



No. 394

December 2025



Old Huntsville

HISTORY AND STORIES OF THE TENNESSEE VALLEY

The Christmas Secret



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Deer Christmas Memory; Two Visits in One Night; My Grandmother;
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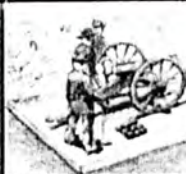


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The Christmas Secret



by M. D. Smith IV

The bartender glanced up from polishing a glass when the door creaked open, letting in a gust of snow and an old man in a Santa suit with snow still clinging to his boots. He shuffled in with weary steps, his crimson coat slung over one shoulder like a burden. His beard, thick and white as winter itself, gleamed under the string of twinkling Christmas lights that lined the bar.

"Recipes are just like a dating service. They never end up looking like their picture."

Maxine

He settled heavily onto a stool, exhaling as if the night carried the weight of centuries pressing down on his shoulders.

The bartender had seen the burdened type before. "What'll it be tonight?" she asked, still polishing a glass but not taking her eyes off him.

"Brandy in a wine glass, please," he said, his voice deep and tired.

"Sure thing." She studied his face a moment longer. "That's a real beard you've got. You been ringing a bell out in the cold today?"

The old man exhaled, a sigh so deep it seemed to drag centuries with it. He propped his elbows on the bar and cradled his chin in his wrinkled hands.

"Worse than that."

The bartender raised an eyebrow. "Worse than a bunch of sugared-up kids climbing all over you at a Christmas party?" she teased.

He shook his head. She set the drink before him, amber light catching in the glass. He lifted it, took a slow sip, and a faint warmth returned to his cheeks, and some of the frost melted from his furry eyebrows.

"That's good," he said. "Haven't had this in a long while. Tonight's special. I'm retiring."

"Retiring from what?"

He stroked his beard. His



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eyes, blue as frostbitten skies, met hers. "From Christmas. From it all. I've worked harder every year, and every year the world thanks me less. Only demands and complaints, wish lists growing longer. I've given everything. And I'm through. Done. Retired. But don't worry, not before I have a replacement and someone who already wants this job, even though he may not know it yet."

The bartender tilted her head, but her smile softened. She didn't laugh. She simply nodded, as though understanding and humoring a weary soul.

"What's your name?" he asked suddenly. His eyes twinkled with something. Was it sadness? Mischievous? Memory? "Let me guess... Susie. Little Susie Richardson."

Her mouth parted—eyes blinked. "It's Susan. No one's called me Susie since I was a little girl. How did you...?"

"I just know things, got a head full of things that stick like an elephant's memory... like how you loved your first Etch-a-Sketch that Christmas," he said with a faint smile.

Her mouth hung open. Speechless. Her head did a slow nod.

He finished the last of his drink, then rose, pulling his red coat around his shoulders. "Well, I've got to find Eddie Wilson. He's close, isn't he?"

"Yeah," she said, pointing across the snowy street. "It's an apartment above the bookstore. You can't miss it. He's got a beard too, though not as fine as yours."

He pushed money across the bar with a generous tip, and stood. "Thank you, Miss Susan. Merry Christmas."

Then he was gone, vanishing like a red shadow swallowed into the snow-whipped night. Across the street, Eddie Wilson opened the outside door by the bookstore and trudged up the narrow staircase. Every one of the old wooden steps creaked as he mentally counted to nineteen and then onto the landing. Then he turned the key to his small apartment above the business. His Santa suit,



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Seen in local church bulletin

worn thin, sagged on his bony frame, the red faded, the padding lumpy, the beard thin and scratchy against his chin. Still, the children adored him anyway, tugging his sleeve, clamoring on his lap, whispering wishes into his ear. They didn't see the shabbiness; they only saw Santa.

When he opened the door, his breath froze in his throat.

A man sat in his chair. A man in a Santa suit, but grander, more real, as if stitched by elves themselves. His beard was a snowy river down his chest and gleamed under the weak light bulb. His eyes twinkled like the lights on a Christmas tree.

"Who the devil are you? How'd you get in here?" Eddie stammered.

"Same as you, Eddie," the stranger whispered. "I'm Santa Claus. Call me Nick."

"Yeah, sure," Eddie scoffed. "Nice outfit. Nice beard. But this is breaking and entering. I should call the cops."

Nick shook his head. "No breaking at all, though I did enter. Santa's key opens every lock on Christmas Eve." He leaned forward. "But I didn't come here to fight. I came to talk about your wish."

Eddie stood still. The words struck something deep.

He stiffened. "What wish? You're crazy. Sure, I put on the suit every year, hand out candy canes, listen to kids' lists. But wishes?" His voice cracked again, softer. "I can't even afford a decent suit."

Nick's eyes softened, and his voice gentled. "You've loved children all your life, Eddie. Loved giving them joy, even after... even after the accident." The words pierced like walking barefoot on jagged, broken sleigh bells. Eddie lowered his head, shoulders curling. His

wife. His three children. Lost when the ferry capsized in winter waters. Gone all those years ago. The grief was a scar he carried under the red suit.

"That's personal," Eddie muttered hoarsely. "And it was long ago."

"I know," Nick said kindly. "But I also know every Christmas you've spent since, listening to children's wishes, even when you had none left for yourself. I know the gift you've been longing for."

Eddie's eyes narrowed. "And what's that?"

Nick smiled. "The chance to believe again."

"Who ARE you?"

"I'm Santa, and I'm retiring tonight. I know more than your sorrow and your desire to make children happy, not only on the holiday, but all year long. I know your Christmases — every toy you found beneath the tree until you stopped believing." Nick listed Eddie's childhood gifts, one by one: the toy train at six, the sled at eight, the football helmet at ten. Eddie's eyes widened with every detail, the disbelief crumbling inside him like paper-thin ice.

Finally, Nick reached into his pocket and drew a pinch of sparkling dust. "Remember the snow globe you got when you were five? Dropped it, shattered it, tears flowed?"

Eddie's breath caught. "I cried all day," he murmured. "How...?"

"Hold your hand out." Nick rubbed his fingers. A shimmer of dust drifted into Eddie's palm, swirling until it took form. And there it was — the snow globe, whole again, glowing softly, with a little boy inside laughing as flakes whirled around him.

Eddie's eyes filled with tears. "Only Santa could do that." "That's what I've been saying." Nick rose to his full height, majestic and timeless. "I'm retiring. It's time for a new Santa Claus."



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You've got the heart, Eddie. You've got the love. You're the new Santa Claus."

"Me?" Eddie choked out. "I'm nobody. I'm just..." He looked down at his worn suit, at his trembling hands. "I can't."

Nick laid a hand on his shoulder, warm as firelight. "You already are. Every time you made a child laugh, every time you listened to a wish with kindness, you were Santa. All you need is to believe it yourself."

Eddie's lips trembled. "But what about Mrs. Claus?"

Nick leaned in, whispering as though sharing the oldest secret in the world. "She's not my wife. She's my sister, and she'll be there for you, Eddie. She'll help you. Maybe even heal you."

Before Eddie could speak, Nick shrugged off his coat, his hat, his gloves. He passed them, one by one, into Eddie's shaking hands.

And as Eddie slipped them on, magic rushed through him like starlight. His beard thickened, gleaming white. His frame grew broad and strong. His eyes filled with a sparkle he had not had since childhood.

Eddie staggered to the mirror. A gasp left his throat. He was no longer Eddie Wilson, weary widower. He was Santa Claus.

Nick stepped back, admiring the new Santa, satisfaction in his eyes. "Your sleigh and reindeer are waiting, tucked behind the billboard on the edge of town. They know you now. Christmas is waiting, Eddie. Go to it."

Eddie—Santa—straightened, his heart pounding with awe and purpose. Laughter, rich and rolling, thundered from his chest. "Ho, ho, ho!"

The windows rattled with it. The snow globe in Eddie's palm glowed brighter.

Nick smiled, younger somehow, lighter. "Merry Christmas, Santa. My work is done," the old Santa said.

Snow swirled through the little

room, though no window was open. And when the flurry cleared, Nick was gone.

Eddie stood alone in the hush, snow globe warm in his hand. He looked out at the snowy street, children's laughter drifting faintly through the night air. For the first time in years, his heart lifted like a sleigh into the sky.

He whispered into the glow of the globe, his voice steady and full of wonder.

"Merry Christmas."

And far above, the stars seemed to echo back:

"And a good night to all."



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"Bless Me Father!"

by Elizabeth Wharry



Growing up Roman Catholic, we were taught by the nuns that just about everything was a sin. If my readers recall, I wrote about going into one of "those" bookstores. The article was written in December of 2023. This is the follow-up of a very confused young Roman Catholic.

On the Saturday after going into the dirty bookstore, I rushed to the Confession/Sacrament of Reconciliation. That poor priest! "Bless me Father, I have sinned. Um, I think I did, I'm not sure. It may have even been a mortal sin. I just don't know."

The priest was more confused than I was. He asked me what happened. I told him that I went into the dirty bookstore. He asked if I stayed. I told him

long enough to realize it wasn't what I thought it was. Through the screen, I could see his shoulders shaking with silent laughter. He was also struggling to control his breathing.

After a long pause, he finally spoke. He said, "No, my child, that is not a sin. It IS however, one of the most interesting confessions I've heard! No penance today, your embarrassment and humility are more than enough. Go in peace."

Many years later, I was working for a doctor who had his office attached to his home. While his wife and children were out of town, he invited his tootsie to come over and "play". After she left, and the office closed, I went home feeling absolutely sick. Since it was

Good Friday, the Sacrament of Reconciliation was being held that evening. "Bless me Father, for I think I may have committed a mortal sin, or maybe not." Shaking my head, I told the priest I wasn't sure. He started to chuckle, and in his Irish lilt, said, "What are ye going on about, lass?! I'm confused!"

So, I told him about knowing about my boss's infidelity. He started to chuckle, and said that the sin was not mine, but it belonged to my boss and his tootsie. He further cautioned me not to say a word to the wife, as it was a Catch-22. He then said, "Go in peace, your sins have been forgiven."

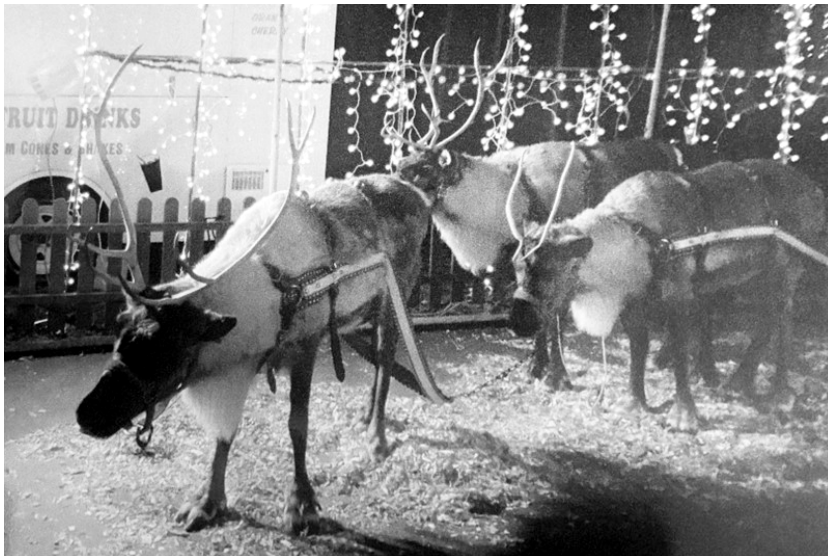
Wishing all of my dear readers a Merry Christmas and a prosperous peaceful New Year!

"You know you're getting older when you have 3 sizes of clothes in your closet and you can only squeeze into one of them."

Bess Jacks, Athens



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A Deer Christmas Memory

by Tanjie Kling

Many cherished Christmas memories are born of the traditions we share with family and friends. Those memories that are created year after year, hold a special place in our hearts even after the traditions fade away. What began as a sixteen year Christmas tradition became a collection of treasured memories for my husband Bill and me.

We first learned of Bobby and Merlene Baldwin around the time Bill and I were engaged to be married. Our friends, Kathy and Frank Ogle, were the Baldwin's backyard neighbors, and they told us that the Baldwin's spectacular style of bringing Christmas to the Holiday Homes and Merri-mac neighborhoods in West Huntsville was not to be

missed. They told us that it was imperative that we meet the Baldwins.

We did not have their exact home address, but were told that if we drove down Drake Avenue, west of Triana Boulevard and looked northwest towards the night sky, we would see a glow of light that cut through the darkness (almost as bright as the Star of Bethlehem). If we followed the light, we would certainly find the Baldwin's house. And we did.

Bobby Baldwin was a very hardworking man, whose ambition was to bring Christmas magic to children and the young at heart alike. Around 1979 or so, he told his wife that he wanted to establish a reindeer farm. Mrs. Merlene told Bill and me, when we met her in 1992, that she thought her husband was crazy to have such an idea, but she was supportive of him and his dream.

Establishing and operating a reindeer farm was a difficult undertaking in Madison County due to the summer heat. Bobby had no experience in raising reindeer, and since he owned

only one of the two reindeer farms in the lower 48 contiguous states of the US - not many other people were experienced either.

The Baldwins convinced their son's friend, Larry Holder, to help them with the business. Larry proved to be indispensable to them. Together they kept the business, Reindeer Incorporated, afloat from 1980 until two years after Bobby's death in 2009.

Bobby's business became successful, and his reindeer went on to become Hollywood stars. One reindeer named Boo played the starring animal role in the 1989 movie *Prancer*, and Bobby Baldwin himself was listed in the movie credits as the animal trainer. His reindeer also made appearances in a Mariah Carey Christmas music video, in a Walmart ad featuring Garth Brooks, and at special Christmas events throughout the United States.

Occasionally, the reindeer would attend fabulous holiday A-list celebrity parties, but those are not talked about since non-disclosure agreements were signed.

When Bobby and his reindeer were in Huntsville during the Christmas holidays, we were all given a special treat. Those days hold special memories for us.

The Baldwins had Christmas lights covering their Spruce Avenue home. They had Christmas lights with a "Merry Christmas" message on their rooftop, and they even decorated their front and back yards; but the most impressive sight to behold on most nights was that of

Santa Claus and his sleigh, complete with live reindeer.

The neighbors came to visit, and throughout the years a lot of people city-wide visited as well. It became a popular spot. We fondly remember visiting the Baldwins and also visiting Santa and his reindeer.

Occasionally, one lucky child was given the task of feeding a banana to the reindeer; and children that visited with Santa would leave with a stuffed toy, until all the toys were gone.

Mrs. Merlene would make hot chocolate and hot spiced apple cider for their guests. Several years, they even had a little Christmas "train" that was actually a little trailer that transported guests throughout the neighborhood to look at everyone's Christmas lights.

Bobby and Mrs. Merlene would never take any donations to offset any of their expenses, and gave this experience to the community free of charge. We remember Bobby saying to us, "I tell Merlene to not show me the utility bill for the months of November and December. I tell her to just pay it and never tell me how much it costs."

The Baldwins would host many children, their parents, and their neighbors at their home each year for several nights, before loading up the reindeer and heading to another location in Huntsville for a Christmas celebration.

Bobby and Merlene Baldwin had hearts of gold, and delighted in seeing the faces of the children light up with the magic and wonder of Christmas.

We were so fortunate to have celebrated 16 Christmases with them, and to have those memories tucked inside our hearts.



"I'm wrinkled, saggy and lumpy. And that's just my left leg!"

Beth Olson, Harvest

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Turn to the experts



Peaches, Where Are You?

by Bob Strickland

As a young man, while still in high school, I worked as a tour guide at the Okefenokee Swamp park, in south Georgia. Now, as a Huntsville resident of many years, I think back to an incident that happened on the last day I worked at the swamp.

First, let me tell you a little about the park. Mainly it's like an outdoor zoo, with wild animals roaming freely. The swamp is just like it has always been, since the beginning of time. Canals run everywhere, full of fish, turtles, snakes and alligators.

"Shake your hips and hope for the best."

Cassie, age 8, on what you have to do to find love

For one of the oldest and largest alligators in the swamp, who spent most of its days near the entrance to the park, we gave him the name "Oscar."

Back in about 1950, I was waiting for my next tourist to guide thru the park, when a car pulled up, and as soon as they opened their car door, a little dog jumped out of the car and ran straight down to where Oscar was lying. The gator caught the dog in his jaws, entered the water and began swimming away, taking the dog beneath the water's surface. The little pup was a gonner. The dog's owners were hollering and screaming "Peaches", the dog's name, over and over. It was a very sad day.

About 7 years ago, my wife and I decided to go visit the swamp, to see what changes had been made over the last 70 years. What we found was it was basically the same. When we arrived, there was a young man sitting on a golf cart in front of the gift shop. He greeted us. He said he ran the boat tours. As we talked, I told him a story I had often told my wife and kids about a gator gettin' a dog. The guide said, "It was Oscar."

He said that when Oscar died in 2007, his body contents included a dog tag with the name, "Peaches".

Oscar now lies entombed in a super large glass case, with many items displayed in the case with him, including Peaches' dog tag.

Thank you!



Old Huntsville Magazine keeps on going thanks to our Readers, Writers and Advertisers. Have we said Thank You lately? We appreciate you more than you know.

Special Christmas Memories

by Kimberly Lang

December is the last month of the year. The month we celebrate the birth of our Jesus with Christmas. Christmas, the most joyful time of the year. In 1836 Alabama was one of the first states to legalize Christmas as a holiday so people could be off work and be home with their family.

Christmas holds so many memories for each of us. It's a time of giving and sharing. When I think about Christmas time I cannot help but think about how it has changed over the years and it's true meaning. It isn't about the gifts, trees and all the glitter. It is about the birth of Jesus. It is about love, family and friends.

Christmas is so different from years ago. My father told me about Christmas when he was little. He came from a family of twelve and times were hard in the forties. They were lucky to get a piece of fruit like a apple or orange with some nuts in a small brown sack, they didn't have stockings like today.

My grandmother would make them tea cakes for sweet treats. She was known for her homemade cakes, pies and her tea cakes. I have her recipe today and I make them now.

They would go out and cut their Christmas tree, and it was decorated with homemade ornaments and those big bulb lights.

Today we put up artificial trees or buy real ones. We don't go out and find one and chop it down.

Times have definitely changed.

Even for my family, times have changed. We look forward to time together and the meal - we don't buy gifts anymore, to us time together is the gift. My children are grown now so time with them is important to us.

We love the music and the beautiful lights every year as Christmas time approaches. I hope reading this will help you to remember your Christmas past and cherish your memories and make time for new ones. Spend time together with your loves and wrap up new memories.

From my family to yours - Merry Christmas!

"I don't believe in dying - it's been done. I'm looking for a new exit. Besides, I can't die now - I'm booked. I can't afford to die; I'd lose too much money."

George Burns

Our eyes will always remain the same size from birth. But our ears and nose never stop growing.



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Ask Grandma *by Mimi*

Let's grab the joy of the season. December is here and bringing lots of activities for everyone. The holiday season is on, so whether you shop online or in person, now is the time to start. If you have packages to mail, plan on postal lines. Mail seems to take longer to reach the destination these days, so you must mail early if you want the package to arrive before Christmas. Two weeks ahead is a good bet.

How about your Christmas decorating? We get our tree up the weekend after Thanksgiving. Some had outdoor lights up in early November, but we like to get 'Turkey Day' over before we decorate for the holidays coming up.

Our wrapping began in early October as we started ordering from catalogs early and wrapping right away. Waiting until the last minute to wrap is totally exhausting, and none of us needs that added to the load near the twenty-fifth.

Plan to drive through the Galaxy of Lights at the Botanical Gardens from November 14 through December 31, 2025. The gardens are celebrating 30 years of holiday tradition, and

you don't have to get out of your car to enjoy it.

Ice skating in the Big Spring Park is scheduled to run from November 21 through January 4th. It is behind the Huntsville Art Museum. Cost is \$5.00 for children 9 years old and younger and \$15.00 for adult admission. Skate rentals are available for \$5.00.

Just watching the skaters and enjoying a snack is a fun way to spend the evening.

Experience the Burritt on the Mountain Christmas festivities with Candlelight Christmas on December 6th from 5:00 to 9:00 pm, with a cost of \$35.00 to \$70.00. Call 256-536-2882 for more details.

We will all miss The Living Christmas Tree at the First Baptist Church this year. Because of the renovations in the sanctuary, we will have to wait until next year to hear the beautiful songs and music.

The first day of winter is December 21st, so be prepared — colder weather is coming. Our 24 degrees on November 10th gave us fair warning. Get the sweaters and heavy coats ready. It's hard on animals and humans, so let's think about our dogs, as they could use a little extra warmth with a warm blanket to sleep on and a sweater.

Have fun decorating for the holidays; do a little each day so as not to get too tired. Start planning meals well in advance, and don't forget the reason for the season. It's Jesus Christ's birthday.



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Being Really Scared

by John Haley



For years now my wife and I have had a talking pumpkin on our front porch on Halloween.

I have a wooden stand that I made and I drape an old orange shop coat over that stand with a small speaker under the shop coat. I use a guitar amplifier and microphone to transmit the sound of my voice to the speaker under the coat. I used to use a real pumpkin but have replaced that with a ceramic one. We put a lighted candle inside the pumpkin. I sit in the bedroom overlooking this scene with the lights off and the window raised.

I can see and hear the kids but they usually don't see me.

We never try to scare anyone but it is very interesting to watch the kid's expressions and reactions to a talking pumpkin. We have done this for so long that now the kids-of-the-kids that originally came are coming now.

I would like to share with you the three times that I got really scared when I was younger.

The first time occurred when I was about 7 years old. I remember that there were two Funeral Homes in the 5 Points area. I'm pretty sure that Spry Funeral Home was on the corner of Pratt and what's now Andrew Jackson where the Regions Bank is now located. There was another Funeral Home that was on Holmes Avenue just toward town from Tenders Restaurant. It was the Hinshaw Funeral Home. They both moved away from that area in about 1945.

As my classmate (Bill Brown) and I were walking home from East Clinton School, we passed the location of the funeral home on Holmes Avenue. They were in the process of moving from that location and the door of the house that served as the Funeral Home was standing wide open. My classmate said let's go in and look around, so we did.

We walked thru the entire house and came to the very back room. The room was empty except for a low table that had a casket lying on top of it. My friend Bill maneuvered me around until I was right beside the casket. The lid of the casket flew open and straight up. A friend of Bill's screamed from the casket and scared the stew out of me.

The second episode occurred while I was on a hunting trip with my Dad and a group of hunters. We were walking along trying to scare up a rabbit. We came to a fence that we wanted to cross to go into another field to continue our hunt. Being safe, I handed my shotgun to my dad and

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climbed the fence. When I jumped off of the fence on the other side, I landed in the middle of a covey of quail. They all took off at one time and the term used for that action is called "thundering". They made a terrible noise and it scared me so bad I fell to the ground because I had no idea what was happening.

The third occasion when I was scared pretty bad occurred at the Lyric Theater in downtown Huntsville.

I was among the group known as "Patrol Boys" or crossing guards at East Clinton School.

We had to wear a thick canvas belt that showed that we were "Patrol Boys."

For our working at the school helping the kids cross the streets around the school, if we wore our belt on Friday the owner of the Lyric theater would let us in the movie for free.

On this particular occasion, the movie was entitled "The Thing". The movie was about an expedition in the Arctic and supposedly their activity had aroused a creature that had been buried in the ice for a long while. There was this one scene where they are searching for "the Thing" in a warehouse like structure. They are looking everywhere.

They come to a cabinet that had a door that opened from the top down and when they opened the door, a dead dog rolls down out of the cabinet. With the sound effects and all, that was pretty scary but the fellow sitting beside me (Wayne Poole) cleared the chair arm that separated his chair from mine and grabbed me around the neck because he was very scared.

Needless to say he scared me much more than the rest of the entire movie.

Thank goodness I hardly ever get scared anymore.



Christmas Macaroon Torte

1 c. flaked coconut
1/2 c. graham cracker crumbs
1/3 c. chopped pecans
1/2 c. red and green candied cherries
4 egg whites, room temp
Dash salt
1 t. almond or vanilla extract
1 c. sugar

Preheat your oven to 350 degrees and grease a 9" pie plate. Combine first 4 ingredients, set aside. In a large mixing bowl beat the egg whites and salt til soft peaks form. Slowly add the sugar and beat til stiff, add extract. Fold in the coconut/nut/cherry mixture and mix. Pour all into pie plate, bake for 30-35 minutes and pie is lightly browned. Serve with whipped cream and additional cherries.

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IT DON'T SNOW IN ALABAMA



by John Michael Hampton

My grandfather Robert told my mom Patricia that phrase when she first moved to our farm in Athens. She and my stepfather David had moved from Brandon, MS to Athens to help my grandfather take care of my grandmother.

My stepfather asked, "Are you sure or are you just joking with us?"

My grandfather replied that he was serious. We had not had any snow since we moved to Alabama. This was about four weeks before Christmas 1998. I knew that I had seen snow in Alabama before, so I knew that it was only a matter of time before my grandfather would be proven wrong.

Right after Christmas, David and Patricia made a trip to Louisiana to visit David's three sons. While they were gone, it snowed as far south as Birmingham and Tuscaloosa. Dad still told them the night before it snowed that we would not get any snow, despite Dan Satterfield's predictions of 2-4 inches for the Huntsville metro area.

"A child develops individuality long before he develops taste. I've seen my kid straggle into the kitchen in the morning with outfits that need only one accessory - an empty gin bottle."

Erma Bombeck

We woke up next morning with about three inches of snow. Patricia and David did not call as they were packing up the stuff they were bringing back and getting on the road. We got a call from them when they arrived in Tuscaloosa, talking about all this white stuff on the ground. "We thought that it did not snow in Alabama, dad!" Exclaimed my mom.

My grandfather replied that anything can happen, and there are sometime exceptions to every rule. They barely got home in the little Ford Mustang hatchback they were driving due to the slippery roads, especially once they got off the interstate.

When they got to the house, they met grandfather with a snowball fight. They threw one at him and he threw one at them. After that, every time it snowed, they would remind him that he told them that it did not snow in Alabama.

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Two Visits in One Night



by Charles Owens

In my early years, and before I had my own family, I was asked by my friend if I would be willing to come to his home on Christmas Eve and play the part of Santa Claus for his two children; Carol, 4-1/2 years old and Janet, 3 years old. Even though the REAL Santa would be coming later that night with presents. He told me that he had the necessary costume and everything else to do the job.

I agreed, though I was a bit apprehensive since I had never played this merry old gent before.

I arrived at their home at 9 PM as I had been requested. The children had been in bed for a couple of hours so they were deep in dreamland. Henry, my friend, and his wife Carol had a very elaborate costume with boots, the long beard and even some pillows to help fill out my more sparse areas. With their help I got into my regalia and must admit that I made a pretty good Santa.

I was given a big chair on the porch, next to their decorated Christmas tree, and it was very bright with some extra lamps that had been added. At 10 pm Carol went into the bedroom and awakened the two children. She came out with a big smile on her face and the two children in tow, one at each hand.

Henry stood at the side completely elated with the scene he was watching.

The two children came up to me and I gave them my best "Ho Ho Ho" and they looked absolutely terrified. I put my arms around each one of them and helped them sit on my lap. I continued with my "Ho Ho's" and talked to them in my best Santa voice and they just sat there - rigid.

They were shaking so much that it was difficult for me to keep each one perched on my knees. Finally, I helped them slip off my lap and they ran back to their mother and her protective arms. Carol carried them back to bed.

The next morning I was back to wish the family a Merry Christmas. When I arrived the two children ran up to me and excitedly related their experience the night before.

They told me that they had seen Santa and they had hugged and kissed him and told him all the toys that they wanted for Christmas.

I thought to myself that there is no end to the imagination of a little one.

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Heard On the Street



by **Cathey Carney**

We had an early winner on the hidden wish-bone in the November issue. Did you find it? I put it on p. 33 on the **Oscar Llerena** ad, bottom right. See it now? It actually took me a few minutes to find it and I put it in there! The winner is **Mary Jane Miller** of Grand Prairie, Tx and amazingly she has found nearly 100% of the hidden items. Congratulations to Mary and keep it up!

Whether you're planning to move to Huntsville or not, this is something you need to know. Huntsville has, hands down, the **hardest working city workers** you'll find anywhere. Our city and streets are clean, issues like potholes get resolved quickly. Our Huntsville Utilities work 24 hours a day to keep us with power. Whenever storms happen and we have power outs the linemen and women are working in the dark, day and night til it's fixed. We could write pages on the "above and beyond" efforts of our departments like the Public Works Sanitation, Public Works/Roads, Landscape Management, etc. but we will keep it short. We appreciate each and every one of our city workers even though we don't let you know often enough.

I found the most comfortable shoes for just everyday use, walking etc. They are Skechers and they are called Slip-Ins. There are several models but they are basically sneakers and walking shoes (not leather) that you just step into. I had my doubts and thought they would slide on my heel

when I walked but ya'll - get you a pair of these shoes. They are like walking on air, and give you support. I have a bun-ion also that prevents tight shoes and these are perfect. They have a boot style as well that you step into, covered with warm furry wonderfulness on the inside. I promise they are not paying me - I just love them!

We lost an incredibly sweet lady in the Old Town neighborhood on Oct. 28. **Linda Alt**. Linda was known as "**Marmie**" and was raised by a strong family, starting with her grandmother, in addition to her mom **Roselle** and dad **Carl Coker**. Linda was a farm girl growing up but always loved fashion design and beautiful clothing.

She met the love of her life, **Emile Alt**, and they married on Valentine's Day in 1966. They welcomed first daughter **Tara**. Then Emile served in Vietnam, returned safely and soon they welcomed second daughter **Tiffany** and moved to Flagstaff, AZ. You can't expect an Alabama girl to like Arizona, though and Linda said there was "Way too much Snow!"

Like most Army families, they moved every few years including overseas. While there they traveled to so many historic and beautiful cities like Paris, Venice, Holland, Greece, Ireland to just name a few. This instilled a love of antiques which stayed with Linda til the end. Upon their return to the U.S. they moved to Huntsville, AL, where they originally met. Their first grandson was **Andrew**. He was followed by **Peyton, Megan, Thomas and Emma Grace**.

Even though Linda was small, she was a sassy, red-headed, feisty lady with great style and you always knew where you stood with her. She was tough and loved her family



Built circa 1850, the Historic Lowry House is open and available to the public and can be rented for private functions. The manicured grounds have been awarded the city's Beautification Award for five consecutive years.

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fiercely. Linda and Emile attended every **Old Town Historic District** event, even when Linda struggled with Parkinson's disease. That never stopped her from doing what she loved. Her passing leaves a void in the lives of her family and many friends who will miss her always.

For some reason, the full moon has a direct effect on diabetics. Check your calendar and when you see that there is to be a full moon, be EXTRA careful and conscientious with your diet and medication during this time.

We've heard recently more and more scams directed at older people who seem to be more trusting than younger folks. Remember that if someone calls you and wants you to get/send money to them it's a scam. These people who call often are not even in the U.S. and they can be very persuasive. And once you've given your information, it's out there. If you don't recognize a phone number, just don't answer. Makes life a lot simpler.

The **U.S. Veterans Memorial Museum** will mark a pivotal moment in its nearly 40-year history - a major expansion that will more than double the facility's exhibition space. The Huntsville Planning Commission unanimously approved the expansion plans in April.

It's currently located in John Hunt Park, right off Airport Road if you're headed west. Construction will begin of a 27,000-square-foot addition to the museum, which has operated in a converted airport hangar since 2000. The expansion represents the largest development at the site since the museum opened its doors on Veterans Day 2001.

"It'll be world class. It'll be a tribute to our veterans and to our service members," said museum director **Randy Withrow**. Withrow has guided the institution since its incorporation in 1986.

The new facility will provide a permanent home for the museum's Alabama boxcar, a significant artifact that has been part of the collection. The expansion will also allow the museum to finally display a dozen restored military vehicles and equipment pieces that have languished in storage due to space constraints.

Happy recent birthday on Oct. 28th to **Becky Galloway** who is a huge War Eagle fan. She gets to visit Huntsville every once in a while and we miss you!

Rocket City Chorus will be at the Parkway Place Mall on December 12 from 6PM to 730PM. They will also perform Saturday, December 13 at Mayfair Church of Christ from 400PM to 530PM. They are so talented and really put you in the holiday mood. All are welcome!

Elizabeth Wharry is celebrating her birthday that same weekend, on Dec. 14th. She is still a kid but as regular contributor to Old Huntsville magazine she has quite a following! Happy Birthday Elizabeth!

Another birthday that we can never forget is **Oscar Llerena** of Miami. He is a proud graduate of Huntsville High Class of '66 and each month in this magazine Oscar sends love to his class as well as all graduates of Huntsville High. His birthday is Dec. 24 and he was the best present ever for his parents. Oscar is a handsome, generous, hardworking man who comes back to Huntsville for class reunions. Can't wait to see you again Oscar!

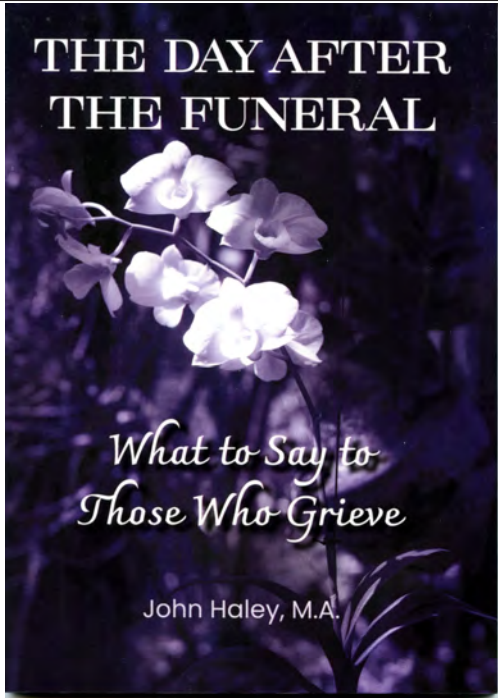
I have hidden 2 toys in this issue - tiny toys. One is a **teddy bear**, one is a **dump truck**. You need to find BOTH in order to win, but you won't If you are the lucky one, call me during daylight hours (256) 534-0502. No midnight calls!

Jean Sanderson has a Dec. 17th birthday and we're hoping her sweet (new) husband **Jay Jamison** takes her somewhere special for her big day. Happy Birthday to you Jean.

A special hello to **Sam Michael** whom we recently spoke with and is delightful to listen to. He lost his sweet wife recently and we are sending love and prayers to you for comfort and healing.

I read that if you're feeling down you can hug yourself and you'll feel better! **Just give yourself a big ole hug** and you will be surprised how much better you'll feel. In addition, make a habit of bragging on yourself, to yourself. In other words, phrases like "I'm proud of you"; "You Did It!"; "I love you"; "Look what you accomplished"; - things you might say to your friends but rarely say to yourself. Try it and when it becomes a habit, you're on the right track!

Merry Christmas to all our readers and we're looking forward to a brand new year! Please check on your neighbors who may be living alone and not wanting to bother anyone. They need your kindness and love too.



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Seasoned salt
Garlic powder
Worcestershire sauce

Defrost roast if necessary. Sprinkle generously with seasoned pepper, seasoned salt, garlic powder, Worcestershire sauce.

Bake at 275 degrees for 1 hour and 20 minutes. Let rest without cutting into it for 10 minutes.

Bourbon Sweet Potatoes

This is a great winter casserole, especially appropriate for Christmas dinner. It is nice with pork dishes, too.

6 medium sweet potatoes
1/2 cup sugar
1 teaspoon salt
3/4 stick butter
Nutmeg, dash
1 egg, beaten
1/2 cup bourbon whiskey

Marshmallows for topping

Preparation:

Boil sweet potatoes until fork tender. When cooked, peel and mash potatoes. Add: sugar, salt, butter, nutmeg.

Beat egg into whiskey. Mix in potato mixture. Place in a Pyrex baking dish and top with marshmallow halves. Bake in a 350 degrees oven for 45 minutes or until marshmallows are golden brown.

Burgundy Beef Stew

1-3/4 lb.. stew meat
1 t. dried thyme
1/2 c. Burgundy wine
1 c. chopped fresh carrots
2 T. cornstarch
1 c. sugar snap peas
1 T. olive oil
1 13-oz. can beef broth
2 cloves garlic, minced
2 c. fresh pearl onions
1 T. water

In a large saucepan with lid, brown the beef in oil. Sprinkle beef with thyme and salt and pepper to taste. Add the broth, wine

and garlic; stir to combine. Bring to a boil; cover tightly and simmer for about an hour and a half til beef is tender.

Add the carrots and onions, cover and cook for an additional 15 minutes. Combine cornstarch and water and stir into the stew with sugar snap peas. Bring to another boil and cook for 2 minutes, stirring all the while.

This would be good with a crisp garden salad and garlic bread.

Squash Casserole

1-1/2 lb.. sliced yellow squash
- fresh
1 stick butter
1 pkg. herb stuffing mix (use half the package)
1 can cream of chicken soup
1 8-oz. carton sour cream
1 4-oz. jar chopped pimiento, drained

1 can water chestnuts, chopped
2 onions, finely chopped

Cook squash in water, drain and set aside. Melt 3/4 stick butter, add 1/2 bag of stuffing mix.

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Stir and coat the stuffing mix.

Pack the bottom of a 2 quart casserole dish with 1/2 of the stuffing mixture. Layer the squash on top. Mix other ingredients and pour over the squash. Put remainder of the topping on and dot with butter. Bake at 350 degrees for 30 minutes.

Potatoes in Cream Wine

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

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

Almond Toffee Triangles

1/2 c. packed brown sugar
2/3 c. butter, softened
1/2 c. light corn syrup
1 egg
1 t. vanilla
2 c. plain flour
1/4 t. salt

Heat your oven to 350 degrees. Grease a 15 x 10 x 1" pan. Mix the brown sugar, butter, corn syrup, egg and vanilla. Stir in flour and salt. Spread dough in pan. Bake until light golden brown, for 18 minutes.

Prepare topping, below. Pour over baked layer, spread evenly. Bake until light brown and set, about 18 minutes. Cool, cut into small squares. Cut each square in half diagonally.

Topping

1/3 c. packed brown sugar
1/3 c. light corn syrup
1/4 c. butter, softened
1/4 c. whipping cream

1 t. vanilla extract
1 c. sliced almonds

Cook and stir brown sugar and corn syrup over low heat until sugar is dissolved. Stir in butter and cream. Heat to boiling, remove from heat. Stir in vanilla and almonds.

Sugar Pecan Muffins

2 eggs
1 c. brown sugar
1/3 c. melted butter
1 t. vanilla
1/2 c. all purpose flour
1-1/2 c. pecan halves

Don't use your mixer for this one. Beat the eggs with a fork, add your sugar and butter. Mix well, add vanilla and flour, stir and add the pecans.

Grease and flour muffin pans. Fill 1/4 to 1/2 full. Bake at 325 for 15 minutes if small muffins, 25 minutes for regular muffins.

Hazelnut Butter Crunch

1/2 c. all-purpose flour
1/3 c. chopped hazelnuts
1/4 c. packed brown sugar

1/4 c. butter or margarine

Mix all until crumbly - distribute evenly in ungreased 9x9 inch pan. Bake at 400 degrees until golden brown, 7 to 10 minutes. Stir and cool, store in covered container

Best Dark Fudge

3 c. semi-sweet chocolate chips
1 dash salt
1-1/2 t. vanilla extract
1 can Eagle Brand Condensed milk

1 c. walnuts or pecans, chopped
In a heavy saucepan over low heat, melt the chips with the Eagle Brand and salt. Remove from heat, stir in nuts and vanilla. Spread evenly over wax-paper-lined 9x13" pan. Do it quickly as it hardens fast.

Cover with plastic wrap and chill in fridge overnight. Next day turn fudge onto cutting board and remove all waxed paper. Cut into very small squares.



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Alcohol - deadens the nerves and the brain, weakens the will, blunts the conscience, and arouses the animal instincts. It is habit-forming.

Tobacco - is a narcotic to nerves and brain, weakens the will, and blunts the conscience. It is habit forming.

Tea, coffee and cola drinks - injures the nerves, interferes with the function of the brain, weakens the will, and are habit-forming.

Cocoa - is the same as coffee but not as strong in habit-forming.

Spices - irritate the nerves.

Pain-killing remedies deaden the nerves and the brain to some extent.

Dope - the derivatives of opium and similar preparations, injure the nerves and the brain cells.

Sour stomach - makes clear thinking very difficult and the best thinking impossible.

Constipation - by causing toxins to be absorbed into the blood, contributes to a dull mind.

Worry - has a disastrous effect on both nerves and mind.

It's Better to Give than to Receive but Why Not Have Both?

by Jack Burwell

As I entered third grade, it looked like it was going to be another bumper year. In second grade, due to the popularity contest that Mrs. Russell arranged, I discovered that my social status was that of an invisible little boy. My best friends thought their other best friends more important than me and girls in the class turned their eyes away when I approached with the exception of Sharon Zarovsky. But while I once thought I got a smile from Sharon, it's highly likely she was smiling at someone behind me instead of actually me. This I will never know for sure.

However, in third grade, it no longer mattered what girls thought of me. I was now in my latency stage of development as described by Freud and Erik Erikson, and the intriguing nature of females seemed to disappear.

At some time during third grade or the summer before it, I was taken to Putt-Putt on Leeman Ferry Road. All of a sudden, rolling golf balls, colored red, blue, green and yellow, dominated my thoughts. In other words, I loved playing putt-putt. For sixty cents every Saturday morning, I could play putt-putt from 9:00 a.m. to noon. Otherwise, it was forty cents a round, but there were ways to win free rounds. Before I knew it, I was completely hooked.

Don and Bruce Woody and I went every Saturday until it got too cold at the putt-putt course. Also, I discovered collecting American coins: pennies, nickels, dimes, quarters, half dollars and best of all, silver dollars. Every time I got change, coins would go into the small blue books where I housed my collections. With devotion beyond the call of duty, my caring mother would take me to the monthly coin collector show at the Elks Club, sitting in the back of the

room with another lady while I was having the time of my life. The show was mostly attended by men, but another friend my age, named L.A. Davis, and I spent two to three hours looking at everything various older collectors had on their tables to sell or trade.

Then there was the auction of expensive coins. I never bought a coin at auction but the call of bids and finally the sound of the gavel coming down would cause my heart to pound. Usually, I would come home with some new treasure that upgraded my collection. L.A. and I would both obsess about someday owning a 1909 S VDB and a 1914 D Lincoln penny in extremely fine condition, key dates in our penny collections.

On rare occasions, some semi-key dates could still be found in hand change. One Sunday night at First Methodist Church when meeting with fellow elementary students, I took out a 1910 S Lincoln penny in the collection plate in "fine" condition. I had put a dime in the plate and took back five pennies in change. I only got a quarter a week as allowance, so a nickel a week was being quite generous on my part. Actually, that's why I usually only gave a nickel every two weeks. A nickel a week was actually being way too generous.

My normally good buddy, Mack McCary, was almost always at church whenever I was there. Mack was probably made a little uneasy as he saw me taking change out of the collection plate. I admit, I was creating what lawyers call "bad optics." He may not have been aware that I had put a dime in and was collecting my change. After all, I was a Burwell. We believed in giving to the church but only the appropriate amount. My fair share was two and one-half cents a week. Christmas wasn't too far away, which meant more giving. I needed to stay in my budget.

The next day, after carefully examining the five pennies I took in change, I determined that one of the pennies was a 1910

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

Woody Allen

S Lincoln penny. My Red Book showed it was worth \$3.50. That's what a dealer would sell it for. At the next Sunday night meeting a week later, I calmly boasted about my great find in the collection plate with a smug smile on my face. I thought everyone would want to celebrate with me as to my good fortune. This was sorta like the prodigal son coming home and having a fatted pig being cooked for him. I say "sorta" because that story was not exactly on point, but it was close enough.

Mack McCary, my life-long friend who had internalized our Sunday School lessons better than I had, wasn't so happy as to my good fortune. He was quick to point out that the semi-rare penny belonged to God and not to me. In effect he accused me of stealing the semi-rare penny. I was deeply offended. I grudgingly surmised that there wasn't going to be a party in my honor for finding the semi-rare penny.

I started carefully thinking about my arguments as to why I shouldn't have to bring the penny back. After all, I took it out of the collection plate as change. That made it mine. Also, if I hadn't found the 1910 S penny, it would have been wrapped up with other pennies and sent to the bank. God would only get a penny of value for the coin, not \$3.50. Some other lucky soul would get the benefit of the semi-rare penny, not God or me. Also, I was quite sure God wanted me to have that penny for my collection. This was my first 1910 S penny in fine condition. He wouldn't have let me find it if He didn't want me to have it. Finally, I wouldn't have paid \$3.50 for this particular penny at the coin shop located next to Lewter's Hardware. I was saving my money for a 1909 S VDB penny in extremely fine condition. The 1910 S penny was nice but only if I found it in change.

Mack still seemed to think after my explanation that I still owed the church \$3.49. Well, I firmly told him, neither God nor the church was going to get \$3.49 from me, and I wasn't bringing the penny back.

In future weeks, Mack and I forgot about my special found penny and stayed lifelong friends. But on that night, Mack went to sit in the front of the class, and I moved to sit in the back. After that, I kept my mouth shut when I found a semi-rare coin whether at church or anywhere else.

In addition, I learned not to make change out of a collection plate even if money is owed to me.

Christmas Coconut Cake

- 1 pkg. white cake mix
- 2 c. sugar
- 2 c. sour cream
- 3 (6 oz) pkgs. frozen coconut, thawed
- 12 oz. whipped topping

Bake cake using package directions for 2 round cake pans. Cool, split each layer into halves horizontally with a string. Mix sugar, sour cream and coconut in a bowl; mix well. Chill in fridge for an hour.

Remove frosting and spread between layers, reserving one cup in small bowl. Combine reserved sour cream mixture with the whipped topping and mix well. Spread on top and side of cake.

Store in airtight container in fridge for 3 days.



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A Christmas to Remember

by Charles Flanders

Christmas 1951 was the year that my brother and I got our first pair of roller skates. I was 8 years old and had wanted a pair of roller skates for a long time. I knew nothing of the kind of skates that came with built on shoes. This was the type that just clamped to the bottom of your shoes.

Problem was I only had one pair of shoes and they were meant to only be worn to church or on special occasions. Mama would surely tan our hides if we damaged those shoes.

On Christmas morning, about 2 a.m. my brother woke me and said let's go see what presents we got. So very quietly, we sneaked into the living room, trying not to wake mom and dad, who, I'm sure, would

have sent us back to bed. When we saw the skates we could not wait to put them on but realized the noise of the skates on the wooden floors would be too loud, we would be better off to get our shoes and go outside..

Unfortunately, we had no sidewalk, no paved driveway and lived on a dirt road. Downtown had sidewalks but was over 8 blocks away. In desperation, we settled on the sidewalk in front of the grocery store about 1 block away. The sidewalk was

about 4 feet wide and 25 feet long, not much room for a good night of skating but we ran down there anyway.

We were only clad in our thin pj's and just the bottoms at that. It was freezing cold, and the wintery wind was blowing furiously but to 8 and 10 year old little boys, a good adventure was more important than being concerned about freezing to

death. We then skated until the break of day. Then we ran back home, put the skates back under the tree, polished our Sunday shoes to hide the scuff marks, and went back to bed.

Later that morning, mom woke us up and we pretended that we were excited to see our Christmas presents for the first time. But at the breakfast table dad asked, how did you boys enjoy your skating party in front of the grocery store this morning? Oh my gosh, I thought, as our lives passed before our eyes, and with fear for our lives, we confessed. But then mom chimed in and said, how were you able to wear the skates? Surely, she said, you did not wear your Sunday shoes.

Instantly we bowed our heads, the fear that had just left was now back. We slowly got up from the table and got our shoes to show mom. After carefully examining them, she said, I don't know how you did it, but the shoes are not hurt.

With a sigh of relief, we realized that for sure we had the best parents in the world..and that we would never forget our first pair of skates that Christmas.

"The pastor would appreciate it if the ladies of the church would lend him their electric girdles for the pancake breakfast next Sunday."

Seen in local church flyer

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John Purdy
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Grandma's Old Time Remedies



* If you have an ulcer, cabbage can help. It contains a lot of glutamine, an amino acid that has been shown to heal ulcers. Have at least one healthy serving of steamed cabbage each day for a couple of weeks.

* Want to dissolve a wart? Do the following: in the morning, crush a vitamin A capsule, mix with a bit of water to form a paste and apply it directly to your wart. About noon, drop a bit of castor oil on the wart, then at night drop some lemon juice on it.

* Worried about that Saturday morning hangover? Before you retire Friday night, take an aspirin with three glasses of water. What hurts the next day is dehydration - so by drinking a lot of water the night before you prevent that.

* For a delicious cocktail that heals sore throat, juice three pineapple rings with 1/2 inch thick slice of fresh ginger. Down the Hatch!

* Do your feet smell bad? End the persistent odor by soaking your feet in tea! It works because the tannic acid eliminates the odor.

* Garlic Tabs (found in health food stores) has been proven to lower blood pressure.

* If your spouse or mate is a heavy smoker, you need to protect yourself against the damage caused by second-

hand smoke. You should consume food high in Beta-carotene, such as carrots, squash, yams, sweet potatoes and other yellow-orange vegetables; foods high in vitamin C such as fruits, peppers and broccoli; and vitamin E (wheat germ and nuts).

* If you feel that you've had food poisoning, immediately eat a slice or two of bread. Don't, however, butter the bread.

* To help lower your cholesterol, eat grapes. There's a compound in the skins and seeds that helps lower the cholesterol - that's why wine is helpful.

* If you know someone with angina pain, make sure they eat plenty of dark green leafy veggies - such as spinach, kale, turnip greens and mustard greens. They are good sources of magnesium, which relaxes the heart muscle and establishes function, making the heart perform better.

* A quick picker-upper is 1/4 teaspoon of cayenne pepper in a cup of water. Drink it down and get a second wind.


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Gifts

by Iolanda Hicks



This is my favorite month of the year and there are so many stories that can be written for this special season. Instead of a story, I wanted to write about something we all share. Sometimes we are not aware of the difference we can make in this world if we use what we are freely given: our gifts. When we are born, I believe that each of us are blessed with gifts from God. Some of us never realize our gifts and therefore they fade as time passes. I believe that God gives us these gifts if we use them, to help not only ourselves but others we meet during our life's travels.

In September of this year, my David and I decided to stay for Sunday School at this special Bible Church we have been attending for quite a few months. It was in one of those classes that Pastor Schwanke spoke about the gifts we are given from God.

Pastor Steve, as I call him, is one of God's children that was given several gifts and he uses them to help so many others. His wife and family have also been blessed with special gifts. It has been amazing to watch this special church family use their gifts to enhance the faith of the church's congregation.

I decided to do some research. I found many verses in several of the books of the Bible, that mention the gifts God bestows on His children. It was amazing how many references there were in the Bible! I thought "what a great story for Christmas!" God gives us His Son, whose birth we celebrate in December: a wonderful gift! Then God gives us gifts at the time of our birth, not wrapped, but part of who we are and who we become. All this to help others.

Did you know that the word gift, in a dictionary, can mean "a thing given willingly to someone without payment; a present. It can also be a natural ability or talent".

Biblically, a gift has a bit more meaning. In fact, there are several meanings. Let's look at spiritual gifts such as teaching or service to others. This service comes from God with the gifts or talents He bestows on us, which many of us

use for His purpose.

It's been said, that if you don't use the God-given gifts you are born with, then "they can diminish over time through disuse, leading to a loss of skill and effectiveness". I decided to pose a question, using the infamous Google, to compare continued exercise to strengthen muscles vs. using the gifts we are given but not continuing with either, on a regular basis.

AI, through Google, immediately came back with this answer: "Exercising a born gift is analogous to working out a physical muscle under the principle of "use it or lose it". Both rely on consistent, deliberate practice and mental focus to improve, grow and avoid atrophy. The comparison highlights how even innate abilities require engagement and effort to reach their full potential".

With everything I have written, I have finally reached the message I truly wanted to pass on during this Christmas season. With all the turmoil in this world, the unfortunate sadness that comes with that turmoil - try to make this season a kind, loving and a happy time. Besides the beautifully wrapped gifts we will have for our friends and loved ones, please remember the many gifts we each have been blessed with and use them to spread joy and peace!

As I have done in so many of my stories, I leave you with a thought from Hamilton Wright Mabie: "Blessed is the season which engages the whole world in a conspiracy of love".

Merry Christmas from our Home to Yours!

City News from 1871

- A Randolph Street man advertised for a "Self-supporting Wife."
- A Decatur thief, after great risks, managed to steal \$400 in Confederate money.
- Two rifled United States mail bags were discovered Monday under the platform of a cotton press. One was unlocked, but both were cut open as if with a dull knife, and both were empty. Their appearance indicated that they had been very recently put there. No letter or sign of the contents was found, but there is reason to think they were rifled Saturday night after being snatched from the incoming train from Nashville.
- A local woman who, unfortunately, has been addicted to the morphine habit for a number of years, sought refuge in the police station Sunday and died there.

LOCAL NEWS FROM 1875

A man named Montgomery, a respected citizen we are told, residing near Courtland, Al who purchased some years ago the Garth plantation, last Wednesday hanged himself in his barn near his residence. It is thought that money embarrassment led the unfortunate man to commit the rash deed. He was found dead before the body had become cold. His father had written some days previous and reached Courtland a couple of hours after the unfortunate act occurred. The deceased leaves a wife and children.

For Sale

I will sell, for two thirds cash, with the balance on the first of July, to the highest bidder in front of the Court House door in the City of Huntsville on Monday March 1, 1875. The property is situated on the west side of Madison Street, in South Huntsville, consisting of a good dwelling house, two small grocery houses, kitchen and well house, all in good order. The lot fronts 80 feet on Madison Street or Whitesburg Pike and runs back 230 feet. There are nice shade and fruit trees on the place, and a well of good water. A bargain can be had, as a sale must be made. Wesley Townsend

It is encouraging to see signs of improvement in the city. Mr. E. S. Johnson is now excavating and will soon commence the erection of a large brick store on the corner of Jefferson and Holmes Streets.

The City Hotel Restaurant opposite the Opera house

This first class establishment is now open to the public. It has been newly fitted up and fur-

nished in the best style - both Ladies and Gentlemens departments. Meals will be furnished at all reasonable hours with the best the market affords, including Wild Game, Fish, Oysters, Etc.

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H. McGee, Proprietor

The Horror of Hydrophobia

William Ellis of Huntsville died yesterday under an attack of hydrophobia. He was bitten last summer by a coach dog as he was trying to muzzle him. The police killed the dog under the supposition that it was mad and in spite of Ellis' wishes. Ellis' wife was bitten at the same time and she burned her wound with caustic, but her husband paid no attention to his hurt.

It healed up and gave him no more trouble until last Monday. Then he went to a ball and on his way home fell in the street in a fit. He was attacked with spasms which extended over his entire body. In his home he screamed and yelled and seemed to be in the greatest agony. He thought that someone was going to murder his wife and children, and when any one approached him he tried his best to strike him.

Dr. A. G. Clopton says that Ellis sprang from his bed and drove one of the physicians from the room. Three doctors applied electric batteries to Ellis' body but he did not improve under them. His convulsions continued until yesterday morning and then he died.

He eagerly drank four glasses of water just before his death.



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

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

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**"If my stories can make
you laugh, cry or think, I
have done my job."**

Tom Carney, Writer

MY GRANDMOTHER



by Richard Hale

I was reading an old edition of the Old Huntsville magazine and I ran across an article written by Gerald Alvis about Grandmothers. It started me thinking about mine and how lucky I was to have her.

My Grandmother's name was Lillian Eslinger and she was an old fashioned southern woman who did things the old fashioned way and had old fashioned beliefs. For example, she was a die-hard Church of Christ member and if you were not, you would not go to heaven. She knew only one man her entire 93 years of life. Never flew in a plane and never drove a car. Cooked all her meals on a cast iron wood burning stove making the best pies you ever ate.

My dad left us 4 kids and went to St. Louis when we were all very young. My mom was killed in a head-on car wreck just outside of Gurley when I was only 9 years old. We were scheduled to be put up for adoption until my Grandmother stepped up to the plate.

My Grandpa passed away from lung cancer in 1953 at age 53 when I was 5 years old. This left my Grandma alone to help my mom

raise us 4 kids. Mom died 4 years later. Keep in mind my Grandmother had already raised 6 kids of her own but this didn't stop her from adopting us so we could all stay together. Most women at this stage would be worn out raising kids but not my Grandma. Now it's just her and the 4 of us.

Because my mother was only 32 when she



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was killed in the car wreck her Social Security was very small because of her age and being the counter person at Service Cleaners at 5 Points in Huntsville. Not much income. It was only \$115.00 per month. Somehow, we made do until we were old enough to get jobs. This all started in 1956 and lasted until 1964 when I went into the service. First thing I did was to start an allotment and send it to Grandma.

During this time, we lived in the country in both Gurley and Woodville. When I was 13 we moved to Sparkman Homes in Huntsville because it was very low rental housing but, a tough place to live. It's here that Grandma took on extra work. When we lived in the country, we all hoed and picked cotton. When we moved to Sparkman Homes Grandma took in extra ironing, sewing clothes, fed a handicapped lady across from us and anything else she could do to bring in extra money.

Grandma and I would go through the commodity line together on Holmes Avenue under a large tent and I would hold open a large flour sack. People would throw in non-perishable food items in the sack. During Christmas and Thanksgiving church people would bring over fruit baskets. We did our food shopping at A&P market in Huntsville but only for necessities. Grandma made lunches for all 4 of us and put them in brown paper bags. We had to use these bags all week and by Friday they were pretty soiled. The bags fit just perfect rolled up in my back pocket. She made potted meat, peanut butter and banana, bologna and cheese and peanut butter and jelly.

As soon as we were old enough, we had to get some kind of a job that would bring money back to the family. I found a job at the Plantation Restaurant busing tables. Remember, I'm fresh out of the country and knew very little about city life. My first night I was cleaning tables I found all kinds of change under all the dishes. I thought this was the way I got paid.

I put the change in my pocket for most of the shift until the waitresses started complaining about no tips and saw my bulging pockets. When they found out, they laughed so hard they couldn't stay mad.

They divided up the tips and they even gave me 75 cents as my tip. I also worked cutting grass for 25 to 35 cents a yard and worked in the blind man's store in the back of the project. My last job before I went in the service was Bellboy/elevator operator at the Russel Erskine Hotel.

Grandma was very devoted Church of Christ person. She would make all of us go with her to church on Sunday, Sunday night and Wednesday night Bible study. We could

never afford a car so we caught the church school buses or rode our home-made bikes that my brother and I built using old parts. We even opened up a business doing this same thing.

There are things money can't buy but a lot of love will. Like cutting wood using a cross-cut saw with Grandma just so we could all stay warm. Setting on the floor listening to Grandma tell stories about O'l Brer rabbit while she was ironing our clothes. She made most of our clothes by hand. You learn to love your grandma when she irons for someone else, mends clothes for someone else, cooks for someone else, and still finds time to help with homework. We ate simple food but I never went hungry. Always had clean clothes.

We all worked very hard next to Grandma in cotton fields, corn fields, potato patches and a garden just to keep our heads above water.

In closing I'll share this. She gave up the Golden years of her life so we could all stay together as a family and she had such an influence on my life that I can still hear her say "Now Richard, you know better than to do that!"

Love you, Grandma.



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The Old Man in the Woods

by Annette Mize Enomoto

This story keeps running through my mind. I feel that I can't put it off any longer. I must tell it now before anything happens to me. I love dogs and have loved them as long as I can remember. As I walked Copper on a cool January morning, we came upon an old gentleman. To me, as a kid, he looked just like someone who could play Santa Claus. Copper just loves everyone so he ran over to the man. I tried to stop him but he had his little puppy dog mind set to say hello. I always call him a community dog for he just loves all people.

I said hello to the man and he told me his name was Chris; he said everyone called him Chris. Chris looked and said Hello, Annette. I was so surprised. Then he turned to my dog, Copper, and said good morning, Copper. I was so shocked! How do you know our names? He said it's just a gift. I said it's nice to meet you but we have to continue our walk. I wasn't sure if I should talk to him or not. Nowadays the way people are, you just have to be careful.

I have to tell you now that I am growing old but part of me is still a kid. I would love to climb trees again with my cousin Beth! It would be coming a rain storm with the wind blowing and we would climb up old pine trees up as far as we could go swaying in the wind. I called it riding the trees. What fun we had! The kind of fun only children know.

Now that brings my memory back to Christmas time. Just what did we see but Santa Claus! I told Beth that is the man in the woods. No one believes me but my cousin Beth. She was always my friend and companion. Still to this day when I talk with her, it just seems like all the years melt away and we just pick up where we left off. Just what we saw was the REAL SANTA CLAUS!

The song "MEMORIES" is so true.



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Christmas with Carol



by Shirley Nolen

One night in December, 1971, our doorbell rang. It was Carol Bankston, delivering a basket filled with all the makings of an English Christmas dinner. The basket contained HP sauce (Carol said "no self-respecting British family would sit down to dinner without it"), Bisto gravy (this still appears on our own Christmas table), plum pudding, mince meat, English tea and other goodies.

My girls were fascinated by the Christmas Crackers, little gift-wrapped tubes that "cracked" when you pulled them apart to find the little surprises inside.

Carol and I had talked a few times before about our Christmas memories.

My memories were mostly of my Mother, the meals she served, and our stocking treats. However, Carol's stories were so exciting to me because her family was steeped in traditions of England and an exotic-sounding land called "Rhodesia."

Carol and I sat at my little kitchen table that night and talked for hours about Christmas memories; me in my night robe, hair in curlers, very pregnant with my youngest child, Scott.

Once, Carol tried to help me make an authentic English "Christmas Cake" and Yorkshire Pudding.

I gave up trying after Carol's Mum Winifred came to live in America, or as she put it "the God-forsaken colonies," and showed us how it was really done.

Our families celebrated Christmas together for more than 20 years. And always, when the little ones' eyelids were so heavy, in that magical moment, Santa arrived with a bag of special goodies.

Then all of the girls would sit down to the piano with the Reader's Digest Songbook for a hearty singalong. "It's a long way to Tipperary" was a favorite. Harrison would regale us with "Why don't you haul off and love me" among others.

Carol was always the epitome of a perfect English lady, a treasured Southern neighbor, and an incredibly loving and fun friend. She is no longer with us, but her memory is with our family every year during the holidays.

Let's have a cup of Wassail in her honor!

Wassail

2 quarts sweet apple cider
2 cups orange juice
1 cup lemon juice
2 #2 cans pineapple juice
2 sticks cinnamon
1 tablespoon whole cloves

Bring to a simmer. Strain. Sweeten to taste. Serve hot.

Pumpkin-Ice Cream Pie

1 pt. vanilla ice cream, softened

1 baked 10" pastry shell

1 - 16 oz. can pumpkin

1-1/2 c. sugar

Dash salt

1 t. ground ginger

1 t. ground cinnamon

1 t. vanilla extract

1-1/2 c. whipping cream, divided

Caramelized almonds

Spread ice cream in bottom of pastry shell; freeze til firm. Combine pumpkin, sugar, salt, spices & vanilla, stir. Beat 1 cup whipping cream til light and fluffy; fold into pumpkin mixture. Spread over ice cream layer; freeze til firm.

Beat remaining whipping cream til light, use to garnish frozen pie just before serving. Sprinkle with Caramelized Almonds.

Caramelized Almonds

1/4 c. sugar

1 c. slivered almonds

Combine sugar and almonds; cook over low heat til sugar and almonds have browned. Careful not to burn. Stir constantly. Spread mixture in a thin layer on a buttered cookie sheet; cool. Break into small pieces and sprinkle over pie.

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

Seen on recent high school quiz on Analogies and Metaphors

A GOOD INVESTMENT

by Cecil Ashburn



Bob and Lee were brothers whom I hired in 1946 at Ashburn and Gray Construction. Bob was an especially good worker who never failed to put his heart into any job I assigned him.

One day we needed to load a dump truck with sand. As I was telling them what to do, I bragged on what good workers they were and suggested they could load the truck in one hour. When I came back in about an hour the truck was loaded and they were leaning on their shovels, tired but proud of having finished the task - an example of the "power of the boss' suggestion." Also, dump trucks were much smaller in those days.

One day Bob asked me to loan him a hundred dollars, which I did. Remember, that unlike the dump truck, a hundred dollars was bigger in those days. He had a little farm down on Weatherly Road and I probably assumed the loan had something to do with it.

It wasn't long until Bob paid me back the hundred dollars.

As the years passed and business began to get better, I would buy a new car every year or so. I noticed that whenever I bought one, so would Bob - maybe not a new one, but still a nice car.

I purchased a Pontiac, Bob got one. I got a Buick and Bob got one. Finally I purchased a Cadillac, and yes, Bob got one too.

Bob was still a laborer and once while talking with him, I asked, "Bob, I know how much you make. How is it that you can afford those big cars?"

Bob kind of grinned when he answered.

"Captain, you remember that hundred dollars you loaned me?"

"Yes," I replied, "and you paid me back."

"Well," Bob said, "I took that hundred dollars and bought a hundred dollars worth of pints and half pints of liquor and sold them out of my smokehouse. I about doubled my money every night."

Bob died a few years ago and made his final journey to the cemetery in a gleaming black Cadillac. His family also rode in a nice one.

Rest in peace, Bob.

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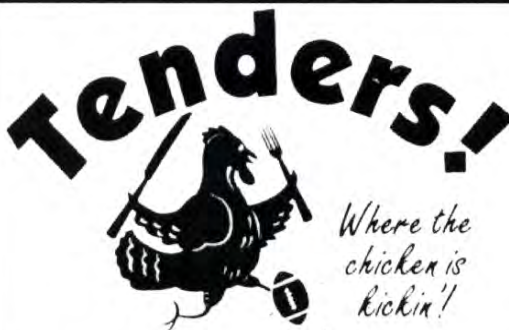
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Smokey Mountain Bears



by Cathy B. Bridges

What idiot would chase a mama bear and her two cubs up the road just to get a picture? Me. That is who. When my daughter was about five or six years old, we went to the Smokies with my parents. It was the end of summer, and the heat was still intense. We stayed in a small motel called the Creekside. It had a pool, which was a welcome sight since it was around 95 degrees. I do not think the motel is there anymore. That was in or near Pigeon Forge, but we also visited Gatlinburg. Despite the heat, we still had a great time on our vacation.

One day, we went on a picnic at a favorite historic eating spot on the mountain. It seemed to be a very peaceful place with a creek nearby. My husband and I walked across the huge rocks and enjoyed the scenery. It felt good to be out in nature. Then we all sat at one of the picnic tables to eat lunch. There were about a dozen people nearby doing the same thing.

Suddenly, a mama bear and her cubs showed up out of nowhere. The mama bear headed towards the people at the picnic table next to us, scaring them so much that they did not know whether to get up or stay still. They had been in the middle of eating their lunch. When the bear climbed up on the table and proceeded to help them eat their lunch, they scattered.

I had my camera nearby and took some pics, even though I was afraid that the bear would decide to come our way. The bear ate their lunch while we sat and watched, deciding not to move.

Finally, we started to get up and slowly move away from the table. The bear must have been satisfied, because she got down and walked away from us, with her cubs. The bear never even looked our way. You could tell it was used to seeing people, more than likely having been fed before. The mama bear started up the road with her two cubs running behind her. I grabbed my camera again and started up the road after them. My mom was afraid the bear would turn on me since she had cubs, but she just started running along. I followed behind and was able to get a few more pictures without the bear getting mad at me. I was lucky and stupid for taking a chance like that. I got my photos, and the bears went on their way with full bellies.

The only other time I saw a bear in the Smokies was in the late 70s or early 80s in Cherokee. It was a sad bear. That poor bear was in a cage by the road all the time. I am sure he was so tired of people staring at him all day long while imprisoned in that awful cage. It was just not the same. The fact that no one had taken care of this poor bear made it worse. Loving animals as I do, I hate to see them put on display like that. The poor bear was having to endure being in an enclosed cage day in and day out, plus no telling what else.

Wild animals are a natural part of the world, and we should respect them. We should be more mindful when enjoying nature, especially in areas where animals are more prevalent. It might save someone's life. I was lucky.



Christmas is a magical time, but not for everyone. Look around for someone you can help, or at least say a kind word to. You won't regret it.

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to all!

**With Love to the Class of '66
Huntsville High School**

Oscar Llerena

"I have been on so many blind dates, I should get a free dog."

Rob Mayfield, Madison

Kindness

*by Gerald Alvis, the
Poet of Greenlawn*

I wrote this for a wonderful nurse who had just found out her mother was terminally ill some 2 decades ago. I stumbled across it in an old email. It's one of the few things I've printed and signed. It went like this.

I have never met your mother, but it's not required. I could pick her out in a crowded room. I see her in you. How incredible she must be. Your college and nursing school sharpened your skills and abilities, but it was your mom who forged you and shaped you in those formative years.

Your kindness, professionalism, and ladylike manners came from years of her developing latent talents and qualities within you. It's why you're a stickler for details, exactness, and I suspect why you're so fond of quilts.

The challenge is difficult, but you're one coach and daughter that anyone would be proud to have in their corner. You possess strengths and depth that you may not fully recognize.

I remember being there when you held up a man literally twice your size and walking him back to the stretcher after he received some devastating news. Your voice and warm expression never wavered. I remember how calming it was.

By sharing my outlook, I hope to repay some of the kindness and friendship you've shown me and others.

"I actually have as much authority as the Pope. I just don't have as many people who believe it."

George Carlin

We have always existed and always will. If you look at life from a pure physics standpoint, there is the law of conservation of mass. It states matter cannot be created or destroyed. It is redistributed or becomes something else (my summary).

From a spiritual standpoint, I inherently feel and choose to believe in some sentences from an old but still relevant book. "Before I formed you in the womb, I knew you". And "Whoever believeth in me shall not perish but have everlasting life". At least in the mind of God, we have always existed, and by his promise, after this life, there is continuance into another.

Still, there is one more viewpoint that perpetuates life. What we share with each other goes beyond a meal, a photograph, or a conversation. A part of us always stays with the ones we care about. It's an indelible mark. Even if separated by space and time, we can still feel them and the effects they have on our lives. More than just our genetics, our influence spans generations.

It is so hard to provide comfort when we ourselves are in need. The barrage of emotions, the frustration, what to do? What to say? Your mother needs the woman you've become. We are all on a journey, help her to travel well. Life! It goes on.....



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THE BATTLE HYMN OF THE 123RD

by L D Rogers

I belonged to the Kentucky National Guard Company B 2nd Medium Tank Battalion 123rd Armor. It was August 1961 when we were called to active duty for the Berlin crisis. President Kennedy called several National Guard units to active duty.

They sent us to Fort Stewart, Georgia to start intensified combat training. Fort Stewart is 280,000 acres of swamps and alligators.

While I was there, I put together a four-piece band and we played in the NCO club and the officers club. We didn't make a lot of money, but it was something to do, and we had a good time.

When Christmas came, we did a little program in the mess hall and there was a colonel there that was over Special Services. Half the Battalion got leave to go home for Christmas. The other ones got leave for New Year's Day.

I took my leave for New Year's and when I got back the company clerk told me this colonel from Special Services wanted to see me. I learned he wanted me to play lead guitar with the 80th Army Band for their dance band and show band.

I thought that was great. It just so happened I knew one of the members so that made it easy for me to join in. Also, there was a unit of the 413th Ordnance from Frankfort, KY there and they were a bluegrass band. I got to know them and played some with them.

About a month before Valentine's Day one of the officers told me that they wanted to write a song about the outfit and do it at a party at the officer's club on "Valentine's Day. I thought that would be fun.

Lt. Carroll Walden from Company D, Lt. Robert (Salty) Sutherland from Headquarters Company, Lt.

Olin Bryant from Company B and myself all got together at one of their homes to work on the song.

We worked on it for three or four nights and we used the tune of That Good Old Mountain Dew. The big night came and we had a full house at the officers club. We were all a bit nervous. We got the evening going and then I went to the microphone and asked for the lieutenants to come on stage. Lt. Bryant told the people that we had written a song about the battalion, and we would like to perform it for them.

I thought they were going to tear the house down when we finished. They didn't just like the song - they loved it. At the end of the night, Colonel Hall came up to the bandstand to shake our hands and said, "It's men like you that make our battalion so great."

This is one night I will never forget.

The Battle Hymn of the 123rd

(Chorus)

Now if you haven't heard about the 123rd

Here's a story we'd like to tell

'Bout the boys in their tanks

Their jokes and their pranks

They're busy raising hell

It was late in the fall

Said old Colonel Hall

Looks like we're in for a year

A through D headquarters company

Get your tanks and follow me (Chorus)

Price, Reese and Lett

Took off like a jet

When the blue came over the hill

Said Bladen and Brady

Boys we're standing ready

To give you a hand or two

(Chorus)

There's Captain Nally

Back up in the ally

Looking for lost silverware

In the shakedown

Here's what he found

Knives and forks were everywhere



Maple Syrup Pudding

1/2 cup white cornmeal

3 cups milk

2 eggs, separated

2 Tbs. brown sugar

1/2 cup maple syrup

2 Tbs. butter, melted

1/2 tsp. salt

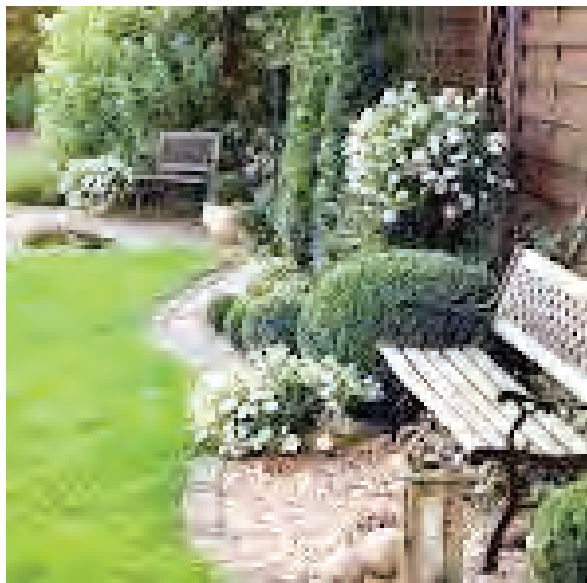
1/2 tsp. cinnamon

1/4 tsp. ginger

Nutmeg

1/2 cup chopped nuts

Blend cornmeal and milk in a medium saucepan. Bring to a boil, reduce heat and cook (stirring) 5 min., or until mixture begins to thicken. Add egg yolks and remaining ingredients, blending well. Fold in egg whites (beaten stiff) and nuts. Pour into a greased baking dish and set in pan with 1 inch boiling water. Bake in 300° F. oven approx. 2 hrs.



YARD WORK

by Willie Weaver

One day, in the late fall, I was out trimming the shrubbery along the front of my house. It was a job that I should have finished several weeks ago. Now the miss cuts that I made will not have time to re-grow and will be visible until the spring re-growth. As I cut, I mumbled to myself about retiring to a house with less yard upkeep. An acre of grass to mow, the leaves from 29 trees to rake and bag, and, of course, 150 feet of shrubbery (front, side and back) to keep shaped to perfection; what was I thinking?

I am not complaining and I am not having second thoughts about our selection of this place. The effort involved in tending the grounds keeps me active and gets me out in the fresh air. I guess I could hire someone to take care of the yard or I could have retired to

one of those places where all the work is done for you, even the cooking and dishwashing. Or I could have retired to a resort area and lived a life of total leisure. However, that really does not fit my temperament. I do a lot of reading and some writing; that keeps my mind busy and, I hope; nimble. The yard work and my shop keep my body active and nimble but also produce some aches and pains. The aches tell me that I am still alive.

As I proceeded with the trimming, a few aches developed, a few bugs hovered about, and although the weather was mild, I began to perspire. However, I was intent on keeping the cuts straight and finishing up while the light was still good, so these were only minor irritations. As I continued to cut, a verse from chapter 2 of Genesis popped into my mind.

- "And the LORD took the man and put him into the Garden of Eden to dress and keep it". - Genesis 2:15 KJV or
- "The LORD took the man and put him into the Garden of Eden to work and take care of it." - Genesis 2:15 NIV

If I understand this verse from Genesis, even in paradise, Man had "yard work" to do. Apparently theirs was not a life of total leisure. In addition to taking care of the garden, Adam was also responsible for naming all the animals (2:19-29) So, why should I fret about my little plot?

I think that there are lessons to be learned here. Otherwise, why would the Spirit have brought this verse to mind. When we enter the Christian Life by accepting Christ we should not expect to sit around just singing and listening to good sermons. There is that thing called "The Great Commission". That commission views the world as God's garden and assigns us to tend it. So we should find out what and where our assignment in God's garden is and work it with all of our heart, mind and body.

We often think of Heaven as being like the Garden of Eden. It will be a beautiful place and it will be filled with the presence of God. I think that just as in Eden and in the Christian life, God will have assignments for us in heaven. I have no idea what those assignments could be, but it will be great working for the Lord of the Universe alongside of our Savior!

"My wife makes the budget work. We go without a lot of things I don't really need."

Paul Jobe, Athans

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He'll Take Care of the Rest

by Kimberly Cook

Remember the advertisement for Baskin Robbins 31 flavors? As a child, that sounded like so many, when there was only chocolate, vanilla, strawberry and Neapolitan (for those who can't decide) in the grocery freezer case. Anxiety comes in all kinds of flavors too.

In the South and Midwest, weather anxiety has got to rank in the Top Five, right along with snakes, spiders, spiders (twice-mentioned, because there are so many of them) and cockroaches. When Greg and I were moving into our first Alabama apartment, I opened the door and a palmetto bug flew right past my head and landed above the curtain rod. I assumed the fetal position and screamed at my husband, "Kill it!" I already had my shoe off, and was holding it out for him. I meant right then, too. Not later, when you feel like it, but right now. I very much wanted to say, "Pack your bags, we're leaving," but, deep down I knew there ain't no such place without cockroaches. There is no place you can run to where there isn't something to run away from. So, pick your poison.

The Importance of Exercise:
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This enables you, at 85 years old, to spend an additional 5 months in a nursing home at \$9,000 per month.

It is March in central Alabama, and James Spann has had his suspenders on since Monday, ready for the tornado outbreak that is coming tonight or tomorrow. People with weather anxiety sleep with their bicycle helmets on, and have already moved the Christmas decoration bins, the ones stored under the stairs, out of the way, replacing them with water and Kit Kat bars, because you have to have something to distract you while listening to the weather radio.

I glance at my phone and a sweet friend, who is 37 weeks pregnant, is having a come-apart on Facebook about the weather forecast. Now, meltdowns, when you are 37 weeks pregnant, can happen. They just can, and any husband knows this. She says weather anxiety is a weakness for her. I think it is a weakness for a lot of people, because weather is one of the things we can least control - that and flying cockroaches.

I remind her that the truth is we are not in control of any part of our lives, but are subject to God's sovereignty, plan and purpose. Mothers have to trust God a lot more than most people, because, when Mama Bear instinct kicks in, someone's going to get hurt. We have to resist fighting everything and everybody, because we just don't have the ability to protect our children as well as God does. And — just you wait — that precious baby girl you are carrying is going to grow up into a young lady, and she will have to drive in the rain back to college and go out on dates with frat guys. Just think of this "trusting" as practice for the future, I told my friend.

"Come to me all you who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest," (Matthew 11:28). I don't even have to look up the reference any longer because I have quoted this to myself so many times. He'll give you more than rest. He will give you peace and joy too. There is a swaying gospel song, "He'll Take Care of the Rest." He takes care of "the rest" of our problems, and he will help us rest, which is even more important, especially for mamas with weather anxiety.

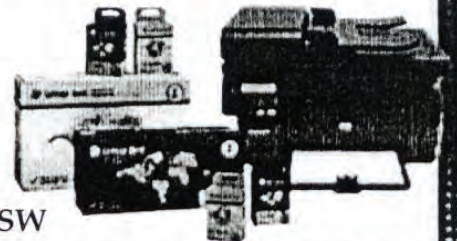
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THE MAN WHO LIVED IN A LOG

from 1927 newspaper

Mr. Frank Coe, inventor of the Coe's tractor wheel, is at present using a hollow log on the side of Monte Sano mountain as living quarters pending completion of the first of a series of cabins for which he has plans.

The log is located several hundred feet from the new Monte Sano road which will be formally opened tomorrow on the old stage coach road which runs off the east side of the mountain.

Although the log was originally hollow, Mr. Coe has improved upon it until it is more comfortable than a Pullman berth. With the use of fire he has enlarged his quarters, im-

proved a small screen door and a wooden door over the two and a half foot entrance. Near the entrance he has two small holes on each side which enables him to look out in both directions.

By closing the screen door he is protected from insects while at the same time a lantern hung at the entrance furnishes sufficient light for reading or writing which he has a great deal of.

A.E. Sampson, an architect, is Mr. Coe's only companion. He is cooperating with Mr. Coe in an architectural way and expects to open an office in Huntsville soon.

The first of a series of cabins which will be known as "Coe's Roost," is under construction a short distance from the log. When completed Mr. Coe says "the latch string will always be open to right thinking people."

As Mr. Coe traveled east 36 years ago, he has decided to face all the cabins in that direction.

Plans are also underway for two other cabins on opposite sides of the ravine, and a short distance from Coe's Roost to which Earnest Thompson Seaton and Albert Payson Ter-bune, the noted writers, and who are friends of Mr. Coe, will be invited to occupy.

Mr. Coe is noted as the inventor of the tractor wheel bearing his name. More than a year ago he left his home in New York for Miami, Florida. His wife and two children were called from this earth a short time before.

After engaging in the building game in Miami for one year he arrived in Huntsville on April 10.

Mr. Coe states he will spend the remainder of his days on this spot on Monte Sano.

Ed. note: Shortly after this story appeared in the newspaper, the weather turned cold and Mr. Coe, with no explanation, disappeared from Huntsville, never to be seen again.

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Care for Your Cat



Indoor Cat Care

* Provide a cozy space: Give your cat a warm, draft-free bed or blanket in a draft-free area. Heated beds and self-heating mats are also great options, particularly for older cats.

* Adjust diet: Increase food portions to provide extra calories for warmth, as shivers use a lot of energy.

* Watch out for hazards: Keep your cat away from fire sources like fireplaces, space heaters, and wood stoves.

* Cat-proof holiday decorations.

* Provide them with warm beds and blankets in a draught-free, cosy spot to curl up in.

* Consider moving them into a warmer room when the temperature drops at night.

* Make sure your cat has indoor litter trays for when it's too cold to go outside, even if they aren't used to using one.

* Dry your cat off after an adventure in wet or snowy weather, so they can get cozy indoors.

Outdoor Cat Care

* Provide shelter: If you have an outdoor cat, ensure they have a warm, dry and insulated shelter that is protected from wind. Using a styrofoam box filled with straw can work well as it repels moisture.

* Keep water unfrozen: Ensure your cat has access to fresh water, and be extra vigilant in winter, as water can freeze quickly. Consider using a larger, heated water bowl.

* Offer extra food and water: Outdoor cats need more food and water to maintain their body heat. Provide extra food and check water bowls frequently to ensure they haven't frozen.

* Clear surroundings: Shovel snow and ice from around their outdoor shelter to prevent them from emitting cold. Use pet-safe de-icing products when necessary.

* Use a petsafe microwavable heat pad and slip it under a cozy blanket - it will stay warm for hours! Just remember to avoid electric blankets, as they can burn your cat and the electrical cord can be dangerous if chewed.

* Know when to bring your cat inside when it gets too cold outside.

Dangers

* Antifreeze is highly poisonous to cats and swallowing only a small amount can be very dangerous. As the temperature plummets, antifreeze is often used to de-ice cars. Ethylene glycol is found in some types of antifreeze products, but sadly is highly toxic to cats. Cats can be tempted to lick it off if it gets on their fur and paws.

You can keep your cat safe from antifreeze by wiping down your cat's fur and paws when they come in from an outdoor adventure using non-toxic products. Or no antifreeze at all for your own car, cleaning up spillages quickly and safely keeping all bottles and containers closed and tightly sealed to avoid any accidents in case your cat accesses your garage or shed.

* Check under the hood: Before starting your car, bang on the hood to make sure a cat hasn't sought warmth under the engine.

* In the winter, mice and rats try to get in to homes to stay warm and set up a household! If you use poison to kill them and a cat finds and tries to eat one, the possibility of cat poisoning can happen. Be vigilant!

* If your outdoor cat goes missing, check nearby sheds/drainage ditches/garages that may be closed up. Cats get in and then find they can't get out!

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*From the Desk of
Tom Carney*

Army Birdmen Lose Their Way

by Tom Carney

Heavy storms on the night of March 15, 1938, almost caused a major tragedy at Huntsville's new airport.

The airport, located on Whitesburg Drive, was in reality nothing more than a meadow with a wind sock and a small office. With no lighting, it was woefully inadequate to meet any type of a night time emergency.

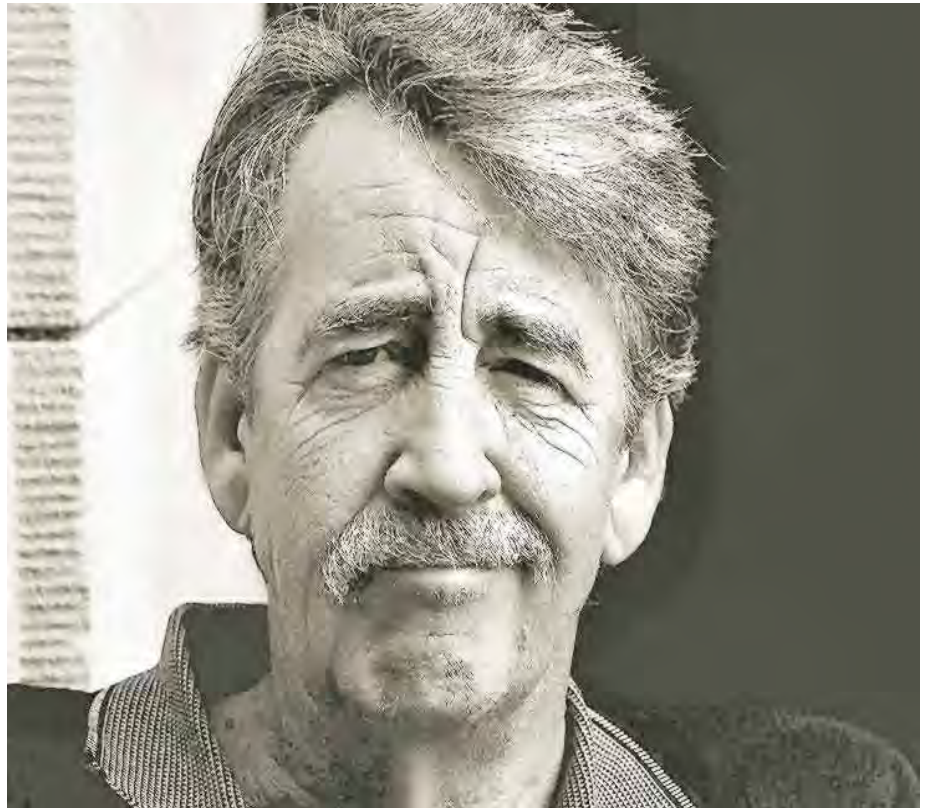
The first sign of impending danger came as Huntsville's citizens began to hear the drone of airplanes circling overhead, searching for a place to land. With no lights, any attempt at landing would result in a catastrophe.

The group of planes, flying a training mission, had been caught by a pulverizing rain-storm and were miles off their course, when they were drawn to Huntsville by a huge electric arrow atop the Russel Erskine Hotel, and the lights of the city.

The roar of their planes brought alarm from the citizenry.

At least one family thought a tornado was coming, and took refuge in the basement of their home, staying there until a radio announcer's voice informed them otherwise.

Quick thinking by the two state highway patrolmen stationed here played a major part in the safe landing.



Patrolmen S.T. Barrett and Franklin Moore heard the roar of motors, and, looking aloft, saw the cloud-laden sky filled with the circling planes.

Hastening to the local radio station, they had an appeal broadcast for citizens to drive swiftly to the unlighted landing field and turn their automobile lights onto the broad open expanse, which was little more than a pasture.

Hundreds of automobiles, loaded with passengers, dashed to the field that night to help break the darkness, and to aid the fliers in their precarious attempts to land.

The Army birdmen, one by one, commenced to land while

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breathless citizens looked on. The first plane taxied back up the field late that evening.

Finally, after two very tense hours, the last plane landed. It was this pilot's escape that provided the biggest suspense of the entire event. Just before touching earth, the plane was caught by a strong gust of wind. It whirled completely about, but the pilot kept his mind alert and settled to safety. He dropped a flare before circling to come in.

"The boys did something proud," said their commander, Captain D.M. Allison. "But it certainly was a great relief to see the last ship land and start back up the field — right side up."

Immediately after the planes had landed, Capt. Allison was surrounded by Huntsvillians offering assistance.

The Army fliers spent the night at the Russel Erskine Hotel, having experienced what could have been a tragic landing, but for Huntsville's speedy answer to a distress situation.

Throughout the dark hours, multitudes of spectators visited the field. Still more suspense came during a heavy rain storm, accompanied by thunder, lightning, and gale-force wind. Again, quick thinking by concerned citizens saved the day when the winds threatened to wreck the fragile aircraft.

Capt. Allison was liberal in his praise of the cooperation given the birdmen by Huntsvillians.

"On behalf of myself and my men, I want to express our

heartfelt appreciation for the quick response and the splendid cooperation we have received all the way through."

The aviators, already behind schedule, were forced to depart Huntsville early the following morning, amidst the well wishes of an admiring population.

In 1972, one of the pilots returned to Huntsville on a visit to the Space and Rocket Museum. While here, he toured the site of the old airport and reminisced about the arrow on top of the Russel Erskine Hotel that had guided him to safety.

"Thank God for radios and Tin Lizzies," he was quoted as saying. "They saved a lot of lives that night."



Nutty Caramel Brownies

1-14oz. package caramels
2/3 c. evaporated milk
1 box German Chocolate cake mix
3/4 c. melted butter
1 c. chocolate chips
1 c. chopped pecans

Melt the caramels with 1/3 cup of the milk in top of double boiler, stir frequently. Combine the cake mix with the melted butter and the remaining 1/3 cup milk. Spread half the cake batter into a greased 9 x 13-inch baking dish. Bake for 7-8 minutes at 350 degrees.

Remove from the oven and sprinkle with the chocolate chips and pecans. Drizzle the melted caramel over the chips and nuts, cover with the remaining cake batter.

Continue baking for 15 minutes, at 350 degrees, until the brownies feel firm to the touch. Let cool before cutting.

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"I didn't attend the funeral, but I sent a nice letter saying I approved of it."

Mark Twain

DO CATS DREAM?



by M. D. Smith IV

Of course they dream. How could they not? When my Siamese cat sleeps, curled in upon herself like a black and brown comma upon the page of the world, she quivers ever so slightly, a ripple running through the velvet of her fur. Her whiskers twitch, her black tail gives the faintest of flicks, as though some inner stage is playing out a drama only she can see.

Perhaps she is thinking of the delicate morsel of left-over broiled sea bass she devoured last night—how her jaws worked with greedy precision, her tongue lapping up every last glisten of oil. In sleep, she might recall the briny perfume, the buttery softness of the flesh. I can almost see her lips twitching as though she savors it again, her mind whispering: just a little more, just another bite.

Or perhaps her dreaming has slipped into the chase—the relentless pursuit of that maddening red dot. How many hours has she leaped

after it, muscles coiling, eyes wide as moons, only for it to dart just beyond her reach? It races up the wall, slides across the ceiling, teases her with its shimmering laser-tail. She hurls herself across the rug until her breath comes short,

but still it evades her. One day, she tells herself, with the certainty only a hunter knows, she will catch it. She will trap the impossible.

Maybe, in her slumber, she is once again crouched before the sliding glass door, where chipmunks strut like jesters on the brick patio. They dash and flick their striped little bodies, mocking her with quicksilver speed. If only the barrier would open, if only for the breadth of a single heartbeat, she would streak through like an arrow. Her claws would catch fur, her teeth would find the small bones of her prize catch. When the chase was over, she would trot back inside, chest lifted, carrying her prize as proof of her skill, as if to say, see what I have done for you. Then, she'd lavish in the ear-splitting screams of delight, as she interprets them, coming from my wife's mouth.

Or perhaps—most tantalizing of all—her dream lingers on the mysterious yellow-striped tomcat, the one who prowls by in the hour before dawn. His coat glows like tarnished gold beneath the moonlight, his green eyes burn with strange invitation. He stands at the glass and calls to her, voice low

and insistent, promising secret adventures in the cool hush of night. His tail sways, deliberate, elegant, a dancer's flourish. Oh, what songs the two of them might write together in the shadows—what prowling, what wild frolic, what courtship! Her paws twitch, her breath quickens. The dream unfurls like a ribbon of smoke, sweet and forbidden.

Then, like all creatures who secretly believe themselves royal, she slips deeper still, conjuring a vision of her rightful throne: a vast feather pillow, thick as a cloud, spreading beneath her like a kingdom of softness. There she reigns, no longer curled on the humble towel wrapped over carpeting at the bottom of her wicker basket, but on silken expanse, every sigh of her body sinking into luxury. She is not simply Sci-Fi the house-cat - she is Sci-Fi the Queen, exalted, adored, eternal.

Her breathing evens, her paw covers her face in the universal gesture of feline surrender, and she disappears further into that secret country where only cats can go. The room stills. The shadows grow long. And then, like a magician interrupting a spell, I speak the words that shatter the veil between dream and waking:

"Sci-Fi. Cat treat."

The bag rattles. Her ears pivot instantly, catching the sound with supernatural clarity. Her head rises, groggy but alert, her eyes yellow embers glowing through the haze of sleep. She yawns—an opera-wide gape, every tooth sharp and ivory, a pink tongue curled like a ribbon. Then, without hurry, she aches and stretches her long back, drapes her tail like a flag, and steps down from her wicker throne.

The spell of the dream dissolves, but not entirely. For here is proof, undeniable: at least one dream has come true.

A Noble Instance of Devotion

from 1887 Newspaper



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

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

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

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

Those who examined the birds think they are about two years old. They have been fed from their birth by their bird fellows through the aperture in the limb of the tree.

A nobler instance of devotion the human family never exhibited. Mankind could greatly benefit from the lessons of these feathered friends.

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Hello, my name is Casper! I am a Jack Russell Terrier mix and am about 7 years old. I am a good, sweet girl and have been spayed and have had all my shots and been micro-chipped. I am medium sized and my coat is a pretty apricot, brown and cream color. My family couldn't keep me anymore and brought me to the Ark Animal Shelter. I am friendly and outgoing and you can see from my picture that I am a happy girl. I love to be with people and am looking forward to having a new family

and forever home where I can be myself and relax and play and where I am loved and cherished. Won't you come and get to know me? I would be so happy to see you and promise to give you all my attention. Come to the Ark Animal Shelter and ask to see Casper, that's me!

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Romantic Superstitions

from 1950 Honeymoon Handbook



* According to superstition, one of the luckiest things to find on a couple's wedding day is a spider in or on the bride's wedding dress. The spider on the wedding dress is a good omen and means that the couple will be happily married for years to come. Why the spider was chosen as the harbinger of good fortune is unknown. It may have to do with the strong, beautiful webs they spin symbolizing a strong bond between spouses. It could also have simply been a frantic fib in order to calm down panicked brides who found something with eight eyes peeking at them from the folds of their dress.

* According to superstition, however, that lucky girl has doomed her chances of ever finding a man for herself. Bridesmaids were originally meant to protect the bride from demons, evil spirits and curses. Bridesmaids looked like the bride, so the ill-intentioned creatures or hexes became confused, and the bridesmaids absorbed the nastiness in order

to spare the bride. If a woman went through this three times, however, she was believed to have internalized so much evil energy that she would never be able to find a spouse for herself.

* Nice knives are expensive, and most people would be delighted to be given a good set, especially if they enjoy cooking. According to superstition, however, accepting a knife as a gift is a terrible mistake. It might save your wallet, but it will doom your relationship, accepting a gifted knife meant that your re-

lationship would be severed, and you would be cut off from your partner.

* A single or unmarried girl should never sit at the corner of a table. If a girl sits at the corner of the table she will not marry for at least seven more years.

* Yellow flowers signify the end of a relationship or betrayal. It is a sign of bad luck and giving them to your loved one should be avoided at all costs. Interestingly enough, it always should be an odd number of flowers in a bouquet. An even number of flowers is for funerals.

* If you accidentally step on your partner's foot, let them gently step on yours or the other way around. Thus you prevent a risk of a future conflict.

* A couple should not use the same towel to dry their hands or bodies. Doing that can bring major struggles.

* Never give a watch as a present to your partner. Watches and clocks are an omen of parting. It would also be a wise move not to give, as a present, a scarf (an omen of tears) or knives (omens of enemies).

* As a couple, do not bite the same apple, do not eat from the same spoon. It will cause arguments and bickering in the relationship.

"I gave up jogging when my thighs kept rubbing together and setting my pantyhose on fire."

Grammy

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THE TRADITION

by Jackie Reed, 2005

I still remember the first Christmas Eve I had dinner with Chuck's parents. We were dating at the time and when I was invited to have dinner with them I was thrilled.

The house was decorated for the holidays with a beautiful wreath on the front door and a large Christmas tree in the living room.

Chuck's mother was a good cook and would often spend days preparing the special Christmas Eve dinner. She would insist that everyone had to try all the dishes on the table.

When I would complain about gaining weight she would say, "You worry about that next month. Right now, you eat!"

My most vivid memory of that night was the love shared by everyone there, I remember thinking, "What a nice tradition."

Little did I know that I would be a part of that tradition for the next forty years.

As the years went by babies were born, people got married or moved away and some died. The one consistent event in our lives, that brought us all together, was the Christmas Eve dinner.

Sometimes there would be thirty or more people for dinner. Chuck's father would grumble in a good natured way that homeless people could be eating dinner there and they would never be noticed in the crowd.

When Chuck's mother passed away in 1986, the family began asking where we would spend Christmas Eve. For me, there was no question. We would continue the tradition. The only difference was that we would provide all the food so Chuck's dad would not have to worry about it. This will be the first Christmas Eve in forty years that we will not be together at his house. Chuck's father died in May of this year at the age of 101. A few months later, Chuck died also, at only 77. He was the love of my life.

It was a beautiful tradition, one that I will never forget.

This Christmas I pray that everyone may be as blessed as I was.

"I was a vegetarian until I started leaning towards the light."

Rita Rudner

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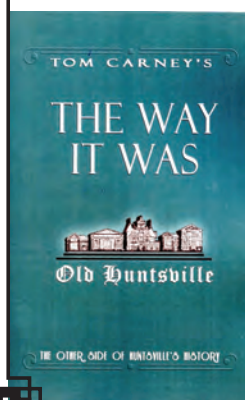
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"THE WAY IT WAS," THE OTHER SIDE OF HUNTSVILLE'S HISTORY

BY TOM CARNEY



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HEARD ON THE STREET - IN AUGUST 2004

by Tom and Cathey Carney

It was good to meet Chuck Whittenberg the other night, sitting at one of the sidewalk tables outside the Kaffeeklatsch downtown. He is visiting here from Dayton, OH and works with MTC Technologies. He was traveling with his dog Jazz.

Well, we thought it would never happen but Joanne Randolph turned 50 at a huge bash at the Monte Sano Tavern. The pink and lime green was carried out in the "It's all about ME" theme and many of her friends had a great time.

Some of the lucky attendees at this event were Loretta Spencer, Vicky Loomis, Mary Jane Caylor, Danny Banks and Brenda and Mike Fancy. We saw Carol and Jerry Arszman having a good time there, as well as Glenn & Sheila Brooks and Ron & Barb Eystone.

We were so sorry to hear that Louie Tippet's mom died in July. Vera Tippet was a dear lady who meant so much to so many. We send our love to Louie and his wife Jane.

It was good to see Tom Antoniel and David and Renee Nunn at the Furniture Factory last week. Tom's looking great for being such an old guy!

Our dear friend Anny Rausch died in July, at age 94. She was a feisty German lady who loved to cook and entertain. Our condolences to her sons Felix and Ekkehart and granddaughter Steffi as well as other family members.

A special hello to the sweet guy I met at Walmart's on South Parkway recently. James Rusniak works in the garden shop there and says it's the best part of the store to work in!

God gave us mouths that close and ears that don't - which should tell us something.

We had a good breakfast recently at Little Farm Grill on Whitesburg and talked with Jo Ellen (Jodie) Adkins. She's a really sweet lady. There's even a Liar's table there, like Aunt Eunice used to have!

Susie Nolen and John Bennett will be saying "I do" at their Weeden House wedding in October. Susie is a sweetheart as well as a terrific singer, and we wish her and John the best.

We really appreciate Sue Orme, of Verizon, who recently did an outstanding job in working through some phone changes.

We ran into Tommy and Cathy Bagwell recently and it was good to see them again. Also gorgeous Annette LeBrecque with her friend Joel. She is a past Miss Canada and now teaches music at UNA. Gay Money was having fun at the Paris event - she is the sister of Trice Hinds, who is a recognized artist in Huntsville.

Our friend Bill Collier gave us some great advice the other day - to get rid of those fire ants, wet the mound, then cover, with grits. He says this really works!

A special hello to Walter Tripp, a retired cabinet-maker who grew up in Fayetteville. His daughter is our good friend Linda Hamlin, of Linda's Printing. She tells us that her dad used to be in the Civilian Conservation Corp (CCC) many years ago.

We had a good time recently visiting with Charlotte Fariss, Bob Bridges, Gordon Cox and Robert Martin who all live at the Morningside Assisted Living in Madison. Also there was the handsome Willard Rogers, who has written a book titled "Looking Back at WWII". Have a good month and remember we love you!

Telephone Rules from 1919

"To answer, don't say 'hello.' That means less than nothing. Simply lift your earpiece to your ear and say 'Johnnie Brown at 14,' if that happens to be your name and number. Always ring one short ring when through talking; this notifies the operator that the line is open and can be used by someone else."

"If the operator is slow to answer, don't get mad and say hard things to her; this only complicates matters."

"One minute is long enough to talk; over three minutes will be charged extra. We will, however, use some judgement in enforcing this rule. The purpose is to cut out useless gab and childish talk."

"Report all phone and line troubles to the manager. If the line is broken and you can make a temporary connection with a piece of wire, we will appreciate it."

"Operators do not have time to carry on conversations-please do not expect it of them."

"Always hang up your receiver earpiece down when through talking; otherwise, your batteries will be exhausted and your bells cut out. Ring off by giving the crank one turn."

"In dry weather it sometimes happens that the earth around the ground rods gets very dry. By digging a small hole around them, and pouring on two buckets of water twice a week, you will greatly improve the service of your telephone."

"Anyone caught using insulators on poles for target practice will have their phone disconnected."

Sewing for the War Effort

by Billy Joe Cooley

During the second world war there spread a great spirit of patriotism across America. Some ladies in Paint Rock Valley decided it would be nice, since we had an abundance of cotton in the South, to cut bed sheets into four-inch squares and convert the squares into bandages for use in "poor houses" up north.

A Mrs. Kirkpatrick knew elderly people who lived in such a commune in Dayton, Ohio, so it was agreed that the bandages would be sent there for use in the facility's clinic. The ladies theorized that cotton bandages were difficult to obtain in northern communities.

Each week, the Valley ladies would buy two or three new bed sheets, cut them into the little squares, sew hems on the borders and ship them up to Ohio in cardboard boxes.

Since money was scarce during the war, the ladies would sell produce from their tiny "victory" gardens to finance the buying of the bed sheets. Some even sold home-baked bread, cakes and pies to workers in home-front factories and mills in nearby Huntsville and Scottsboro. The ladies worked their fingers to the bones, so to speak, to provide this very necessary service to the ailing elderly of the Ohio Home for the Destitute.

Three days a week the Paint Rock Valley women would meet in various homes, pray for the war

effort and pour over their bed sheet tasks. It also gave the women a chance to talk about various events in the community and stay abreast of war news as it affected the community: which local servicemen had been killed or wounded overseas and which ones were missing in action.

But mainly it was the bed sheet project which concerned the ladies. The knowledge that their bandages were being sent to help poor people in another part of the nation accounted for a great deal of morale-boosting. It would lessen the demand for "civilian" bandages on the medical industry, thus freeing more commercial bandages for use by our servicemen overseas.

A Shrewd Lady Speculator

from 1887 newspaper

Last week a widow lady, residing near Hazel Green, put her house up at a raffle and very soon disposed of the tickets - all feeling disposed to assist her.

The evening arrived, and the house was won by a gentleman who thought himself most fortunate in obtaining a homestead so cheaply.

The next day he asked for a title to the property. What was his surprise when he was coolly informed that it was unnecessary to give any written title to the house - that there it was, and to take it; and the sooner the better, as she was anxious to build another on the spot where it stood. The winner discovered that he had drawn a house, but no lot.

Upon applying to the authorities for relief he was turned away with the understanding the raffle was legal and he had no recourse.

The gentleman, deciding to make the best of a bad situation, moved into the house with it still standing on the lady's piece of land.

The lady then applied to the authorities for relief but was told that she too had no recourse; she had not specified the house had to be moved.

There has not been a final outcome to the baffling dilemma yet.

"Mapquest really needs to start their directions on #5. I'm pretty sure I know how to get out of my own neighborhood."

Steve Cobb, Madison



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When life was simple...



In 1950 the Huntsville High School cheerleaders got a chance to show off when they marched in Huntsville's first Christmas parade. There were 3,138 students attending school within the city limits in 1950. Huntsville had a population of only 16,437.

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