



No. 400

June 2026



Old Huntsville

HISTORY AND STORIES OF THE TENNESSEE VALLEY

WHEN GERMAN POWs LIVED IN HUNTSVILLE, ALABAMA

Huntsville residents know that there was once a prisoner-of-war encampment in their midst.

During World War II, an elite regiment of 250 German paratroopers was captured and brought to North Alabama, where they were housed in a hastily constructed camp at Redstone Arsenal.

After the war's end, the camp was completely demolished and all records pertaining to it were "Classified". Almost half a century later, personnel files of the POW's were shipped to Germany where they remain sealed under tight security.

The only trace of the camp's existence are the memories of the men who worked or were once imprisoned there.....



Also in this issue: Children Caught in the Middle; The Ryland Rose; Moonshiner's Fellowship Hall; Angel Prevents Drowning; Tales from the Arsenal; B26 Crashes Near Huntsville; Beautiful Homecoming Queen; Pet Tips, Easy Recipes and much much more!

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German POWs in Huntsville, Alabama

*by Tom Carney,
first published in 1999*

The area along Dodd Road on Redstone Arsenal looks almost serene today. Off in the distance the remnants of a long ago dirt road meanders aimlessly through the tall grass and overgrown brush while a rabbit sits in the middle of a small clearing, basking in the warmth of the early morning sun. Occasionally you spot a stray piece of broken concrete or a piece of wire that, in your imagination, might have been part of the barbed wire enclosure.

Regardless of how hard you search though, there is nothing to tell you that the area was once a prison camp for German prisoners of war.

The 6th Regiment of the 2nd Fallschirmjager (Paratrooper) Division, under Major Freiherr von der Heydte, was considered by many military experts

to be the premiere airborne force of the German Army in World War II. Often jumping into the midst of raging battles from an altitude of less than four hundred feet, the regiment was constantly in battle as the German High Command shifted it from one front to another in an attempt to stave off the inevitable defeat.

Part of the regiment, under the temporary command of the SS-Hauptsturmführer, Otto Skorzeny, was used to rescue the Italian Fascist premier, Benito Mussolini from atop Gran Sasso, a 2,130 meter peak in Italy, where he was being held captive by Italian forces after they had negotiated a surrender with the Allies. Afterwards the regiment was transferred to the Russian front where the unit suffered 60% casualties in the bitter hand-to-hand fighting before being ordered back to Germany to rest and regroup.

Many German citizens thought joining the Fallschirmjager as the same as committing suicide but others, drawn by its elite spirit and bold exploits, eagerly signed their names to the enlistment papers. Typical of the young men who

It seldom occurs to teenagers that they will grow up and know as little as their parents one day.



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joined the regiment was Karl Spitzenpfeil, a native of Oberfranken.

Spitzenpfeil, born in 1922, grew up in a country where the youth were immersed in the Nazi dogma. At the age of 11 he joined the Hitler Youth and in 1940 became a member of the Labor Front. That same year he officially became a member of the N.S.D.A.R (Nazi Party). Perhaps drawn by party ideology as much as glamour, Spitzenpfeil joined the Fallschirmjagers in 1941.

In 1944 the regiment was transferred to Normandy, France to be held as reserves for the expected Allied invasion. Ironically, though designated as reserves, the 6th Regiment was the only German fighting force fully prepared when the invasion occurred, on June 6.

The regiment was in the middle of live-fire field exercises with troops deployed and artillery dug in when suddenly Allied paratroopers began dropping into the middle of the training grounds. One of the first Allied soldiers to hit the ground was Reverend George Woods, who later became a priest at the Church of The Nativity in Huntsville.

The same troops who were firing at Father Woods would soon know Huntsville well.

Using a combination of armor and overwhelming air superiority, the Allies rolled over the makeshift German defenses. Within days the 6th Regiment was reduced to small pockets of men fighting desperately to survive against overwhelming odds. A German private, George Remer, later recalled the battle.

"We couldn't move. Every time we tried, airplanes spotted us and artillery would fire at our positions. We were fighting tanks and airplanes with rifles.

The worst thing was the thirst and the smells - we had run out of water days before but to move was almost certain death - we had to stay in our holes with dead cows and bodies lying just feet from us."

Although the Germans had been taught that surrender was the ultimate disgrace, reality soon won out and the Allies began taking vast numbers of prisoners. Among the captives were 272 soldiers of the Fallschirmjager. After being relieved of their weapons and helmets the prisoners were marched to the beach where they were loaded into the empty hull of a cargo ship destined for Glasgow, Scotland,

In Scotland, the prisoners were transferred to a temporary POW camp that held almost 135,000 captives. No preparations had been made for the large number of prisoners and as a result the camp was hastily thrown together with an unruly and disorganized mob held behind the barbed wire.



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**"When a husband has the last word,
he's usually talking to himself."**

Janie McNair, Woodville

The noncoms of the 6th Regiment POW's immediately set about restoring order among their troops. While other units deteriorated into leaderless masses, the 6th Regiment set themselves apart by the rigid military discipline they submitted to willingly, a trait that would follow them throughout their captivity. According to the Glasgow News, the regiment, when ordered to board a Liberty ship destined for the United States, infuriated its guards when it formed ranks and marched, goose-stepping, to the embarkation point while singing German military anthems.

After disembarking in New York the POWs were shipped by train to Camp Forrest, near Tullahoma, Tennessee. Private Heinz Pabel described the train ride.

"We laughed and jeered at the flimsy construction of the wooden houses. All the cities we passed through seemed built haphazardly with no plan in mind. How could a country like this defeat the Reich? But as the miles grew longer we began to realize the vastness of the country and our bravado turned into hopelessness."

Camp Forrest had originally been authorized, in 1942, as an internment camp for Japanese civilians. As the war in Europe grew in intensity, however, it was decided to convert the camp to a German POW camp with the capacity to hold 3,000 prisoners. By June 1944, the camp held almost 22,000 prisoners. Much of the overcrowding was alleviated by the establishment

of sub-camps throughout Tennessee and Georgia where they were employed in non war essential jobs.

Upon arrival at Camp Forrest all POW groups went through an informal classification. Class 1 was considered suitable for employment with minimum control; class 2 was employment with guards and class 3 were to be segregated from other prisoners and not allowed employment away from camp. Normally the last classification was reserved for the elite, such as paratroopers and submariners who might have an influence over ordinary troops.

The submariners were transferred to Anniston, Alabama and the remnants of the 6th Regiment, apparently the only paratroopers at Camp Forrest, were ordered to the newly established Camp Huntsville.

A company called Chambers Construction of Athens had been awarded a contract on July 24, 1944 to construct the basic camp which consisted of three wooden buildings and a barbed wire enclosure with guard towers at each corner. A sick bay was located in one end of the mess hall, although seriously ill patients were sent to the University of Alabama campus in Tuscaloosa where McFarland Hall had been converted for use as a POW hospital. The enclosure was approximately 600' by 400', fronting on Dodd Road. A motor transport pool was located across the road.

Two weeks later 250 of the 6th Regiment POWs arrived and were immediately separated into groups of six. Each group was then assigned a tent with a small wood burning stove and given a "kit" bag in which to store personal belongings.

Almost from the beginning the POWs seemed determined not to appear defeated.



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"They were haughty," said one former guard. "You could give them an order and they would look at you like you were nothing. I've seen them stand at attention in the hot sun for hours without flexing a muscle, waiting for one of their people to give them an order. But an American couldn't even get them to pick up a cigarette butt."

The camp quickly took on the appearances of a regular German army camp. Reveille at 6:00 in the morning, formation and roll call at 6:30 and breakfast at 7. The prisoners worked from 7:30 until 4:30 when they would fall in for another roll call. After dinner there was usually another formation, this time called by the Germans, to take care of camp business, mail call and other items relating to the welfare of the prisoners.

In one instance, when a POW was accused of stealing from a tent mate he was tried by his own comrades, before the entire camp. After being found guilty, he was ordered to walk sentry duty four weekends in a row (inside the barbed wire).

After helping to complete the construction of the camp, the POW's were assigned to work in a rock quarry where they broke rocks with a 12 pound hammer for eight hours at a stretch. More important than the gravel used in road building was the cooperation gained by such labor. While most POW's initially resisted being assigned to work details, a month's hard labor at breaking rocks caused all but the most fanatical to volunteer. After the first several months, the stone quarry seems to have been used primarily as a punishment detail.

About half of the prisoners were assigned regular jobs such as kitchen detail, barbers, sanita-

tion and grass cutting. The other half were "temporary workers." They would stand in formation every morning while civilian "foremen" would tell the guards how many prisoners they needed that day for certain jobs. The guards would then inform the German noncoms, who would order the appropriate number of people to "fall out" and board the trucks. Most of these POWs were used in road construction and spraying for mosquitoes in the malaria infested marsh lands of the Arsenal. Each prisoner was paid 80 cents a day, in canteen script.

Many stories persist today about German POWs being used to manufacture chemical weapons at the Arsenal - there are many people still living who actually saw them in the workplaces. The truth, however is much simpler. Although the POWs were elite soldiers, they were still virile young men who would go to great extremes to be around the fairer sex. Often when sent to the area on a garbage detail the men would loiter as long as possible hoping for glances of the female workers. In several instances POWs actually posed as janitors until they were discovered and sent on their way.

At one point the loitering become so bad that the Base commander was forced to issue an order detailing exactly what chores the POWs were allowed to perform.

The POWs favorite job assignment was the garbage detail. Not only did they get to travel all over the base but it gave them the opportunity to "organize" items such as



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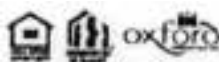
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reading materials, radios and odd pieces of clothing.

In a typical case of government bureaucracy, the prisoners were not allowed to purchase any type of reading material but could receive it if someone sent it to them. Many of the POWs took advantage of this by writing relatives who lived in the States. An aunt of Karl Spitzenpfeil, who lived in New York, sent a large box of books along with packets of flower seeds which were planted along the camp walkways.

"All the prisoners were treated correctly," Spitzenpfeil later said, although probably with a certain amount of exaggeration. A former guard laughs at the story of POWs getting two cases of beer each for their birthdays. "The truth was they would trade us cartons of cigarettes they had gotten from the canteen and we would trade them in town for beer. For every three cases we would give them two and we would keep one."

In all POW camps there was a constant struggle for the "souls" of the POWs. Prisoners who would renounce Nazism and agree to cooperate with the authorities were deemed "progressives" and offered better working conditions as an incentive. They were also sent to re-education camps. In most camps becoming a "progressive" was viewed as being a traitor and was severely

dealt with, often with a beating in the middle of the night. An ex-POW from another camp, now living in Huntsville, later told how the "fanatics" terrorized the prisoners, sometimes administering beatings for offenses as simple as talking to a guard. As far as is known, no one with the 6th Regiment ever applied for "re-education."

Oddly, few people in Madison County even knew there was a German POW camp in their midst. All news of the camp was censored and even the guards were under strict orders not to talk about it. In one case, two POWs actually walked off from a work detail and hitchhiked into Huntsville where they went to an evening movie and then went next door to a restaurant to enjoy a large meal. When it came time to pay the bill they calmly told the restaurateur to call the base so they could turn themselves in. Even though they were clad in prisoners uniforms with large white letters painted on the legs and sleeves, no one had thought it was unusual.

From the original contingent of 250 prisoners the camp had grown to hold over 1200 by March of 1945. Small groups of prisoners were continuously being transferred in and out, but the total number appears to have remained at between 1100 and 1300 until the camp was closed down.



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As the days turned into months, the prisoners began to realize the hopelessness of their situation. In Europe, if a prisoner could escape, he at least had a chance to make it back to his own lines. In America, a prisoner had no chance whatsoever. Even more bitter was the realization that with an Allied victory they would be able to return home, but as a nation defeated. Most of the men were torn between wanting to go home and wanting the war to continue. Though there were no escapes from Camp Huntsville, in nearby Camp Forrest there were four escapes and seven suicides as the war entered its final days.

Henry Gibbons, a former guard, described the end of the war. "We received orders to double the guards around the fence but they didn't tell us why. The base sent over a detachment of M.P's and we posted them next to the gate. In a little while an American officer drove up and entered the camp where he stayed for a few minutes and then left. Shortly afterwards the POWs lined up in formation and one of their officers gave a speech. I couldn't understand him but they told me later what he said."

"The Fuhrer is dead. He has fallen in the defense of the Fatherland. You are reminded that you have taken an oath as a German soldier and shall be expected to act accordingly."

"For the first time," Gibbons continued, "those boys really looked whipped. You could just see all the hot air going out of them."

The elite 6th Fallschirmjager Regiment had finally been defeated.

If the POWs had been expecting a quick return home, they were to be disappointed. Almost immediately, new regulations went into effect. Whereas before officers and noncoms, under the Geneva Con-

vention, could not be forced to work, after the surrender all POWs were required to work regardless of rank. The recalcitrants who refused were placed on a special diet, called the "Camp Forrest dinner," consisting of milk and herring. Huge quantities of herring had been shipped to the States by Great Britain in partial payment for war loans but when the United States troops refused to eat it, a large amount ended up in Camp Forrest from where it was shipped to other camps.

A few days of this diet usually persuaded even the die-hards that work in the rock quarry was an acceptable alternative.

An event that was to have even more far reaching effects occurred on June 5, 1945 when all the POWs were assembled and ordered to fill out new forms. This form, unlike others they had already filled out, asked for information on political organizations they had been a part of.

Karl Spitzenpfeil, as many others did, while not realizing the implications, acknowledged being a member of the N.S.D.A.E (Nazi party).

Preparations to close Camp Huntsville began in September of 1945. For the first time the men of the 6th Regiment were separated, with many being sent to the Midwest to help with the harvest and a few to a camp outside of Chicago.

"If by 'Crunches' you mean the sound bacon makes when you eat it, yes I do crunches."

Sam Keith, Huntsville

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The last group of POWs left Huntsville at the end of October after helping to demolish the camp. Lumber from the buildings were stacked in neat piles, later to be used for other construction on the Arsenal. The tents were returned to Army warehouses and even the gravel walkways in the camp were completely erased.

The United States government marked all the records concerning the camp as "Classified," thereby effectively erasing it from history. Almost a half century later personnel files of the POWs were shipped to Germany where they remain sealed under tight security.

For Karl Spitzenpfeil, the war was far from being over. After leaving Huntsville he was sent to Nebraska where he helped to harvest potatoes. At this time they were slowly beginning to return POWs to Germany with the "politically correct" being sent first. Others who had acknowledged being members of the Nazi party suffered a different fate.

In January of 1946 Spitzenpfeil was sent to San Francisco where he boarded a ship bound for England with most of the other POWs from Camp Huntsville. There, they were joined by another 900 members of the 6th Fallschirmjager Regiment who had been held in other POW camps.

They were held in England for another two years after the war helping to repair war damage, "doing penance" for having once been Germany's elite.

In 1982 Karl Spitzenpfeil returned to Huntsville for a visit. After touring Redstone Arsenal and seeing the site where he once broke rocks, he asked to be taken to the site of the camp.

There was nothing left of the camp to stir his memory. All traces had long ago disappeared. Spitzenpfeil stood for a long moment staring at the site before finally turning away.

"It's good," he said. "It's good that it is gone."

Karl Spitzenpfeil died in 1996 in Michelau, Germany.

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Turn to the experts



Doin's and Nostalgia

by Iolanda Hicks

I had another story in mind for this month's issue of the Old Huntsville's Magazine but I came across something else that grabbed my attention.

It was a small copy of Dick Coffee's Huntsville Doin's which was a quarterly publication. My sister Melissa gave it too me to look at, a while back, explicitly saying to return it, soon. I have had it for at least a year! This one was published Spring of 1960, Volume II, No. 3, with a cover picturing two, lovely Southern Belles : Brenda and Sylvia Turner of Huntsville.

I don't actually remember this small brochure but I have it in my hand. As I look through this 15 page wealth of advertising information, I remember so many places, now gone, with the few left

being renovated to a degree that no one would recognize from the original.

There were advertisements for establishments that today, don't exist: Dunnivant's on Washington St.; the Ice Palace at 404 Governors Drive (I got bruises from that place); Gibson's Barbecue on South Memorial Parkway owned, during that time period by Mr./Mrs. Paul O. Hampton (remember those pies!). Then there was the Sno-Wite Drive Inn on Whitesburg Drive (across from long gone Big Brothers Super Market plus other places that have been replaced by twenty-first century progress.

This little brochure had places of interest, travel information, Civic Clubs of that era, available sports, churches (a few still standing today), plus motels and hotels for travelers (most have vanished). Here and there were several paragraphs on events of the time, a personality's short biography and historical facts of Huntsville.

You ask, why is this 4th quarter, senior citizen writing about what is no longer here? Taken from a Google post (not exactly word for word): "We know the past and we all remember certain places with fleeting shadows of long ago friends and family. Remembering helps us in life's journey, learning from past actions." I tend to get stuck in the past.

I know though, that remembering or reminiscing of the past is said to "provide comfort and a sense of stability when facing stressful, unpredictable times." These times we live in are really unpredictable and totally crazy! We will survive, one day at a time and we will each forge ahead!

Ralph Waldo Emerson, a 19th century poet (tagged with a few other titles) frequently has been associated with the following quote, even though it hasn't been found as a "verifiable" quote from his published works. It is also often attributed to Martin Luther King. I like how these few words blend with how life exists in present times: "When it is dark enough, you can see the stars."

Breaking these few words down for its meaning, I found the following, with no known author, and am sharing with you, my reader: "Our deepest hardships (darkness) provide the unique, necessary perspective to discover hope, inner strength, or opportunities (stars) that are invisible during comfortable times."

Wishing for many stars in the month of June.
Welcome summer!

Seen and Heard in Town - 1885

-For Sale - Home place on the Meridianville Pike, containing about 33 acres, with a comfortable dwelling. Immediate possession - call Wm. R. Patton.

-Tragedy at Hillsboro - yesterday evening Kenneth Barnes, Marshall of Hillsboro, was shot and killed by one Peeples. It seems that Peeples had a difficulty with a Mr. Robinson and Barnes, acting in his official capacity as town Marshal went to arrest him, when Peeples shot and killed him. At a late hour last night Peeples had not been arrested. A posse of citizens are in pursuit of him. He is armed with a shot gun.

-(From Galconda, ILL) Last Monday night Frank L. Pollard, of Huntsville, Ala., and Anna E. Huffman, of this town, were united in wedlock's bands and bonds by the Rev. R. C. Galbreath. The wedding was a private one and took place in the parlors of Doctor and Mrs. J. B. Young. The couple left for their home in the South on Tuesday. Mr. Pollard, whom we chanced to meet when he landed at our wharf, is every inch a perfect gentleman. He is the very picture of life's greatest boon - perfect health. Mrs. Pollard will be missed in this town.

-Last Saturday night some malicious scoundrel killed a horse belonging to Mr. H.W. Helm, the well-known blacksmith. The horse, a very fine one, was in the pasture bordering the spring branch, and was killed by being struck just above the eye with a brickbat. We trust the perpetrator maybe discovered and appropriately punished. This should not be tolerated.

-Yesterday, in the Big Cove, a man named Stewart Wishard was shot and mortally wounded by a man named R.S. Buford, who was arrested. The trouble arose about a dispute in regard to crops. Wishard was cropping on Buford's place. It is thought Buford was justifiable.

-We understand it is reported through the country that yellow fever is in Huntsville. This is untrue. There has not been a single case of yellow fever in Huntsville up to this time.

- Mr. Timothy Murphy, of this city, received a dispatch last Friday from Canton, Miss., conveying the sad news that his wife, daughter and granddaughter were all down with yellow fever. Mr. Murphy left on the next train for Canton and it is reported he has been seized with the dread disease.

Update: Since writing the above we have been informed that all of Mr. Murphy's grandchildren have the fever, and that one of them has died of the disease.

-Appeal to Mothers --
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of any description, remnants of calico such as always accumulate in families. Any of all these articles are earnestly solicited for the Orphans of the plague-stricken city of Memphis, and will be thankfully received and immediately forwarded if sent to Mrs. S. R. Cruse, Adams Avenue.

-Charles Rice, the one-eyed man from Mr. Frank McClung's place in Little Cove, was tried on a complaint before Justice Figg last Saturday. He is charged with an attempt to rape Linda Beasley, aged 10 years. Rice was arrested after an investigation of the facts committed. He came from Jackson County.

-Wanted - 10,000 pounds dried fruit, for which the highest price will be paid. T. J. Humphrey, Hotel Building.

- John Harris reports to the papers that the last time he saw his wife Sarah, she was leaving town in the company of one Chas. Robertson and he is offering a reward for her return. She leaves him with 4 children and a grandmother, and gave no warning of her intentions.

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Oh June, how I welcome you and the lazy days of summer ahead.

Graduations are over, June brides are awaiting the biggest day of their lives, and the kids can't wait to get into the pool – most of which opened on Memorial Day weekend. If your child does not swim well yet, look into swimming lessons at the YMCA or Natatorium that are available and could be a lifesaver for your child someday.

The Huntsville High School class of '59 is having its annual class picnic this year at the big pavilion at Monte Sano Park. For this event, no charge to get in the park. This will mark the sixty-second year gathering, and it keeps getting smaller because various illnesses claim lives. We had one member pass away in early May.

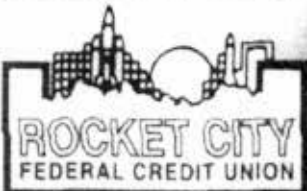
Don't forget Huntsville's Concerts in the Park series. Last year they started on the first Monday in June, from 6:30 to 8:30, and I assume they will do the same this year, but the schedule has not been released yet for this year that I can find. When it is ready, you can

find it here: www.artshuntsville.org/ on the home page.

June 21st is time again to honor all the fathers around town during Father's Day. Since Grandma has so many kids, for this special day, we have a gathering at our house for Dad later in the afternoon from 4:30 to 6:30 outside under the large carport in our backyard. Each grown offspring (and family) brings a dish for our group of about 25, counting spouses and grandkids, to share, and we provide roasted chickens from Costco which are only a tad over \$5 per whole chicken. Three are always more than enough to go around with everything else. My husband loves music, so he makes a thumb-drive with pop songs from the 60s through the 80s that are his favorites. We also provide checkers on card tables and 'Connect Four' games, dropping colored disks to try to get four to line up while your opponent attempts to stop you and line up four of his/her own.

But if you have your own special way to celebrate your father or male spouse, the point is to let them know they are special and all they've done in the past to raise the children is appreciated.

With all of these fun outings to do and many at no charge, there is no excuse not to get out and enjoy June. Just drink plenty of water or hydration drinks and don't get overheated.



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THE HYPOCHONDRIAC

by Charles Flanders

I guess we all practice hypochondriacy at one time or another. But it's the ones that live, eat and practice it daily that I'm writing about. As my mom and her 6 sisters were super hypochondriacs, my cousins and I had this saying: "Never ever ask one of our aunts how they're doing...because they will tell you."

When they would see any friend or family member, it would give them someone to tell their troubles to. Most every time you were around any of them, the first thing they would do is ask you how you were doing and then without giving you the time to answer, they would tell you how bad off they were.

A typical start of their latest ailment would be a statement, such as, "I'm so glad to see you because I almost died yesterday." Then you had a choice, either stand and listen to how bad off she was, or interrupt and start telling her your troubles, which she would quickly shut you down and tell you that her ailment was

much worse than yours.. I once asked an aunt why she did not go see the doctor and she answered, it doesn't do any good, they won't

listen to you more than a few minutes and that's not enough time to have the chance to tell them all the things wrong with you."

Back in about 1951, doctors would come to your house to see you. Once Mom had Dad to call the doctor because she said she was too sick to make the phone call...shortly, the doctor was there and after carefully examining her, he told dad that he did not know what was really wrong, but as bad off as she told him she was, that she might not make it thru the night.

Dad called us in from playing in the yard and gave us the news...we then went right back outside and started playing again, as we were not in the least concerned since this was just another typical day to us. The next afternoon, when I arrived home from school, Mom was washing dishes in the kitchen. I remarked, "Mom I thought you were going to die last night."

She then said, very bitterly, "Well nobody would care if I did. Your Dad got up this morning and left for work without even asking me how I was doing, and all 3 of you kids took off to school, not knowing if I was dead or alive."

She then stated some words that I was happy to hear. "After everyone left I realized that nobody cared whether I lived or died, so I have decided to never tell anyone how I feel, ever again."

She even started telling her sisters, when they complained of some ailment, that she didn't want to hear about it. It really slowed them down. That was a better cure than any doctor ever gave them.

After that, my life became much better, and I never heard her complain again, but, my poor cousins were never so lucky..

"A sure sign of getting older is when your wife says 'Let's go upstairs and make out!'

And you answer, 'Pick one, because I can't do both.'"

Seth Roberts, Gurley

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A Story About a Bird



from 1870 Newspaper

A young bird sat on the bough of a tree, and from pure gladness of heart he thought he would sing. His father was quite a beautiful singer, and his mother quite a tolerable chatterer, so he inherited a fine voice and all he needed to do was to give it proper cultivation.

He had begun to strike a few notes when the "bow wow" of a small dog frightened him, and away flew the bird in great chagrin, without waiting to see if the dog was barking at him or at his own tail.

For some time he would not try to sing again. He had noticed that the grove around him was full of birds. But as he gargled out a few notes, he noticed at a little distance a fine concert in progress.

"Oh," said he, "I'm not going to practice among all these old singers. How they would laugh at me! No, indeed, I'm not going to give them a chance to laugh at my blunders."

So he became silent while the charming concert went on the whole season through.

The other young birds warbled, chirped, and tweeted, trilling the notes as they could, gaining a little every day, without at all thinking of who heard them. So, in time, they became truly accomplished singers.

Our poor little bird, who was so foolish to be afraid to try before folks, because he was not already perfect. He never found the time to practice much alone, and when he did, it did not seem to amount to much.

So with fine, natural powers, he grew up to be a very dull and dissatisfied bird, for want of true courage and independent character.

Getting Over Trauma

Those who have been through a trauma such as a loss of a loved one often find that writing in a diary can be very helpful. At least once a day, write down your innermost feelings, don't censor yourself, let it all out on paper. This is said to really help in the healing process.

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John Purdy
Loretta Spencer
Sarah Chappell

Today's Tale from the Legal Twilight Zone - *Children Caught in the Middle*

by Judge Billy Bell

The most difficult thing for me to endure during my time on the Circuit Court bench was seeing children hurt by the conflict between their parents going through a divorce or custody case.

The only time I cried in open court involved a couple going through an intense and hostile divorce. They had two teenage sons, and one of the attorneys called the older of the sons to testify.

A judge cannot make parents leave the courtroom while a child testifies, but in this case, both parents elected to leave the courtroom during their son's testimony. He was in high school, an intelligent, good looking young man, played sports for his school, and was extremely polite and respectful.

The lawyers asked him their respective questions, and when they finished, the young man looked up at me, and asked "Judge, can I tell you something?"

The lawyers did not object, so I told him that he could. This is what he said to me - "I do think that there needs to be help on both sides of my parents to help them relieve some stuff from me and my brother, and me and my brother are taking a bunch of what my parents are doing. I think that they both

need to understand that me and my little brother do not need to be in the middle of it. We do not want to hear what they think about the other person and we do not want to be in the middle of this divorce. It's hard enough as it is. They both are too mad at each other to realize what they are doing to me and my little brother. I love them both to death, but it is—that, that is the worst feeling in the world how little they see what happens to me and my brother."

I thanked him for his testimony; and told him that I would do what I could legally to help, but that the rest was up to his parents.

I was fighting back tears as he left the courtroom, and then his parents came back in. I felt like I had been punched in the chest, and I told his parents that I wished that they had heard what the impact of their hostility for each other was having on their sons.

I am posting this because I know that there are so many people going through divorces right now with children caught in the middle. That there are so many divorced couples where one or both parents may still carry bitterness towards the other.

My prayer for all of them is that they will put their children's best interest ahead of their own personal feelings about the other parent. Let them grow up being able to love and respect both sides of their family. If you love them, that's what you will do.....

**"I don't know why people change churches.
What difference does it make which one you stay home
from?"**

Eddie Baker, Meridianville



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Tips from Liz



* When your gray hairs are becoming more obvious and you have a couple of weeks to go before you have it colored, part your hair in a zig-zag rather than a straight line. The grays will be much less obvious!

* Aloe lotion has good results with arthritis sufferers. Just rub the lotion onto the spot that hurts, and the pain will be diminished. Be sure and buy a lotion that is at least 70% aloe (like you find in Fresh Market, etc.).

* If you like mushrooms, buy them sliced rather than whole - you don't have to wash them as they are pre-washed. The whole ones need cleaning.

* There is lots of news lately about the dangers of microwaving food in plastic as the ingredients in the plastic may leech out into your drink/food, etc. Buy ceramic or microwavable glass containers to put your food in, don't heat it up in the plastic container.

* If you must drink tap water out of your sink, only drink from the cold side as the hot side has more lead in it.

* You can use your favorite face lotion as a cleanser. Just rub the lotion onto your face at night, then scrub with a wash-rag that you've dipped in warm water. Clean!

* Many folks have trouble sleeping (especially now with economy worries). Some tips:

- Keep your bedroom colder at night - most people sleep better in cooler temps.
- Warm milk and honey does the trick for many people - your grandma was right!
- Take a hot shower right before bedtime.
- Wear warm socks at night. Reading a book or magazine works with lots of people, especially if your book is boring.
- I found that when I slept on my stomach

with my face pressed into the pillow, I had more wrinkles in the morning. Some didn't go away! So now I sleep on my back, so the wrinkles can move away from my face towards my ears - no more fine line wrinkles!

* Our small businesses are really struggling now. Instead of spending your money at the big box grocery, restaurant & clothing stores, why not shop at the locally-owned stores such as Star Market, Purple Peanut, Propst, Big Ed's, etc.? We need to always support local businesses!

* People who eat 2 apples a day have less anxiety, fewer headaches, clearer skin, fewer colds, not as troubled by arthritis, and more mental stability when it comes to stressful situations compared to people who don't eat any apples at all.

* When your nose is stuffed, rub your ears vigorously til they feel like they're burning. For some odd reason, it seems to clear up stuffiness.

* When you are somewhere and need to be alert but find yourself getting drowsy, press your elbows against your sides, or press your knees together, hard. Do this for just a few seconds. Your blood circulation will increase, making you feel more energetic.

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Heard On the Street



by Cathey Carney

Sue McCoury of Scottsboro was our winner for the hidden Artemis capsule I hid on page 34. Do you see it in the picture on p. 34? I think I did a great job hiding it but sure enough, Sue found it. She is a grandma of 4 grand kids who adore her and loves this warm spring weather. Congratulations to you, Sue!

For years I thought if you ate yogurt right before taking an antibiotic that your stomach would feel better. Many who take antibiotics have complained of stomach pains, nausea, bloating etc. Recently the Nurse Practitioner in my doctor's office said that was not true. The purpose of the a/b is to destroy all the good bacteria that's in your gut in order to fight an infection. Yogurt, on the other hand, acts to replace good bacteria. So if you're taking them together they will have adverse affects in your stomach as they're basically fighting each other. Let the antibiotics do their thing and if you eat yogurt wait an hour or so after the pills. Makes sense!

Special hello to **James and Faye Bobo** of Athens - they sent a short note just to tell us how much they enjoy reading about Huntsville history because it includes stories about Athens and North Alabama - so much history in this area! Happy Summer to you both.

We don't want to forget **Odie**

Jones of New Hope who just wanted to say hello!

A beautiful lady has her birthday in June. **Iolanda Hicks**, also a writer for Old Huntsville and very popular, has her day on June 17th! We get more comments from readers on stories by Iolanda because she adds so much detail. People say, "I never knew that!" Happy Birthday to a talented lady and we know that your sweetie **David** will really pamper you!

Many of us getting in our 70s and 80s find it's more difficult to maintain strong legs and steady balance. That leads to falls and falls lead to nursing homes. So we've got to **keep our legs super strong**. Walking is great for your heart but now we are told that we must do more than that to target leg muscles. One simple one I found has helped me with balance and it is so simple. Just hold on to a chair or table, and do toe/heel raises. Where you just lift up on your toes, hold, then back down. I do about 30 but if you do this several times a day you will feel your calf muscles strengthen, and that seems to help with balance, don't know why.

There are lots of exercises you can find for Seniors online but another good one is just sitting on a chair, and getting up. Straighten up, then sit back down. Sounds easy but it's not. It targets thigh muscles. Find your own but be sure to check with your doctor if

you have limitations - you don't want to hurt yourself but remember that muscles can atrophy within a week of laying on the couch.

We have a very popular BBQ restaurant in Hazel Green that is celebrating its 31st year on June 10. **It is Ole Dad's BBQ**. 31 years is a long time for any restaurant these days but it's still here because the food is delicious. **Rosemary Leatherwood** started it with her husband **Billy**, whom she married 49 years ago in June. Billy passed away 10 years ago on June 9th. She knows he is watching over her every day.

Rosemary wants to say Happy Birthday to her sister **Lynn** on June 14th, and to her sister **Dot Branche** and son-in-law **Allen Woods**, who both have June birthdays. June is a huge month for them!

The **Huntsville High School class of 1966** held its annual reunion recently at Huntsville Country Club and it was packed with beautiful people. So hard to believe this is our 60th anniversary! How can that be when we're all in our forties? Many thanks to **Beverly Boylan** and her team for putting this together again. **Oscar Llerena** came all the way from Miami, even after a recent knee replacement! The whole May weekend was super fun.

This is the year for the **Old Town Hidden Garden Tour**. It only happens every 3 years and

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there are usually thousands who come to look at the unique gardens. Tickets are only \$10 for the whole day - June 7, Sunday, from 1-5, and bottled water will be provided. Rain date is June 14th. There will be art displays sprinkled throughout the neighborhood as well. Be prepared to do a bit of walking and bring chairs if you just want to people watch.

Happy Happy Birthday to my sweet grand daughter **Evan Troup** who has her birthday on June 25th. And I can't forget the lovely lady in Grand Prairie, TX who discovers whatever I hide in the magazine each month - **Mary Jane Miller**, who celebrates her birthday on June 23rd.

We don't say it enough but **THANK YOU** to our **City Workers** who work every day to keep our city running and beautiful. Have you noticed how clean we are here? Visitors sure notice. **Our street and sanitation workers, The Green Team, our Huntsville Utility workers**, way too many to list here. Thank you and we appreciate you!

There are so many things to do in Huntsville. Here are just a few, and of course Google them to get directions, times open, etc.

* Major Landmarks & Museums

Huntsville is home to the world's largest space museum and several historic sites dating back to Alabama's founding.

* **Space and Rocket Center** - The city's premier attraction featuring the Saturn V rocket, space shuttle replicas, and hands-on astronaut training simulators.

Lowe Mill ARTS & Entertainment

The nation's largest privately owned arts facility, housed in a former textile mill with over 200 artists, studios & culinary shops.

Huntsville Botanical Garden

A 112-acre site featuring diverse themed gardens, a butterfly house, and seasonal events like the "Galaxy of Lights."

Burritt on the Mountain

A historic mansion and open-air museum offering panoramic views of the city and a glimpse into 19th-century farm life.

Entertainment and social hubs

Former industrial sites and schools have been repurposed into popular nightlife and dining districts

- Campus No. 805: A former middle school turned entertainment complex featuring craft breweries (Straight to Ale, Yellowhammer), a speakeasy, and arcade games.

- Stovehouse: An outdoor leisure hub with food garden stalls, live music, and diverse culinary options ranging from Mediterranean to BBQ.

- The Orion Amphitheater: A world-class outdoor venue at Apollo Park known for its acoustics and major concert tours.

- Bridge Street Town Centre: An upscale outdoor shopping center with a cinema, diverse dining, and a carousel.

We've got the Von Braun Civic Center with non-stop concerts and plays and entertainment.

These days we have lots of **squirrels and little critters** running around and many of them get hit by cars. It just makes me so sad to see them hit in the road in my neighborhood because I feed birds and squirrels and they all have little families. I'm the one you'll see in the street picking up the little bodies and burying them in my yard. Luckily there haven't been this many so far, hope it stays that way. Most people try to drive pretty carefully through our historic neighborhoods.

In honor of the little critters who are no longer with us, I have hidden a tiny chipmunk in this issue. If you are the first to find it and call to ID the page it's on, you win a year's subscription to the magazine, worth \$50. If you've recently won don't call, leave it to someone new!

My last bit of advice - wait a couple seconds when you're on the road and the light changes to green. Those seconds might save your life - you don't want to be T-boned. There are some crazy drivers out there.

Get out and walk, have a good Father's Day for all our Dad's - no matter where they are!

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Favorites from Madison Academy

The 1972 Madison Academy Cookbook was first published in order to help defray the costs of their new grammar school building. It contains simple, delicious recipes.

Cabbage Slaw

- 1 large head of cabbage
- 3 stalks celery
- 1 green pepper
- 1 medium onion
- 1 c. sugar
- 1 c. white vinegar
- 1 T. mustard seed

Shred vegetables. Bring sugar, vinegar and mustard seed to boil. Add salt and black pepper. Cool. Pour over shredded vegetables. (This keeps well in refrigerator.)
Mrs. Ronald Frost

Sauce for Pork

- 1 c. strained applesauce
- 1 c. cream, whipped
- 1 c. horseradish
- 1 T. sugar
- 1/2 t. salt

Mix all together. Serve with pork.

Pat Womack

Hot Pepper Jelly

- 1/4 c. Jalapeno peppers, finely minced
- 1-1/2 c. bell pepper, chopped
- 6-1/2 c. sugar
- 1-1/2 c. vinegar
- 1 small bottle Certo

Combine all ingredients except Certo in large pan. Bring to fast boil; cook 3 minutes. Add Certo; bring back to fast boil; cook approximately 10 minutes. Skim. Pour in jars and seal.

Virginia McClure

Date Nut Muffins

- 1 c. boiling water
- 1 t. soda
- 1 c. chopped dates
- 2 T. butter
- 1 c. sugar
- 1 egg, beaten
- 1-3/4 c. self rising flour
- 1 c. nuts, chopped

- 1 t. vanilla

Pour boiling water over dates and soda. Set aside. Cream sugar and butter. Add well beaten egg. Add flour and date mixture alternately. Add nuts and vanilla. Bake in pre-heated oven 350° in small muffin tins until brown.

Emma Adair and Jimmie Sue Moore

BBQ Chicken

- 8 chicken breasts
- 4 T. butter, melted
- 1 T. sugar
- 2 T. Worcestershire sauce
- 1 t. Tabasco sauce
- 4 T. mustard
- 2 T. vinegar
- 1/2 t. salt
- 1/2 c. tomato catsup

Melt butter in saucepan; add other ingredients. Arrange chicken in large baking dish. Baste every 30 minutes with sauce. Bake 1 hour 15 minutes at 350°. Place under the broiler for a few minutes just before serving.

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Grits Casserole

- 3 c. grits, cooked
- 1 pound sharp cheese, grated
- 1 stick butter
- 6 eggs
- 1/2 c. milk
- Pinch of red pepper
- 2 t. baking powder

Cook grits in salted water. Stir in cheese and butter. Beat eggs. Add milk, pepper and baking powder. Add to grits. Place in casserole. Bake at 350° for 45 minutes.

Mabel Birchfield

Cheese Wafers

- 2 c. sharp cheddar cheese, grated
- 2 sticks butter, softened
- 2 c. plain flour
- 2 c. Rice Krispies
- Cayenne pepper (optional)

Blend cheese and butter with electric mixer. Add flour slowly. Stir in Rice Krispies and Cayenne. Drop in small balls on ungreased cookie sheet. Flatten to make round wafers. Bake 10 minutes at 375°. Makes 3 dozen.

Addye Hanback

Butter Pecan Cream

- 1 c. pecans
- 1/4 c. melted butter
- 1 can evaporated milk
- 6 eggs, well beaten
- 1-1/2 c. sugar
- 1 T. vanilla
- 1 can sweetened condensed milk
- Dash salt
- 1/2 gallon milk

Pour butter over nuts. Roast at 300° for 20 minutes. Cool. Chill and beat evaporated milk. Add beaten eggs, sugar, vanilla, condensed milk, salt and milk. Mix well, add nuts and freeze.

Mrs. Don H. Walker

Apple Crisp

- 1/3 c. flour
- 1 c. old-fashioned oats, uncooked
- 1/2 c. brown sugar

- 1/2 t. salt
- 1 t. cinnamon
- 1/3 c. butter, melted
- Sliced apples

Fill greased 1-1/2-quart casserole with sliced apples. Combine dry ingredients. Add melted butter, mixing until crumbly. Sprinkle crumb mixture over apples. Bake 30 minutes at 375°.

Marianne Bond

Chess Pie

- 1-2/3 c. sugar
- 4 eggs, well beaten
- 1 stick butter, softened
- 2/3 t. vinegar
- 1 c. buttermilk
- Pinch of salt
- 1 t. vanilla

Blend beaten eggs, sugar and butter. Beat until lemon colored. Add salt, vinegar, buttermilk and vanilla; beat 1 or 2 minutes. Pour into unbaked pie shell. Bake at 350°

until crust is lightly browned.
Mrs. Percy Sadler

Pecan Pie Surprise Bars

- 1 package Pillsbury white cake mix
- 1/2 c. butter, melted
- 4 eggs
- 1 c. pecans, chopped
- 1/2 c. brown sugar, firmly packed
- 1-1/2 c. light corn syrup
- 1 t. vanilla

Reserve 2/3 cups cake mix. In large mixing bowl combine remaining cake mix, butter and 1 egg; mix until crumbly. Press into greased 13 x 9-inch pan. Bake 15 minutes or until light brown at 300°. Combine 2/3 cup cake mix, brown sugar, syrup, vanilla and 3 eggs. Beat well. Pour filling over partially baked crust, sprinkle with pecans. Bake 30 to 35 minutes more, until filling is set. Cool and cut into bars.

Mrs. W. C. Pittman

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Tales from the Arsenal

by Tom Rathz



So, another day begins at the 36 story Dynamic Test Stand in one of the test areas at NASA. University of Alabama/Huntsville and part time students are working with a Research Scientist from a major university trying to get all his work done in one day's time. A lot to do. We ended up finishing when a storm came upon us around 7pm. A BIG lightning storm.

If you don't know the Dynamic Test Stand (DTS), it is a large metallic building that is a great conductor for lightning. Inside the building is a large open area within which the Saturn V and Shuttle were assembled for vibration tests. Around this 36-story void are metal walkways at every level with 4-foot-high rails and that's it. No internal walls of any kind. The Research Scientist's research, however, is done inside a small one-room building built inside the DTS on the uppermost floor.

As we are trying to finish up... the power goes out. Now we are 36 stories atop this building with no elevator in the complete dark! The

only way down is the metallic stairs with flashlights. As we are running down the stairs to get out of the building, and trying not to touch the railings, you must understand that this is a building that has very little stair traffic. All the way down we must knock the huge spider webs out of our way, if we see them, so we don't become Spider Man by getting a bite. We finally make it down, say goodnight, and adios. Unfortunately, I left my windows in my car down all day.

No problem: I was under the roof of a shed when it rained. So, as I am driving happily home, going over the speed limit on the Arsenal to reach the Martin Road gate before it closed for the night, which you should NEVER do, I feel something crawling up my leg under my pants leg. I have arachnophobia. Spiders should be left to eat mosquitos or under my boot.

I throw the car to the side of the road. Now remember, it is dark, it is very dark on the Arsenal. As far as I can tell no one is around. I proceed to get out of the car and... pull my pants down. Either that spider is dying or I'm getting naked. And lo and behold, immediately an MP is behind me with lights flashing. Just my luck. Well, I just hold my position with pants down to explain what is going on to the male MP. You know, mano a mano.

The MP tells me "Sir, please get back into the vehicle". Now I know from the sound of the voice, I'm in trouble. It is a female MP. Ohhhs***. I explained and she let me go with a warning. Speeding, not exposing thank goodness.

I bet that was one funny story she had to tell that night to the other MPs.

Thank you to our City of Huntsville employees. All of the departments that keep our city safe and so clean. We see you working every day but don't say thank you. So this is letting you know we appreciate your hard work every day!



The Little Gem Hamburger

by Walt S. Terry



When I was overseas during World War II, I dreamed not of Mom's apple pie or Southern fried chicken, I dreamed of "Little Gems." There were times when I would have hocked my soul for just one Little Gem - juiced up a bit, of course. There are probably other places in the world where these culinary delights are made, but if there are places besides Huntsville, I've never been lucky enough to find them.

Several places in Huntsville sold french fried hamburgers over the years, including "Major Hoople's Owl Club"- but "The Little Gem Cafe" (presided over by chef supreme Tooney Summers) in the front of Mr. Bill Payne's pool hall, east side Courthouse Square, was hamburger heaven to me. Later my wife and children came to enjoy them as much as me, until we were shattered by its closing in the 1960s. And though there are places like Big Spring Cafe and Mullin's Drive-in which would carry on the tradition, I decided to do the same in my own kitchen.

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

Seen in Athens church bulletin

The ingredients:

- * hamburger meat
- * Wesson Oil
- * buns
- * mustard
- * chopped onions

The Process:

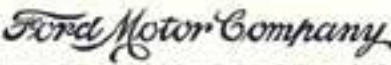
Fry hamburger patties in dry skillet on high heat, both sides, to seal in juices, about one minute each side. Drop patties in Wesson Oil preheated in deep pan to hot but not boiling vigorously. Oil should completely cover the patties. Let simmer for at least 10 minutes, but longer if desired.

The Eating:

Fish out patties, place on bun, juice bun a little by splashing with spatula, if juice is your thing.

Add mustard and chopped onions, close bun.

Have a joyous and ecstatic experience by biting sensually into this mouth-watering morsel. Do NOT degrease.



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

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B-26 CRASHES NEAR HUNTSVILLE

by Charles R. Wells

On an early summer morning in June of 1944, I decided to go fishing. With Mama and Daddy's permission, I found my fishing pole, dug a can of worms, got my new (to me) bicycle and got ready to leave. I had celebrated my fourteenth birthday about three weeks earlier (June 2nd), and Daddy had scrounged together enough money (\$6.00) to buy me a Hienz 57 used bicycle.

By this, I mean it had oversize handlebars, no chain guard, a 26-inch wheel in the back and a 24-inch in the front. I was always going downhill. I rolled up my right overall leg to keep it from being caught in the sprocket and headed over to one of my favorite fishing holes on Indian Creek.

After traveling about three or four miles, I had gotten to the hill on the west side of the creek and the north side of Highway 72. I was pushing my bicycle along a cow path that ran about halfway up the side of the hill. As I was nearing the highway, I heard a huge explosion to the south and looked that way.

It appeared that the whole end of Rainbow Mountain was gone. There was fire and a lot of smoke, and I could see trees falling from the sky.

I looked up and saw a plane (B-26 Marauder) coming toward me. It was on fire and smoke was coming out of the cockpit and the bomb bay doors.

It was losing altitude rapidly as it passed over me and headed toward a cultivated field at the top of the hill. Its nose was down at a very steep angle and did not flare out before impact. Upon impact, the nose-wheel collapsed, the nose of the plane dug into the ground, the tail went up into the air and a matter of seconds later, it blew up. The pilot had apparently dropped part of his bomb load on Rainbow Mountain.

I made my way closer to the crash

site. The pilot must have radioed the base that he was in trouble because only minutes after the crash, the area was crawling with MPs, police cars and ambulances. Within minutes, they had formed a circle of guards around the site. There were several planes, flying around the area. Curiosity seekers began to gather on the highway but were not allowed to approach the crash site. No one questioned me as to what I may have seen.

I was told to leave the area immediately. I guess a freckled face, barefoot boy dressed in overalls, carrying a fishing pole and holding on to a weird-looking bicycle could not tell them anything they wanted to know. An article in the Huntsville Times stated that the only witness to the crash was a Black woman who could not tell them very much.

Besides myself, the McMurtrie family, working in their field across the highway, were also witnesses to the crash. For whatever reason, none of us were ever questioned about the crash.

I had seen the plane many times before. Almost daily, depending on the weather, it would come over the farm several times; always approaching from a southeasterly direction, pass over and then go on to the southwest. A few minutes later, we would hear the report of exploding bombs dropping on a mock village on the Arsenal.

Sometimes it would be flying low enough that we could clearly see the pilots. We would wave and sometimes they would wave back or dip their wings to let us know that they had seen us.

The crash site is now occupied by Huntsville Memory Gardens. Perhaps a fitting tribute to the three men who perished there.



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- If your child isn't growing fast enough, have him stand next to an oak tree and cut a notch in it right above his head. Then put a lock of his hair in the notch and he will begin to grow quickly.

- If your child has thrash, have a preacher blow in her mouth and she will get better.

- If a very sick person wants to know their true condition, they should touch a piece of bread to their lips and throw it to a dog. If the dog won't eat it, they have only a short time left to live.

- If a baby is allowed to see her reflection in a mirror, she will be cross-eyed. Keep mirrors away from children for the first year.

- For a snakebite, take a frying chicken, split it and put it on the wound. The chicken will turn green as it draws the poison out.

- If someone you know snores, you can stop it by placing his or her hand into a bowl of water while they sleep.

- For a case of sunstroke, take a lock of hair from the person's head and throw it into a stream which flows north. This will cure the sunstroke.

- To cure a sty in the eye, rub an engagement ring across it. Or, go to a crossroads and say three times: "Sty, leave my eye and go to the next one who passes by."

- If you pull a tooth and throw it on the ground, if a dog walks on it you will grow a permanent fang.

- If you pull a tooth and put it under your pillow, the next morning you will find a new dime where your tooth was.

- If you have warts, plant a pea for each one and they will disappear.

- For bad chills, dip a string in turpentine and tie it around the waist.

- If you are superstitious, you know that the first thing that must be placed on the dining table after the cloth is the salt shaker, and it must be the first thing removed.

- To stir another's cup is to invite strife into the home.

- To fold your table-napkin after a meal is a certain sign that you will never return to the house.

- If bees nest in the roof of a house, the girls of that house will not marry.

- When you drop your comb, if you will put your foot on it, your wish will come true.

- If a rooster crows on the back steps, a neighbor will die.

"Anything you find wrong with your body at age 50, you'll really miss at 70."

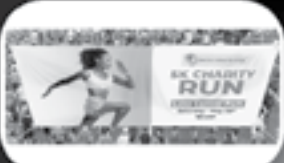
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Blackberries - Watch Out for the Thorns



by M. D. Smith IV

I can still taste them if I close my eyes — the sharp sweetness of fresh, sun-warmed blackberries, bursting between my teeth with tiny seeds inside. But even that memory bows to something greater: my mother's blackberry cobbler. The crust was never fancy, just golden and uneven, but the filling with berries, sugar, and dump-lings, bubbled up dark and fragrant, staining the edges purple as it baked. The smell alone could pull the whole family into the kitchen, drawn like moths to a promise of comfort.

In the early 1970s, we lived in a brand-new housing development pressed right up against the woods, a place where suburbia ended abruptly and nature reclaimed whatever humans hesitated over. The developers had cleared a long strip of land for a future road extension — graded dirt stretching nearly a mile — but then they stopped. No pavement. No houses. Just bare earth abandoned to the sun and rain.

Nature wasted no time.

By two summers, that scar of dirt had become a jungle of blackberry vines — thick, tangled and ferocious. They thrived there, fed by runoff from the low hills on either side and ripening under long, unbroken hours of sunlight. The berries came in heavy clusters, darkening from green to red and then to deep purple-black, swollen and glossy, as if they were holding sweet secrets.

One Fourth of July weekend, when the air felt heavy and electric with heat and cicada song, my mother made us an offer we couldn't refuse.

"If you and your sister fill two 2-quart clean mayonnaise jars with blackberries," she said, pointing at my seven-year-old sister Anita and me, eleven and proud of it, "I'll make a blackberry cobbler for everyone."

That was all the motivation we needed.

"Just don't eat so many you get sick, M.D.," she warned, fixing me with that look mothers have when they already know you won't listen.

"I won't," I said, lying without effort.

It was July third, brutally hot, the kind of heat that glued your shirt to your back. Typically, we would have worn shorts and T-

shirts, but blackberry patches demand respect. That day, we pulled on stiff blue jeans, already warm before we stepped outside, and old sneakers that had seen better days.

Thorns were not forgiving.

The patch was especially thick that year. Rain had come at just the right times, and the vines had responded greedily. Standing at the edge, it felt endless, a green wall bristling with hooked spines and dotted with dark fruit. I took the lead, as older brothers do, testing the ground with my right foot, Keds first, pressing vines down, pushing others aside, forcing a narrow path forward.

Anita followed close behind.

"Start picking," I told her once we were deep enough that the road hid behind leaves and thorns. I plucked a berry, popped it into my mouth, and smiled. Perfect. Two more went into the jar.

Anita did the same. "These are really good," she said, her lips already stained purple.

"Fill the jar first," I reminded her. "Then we can eat all we want."

She reached lower, eager and



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yanked her arm back with a yelp. "Ouch! That hurts, brother."

A thin red line had already appeared along her wrist.

"You gotta be careful," I said,

suddenly serious. "The thorns down low are bigger. They hurt more. Just take it slow."

We moved deeper; the vines folding beneath my steps in a strange obedience, crossing and collapsing like they'd been commanded to bow. The air smelled green and sweet, buzzing with insects and flying grasshoppers zooming out of the way as we shook the vines. Our jars slowly filled, the berries soft and warm against our fingers.

Then it happened.

I shifted my weight to the side, and a thick stalk hidden beneath the leaves drove its thorns straight through my jeans and into my leg. Pain exploded upward, sharp and electric. I twisted instinctively to escape, but my left foot caught in the flattened vines behind me. For a suspended moment—like teetering at the edge of a lofty building—I wobbled, arms useless.

Then I toppled backward.

Flat on my back. Arms spread into untouched vines.

The blackberry patch seemed to inhale around me. Vinescrackled and snapped inward as I landed flat on my back.

"Owww—holy mackerel!" I screamed. (But I didn't say 'mackerel'.)

And then I yelled some more—words I didn't even know I knew, a complete catalog of every curse word my father had ever uttered when a saw blade bit him or a hammer caught his thumb.

The pain was everywhere. My scalp. My shoulders, arms, back, butt and legs. Thorns pressed, pierced, hooked. I lay perfectly still, afraid that moving would somehow make it worse—though it was already worse than anything I'd known. Slowly, I stretched one arm forward and yelled, "Anita! Give me your hand!"

She took one look and stepped back. "I... I might fall, too."

I didn't have sympathy to spare.

Very carefully, inch by inch, I tried to rise. Each movement drove some thorns deeper, especially where I least wanted to feel them, in my rear end. Pain flared hot and humiliating. It was worse than any belt whipping I'd ever gotten—worse because it felt earned, delivered by my own pride.

Eventually, I managed to rock forward onto my feet, refusing to grab onto anything. I stood there breathing hard while the vines

reluctantly released me, thorns popping free one by one.

The damage was impressive.

My arms and hands—bare below my short sleeves—were striped red, dotted with beads of blood where thorns had gone in deep. My neck stung, my shirt clung damply to my back, already speckled with red. I tiptoed back to the path I'd made and looked behind me.

The vines lay flattened in the shape of my body, like a grotesque snow angel pressed into green and purple.

Anita stared at me. "Wow. You look bad. You better go home."

I considered it. I'd had worse knife cuts. Worse bike wrecks on concrete. The pain was sharp, yes—but it was fading into a dull burn now.

"Nope," I said. "We came to fill our jars."

My jar lay near my feet, mostly upright. I gathered it, and we went back to picking... carefully. I ate almost as many berries as I picked, letting their sweetness fight the sting. After what I'd endured, I figured I'd earned them.

When we finally carried our full jars home, Mom took one look at me and shook her head. "Bathing suit. Pool. Now. Both of you."

The water burned at first, then soothed.

Later that evening, scratched and aching, I ate the best blackberry cobbler of my life.

It was worth it. Almost.

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The Storyteller: The Moonshiner's Fellowship Hall - Uncle Charnel and Aunt Versa

by Bruce Walker

Every family has a few colorful characters. Mine had moonshiners, preachers, politicians, businessmen and traveling salesmen. Truth be told, most of them were in the spirit business one way or another. Different professions, different callings—but they all had one thing in common. Each of them was possessed... by their own kind of spirits.

My Uncle Charnel was a big, burly man who spoke his mind and lived life exactly the way he saw fit. He was big-hearted, too. If a family fell on hard times, they might wake up one morning to find a basket of groceries quietly sitting on their porch. Nobody ever saw who delivered it—but everyone knew. Uncle Charnel was generous. He was loyal. And he was also a moonshiner.

Now my Aunt Versa, the love of Charnel's life, was exactly the opposite. Sweet as a Georgia peach, she had been married to him for thirty years and was 100 percent teetotaling. If the church doors were open, Aunt Versa was inside them. She belonged to the BTU, the WTU, and believe it or not

the WWF. Now if you don't know what the WWF is... that's professional wrestling. That's right. Every Saturday night she planted herself in front of her little nine-inch black-and-white television, the kind that sat in a wooden box with rabbit-ear antennas. With a white handkerchief waving like a victory flag, she

cheered for her favorite wrestler—Gorgeous George, like she was ringside at Madison Square Garden.

Now Uncle Charnel's "special" was legendary. One hundred and fifty proof. He made it so smooth you could swallow half a fruit jar before you realized what you'd done—and so clear you could read tomorrow's newspaper through it... if you drank enough. Once a month something curious happened during the Sunday offering. Crinkled five- and ten-dollar bills would mysteriously appear in the plate. Eventually the ushers spotted Aunt Versa quietly dropping a thick manila envelope into the offering.

When someone told our pastor and asked what he planned to do about it, Brother Jones who was way ahead of his time—just smiled. "Boys," he said, "I don't see no harm. Looks to me like we're just recycling." Brother Jones had been our pastor for as long as I could remember. He didn't have a degree in theology, but he surely had one in knee-ology. That man could pray. He could preach Hell so hot in July you'd still be warming yourself by it in January. Then he'd turn around and preach Heaven so sweet you wanted to go right then and there.

Our troubles began when Brother Jones passed away. The church called a new preacher—Reverend Doctor Charles Wilson III. And things started changing the very first Sunday he arrived. Where Brother Jones wore overalls, a crisp white shirt, and a black clip-on tie, Reverend Wilson showed up in a three-piece suit—even on fifth Sundays and dinner-on-the-ground days.

His sermons were polished. Educated. Impressive. The old timers had their own way of describing him. "He's one of them mama-called-and-papa-sent preachers," they'd say. "Mama called him to preach, and papa sent him off to cemetery... er... seminary." Then they'd laugh.

One Saturday afternoon Reverend Wilson decided to pay a visit to Uncle Charnel and Aunt Versa. He drove down the dusty farm lane, waited patiently while someone opened the cattle gate,

"I offer my opponents a bargain: if they will stop telling lies about us, I will stop telling the truth about them."

Adlai Stevenson, 1952


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and parked his shiny car off to the side. He didn't want anyone thinking he was connected to their... entrepreneurial activities. He walked up on the porch and knocked. My cousin Leilus answered the door and fetched his mother. Aunt Versa came out wiping flour from her hands onto her white apron. "Come in, Reverend," she said kindly. Reverend Wilson stiffened. "I'd rather not," he replied.

Then, in a tone that suggested both authority and disapproval, he said: "I've decided the church can no longer accept the money you've been placing in the offering plate. It would appear... unseemly." Aunt Versa said nothing. She simply nodded. Then she turned and went back inside.

Now Aunt Versa was a rotund woman built more for comfort than speed—but when she got moving she had the determination of a bulldozer. Within a week she called her nephew Buddy Jr. and bought his bean field directly across from the church. And then she built something. She built the largest fellowship hall in St. Clair County. Next to our little church it looked like a German Shepherd standing beside a Chihuahua. Across the front of the building, in bright red three-foot-high letters, a sign proudly read: THE CHAR- NEL HANNAH FELLOWSHIP HALL. It caused quite a stir.

Now if you've never been in a country fellowship hall, let me explain something. A fellowship hall is not a gymnasium. It's not a recreation center. And it certainly isn't a technology hub. You won't find treadmills, basketball courts, Wi-Fi, or highspeed internet. What you will find are two long rows of battered tables with folding chairs on both sides, a beat-up upright piano in the corner, and somebody who knows half a chord and one verse of "Victory in Jesus." If you start playing, someone will pat you on the back and tell you how wonderful you sound. Slow ceiling fans stir the smell of fried chicken, green beans and banana pudding.

People sit. They talk. They laugh. And young folks learn how to look each other in the eye. Now that is a fellowship hall. Before evening service each third Sunday, our pastor and deacons had a tradition. They'd walk down into the pine thicket behind the church—past the outhouses—and pray before discussing church business. One Sunday as they finished and

started back up the path, Aunt Versa was waiting for them at the edge of the trees. In one hand she held the keys. In the other, the deed. She looked everyone of them square in the eye, then handed both to Brother Taylor, the head deacon.

The men looked at one another and disappeared back into the pine thicket. We couldn't see much through the trees, but we did hear a few things. "Don't be a hypocrite..." "Let's be practical..." "I'll show you..." A few minutes later the men came back out. Brother Taylor had a black eye. Deacon Walden was holding a bloody nose. And somehow Reverend Doctor Charles Wilson III was missing about a third of his left eyebrow.

That Sunday night we gained a brand-new fellowship hall. And two weeks later... we gained a brand-new preacher. What happened in that meeting was mostly hidden by the trees.

Which just goes to prove something I learned growing up in the South: Never underestimate a moonshiner... or a determined church woman.

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Remembering Parkway Motors and Frank Digesu, Jr.

by Writer C5

In 1987 when Frank Digesu Sr. and Jr. opened Parkway Motors, there was no internet or YouTube to obtain pertinent information on vehicles quickly. Learning curve rates were often slow and tedious. Trial and error, manuals, along with consultation among peers was how maintenance and repairs were done. Many calls came into Parkway Motors seeking their expertise. The pair were well respected for their in-depth knowledge within the industry.

By the time the internet was available, Frank Jr. was already a walking cornucopia of Corvette information. He knew each year and every idiosyncrasy associated with that model. He even made correction notes in service manuals. Frank Jr. knew his Corvettes and was recognized as a specialist who was always open to assisting others. He helped many and personally trained one fellow who is now considered a Corvette specialist in the Huntsville area.

Searching online and through dealer auctions, he always maintained a fine inventory of pre owned vehicles. Every car was personally inspected to make sure the standard of Parkway Motors was met. A vehicle was not sold until he was confident that it could be driven to California. Frank Jr. had hundreds of satisfied repeat customers throughout the years. These included buyers of vehicles for young drivers, families, trade workers...and of course, Corvette enthusiasts.

One such buyer was a young newlywed man. He pronounced he was tired of driving by and looking. He was ready to own a Corvette. Before long, the paperwork was done and he muscled out of the lot blistering north on the Parkway. Before long....he was back! A couple of days later, he explained that his wife did not

approve of his investment strategy. "If you don't take this Corvette back, my wife will divorce me!" he said with an anxious tone in his voice. Having as much compassion as he had character, Frank Jr. took the car back only to sell it again shortly thereafter. Hopefully this guy is still married.

Another buyer called from Memphis and asked if this rare Corvette was actually on the lot at Parkway Motors. Upon confirmation, he said he was leaving now and would be there in five hours. Frank reminded him that the collectible Corvette business is a cash business! With a degree of apprehension, he called his older brother Sam to come down and visit during the transaction. Upon arrival the two helped him out of his wheelchair, into the car and after a brief drive the paperwork was on the desk. Wearing only jeans and a tee shirt, Frank and Sam wondered where he had \$35K cash? The buyer then reached down and pulled the money out of his prosthetic leg. The brothers shared a smile together. Frank then headed south to the bank, as the buyer slammed on the gas entering north Parkway.

Another buyer was a young hillbilly that hailed from Lacey's Spring, Alabama. He arrived announcing he had been driving by and saving for three years. With an added tax return and moma's approval, he now owned a Corvette. A few days later he returned. He was animated while explaining that the passenger window would not roll down. He added, moma was certain her baby boy had been swindled by a big city car dealer. Frank calmly walked over to the door and sharply struck just below the function button. He rolled the window down and then back up twice. He then said, "When the weather is this cold, the frost will sometimes make them stick. Same is true for the pop up headlamps." As Frank turned to walk back into the office, the hillbilly was heard on the phone telling moma, "I'm glad I have the car, and I think it will be easy to work on."

Through the years, Parkway Motors became a regular stop for many friends. The inviting atmosphere welcomed all in to share their stories. Special thanks to Miss Rosemary for managing the business every Wednesday throughout the years. Frank Jr. decided to retire in 2021. He had helped many people with automotive needs and made numerous lifelong friends along the way.

Sadly, Frank Jr. passed away in 2025 from complications of type-1 diabetes. He is remembered as a great friend and a solid pillar in the Huntsville business community.

A SONG IN THE DISTANCE

by Trey Cornelius

Life in the country was always unique. Days were outgoing and long, while nights were peaceful and tranquil. At night, sounds could be heard amongst the sounds of nature. One could say fishing in the dark could be the best thing ever. When it is hot, dry, and discouraging, the road can seem longer than a mile. When it rains, that's when the magic really happens. All that must follow is a little faith, hope, and a big helping of imagination.

On a spring day, I sat on my porch and watched a big field of irises wave vibrantly in the wind. It was as if Mother Nature was making her presence known to all around her. The air was gentle as a breeze. The field was as far as the sky. Soon, I began to get lost in thought. I was ready for a hot girl to come sit next to me with a kiss ready for the smooching. My heart danced with joy as did my feet. It was all so nonchalant and wide open.

It was a diamond day in April when, suddenly, the wind changed. It went from whispering hope to loudness. Discharges came from dark clouds in the sky. There were sounds of rumbling, grumbling, and KA-BOOMING! The air was dry. It had not rained in a while. Crops were hungry and plants were wilting. People embraced it like a soldier coming home. After all, a heavy April shower never hurts. As a result, the bottom fell out like a trap door in a haunted house. It rained heavily upon the earth.

The rain dampened the ground tops. Each and every mauve petal glistened with each drop. Each drubbing of the rain quenched the thirst for all that was in the field. The foliage grew amongst the lathyrus. The field, the irises, and the crops had survived the dry spell and embraced the heavy and happy storm.

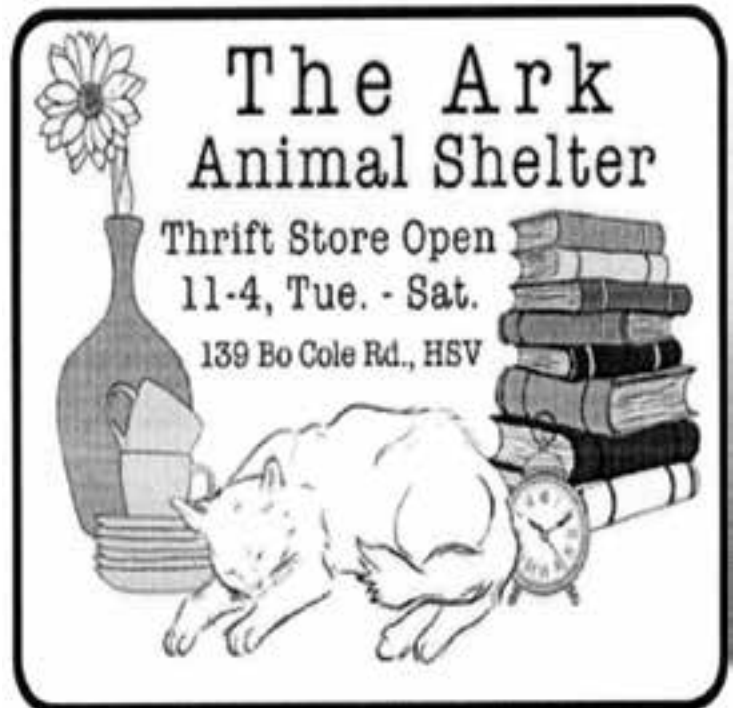
The evening came quietly after the rain subsided. It came quietly like a mouse on a cheese hunt. Peace filled the air once again when suddenly, there was a song in the distance. It could not be seen, but it was like music to my ears.

It started low, and then it grew in its volume. It went from pianissimo to forte. It was pleasant to the ear. They lingered and loitered by the puddles of water. They enjoyed themselves more than at a sold-out concert for the Emperor and his new

clothes. After all, frogs love water, especially after it rains.

The army of frogs began singing in a choir when suddenly, the crickets chimed in. They chimed in, and they chirped. Soon, their projection felt like an orchestra. The crickets kept in rhythm as the frogs held out the melody. They all sang as each drop dripped down their vertebra. They sang out throughout the forest. Such a solemn symphony echoed throughout with persistence.

The song in the distance became well-known cognizance. The irides of March soon became April. Soon, April became May. Such songs came bursting forth. They came bursting forth in glorious day and in forte. Their thirst was quenched, and their hunger was fulfilled. Some might call it noise, but others call it peace instilled. It was a song sung in the distance.



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The illustration shows a white cat lying down next to a stack of books and a clock. To the left is a vase with a single flower.



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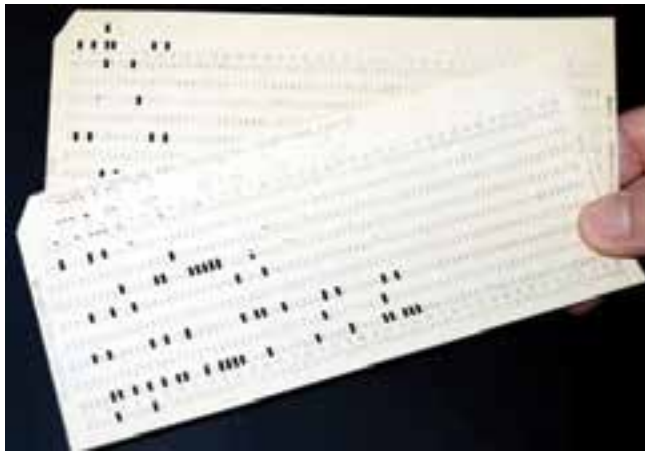
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A Letter to Jake

1967



by Bill Alkire

Jake was a man for all seasons. Everyone has had or has a Jake in their life. Jake had an opinion on anything, everything, and liberal politics and politicians especially. He disliked all authority and being told (instructed) what he could or could not do, and where he could do it. Jake never voted for anything. His vote was always in protest of someone or something.

His attitude and haughty ways had prevented him from advancing with the Newport News Shipbuilding (NNS) company, which left him bitter toward the management.

Jake was a highly intelligent, capable mechanical engineer. He graduated top in his Engineering Program at East Carolina University. He was a tall, slender, mostly bald man. He was of medium build and complexion and what little hair he had was white. He was a chain-smoker and though he never came to work with alcohol on his breath, it was said he was a weekend alcoholic. His mother-in-law had moved in with Jake and his wife before his son was born. She came to help with the baby and never left. Jake's enormous dislike for his mother-in-law was suggested as the most plausible reason he drank on weekends for the last twenty years. I could draft an entire book about Jake. There are two stories, however, and I would like to convey them to you.

First, about the Virginia Electric and Power Company (VEPCO) monthly utility bill. He resented the taxes and add-ons to his utility bill. As a protest he would bring his bill to work to pay

each month. He kept his checkbook in his desk, as he did not want his wife or mother-in-law to know the money he had in the bank.

Back to the billing. The bill was printed on Computer Card Stock, with computer-generated holes delineating the charges and the date due. The bill also supplied other local and state information and payment instructions. One instruction always disturbed Jake, it read, "Do not staple, fold or mutilate." In defiance, Jake would fold the card in half, staple with all the staples possible and mail the mutilated card to the utility company in Richmond, Virginia. This caused the company to resort to manually key inputting the bill and payment information into the company computer. As strange as this may appear to others, for Jake it was his way of protesting.

Secondly, let me tell you about another Jake monthly ritual. Throughout the month he would bring junk mail into the office that he collected. He would then sort through the mail and segregate the "Postage Paid Envelopes" He would take the envelopes and stuff them with the collected Junk mail from that month. After he stuffed what he had collected into the envelopes he would mail the envelopes to those who had supplied them. He always had junk mail and postage-paid envelopes. He continued this practice for the 15 years I knew him.

Jake's mother-in-law died and he began to change. His wife passed month after her mother. Jake stopped smoking and drinking, claiming there was no reason for him to drink now. He began to contemplate retiring. A month after he retired at 62, he had a light stroke. He recovered quickly with rehabilitation and never slowed down or looked back.

He lived an active, productive life attending East Carolina University Basketball and Track & Field activities. He enjoyed visiting his granddaughter and traveling with his new female companion, fifteen years his junior, cruising the world.



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Transition

*by Gerald Alvis, the Poet
of Greenlawn*

I'm not cleaning up after myself. I'll let 2 or 3 others do it instead! So, I did!

Men go through stages in life, but not just silver hair and a less-filtered speech.

My current stage is bird feeders and houses; I'm in the advanced stage because, last count, I have 8, and I more than routinely check to make sure the feeder (it looks like a lighthouse) is full. That's what I was doing, making sure that this dispensary of seeds was topped off when I spilled them all over the garden wall I was using as a workbench. But as I retreated to my shaded chair, it wasn't long before the cleanup crew arrived, 3 of them pecking away at the protein treats I left for them to enjoy.

They have gotten used to me now and routinely fly by, landing within a few feet of where I sit near our fountain, which ensures refreshment after their newfound meal. Ladies, here are some things to look forward to as your spouse or older male friends... ahem, evolve.

In our 20s, we are pretty much bouncing off walls, this and that, just trying to get equilibrium, recovering from school, and finding ourselves (whatever that is). Biceps and peacocking are at their peak.

In our 30s, we realized we had slipped physically, and it's the fitness craze trying to recapture our youth. Stuff begins to hurt. Mid to late 30s BBQing sets in, with inquiries and advice on which rub to use, and the argument over charcoal vs. pellets. Don't even bring up an air fryer unless you want to be ostracized. Words like "Weber" and "the Egg" are added to strengthen connections with peers. Toy accumulation begins, and bass boats are in his future. Someone who is younger than you "Sirs" you, and it stings.

In our 40s it's history documentaries, especially about WWII, and hold on ladies, the first of many midlife crises. Yes, sports cars, motorcycles and, if we are really reach-

ing back hard to our youth, "the ponytail" golf: the new social-sport obsession, with drivers, and who can hit it farther as the competitive edge and status we seek. Some men experience YOS (yard obsession syndrome) as early as their late 40s. Smack talk includes "Have you seen Earl's edging on his sidewalk"? He's just let it go this year! He should not have used that 13-13-13 fertilizer before applying preemergent. We start making noises as we get out of chairs.

50s - Arts and crafts time, yep, if our garage isn't full, it will be, tools tools tools! Gonna build stuff, and yes, of all things, it starts with the bird houses previously mentioned. When he runs out of things to fix or build, he will want to try to restore an old car or motorcycle. And we just make noises. Auctions are a thing, and bidding on stuff you don't need is mandatory at this age. The early stage of RVing begins.

In the mid to late 50s and 60s, your parents will become totally different people as they have now become grandparents. You will not be recognizing them, and it's open season on snacks and bedtime, or at least its meaning is forgotten conveniently. The money they required you to work for is given FREELY, or for jobs such as keeping the alligators out of the yard or light-monitoring duties (verifying that the light comes on when they open the fridge). We get "the look" from our kids as they are correcting them, both of us knowing they used to do the same thing and likely worse. Others rush to help you loading lumber or other heavy items at the supply store.

In the 60s, getting on the roof or ladder is not advisable, as the roles of parent and child switch. Dad, don't make me come over there. Do not get on the roof. I'll do it, or you hire someone. If you see your adult children playing paper, rock, scissors in the parking lot, they are deciding which parent has duty. Someone will offer you their seat. Someone will help you with your luggage. New hobbies include music learning to play an instrument, and travel. Writing becomes a thing along with your legacy. Most everyone calls you Mr. at this point, and you stop laughing at the joke, it's the doctor telling you to slow down, not the police. You will be tailgated by a school bus. Getting out of a recliner requires a rocking motion. We don't care if we make noises.

70s and beyond, you've reconciled with your children for spoiling their kids as you see them step into the roles you once led. Grandkids are still your best buddies, and you enjoy the fruition of the love you gave.

70s -80s I've heard the Greats are even better. Wow!

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A FATHER'S LOVE, FROM A DAUGHTER

by Kimberly Lang

The month of June is already here. Where has the time gone? This month we will celebrate our fathers or what I call him, my dad. In 1966 President Johnson issued the first proclamation honoring Fathers and in 1972 President Nixon signed it into law making it a permanent holiday.

The month of June has three birthstones: Pearl, Alexandrite, Moonstone. What makes a dad? By birth of a child but there are other ways we have; stepfathers, grandfathers, fathers-in-law and then those special uncles who are like a father to us. I have had them all.

I am blessed to still have my dad with me today. He is my anchor in life when I need him. He is always there for me. I can go to him with a problem and he always has the time for me. He is a strong man with strong values of right and wrong. My dad's love is a reflection of God's grace. My dad has a firm hand when it's needed and a strong embrace when it's needed. My dad taught me patience, compassion and trust. He taught me to be honest and caring to everyone.

I think when God created dads he was thinking of mountains cause they stand firm and tall. God gave us dads to be there in ways he can't here on earth. I think we get nurturing parts of life from our mothers and we learn strong firm values from our dads. We look at our dads as the firm one cause he is the one who goes out and makes a living for his family and he is usually the stern one when we do wrong. How many times were you told by your mother "Wait till your father gets home!"

Thats all it took with me growing up!!!

Do you remember when your boyfriends had to meet your dad? Or when your girl-

friends did? Nobody was ever going to be good enough! Dads hold a special place in our hearts and they are different if you're a son or daughter. I think for sons they always try to be like their dads and daughters try to find men like them. I am blessed to have a great dad and a great husband. They both have great values and both are hard workers.

I lost both of my grandfathers at an early age, one I remember, the other I don't. My kids are blessed with knowing both of theirs. That is a time in their life I tell them to cherish because it's a blessing to hear the old time stories about them growing up and the things they can learn from them.

I am getting older and time seems to be passing by faster and faster so it's important for me to spend time with my dad and all my loved ones. I don't have a lot of family left so many have passed away and now I think of them everyday with all the memories.

This Fathers Day if you still have yours be sure to hug him and cherish those moments, you get to make more memories. I pray all of you have a wonderful Father's Day and God Bless You all.

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"I was taking my parakeet to the vet when he got loose in the car. Next thing I saw was his rear end and there was a crash."

Seen on Hazel Green accident report

It Had to Be an Angel



by Doug Clark

My Father-in-Law, Mr. Cherry Smith, a long-time Huntsville resident, loved fishing, especially crappie fishing. When I first started dating his daughter Lea in 1982, I remember him taking her fishing to the Honeycomb area near Guntersville. They caught over 90 Crappie. I was amazed at their success.

He would fish by drifting in his V Hull 16' Alumacraft Boat with three fishing poles for each person and three hooks on each pole at different heights along the fishing line. When you came across a school of fish you would have multiple poles hook a fish. In the next few years, he took me fishing two or three times and we would catch thirty plus crappies, which was a good day of fishing. He was a very patient man and taught me much of what I know about fishing, like how to filet the fish, launching a boat into the water and baiting your line.

Mr. Smith was always interested in my career and well-being. He was a great listener, never interrupted and would always offer financial advice, spiritual advice and be a source of encouragement. He taught me things such as how to tie a tie; if you borrow someone's truck, always put more gas in it than it had upon returning it; and how not to ruin a good steak with steak sauce and other things like that over the years.

The following is a true story involving my Father-in-Law. We always joked about him having nine lives as he had previously experienced other close calls in life. It was in 1986, Mr. Smith took his

son Art fishing near Guntersville in the same sixteen-foot Alumacraft Boat. The weather seemed fine and the 1958 Johnson 8 horsepower motor had been working great.

They had been fishing for a couple of hours when they noticed the clouds were starting to gather and the wind was picking up, but it still seemed like they were OK to continue fishing. You always hear the weather can change quickly when you are on the lake boating or fishing. So, after a little while longer and the water starting to get rough, they decided they had better stop for the day and start back towards the shore. They cranked the engine and put it in gear.

The engine was running; however, they were not going anywhere. Forward gear was not working. It had worked perfectly on the way out. The wind continued to increase, and the waves were getting bigger. They tried and tried to get forward gear to work to no avail. Finally, they had no choice but to try to reach shore going in reverse. These V Hull boats were flat across the back, so going backwards against rough water was not desirable, but it was their only option.

They started taking on water immediately as the waves were crashing against the flat back of the boat and over into the boat. They were still about fifty yards from the shore, and the boat was half full of water and sinking.

Instantly, Mr. Smith and his son Art were completely in the water fighting the waves and trying to stay above the rough waves. They both looked towards the shore hoping someone might be there to help them. But there was no one around. They were on their own. They had to try and swim to the shore.

Art had boots on which quickly filled with water, becoming like anchors making his swimming harder and slower. It was all Art could do to keep himself above water as he was swimming as hard as he could and hoping his father would make it or at least stay afloat until he could get help. Exhausted and breathing heavily, Art made it to the shore and looked back towards his dad and could see him barely above water where the boat had sunk, holding his life vest and gasping for air.

Then out of nowhere, a man was standing next to Art. Art asked him to help his dad. The man did not say a word, but immediately jumped into the water, swam out to Mr. Smith just as he was out of strength, and helped Mr. Smith to the shore. As Art was making sure his dad was fine, he looked up to thank the man and he was gone. Nowhere in sight! Where did he go? Could he have been an Angel?

We all concluded that Mr. Smith would not have survived that boating accident had this man or Guardian Angel not been there. It was a miracle and it was another one of my Father-in-Law's nine lives.

Duck's Dilemma

by Arthur Werkheiser

Our condominium on Four Mile Post Rd. has a clubhouse and a pool. Yesterday, (26 Apr. 2026) my wife and I were informed by a neighbor, John, that there was a mother duck and 10 newborn ducklings swimming in the pool. The Momma duck could get out of the pool whenever she wanted to but the ducklings could not because the lip of the pool edge was much higher than the water level where the ducklings were paddling around. Moreover, the ducklings had been there for over a day. The Momma duck had made her nest inside the pool area, behind some bushes. This was a safe area for her because the pool area was fenced, there were two locked gates, and the pool area had been closed with gates locked for the winter time.

My wife and I were worried because the ducklings had been swimming there for so long and had had no opportunity to feed. So we went to the pool to look over the situation. The neighbor who had reported the situation had also put in a small float tied to the pool's edge in the hopes that the ducklings would climb over the float and reach the pool's edge. When we examined the situation, it appeared that the ducklings could probably not climb on the float.

While we were looking over the situation, another neighbor, Richard and his wife, stopped by to also look over the situation. Art, who lived in a unit next to the pool saw us and came out. He, too, was aware of the ducklings dilemma.

I suggested that we could use the lawn chairs inside the pool as a ramp, if they were placed on the pool edge, with the chair backs in the water. However, I had not brought my pool key and so could not get inside the pool area to try out my idea. So Art went home and got his pool key.

In the meantime, my wife headed for our near-by home for what purpose I did not know.

Art came back with his key and unlocked the gate. The three of us began placing the lawn chairs half in the water at the shallow end of the pool. Just then my wife arrived with two butterfly nets we happened to have.

In the meantime, the Momma duck had ner-

vously been herding her 10 little ducklings away from us and our activities. Richard took one net and I took the other. He placed himself on the opposite side of the pool from me. After trying several tactics with little success, we decided to use their avoidance tactics to our advantage. We slowly herded the duck and ducklings to the shallow end of the pool.

As I got too close for the Momma duck's worries, she hopped out of the pool at the shallow end corner nearest me. The ducklings, having lost Momma's protection, grouped in a tight little group for self protection. I dipped in my net and scooped up 8 of the 10 ducklings. The Momma duck retreated to a break in the fence and stood just outside the fence, waiting and keeping an eye on her ducklings. I carefully approached the break in the fence with Momma on the other side. I set down the net and spread the net so the ducklings could get out. They immediately ran to Momma and she retreated with her brood.

Now to get the remaining two. Easier said than done. The two knew to avoid the net. At times they would resort to diving underwater to avoid the net. Eventually, I trapped one of the two in that same corner. I scooped him up before he could dive again.

With duckling number 9 in the net, I took him to that same break in the fence. And he ran to where he believed his Momma was waiting.

While it took about 5 minutes to catch duckling no. 9, the 10th was even more elusive. He took to retreating to the center of the pool where the butterfly nets could not reach from either side. So, I got down the pool dipping net, with its long handle. It was slow and cumbersome, but it did chase the last duckling into Richard's net.

This last duckling was released at the same spot in the fence where the other nine had gone. We said "go to Momma."

End of Story? No.

The next morning, my wife and I were sitting in our patio when some friends dropped by. We told them the story of the ducklings and Christy said she would go check on things. She reported back that duckling no. 10 was back in the pool and stuck again. She was going back to see what she could do. Becky was there at the pool as well.

We gave her a butterfly net and I suggested that the duck be released far from the pool because he obviously had not found his mother.

Later she called back to say she and Becky had caught no. 10 (again). He was probably feeling poorly by now. Anyway, they had their bicycles (car?) and went over to the Jones Farm Park pond across the street to release the duckling into the water. The duckling was released and the duckling swam to a Momma duck with some ducklings - who attacked No. 10. Wrong Momma.

Another duck swam up and had No. 10 join her ducklings. Right Momma. Happy Ending.

**"Don't stick your elbow
Out so far.
It may go home
In another car."**

***Burma Shave Sign seen on highways
in the 1930s***

NEWS FROM 1875



- For Rent - the large and commodious storeroom with wareroom attached, and the enclosure included, situated at the foot of Jefferson Street and adjoining the Railroad, now occupied by Joe T. McGehee & Co., will be rented for one year. Contact Mrs. Geo. Neal at her residence on Franklin Street.

- Our friend Henry Ford, who has a most elegant little saloon on the North East Corner of the Square, invites all his friends of the old 4th. Alabama, and everyone else, to call and test the quality of his cooling drinks. Henry was a good soldier, and therefore a good judge of liquor.

- The public is invited to try Volta's Electro Belts and Bands, available at all drug stores. All nervous disorders, chronic diseases of the chest, head, liver, stomach, kidneys and blood, aches and pains, nervous and general debility are quickly cured by wearing the electric belt.

- Lost - somewhere between the Baptist Church and the Public Square, a large double Shawl, all wool, black and white plaid.

- Dr. Henry A. Binford, one of Huntsville's highly esteemed citizens, was stricken down with paralysis a few nights ago and now lies in critical condition, with no hope of recovery. It seems on the day of his affliction he had been unusually active and had exercised more than usual, and had eaten more heartily than ordinary. He had visited a patient at ten o'clock that night and was quite lively up to that hour.

- On Saturday night the warehouse of Mr. J. A. Stephens was broken into and as much bacon carried off as the thieves desired. A large hole was made through the wall at the rear of the house where was stored a large amount of bacon - some thousand pounds. The amount taken could not be ascertained. No arrests have been made to this time.

- Where there are so many idle and worthless people floating around as are now found in Huntsville, this thieving will continue and the sooner the vagrant law is enforced the better. Whenever a man is found loafing about without visible means of support he should get promptly arrested and put to work. It is evident that those who do not work must steal for a living.

"Beginning in April your assistance benefits will be discontinued.

Reason: It has been reported to our office that you expired in February."

Letter received by living taxpayer

**Good Dads take care of their families,
but they can feel weak sometimes too.
Show your Dad some extra love this
Father's day and all the year through!**



**With Love to All Dads and to the
Huntsville High School Class of 1966
from Oscar Llerena**

Music, Music, Music

by Elizabeth Wharry

I am often asked how I can sing and play the violin if I am deaf. Truth be told, I am totally deaf on my right ear. I have about 50% hearing on my left ear. When I wear my hearing aids, I have 100% hearing on my left side. I learned to sing, and to play the violin before I lost my hearing.

In August of 2024, I met my fellow Rocket City Chorus member, Art. He was wearing one of the shirts with the Chorus logo on it. I asked a few questions about the Chorus. Art invited me to a rehearsal which are held on Tuesday evenings from 6 to 8:30. By early September, I joined.

The Rocket City Chorus is a cappella. We usually do not have instruments accompanying us. We take our notes from a pitch pipe. There are 3 ladies and we can always use more! We have sung at various retirement communities, the Veterans Day prayer breakfast and lunch, the Vietnam Veterans day, and at the Memorial Day service downtown. We are on YouTube as well, I suggest Rocket City Chorus/children's medley.

As I stated earlier, we meet from 6 PM to about 830 PM at the Mayfair Church of Christ. It's located at 1095 Carl T. Jones Dr. SE. We warm up for about 20 minutes, then start singing. Our director Norm Myers warms us up vocally and covers some music theory during those 20 minutes. We usually take a break around 7 or 730. It really helps if one knows how to read music.

We have quartets available for singing Valentines. Have an anniversary coming up? We can provide music for that as well. To reach the Chorus, the phone number is 256-265-7352. Our email is secretary@rocketcitychorus.org

Hope to see you there! Keep a song in your heart, and a smile on your face (Lawrence Welk).



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PET TIPS FROM ANGEL

Your Arthritic Pet



Did you know that pets become geriatric at age 7? Larger breed dogs tend to have shorter life spans and are considered seniors when they are approximately 6 years of age. Learn how to care for your elderly pet.

Many pets have a high threshold for pain caused by arthritis, but as a pet ages, the likelihood of developing some form of arthritis is common. Pets with arthritis develop pain in the joints and often require medication or natural supplements to help alleviate the soreness and pain they feel. Prevention of arthritis in elderly pets is often impossible. It's important to remember that in most cases, degenerative changes to a joint cannot be reversed so the goal of treatment is to slow the progression of arthritis and manage pain.

Signs of Arthritis in Pets

- Favoring a limb or moving much more slowly
- Difficulty sitting or standing
- Sleeping more
- Seeming to have stiff or sore joints and hesitancy to jump, run or climb stairs
- Weight gain
- Decreased interest in play
- Attitude or behavior changes (including increased irritability)
- Being less alert

Signs of arthritis often are similar to signs of normal aging, so if your pet seems to have any of these symptoms for more than two weeks, the best thing to do is to have your veterinarian examine him. Then he can advise you as to what treatment plan would be best to help your pet deal with the pain.

Arthritis Treatment

- Healthy diet and exercise to help maintain proper weight.
- Overweight dogs are a common sight in most vet clinics, and that extra weight is hard on painful joints. Even losing just a few pounds can make a world of difference for your dog. Discussing nutritional needs and weight loss with your vet should be a number one priority after an osteoarthritis diagnosis
- Over-the-counter pet treatments, such as pills or food containing either glucosamine and chondroitin sulfate, vitamin C or Omega fatty acids. Glucosamine is by far the most commonly recommended supplements

for arthritis in dogs. A naturally occurring substance, glucosamine is believed to help heal the damaged cartilage found in arthritic joints.

- We all know a massage can make you feel like a million bucks, relieving tension and loosening sore muscles — and dogs are no different. Canine osteoarthritis can trigger muscle soreness and discomfort; massaging your dog's muscles near the affected joints (hips, knees, shoulders and along the spine most commonly) can bring immediate relief. Massage is a treatment you can do on your own, in the comfort of your own

home, any time you want.

- Many vet clinics and hospitals now offer hydrotherapy, or water treatment. The most common is an underwater treadmill, and it's gaining popularity as a treatment of choice for joint problems and surgical recovery. Water increases buoyancy, taking pressure off your pet's affected joints; this makes movement easier and less painful. Keeping arthritic joints moving and maintaining a healthy range of motion are the primary goals of osteoarthritis treatment, so hydrotherapy might be just what the doctor (of veterinary medicine) ordered.

- Diets with special supplements may also help decrease the discomfort and increase the joint mobility. Do not give human pain medications to your pet without first consulting your veterinarian. Some human products, including over-the-counter medications, can be fatal for pets.

A New Leash on Life

Huntsville Thrift Store & Boutique - Located in Five Points at 707 Andrew Jackson Way as Market Place

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Kittens and Cats available for adoption



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From the Desk of Tom Carney

The Last Will of John Thomason

by Tom Carney

I, John Thomason, knowing that my remaining days are few, take pen in hand to render my last will and testament.

I ask that Horace Cauthren, my good friend of thirty-two years, be the executor of my wishes. He is to be paid the normal fees as is customary for such situations.

He is to pay all debts owed by me from funds on deposit with the Bank of Scottsboro.

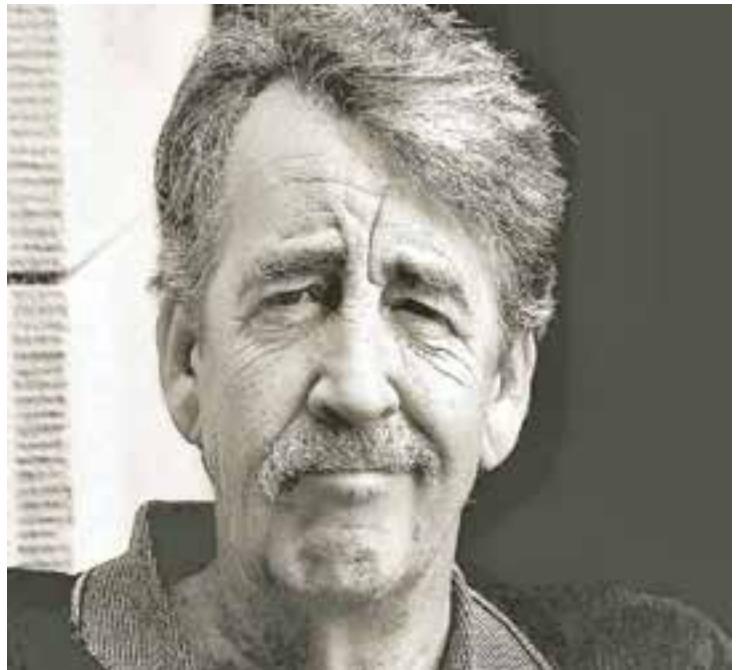
To my wife, Mary, who has remained steadfast at my side for sixty-three years, I leave a lifetime of memories and love along with my sorrow at the many times I have caused her anguish. She knows well of what I'm saying.

It is my hope that the good days will heavily outweigh the bad days.

In addition, I leave her our home and farm, with all its furnishings, implements and livestock that she might live her remaining days in a comfortable manner in which she deserves. I will be forever grateful that she didn't leave me.

In addition, I leave her all my stocks and bonds currently on deposit with the Chattanooga Trust Bank, in addition to any other monies due my estate, that she may continue to derive income from such.

For my oldest son John, I leave the amount of ten thousand dollars to be paid up on the tenth anniversary of my death, or on the occasion of his mother's death, on the condition he visits her every week and continues to maintain the relationship of a loving son. If he fails to do so, the money shall be given to a church of the executor's choosing.



For my son, Perry, who has caused his mother and I so much grief for so many years, I leave the amount of three thousand dollars which is in a metal box, buried somewhere on the farm in a location known only to me.

If he can find the money it is his to keep.

It is my hope that after weeks of grubbing in the dirt he will realize the folly of chasing his foolish dreams.

In addition, a sum of seven thousand dollars shall be paid to him only after the completion of ten years full-time employment, in a manner consistent with the morals of the community.

If he fails to do so, the money shall be given to a church of the executor's choosing.

John Thomason, this day of July 4, 1923



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you do to keep us
Safe Every Day.**

ON OCTOBER 17, A BEAUTIFUL HOMECOMING QUEEN FELL FROM THE SKY

by Jack Burwell

Why am I crying? According to Google AI, 150,000 homo sapiens die each day. 100,000 are old and, by the laws of God's universe, that is what's supposed to happen. We will all have our October 17. But there are another 50,000 who have not used all of their allotted years. Why do they die, some of them being so young?

One obvious answer is that we live outside the Gates of Eden. Outside those gates, the world is not only unfair but also unsafe. For Huntsville High's beautiful Homecoming Queen on October 16, the world was overly fair. Everything was going her way. She had a loving older sister and parents who met her needs with extraordinary love. The 1,800 students at Huntsville High School had elected her Homecoming Queen. College was a year away.

She was a bright spot in a world not always filled with beauty. What do I have in common with a young woman who

lit up a room by simply walking into it? One of my beautiful granddaughters attends her school. And sixty years earlier, I was at Huntsville High. The life of a homecoming queen can take some strange twists. Our homecoming queen of 1965 wrote some notes to me that were misplaced, not to turn up for fifty years. All I can remember about her was that she was beautiful, gentle, gracious and smiled when I sat behind her in speech class. If I was ever tempted to ask her for a date, I quickly dismissed the thought as inappropriate and reaching too far. I believed a homecoming queen ought to be dating a young man with the qualities of a hero which I knew I didn't possess. While I have now changed my definition of a hero, that came much later. As a result, I was never the boyfriend of a homecoming queen.

But why do I cry for the current homecoming queen whom I have never seen? Maybe I cry for myself due to the knowledge that I'm surrounded by people that I love and that life is uncertain. There is my loving wife, a beauty queen herself, children, grandchildren and friends. There may be no tomorrow for any of us. When Christ was asked about those persons who died when the tower in Siloam fell on them, He replied that they had no guilt greater than others. We are to use their deaths as a reminder to repent and align ourselves with God while we still have time. Jesus' other teachings enlarge on this.

Seek to grow in your love of God and in your love of others for none of us know when we may also fall from the sky.

"You know you're getting older when 'Tying one on' means fastening your Medic Alert bracelet."

Louise Avery, Huntsville

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HUNTSVILLE'S PIONEER NEWSWOMEN

by Stephanie Troup

In 1885, John Withers Clay was stricken with a cerebral hemorrhage and forced to leave his publishing duties at the Huntsville newspaper he purchased in 1856, the Democrat. In his absence, his two daughters, Virginia and Susie Clay, took over the responsibility of publishing the paper.

At the time it was very unusual for women to work in the journalism field, and the work was hard. The sisters were responsible for gathering materials, writing all the articles and editorials, and setting the type before they could print the paper. Then there were the daily office chores to be done. The sisters had to split and carry the firewood uptown to make the office fire, clean the office and carry water from the public hydrant on the Square.

As single women, they did not have the standing in the community that married women did. The paper allowed them a voice to speak out about a variety of issues that other women in their position would not have had the opportunity to do.

The Clay sisters saw the newspaper as the moral conscience for Huntsville. They felt that they were in a unique position to be able to comment on and write what was on other people's minds in the community. Years earlier John Clay had chosen the motto for the newspaper, "The people must be heard, and their rights vindicated." His daughters carried on this theme when they took over publishing duties.

The sisters had strong opinions and had the courage to voice them through their editorials. Some common issues that attracted their moral indignation were the practice of cock fighting and the lack of a public library in Huntsville. They wrote, "We have heard nothing in regard to the proper officers of the law arresting cock-fighters and bringing them to justice. Do they lack moral courage to enforce the laws of our state, or are they guilty themselves?" and, "Huntsville needs a Public Library. Let someone start the ball rolling."

**"Having more money does not make you happier.
I have \$50 million and I'm just as happy now as
when I had \$48 million."**

Arnold Schwarzenegger

The women also admonished city fathers who were trying to abolish music education from the city schools. They argued that is where children learned to sing patriotic songs of their country.

If the city leaders were neglectful in their duties, the publishers of the Democrat were quick to point it out. Comments such as "We have heard nothing recently about a bridge being built across the creek on Clinton Street," and, "The condition of the cemetery is a disgrace, not a path decent for a lady to walk on, it's so filled with weeds," were common.

As the years went on, the women expanded the paper to include more worldly news. The front page contained articles related to world, national and state politics. The inside pages were reserved for local news and any subject that caught the interest of Virginia and Susie. The sisters often contributed personal recipes

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and poems as well.

Other competing papers at the time might have sold more copies and been more up to date, but the Democrat contained any and all local news important to the community.

On the inside pages, the births, weddings and deaths in Huntsville were announced under a heading called "In The Garden of Life." These pages also included updates about the Clay family's happenings. The sisters might have included news about visitors they had entertained at their home, trips they had taken and personal family anecdotes.

The ladies decided what other social items in the community were worth reporting and included those as well.

One memorable series of stories published in the Democrat was called "Old Mahogany Table Tales." These were family stories related in a very chatty, homey manner, as if a family was sitting around a table recounting their passed down family stories. These tales came not only from the Clay family but other prominent Huntsville families of the day as well.

The sisters' opinions evolved with the times, as did the paper's content. For instance Virginia and Susie were at one time strongly opposed to women gaining the right to vote. However, they changed their opinion on that matter influenced by their aunt, Virginia Clay-Clopton as well as socialite Elielee Humes.

Through the power of the newspaper the Clay sisters were able to add their voices to the growing number of those speaking out to support women's suffrage. They also had the courage to print about their admiration for a progres-

sive local author, Norah Davis, whose books offended many old-time Huntsvillians.

Virginia Clay died in 1911 at the age of 49 after a prolonged illness. In her obituary in the Democrat it was said that she possessed "vitality, energy, indomitable will to do, devotion to family and friends, always faced the sunshine and left the shadows behind."

After her sister's death, Susie continued to publish the newspaper alone until 1919 when it was sold.

By the end of their careers, the sisters had gained confidence and prominence and had affiliated themselves with the Alabama Press Association and the National Editorial Association.

Through their hard work and example, they paved the way for other women to follow them into the journalism profession.

Dainty Cookies

by Nancy Holliman

1/4 c. shortening
1 c. granulated sugar
1/4 tsp. salt
2 c. sifted flour
2/3 tsp. soda
1 egg
1/2 tsp. lemon extract
1 tsp. vanilla
1/3 c. sour cream
1 c. shredded coconut

Sift dry ingredients. Cream sugar, shortening, egg and flavorings. Add dry ingredients and coconut, alternating with sour cream. Chill for 2 hours.

Drop dough by teaspoon onto baking sheet. Bake at 350° for 12 to 15 minutes.



CUPCAKE

Hello, my name is Cupcake! Volunteers here at the Ark Animal Shelter think I am the happiest and sweetest dog here! I am a 10 year old mixed breed tan and white girl. While I am considered a senior dog I am very active and playful. I have been spayed and have had all my shots and I've been micro-chipped so I am ready to go to a forever home. I love to

go on walks with the volunteers and play with the other dogs at the shelter. I get along with everyone and hardly ever bark I am so happy to get any attention from the volunteers and from anyone who comes to visit I just want to be noticed. Everyone says I am a good dog so I'm not sure why I'm still here and don't have a home of my own. I just want a home where I am loved and can spend the rest of my life. If you are looking for a good and friendly family dog you should consider coming to see me. I am very adaptable and undemanding and would fit right in to your family's routine. Please consider coming to the Ark Animal Shelter and ask to see Cupcake, that's me!

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THE RYLAND ROSE

by Austin Miller



The first time I remember seeing the rose was in Arley and Sue Parton's front yard. Their house was in the center of Ryland close to the Ryland Store, the Post Office, the cotton gin and in the early years, the Ryland Depot. They didn't have much front yard which made the rose stand out when it was in full bloom.

The house stood about thirty of forty feet from the Southern Railroad track, now Norfolk Southern, and the front porch was about a car length off what is now Ryland Pike. I often wondered what the trains sounded like in the house late at night when they came roaring through with the whistle blowing for the Ryland and Dug Hill crossings.

In the twenties, thirties and forties the building was a store. In the early forties Sue, Arley and their daughter Catherine moved in and the building served as both a residence and store. The store closed in the forties but remained the family's home.

At some point Daddy got a cutting off the rose from Mr. Parton and rooted it. The root flourished and we soon had several pretty red rose bushes in our yard and there is no way to count how many Daddy gave away over the years to family and friends. They all came from that one bush in Arley and Sue Parton's front yard. I had one at every house where we lived in Georgia. When we moved back to Huntsville a few years ago, my friend Charles McCay asked me if I wanted a Joe Miller Rose. Charles had several in his yard and picked one of the best ones and dug it up for me. I brought it home and set it out on the berm behind my house. The rose is now in full bloom. The first blooms come in May and when my mother was alive I always attached one to my lapel for church on Mother's Day.

The remarkable thing about the rose is its durability. Nothing bothers it; that includes insects, aphids, wilt, black spots or powdery mildew. It requires no fertilizer and will thrive in the poorest soil. It does need full sun but does well on very little water after it gets established. The berm where my rose is planted is basically fill dirt full of limestone rocks but the rose thrives. It is not bothered by the hot dry days of summer. I have seen weeds in proximity of the rose wilt but never the rose.

The rose could appropriately be named the Arley Parton Rose or the Joe Miller Rose as it is called by Charles McCay. Mr. Parton is the first one known to have the rose and Daddy propagated it and spread it far and wide. But I think the Ryland Rose is the most fitting name.

Both Daddy and Mr. Parton lived all their lives in Ryland. The rose was first seen at the center of the Ryland community and I think that it is a reflection of the Ryland people and of their generation.

They grew up during the Depression, worked hard all their lives with little reward and survived some of the hardest times ever known in this country. It was in the late fifties before life started to improve for most Ryland people.

The rose would never win a contest in a flower show but it adds to the beauty of its surroundings as much as a champion. In the same vein, I am not aware of any acclaimed people that ever came out of Ryland.

The Ryland people of my parents and Mr. Parton's generation were just ordinary salt of the earth folks who managed on their own. Regardless of how tough it got they survived without any type of charity, outside help or assistance from the government. I like to think they passed some of that ethic and toughness down to their descendants.

I love having the rose at my house; I appreciate its history and the beautiful red blossoms brighten up my yard. Also it reminds me that if you are of good tough stock you will bloom wherever you are planted no matter the condition of the soil or surroundings.

"I pulled away from the side of the road, glanced at my irritating mother-in-law and headed over the embankment."

Seen on Decatur accident report

HOME & GARDEN TIPS



* If you store your patio umbrella in one leg of a pair of panty hose, this keeps it together and allows it to breath.

* To clean silver: in an aluminum pie plate, mix 1 tablespoon water softener, 1 tablespoon salt and 1-1/2 cup hot water. Add your silver and watch the change.

* A piece of orange rind in your morning coffee cup lends a good but subtle flavor.

* Place jars of sticky food such as molasses or jelly on plastic lids in your pantry to avoid sticky messes.

* A good air freshener is to combine 1/4 cup orange rind (use vegetable peeler for large pieces) with 1 cup of coffee beans (hazelnut is good) in a Ziploc bag. Let alone for a day or so, then open bag and place in small saucers throughout your home.

* Anyone can make a beautiful color bowl of flowers - start with a "Spike" plant (available at nurseries), put in right in the middle, then fill in with smaller flowers around the Spike, then finish with hanging ivy or other plants that hang and balance out your taller plants.

* Silver plants make a striking contract in flower beds - in fact, some herbs like curry have a really pretty silver color.

* To get odors out of your plastic containers, crumple up pieces of newspaper to put inside the container, add top and leave for a few days.

* Shaving cream rubbed onto your eyeglasses will keep them from fogging up.

* Make your own superfine sugar by whirling regular sugar in a blender or clean coffee grinder.

* Have a bad water ring on your wooden table? Simply coat the stain with a thin layer of mayonnaise to remove.

* Many of your old wall clocks have quit working. To get them going again, use a couple of cotton balls soaked in kerosene, placed inside the clock near the works, to fume away the dust and muck.

* Keep a pair of scissors in your kitchen drawer for quick opening of packages, boxes, etc.

* When you're out working in your garden and don't want to be bothered by mosquitoes, rub your exposed skin with a sheet of Bounce before you go out.

* Have you noticed that when you water your garden after a dry spell, you become surrounded by bugs? That's because they get thirsty, too, and are just trying to get a drink!

* Run your fingernails on a bar of soap before you start digging in your garden, and they'll be much easier to clean.

Tom Dark Drugstore

Many years ago a little boy came into Tom Dark's Drugstore on the Square. Scotty, the pharmacist, asked what he could do for him.

"Momma said she needs 10 cents worth of assfeddia."

Scotty got the ill-smelling drug and gave it to the boy and said, "That will be 10 cents."

"Momma said to charge it," the little boy claimed.

"And the name to charge it to?"

"Hunkapillar."

The pharmacist said, "Take it for free. It's not worth a dime for me to try to spell both assfeddia and Hunkapillar."

by Jim Latham

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PUMPKIN, THE CAT OF CONSOLATION ON CHICKAMAUGA LANE



by Suzi Bailey

I met Pumpkin in 1996. Some people would say he was a "stray" cat, but I've come to understand that he is actually a "wandering minister" who chooses certain people or families who need a special gift of love. Folks who live on my street, Chickamauga Lane, know Mr. Pumpkin the cat because he is a very friendly fellow. He stops by regularly to visit anyone who welcomes him, sometimes even when they don't!

One summer Pumpkin sauntered inside my neighbor's house for a visit and no one saw him enter. They were packing up and leaving for a 10 day vacation. After a week of searching for him, we thought he had disappeared. When our neighbors returned they found Pumpkin inside their house and he was okay. He'd survived on left-over dog bones and got water from the toilet to drink. Thankfully, they'd left the toilet seat up. Pumpkin revealed his impeccable manners by using only ONE bathroom rug on which he'd relieved himself. My kind-hearted neighbors were happy to only have that one rug to toss in the garbage and we were all delighted that Pumpkin was safe and unharmed.

**"If you don't count your pennies,
you'll never have a dollar!"**

Pam Dodson Gasser, Cullman

Pumpkin appeared in my life six years ago just when I needed a "furry friend". It was the winter of 1995/1996 and a very sad time for me. My dear dog Pepsi died on February 10th, 1996. For the first time in 16 years I was returning home from work with no one waiting "just for me." However, there was this big orange cat visiting in my cul-de-sac that winter. He would hang out in my garden and my neighbor's children named him Pumpkin.

After Pepsi died, a friend mentioned to me

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that the sweet orange cat at the top of my hill was "much too skinny under all that hair for a cat his size." Since I had never had a cat in my life before, I knew very little about them. I had been distracted by my grief and hadn't even noticed how skinny he was or that he never seemed to be home. Then the light bulb went off in my head, this cat didn't have a home. I hurried to the store to buy cat food.

The charming, gentle Pumpkin quickly became part of our family. We appreciated his intelligence, gracious manners and funny antics. I began to look forward to coming home from work, because Pumpkin was always right there waiting for me. I also feel Pumpkin helped me get through one the most difficult times of my life.

A year later, my neighbor Sally's beloved dog died. She told me that Pumpkin began to visit her more often and she believes that Pumpkin also helped her during her time of grief.

During the summer of 1998 my step-daughter, Savannah, found a kitten and brought him home. Pumpkin was not pleased with Pippin, the new boy cat. Pippin was a bit aggressive to say the least. We tried everything we

could think of to help the two cats get along in the same home, but nothing worked.

It broke my heart when Pumpkin went in search of a new home. He found Tom and Sandy, who lived at the other end of Chickamauga Lane. Perhaps not coincidentally, Tom and Sandy had also recently lost their family dog and they too had never had a cat of their own. I think it must have been "time" for Pumpkin to find Tom and Sandy. He was a great joy to them for the three years they lived here.

Last year Tom and Sandy had to move out of state and we all decided together that it would be best not take Pumpkin with them, since ministering to the folks on Chickamauga Lane appears to be Pumpkin's chosen vocation in life. After Tom and Sandy moved away, Pumpkin picked the Muskgrove's as his newest "home base" family where he is welcomed, fed and offered laps to nap on.

I can't extend enough praise and thanks to them for caring for this beautiful, magical, marvelous cat. He also visits Helen who lives a few houses down from the Muskgroves. Helen has said, "I think that cat has ESP!" The Musk-

groves and many of my friends have made this comment about Pumpkin:

There is something very special about him... his eyes, his face... he just looks so wise. And he seems to always know what we're thinking and saying!"

I take walks down the street with chicken treats for Pumpkin. He gets along perfectly with my new dog Abby. (Abby was "trained" by Pippin to respect ALL cats, which Pumpkin appreciates, I'm sure).

Even though it's been many years since he lived with me, he knows my whistle, and will come running to greet me, talking and "chirping" the whole way to my feet where he immediately flops down and rolls over for a scratch.

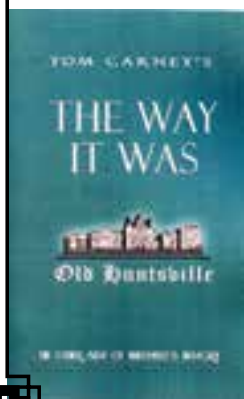
I send my thanks to ALL the kind folks on our street who stop to speak to Pumpkin, who invite him in for visits and offer him special treats. He is a missionary to human beings, the "Cat of Consolation" on Chickamauga Lane, a furry friend who blesses all who have the opportunity to know him.

With love and thanks to all of you who are kind to and care for animals.

BY TOM CARNEY

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Times Have Changed



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