farmers in Alabama were tenant farmers. The Jenkins family moved often

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John Purdy
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 Sarah Chappell

around the New Hope, New Market, and Gurley communities.

In 1933, my mother's family lost everything and really struggled to make ends meet. Between 1933 and 1940, the family moved a total of five times. Libby was the 11th child of 12 children. When my mother was a child, she was responsible for cooking and washing clothes to support the family's cotton-picking efforts. When she was not doing that, she was attending school and picking cotton. She told me that her mother would keep her home from school some days to wash clothes and to iron for the family. Everyone pitched in to do the work.

As my mother's older siblings married and moved away, more work would fall on the younger children. Libby took her lunch to school, and it would typically be a biscuit. If the family had chicken for dinner, each family member had their assigned piece. My mother's piece was the chicken wing.

The family had a garden and also hoped for a good growing season of vegetables. For a tenant farmer like my maternal grandfather, it was critical for the cotton field to be successful. Life for their family was difficult. Lorenzo and Lizzie Lyon at their farm on Poplar Ridge Road, circa 1950.

Growing up during the Depression was challenging and it shaped the way my parents chose to live their adult life. They saved their money. They did without. They grew a massive garden. They wanted their children to have a better life. My parents planted their garden beginning in the spring and ending in the fall. They planted okra, squash, green beans, corn, turnip greens, potatoes, and many varieties of tomatoes. My parents grew everything we ate, except for the meat. My mother would freeze the corn and okra. Both my mother and my father would "can" green beans, turnip greens, and tomatoes. I remember being awakened in the middle of the night to the popping sound of the Ball lids sealing.

I also realized that having parents that survived the Depression generally impacts the generation that they have brought into the world. Their advice has stuck with me: Always save your money, because you never know when you are going to need it. Never go into debt. If you charge something on your credit card, make sure you have the money in the bank right then to cover it, and to always, always count your blessings.

**Some people who move to
'get into a better neighborhood'
often improve the one they
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David Baxter, Huntsville

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Setting the Record Straight, Part 2

by David Bowser

In part 2 of our story of Russel Erskine's involvement with the Russel Erskine Hotel, I want to give you a snap shot of the people involved, the mood of America and what our new hotel was like. This new hotel was a really big deal in Huntsville at this time and this information will add to the overall story.

The 1920s in America were known as the "Roaring 20s" and at this juncture in history our country was booming. Everything was "coming up roses", even the average Joe could invest in the stock market and expect to make money. It was an era of optimism, new ideas, and inventions were coming. Calvin Coolidge was President, Charles Lindbergh flew the Atlantic, TV was invented in 27, Kool Aid and Hostess cakes came out, penicillin, and the first successful talking movie, The Jazz Singer with Al Jolson hit the screens. Yes, America was riding a giant wave of prosperity and out of the way Huntsville, AL was riding the same wave.

Not all cities of Huntsville's size in this era were fortunate enough to have the high caliber of men and women leaders as we had. They foresaw Huntsville expanding and envisioned our city needing a new elegant hotel to meet the needs of traveling salesmen, conventions, honeymooners, and for our own citizens. Plus, the extra visitors as adding to the city Coffers.

There were several people who shared this conception, with most of them from Huntsville, but the general consensus of Huntsville historians point to the prime movers as L.B. Goldsmith and brother-in-law Robert Schiffman. This should not detract from the fact that there were several other leaders and influential minds at work combining to make a good team. Several people from many backgrounds are required to pull together a project of this size and complexity, and Huntsville had them. It would take a multitude of others to make this new addition to Huntsville's skyline.

Mr. Lawrence Goldsmith was born in 1883. He attended a prep school in New York City, then business school. In 1908 married Annie Schiffman and after this he joined his father-in-law's company, I. Schiffman. I. Schiffman Co. had warehouses, farm land and other properties.

In 1915, Mr. Goldsmith joined the Free Masons at Helion Lodge # 1. It's said he earned his 3 degrees within a month, becoming a Master Mason. This took quite a memory and a lot of intelligence. Trust me. Later he became a 32nd Degree Scottish Rite Mason. This is not easily acquired. In 1941 he showed some men from Washington, D.C. land close to the Tennessee River. This later became part of Redstone Arsenal. Lawrence belonged to several civic groups and he and his family contributed a lot to our area. He passed away in 1972. He was Margaret Anne Goldsmith's grandfather. It was she who told me where to find the paperwork for Huntsville Hotel Co. and I truly thank you very much.

Here are some of the other key players concerning the development of the hotel. J. Emory Pierce; General manager of the newspaper, the Huntsville Daily Times; T.T. Terry (Great is the Power of Cash) had a dry goods store on the Square; Wells Stanley; a vice president of Alabama Power Co.; Morton M. Hutchens was a partner in the Hutchens Co. that had supplies for building trades, like plumbing, heating, electrical and general hard ware. Of course there were others.

The Russel Erskine Hotel is located on the corner of Clinton Avenue and Spragins Street. On June 30, 1928, site preparation started. Unfortunately, serious trouble was only a few steps ahead for our country and few Americans had a clue about the upcoming stockmarket crash in October of 1929.

The Russel Erskine Hotel grand opening was held Jan. 3, 1930, which was a very tough time to open a hotel.

Our new hotel had 12 stories, 132 rooms and cost about \$640 thousand to build. It had a beautiful ballroom, a barber shop, great restaurant that served watercress salad year round. New Market was the watercress capitol of the world. When the hotel and Times Building were built, the city had to buy a new fire truck with equipment and ladder to reach the top floors. All the rooms had running ice water, a fan, and accounts vary, a radio/speaker. A large sign on the roof spelled out Russel Erskine Hotel using 25 watt bulbs.

All this was given as a background for future stories dealing with Mr. Erskine's dealings with the Huntsville Hotel Co.

Heard On the Street

by **Cathey Carney**



Mary Jane Miller of Grand Prairie, TX was our first correct caller for the hidden salt shaker on p. 47 of the March issue. See it in the picture for the Lynne Roberts story? I've had calls since then but many are not able to see it so I'm doing my job! Mary is retired from the Dallas, TX Hewlett-Packard Co. and really loves getting out in her yard when weather allows. Congratulations to you Mary!

Are you a **Huntsville High School graduate**? Possibly in the 1964-1967 time frame? If so you are invited to the HHS Reunion that will be held on April 26 at Huntsville Country Club. The organizers want you to come and meet up with classmates you may not have seen in years! You must reserve your spot tho, and for more information email hhs1966@gmail.com. One of the out-of-state graduates (1966) who will be attending is Oscar Llerena, and we can't wait to see you!

There are many who just can't sleep without a fan, for the noise in the background as well as air movement. Rather than use a big box fan that takes up alot of

room, what I did was buy one of those tall air ionizer/purifiers that you can put in a corner. This way you can breathe in fresh air, you regulate the amount of air that gets circulated and it takes up much less room. I love mine!

David Carney, 79, of New Market, passed away February 16, 2025. He was my brother-in-law, **Tom Carney** was his brother.

David learned to deal with life at an early age. He joined the Army in July of 1962, at 17, and proudly served for eight years, in both Germany and Italy. After he was discharged he returned home to Huntsville, Alabama, worked at Regions Bank. During that time he joined the National Guard, and earned an Associates Degree, a Bachelors and a Masters Degree, and credited the G. I. Bill for allowing him to complete his education. He authored several books as well as a magazine ("Mountain Folks").

After 9/11, he was ordered to conduct deployment ceremonies and welcome home ceremonies for Guardsmen all over the state of Alabama, which he considered a great honor. The families of those deployed men and women were of great concern to him so he arranged group phone calls and even video calls for the soldiers and their

families. He then developed the idea of annual "Christmas Bear" parties for children of deployed men and women in the Huntsville area which continued for ten years.

David also took great pride in being on the board of the Huntsville Madison County Veterans Memorial and in working as Master of Ceremonies for the returning Honor Flight Veterans and at numerous Patriotic events, including the Huntsville Veterans Day Parade wearing the Uncle Sam hat for which he became known in the area.

He took part in bringing the traveling "Wall That Heals" to Guntersville, Alabama as well as other events, too numerous to name. He was the recipient of numerous commendations.

David is preceded in death by his mother, **Nellie B. Carney**, father, **Andrew J. Carney** and brothers **Tom Carney** and **Jim Carney**.

He leaves wife **Judith Carney**, son **Michael Carney/Emily** and daughter **Lydia Birk/John**. Grandchildren **Tanner, Aubree, Charlee Carney, Clint Perry, Eli and Casey Birk**; and stepchildren **Lyn Peppers, Joseph/Tamara Peppers, and Loren/Steve Anderson** as well as beloved grandchildren and great grandchildren. He will be missed.

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One of our long time dear friends is **Betty Lewis**, of Huntsville. Betty is in her 90s now and is in nursing care and we just want to tell her how much we love her. She is the most generous of people and would help anyone who needed her. Sending hugs to you!

Hank Miller is a retired military Colonel and lived for years in Huntsville with his sweet wife **Judy** and their family. He was a longtime member of the Golden K Kiwanis/Huntsville who helped distribute Old Huntsville Magazine as their only fundraiser, for nearly 30 years. Hank has moved to Knoxville, TN to be close to family and he will be celebrating a big birthday on April 9 - Hank will turn 98 on that day! Please tell me the vitamins you have been taking all these years! We love you Hank and he subscribes to OHM each month to keep up with Huntsville stories. You are amazing.

There are a few things we older folks (yes I'm in my mid-70s) don't do as we age. One is **drink enough water**, the other is **get enough protein**. When you feel tired and run down and it's only 1 in the afternoon, you might not be getting enough protein. I did a bit of research and found that once people started increasing fish/chicken/meat intake and lowered carbs, they started feeling better. Sugar and high carbs are the path to you feeling tired and run down. It has been working for me and I don't need to take a mid afternoon nap anymore. So drink water, eat meat!

Special hello to **James Bobo**, of Athens, who wrote us a note lately and just loves the North Alabama history.

There are some groups who just like to contribute to worthy causes. One of these in Huntsville is **Beta Sigma Phi, Preceptor Alpha Gamma Chapter**. Thirty five percent of this group of generous ladies is celebrating March birthdays and here they are: **Pat Riley**, Mar. 2; **Sherry Taylor**, Mar. 6; **Vivian Kruse**, Mar. 20; and **Linda Drake**, Mar 22nd. 100% of the dues they bring in annually goes to agencies like Tunnel To Towers, Food Bank of North Alabama, Downtown Rescue Mission, New Leash on Life and more. Thank you to this special club for caring about all parts of their community!

As we all know who live in this area, we are prone to tornados of every type. We all need to have a plan as to what you and your family will do in case of a violent storm. One thing I did was to use my phone to **videotape my things** - appliances, furniture, paintings,

family heirlooms, etc. I just walked thru the different rooms and narrated what each item was, when it was purchased, the value, etc. It seems unnecessary when all is good but one day you may wish you had that information. I know after a disaster people say, "Things don't matter, they can all be replaced," well NO they CAN'T. Some items can never be replaced and I'm sorry, I love all my things. Just try to be prepared and hopefully you will never need that video.

Happy Birthday to the best editor a magazine could have - **Cheryl Tribble** has been cleaning up all my mistakes for nearly 15 years. She is very detailed but in a good way. Her day is April 27 and has recently moved to Utah with her daughter and is now very close to her granddaughter and great-granddaughter. Sending love and hugs to you Cheryl for a happy, peaceful birthday!

OK, if you've read this far you know I'm hiding a tiny item in these pages for you to look for and hopefully find. For this month look for a teeny tiny rosebud to celebrate spring finally being here. If you are the first to find it and call me, and haven't won recently, you are the winner of a whole year of Old Huntsville Magazine. You won't find it tho cause it's way too small.

The Farmers Markets are beginning to open up and have lots of cool weather foods that are healthy for you. Remember to shop our local small businesses and save the big box stores for later.

Have a wonderful Easter and please remember to watch out for your older neighbors who never ask for help. You might save a life.



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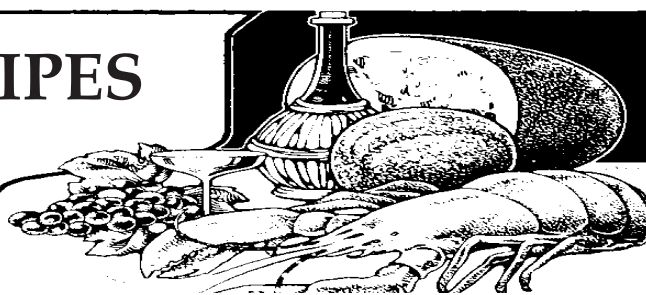
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RECIPES



From Tanjie Kling's Kitchen

Curry Dip

1 c. mayonnaise
1 T. McCormick's curry powder
Garlic Powder to taste
Salt to taste

In a bowl, mix all ingredients. Adjust seasonings to your taste. This is best served with cold steamed vegetables such as asparagus, snow peas, sugar snap peas, or pretzels.

(This recipe was given to me by Judy Link, wife of General Jim Link, former Deputy Commanding General AMC, Redstone Arsenal)

Tanjie's Hummus

2 cans of Garbanzo Beans or Chick Peas (Use Bush's brand because the liquid is thicker)

1/2 c. of liquid from the Bush's Chick Peas (may only use 1/4 cup)

4 cloves of garlic, peeled
Juice of 1/2 lemon

1 T. of roasted sesame oil

Drain the can of Bush's Chick Peas, and reserve the juice in another container.

Drain the other can of Chick Peas and discard the juice. Empty both drained cans into a food processor or blender.

Add 4 cloves of peeled garlic. Add 1/4 cup of liquid that was set aside. Add juice of 1/2 lemon.

Puree this mixture.

Add 1 T. of sesame oil

Check texture of dip. If it is too thick, add a little more of the reserved juice.

Puree again.

Add more sesame oil to taste if needed, and puree

again to blend.

You may also add salt or garlic salt to taste.

Serve with pita chips or tortilla chips. This is best served with raw vegetables such as cucumber spears, red or yellow bell pepper strips and carrot sticks.

Quinoa Salad

1 c. of uncooked quinoa

1 can of chick peas or garbanzo beans

1 c. of seeded, diced tomatoes

1 c. of peeled, seeded and diced cucumbers

1 c. of raw diced carrots

1 large raw red or yellow bell pepper, diced

1/2 of a small to medium onion

1 bunch of cilantro or parsley

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Dressing

Mix the following:

1/2 c. of olive oil

Juice from 1 lemon

2 cloves of minced garlic

Salt and pepper to taste

2 t. of Italian seasoning
blend.

Cook quinoa according to package directions. You should have two cups of quinoa cooked.

While the quinoa is cooking, drain the chick peas or garbanzo beans. Set aside. Dice all the other vegetables. Mix the dressing.

After quinoa has cooked and cooled, add the drained chick peas/garbanzo beans and all the diced vegetables.

Mix in enough cilantro or parsley leaves to your liking. Stir ingredients. Toss with dressing. Serve cold.

This is best if it sits overnight in the refrigerator and is eaten the next day.

Joan Garner's Frozen Chocolate Pie

1 Oreo pie crust (found near the Keebler graham crack crusts in the baking aisle of your grocery store)

6 full size Hershey's milk chocolate bars with whole almonds

8 oz. container of Cool Whip or similar store brand product

1/2 t. Almond extract

1 small bag of sliced almonds

Melt all of the candy bars in a medium sized bowl in the microwave, stirring occasionally during this process. Spoon the Cool Whip into the bowl and stir.

Add a few dashes of almond extract to the mixture.

Add a handful of sliced almonds and stir.

Spoon the mixture into the pie crust and freeze overnight or at least 8 hours or so. Eat!

Tanjie's Meatloaf

1 lb. low-fat ground beef (I use Maverick Ranch Grass fed beef, that is about 96% lean)

1 egg

8 or 9 T. of plain, unflavored oatmeal

1/2 diced onion

1/2 c. of milk

2 tablespoons of ketchup

Tiny bit of salt

Mix all ingredients and put into a loaf pan or other small dish.

In another bowl, combine:

1/3 cup ketchup

2 tablespoons of brown sugar

1 tablespoon of yellow mustard.

Spread this mixture on top of the meatloaf.

Bake in a 350 degree oven for about an hour. It is wise to put the dish in a larger baking metal dish in case the meatloaf bubbles over while cooking.

Pico de Gallo

1 lb. of tomatoes, seeded and diced (about 2 cups)

1/2 of a peeled, seeded, and diced cucumber (about 1/2 cup)

1/2 to 1 medium jalapeno pepper, seeded and diced

1 c. of white or yellow onion, diced

Juice of 1/2 lemon or lime
Fresh or dried cilantro to taste (optional)

Garlic salt to taste

Mix all ingredients. You may use more or less jalapeno pepper depending upon how spicy you desire. Serve with crispy tortilla chips. Makes about 3 cups. This recipe can be halved. Store leftovers in the fridge, if there are any!

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THE ROCK CLIFF SERVICE STATION

by David L. Bacchus



It was an unbelievable set of events and circumstances that led to my first date with Sandra. While working as a Georgia Tech co-op student for the Army Ballistic Missile Agency in Huntsville, I had become active at Holmes Street Methodist Church and participating in its various youth related activities. As a result, on one occasion in the early spring of 1960, I had attended a sub-district meeting, a periodic get-together of young people from several of the churches in the North Alabama Conference. Exactly where this particular meeting was I can no longer recall. I just remember it being a small country church somewhere in northern Madison County. In any event, Sandra was there and, although we did not actually meet, there was something about seeing her from a distance that apparently left a lasting impression.

I'm sure nothing would have ever come of this had it not been for Patty Wilson. Patty, along with her husband Ben, was one of the older youth counselors at Holmes Street Methodist. As such, she and Ben had taken several of us co-op students from Georgia Tech under

their wings, including two who were rapidly becoming my closest friends, Ben Shackelford and Ross Woods. Ben, Ross, another co-op student and I were sharing a house together during our work quarters in Huntsville. It had been Ross, in fact, who first encouraged me to begin attending Holmes Street Methodist. Before that, I had visited First Methodist downtown on occasions, but had never become involved in any of their youth activities.

Things were totally different at Holmes Street. Aside from the numerous church activities, all of us guys were often invited to Ben and Patty's home just to hang out, for meals on occasions (Patty cooked the smallest biscuits I'd ever seen that we used to kid her about), but most memorably for games, sometimes playing cards until the wee hours of the morning. And this was despite the fact the Wilsons had three small chil-

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dren to care for. A few times I even spent the entire night there, mainly during my quarters at school when I would drive over to Huntsville from Atlanta for the week-end.

Patty was also one to counsel us on occasion and, as such, during a conversation I was having with her at her house she surprised me by inquiring about my current dating situation. If I remember right, I think she even asked whether I had any plans to eventually marry one day and have a family. My response was something to the effect that there was no one at the moment that I was particularly interested in, but that I did hope to one day find the right person. It was about then, I guess, that I remembered having seen Sandra at that recent sub-district meeting, so I casually told Patty about the experience and described her as best I could. I could have also known what church she represented and relayed this information as well.

In any event, once she had what information I had, Patty seemed to know immediately who I was talking about. She told me her name was Sandra Butler and that she lived a few miles east of Huntsville on Highway 72. Not only that, she said if I wanted her to, she knew just the person she could talk to who could possibly set something up between us. That person turned out to be Dot Parton. Dot was a youth counselor, like Patty, but at Shiloh Methodist, the church Sandra attended in Ryland, a small unincorporated community not far from her home. This would explain how Patty, who was a very outgoing person anyway and knew everybody, had come to know Dot and perhaps Sandra as well. Just as she promised, Patty did later call Dot who agreed to get in contact with Sandra. To my delight and good fortune, Sandra gave her the green light to get back with Patty with a positive response. All I had to do afterwards was to call Sandra to pick a date and time for our date and to get directions to her house.

She confirmed she lived on Highway 72 East, a few miles out of Huntsville. Just past the intersection of Dug Hill Road, there would be three rock-faced structures on the right, the first being a small store and just beyond it two houses. Hers was the second house. As I would learn later, Sandra lived with her mother, Lyndall and step father, Wessie Miller. She had three younger half-siblings, Mike, Sherry and Ricky.

The area, I would also later learn, was known locally as Rock Cliff, which was also

the name of the service station near Sandra's home. Rock Cliff baseball and basketball teams had formed there in the late 1930s and early 1940s that competed against other Madison County teams. These were apparently independent ball teams not affiliated with any schools, and once WWII broke out so many players were either drafted or enlisted they had to be disbanded. Those teams, a store and a few houses, though, were about all there was to Rock Cliff as best I can tell. There was another name too, Yankeetown, associated specifically with the intersection of Highway 72 and Dug Hill Road, but the origin of that name, as well as Rock Cliff, has eluded me.

I did find Sandra's house the night we had selected and we opted to take in a movie in downtown Huntsville. Unfortunately, none of the movies showing at the three theaters that were there at the time had anything worth viewing, but we picked the one we liked best and went with it. Sure enough, it was a lousy movie, but fortunately, despite that, our date apparently went well. I say that because at the end of the evening Sandra agreed to go out with me again.

We soon fell in love, ultimately wed at Shiloh Methodist, and have been married now for 61 years.

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My Sister Nancy and the White-Faced Bumblebee

by Willie Weaver



The white-faced bumblebee does not sting. I know this is true because Nancy told me so. To prove her statement she took a bee out of the jar and, gently restraining it from flying away, let it crawl around her fingers. After this demonstration I questioned, "Does it bite?" "Yes, it does bite a little, but it can't hurt you, see", she said as she placed a finger tip against its mouth and it nibbled with no ill effects.

I took the bee into my cupped hands and felt it crawl around inside. Not an unpleasant sensation, but somewhat disconcerting for a very squeamish little boy. With the continuing tickling and a desire to see the bee in my own hands, I attempted to make the transition from the hollow of my hands to holding it in my fingers as she had done. Needless to say, in the process, it escaped and returned to feeding on the many flowering shrubs that surrounded our log house, but no harm was done.

There were several more white-faced bees in the jar. She promptly extracted another one and offered it to me, reminding me that it was

the white-faced ones that did not sting. I do not remember how many bees I let escape or how many my unpracticed fingers injured, but soon I could take a bee from her and let it move about my fingers without losing or injuring it. I even became brave enough to offer it the tip of my finger for a few nibbles.

Obtaining the jar of bees had been simple enough. After watching the many bees gathering nectar for a while, we went inside where Nancy asked our mother for a jar with a lid so she could catch some bees. With the jar we returned to the yard where Nancy quickly caught more than a dozen bees by holding the jar under a feeding bee and coaxing it into the jar with the lid.

(NATURE NOTE: A bumblebee, if dropped into an open jar, will be there until it dies, unless it is taken out. It never sees the means of escape at the top, but persists in trying to find some way out through the sides near the bottom).

I never became very adept at capturing bumble bees this way, nor could I capture them directly as Nancy often did by reaching out to lift a feed-

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ing bee from a flower with her bare hand. Sometimes she would hand me a white-faced bee while she would take a black-faced one. "Remember, you can only play with the white faces, because they don't sting, but I can play with either." From later experience I know that the black faced bees do sting, but I do not remember one stinging her.

When we tired of playing with the bees, Nancy would remove the lid, turn the jar upside down and let the remaining bees return to their task of gathering nectar. I assume today that she had learned from experience which bees stung and which did not, but then little brother never questioned where older sister had learned all the things that she was teaching him. She had a world of knowledge and was always eager to share it with me.

"Don't climb on the pig pen, the pigs will bit your toes off!"

"In a log house, you can climb up and bump your head on the ceiling." She would demonstrate this for me by backing into a corner, placing her hands and bare feet on the logs on each side of the corner and working her way up the wall. I was never brave enough to get more than a couple of logs above the floor. When she started school, she continued to share her newly acquired knowledge with me.

However school was a short-lived experience for her. There was no Special Education Program back then and she had to drop out halfway through the second grade. I felt my sister was a very special person, always protective of me, always eager to teach me new things. But very early, I knew that Nancy was different. She had seizures.

Within the family we called them "spells." Unkind children and even some adults would say she had "fits." A grand mal epileptic seizure is not a pleasant thing to watch, but if it has always been a part of your life, you do adjust. It never becomes commonplace and it is always heart rending for those who provide care and others who are on the scene. You learn not to react outwardly and to go on with your day, but you never learn not to care.

By all accounts, Nancy was a brilliant child, eager to learn and eager to know life. But, by age 10 it was apparent that the deprivation of oxygen during seizures and the heavy medications she was taking took their toll, both physically and mentally.

As she grew older, nerve damage and crippling arthritis caused her to lose the ability to move about on her own. She lost the ability to put together clear-complete sentences. She lost the ability to properly chew and swallow her food.

Several years after our father died it became obvious that my mother could no longer care for her at home. So with heavy hearts we placed her in a nursing home. There my mother sat with her almost every day. Many family members and friends visited her on a regular basis.

Although she became more and more impaired, she never lost her knowledge of and love of Jesus. She was sure that one day she would go to heaven where she would be reunited with her Daddy and where Jesus would give her a new body. For many years we all grieved for the NANCY that was trapped inside that disabled body and confused mind. Then at the age of 63-1/2 and after 22 years in a nursing home, Nancy passed away with aspiration pneumonia.

Like the bumblebees which we had confined in a jar for a little while and then set free, she was set free from the suffering of this earth.


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OUR TRIP TO ALASKA

SEPTEMBER 3-11, 1988

by L D Rogers

When I found out I had won a trip to Alaska through Motorcraft I was thrilled. The first novel I ever read was Jack London's "Call of the Wild" and I knew I had to go there one day. Now was my chance. My wife and I took a cruise on the Island Princess, one of the Princess boats from the TV show The Love Boat.

We left Huntsville and drove to Memphis to catch our plane for Seattle. When we reached Seattle, it was 95 degrees. During this time, they were having a heat wave and power failure in Washington. Next, we rode by bus to Vancouver, British Columbia where we would board the ship. It was a beautiful boat and our cabin was small but very nice. When the boat left the dock, everybody was outside to watch while it left the harbor. That night we joined other Motorcraft and Ford Dealer employees for dinner who had also won this amazing trip.

The next morning, we woke up in Ketchikan, Alaska. We spent the day there seeing all the sights. Late that afternoon the ship left the dock, and we were on our way again. We had another good meal in the dining room before enjoying the ship's movie theater.

The next morning, we woke up in Juneau, the state capital. We had a great time exploring the city. We went to the capital building, and it was the first time I ever saw a seismograph. According to the device we were having small tremors which they have all the time a man explained. We also toured the governor's mansion.

The next two days we were on the ship but there was a lot to see as we traveled inside the passageway. We saw deer, mountain goats and bears coming down to the water. In the water there were porpoises and whales swimming alongside the ship. It was a treat to see them that

close.

By this time, it was getting colder, so a jacket felt good when we went outside. There was a place on the ship where we could have our meals outside. It was a buffet-style dinner with a cover above and heaters to keep us warm.

The next stop on our trip was Skagway. When we pulled into the dock, I noticed ice had begun to form in the lagoon. One of the ship hands told me it was called pan ice. He said it's not very thick, but it would get solid in a few weeks. Skagway was a small town with a lot of history. It's one of the places where people started their journey to the gold fields in the Yukon a long time ago. You were required to have a year's supply of food to prevent starvation before going across the mountainous terrain.

After we spent time in Skagway we got back on the ship and were off again for our last ride. We ended up in Whittier, Alaska and took a train to Anchorage from there.

When we were about to get off the boat a crew member told us to be sure and get to the train station on time. He told us the train would absolutely leave on time because it had to get through the "bear" doors before they closed. He explained that the train had to go through a tunnel in the mountains. The tunnel had doors that were closed to keep the bears from going in and hibernating.

We arrived in Anchorage and there was quite a bit of snow on the ground. We made it to the airport and got back to Huntsville safe and sound. It was a wonderful trip, and we enjoyed it very much.

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DADDY DAUGHTER DANCE

*by Gerald Alvis,
The Poet of Greenlawn*

My oldest son (now in his mid-forties) told me, Dad, we are on the other side of the bell curve. He moved his eyes to the right from where we were sitting and nodded. I switched my gaze, and it took only a moment last Friday night to understand his meaning.

Most of the little girls were 4 to 8 years old, jumping around in their formal "poofy" dresses, but the two young ladies we escorted to this formal dance were of the upper age of those allowed to attend this special

"Men are liars. We'll lie about lying if we have to. I'm an algebra liar. I figure two good lies make a positive."

Tim Allen

function. His daughters were growing up at a pace that only seemed to quicken with time.

He reflected several times how just a perceived few days ago his daughters were bobbing up and down on the dance floor, joining in the tiny conga lines and bubbling over with the joy and excitement of a larger world viewed at their first Daddy Daughter Dance.

I don't have a lot of moves anymore, but when the music slowed, I took the opportunity to slow dance with each of my Granddaughters. Indeed, I was holding on to time, absorbing this rite of passage, I wanted them to know it was special for me as well. I felt young and alive with a deep appreciation for this future memory.

When you get old, it won't be the number of years you celebrate but how well you lived the ones you were given.

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

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WASHING MACHINE AFFAIR

by Kimberly Cook



I am having an affair with my washing machine. It started in the usual way. My husband was working late. I am in the bedroom, hear a noise, and think, "Is it hailing outside?" I walk into the kitchen and stand outside the closed door of my laundry room: it sounds like someone has put a load of hammers in the tub.

I remove the plug from the wall, take off the front panel and look around, like people do when their car starts spewing steam on the side of the road. We open the hood. We have no idea what to do, but we look anyway.

I put on my husband's Boy Scout head lamp and see a huge block of concrete in the bottom pan. Why is there a brick in my washer? I check with Duck-Duck-Go, and find out — lawdy-mercy - that washing machines have a counterweight. But mine isn't where it

is supposed to be. It has broken free and is bouncing around the inside of my washer like a ball in a racquet-ball court. One of the counterweight bolts and all the nuts have, mysteriously, disappeared. (To this day, I have not been able to find them — they are probably hiding out in the corner of a fitted sheet.)

I ask the internet: "What makes a sound like hammers hitting the inside of a washing machine?" Some old guy standing in a pristine appliance showroom tells me it may be a loose spin drive belt. It is a simple whang-do to replace it. On the screen, I watch a person's clean, manicured fingers snap a super-tiny belt on a really big wheel in one try.

Piece of cake. I place an order for a new belt that will be delivered tomorrow and try to ignore the mountain of dirty laundry spilling over the sides of the hamper. I decide not to mention to my husband that the washer is broken, because, like Andy Griffith told Aunt Bea, I know he will tell me to "just call the man" or buy a new one.

The next morning, I listen for the garage door to close and watch my husband's truck drive away before pulling out my secret laundry basket of tools and leftover nuts and bolts from every piece of furniture I have ever assembled. I watch video after video of guys working on top-load washers. They might as well be videos of a surgeon doing open-heart surgery; however, if I screw up, I know I can just buy another washing machine. I am not worried my machine will die on the table; I'll just hire someone to dispose of the body. No way will my husband notice if a new machine appears in its place.

Over the next several days, I take my washer apart and put him back together multiple times, with only a few

"When the Academy called I panicked. I thought they might want their Oscars back and the pawn shop had been out of business for a while."

Woody Allen

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screws left over. (Worrying about extra screws is for losers.)

When I have trouble getting a stubborn part to fit, I procrastinate by watching another how-to video or gazing in wonder at all the tools hanging from workbench pegs, wondering what they do. Some women watch Gilmore Girls and eat Haagen-Dazs ice cream by the pint as their guilty pleasure (not me, but some women); I watch home repair videos.

I learn the counterweight attaches to the frame in the deepest, darkest recess of the machine cabinet. So, I lie there on my side, arms wrapped around each side of the motor in a precarious embrace, hard metal brackets pressing painfully into my forearms, and wonder what my husband will say if he catches me in this compromising position.

I trudge up and down stairs searching for tools that I think may fit into the miniscule space, but, sadly, none of them do. I hold the one bolt that I have with one hand and tighten the one nut that I have with the other, but once the machine starts the spin cycle, the aluminum strap shakes like a timber rattler and the weight breaks free. I cry. I repeat this process several times before I put my growing pile of tools back in the laundry basket and close the door.

As Scarlett would say, "Tomorrow is another day."

At the end of the second day, my husband comes home, smells the motor oil

behind my ears, and says, "You've been working on the washing machine, haven't you?" Tears fill my eyes, but I stick my chin out: "I put on a new drive belt today."

Mr. YouTube repair guy wearing pressed khakis and a clean polo shirt said it was easy to put on a new drive belt, but he was lying so he could sell me the part and a belt repair thing-a-ma-jig. Putting on a new belt is nothing short of a miracle, and he should at least be honest about it.

On the third day, I break down and visit the local hardware store to purchase new hardware for the counterweight. I tell the clerk that I am fixing my washing machine, and blush with pride when I see the glimmer of respect in his eyes. I sense victory is near and my pulse quickens. I open the cabinet, assume the position, and carefully press the new bolts into the slots of the weight, scraping my knuckles just a little in the process. I close my eyes and thread the nuts by touch, turning them as tight as my straining fingers can manage. Lefty-loosey, righty-tighty.

"I believe in you," I whisper into the darkness of the cabinet. I turn him on, and this time, there is no rattle and bang. When he gets to the spin cycle, he sounds velvet-smooth, like Frank Sinatra singing in the cellar.

A lesser woman would have given up when she got her hair caught in the drive belt, but I have no regrets for the three days we spent together, flesh pressed against metal. And I wouldn't trade that admiring glance from the hardware clerk and my machine that spins like a top for a million bucks. I am woman, hear me roar. You and me, Helen Reddy.

Who needs a new washing machine, when you have a good steady?



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"Bankruptcy is a legal proceeding in which you put your money in your pants pocket and give your coat to your creditors."

Samuel Goldwyn

THE GREAT FILLING STATION HOLDUP

by David M. Stephens

The title borrowed from a Jimmy Buffett song

In the fall of 1975, I was a senior in high school and had been working my first job at Traylor Music Company for six months. I was making an extraordinary income of two dollars an hour and working part-time. I worked with an almost blind piano-tuner named Wendell and he would do side jobs after hours to earn a few extra dollars.

Wendell needed someone to drive him, so I would spend evenings taking him to his customers' homes. If I remember correctly, he charged \$25 to tune a piano and paid me \$4 for using my truck and driving.

One Saturday, Wendell had a job in Lacey's Spring and asked me to drive. It was on this job that I met a young lady who was soon to become my first love. I was seventeen, a late bloomer, and painfully shy around girls. This beautiful young lady had green eyes, an easy smile, and Angelina Jolie style lips, and she taught me how to kiss. Needless to say, I was smitten.

After that day, I wore out several sets of tires racing to Lacey's Spring every Friday night. In the mornings, I attended classes at Lee High School and spent the afternoons at work.

On Fridays, as soon as I arrived at the store, I would ask the bookkeeper for my check.

"Always do sober what you said you'd do drunk. That will teach you to keep your mouth shut."

Ernest Hemingway

When I got off work, I would race to the bank, cash my check and then go home and get ready for my date.

Heading south on the Parkway, I would cross the Whitesburg Bridge and enter a section of road known as Gasoline Alley. For a mile or so, gas stations were lined up on each side of the highway. Morgan County's gas taxes were lower, so Gasoline Alley was a popular place for everyone to fill their cars to save a few cents.

Always being Mr. Practical, I usually went past Gasoline Alley, picked up my girlfriend, and then stopped to fill up with gas as I came back through; that way, I did not have to cross traffic twice. Also, being an introvert, I disliked the big stations, and I usually filled up at the little Amoco station on the east side of the highway just before the north-bound bridge. It was a small, glassed front station with four pumps and was owned by Bill Black. Mr. Black sat at a desk in the window and spent his days watching his pumps and collecting payment for his gas sales. This was long before there was such a thing as "pay at the pump", so Mr. Black had to trust his customers to fill their tanks and then come inside to pay.

One Friday, as I arrived at work, Mr. Traylor handed me a list of service calls he had scheduled for me to do in Tennessee. I loaded my tools in the company truck and headed north to my first appointment. The afternoon flew by, and I knew I would be late returning to the store and probably late for my date.

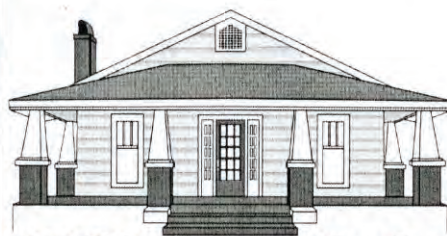
When I returned to the store, I parked the company truck, jumped into my truck, and raced to my parent's house. I changed clothes, climbed back in my truck, and headed south on the Parkway. As I crossed the Whitesburg Bridge, I realized that my truck was running on fumes, and I had to fill up with gas before I picked up my girlfriend. I whipped into Mr. Black's station and pumped the tank full. Then I reached for my wallet and immediately had a sinking feeling in the pit of my stomach. Sure enough, my wallet was empty. I had forgotten to ask for my check and to have it cashed.

I could feel the panic rising through my body. Being a "the glass is damn near empty" kind of guy, I went through every type of scenario that could happen in my mind. I wondered if Mr. Black would call the police. I wondered if they would handcuff me. I wondered if I really did get one phone call and if my parents were even home to answer the phone.

Finally, I devised a plan. Being an extremely immature seventeen-year-old with a marble-sized brain, I decided to do what I had seen

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people on TV do: I would give Mr. Black an IOU. Sure enough, I hunted around in my truck and found a scrap piece of paper. I wrote "IOU" at the top. Then, I wrote the amount and the date, and I signed it.

The pumps were only about 30 feet away from the office, but it had to be the longest walk of my life. Each shoe felt as if it were a concrete block. I walked in the door and immediately began gushing out the entire story. When I finished, I handed Mr. Black the piece of paper. He took the IOU and looked it over, then he looked at me, then he looked back at the IOU. He had to be thinking I was the dumbest kid he had ever met.

Finally, he leaned back in his chair, pulled out a wallet that was three inches thick, and stuffed my IOU with all the other pieces of paper.

He looked at me and said, "I'll tell you what. I'll keep your IOU, but the next time you're over here to see that pretty little gal of yours, you stop in and pay me. Okay?" The relief flowed over my body, and I became almost giddy. I had to fight back an overwhelming urge to kiss that old man on his cheek.

I thanked him thirty-two times, gave him an overzealous Andy Griffith style handshake, and headed for the door. Needless to say, my girlfriend and I watched TV with her parents that night because I didn't have the money to take her anywhere.

The next day, which was Saturday, I had to work. When I arrived at the store, I asked for my check. At lunch, I went to the Central Bank, which stayed open until noon on Saturdays, and cashed my check. As soon as I got off work, I hit the Parkway and headed south. The thought that I had screwed up and owed someone money was driving me crazy; I had to go pay my bill.

I could tell Mr. Black was surprised to see me back so soon, but it was probably a relief to him that I came back to pay. It's a shame that most of the Mr. Blacks of this world are gone.

I have always heard there is a silver lining to every dark cloud. I guess the silver lining in this little storm was that I got to see that pretty little gal of mine twice that week-end.

"If a lawyer and an IRS agent were both drowning and you could only save one of them, would you go to lunch or read the paper?"

Diet Tip: If you think you're hungry, you might just be thirsty. Have a bottle of wine first and then see how you feel.



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Trouble in the Corn

by Walt Terry
OHM 2005

In the summer of 1938, I had just gotten permission to drive the family Plymouth. Lawrence Cooper, a friend, "Cricket" McDonald, a friend who was a girl, and I had one night decided to find out where Donnegan's Lane went. It was a dirt road that is now Drake Avenue.

We crossed the railroad tracks (same ones are there now) and wound up at the end of the road in a cornfield. We turned around, very carefully to avoid running over the corn. I remember a small farmhouse was nearby. On the way back towards Whitesburg Pike, we re-crossed the railroad tracks. The railroad bed was raised and, coming down the other side, I had forgotten that the road turned sharply to the left.

We quickly found ourselves down a steep, slippery grass-covered embankment. I gunned the engine until it was apparent that we were not going to get back up on the road, at least, not until we had unloaded the back of the car. (My dad traveled for Marshall-Field in those days, and the back seat and trunk were filled with his loaded sample cases.)

While we were doing this, a man in overalls and straw at appeared out of the darkness. "You kids ain't been joy-riding through my cornfield, have you?" His voice sounded like the voice of doom to me.

"No, Sir!" I replied. "We were just trying to get over to Merrimack Mill." "Well, I seen that you took care when you turned around. Ya'll look like you could sure use some help."

"Yes, sir," I said in tremendous relief. At that, other folks began to emerge from the darkness, there seemed to be no end to them. There was a bonneted woman and stair-cased kids from teen-agers to babes in diapers.

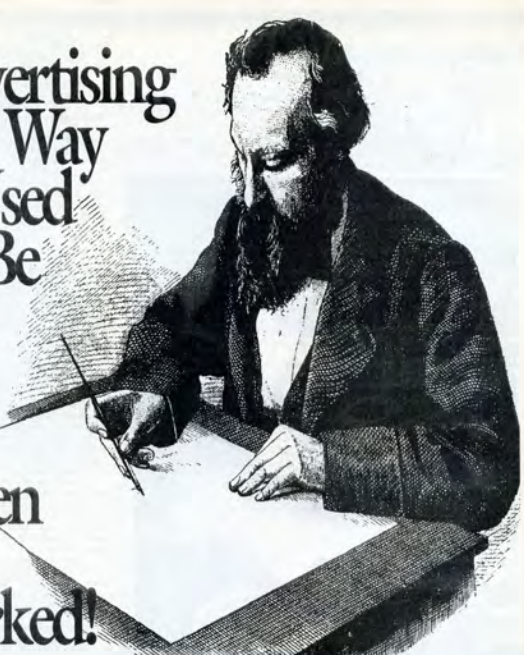
I got back in the car and gunned the engine again, this time with all those folks as well as Lawrence and Cricket pushing hard. We shot up that embankment as if rocket-propelled. The tribe then helped us reload all the

sample cases. By this time I felt that they were my best friends. "Thanks a lot, folks," I said to the group, and told them that I hoped no one would ever knock over their corn again.

I'm pretty sure that the farm was in the same place where the IHOP on Drake and Parkway is now.

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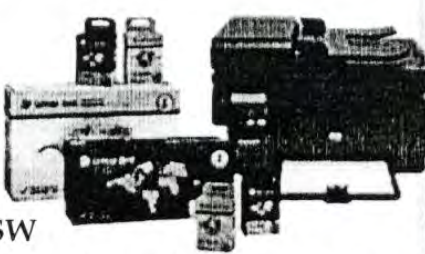
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"There's Always More Hope in Laughing than in Crying"

by Elizabeth Wharry



When we lived near Toledo, Ohio, we joined the Henry Ford museum up in Detroit. There was always something new and interesting to see. It was maybe a 2 hour drive up.

The "powers that be" had found the bus Miss Rosa Parks made famous. (Miss denotes respect, regardless of one's marital status). It took several years and many hours to bring it back to its former appearance.

In October of 2002, we got an invitation to attend the unveiling of the bus, that was to be held in May of 2003. I marked down 3 to attend. My boys were still pretty young, Joseph was 3, and Jacob wasn't quite a year old.

Miss Rosa was going to do the unveiling, and tell us her version of what happened in 1955. There was

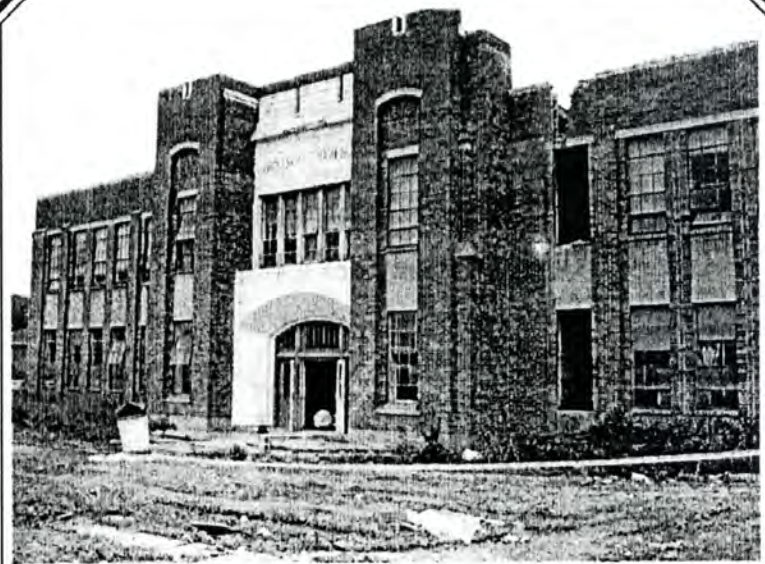
a crowd of maybe 100 invitees. When she was escorted to the podium, everyone not only applauded, but rose to their feet. The standing ovation lasted a solid 3 minutes.

Miss Parks was not a big woman. She stood maybe 5'3 or 4. We were all surprised at her diminutive stature. She spoke for about 15 or 20 minutes. Her southern accent had softened to a drawl. She recounted what happened in a clear matter-of-fact voice. She held no rancor or bitterness. The police were just doing their job.

We all wanted to meet her. Unfortunately, she couldn't do so. As I turned away, a security guard the size of a fullback said that she wanted to see me. I walked back to where she was seated. She smiled and asked if she "could hold them sweet babies". I put Jacob in her arms, and Joseph snuggled up against her. She slipped an arm around him. She said that she loved children, but didn't have any of her own. I took a deep breath and asked her what kept her going, growing up during the forties, fifties and sixties. She smiled and said, "Chile, there's always more hope in laughing than in crying."

That was in 2003. Miss Rosa passed in 2005. To this day, I have kept those words imprinted in my heart. Feel free to imprint them on your heart.

Happy Easter to all.



Huntsville High School Being Demolished and Rebuilt in 1994

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With special greetings to the
Huntsville High School Class of 1966

from Oscar Llerena

Next Door to the Parsonage



by Fran Miller

In my opinion, growing up on Ninth Avenue in West Huntsville was as close to heaven that anyone could hope to get. I suppose I might have acquired that notion from the fact that our neighborhood was surrounded by churches. Five to be exact.

The packed pews on Sunday mornings testified that each denomination was intent on having the largest roll-call in heaven, when it came time for our reckoning.

With so much completion for a person's soul, a chance of missing those pearly gates seemed rather slim.

The house where I grew up was next door to the Methodist parsonage, and since we were Methodist, I felt that made our chance of deliverance even greater.

My father was away in the Army, so our home consisted of my sister, who was a couple of years older than I was, me, our granny, our mother and our mother's uncle, who was bedridden.

Back then, in the 40s, Huntsville was a small friendly, southern town. Not the now popular image of southern life, where the south is depicted with magnolia lined plantations, and folks sipping mint juleps.

From my way of looking at it, Huntsville was a small easy going town, where even the air sometimes felt a bit lazy. It was a place where a smile could creep across faces for little or no reason. A place where everyone spoke to whoever they passed on the street, inquiring about their family's health, not just to be polite, but truly wanting to know. It was common to hear, "just know I'm praying for you."

Perhaps because our community was poor in material things, made us rich in things we could never lose.

The parsonage was like a second home to my sister and I. It was a large, drafty, white frame house, with high ceilings and raw floorboards. Most of the walls were covered in wallpaper, and each room had a corner or two where that paper would refuse to stick to the wall. It always seemed to be in need of paint or patching in one spot or another. I'm sure not even on its best days could it have been considered an attractive house, and with little funds for upkeep, to some it was an eyesore. It didn't matter because this house and the people it sheltered couldn't be found in it's appearance. It was something you could feel rather than see.

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In my growing up years, five Methodist ministers and their families came and went, each one making my life a little richer, and forever holding a small corner of my heart. I suspect we were closest to the Pharr's. They moved in when I was in elementary school, and served over five years, which was longer than most.

I can't recall how or why, but my sister and I called the preacher Papa George, and his wife, Mama Dot. They had four daughters, all older than my sister and I.

Their youngest, Katherine, was closest in age to my sister, and they became constant companions. I truly believe their sole aim in life was to rid themselves of the youngest and biggest pest of this lot of six females, which happened to be me.

I hate to admit it, but I'm sure I was a royal pain trying to follow them wherever they went. I guess that made them intent on getting rid of me, but the harder they tried, the more I tagged along. I was forever getting them in trouble, simply because I was born with a big mouth and a voice to match.

I expect they grew tired of being told to take into account I wasn't much more than a baby, and they needed to include me. That caused them to dream up a magnificent stunt to scare me off, and I'm sure their plot to get even with me must have caused them a great deal of deliberation.

As I recall it was a sunny, spring morning when I waltzed into Mama Dot's kitchen. I had no more than gotten inside the door when I saw my sister lying face down on the kitchen floor, her back smeared in what I thought was blood. Katherine was standing beside her holding a large butcher knife, covered in the same red substance I had seen on my sister's shirt. She said, "I just killed your sister."

Even though I had sometimes thought of doing the same myself, I couldn't bare the idea of her really being dead.

For once, my big mouth came in handy, for if I remember correctly, my screams had brought Mama Dot, Granny, and half the neighborhood running.

Turns out it wasn't blood after all. It was ketchup. They had just wanted to scare me.

It worked.

After my sister and Katherine recovered from a week of not being able to sit in the usual fashion, they both treated me with a little more respect.

As long as the Pharr's lived there, it was a common practice for me to walk through the back door of the parsonage, never bothering to knock, head to the food safe, and help myself to a cold biscuit.

Mama Dot always managed to have at least one extra biscuit put aside for my mid-morning snack. She was probably aware that I had already been hustled out of our kitchen with the warning, if I didn't slow down on eating, there would be no

fate left for me other than becoming a fat lady in the circus.

Mama Dot tried hard to be stern, but it never scared me. I guess I just never took her seriously. Many times she would tell me God had a big book where he kept the names of children who misbehaved, and according to her, my



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name must have taken up several pages.

Other times she would scold me and say, "The devil's gonna get you before your feet get cold."

The more she threatened me with that red fellow carrying his overgrown fork, the more I assured her there was no such thing as the devil. I think she sometimes thought I was one of his personal helpers.

In those days, cars were few and far between. Papa George was fortunate enough to have the only car in our neighborhood, and with grave misgivings he had taught his oldest daughter, Midge, to drive.

Even though he had gone to the trouble of teaching her to drive, he didn't quite trust her to drive his car without him sitting beside her. That presented a big problem for us girls, but not an impossible one. All six of us loved going for Sunday afternoon rides without adult supervision. We had Midge, who could drive, but no car, except for Papa's.

After a good deal of thought, the older girls mapped out a plan which could work out quite satisfactorily. Even though I wasn't old enough to be in on the planning, I became the key player.

They came up with the idea since I was the baby of the group, I should approach Papa George, using all my little girl charms to make the plan work. They coached me on how to approach him after his sermon, while he was shaking hands with his parishioners, hug him around his leg, then fold my hands under my chin, like I was praying, and tell him what a good sermon he had "delivered". (I liked using that big word). I was to say it loud enough for everyone to hear, roll my eyes just the right way, and ask him if Midge could please have the car to take us for a little ride.

It most always worked, and we really did enjoy our Sunday afternoon car rides.

However, there was a big problem. Unfortunately, it was hard for me to be still while Papa George was preaching. I would sit with his daughters, but if my mother saw me moving around too much during the service, she would whisk me out of church, foiling our plans of me wheedling Papa George into giving us the keys to his car.

I loved to sing, so I was good while we were singing church hymns, but the rest of it bored me, and even though I tried very hard to sit still, I'm afraid my thoughts would wander quite aimlessly, and my feet soon followed close behind.

Away from church, I loved hearing Papa George tell me stories while we were making homemade ice cream, or washing his car, and other chores, but this preaching thing was different. He'd use big words and

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tell of places I never heard of, except for hell, which I was well acquainted with, as I was forever being reminded that's where I was headed.

The girls needed to come up with something that would keep me busy while Papa George was preaching, and therefore keep my mother from taking me out of church for misbehaving, thus losing the chance of me requesting our use of his car.

Knowing how I enjoyed scraping nail polish off their fingernails, they came up with the idea that they would all paint their nails on Saturday night, and come Sunday morning, I could sit with them and keep occupied by peeling off their nail polish. This would keep me safe and my mother happy.

As in all good, southern Methodist churches, each summer we would have a revival.

Revivals were a time of taking stock of your life with a week of songs, prayers, and sermons. On the last night of the revival we traditionally had testimonial night, which was a night of confession for some, reassurance for others. Papa George would encourage anyone who so desired, to feel free to sing a song, play the piano, offer a prayer, or just tell how they had been saved from a life of sin.

My sister and I liked this night the best, and thought we too should contribute our talent to the Lord. When Papa George asked the congregation if anyone had anything they wished to share, my sister and I slipped from our pew, and literally skipped down the aisle to where he stood.

With an arm around each of us, he said how he felt like a second father to us, since our daddy was away in service of our country. Then he went on to say he knew, first hand, how hard our mother and granny worked to teach us right from wrong. He

explained how my mother had to work outside the home, and how she and Granny not only tended to us, but also cared for an invalid uncle who lived with us.

I could see a smile on mother's face, and a tear slide down her cheek.

With a slight tremor in his voice Papa George asked what we would like to do.

I will never forget how his body stiffened, and his face turned white as chalk when my sister announced our intention to sing a song entitled "Pass Around the Bottle And We'll All Take A Drink."

Mother's face had taken on a crimson glow, her eyes had grown quite large, and her tears were no longer softly flowing. I really didn't think we sang that badly.

Unfortunately, the Methodist conference, then and now, decide among other things, when it is time for a preacher and his family to pull up stakes and move on.

The Pharr's had been with us longer than was usual, over five years, and my heart was broken when they told us they had been assigned to another church, and would be moving.

What would we do without them?

Over the next few years, other preachers and their families moved into the parsonage, each one becoming very dear to us.

All in all, I can safely say, what a blessing it was to grow up next door to the parsonage.

John B. Carruthers was bit by a snake Tuesday last while gathering corn. After experiencing painful swelling of the extremities he was made well again when his wife applied a poultice made of Kerosine and chimney soot. Within three days he was well enough to complete harvesting the corn. The snake also survived and is again lurking in the cornfield awaiting its next victim.
From 1899 Newspaper



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HUNTSVILLE NEWS IN 1901



New Addition to the City

Sharp & Newson have purchased from Boyd and Wellman several acres of ground at the head of Locust Street on California, formerly a part of the estate of the late Gen. Samuel F. Moore, and will lay it off in city lots. Streets will be extended through the new addition, granitoid sidewalks built and shade trees planted.

This will be made one of the most desirable residence sections of the city. The gentlemen composing this firm are prominent Nashville business-

men and the fact that they are fit to put their money in Huntsville property shows that Huntsville real estate is looked upon as a good thing by capitalists in other cities.

Probably Fatal Accident

Walter Bradford, a weaver employed in the Merrimack Mills, was probably fatally injured yesterday afternoon by allowing the elevator to descend on his head. The young man was looking down the elevator shaft and did not see the car descend from above. The floor of the car caught his head on the side and his scalp was almost torn off. The accident was a horrible one and Bradford is not expected to live.

He Threw a Heavy Stone into a Scottsboro Crowd

About 6:30 a number of men, women and children were at the depot watching the old Confederates leave for the reunion. Just as the second section of No. 57 was passing by at a high rate of speed, some unknown young man threw off a large limestone rock into the crowd from the train. The throw was an aimless attempt at destruction.

Isaac H. Davis was struck on the right leg. The force of the rock, which weighed 39 pounds, crushed his leg bones in fragments, and passing on struck Tillman Davis a painful blow on one of his legs.

Mr. Davis was carried to the Baty House where his leg was dressed. It has not been determined whether his leg will have to be amputated. The injury was quite severe.

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Dog Trivia



1. While Chow dogs are well known for their distinctive blue-black tongues, they're actually born with pink tongues. They turn blue-black at 8-10 weeks of age.

2. It pays to be a lap dog. Three dogs (from First Class cabins!) survived the sinking of the Titanic - two were Pomeranians and one Pekingese.

3. It's rumored that, at the end of the Beatles song, "A Day in the Life," Paul McCartney recorded an ultrasonic whistle, audible only to dogs, just for his Shetland sheepdog.

4. Puppies have 28 teeth and normal adult dogs have 42.

5. Dogs chase their tails for a variety of reasons: curiosity, exercise, anxiety, predatory instinct or, they might have fleas! If your dog is chasing his tail excessively, you should talk with your vet.

6. Seeing spots? Or not... Dalmatian puppies are pure white when they are born and develop their spots as they grow older.

7. Dogs do dream! Dogs and humans have the same type of slow wave sleep (SWS) and rapid eye movement (REM) and during this REM stage dogs can dream. The twitching and paw movements that occur during their sleep are signs that your pet is dreaming

8. No night vision goggles needed! A dog's eyes contain a special membrane, called the tapetum lucidum, which allows him to see in the dark.

9. A large breed dog's resting heart beats between 60 and 100 times per minute. A small dog's heart beats between 100-140. Comparatively, a resting human heart beats 60-100 times per minute.

10. If your dog's acting funny, get out the umbrella! According to a Petside.com 72% of dog owners believe their dog can detect when stormy weather is on the way.

11. It's not a fever...A dog's normal temperature is between 101 and 102.5 degrees Fahrenheit.

12. Unlike humans who sweat everywhere, dogs only sweat through the pad of their feet.

13. In addition to sweating through their paw pads, dogs pant to cool themselves off. A panting dog can take 300-400 breaths (compared to his regular 30-40) with very little effort. But panting can also mean that your dog is feeling pain or anxiety - so be very watchful.

14. Americans love dogs! 62% of U.S. households own a pet, which equates to 72.9 million homes.

15. 45% of dogs sleep in their owner's bed (pretty sure a large percentage also hog the blankets).

16. Why are dogs' noses so wet? Dogs' noses secrete a thin layer of mucous that helps them absorb scent. They then lick their noses to sample the scent through their mouth.

17. Yummy! Dogs have about 1,700 taste buds. Humans have approximately 9,000 and cats have around 473.

18. Watch that hamburger! A dog's sense of smell is 10,000 -100,000 times more acute as that of humans.

19. It's not so black and white. It's a myth that dogs only see in black and white. In fact, it's believed that dogs see primarily in blue, greenish-yellow, yellow and various shades of gray.

20. Sound frequency is measured in Hertz (Hz). The higher the Hertz, the higher-pitched the sound. Dogs hear best at 8,000 Hz, while humans hear best at around 2,000 Hz.

21. Dogs' ears are extremely expressive. It's no wonder! There are more than a dozen separate muscles that control a dog's ear movements.

22. Why do they do that? When dogs kick after going to the bathroom, they are using the scent glands on their paws to further mark their territory.

23. No, it's not just to make themselves look adorable. Dogs curl up in a ball when they sleep due to an age-old instinct to keep themselves warm and protect their abdomen and vital organs.

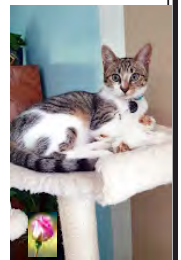
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From the Desk of Tom Carney

Delivering the Mail

by Tom Carney

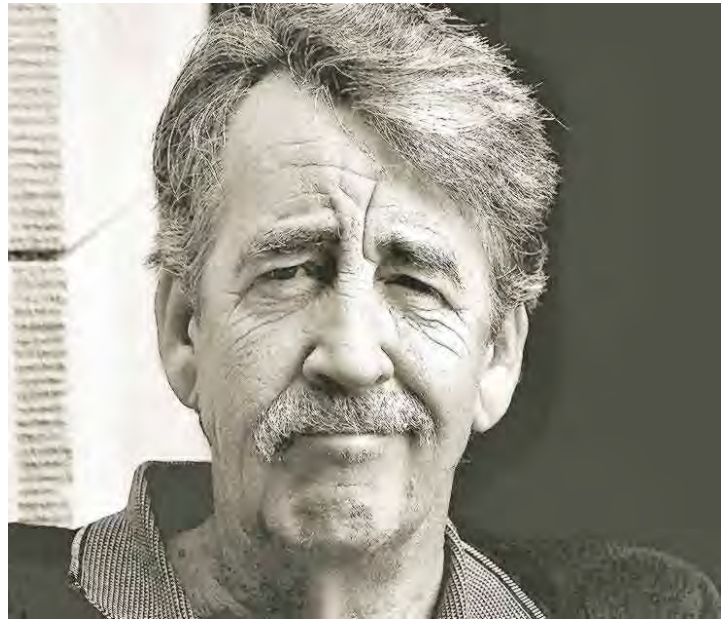
This may be hard for Huntsville residents to believe, but as German rocket scientists were preparing to move here to set up an arsenal that would change the world, our mail was still being delivered by horse and buggy!

A mail carrier for the Huntsville Post Office for over 30 years, Clarence Celia Powers refused to change to the automobile and delivered mail to his customers by horse and buggy until he retired in 1948.

Clarence was a familiar sight to all on his route. He knew all his mail recipients by name and would often carry candy to the young children along his route. The children especially liked to run alongside his buggy until he would get out of their neighborhoods. On several occasions he had stopped to help people in distress and was known to have a kind heart and a good sense of humor.

Clarence served several territories throughout Huntsville. His last route covered the area of Pulaski Pike and West Clinton Avenue. One of the few black men working for the Post Office at that time, Clarence was born in March of 1878 and was the youngest of five brothers. His father was a farmer and a Methodist minister, and Powers had always taken an interest in church work. When he wasn't delivering mail, he was usually found at the church. Powers' high school education was received at Central Alabama Academy, located on Franklin Street.

Clarence became a mail carrier on June 1, 1917 after working for Chattanooga, Memphis and other Huntsville employers. He especially liked carrying the mail, he said, because he liked seeing the same people every day. The fact that ladies along his route oftentimes would have pies and cakes waiting for him just provided an extra incentive. For all the eating he did, Clarence was a tall, slim man.



The last day that he served, January 27, 1948 was one of the most difficult he had ever experienced, due to the severe icy conditions of the Huntsville streets. His horse had gotten quite old by this time and found it very hard to maneuver the slick roads. There were very few days that Clarence was not able to deliver the mail to his customers. He had many friends, both black and white, among the people who knew him and respected him. Powers was recognized by the Post Office for all the years of dedication. He was given a dinner in his honor and the gift of a beautiful pocket watch.

The new man who was to take over Clarence's route, when asked if he was going to use a horse and buggy, replied he was going to use a "gas burner, not a hay burner!"

Clarence Powers was 70 when he retired. Upon his retirement, the horse and buggy were consigned to the county barn. Two months later, a group of people led by farmer Ben Lucas bought the buggy and horse and presented it to the retired mail carrier in appreciation of his years of dedicated service. For several years thereafter, Clarence and his horse remained a familiar sight to Huntsvillians.

The Right Man for You

If you think he's the most beautiful man you've ever seen, chances are other women will, too, and maybe other men as well. More than likely, so will he.

So you'll be competing for his attention not only with human rivals but with his mirror.

It's a lot more pleasant and reassuring to find someone who thinks YOU'RE terrific and can't stop looking at YOU.

(advice from 1962 newspaper)



"I am Ben Smith"

by John Michael Hampton

Local TV meteorologists are known for having a focus on the community.

My son, John Robert, experienced this on a Saturday morning while eating breakfast at a local fast food place.

Several years ago, our family went to Jack's on Winchester Road to eat breakfast on Saturday mornings before going shopping at yard sales and then at the grocery store. We had certain items that each of us ordered, and the staff knew just how we liked our biscuits.

On this particular Saturday morning in spring 2014, we ate with a sense of purpose. Severe weather was expected later in the day, so we wanted to get our shopping done and get back home before storms rolled into the area.

John Robert looked over at the other corner of the dining room several times. I asked JR, "What is going on?"

John Robert replied, "The guy sitting over there in that corner looks like Ben Smith." (For those not familiar with Ben, he is the

morning meteorologist at WHNT-TV 19 here in Huntsville.)

I smiled at my son. "I will find out if it is him when I go to dump our trash in the trash can. It may just be someone who looks like him. Everyone has a twin, so it is said."

I stood up and took our trash to the trash can. On the way back, I walked over to where the person was sitting. Sure enough, he did look like Ben Smith. I spoke to him. "Sorry to interrupt, but my son says you look like Ben Smith." He looked up from the laptop, tablet, and two cell phones on the table in front of him, and smiled. "That's because I am Ben Smith! Where is your son?"

I pointed over to where John Robert was sitting with my wife and mother-in-law. "That's him over there. His name is John Robert."

Ben told me, "Tell him to come over."

I told John Robert to come over. Ben sat there for about twenty minutes, giving John Robert a one-on-one class about severe weather and what they looked for when they were looking at radar. We found out that Ben was there because his internet was out at home and he was using the free WiFi at Jack's to monitor the storms that were coming in later that day while eating breakfast.

We have seen Ben multiple places over the years, especially in the local stores since he lives less than two miles from where we live.

But, I will never forget the Saturday morning when he made a little boy feel special by taking time with him. And that is why he is well loved by not just our family, but the Tennessee Valley, because he has a servant's heart, which is a very special thing to have.

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**"If my films make one
more person miserable,
I'll feel that I have done
my job."**

Woody Allen

Officer Nelson to the Rescue



by Judy C. Smith

Today started off like most Wednesdays for me with morning chores and a rush to exercise class. When my phone rang, it was my daughter calling to remind me that my red '57 T-Bird had a photo shoot at 11:00. I told her I knew that and it wasn't until the 8th of August. Her response was, "Mother do you know that today is August 8th? Be there at 11:00." How could I have forgotten that? I don't know.

I hung up on her and ran to uncover the car and start to wax it. It is so shiny one can see their face in it. I tried to get it started, nothing happened - I tried again, ran inside called Champ to come to my rescue and jump it off. When Champ arrives, I get back into the car, remember M.D. had told me to jiggle the gear shift lever in neutral and low and behold it started right up. I had remembered the magic touch.

I zip down Governors Drive and I'm sitting at the light to turn left onto California when I notice a man in the car next to me waving. So, I let down the passenger window, we talk and he tells me what a beautiful car I have. When the light changes and I press on the gas pedal and to my horror nothing happens, the car is dead.

Not only that, but jiggling the stick in neutral won't let it start again. What am I going to do? I have to get another car and get to the photo shoot.

I dial 911 and when I talked to the 911 operator she said to me, "Honey, just turn your flashers on and an officer will be there shortly."

I didn't know whether to laugh or cry when I answered her and just said, "I'm in a 1957 T-Bird and there are no FLASHERS on '57 T-Birds." To my rescue out of nowhere, Officer Nelson of the Huntsville Police Department knocks on my window. In the meantime, I have called M.D. and Scott and they are on the way too.

Officer Nelson was so understanding. He was already parked behind me and had his blue lights flashing. I was stranded in a very busy intersection. He called "Lappdog Towing," and Scott stayed with the car while M.D. drove me home to get the Red Bentley convertible. Secretly I'm hoping the photographer will be happy with a red Bentley instead of a red T-Bird.

As I'm going down Governors again, I see the wrecker just starting to load the T-Bird and Officer Nelson waves to me. I roll down the window and tell him my special wax and towel are in the T-Bird. He gets Scott to find the trunk key, gets my wax and towel out and puts them in the Bentley for me.

I arrive at the photo shoot fifteen minutes early having time to let the top down and wax it. They loved the car and didn't seem to mind that I didn't get there in the red '57 T-Bird. Afterwards, I headed home, arriving just in time to get it covered and in the carport before a down pour came.

Also, I said a prayer for Officer Nelson for all his help and kindness that he gave an old lady today in her red '57 T-Bird.

Mid Sixties Huntsville High School Reunion!!

If you graduated in the mid sixties come join
us for our HHS Reunion

Location: Huntsville Country Club

Date: Saturday, April 26, 2025

Contact for reservation and info:

hhs1966@gmail.com



Huntsville High being demolished and rebuilt in 1994

TO BE SIX AGAIN

**Submitted by Sue Cross,
Author Unknown**

To whom it may concern:

I hereby officially tender my resignation as an adult. I have decided I would like to accept the responsibilities of a 6 year old again.

I want to go to McDonald's and think that it's a four star restaurant.

I want to sail sticks across a fresh mud puddle and make ripples with rocks.

I want to think M&M's are better than money, because you can eat them.

I want to play kickball during recess and paint with water-colors in art.

I want to lie under a big Oak tree and run a lemonade stand with my friends on a hot summer's day.

I want to return to a time when life was simple. When all you knew were colors, addition tables and simple nursery rhymes, but that didn't bother you, because you didn't know what you didn't know and you didn't care.

When all you knew was to be happy because you didn't know all the things that should make you worried and upset. I want to think that the world is fair. That everyone in it is honest and good. I want to believe that anything is possible.

Somewhere in my youth I matured and I learned too much. I learned of nuclear weapons, war, prejudice starvation and abused children. I learned of lies, unhappy marriages, suffering, illness, pain and death.

I learned of a world where

men left their families to go and fight for our country and returned only to end up living on the streets...begging for their next meal. I learned of a world where children knew how to kill...and did!

What happened to the time when we thought that everyone would live forever, because we didn't grasp the concept of death?

When we thought the worst thing in the world was if someone took the jump rope from you or picked you last for kickball?

I want to be oblivious to the complexity of life and be overly excited by little things once again.

I want to return to the days when reading was fun and music was clean. When television was used to report the news or for family entertainment and not to promote sex, violence and deceit.

I remember being naive and thinking that everyone was happy because I was. I would walk on the beach and only think of the sand between my toes and the prettiest seashell I could find. I would spend my afternoons climbing trees and riding my bike. I didn't worry about time, bills or where I was going to find money to fix my car.

I used to wonder what I was going to do or be when I grew up, not worry about what I'll do if this doesn't work out.

I want to live simple again.

I don't want my day to consist of computer crashes, mountains of paperwork, depressing news, how to survive more days in the month than there is money in the bank, doctor bills, gossip, illness and loss of loved ones.

I want to believe in the power of smiles, hugs, a kind word, truth, justice, peace, dreams, the imagination, mankind and making angels in the snow. I want to be 6 again.



MAX

Hello, my name is Max. I'm a very happy boy and love all the people I meet. I am about 2 years old and am a black and brindle color with a white chest.

A kind person found me in February and brought me to the Ark Animal Shelter after trying to find my owner for about 2 weeks. Since coming here I have received all my shots and have been neutered and micro-chipped. The vet thinks I am a terrier mix. I am a very energetic dog and want to run everywhere I go. It was hard for me to stand still to have a picture taken because I am so excited to be outside on a leash and I am so interested in my surroundings. I love all the volunteers but I'm hoping to find a home with a fenced in backyard where I can explore and run and play. I'm hoping for a forever home where I will be the only dog and live in a safe and loving environment. If you are looking for a young and energetic dog that will be your friend for life won't you consider coming to see me at the Ark Animal Shelter? I hope you like to run and play! If so, ask to see Max, that's me. I will be so happy to meet you!

A No-Kill Animal Shelter

139 Bo Cole Rd.

Huntsville, AL 35806

The Ark

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News in 1911



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

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

Money Found - some one left an envelope containing \$4 in paper in the office of the ideal Laundry Co.. Owner pay for ad and recover same.

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

Man Arrested for Killing Dogs

Thos. Hooper, the surveyor, called at the Daily Times office to explain why he killed the two fine dogs about which the Sunday Morning Times had referenced. Mr. Hooper claims that the dogs had been killing his geese, which he valued at \$5 a piece and had also, he said, bitten a fine bull belonging to him. He was fined \$15 in the Mayors Court for shooting firearms in the city limits and appealed his case to the law and equity court, where he also has a case against him. One of the dogs belonged to Miss Margarette Wellman, the other to Frank E. Murphy, who had the warrants sworn out for the arrest of Mr. Hooper.

Mrs. William Dilworth has returned from a short visit to Paint Rock where she went up to see her mother, Mrs. Kiel, who is very ill.

Ardmore, Tn. Mrs. Josie Leman relates a very unusual experience she has had recently with a bird - a common English Sparrow.

Mrs. Leman has been troubled for several months with falling hair and had begun to feel that she was going to be completely bald. She is very fond of birds, and regularly feeds several English sparrows near her front steps and she had taken

special interest in one which had a deformed wing, showing that it had been badly crippled at one time. This bird reciprocated the interest shown in it and would often sit for several minutes while Mrs. Leman would talk to it, and she among many other things often told it about her falling hair, not for a moment thinking the bird could understand her.

Now, Mrs. Leman does not claim that the bird understood the trouble she was having with her hair, but she does state and can prove that this bird is daily bring her hair to her, such as it finds in its flights, and is leaving it on her porch.

"It makes eight or ten trips a day," said Mrs. Leman, "and seems to be especially happy after bringing a real long hair, and I always let the bird see me take the hair, and I pretend that I am very much pleased, for I wouldn't hurt the little thing's feeling for anything on earth."

Accidental Killing of a Man in Decatur

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

Busy Day at the Court House

Huntsville Saturday afternoon was a busy place, especially around the Court House where the warm weather brought the farmers in with their mules and hogs for sale. Traffic on Washington and Jefferson Street was blocked with the crowd and their vehicles in attendance on the old-fashioned live stock auction sale that took place this afternoon.

Not only the Square was crowded but the streets were lined with shoppers. The spring weather surprised many out of their homes and the merchants were seen brushing up their windows with spring stock. Huntsville, from its appearance this afternoon, is certainly taking on a metropolitan appearance.

For Sale

One genuine New York automatic cow milking machine. Only used for one week until herd ran away. Will trade for anything you got.

Also have assortment of woman's clothing and accessories for sale.

My wife left too.

**Contact at newspaper office
From 1901 newspaper**

For Better or Worse

by *Malcolm Miller*
May 2008

In the fall of nineteen fifty-five I went to work as a letter carrier for the Huntsville Post Office and after almost ten years working in the General Shoe Factory (later Genesco) with hard work and almost poverty pay, the Post Office was a real change for the better.

I worked as a substitute carrier for over a year delivering mail and parcels to what then was greater Huntsville. I think at one time or another I delivered mail on every street.

Finally I was assigned my very own route and it made work much easier because I would be walking the same long streets every day. I would be going up on the same porches, meeting the same people and incidentally the same dogs knowing which were friendly, both people and dogs, and which were not.

I had one cocker spaniel that met me at the beginning of my

route and followed me all day every day.

There were several special people on my route that I still remember till this day. There was Mrs. Fisk, an invalid, who lived on Humes Avenue. She told me to just open the front door and hand her the mail.

There was Louis and Lillian Jennings also on Humes and on McCullough Avenue there was Marie Osborne, a lady I went to school with at Hazel Green. Also on McCullough I met Herman and Lessie Hunt, two of the finest people I ever knew.

When you deliver mail on those long neighborhood streets it sure is good to have a place to stop for a cool drink of water and use the bathroom.

I know I could always count on Lessie Hunt to provide this assistance with a friendly smile.

Herman worked at the Huntsville Fire Department when I first started delivering their mail but he soon started working for the Post Office delivering mail.

I dare say Herman Hunt was the hardest working man I have ever seen. He was assigned a route in Dallas Village joining my route and at that time if you were carrying a mail bag you could ride the city buses free.

Herman would rush around his route as fast as he could and when he finished at the corner of Oakwood and Andrew Jackson Way, if it wasn't time for a bus, Herman would walk all the way back to the Post Office at the corner of Holmes and Jefferson Streets.

Unfortunately as the Hunts were raising fine children and enjoying life, tragedy struck. Lessie was hit with a stroke that left her wheel chair bound; this crippled her body but not her spirit. Even years later when I visited her she greeted me with a smile and a hug.

When Lessie became disabled is when Herman proved that he had married her literally for better or worse.

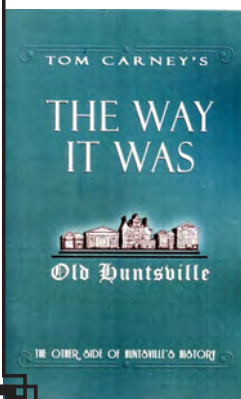
All these many years later he devoted his life to taking care of her every need and never once complaining that I know of.

Recently Herman reached the point where he could no longer take care of Lessie, so they moved in with their daughter where she could help out with her.

But Herman is still living up to those wedding vows that he made many many years ago, for better or worse, till death do us part.

"THE WAY IT WAS," THE OTHER SIDE OF HUNTSVILLE'S HISTORY

BY TOM CARNEY



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MARIA VON BRAUN

By the von Braun family

On January 20, 2025, Maria von Braun passed away at her home in Alexandria, Virginia, where she had resided and received family and friends for 55 years. She passed away peacefully surrounded by her family and wonderful caregivers who looked after her for the last 5 years. The family held a private graveside service and, this summer, will hold a Celebration of Life.

Maria often fondly recalled her twenty years in Huntsville, Alabama (1950-1970) and marveled at the evolution of the city and Marshall Space Flight Center from the Cotton Mills and Redstone Arsenal Army Base. She appreciated the warm welcome and recognition the family received.

Maria is kindly remembered by friends and neighbors and as a second grandmother. In recent years, she especially appreciated her ninety-something birthday parties at her favorite restaurant, attended by generations of her Alexandria friends and yoga students.

She was preceded in death by her husband and two brothers and is survived by two sisters, her children and their spouses, and extended family in Germany and the U.S.

Several years ago, Maria shared her life story:

"I was born on June 10, 1928, in Berlin as the second child and first daughter of Alexander and Theda von Quistorp. I was baptized by the pastor of the Kaiser Wilhelm Memorial Church with the names Maria Irmengard Emmy Luise Gisela. The family was ecstatic to welcome the first girl in my generation, after ten male cousins. As my mother recalled, this event led to me (and the relatives) being honored not just with a tea at the baptism, but with a formal dinner."

"Although we were later separated by an ocean, the five Quistorp siblings were extraordinarily close and I was especially close to my older brother, Albrecht. My school days in Berlin were marked by the Nazis beginning in 1934 and by the war in 1939. Toward the end of the war, it became apparent that the Russians would come to Berlin and Pomerania. Escape options were considered. Our parents were able to send my sister (age 6) and me (age 16) to relatives in East Frisia on the last train west. My mother hitchhiked out, carrying her fifth child (third daughter). My brothers arrived later. Our father remained missing for years."

"I knew Wernher von Braun from my childhood. In 1945, he began working as a rocket specialist in the US. From there, he sent me a marriage proposal. We married on March 1, 1947 under military guard in Landshut, Germany. The Americans did not see it as dangerous that he was getting married, but were concerned that the Russians were also looking for rocket engineers and were trying to kidnap them."

"Our married life began in El Paso, Texas, together with my parents-in-law, my brother-in-law, and a hundred members of the rocket team. In December 1948, our first daughter, Iris, was

born. Both in El Paso and from 1950 in Huntsville, Alabama, we lived in a community of German engineers without much work pressure."

"This changed abruptly when the Soviets launched their first satellite, Sputnik, into space on October 4, 1957. The space race suddenly became a national objective and Wernher became an international celebrity with the successful launch of the first U.S. satellite, Explorer 1. Our lives changed fundamentally."

"Countless press articles about us appeared in both the U.S. and Germany. We traveled all over the world. We found peace on weekends on our houseboat at Guntersville Lake in Alabama (back then there were still no mobile phones!), water skiing and flying after I got my pilot's license."

"Margrit and Peter were born during our Huntsville years. It was a happy time. It was an enormous emotional experience when my father visited us together with my mother and two sisters in May 1956 after being released from his Russian imprisonment."

"In 1970, we moved to Alexandria, Virginia. In 1977, Wernher died after a long illness. Since then, I have lived alone in Alexandria, yet I am not lonely because I am looked after by my children and many friends. I teach yoga at a community center and continue to travel. The children in my neighborhood see me as a friend and caregiver."

The family asks that any donations be made to the Cora Kelly Advisory Committee, Leonard Armstrong Recreation Center, 25 West Reed Avenue, Alexandria, Virginia 22305, where she taught yoga; the Huntsville Symphony Orchestra (PO Box 2400, Huntsville AL 35804); or the US Space and Rocket Center Education Foundation to support Space Camp Scholarships or Rocket Park (One Tranquility Base, Huntsville, Alabama 35805).

Maria von Braun (June 10, 1928 - January 20, 2025)



John Wayne

At a high-end Hollywood restaurant, John Wayne sat quietly at his table, enjoying his meal, when he noticed a commotion a few tables away. A wealthy patron, dressed in an expensive suit, was berating a young waiter. The server had apparently made a small mistake, but the customer reacted with unnecessary aggression, his voice carrying across the restaurant. Other diners turned their heads, uncomfortable yet unwilling to interfere.

Wayne, a man known for his intolerance toward bullies, watched for a moment before standing up. As he walked toward the table, his presence alone was enough to draw attention. Towering at 6'4", with the same commanding posture that had made him an icon in "Stagecoach" and "The Searchers," he placed a firm hand on the back of the man's chair and leaned in slightly. His deep, steady voice broke the tension in the room.

"In my movies, bullies don't last long," he said, staring the man down.

Zsa Zsa Gabor got married the first time and it was so successful she turned it into a series.

The diner's bravado melted away. He mumbled something, quickly composing himself and turned his focus back to his plate. The waiter, visibly shaken, stood frozen for a moment before giving Wayne a nod of gratitude. Without another word, Wayne returned to his seat, signaling the moment was over.

Though Wayne was often seen as the epitome of Hollywood masculinity, he had a strong personal code of honor. Many who knew him personally spoke of his belief in fairness and respect. He could be blunt and forceful, but he despised people who mistreated those in lower positions. Having grown up in a working-class household and struggled through the Great Depression, he understood the value of hard work.

This moment was not the only time Wayne took a stand for those who couldn't defend themselves. In another instance, on the set of "The Alamo," he personally ensured that the crew members received fair treatment, even intervening when he felt they were being underpaid.

Similarly, during the production of "True Grit," when a technician was harshly reprimanded by a producer, Wayne spoke up, reminding the higher-ups that every person on set was essential to the film's success.

Wayne's larger-than-life persona on-screen often carried into his real-life interactions. Those who worked with him recalled his unwavering sense of justice. While he had his flaws and controversial opinions, his sense of fairness and his willingness to defend the underdog were consistent traits throughout his life.

Back at the restaurant, as the shaken waiter continued his duties, Wayne discreetly left a generous tip on the table before heading out. He didn't need applause or recognition; his actions spoke louder than words. John Wayne believed that respect wasn't just for the powerful; it was something that should be extended to everyone.



Thank you!

**Thank you to our
Police Officers,
Fire-fighters,
Paramedics,
EMTs - We
appreciate all
you do to keep us
Safe Every Day.**

HUNTSVILLE HISTORY THROUGHOUT THE YEARS



Around 1910 some of the employees of Dallas Mill gathered for a photograph. Many of them were only children. During that same period Judge Betts and James Ballentine, who were both running for the same office, fought a duel on Huntsville's streets. Both were lousy shots and no one was injured.

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