



No. 398

April 2026



Old Huntsville

HISTORY AND STORIES OF THE TENNESSEE VALLEY

“The Tornado’s Tearing up Airport Road!”



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"The Tornado's Tearing up Airport Road!"

Huntsville Times File Photo, p. 1

by M. D. Smith IV

Those are the words I remember saying as I stood on the second-story balcony outside the WAAY-TV, Channel 31 Newsroom on Monte Sano. I had a perfect view of the Parkway and most of Airport Road.

April is our main "Tornado Month," but we've had them at other seasons. The tremendous 1974 April 3rd tornadoes that hit buildings around Memorial Parkway and Drake, destroying Sterling Cadillac and much of Parkway City on the other side. Then, into neighborhoods beyond and up the side of Monte Sano, destroying houses and the power substation for all the TV stations, which were off the air for several days.

More recently, April 27, 2011 that didn't do much damage to the Huntsville area, but took down TVA power transmission towers and lines, and the

"Never go to a doctor's office whose office plants have died."

Leslie Able, Gurley

city was dark for five days. We have to remain alert in the month of April. But, this story is about one November in particular.

This was a dark Thursday afternoon on November 15, 1989. Madison County went under a Tornado Watch covering 12:30pm to 8:00pm because some tornadoes had already occurred to the west of us and weather conditions were right for twisters. At 12:45pm, there were reports of a severe thunderstorm with hail in our far western counties past Florence. Madison County got a Severe Thunderstorm warning at 4:13pm that afternoon.

My whole staff was on duty that afternoon getting ready for newscasts and checking our radar images constantly. We saw the severe storms coming and were on the air with Gary Dobbs, breaking in for coverage. We had installed a gigantic 500,000-watt diesel generator a few years before, and the only TV station to do so, so we could stay on the air if we lost power. I discussed what was heading our way and the possibility of losing power, so we switched our generator on and changed all power over to it shortly after 4:15pm.

I have some color images I took off-the-air of Gary Dobbs standing in front of our color



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radar image showing exactly where the storms were prior to the tornado forming and striking. He's reading the message handed to him about the tornado on the ground.

We first had the tornado confirmed by Floyd Smith, one of the three police officers at the K-9 range on the southern end of the old airport, when the tornado hit, grabbed his radio and called the police dispatcher. That's how everyone first knew of a tornado on the ground.

The two other officers, Mark Hastings and P.T. Smith, ducked behind some folding tables used for squad meetings.

Said P.T. Smith: "I lay down on the floor in the fetal position behind a Coke machine." Among the three officers, P.T. Smith suffered the worst of the injuries: crushed foot, five broken ribs, broken collarbones, both shoulders broken, twisted knee.

Radar Tracking

Our radar tracked a thunderstorm heading toward the edge of Redstone, over the old airport, and the golf course, heading to cross South Parkway at Airport Road, heading for the business district. It was 4:37pm, and the tornado was on the ground. Spotters alerted the weather service, who then sounded sirens and issued the Tornado Warning, too late for anyone in its path to prepare.

I could see the edge of the storm, and rain was coming down, making it hard to see if there was a funnel cloud. As soon as it hit the Parkway, power transformers began exploding like bombs going off, and those bright bursts of light and later resounding sound echoed up to us on the mountain. We could not see as far as Whitesburg Drive and beyond because of other mountains blocking our view.

The bulk of the damage and deaths occurred when it first touched the other side of the Parkway. The massive twister virtually leveled the Waterford Square apartment complex, and there were peo-



Gary Dobbs giving Weather Report during Hit

ple inside.

The ones that made the most news were the young man and woman who were in the shower together when the building came down, and they were trapped under the rubble with no clothing. Some time later,



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**"No matter what life brings you,
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A Lesson from the Dog

when rescue teams were combing through the rubble, they heard them call and quickly removed enough debris to extract them. Both were quite embarrassed to have no clothes on, but the crew provided some coats to cover them enough to get to the hospital. Their injuries were not serious.

I happened to meet the woman at a function about fifteen years later. Her vivid memories of the tornado, being trapped under rubble and finally being rescued, made for interesting conversation. She mostly remembered the nude rescue and the embarrassment of it all.

The tornado was most destructive from where it crossed the Parkway, up the length of Airport Road, until it reached Whitesburg Drive. There, the entire intersection was leveled. Gate's Cleaners – gone. Whitesburg Gulf Oil station – gone. A partial list of all the businesses destroyed beyond repair is at the end of this account.

Tornado Path

That's where all the occupied cars got tossed around like Styrofoam dominoes, causing significant loss of life. Twelve people died in those cars. One man, Dr. Elliott Marcus, who didn't die, had his left hand crushed when his car landed on its side with his lower arm protruding from the window. He managed to hitch a ride to Huntsville Hospital, and there they amputated his hand and part of his lower arm. I met him at the gym several years later, and he told me about it. I found out he was a doctor, and he was doing just fine without that left hand.

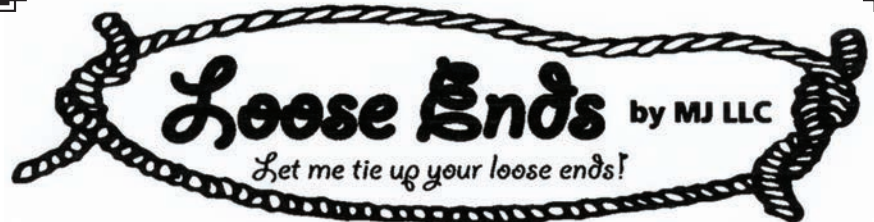
The tornado continued up the 5-lane highway (where Airport Road turns into Jones Valley Drive) toward Jones Valley,

destroying another church at the intersection, businesses and homes on either side, and then heading into the woods at the top of the hill, Garth Mountain.

The storm then moved up and over Garth Mountain and struck Jones Valley Elementary School on Garth Road, where 37 students and five teachers were at an after-school Extended Day-care Program. Acting in accordance with the principal's instructions, the children had been rushed to the school's basement, which was on the first floor, but to the back of the school against the scooped-out dirt bank made when building the school, and moved them under a stairwell for shelter. Painters working at the site helped shield children with their bodies, saving lives. Although the Jones Valley Elementary School was virtually destroyed by the storm, the timely actions of the principal and a



Jones Valley Elementary School



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teacher in charge of the Extended Daycare Program probably spared the lives of those 37 children and several other teachers.

Unfortunately, one woman driving on Garth in her car when the tornado hit the school was also killed. Before it finally dissipated, the tornado hit the Jones Valley subdivision, moved up Huntsville Mountain, and crossed Red Mountain before ending at a small creek.

The Day after the Tornado

The day after the tornado of '89, I drove into the neighborhood near the original Randolph School on Drake. Roadblocks would not let me go down Garth Road, which leads to the Jones Valley school, very heavily damaged. So, I parked my car in the Randolph Parking lot and walked into the neighborhood until I got to Garth and Toney Drive, and I could see the damage coming out of the Jones farm cow pasture and heading down Toney Drive.

My wife and I had close friends who lived near the community swimming pool, Bill and Sue Tidwell (now both deceased from natural causes), and I wanted to walk to their house to check on them. The cold front had come in behind the tornado, and the temperature was in the 30s, and I was freezing from my walk with only a light jacket and cotton gloves. Of course, there was no power and as I got to the Tidwell's house, it was dark inside. I knocked on the front door. There was minor damage to their house, just a gutter torn off and some shingles missing, unlike further up Toney toward the hill where houses stood with roofs gone and parts of the structures missing.

I decided to walk to the back of the Tidwells to see if they might be in the rear of the house and just as I got to the backyard, their dog who I knew and had patted many times inside their house, ran up unseen behind me and gave me a vicious bite right on the butt-cheek. I talked to him and, with gentle talk, calling his

name, managed to ease out of the backyard. Later I found out he was in the fenced backyard during the tornado and was thoroughly traumatized by the event and didn't want the demon from the previous night, whatever it was, coming into his backyard.

Further down, I walked into a house with most of the roof missing and part of the front wall. It was deserted, of course. Such an eerie feeling walking around in that house, partially destroyed by the twister. I knew there were dangers in these houses, and it was the only one I ventured into



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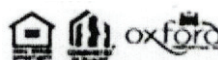
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during my long, cold walk.

Power Out

When the tornado got into Jones Valley, power to all the local TV stations failed, along with thousands of others in the valley. Channel 31 was the ONLY station to have a generator and be able to stay on the air that night for extensive live and taped coverage. It's safe to say (and ratings that happened to be going on that night proved it) that WAAY-TV had all the eyes watching that had power or were able to in North Alabama and Southern Tennessee. We received much praise for that wise move of having a generator that powered the entire TV station. Some time later, other stations got generators too. They could not afford not to after what our station had proved the value of it was.

Donation

Later WAAY-TV station raised \$26,000.00 for the Red Cross Disaster Fund. We sold VHS videotapes of all the coverage we had from before the tornado hit, into the night with interviews, damage under our portable lights, and into coverage the next day when snowflakes were falling. It was over an hour long, and all the proceeds went to the Red Cross.

Fatalities

Twelve of the 21 people killed had died while in their cars. (18 died that day, and 3 more died days later in hospitals). Nineteen of the twenty-one fatalities occurred in the area between the intersection of Airport Road and Memorial Parkway and the intersection of Airport Road and Whitesburg Drive. Eleven of the deaths occurred in automobiles (including a woman on Garth Road), four in apartments, and four in

commercial buildings.

The day became known as Black Wednesday. Over 450 people were injured. At its peak, the tornado's winds ranged from 207



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mph to 260 mph, according to the National Weather Service.

(Statistics from other places)

A summary of damage from reports gathered by the Huntsville Times included:

*259 Homes destroyed

*130 Homes with major damage

148 Homes with Minor to moderate damage

80 Businesses destroyed

8 Business damaged

3 churches heavily damaged

2 schools destroyed

10 Public building destroyed or heavily damaged

\$1.9 Million in public utility damage



Airport Road, Aftermath

Shopping centers and retail complexes:

Whitesburg Shopping Center area — Entire shopping center area along Airport Road/Whitesburg Drive was heavily damaged or leveled. Although exact individual store names from the time aren't consistently preserved, local reports and photographs indicate dozens of retail units in this center were destroyed.

Westbury Plaza / Westbury Mall corridor — This commercial zone suffered severe destruction, with buildings reduced to rubble and large-scale structural collapse documented in aerial and ground-level surveys.

Specific businesses (from local memory and photo captions):

- Gulf Oil Gas Station at corner of Airport Road and Whitesburg Drive

- A Golbro jewelry store — Referred to in local recollection as being inside a shopping center on or near Airport Road west of Whitesburg Drive, this store was obliterated by the tornado. Community posts recall gold chains from inside being scattered in the aftermath. Some even found in the Garth



M.D. Smith IV giving check for \$26,000 to local Red Cross

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Mountain woods in days following. (Reddit.com)

- Gates Cleaners – Photo archives from the time show the building of Gates Cleaners in the area of Whitesburg and Airport as destroyed, with recovery crews retrieving a U.S. flag from the debris.

(huntsvillehistorycollection.org)

Destruction

Recollections from residents place a gas/service station on the southwest corner of the Airport/Whitesburg intersection that was completely destroyed. This was one of the first businesses hit as the tornado crossed that busy junction. (Reddit.com)

Additional Notable Business Zone Losses

While exact tenant lists from every individual store aren't fully documented in online summary sources, national storm surveys and newspaper accounts from the period confirm that:

Numerous small retail and professional office buildings along Airport Road up to and past the Whitesburg Drive corridor were leveled. Many were shopping plazas with multiple units. (National Weather Service)

Office buildings and service businesses in the one-mile stretch between Memorial Parkway (US-231) and Whitesburg Drive also suffered total destruction or such extensive damage they were later demolished. (Tornado Talk)

Context of the Damage

The tornado hit during afternoon rush hour, meaning many employees, customers, motorists and pedestrians were near these businesses when the storm struck. (Tornado Talk)

An estimated 80 businesses were destroyed along Airport Road and adjacent commercial streets, including retail, service, restaurant, and office space. (National Weather Service)

Summary

The tornado essentially wiped out large swaths of the commercial district at and near Airport Road and Whitesburg Drive, including big shopping plazas (like the Whitesburg Shopping Center), smaller retail establishments, office buildings, a destroyed gas station at the corner, Gates Cleaners, and a jewelry/retail store referenced as Golbro's (or Service Merchandise type).

While detailed tenant lists from 1989 aren't preserved in the main disaster summaries, these named businesses and broader shopping centers are documented in photographic and community memory as being destroyed by the storm. (Wikipedia)



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Turn to the experts

Tips from Earlene



- Raw chicken breasts are easier to cut up if you freeze them, start to thaw them out and use sharp scissors instead of a knife.

- For a different taste in your hot tea, try using a spoonful of strawberry jelly instead of the sugar, or add a slice of lemon that has been studded with a couple of whole cloves.

- If your kid's shoelaces always come undone, try dampening them before tying.

- If you are going to be out and have no way to brush your teeth after eating, carry some mint teabags with you to nibble on - they will make your breath smell sweet.

- For a deep-cleaning mask, try stroking on some Milk of Magnesia, leave it on for 10 minutes and avoid the eye area. Rinse with warm water.

- Remove paper that is glued on to wood surfaces by rubbing on some olive oil.

- When you wake up in the middle of the night with a bad leg cramp, drink 1/4 cup of pickle juice. This works!

- If your windshield wipers smear, clean the windshield and the wiper blades with rubbing alcohol.

- Avoid storing different cakes, cookies or bread in the same container - they affect each other and will get stale much faster.

- Be sure and store your nuts in the fridge or freezer - oftentimes they will get rancid if stored at room temperature.

- If you love to steam vegetables, like I do, pour the leftover liquid in the bottom of your pan into containers and freeze. That way, when you are making soup or need vegetable broth, you will have it ready.

- Roasted vegetables are the best. Cauliflower, brussels sprouts, sweet peppers, broccoli, onions - any you like. Simply wash, cut in pieces, pat dry with paper towels and add a couple tablespoons of olive oil, add your seasoning of choice, toss to coat. Pour all into a greased cookie sheet (with rims) in one layer. Bake at 425 degrees for about 15 or 20 minutes - keep an eye on it so it doesn't burn. These will be your favorites!

- A good astringent for your face, after you clean it, is to splash on some diluted apple cider vinegar - this will prevent dryness and soreness.

- If your child has trouble zipping up her/his jacket, make it easier by attaching a key ring to the zipper.

- To keep cauliflower a pretty white while cooking, add a little milk to the water in which you are cooking it.

- To intensify the sweetness of any dish, add a pinch of salt.

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If and When

by Trey Cornelius

Dear Father in Heaven,

If I fall, please be there to catch me from the sky.
 Sometimes when I'm sad, I might need You to hold me so I don't cry.
 When that happens, then can I please have Your shoulder?
 It takes more than two strong-armed people to lift and carry such a heavy boulder.

If I feel a dark shadow with a devilish persuasion come hither, then show me the right path. Something to permanently hold is better than to only temporarily have.

When the time comes, will You please come and walk with me?
 We can sit together with Your harpist and have biscuits and tea.
 If I break, will You take the glue and put me back together?

Between You and me, we can handle just about any kind of weather.
 When the rest of the world leaves for something greater, will you please stay?
 You're always the One who comes in and saves the day.
 If I grow weak and can't find the strength to sing, open me up,
 Open my mouth so that my voice can come out because shut up does not go up.
 When storm clouds surround my heart and I begin to lose control, whisper assurance.
 There is more than the spirit of rock and roll, the Redeemer's insurance.
 If I lose foolishly and then everything falls apart,
 Please hold my hand, help me move forward, no more going back to the start.
 When I hurt those I love, let forgiveness pass bandied.
 It won't be to them as to what is needed rather than what is fancied.
 If pride is a prejudice and guilt is the senescence, let joy, hope, and faith be the victor.
 Unconditional love is the way to renew quicker.
 When demons are after me, let Your arms be wide open for an embrace of sheer strength.
 The right victor will take the crown for going the extra length.
 If I'm on the edge and the only way is down,
 Please make that direction go away, so I can turn back around.
 When darkness fills the night, let Your light shine for all the world to see.
 Evil spirits are no longer welcome and must banish from me and thee.
 If I feel like giving up, please hold me still.
 To answer my prayer, send down my back a steady embraceable chill.
 When the world gets cold, fill my heart with Your warmth.
 I'll know soon for whatever new is coming forth.
 If all I can be is all I can be, please let that be enough.
 Please do not turn me away because I'm not worth it or if I'm not strong enough.
 When I get knocked down, please let me get up again.
 Always let the result be that the good will always win.
 If there is constant bickering, please tune my ears out.
 My heart, soul, and mind can't handle it because it's too much for violence to scream and shout.
 When the storms of life rage, let the King of Peace appear.
 You're the One who always says to have no fear.
 If all I am surrounded by is a burning fire, send down Your rain to quench me with water.
 I am Yours and You Lord are my Father.
 When walls close in because isolation is overwhelming, expand Your horizons.
 The hills, mountains tall, and fields filled with compromising.
 If words can't find an understanding and there's nothing but lies, let silence show the truth.
 I've wanted to see You ever since my final youth.
 When there is constant rejection because there's nothing I can give.
 Remind me of what You did so that others may live.
 AMEN.



April brings us the hint of summer on the breeze, and flowers are calling us to come outdoors. One can't help but enjoy the beauty of the spring season. Just hope my yard person comes soon because the weeds can creep up in cracks in the driveway so fast this time of year. It's important to keep ahead of them because they can take over before you know it.

Like many of you, I always want to plant a garden or flowering plants. I particularly like tomatoes, and the rule in this part of the country is to wait until after Tax Day, April 15th, to put them in the ground, to be sure the last frost is over. Those tender young tomato sprouts can't take a freeze. Even so, you may want to cover them with a cloth if a frosty night happens later this month.

With Easter on Sunday the fifth, you might be thinking of a few things to do with your kids or grandkids. I liked to put foil to line the inside of an Easter basket, add a small layer of soil and sprinkle grass seeds on top and water. In no time, you'll have tender little grass sprouts growing that are perfect for those colored eggs that will be gathered soon.

When I was growing up, April 1, April Fool's Day, was filled with pranks and laughter. The most common one I remember

is "Your slip is showing," said to a friend, and when she looks, you say, "April Fool."

I hate to remind everyone, but April for us is Tornado Month. It's a good time to check all your battery-powered items like flashlights, weather radio, and maybe even a backup battery charger for your cell phone. Those little battery chargers can hold enough to charge your cellphone multiple times in case of a power failure from a severe storm that knocks out the home power for hours or longer. On April 27, 2011 we lost power for five days when the big TVA lines were hit by a tornado. We didn't get power back at our house until the second of May. Stock up on bottled water and other supplies that might be in short supply in case of extreme weather.

Graduation starts early in May for some schools, and you might want to get those congratulation cards soon and be ready for a graduate this year who has worked hard and appreciates recognition. Those graduating from college are starting a new life as they begin their working careers full-time. Of course, a small gift for those you know well is also a good idea.

With the spring weather, remember all the wonderful walking trails around Huntsville, like the 4.19 mile walking, jogging and bike trail at Aldridge Creek Greenway. Pets are allowed on a leash, and it can be a wonderful family outing. If you count the hiking trails around the area's mountains, it's over 130 miles to traverse.



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JUST LITTLE BITS OF HUNTSVILLE HISTORY

by Johnny Johnston

Published in
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- Lee Highway came down from Chapman Mountain with a vengeance. Oakwood Avenue was the first cross street. Without stop signs or lights, auto drivers did not slow down and often wound up on the northwest corner of Oakwood where a large tree stood. Automobiles did not stop well before the 1960s so many of those autos ran into that tree. I remember scars from the ground to eight or ten feet up with damage from those wrecks. Quite a few deaths occurred at this scene.

- Beautiful homes now are located in the area of Saddle-tree on Highway 72 East. For many years this area, down to Oakwood Ave, was one of Alabama's largest dairies with many, many milk cows.

- You would not believe it by looking now but a few years ago Huntsville had quite a collection of areas needing improvement. Now we know, Huntsville did it. The area from Big Spring all the way to

the Huntsville Hospital was called Baxter's Bottoms. In 1952-3 most of it was turned into Council Courts which was a Government Housing Project. My paper route for the Huntsville Times. In 2010 plans were made to turn most of that area into beautiful commercial, hospital and residential areas. Thank you, Huntsville government.

There was Honey Hole in the 1950s that was converted into auto dealerships, then in 1980s Interstate I565. It is still being improved today with construction on Church Street and Pratt Avenue.

- At one time Huntsville was the home of 12 cotton mills. Well, the Mills called Huntsville home, however each of them sat on a tax island (there may have been a couple of exceptions), which indicates they were not actually paying taxes or in the city of Huntsville. They were all outside the city limits when built anyway. Not much remains of the buildings. Lincoln Mills still has a large building standing on Oakwood and Meridian and West Huntsville Spinning has one building left at the corner of 8th Street and 9th Ave., which is being used as a day care.

- Huntsville was very early with the beginning of daylight saving time. That's right! It was a bust! During the summer of 1956 or 1957, Dr. Von Braun wanted NASA to be on the same time as Washington, D.C. The results, not good. Imagine Redstone Arsenal, the city of Huntsville, not the County of Madison, went on DST alone. In those locations it was an hour ahead of the rest of Madison County and the rest of the south for that matter. I worked at the Huntsville/Madison County Airport, so you can imagine the number of people from the county or other towns in North Alabama arriving one hour late for their flight.

- Auto racing has been popular for many years. After WWII ended, a race track was built on Highway 72 West. It was very popular in the 1940s and early 1950s and was located about where Cars 'R Us is now located. Across the highway in the same area was located a restaurant called The Green Lantern, name taken from a famous radio and later TV show of the same name. McMurtries owned a majority of the land on the south side of Highway 72, the McCutchen's owned the land on the north side of the highway. They were descendants of a settler of Monrovia who was my Great Great Grandfather W. T. Oakes.

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Rebirth



by Iolanda Hicks

April is the month of the year when Mother Nature begins rebirth of winter's dormant trees, flowers and all growing, living things. Our animals awaken from hibernation and our feathered friends fly home from their places of their winter migration. This happens each year: rebirth.

Two movies come to mind that give different views of rebirth and how the actors depict the two different events. One movie came out in 1944, titled "Once Upon a Time" showcasing a manipulating Broadway producer, and a young boy with a dancing caterpillar. The other movie is a 2020 production, action packed, named "Greenland". The first movie does stretch the imagination but the second bends more towards a possibility, with events that could happen. Both depict examples of a specific kind of rebirth. I am definitely not telling you anything about either one of those movies, because that would spoil your curiosity!

In 1982, near a street named Pacific in Brooklyn, NY some residents decided to clean an abandoned lot that was really an eyesore. While getting rid of the weeds and debris left over time, they came across a discarded teddy bear, dirty and deserted. This teddy bear became a symbol of what the neighbors, in this small community were trying to do: make a beautiful garden out of a space that was once neglected and had that look of decay. With shared work and loving care, the space became part of the Brooklyn Bear's Community network and is located near the Brooklyn Academy of Music's Community Garden. The Bear's garden remained until progress plowed the garden to make way for a mall, but through community support, a portion at the site of the original Bear's Garden was recreated along with two sister gardens.

The permanent Bear's Garden today has a vegetable garden, a flower garden and a water garden which is enjoyed by many that come for a visit, whether it be to look at the garden's beauty or to relax during a peaceful break. To me, this is an example of the first of spring: a rebirth.

A children's book, "The Bear's Garden", is said to serve as confirmation with what can be accomplished through the dedication of a few determined individuals creating beauty, a rebirth, out of a neglected, abandoned space. This book was based on what that first community in Brooklyn, NY did to that forgotten, junk and weed-ridden lot in 1982.

We see this happening from time to time, all over this world. I think it is wonderful to make something new again from something old and neglected: a rebirth!

I was reading something from one of our active, motivational speakers recently that made me realize that we could relate this rebirth, happening every spring, with changes in our own lives. I wanted to share a quote from this speaker: "Like the butterfly, you will go through stages of change, rebirth, and new beginnings for transformation and renewal. Use these changes to create a clarity of purpose for a personal renaissance. Break out of your comfort zone, shed old layers, and stretch in your potential to become your best self. Be free of outdated limitations, experience rebirth and take flight." Susan C. Young

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His Book is Back on the Shelf

by Carrie Rogers Gray

My dad, or Daddy as I always called him, went to Heaven on Wednesday, March 4, 2026. You all knew him as L D Rogers and probably read some of his stories in this magazine. He was so proud to have written 29 articles. He was even more proud that he had a story in every issue of 2025. He was still going strong this year even though he's now with the Lord. A month before he passed he was asking me how many stories I had submitted. Checking in as he always did to make sure I was keeping him a few months ahead so as not to miss a month. Before he passed away we had submitted stories through May.

My dad lived a long and adventurous life. I've never seen anyone pack more into 89 years than he did. And he got to live it just like he wanted almost to the very end. On the Saturday before he passed he enjoyed every bit of one of his favorite meals - tomato soup and a grilled cheese sandwich. After that he played a few songs on his keyboard with the last one being Ave Maria. All of this has helped me tremendously with the grief of losing him.

Another thing that has helped with the grief is the explanation our dear friend and also one of my dad's caregivers, Sue Harp, gave on how she sees life like a book. Just like a book, life involves characters, plot, setting, conflict and theme. When you're born, people like your mom and dad help to

take the new book off the shelf. They help you begin writing your story by taking care of you and teaching you things.

For my dad, I know that his sweet mom and dad helped him with the beginning of his book incredibly well. Taking good care of him through sickness, teaching him to play piano, teaching him how to cook and build things. Taking him to church and sending him to great schools, and so much more.

As you get older, you begin to write in your book. Maybe you start by drawing pictures. Then you fill in your own adventures. School, activities, friends, graduation, college, career, family, hard times, vacations, illnesses, celebrations, etc. My dad lived a wonderful, fun and full life. Not void of mistakes or tragedy but they never kept him down for long.

Then you begin to reach the end of your book. Sometimes we are able to know when that is happening and sometimes it happens suddenly. Sometimes even too soon. For my dad, age and declining health entered his story. So many friends, loved ones and caregivers surrounded him with love and served him well in the last chapter. Through the love of all of these characters and with the help of God's answered prayers, my dad the protagonist, passed away peacefully.

My husband and I, along with three of his beautiful caregivers, were able to gather around his bedside and give thanks to the Lord for his life, his love and that he was now more alive than he'd ever been here on earth.

We were honored to help him write the very last page, close the book as we cried tears of sadness and joy, and place it gently back on the shelf. His legacy will live on as many will be able to read the book of his life through family and dear friends that knew him and loved him well.



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Left to Right - Kenz e Singletary, Sandi Singletary, Roy Cox, Karen Nabors, Autumn Nabors

Trav-Ad Signs: A Family Legacy of Craft and Community

Part Two: Doing Big Things While Staying Local

by Writer C5

Trav-Ad Signs' growth was never driven by shortcuts or spectacle. It came through steady relationships, skilled craftsmanship, and a reputation for treating every project—large or small—with the same level of care. From local mom-and-pop storefronts and start-ups finding their footing, to large-scale corporate accounts across the Southeast, Trav-Ad built its name by doing big things for all customers.

That philosophy carried the company far beyond Huntsville while keeping it firmly grounded at home. One such example came years later when Adtran trusted Trav-Ad to install five-foot lettering more than 100 feet in the air. The solution—a helicopter-assisted installation—was bold, but the mindset behind it was the same one applied to hand-lettered trucks decades earlier: plan carefully, execute precisely, and stand behind the work. When Adtran rebranded in 2025, they again turned to Trav-Ad.

Roy Cox's leadership extended beyond individual projects. In 1998, he became involved with the Mid-South Sign Association, eventually serving as President. In 2014, Roy was elected President of the International Sign Association, representing the industry alongside leaders from more than forty countries.

That same year marked another milestone. When Cracker

Barrel was seeking a partner for nationwide signage, the decision wasn't won on reputation alone. Roy, Karen and Sandi sat across the table from the Cracker Barrel team, sharing not only experience, but confidence in their people, processes and values. Trav-Ad was awarded the contract, and Sandi led the charge managing the account—a role she continues to hold today.

As the company's reach expanded, its identity did not change. Trav-Ad remained a local, family-owned business whose team provides professional guidance on every signage project—whether simple or complex—drawing on decades of hands-on industry experience to serve as a trusted advisor and help customers make informed decisions and achieve results they can be proud of.

In 2020, after decades of hands-on involvement and progressive leadership, Karen and Sandi assumed full operational control of Trav-Ad Signs. Their transition represented continuity, not departure. The values established from the beginning—respect for skilled trades, pride in workmanship, and commitment to people—remain the standard.

Today, a third generation is beginning to learn the business the same way the second did: through hands-on experience, time in the shop and exposure to what it takes to run a company built on trust.

Multiple generations often work side by side in the yellow-striped facility on Shields Road, sharing knowledge shaped over five decades.

Trav-Ad Signs' story is one of growth without forgetting its roots. It is the story of a local family business built on people, pride, and purpose. Fifty years after its founding, Trav-Ad continues to serve Huntsville, the Tennessee Valley, and beyond—living out a belief formed in its earliest days: a sign of good business, is a good sign.

Heard On the Street



by Cathey Carney

Nisha Kenett was our winner for the hidden guitar that I put in last month's issue. Did you find it? It was on p. 38 in the B&W ad and I made it larger so had many more calls. But Nisha was the first. She lives in Greensboro, NC and has family here in Huntsville. She has visited a few times, and looks forward to reading the stories, but loves life in North Carolina. Congratulations to you Nisha!

One of our most popular writers was **L D Rogers**, because he had such a great sense of humor in his stories and had such a good life! We were so very sad to hear that he had passed away on March 5 at the age of 89. But the positive in this is that his family and friends were so lucky to have had him in their lives for that many years!

L D wrote over 25 stories for OHM over the years and he loved to see them in print, sharing them with his dear friends at Terrace Lake Assisted Living in Guntersville. L D is survived by his daughter, **Carrie Ann Rogers Gray** and husband **Tommy** of Madison, AL; daughter, **Diana Love**, Paducah, KY; sister, **Angharad "Ann" Futrell**, Granite City, IL; three grandchildren; four great-grandchildren; sister-in-law **Harriet Taber**, Paducah, KY; several nieces and nephews. He had upcoming stories for OHM so you will still see those. His spirit will never die.

Happy Happy Birthday to **Cheryl Tribble** of Utah who is the premier editor for OHM. She is still a child at heart and loves playing with her beautiful great grand daughter **Scout**. Cheryl's day is April 27!

The Farmers Markets are opening up in April and we can't wait for that good local produce. Not only are you helping yourself by eating healthier, you're helping local small businesses. A definite win-win for all of us. Two favorites are Greene Street Market close to downtown, and the Lowe Mill Outdoor Market. This is happening now (April 4 til Oct. 24) every Saturday from 11am - 4pm, at 2211 Seminole Dr. SW off Governors Drive. Greene Street Market will be opening soon.

Be sure to check out Ayers Farmers Market too - they have a location on Meridian Street with beautiful plants for your garden, and on Cook Ave. for your fresh Veges.

Bennett's Nursery on 7002 North Parkway has every kind of gardening plants you can imagine. What I love are the folks who work there - everyone there is so knowledgeable and they patiently answer every question I have about what to plant and when.

If you are fairly new to Huntsville and are looking for a huge variety of activities, Google Huntsville Explorer. It is a really good website that gives you activities, places and times, and the site itself is very well done!

Many knew **Linda Lawrence**

and were so sad to hear that she had passed away. She was in the Lee High School class of '65 and had retired to Orange Beach, AL. She is the sister of **Billy and Frank Lawrence**, and is survived by her husband **Larry**, sons **Jonathan and Jason**, granddaughter **Clara**, and grandsons **Jacob and Van**. Thank you to **Phyllis Lawrence** for sending this to us - **Billy Lawrence** was her beloved husband.

A special hello to **Gertrud Nein** of Huntsville. She sent us a note recently letting us know how much she has enjoyed Old Huntsville Mag for the past 30 years!

Juanita Mabel Green Adcock was proud to be born and raised in North Alabama. She was a life-long and passionate Auburn War Eagle and an Auburn softball fan as well. She never missed any of these games and always wore her blue and orange with pride! Juanita also loved the history of our area. She passed away on December 30, 2025 at the age of 83. She is survived by her daughters, **Leala R. Taunton** and **Lyala L. Walters (Jonathan)**, two grandchildren, **David Miles** and **Leslie T. Burgess (Taylor)** and two great-grandsons, **Maximus Miles** and **Sawyer Burgess**. She will always be remembered by her loving family.

Do you ever feel, as you get older, that just doing everyday activities is getting harder and harder? Like opening bottles of water even? And getting into packages from gar-

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dening stores, big box stores etc? I have found that if I didn't have scissors, pliers, hammers etc. I wouldn't be able to exist. Opening up bottled water with pliers is a regular activity! My friends tell me it's not just me either.

A very happy birthday was celebrated on March 26th for **Charles Higginbotham** of Decatur, Al. This handsome man just celebrated his 89th birthday and his family knows that he just loves the old stories of our area. Happy Birthday to you Charles! We hope you partied like you should!

I have hidden a **tiny pair of pliers** within the pages of this magazine - find it and be the first to call - you win a year of Old Huntsville magazine! Don't call if you've recently won, give some others a chance!

One of our readers has a question and she's hoping that some other readers might have information on this. It is a very interesting subject and we are hoping you can shed light on this. We'll let all our readers know and perhaps be the subject for a good upcoming story in OHM. This is the request.

Kathleen writes: "I have been interested in the story of the first bathtub in Alabama and probably the nation which was carved out of Limestone and installed in a home that was completed for **Thomas Martin** in 1816 on 80 acres which included a spring. The tub was 5 ft. long, 19.5 inches wide, and 12 inches deep. 500 feet of hollowed cedar piped water from Cold Springs. It was moved sometime before the Civil War when Martin relocated to a home at the corner of Jefferson and Holmes. My question is does anyone know the fate of that bathtub?" If you have information on this that you would like to share please send an email to oldhuntsville@gmail.com - thanks in Advance!

We do have US-wide subscribers and one of our favorites is **Eleanor Ransburg** of Shreveport, LA. Love to you Eleanor and you have a great spring!

We lost another dear lady in February. **Betty Jo Cunningham**, 88, of Huntsville, Alabama, passed away on February 4, 2026. She was definitely a 60s lady who loved music, flowers, her family and especially her husband. Betty Jo is survived by her husband, **Lee Roy Cunningham**; daughter, **Robin Marshall (John)**; granddaughter, **Madison Leigh Marshall**, and a host of nieces, nephews and cousins.

Betty was a wife, mother and grandmother who was strong in her faith and dearly loved her lord and Savior. She was a wonderful example of a true Christian and will be missed dearly by all who loved and knew her.

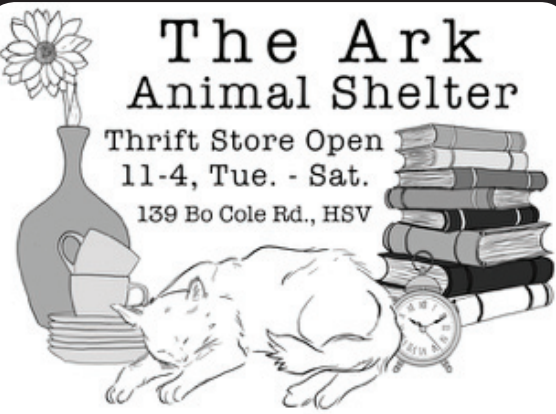
All of us are going through something, whether it's health, financial, personal, physical. It seems as you get older, life gets

more difficult. So before you criticize or judge someone, imagine that what they're going through is possibly worse than what you have and be **kinder**. It's a simple idea but you just might be the person who lifts up another on a particular day. They will feel better and you will too!

Thrifting is a great way to find treasures at really low prices and sometimes brand new. You might find clothing, shoes, furniture, jewelry - lots of things at great prices. Also it's fun, gets you off the cell phone for a few hours, and we're hearing that many younger people are loving it now because it's just fun.

Have a good Easter and I know most of us can't wait for the beautiful warm weather even if includes some humidity and bugs.

Happy April!



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Deep South Classics

Best Fried Chicken

4 chicken breasts, skin on,
washed very well
Salt & pepper
Garlic powder
Onion powder
1 c. plain flour
2 T. paprika
1 brown paper bag
2 c. oil or lard

Season your chicken with the salt, pepper, garlic and onion powders. Mix paprika and flour in a brown paper bag, add your chicken and shake well to coat. Put chicken aside for an hour, shake & coat again.

Begin heating about 2 inches of oil in a large skillet. When very hot but not yet smoking, begin to add chicken, skin side up. Don't crowd them, continually move them around. Don't leave a breast in one place more than 5 minutes. Turn occasionally. When each piece is golden brown, after about 25 minutes, remove them to paper towels and make your gravy.

Spicy Chicken Gravy

Pour off most grease from your fried chicken pan. Brown a little flour in the bottom of your skillet, add salt & pepper to taste. Pour in milk or water, or a mixture of the two. Stir well. Add a few dashes of cayenne pepper and garlic powder. Spoon this on your fresh biscuits. Delicious!

Fried Peanut Butter & Banana Sandwiches

4 slices white bread
1 banana
1 c. crunchy peanut butter
3 T. honey
1/2 t. ground cinnamon
Soft butter
Sugar & cinnamon mix

In a small bowl mix the peanut butter, honey & cinnamon. Slather all 4 bread slices with the peanut butter mixture.

Slice your bananas & top two of the bread slices with the

banana - cover with other two bread slices.

Spread soft butter on outside of sandwiches, place each sandwich in hot frying pan with buttered side down.

Add more butter to top of sandwiches & flip to brown on both sides.

On a flat plate mix 1/2 cup sugar with 1 teaspoon cinnamon and add warm sandwiches to plate, flip each side to coat with the sugar mixture. Cut each sandwich diagonally and serve warm.

Thanks to Paula Deen for this recipe, which was a favorite of Elvis Presley!

Deep-Fried Tuna Balls

1 small can tuna
1/2 c. chopped onion
1 t. salt
1 t. pepper
3/4 c. plain flour

Mix all ingredients and form balls. Drop into hot grease and fry til golden brown.

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Potato Dumplings

- 2 medium potatoes
- 1 egg
- 1 t. salt
- 1/2 t. pepper
- 2 c. plain flour

Grate the potatoes, add salt, pepper, egg & flour. Mix well - if the dough is too stiff add a bit of water. Cook by dropping lima bean size portions of the dough into boiling water and cook for 7-10 minutes. Drain and rinse with cold water. Great with the following cabbage recipe.

Cabbage and Dumplings

- 1 small onion
- 1 T. butter
- Medium head cabbage, finely chopped
- Salt & Pepper
- Paprika

Chop onion and brown in lightly browned butter. Add the cabbage with spices. Fry slowly til done - about 20 minutes. Add the potato dumplings from above and mix well - you'll love this dish on spring days!

Coconut Pie

- 1/2 c. self-rising flour
- 1-1/2 c. sugar
- 4 eggs, beaten
- 1 t. vanilla extract
- 1/2 stick butter, melted
- 7 oz. flake coconut
- 2 c. milk

Blend the sugar & flour, stir in eggs and remaining ingredients. Pour into 2 greased 9-inch pie plates. Bake at 350 degrees for 30 minutes.

Syrup Pudding

- 2 c. syrup
- 1 c. hot water
- 3/4 c. Crisco
- 4-1/2 c. plain flour
- 2 t. baking soda
- 1 t. nutmeg

- 3 t. baking powder
- 1/2 t. salt

In a small bowl mix first 3 ingredients. In a larger bowl mix remaining dry ingredients. Pour the syrup mixture into the dry mix and combine well, until smooth. Pour into a greased pan and bake in moderate oven (325 degrees) for 35-40 minutes. Serve with any kind of sauce or additional syrup.

Almond Coconut Bars

- 3/4 c. butter
- 1-1/2 c. plain flour
- 2 t. sugar
- 5 eggs, beaten
- 2 c. sugar
- 3 T. almond extract
- 2 c. coconut

Mix the butter, flour and sugar. Press into a 9x13-inch pan. Bake at 350 degrees for 15 minutes. Mix the remaining ingredients and spread over the pastry. Bake at 350 degrees for 25 minutes. Cool and cut into bars. These can be stored in the refrigerator for a week or frozen in freezer bags for several months.



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Cat Scratch Fever

by Elizabeth Wharry

In 1977, Ted Nugent wrote and performed the song, "Cat Scratch Fever."

On September 29, while I was sleeping, my cat Lucy bit me on my right hand. The bite hit the vein just below the index finger. I decided to keep an eye on it. By Friday, October 3, I saw tell tale signs of a nasty infection. When I went to the emergency room, I was given an antibiotic.

I had a prepaid, non-refundable room booked in Gulf Shores. That weekend, the beaches were closed due to weather. Still, it felt good just to be outside and walking along the shore. I noticed a faint red streak starting on the palm side of my wrist. The antibiotic wasn't strong enough.

I came home a couple of days later, feeling weaker and sicker. I called my family doctor, and was seen within 48 hours. By then, the red streaks indicating blood poisoning were about 2 inches up from my palm. My family doctor looked serious as he said, "If this antibiotic doesn't work, we may be considering an amputation. I want to see you back in a week." I was shaking when I left the office.

"I was going to get up really early this morning and go jogging, but my toes voted against me 10-1."

Pat Riley, Huntsville

Fortunately, the antibiotic he prescribed started working almost immediately. The infection headed up, and was rather gruesome looking. I had to have help with the most basic tasks. I couldn't tie my own shoes. I wore slip-ons.

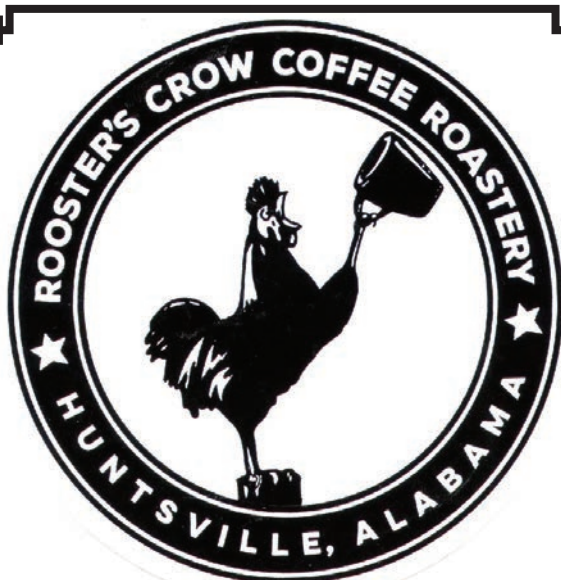
Fortunately, being somewhat ambidextrous, I was able to put on makeup. I would dictate my articles, and my son Jacob was gracious enough to write them down.

Eventually, the infection went away. However, it left my hand swollen, stiff and sore. I also had, and still have, a scar on the back of my wrist. That's

where the infection had settled. In December, I saw a hand specialist. That doctor prescribed a compression glove and physical therapy.

My cat Lucy is still with us. She is a lovely ginger tabby with gold eyes. She was named after Lucille Ball. Aside from the scar, and occasional swelling, my right hand is fully functional. It has taken a full 6 months to heal.

Wishing my dear readers a Blessed and joyous Easter!



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The Hula Hoop Contest



by Charles Flanders

My sister, brother and I had never owned a bicycle. But we all wanted one, especially me. Dad said he just could not afford to buy us one. So that was that. But that didn't stop my devious mind from trying to figure out some way for us to get a bicycle.....

In the 1950s nothing was more popular than the "HULA HOOP". It was a cheap toy that anyone could afford, and almost everyone from young to old had one. They were popular entertainment on TV and many other venues. Contests were being held everywhere for endurance and tricks. Sometimes even prizes were awarded.

My younger sister (Sylvia) practiced daily on the Hula Hoop. She was quite an expert. She could go for hours. I usually lasted 5 minutes, at the most.

As luck would have it, the local Chevrolet dealer announced that they were going to put on a HULA HOOP contest for children 6 to 12. The prize, to my delight, was a bicycle. About that time, my twisted mind started turning. I decided to enter Sylvia in the contest, and she could easily win me the bicycle. I even walked down to the car dealer and signed her up.

She agreed to be in the contest, so everything was set.

The day of the contest, our whole family went to watch the contest. Sylvia (age 9) was all excited and had no doubt that she would win... there were prob-

ably 50 kids or more that entered the contest. Then the music started, and within 10 minutes, at least half of the contestants were out. Another 10 minutes and only about 10 kids remained. Sylvia was going at it with all the ease in the world. Another 10 minutes and there were only 2 kids left, Sylvia and some boy. At that time, the boy, you could easily tell, was very fatigued. We knew that any time now Sylvia would be winning me that bicycle. I could just see me riding down the street on it.

But all of a sudden, something went wrong. Sylvia just reached down and stopped the Hoop from spinning. I was in a panic. Then all of a sudden she went running up to Mom and whispered in her ear that she had to go potty. I told her that she should have just gone in her pants. My dreams of owning a bicycle had vanished. But then, she told me she was sorry and then gave me a great big hug, with that big smile she always had. I forgot about the bicycle, after all isn't a sincere hug from your sister better than an old bicycle?

The popularity of the Hula Hoop is not as great as it used to be. But you can still buy them and they are still just as much fun. On my next birthday, Dad bought me a used bicycle.



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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 worthwhile 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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SURVIVING THE DEPRESSION

by Cathey Carney



I thought you would enjoy reading about family survival tactics used during the Depression era that our readers have sent in over the years.

- * Women made everything out of flour sacks, including skirts and dresses for girls.

- * There was lots of sickness, we used to take 666 which was so bitter, it only took one spoonful to cure you. We also used castor oil, Black Drought or kerosene and sugar.

- * We always used our ground coffee 3 times.

- * Mama stretched our butter by softening it, then beating it with a can of evaporated milk.

- * Road meat was Depression food. Fowl or wild game killed by cars was quickly retrieved and dressed out for the next meal.

- * Leftover gift wrap and ribbons were always carefully removed, ironed and saved.

- * My Dad would patch the tops and sides of our shoes with tire patches. We used hardened tallow to polish our shoes.

- * Mom always watched the first 3 days of spring to see what the next three months would bring.

- * Everyone had a cabbage patch. Cabbage was used in sauerkraut, as well as a hot vegetable.

- * We used to try to beat the squirrels to all the wild nuts like hickory and hazelnuts.

- * The weed, Queen Anne's Lace, was dipped in flour and fried. It kept the family from going to bed hungry many times.

- * Bread was torn into pieces and added to fried potatoes, to make "Stretch Potatoes."

- * Farmers planted only the potato eyes for the garden, then ate the rest of them. We used cardboard in our shoes and washed our hair in Pels Naptha, we brushed our teeth with salt and soda.

- * Mama wrapped my school sandwiches in the cornflake box liner. I used it day after day.

- * To unshrink woolen sweaters Mama would boil them in a solution of 1 part white vinegar to 2 parts water, then stretch to original size and dry,

- * Baths took place on Saturday and the cleanest one bathed first, then the rest of the family used the same water in the old wash tub, the dirtiest person last.

- * Everything was patched and darned. Orange crates were used for everything from furniture to storage containers.

- * Weddings were simple and beautiful, with the average cost of everything - dress, veil, bridal and groom's cakes, reception, etc. being around \$50.

- * An unopened box of baking soda will stay good up to 2 years; baking powder 18 months; cake mix good for a year; flavored gelatin, 15 months and unflavored gelatin, 3 years.

- * Baking bread will help improve your spirits when you're feeling low. Pound and knead the dough as if you were trying to beat away all your problems, then pull and push it into shape. Bake the bread, enjoy that wonderful smell in your kitchen, then eat a couple of slices with real butter, while it's still warm.

- * Tea bags are often good for two servings. We used it for the first cup, then put it back in the hot water later for a second cup.



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City News 1908



- William Moore is being held here for charges of forgery and bigamy. He tried to commit suicide in his cell by eating the heads of a large number of matches. Women companions had returned from seeing him and went to his mother to get help. The jailor discovered his plight and administered medicine. Before eating the matches he wrote a letter to his mother, police and companions.

- A local woman asserted that for months she had been abused and threatened by her husband. Mrs. Ethel Olsen, formerly of England and later of Huntsville, sent a pistol bullet at her husband in a crowded street near the Courthouse here late Sunday, missed him and powder-burned a passerby. She declares she fired to protect her face from a dash of muriatic acid which she charges her husband was preparing to cast at her. She was arrested and charged with assault with intent of murder. She tells a story of her husband's alleged cruel treatment of her and their children.

- Jennie Smith holds the record in this area for marriages. She claims she was widowed 6 times in Nashville before moving here and marrying Jimmy Smith.

- Mayor R. Earle Smith stated today that no whiskey shall be sold in Huntsville while he is Mayor. He stated that a few bottles may occasionally change hands but that there will be no general or even restricted sale and that the law shall be enforced as it appears on the statute books. As far as I know bootleggers and moonshiners are about extinct, just another way of life that only remains with those of us who still remember such things.

- A Dallas Mill family is counting their blessings this morning after their home was completely destroyed by fire. The family was sound asleep when the blaze began and were alerted by the pet wire-haired terrier which began barking until the whole family was roused. The dog continued to bark until all were out of the home. The family is staying with relatives until more accommodations can be found and neighbors are already taking up a collection to replace the family's belongings. The Mills have a policy against pets but it is expected to be waived in this instance.

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

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

- Found - Buggy lap robe on Franklin Street. Owner return to this office and recover by describing and paying for this advertisement.



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Voor's Night Club

by L D Rogers

Voor's Night Club was the ultimate place to play music in Paducah, KY. I spent many years playing before I had the chance to play there. Voor's was a place you went for a night of dancing and drinks. The ladies wore their best dresses and the men wore a coat and tie.

There would be a man at the front door that welcomed you and turned you over to one of the servers. The server would show them to a table and take their drink order.

They also had hat check ladies that would take your hat and coat and give you a ticket for it. It was well known that at the end of the night when you went to get your coat you always tipped the person in the hat check booth.

The club was owned by Micky Galvin and his son Tommy and daughter Jean. Sorry to say Micky had passed away long before the first time I played there. Tommy ran the place and Jean ran a package store that was attached to one end of the club.

The place could seat about 400 people and they also had a long bar that was separate from the dance hall. You could go there and have a drink if you didn't care to get a table. There were three bartenders and there were always at least five or six servers. The servers were always men dressed in black pants, white shirts, white vests, and black bow ties.

Someone asked Micky why he hired men to serve and he told him right fast, "You know we belong to the Catholic Church and my kids go to the Catholic School. I have enough

trouble with them because of the night club. I'd hate to think what it would be like if I hired women to work the club floor."

One other nice thing at Voor's is that they served lunch. They had the best ham sandwich you ever put in your mouth. Tommy would have a 10 or 15 pound ham in a ham rack on the back bar and would slice the ham right in front of you to make your sandwich. I have never tasted a ham sandwich that was any better.

Sometimes I would go to Voor's and get a sandwich and bring it back to work at the Ford dealership. The ladies in the office found out about it and I would have to go and get them one. They had beer on tap that came in a keg and they would serve it in cold mugs kept in a fridge.

There was a man that would come to Voor's just about every day and have lunch and a cold



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beer or he would stop by after work and have one. For a long time I didn't know who he was until I started dating my wife Sara. I was at her parents' house one time for Christmas and this man came in with his wife and I realized who it was. It was Sara's Aunt Golda's husband Pete. He let me know right away that I didn't need to say anything about him being at Voor's.

People loved to dance to big bands at Voor's and but big bands were going away. They started using smaller bands. The only thing the bands needed to know how to play was a waltz, a two step, cha-cha and a tango. There was an Arthur Murray dance school in Paducah and on Friday and Saturday night their students came to dance to live music.

The stage in the club was big. It was two tiers and it could hold 15 to 20 musicians. Beautiful curtains behind the stage and lights that lit up the curtains. I was so glad when I saw a Hammond organ and piano. All I had to do was go in and sit down and play.

I started playing there with Bill Havel. He was a friend and fellow musician. He was the band director at St. Mary High School and he played the trumpet. We also had a bass player and drummer so along with the organ and piano we had a pretty good band. Tommy Galvin believed you had to have a horn in the band to play there so it worked out just fine. We played there for a little over two years on Friday and Saturday nights.

The people that came liked our music because we could do just about any type music. The people in the dance class really loved the Latin songs that we did. Some nights we would have three or four other horn players come and sit in with us.

I remember one night there were four ladies who came in and took a table close to the bandstand and I could tell that they knew Bill. When we got our break he went over and talked to them. They didn't dance and all they had to drink was a Co-Cola.

When we got back from our break I asked Bill about them. He kinda laughed and said, "They are nuns from the school and found out I was playing here and decided to come and listen. They traded their habits for regular clothes." They were very nice and really enjoyed the music.

Back then there was a song that came out called "Haunted House" by Jumpin'

Gene Simmons. I had learned to play and sing it. The servers really loved it and they would want us to do it for the last song. I told them I couldn't do that because the last song we did was Show Me the Way to Go Home but it could be the next to the last song. When it was time to go one of the servers would come up to the bandstand and say, "HAINT THAT HOUSE!"

One last fun fact - musicians had to be a part of the musicians union to be able to play the clubs in town. They met occasionally on Monday evenings. The union would pay for bands to play at places like retirement homes, etc.

It was a wonderful experience working at Voor's and I made a lot of great friends.

(I was good friends with Hank Weitzel mentioned in this old ad we found. He was a great accordion player.)

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Grandma and the Butterflies

by Bruce Walker

I was sitting on the edge of her bed, holding my 85-year-old grandmother's hand. We were not sad. The ravages of disease had taken their toll, and she was ready to go.

She looked out the bedroom window, smiled softly, and said, "Look — there's a butterfly. They've returned once again."

From as far back as I can remember, Grandma talked about butterflies, especially Monarchs. Under her bedroom window, she planted what she called a "butterfly bush." It wasn't much to look at — scraggly, with small pale-yellow flowers. You wouldn't feature it in a landscaping magazine, but it did exactly what Grandma wanted: it brought the butterflies.

She began telling a story I had heard all my life. "These butterflies have traveled thousands of miles — over mountains, across the Gulf of Mexico, and through fierce ocean storms. They start their journey in the Oyamel fir forests high in the mountains of northern Mexico."

Grandma had never been there. In fact, she had lived her entire life in Alabama and rarely left her farm. Yet there she was, smiling, describing the adventures of those butterflies as if she had walked among them herself.

"I'm told that if you walk into the Oyamel forest on

a certain spring day," she continued, "you'll see what looks like Christmas ornaments hanging by the millions from the trees. Then, when the sun hits them just right, the whole forest comes alive. Millions of wings beat their wings in the trees. Then, when the sun hits them just right, the whole forest comes alive. Millions of wings beat the air, sounding like a gentle rain, as brilliant orange and black Monarchs move through the trees like living stained glass."

As she pictured it, her voice grew stronger.

"They gather together and begin their journey north, year after year. None of the butterflies that leave Mexico will make the entire trip to Canada. It's a multi-generational journey — birthing, living, and dying along the way."

What struck her most was that the Monarch's entire life is spent on a journey — finding its way and passing that knowledge, somehow written into its DNA, on to the next generation.

Grandma had looked out that same bedroom window for more than sixty years, watching the butterflies return. Now her children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren were beginning their own journeys.

"You know," she whispered, "those butterflies and I have a lot more in common than you think. We've come to the end of our days — and we've found our way."

She didn't need to shout it. By her example, Grandma passed on everything we needed to navigate this life. Some of her "DNA" for the journey included:

- "You can't see over the hill or around the corner."
- "Don't let your temper get in your pocketbook."
- "Don't borrow troubles from tomorrow; there's enough for today."
- "Don't let the sun go down on your anger."
- "What goes down in the well comes up in the bucket."
- "There's many a good tune played on an old fiddle."

And her favorite verse: "Trust in the Lord, for He will make a way where it seems there is no way." (Isaiah 43:16-19, KJV).

Like the Monarchs she loved, Grandma finished her journey knowing she had shown the next generation how to find its way.

*Bruce Walker writes a weekly column and speaks to civic groups, churches, and community events
Contact him at bruce.walker2@gmail.com*



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News of the Absurd



- John Allen and his brother, Richard, decided to remove a bee's nest from a shed on their property with the aid of a "pineapple." This is an illegal firecracker that is the explosive equivalent of 1/2 stick of dynamite. They ignited the fuse and retreated to watch from inside their home, behind a plate glass window. The concussion of the explosion shattered the window inwards, seriously lacerating John. Deciding his brother needed stitches, Richard took John out to his car and while walking, John got stung 3 times by one of the surviving bees. Unbeknownst to either brother, John was allergic to bee venom, and died of suffocation en route to the hospital.

- A driver crashed into the side of a 3000-ton wheat train and was dragged in his car more than a mile before being slammed into a pylon at the edge of a cliff. He died when he successfully got out of his car, then fell to his death from a bridge as he walked for help.

- In Gulf Breeze, Florida, 3 unidentified teenage males were using a home video camera to film an action "movie." In this movie, that one of the boys had written, a character is ignited by fire when his clothes are doused with lighter fluid. The intentional fire, which proved unexpectedly difficult to extinguish, left the young man with third degree burns on his left arm, torso and both legs. It was all captured on film.

- In Bradford, Pennsylvania, J. Cruew, 28, caught a small snake in his yard. As a joke he placed the snake in a container,

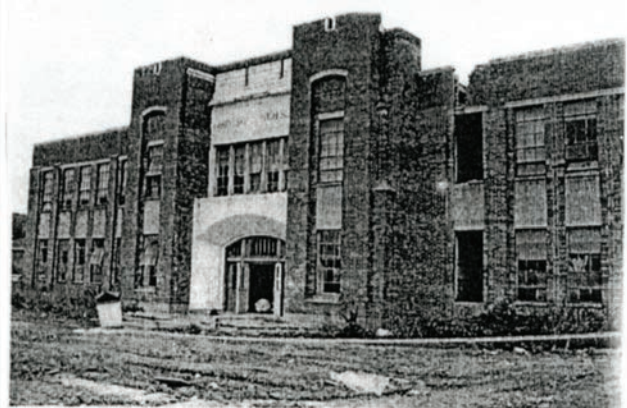
then handed it to his wife. She opened it and, startled to see a snake, dropped it. The poisonous snake immediately bit Mr. Cruew on the ankle. The man survived, but only after a long painful period.

- In a rural county of Pennsylvania, a group of men were drinking beer and discharging firearms from the rear deck of a home owned by Irving Michaels, 27. The men were trying to shoot at a raccoon that was wandering through the yard. The beer impaired their aim and the animal escaped into a 3-foot diameter drainage pipe 100 feet away from the deck. Determined to get the raccoon, Mr. Michaels poured 5 gallons of gasoline down the pipe, then tried to ignite the fuel. After trying several minutes, he finally slid feet-first 15 feet down the sloping pipe to toss the match. The subsequent rapid fireball propelled Mr. Michaels back the way he had come, though at a much higher rate of speed. He came out of the angled pipe, "like a Polaris missile leaving a submarine" according to witnesses. Mr. Michaels was launched directly over his home, right over his astonished friends, traveling 200 feet through the air. Luckily the man was not hurt badly. No one knows what happened to the raccoon.

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APRIL BLOOMS



by Kimberly Lang

April is blowing in fast to me. Is it you? Have you started planting your flowers and vegetables? We will be celebrating Easter this month. It is my favorite holiday. It means more to me than Christmas because it is the day our Jesus rose from his tomb. I love April because it brings so many pretty colors.

How will your family be celebrating Easter? We go to church if I am able too. We don't have small children around to hunt eggs anymore. I miss that alot. I don't get to see my grandsons enjoy it either because they live in El Paso, Texas.

It is hard when your children grow up and move away to another state but I am proud of my son-in-law. He is in the Army serving our country.

I try to visit my dad as much as I can but with MS and other health issues I don't get out as much as I want to. I will try to cook dinner for my husband and my 2 sons who live with us. My husband said not to worry about it, he can grill burgers!

April unfortunately brings

some good and bad memories for Huntsville. I want to take the time to remember all the ones who we lost in tornados that we had in our city. We also can celebrate the Redstone Arsenal; it was founded in April 1941.

Did you know Alabama's first Constitution was signed in 1819 in Huntsville? Did you know the modern zipper was granted patent on April 29, 1913?

The birthstone for April is the diamond. The flowers are Daisy and Sweet pea. The birth sign is Aries or Taurus.

So as I close I pray you all have a wonderful Easter however you celebrate it and enjoy your family. Take this month to look at all the pretty blooms of color. Spring is in the air, summer is not far away and here in Alabama we know it will be a hot and humid one and that part I don't look forward to.

I can't wait for the fresh vegetables though, that first red tomato! I will close now. I hope April brings you all delight and wonderful memories.

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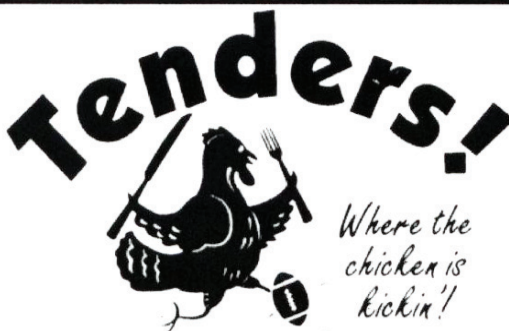
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Jerry "Punchy" Davis
April 15, 1955

The Punching Post Master

by Steve Williams

This is a story of my father, Punchy Davis.

There are many stories to tell about my Dad. This is the story of the Punching Postmaster.

Born in 1935, in the village of Merrimack, Huntsville, Alabama, Jerry Davis grew up with a love and a knack for boxing and football.

Merrimack was a place of hard working people. A no-nonsense life, old school values before old school was a term.

As a youngster, he was quite good at both sports - playing football at Joe Bradley School and boxing at a local gym. His amateur boxing culminated with winning his Golden Gloves tournament as a teen.

His victory over a twenty-something year old adult opponent was frowned upon by his father, who by protective instinct, forbade Jerry to fight grown men. As punishment, Jerry was given an ultimatum: pick one sport. Boxing or football. My dad chose to quit the football team.

After some time, and seeing his son's sad-

ness, his father relented. Jerry was allowed to play football once again. Jerry happily walked back to football practice, and the coach exclaimed, "Here comes ole Punchy Davis!"

A lifelong nickname was born.

Eventually, his football career ended when he graduated at Butler High School in 1953. Though, he and his good pal, future Madison County Sheriff David Hedrick, pursued a scholarship at Florence Tech College (now UNA) by attempting to walk on to a football team led by future NFL Chicago Bear Harlan Hill.

But that's another story for another day.

After joining the USMC, Punchy's boxing career continued into the All Armed Forces Tournament during the Korean War. Pulled by an officer from a unit guard post, he went into the tournament with hardly any time to prepare. Ultimately, he took second place in the middle-weight division, beaten by the same man who won the previous year.

After his time in the Marines, he boxed professionally, eventually hired by the U.S. Postal Service. A freak accident and injury ended his boxing career.

After some years as a mail carrier, he was considered for promotion into the Post Office upper management in Huntsville. At one point, he was sent to a seminar in a hotel in Orlando, Florida, to learn the ins and outs of management.

Being the boxing fan historian he was, it was near karma that one day he met heavyweight champion Muhammad Ali in the Orlando hotel elevator. They bumped into each other numerous times, initially chatting about boxing as two boxers would. Eventually chatting about family and other interests. This culminated in a lunch break together at the busy hotel restaurant. Before they could be seated, Ali was swarmed by flocks of kids.

Punchy looked on as Ali took the time to get down on the floor and play with them all. He had a new found respect for the Greatest of All Time.

Ali signed one of my Dad's business programs as a souvenir, with intent to give it to his kids. It hung on my bedroom wall for many years.

Later on, Punchy was the boxing coach at the Blue Springs YMCA in his spare time. He was the Director of Customer Services under Postmaster Eddie Hayes in Huntsville.

Eventually, he took a Postmaster job in the small town of Rogersville, AL until his retirement.

During my baseball and football playing youth, some of my friends called him Punchy, but he was also known as the "Punching Postmaster."



The Story of Parkway Motors

by Writer C5

For thirty-four years a personized car dealership operated at 11141 South Memorial Parkway. That was located on the access road across from Lowes. Hundreds of satisfied customers now drive by and see an empty asphalt garden. Thousands now pass along looking over for that obscure car dealer that had all the Corvettes. Many people would even use the place for directions. "Down South Parkway, past the guys who always have all those Corvettes".

If you have been in Huntsville for at least a few years, you are probably familiar with the location. This is the story of Parkway Motors.

In 1987 Frank Digesu Sr. opened Huntsville's first car dealership that specialized in Corvettes. Frank Sr. had just retired from IBM where he was a lead engineer for the Apollo Space Team and Saturn V program instrument unit. Sr. had worked at Edwards Chevrolet of Birmingham in the 1950's and had a deep passion for the car industry. He married Rosemary DiGiorgio in 1954. They had four children, Frank Jr., Sam, Diane and David. Rosemary is an eloquent and soft-spoken lady, who should have her own book on properly managing an Italian home.

With the Apollo missions complete and the kids in college, Sr. shared his vision with Rosemary. Over a home-

made Italian dinner, Parkway Motors began.

Frank Sr. had graduated from University of Alabama 1959. Rosemary and Frank Sr. held hands and jumped towards the stars as they planned their life together. They had a plan built on love. Certainly, they loved their Alabama football. Roll Tide! Make no mistake about it, if you were to call Miss Rosemary today during an Alabama game, you would receive an Italian tone and lecture that was normally saved for the three

boys. Alabama football is serious business in the south. The couple added a little Auburn love when Frank was recruited by Auburn University. They attended Frank's Auburn games. They are mighty fine people.

Sr. knew he had to start recruiting some good team members to build a winning program. He didn't have to leave the car lot to get his first recruit, Frank Jr. An Auburn graduate. Who would not take Jr. as the first overall pick? He maintained a stellar GPA at Auburn University, where he was a scholarship athlete on the football team.

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Frank Jr. had an accountant mindset, superior social and grammar skills with a true desire to be the best corvette dealer in the SE. Frank Jr. left his accounting position at Brazelton Imports and joined his dad's team.

The duo sat down and laid out their business model. They understood that customer satisfaction and repeat business was key in building a reputable car business. These would be the pillars that helped build their success. The two set up and maintained an inventory of top-quality vehicles, that always included a fine lineup of Corvettes.

Frank Sr. described his business model in a few words. "The complete process of taking a product or service from conception to satisfaction of the end consumer". Sounds simple. However, there are thousands of variables that effect that final outcome. They understood these and planned accordingly. Sr. and Jr set the standard in pre-owned automobile and Corvette satisfaction for customers from day one.

They signed on top tier mechanics, paint and body specialists, an upholstery seamstress and set up connections with auto parts suppliers through out the Southeast. After a meeting with Firestone tires, Parkway Motors was ready for inventory. Frank Sr. knew what the people needed. He brought in trucks, family sedans, vans and Corvettes. With their reputation on the line, the pair made sure every car that left the lot was ready to drive to California.

In a short period of time the two had established the ideal outline for a small car dealership. Parkway Motors became known for high quality, preowned vehicles, with personalized service. A consistent flow of Corvettes always graced the lot as well. Sr. made many new friends throughout the years. They would often stop in to visit and talk about cars. Referrals and repeat business allowed the team to operate with low advertising costs and pass the savings on to customers.

Soon clients were asking the two to locate specific vehicles, especially Corvettes. They em-



Frank Digesu, Jr. with his 1974 Corvette. Car to the left is a 1965 Corvette

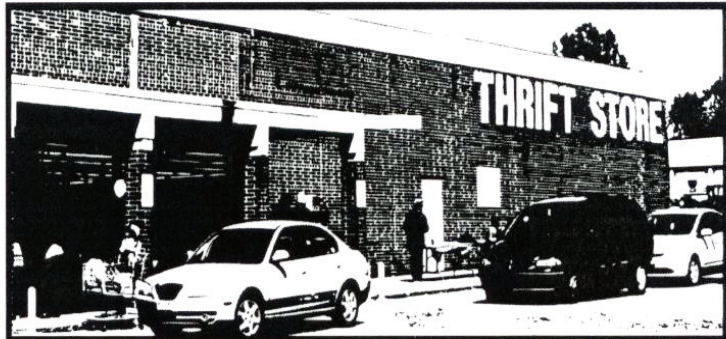
braced the request and soon bought and sold nationwide.

Sr. was an engineer and had a knack for finding great values on reliable transportation. Jr. could find any car a client might be looking for. When he was not tracking down cars, Jr. was busy performing Corvette repairs and memorizing maintenance manuals. Soon Parkway Motors offered a free technical advice service. The two could troubleshoot issues and advise what needed to be addressed, often over the phone. They enjoyed helping friends and loved the car industry. For 33 years the pair worked side by side doing what they loved.

The 1963 split window Corvette is considered the Jewel of Corvettes. In 2015 a true Jewel in the corvette industry raced away. Frank Sr. passed at the age of 83. He preceded his family in death. He left behind a legacy, from leaving his mark on the moon with the Apollo missions to providing fine vehicles across the United States. He raised a great family and is currently missed by hundreds of friends and colleagues.

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ABSOLUTELY I BELIEVE IN A HIGHER POWER

by Jim Vann

I grew up in a Christian environment in a Christian family.

As I have matured in my Christian faith, I have not believed everything I was taught in that environment but I have resolved nearly all those issues that I did not agree with.

The Bible (GOD'S Book) is an incredible book written over centuries by so many different authors. It's amazing to me that it has been preserved down thru the centuries and still remains the best selling book every year in publication. The prophecies that were made by Holy Spirit guided prophets in the Old Testament have come true hundreds of years later.

Because of my scientific background, I usually expect things to progress logically. The God or the Bible does not rely on logic but is extremely capable of the illogical. So many of the happenings in the Bible do not follow any pattern of logic, (i.e., the burning bush, the parting of the Red Sea and many others).

Having some experience with planets and gravity and solar functions, the Book of Job is incredible. When Job thought he was pretty smart, God asked him a few questions about solar things that God does that Job can only imagine. Check it out.

I was impressed by some of the things that I discovered when I learned about missile trajectories. The fact that a ballistic missile at the exact point in space where it burns out and starts to be affected by gravity on its return to earth will pass through the exact same point in space where burnout occurred. That's pretty consistent and amazes me.

The idea of the Trinity stretches my imagination. God seems to me to be in charge but the other two in the Trinity have as much authority as God himself. The Bible says that Jesus was involved in the Creation and responsible for a lot of the processes that occur to our bodies on earth in everyday life.

I believe that's one of the reasons he was so distressed that night in the Garden. He knew he was going to have to go through a process called Hypovolemic Shock. He enveloped that process and it is very, very painful. When you lose 20% of the blood in your body, it goes through this process called Hypovolemic shock. All of the things that Christ experienced on the cross are effects of Hypovolemic Shock. Google the term and read about what all happens to your body when you go into Hypovolemic Shock. One of the things is that the water in your body goes to the vicinity of the heart to protect it as it struggles to get what

blood you have left to the parts of the body that need the oxygen carrying blood. Isn't it amazing that when the soldier pierced him with the spear, blood and water poured out.

The entire sacrificial plan that God had to give 1/3rd of Himself up so that man could be redeemed or forgiven of his sins is amazing to me. The plan is so complex and took many years to accomplish and much pain endured by that 1/3rd of Himself. God most always had required some sort of sacrifice that would please him for various reasons. The sacrifice of Christ on the cross was what God had planned all those years and it was executed to perfection.

I believe Christ took on all the sins of the world that had been committed and will ever be committed if repented of and allowed all of us to be adopted into God's own family. Christ taking on all of those sins was why God had to forsake him because God can't be in the presence of sin. Jesus asked why God had forsaken him.

I have to occasionally remind myself that God is a spiritual being and I am made in his image, therefore I have a spirit as well. One of the things I love that happened when Christ died was the Temple Curtain being torn from top to bottom. The curtain was about 60 feet tall. Who could tear that from top to bottom? The curtain was the cover to the entrance of the "Most Holy Place" where God resided in the Temple. I think this story indicates that after this time and event, God came out to live in my world and not just in the "Most Holy Place".

So yes, I believe in a higher power and believe it is active in the world today. I personally believe that one of the reasons we have so much trouble in our country today is that the powers that be have removed God from our country.

2 Chronicles 7:14 says "If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and I will forgive their sin and will heal their land".

I try to remember this verse every morning when I put out my U.S. flag on our front porch and pray for our country.

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Guess Who Came for Dinner?

by Bill Alkire



I was on a temporary hiatus from work after September 11, 2011. The project I was working on, building a Land Mine Clearing Vehicle for the Military, was halted. Defense contract monies were diverted elsewhere.

At Athens State University (ASU) a new degree program intrigued me. The company indicated it could be a while before any new defense contracts were available. I decided to pursue the new degree program, Management of Technology. My effort was met with success, and after the necessary transfer of credits, applications and fees, I was ready to begin classes. I found myself studying generally at home on the breezeway where I could have peace and quiet.

One morning while eating breakfast, observing the birds at the feeders out the window, my attention was drawn to my neighbor's second-story deck. A cat was harboring there. She was not just a cat - she was a long-haired red-orange Persian cat. Beautiful. The cat was obviously scared and somewhat frightened.

I mentioned the cat to my wife, who responded "she had been wandering around the house next door and our house for several days."

My wife, knowing my soft heart for animals instructed me, "Do not feed her or give her any attention." She believed someone had dropped her off.

"Let her alone and she will leave," were my instructions.

I gathered lesson material and a cup of coffee and went out to the breezeway. An hour later my wife came out to read the newspaper. We were soon joined by the mysterious cat. She observed us humans from a distance - she spoke to us. I responded and received an evil stare from my wife. She instructed me again to "Ignore the cat, she will leave."

By the end of the day my wife had given the cat food and water, "he had not eaten for days" was her remark. The cat hung around for a few days and began to become more friendly to my wife and me. The cat had become a lot of company to me while I studied.

The cat had been de-clawed, neutered and was possibly an indoor show cat. She was of a very loving nature. She was hesitant, apprehensive and frightened at most outdoor sounds. The cat had found a place to sleep in the garage, on the floorboard of my 1981 Corvette. I was okay with that. My wife still insisted the cat must go - "We do not need any animals to tie us down."

My wife placed an advertisement in The Huntsville Times, offering the cat free to a good home. A woman called who had recently lost her husband and was looking for a cat to keep her company. The lady came to check the cat out. It appeared to be the right combination. However, as the woman approached the cat, the cat hissed at her and tried to bite her. This response was totally unacceptable, and the woman and my wife were both in tears. This response by the cat frightened both women. The woman left upset and my wife sat down and cried. I had named the cat "Annie" after Orphan Annie. "Annie" was also upset. She noticed my wife crying and approached her and jumped upon her lap. As "Annie" purred she raised her paws to each side of my wife's neck as if to hug her and licked my wife on the nose.

"Annie" had solidified her position - this cat was going "nowhere" — she had found a loving home. She stayed close to home and slept in my Corvette. We knew she was an older cat - however she required little and had a good loving home. She was a great companion during my time off from work and studying. She became a constant companion to my wife and loved to walk and sleep in the various flower and herb gardens my wife had.

"Annie" lived with us for three years and died peacefully. She had a good life with us. I never got another cat until 2020. My new cat, though not as friendly, is a good companion and communicates loudly when she requires something. Her name is "Sassy".

Fat and Marriage

What are you having for dinner tonight? A study discovered that unhappiness among spouses is directly correlated with how much fat they eat. 155 married couples were interviewed about their eating habits and family life. Each spouse rated how in control they felt and how they believed their partner would rate them on various personality traits. Researchers found that women who felt helpless and out of control ate the most fat in their diets. Men who felt their wives didn't think highly of them were the ones whose fat intakes were the highest.

UNCLE BILL, THE BOOTLEGGER

by Charles Martin



The first memories I have of my Uncle Bill was when I was about nine or ten years old back in the 1920s. I remember spending the night with my cousins and being woken up at all times of the night when people would knock on the door. After a few minutes of whispered conversation, my Uncle would give them a bottle in a brown paper bag.

At the time I supposed I just assumed my Uncle had a lot of friends. It was several years before I realized he was a bootlegger.

Uncle Bill sold moonshine. He would buy several gallons at a time and dispense it in half pint and pint fruit jars. Friday nights were always his busiest time and us kids were warned to stay out of the kitchen. Sometimes we would sneak and watch what was going on. I remember a bunch of men drinking and playing cards. I don't remember there ever being any trouble.

Uncle Bill had a small room built on the house, next to the kitchen, for a bathroom, only it wasn't a bathroom. There was a commode that fed into a wash tub under the house. When he got raided he would pour the liquor down the commode and after the law left he would retrieve it and bottle it again.

One time he got raided and he just barely had time to pour the booze down the commode. After the deputies had searched in vain and were about to leave, one of them excused himself, saying he had to go to the bathroom.

I hope Uncle Bill didn't bottle that whiskey again.

Another time he was walking into the house carrying a glass gallon jar of moonshine when deputies sneaked up on him. Thinking fast, my Uncle threw the jar with all of his might against a large rock. Instead of breaking, it simply bounced off the rock like a rubber ball and rolled to where one of the deputies was standing.

As the deputy picked up the evidence, it slipped out of his hand and fell to the ground, shattering into a million pieces.

With no evidence they could not arrest Uncle Bill.

We all knew what he did for a living but, somehow, it just didn't seem that bad back then. I don't remember him ever saying a curse word or raising his voice.

Aunt Gemma never talked about her husband bootlegging. She always referred to it as "Bill's business." The only argument I ever recall them having was when Uncle Bill confiscated two boxes of canning jars that she had purchased.

Family legend has it that when he died Aunt Gemma put a half pint in his coffin.



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Monopoly, Charlsie and the Psychic Pain



by Jack Burwell

It was right after first grade that I encountered a new set of girls. The Emerson family moved into the house across the street from Mrs. Darwin's house. The Emersons had three daughters. One was a lot older than me. I paid no attention to her. She was a foot taller than me. There was no need to waste time on her. I didn't know her name and didn't need to. But then there were Charlsie and Judy. Charlsie was a year older than me, and Judy was my age. Both were very attractive but it was Charlsie that especially caught my attention. She was a little taller than me and very slim, a dark haired brunette with a slightly tan complexion, and wonderful brown eyes.

Charlsie and Judy would sometimes come over and play Monopoly with me and with any other neighborhood boys who were around. I still couldn't read the Community Chest and Chance cards, but I had them all memorized by then and therefore knew the consequences of each.

One day Charlsie told me she wanted me to bring my Monopoly game to her house that night about seven o'clock. That sounded great. It was summer time and we could have a great long game for the evening. I would have a lot of time to stare at her beautiful brown eyes and cute nose.

At seven o'clock, having taken a bath earlier in the afternoon, I prompt-

ly showed up with my Monopoly game under my arm. She met me at the door, took the game from my hands as I put it in front of me and politely told me thank you. She said she really appreciated me loaning the game to her. She then said she had other friends coming over, and they all would enjoy playing Monopoly. "I will get the game back to you very soon," her beautiful voice announced. I thought to myself, "You mean I'm not invited! You are going to use my game to entertain other friends and I'm not invited!" It would have been easier on me if she had hit me in my Adam's apple and used her knee to strike below the belt like a G.I. Jane. The pain would have been easier to take. Somehow I managed to tell her that I hoped they had fun.

I ran across the street as fast as I could, somewhat in a daze, and retired to bed early that night. It was the first time I experienced the blackish gray mist that descended upon me and which made me ache on the sides of my body and in the middle, coming over my back and up to my head in a slow wave. The rest of the week wasn't much better. I didn't ask for the game back. I didn't want it anymore. However, at some point Charlsie brought it back. She gave it to my mother. I made a point not to come to the door when she rang the doorbell. I didn't play Monopoly for a long time after that.

My friend, Don Woody, told me recently that he used to enjoy watching Charlsie walk down Holmes Street also, even though she was two years older than him. Don and I lived on the North Side of the street. Charlsie was a South Side girl. After a while I got over having my feelings hurt. After all, I thought of myself as an Army man. Pain was supposed to be a joy for an Army man like me as long as I didn't have to hit my head against the wall in order to distract myself from the psychic pain. But, also, I stopped looking at Charlsie when she went up and down the street. I knew when to quit. I remembered the feeling of the blackest gray mist coming down over my face.

It wasn't Charlsie's fault. She was just a little girl whose family couldn't afford a Monopoly game. I was a North Side boy who was an acquaintance, nothing more. She was never told she had an obligation to an acquaintance when he provided the Monopoly game. She didn't mean me harm. She had true friends she wanted to play with. I would have just been in the way.

When she first talked to me, perhaps she should have said "Hey, Jack, I have some friends coming over tonight. It would be really neat if my friends and I could play Monopoly together. Could you loan me your game? I would like it delivered at 7:00 p.m. sharp. Please show up at that time with the game." If she had done that, at least I would have known I didn't need to take a bath.

I recently found out that Charlsie is the second cousin of a good friend of mine who herself is my third and fourth cousin. It's really a small world down here in Alabama. It's not unusual for our love affairs to be within the family. At family reunions, we sometimes say, "I used to be in love with you until you kicked me in the shin and ran off with my Monopoly game."

STORE BOUGHT

*by Gerald Alvis,
The Poet of Greenlawn*



Many terms and what they mean have gone by the way-side. Remember dialing in your radio on the way to work because that station had the eye-in-the-sky reporter who gave real-time traffic updates? Can you remember the last time you called the front desk at a hotel for a wake-up call? Has it been a while?

And how about the term store-bought, which, for the generations after me, may not still be utilized, much less understood.

People once canned their food, made their own clothes, and handcrafted gifts. This has yielded to the convenience of Amazon, which provides quicker delivery, and with one click, you're done.

There was something about the personalization, things, when you had less, it meant more. It's true the good ole days weren't always good, but there is more to personalization than nostalgia, as a 12 year-old girl would remind me. I typically include some of my grandchildren's art in my books, and my fourth was about to go to print. There is a young lady at Church, and she stopped by to talk with me after her dad and I finished chatting. I offered her a job, and she provided the results a week or two later.

Item one would be a short essay on what it means to be

rich, and I wanted a picture titled in the center of the hour-glass. Her wisdom and talent showed through she was rewarded with a small sum. Her art and thoughts are permanently recorded in my fourth book.

She showed her appreciation, but that gratitude would be revisited as she delivered a surprise gift to me!

It was a needlepoint butterfly pillow she had handmade. I showed it to my wife and we both shared how beautiful it was! Then, on the following Sunday, she brought a second one for Ann. Again, a butterfly, but this one was larger and blue.

She said her grandmother helped her finish it. They are both finely crafted from the heart and share a prominent place in our home.

What I've learned as an older gentleman is that the role of a Grandfather extends beyond his bloodline, and there are some things you just can't buy.

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PET TIPS FROM ANGEL

Summer Cats



1. Make sure your cat has plenty of water

It's common sense but you should check your cat's water bowl regularly and fill it up whenever it's low. Cats can't survive for long without it.

2. Ensure there's a shaded garden spot. If you have an outdoor cat and there are no naturally occurring shady spots in your garden, create one by placing some cloth or cardboard over an area to keep the sun out. Also, make sure you check outdoor buildings like sheds and greenhouses before shutting them as cats often get locked in accidentally overnight.

3. Brush your cat daily

Most cats begin shedding in the spring but continue through the summer and a brushing feels really good. If you make it a regular event you and your cat could look forward to it. Matted hair traps heat so give them a thorough groom if possible. This is especially important for long-haired cats.

4. Keep them out of conservatories and greenhouses

These areas can get dangerously hot even when the weather just feels warm. Bear in mind that they both exclude cooling breezes and magnify the heat. Cats are very prone to getting accidentally trapped in conservatories and greenhouses.

5. Use damp towels to cool down your cat

The warmest parts of a cat's body is their tummies, the pads of their paws, their armpits, under their chin and on the outside of their ears. Although most cats hate getting wet, try dampening a cloth with cold water and gently stroking your cat with it from their head and down their back.

6. Keep your cat calm

A very active cat that is running around on a hot day will quickly become exhausted and dehydrated. Encourage your cat to relax when outside temperatures are soaring.

7. Create a retreat

Cats are clever when it comes to comfort and they will seek out places such as the bath or sink as these often stay cool even when it's hot outside. You could also try creating a cool and darkened indoor retreat for them to sleep in and feel safe. A good tip is to place a cardboard box on its side and position it somewhere cool and quiet in the house, such as behind a chair or on a cool surface like a wooden floor. Line it with a breathable natural fabric such as a cotton towel.

8. Keep outdoors cats indoors

If temperatures really soar, then it's worth considering keeping your cat inside during the hottest hours of the day.

9. Encourage cool play

Ice cubes are a great way for cats to play and keep cool at the same time. Put a few on the floor so they can chase them as they scatter around the floor. Perhaps even consider flavoring the ice with a hint of chicken stock to encourage their interest. Throw cubes in their water bowl.

10. Close the curtains

Things that keep you cool will also benefit your cat — keeping curtains or blinds closed will keep the sun out.

11. Watch out for signs of heat stroke

Although this generally only occurs on really hot days. Symptoms of heat stroke can include agitation, stretching out and breathing rapidly, extreme distress, skin hot to the touch, glazed eyes, vomiting and drooling. If you're at all worried about your cat, contact your vet immediately.

12. Circulate cool air

Open the windows, turn on a box fan or keep air conditioning at a reasonable temperature. Your cat will appreciate having a cool place to relax indoors if it's scorching outside.

13. Cats and hot weather could mean sunburn

Don't forget cats are susceptible to sunburn, particularly those with white ears and noses. This can lead to painful blistering and sores, and long-term exposure can lead to skin cancers. It is possible to buy pet sunscreen to apply to the hairless areas on the end of the ears and nose. It's also advisable to keep white-faced cats indoors during the heat of the afternoon.

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*From the Desk of
Tom Carney*

Father of the Blues

by Tom Carney

Born in 1873, as the son of a Methodist preacher, Willie Handy decided at a young age he wanted to be a musician. His family, however, all stalwart hell-fire and brimstone God-fearing people, thought a musician was nothing but a blatant sinner in disguise.

In an effort to pacify his father, who wanted him to become a minister, Willie agreed to finish school and take the examination to become a schoolteacher. After graduation, and unable to find a position as a teacher, he and a friend moved to Birmingham where he went to work at one of the iron mills as a laborer.

Willie had not lost his desire to be a musician, though. He quickly became friends with most of the black musicians in Birmingham and it was not long before he had formed his own group and was playing around town at night while still working in the mills during the day.

One of the first gigs he had in Birmingham, according to legend, was playing in a notorious dive. The owner, after listening to the audition, asked what the group's name was.

"Don't have one." Willie replied.

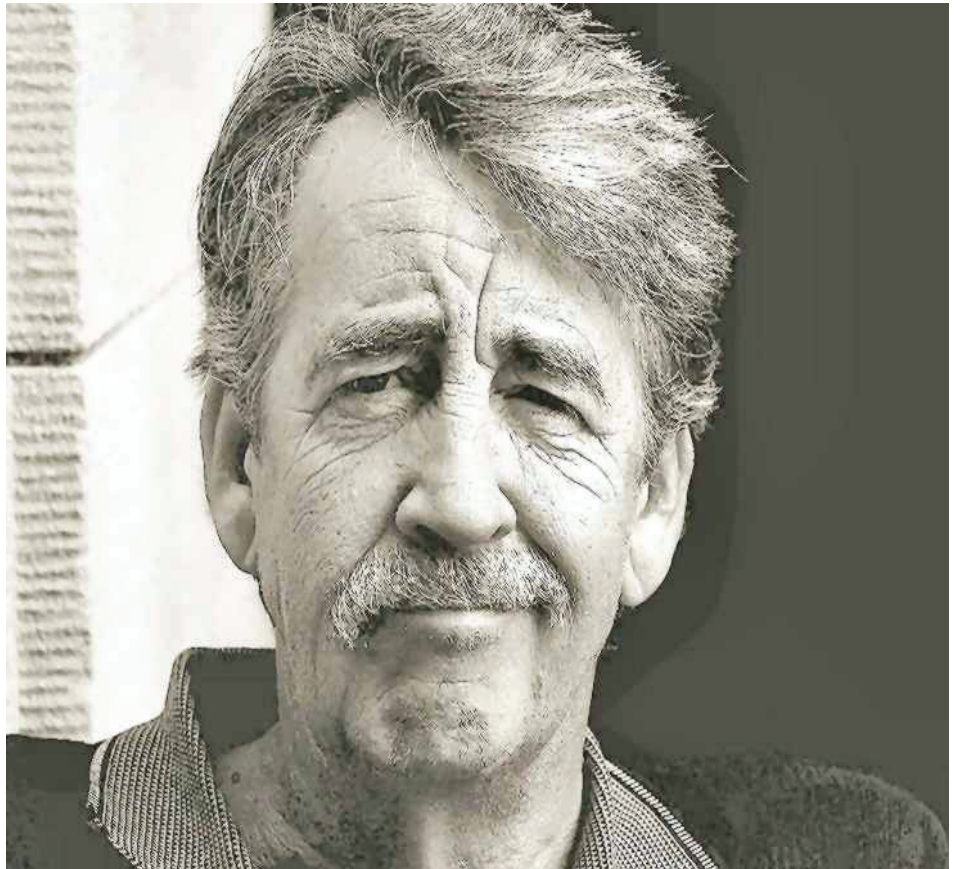
"Well, what's your name?"

"Willie."

"That's not right. What's your whole name?"

"Only choose in marriage a woman whom you would choose as a friend if she were a man."

Joseph Joubert



"William Christopher."

"Hell, that's even worse!"

"We'll just call you by your initials."

W.C. Handy soon tired of Birmingham, though and moved to Huntsville where he got a job teaching at Alabama A&M as a music instructor. Among his

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many duties as an instructor, Handy was also responsible for organizing recitals for his students.

Unfortunately, the headmaster at A&M believed that classical music was the only music that should be performed. He even insisted on personally approving the programs for every recital.

For his first recital Handy chose a piece, written by an obscure song-writer, he said, entitled, "La Overture Toussaint." With a name like that, it was no trouble getting the headmaster to approve it.

Handy diligently rehearsed the students, who were by this time enraptured with the new musical composition.

The day of the concert arrived and it was an instant success. Even the staid headmaster was seen sitting in the front row tapping his foot to the music.

W.C. Handy's career as an instructor did not last long. He was still determined to make his mark as a musician. After leaving Huntsville, he moved to Memphis where he wrote the all-time classic, "Memphis Blues," which he sold for \$100.

Still a poor man, he next ended up in St. Louis, and after being forced to sleep in alleys and pool rooms, composed the song "Saint Louis Blues," a song that made him wealthy and famous and earned him the title of "Father of the Blues."

Ironically, he was to become best known for the piece he had composed while teaching at A&M - after he changed its name - to "My Ragtime Baby."

"The best way to give advice to your children is to find out what they want and then advise them to do it."

Harry S. Truman

City Laws in 1860

- Bathing in the Big Spring branch within less than 300 yards below the dam, between the hours of 4 a.m. and 10 p.m., constituted another misdemeanor. A person was permitted to burn out a stove pipe or chimney flue only when the roof was wet from rain or covered with snow.
- A fine of from \$5 to \$10 was assessed upon any individual who carried an unguarded candle or lamp into a stable, or who kept ashes in barrels, boxes or wooden vessels of any kind.
- All persons attending a fire, and not a member of any company, were required to assist the firemen, if called upon, or pay a fine of \$10.
- The community bell, a vital factor in the life of the community back in those days, was rung by the police every two hours. This was one of their standing duties, and could not be overlooked under penalty.
- Sunday was the day of rest in Huntsville of 1860. To insure this, an ordinance was inserted in the code to notify residents that "no person shall in this city do or exercise any worldly labor on that day under a penalty of \$5 for each offense."
- A fine of \$1 was assessed upon any person who bought goods or commodities of any sort on Sunday. An exception was made in the case of sickness or necessity.
- "Bawdy houses or houses of ill fame" were banned. The ordinance further read that "all public prostitutes, or such persons as lead a notoriously lewd and lascivious course of life, and all persons not being lawfully married, who shall cohabit, or live together as man and wife, shall pay a fine of not less than \$25."

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IRREFUTABLE PROOF MY WIFE LOVES ME

by Al Dean



Leslie Weatherhead, in his book, *The Christian Agnostic*, wrote: "To prove the existence of God is a bit like proving that your wife loves you." He goes on to say that your wife may act the way she does because it's easier or she wants to inherit your money. To which I say, "Pshaw!" My wife will inherit shotguns and fishing tackle; there is no money. Also she has never accused me of making life easier for her. I know she loves me and I hereby offer several proofs why this is so.

She accepts my imperfections. It took nearly two weeks of marriage for her to discover she had been duped, and except for the three years her mother lived with us, she's never mentioned it.

She appreciates the practical gifts I give her on special occasions. Less sensitive hus-

bands miss many opportunities to express how they really feel. I overheard her lamenting her weight gain in a conversation with my sister, and astutely recognized that candy for Valentines' Day would send the wrong message, so I'm surprising her with a Weight Watchers membership. It is typical of me to present her with gifts that convey my feelings, the riding mower with the roll bar for last Mothers' Day, the replacement ductless under-cabinet range hood for Christmas. Which reminds me of another husbandly characteristic she finds endearing: I'm a DIY kind of guy.

She asked if I would separate two pans stuck one inside the other. I got enough water in the bottom pan to create steam, set them on the stove with the burner on high, and waited for the pan to bubble free. She was saying something about steam powered locomotives when the stuck pot launched into the range hood and mangled it. I haven't replaced the cookie jar. Maybe I'll do that for her birthday; either that or the forged-in-fire meat cleaver advertised on TV.

She applauds my choices in wearing apparel. It takes her breath away when I wear my white no-tuck embroidered front Guayabera shirt with the four oversize pockets, and round out the ensemble with complementary black pants. She says it makes me look like Mr. Richard - he's my barber. And if I promise not to wear the western bolo tie with the bullhead clasp, she insists I wear my fancy cognac colored cowboy boots to church.

She lets me control the TV remote, which has nothing to do with me telling her that it's more fun to watch her do it. She aims it, like a pistol, at arm's length, punches a button and grimaces. She also appreciates that I mute the sound for Saturday and Sunday ball games, and I can tell by the look on her face how impressed she is that I understand what's going on without sportscaster's commentaries.

She approves of my pipe smoking. Upon reading Weber's *Guide to Pipes and Pipe Smoking* and discovering that an early 1960s surgeon general's report indicated that death rates for pipe smokers was little higher than for non-smokers and upon reaching the decision that a pipe is simply a pacifier for adult males, she created my very own private smoking area. She bought a yard sale recliner and end table to hold my pipe smoking paraphernalia, and cleared away a spot between the freezer and the hot water heater in the garage where I enjoy my pipes before cold weather sets in.

She appreciates my enthusiasm for the out of doors, and even though it meant spending most of our waking hours apart, she encouraged me to take up gardening during our at-risk, stay-at-home Covid isolation. I can recall her squeals of delight as I put on my work gloves, loaded my tools in the truck and headed for the perfect spot she had chosen for a garden on the far western reaches of our property.

Action may speak louder than words to express love, but it needs to be said. I never heard either of my parents tell the other they loved them. Then again, I don't remember either of them saying they loved me. I know they did, but it would have been nice to hear them say it. My wife and I have had to say it often during this past year of lockdowns to remind ourselves that the coronavirus pandemic hasn't destroyed 62 years of marriage - at least, not yet.

**"If practice makes perfect
and nobody's perfect, why
practice?"**

Jerri Kingston, Arab

News Around Town - 1916

Divorced - Mrs. Esther Daniels, the pretty 18 year-old bride of Ashford Daniels of this city, is suing her new husband for divorce because he represented himself to be rich and turned out not to have anything. She says she is giving up on him not because he only makes \$30 a month, but because she has observed that he is not worth more than \$30 a month and if anything, is overpaid at that amount. During the courtship he entertained her with fabulous stories about the number of plantations and banks he owned.

For Rent - two rooms, only one block to town, electric lights, use of telephone. Telephone 158, party 1 or apply in person to home at 206 Green Street.

Return - John A. Royal is offering \$5 for information that may lead to the return of his wife. He is offering a reward of 2-1/2 cents per pound and says she weighs in at 200 pounds and is 38 years old. She is 5 feet 3 inches tall. She disappeared last Wednesday.

J.D. Bragg Suffers \$1000 Fire at Dallas Today

At about 2 in the afternoon fire of unknown origin starting in the soft drink stand of Ben Morring at Dallas Village destroyed the general mercantile store and its contents belonging to J. D. Bragg and also his residence adjoining. The residence was occupied by Mr. Walker, who saved practically all of his household goods. Mr. Bragg's store and contents are a total loss. He carried no insurance on his stock of goods but had something like \$1,500 on his store building. He estimates his loss above the insurance at

between \$2,200 and \$2,500. The local fire department responded, but was handicapped in rendering service, the fire being so far beyond the city's fire limits.

Collision - Architect E. L. Love, with his automobile and the driver of John Scott's florist wagon this afternoon at 2:30 experienced a collision at the Holmes and Greene Streets crossing. No one was hurt. The other night when the heavy bolt of thunder and lighting came, McFarland's dairy on Meridian Street north of town suffered the loss of five valuable cows. Other damage was done but fortunately Mr. McFarland and his family escaped serious injury.

Want to buy - second hand Ford car - Either two or five passenger; must be a bargain. State condition and price. Address: New Market, Ala P.O. Box 15

A Royal Washington Range will make happiness in your home. We also specialize in Harness, Buggies, Farming Tools, Cutlery and a general line of hardware. We sell on cash basis but will take GOOD NOTES. Scroggins Hardware Co., East Side Public Square, Phone 18

Foley's Kidney Pills - what they will do for you

They will cure your backache, strengthen your kidneys, correct urinary irregularities, build up the worn out tissues and eliminate the excess uric acid that causes rheumatism. Prevent Bright's Disease and Diabetes, and restore health and strength. Refuse any substitutes.

Old Hats can be made new again by sending them to The Electric Pressing Parlor, opposite May & Cooney's.

Lewter & Young (successor to J. W. Young)

Wholesale Grain, Hay and Mill Products - Agents for Lilly White flour and Big 4 Flour. Moved to I. Wind's Warehouse, opp. N. & C. Depot



OPAL

Hello, my name is Opal. I am a white Labrador retriever mixed breed dog. I am a sweet 3-year-old girl that has been spayed and have had all my shots and been micro-chipped. I came to the Ark Animal Shelter in February 2026 after being found by a kind citizen. I was so glad to come here to the shelter where I have a warm bed and am safe from the terrible cold weather and no longer hungry and alone. Volunteers here at the shelter take me for walks and play with me whenever they can but it's not the same as having a home of my own. If you come to see me you will find that I am happy to be with people and that

I'm friendly, affectionate and playful. Please consider coming to see me. I promise to greet you with a happy bark and give you all my attention. I get along with the other dogs here so if you already have a friendly dog, chances are that we will like each other. I'm looking forward to getting a home with a yard where I can run and play with a family of my own that will be kind to me and welcome me into their home. Won't you come and see me? Please consider coming to the Ark Animal Shelter and ask to see Opal, that's me!

A No-Kill Animal Shelter

139 Bo Cole Rd.

Huntsville, Al 35806

The Ark

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Hours Tues. - Sat. 11 am - 4 p.m.

BETWEEN 65 AND DEATH

*Submitted by John Richard,
(Nov. 2018) writer anon.*

Many of us are between 65 and death, i.e. old. What follows is an excellent list for aging ... and I have to agree it's good advice to follow.

1. It's time to use the money you saved up. Use it and enjoy it. Don't just keep it for those who may have no notion of the sacrifices you made to get it. Remember there is nothing more dangerous than a son or daughter-in-law with big ideas for your hard-earned capital. Warning: This is also a bad time for investments, even if it seems wonderful or fool-proof. They only bring problems and worries. This is a time for you to enjoy some peace and quiet.

2. Stop worrying about the financial situation of your children and grandchildren, and don't feel bad spending your money on yourself. You've taken care of them for many years, and you've taught them what you could. You gave them an education, food, shelter and support. The responsibility is now theirs to earn their own money.

3. Keep a healthy life, without great physical effort. Do moderate exercise (like walking every day), eat well and get your sleep. It's easy to become sick, and it gets harder to remain healthy. That is why you need to keep yourself in good shape and be aware of your medical and physical needs. Keep in touch with your doctor, do tests even when you're feeling well. Stay informed.

4. Always buy the best, most beautiful items for your significant other. The key goal is to enjoy your money with your partner. One day one of you will miss the other, and the money will not provide any comfort then, enjoy it together.

5. Don't stress over the little things. Like paying a little extra on price quotes. You've already overcome so much in your life.

You have good memories and bad ones, but the important thing is the present. Don't let the past drag you down and don't let the future frighten you. Feel good in the now. Small issues will soon be forgotten.

6. Regardless of age, always keep love alive. Love your partner, love life, love your family, love your neighbor and remember: "A man is not old as long as he has intelligence and affection."

7. Be proud, both inside and out. Don't stop going to your hair salon or barber, do your nails, go to the dermatologist and the dentist, keep your perfumes and creams well stocked. When you are well-maintained on the outside, it seeps in, making you feel proud and strong.

8. Don't lose sight of fashion trends for your age, but keep your own sense of style. There's nothing worse than an older person trying to wear the current fashion among youngsters. You've developed your own sense of what looks good on you - keep it and be proud of it. It's part of who you are.

9. ALWAYS stay up-to-date. Read newspapers, watch the news. Go online and read what people are saying. Make sure you have an active email account and try to use some of those social networks. You'll be surprised what old friends you'll meet. Keeping in touch with what is going on and with the people you know is important at any age.

10. Respect the younger generation and their opinions. They may not have the same ideals as you, but they are the future, and will take the world in their direction. Give advice, not criticism, and try to remind them that yesterday's wisdom still applies today.

11. Never use the phrase: "In my time." Your time is now. As long as you're alive, you are part of this time. You may have been younger, but you are still you now, having fun and enjoying life.

"Have you noticed that lemon juice in a bottle contains mostly artificial ingredients, but dishwashing liquid contains real lemons?"



**So Proud of the
Men and Women
who Protect Us
Every Day**

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

12. Some people embrace their golden years, while others become bitter and surly. Life is too short to waste your days on the latter. Spend your time with positive, cheerful people, it'll rub off on you and your days will seem that much better. Spending your time with bitter people will make you older and harder to be around.

13. Do not surrender to the temptation of living with your children or grandchildren (if you have a financial choice, that is). Sure, being surrounded by family sounds great, but we all need our privacy. They need theirs and you need yours. If you've lost your partner (our deepest condolences), then find a person to move in with you and help out. Even then, do so only if you feel you really need the help or do not want to live alone.

14. Don't abandon your hobbies. If you don't have any, make new ones. You can travel, hike, cook, read, dance. You can adopt a cat or a dog, grow a garden, play cards, checkers, chess, dominoes, golf. You can paint, volunteer or just collect certain items. Find something you like and spend some real time having fun with it.

15. Even if you don't feel like it, try to accept invitations. Baptisms, graduations, birthdays, weddings, conferences. Try to go. Get out of the house, meet people you haven't seen in a while, experience something new (or something old). But don't get upset when you're not invited. Some events are limited by resources, and not everyone can be hosted. The important thing is to leave the house from time to time. Go to museums, go walk through a field. Get out there.

16. Be a conversationalist. Talk less and listen more. Some people go on and on about the past, not caring if their listeners are really interested. That's a great way of reducing their desire to speak with you. Listen first and answer questions, but don't go off into long stories unless asked to. Speak in courteous tones and try not to complain or criticize too much unless you really need to. Try to accept situations as they are. Everyone is going through the same things, and people have a low tolerance for hearing complaints. Always find some good things to say as well.

17. Pain and discomfort go hand in hand with getting older. Try not to dwell on them but accept them as a part of the cycle of life we're all going through. Try to minimize them in your mind. They are not who you are, they are something that life added to you. If they become your entire focus, you lose sight of the person you used to be.

18. If you've been offended by someone - forgive them. If you've offended someone - apologize. Don't drag around resentment with you. It only serves to make you sad and bitter. It doesn't matter who was right. Someone once

said: "Holding a grudge is like taking poison and expecting the other person to die." Don't take that poison. Forgive, forget and move on with your life.

19. If you have a strong belief, savor it. But don't waste your time trying to convince others. They will make their own choices no matter what you tell them, and it will only bring you frustration. Live your faith and set an example. Live true to your beliefs and let that memory sway them.

20. Laugh. Laugh A LOT. Laugh at everything. Remember, you are one of the lucky ones. You managed to have a life, a long one. Many never get to this age, never get to experience a full life. But you did. So what's not to laugh about? Find the humor in your situation.

21. Take no notice of what others say about you and even less notice of what they might be thinking. They'll do it anyway, and you should have pride in yourself and what you've achieved. Let them talk and don't worry. They have no idea about your history, your memories and the life you've lived so far. There's still much to be written, so get busy writing and don't waste time thinking about what others might think. Now is the time to be at rest, at peace and as happy as you can be!

"A household tip: Stop dusting, and you can use your coffee table as a message board."

Maxine

THE PERFECT GIFT FOR THAT HARD-TO-PLEASE FRIEND!



*They will love memories of the town they left
but can't forget.*

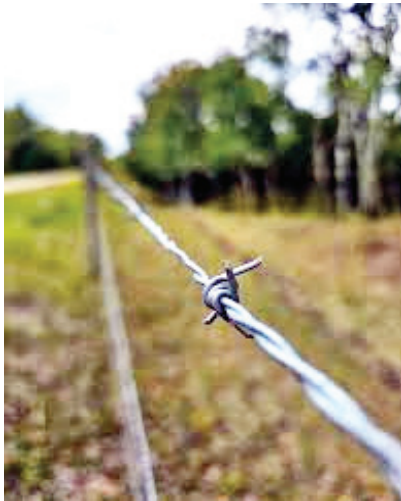
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A NIGHT IN HARRISON COVE

by Jim Harris



We lived on the Houk farm in Harrison Cove which is located between Gurley and Maysville. There was another family - a young man, Tinche, and his wife - who were also tenant farmers, or sharecroppers as we referred to ourselves back before we became sophisticated.

Tinche was a real comic. He

could tell some good stories of things he and others did while under the influence of the spir-its. However, I never saw him drunk or even take a drink. He was fun to be around and loved to mimic people. His favorite targets were Mr. Kenneth Houk, the son (not the father who was a Primitive Baptist preacher, but that is part of another story) and another man who loved his liquor but unlike Tinche, he drank, it seemed, all the time.

It may be that he worked more, but not necessarily better, when he was under the influence. For example, one day we saw him plowing in a rainstorm. The following story is one of Tinche's best.

He went partying one cold night wearing his new overcoat. After the party and feeling no pain, he started for home taking a shortcut across a field. Somewhere between the road and the house was a fence, and when he got to it he was attacked.

Somebody hit him but held on to his coat. Tinche would

strike back or try to grab him and every time would get hit again.

He tried to get away, but the man just wouldn't let go of his coat. He didn't remember how long the attack lasted, but he eventually fought free, got over the fence, and made his way home.

When he got inside the house and turned on the lights, his new overcoat was in shreds and he had a few cuts himself. The next day he retraced his steps to the fence and found shreds of his coat hanging from a strand of barbed wire.

In the dark, he had walked into that barbed wire fence. He thought he was being hit and his attacker just wouldn't let go of his coat. The truth is, he fell across the fence and his coat became entangled in the barbed wire. The more he fought the more entangled it became. He was fighting the fence, which just happened to be a single strand of electrified barbed wire, and it was alive.

Old ad run in Old Huntsville magazine in 1998

Cousins CAR & VAN WASH

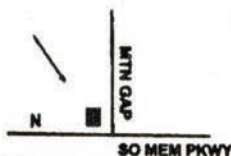
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Me and My Bike

by Ted Roberts



A famous English poet decrying the brevity of life once stated, "But at my back I always hear time's winged chariot hurrying near" or something like that.

I know exactly what he means: because I'm a bike rider and how often have I mumbled; "But at my back I often hear a two-ton cement truck hurrying near." It's enough to wobble you into the curb and a fog of embarrassment in front of friends and neighbors (I ride in my neighborhood).

I can just imagine my public audience rushing to their doors and windows to see that "wobbly old guy" navigate the streets and sidewalks. There must be a well organized betting pool in place too: even money bets that he falls off.

Real biking - far better and more natural than pedaling away in a gym with your only company your fellow creatures - much duller than the birds, the sun and the occasional squirrel and chipmunk that cross your sidewalk path. Of course, there is occasional danger. Once in a while, here comes the lady walking her two Pomeranian wolfhounds. With teeth like daggers and tempers like tigers: cursory critters that chase and devour anything that moves - like you. The only reaction is to veer into a neighboring tree or cut in front of the cement truck. Data gathered by bikers favor an immobile tree - not a truck moving towards you at 60 mph.

Riding around the neighborhood doesn't display many kids with helmets - though it would help when you avoid the Pomeranians and hit that tree. I think the bike riding world has figured out that if Junior needs to wear a helmet riding a bike, he needs full body armor in the back seat of a four wheeled vehicle going 160 mph in a 30 mile zone along with dozens of other maniacs. But I don't think an adventurous world has yet figured that out.

Junior isn't the problem. It's the wobbly old guy (me) whose balancing capabilities are under challenge: the senior citizen whose wife - upon his return greets him like a wing-walking acrobat. "Well, did you fall off today?"

Most of the time I smugly reply: "No way" unless crutches, arm in a sling, streaming blood or grass stains give me away.

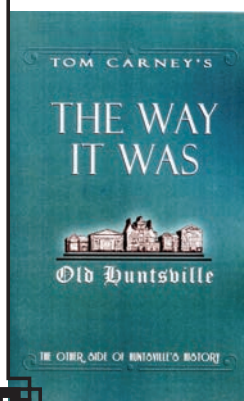
Another hazard. You're wobbling down a street and you decide on a U-turn, which can be deadly if a garbage truck is behind you. Maybe you ought to take a look before you take a turn. Simple, you'll swivel your head and make sure that the garbage truck is in another state.

But alas, your neck no longer swivels like it did when you were sweet sixteen. So, you do a half-way swivel and listen for the roar of a ten-ton behemoth. This works most of the time.

BY TOM CARNEY

"THE WAY IT WAS,"

THE OTHER SIDE OF HUNTSVILLE'S HISTORY



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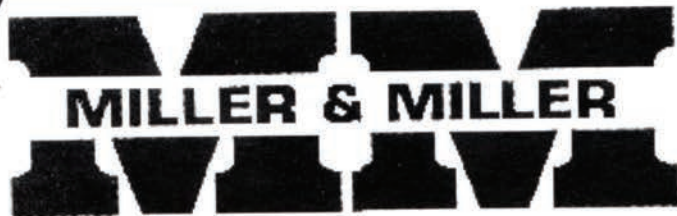
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Loading cotton on the Tennessee River near Ditto, circa 1890



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