



No. 401

July 2026



Old Huntsville

HISTORY AND STORIES OF THE TENNESSEE VALLEY

PERSONAL MEMORIES FROM THE MAN WHO BUILT THE PARKWAY



Also in this issue: The Witchcraft Trial; Unforgettable Boat Trip; Catch Me Daddy!; Coming to Huntsville; Memories of Wernher von Braun; Good Samaritans in My Court; Mullins Creek; Central Church of Christ; Play Ball; Celebrating 250 years; Cats and Summer; Sweet Recipes and much much more!

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My Memories

by Cecil Ashburn

So many have written about the Depression, and how tough the times were. Sure the 30s were hard time but how about the twenties, the roaring twenties? And I was born in 1920 so I remember some good times in the twenties.

My parents had a store; I remember the ice truck coming to fill up the soft drink boxes, and the ice boxes. People would walk to the store from miles away to get an ice cold Coca Cola. Cokes were better in those days. Whatever it was that made them so good they took out later. The store had a porch and that was the gathering place for the community. There were always enough flats or nail kegs to sit on and plenty of red cedar whittling sticks. On hot days just open the screen door and have another ice cold Coke.

In cold weather, the meeting was adjourned to the pot-bellied stove in the back of the store and let the yarns begin. We got a weekly paper called

the "Grit." My brother Virgil was the carrier. We argued about Babe Ruth, Ty Cobb and that fellow Lindburg flying across the Atlantic Ocean; yes, we kept up with all the important news.

Coke sales fell off in winter but the black coffee pot took over and it was free. The hoop cheese was handy to the cracker barrel and a nickel's worth of cheese and crackers served on a piece of wax paper from the big roll, or maybe nickel's worth of bologna and crackers or a can of pork and beans with another ice cold Coke was good even in the dead of winter.

Since this was the roaring twenties, there was usually plenty of Buffalo Nickels for the big spenders, or for the big sports to put a nickel in the nickel slot machine or buy a space in the punch card.

For boys growing up in the twenties, the creek was just a half a mile away. The water was sparkling clear and always cold. When you tired of swimming just call your dog and grab your .22 rifle - there was a 10,000 acre hunting preserve nearby with rabbits and squirrels just waiting. Tired of this, most of us had a bicycle and a horse to ride.

About once a week the fruit truck would come to the store. A banana, or out-of-season apples or peaches were mighty good.

**"I was so naive as a kid,
I would sneak behind the
barn and do nothing."**

Johnny Carson



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P.O. Box 4648

Huntsville, Al 35815

(256) 656-5321

Email - oldhuntsville@gmail.com

(Website) www.oldhuntsville.com

Publisher - Cathey Carney

Advertising - (256) 656-5321
Sales & Mrktg. - Cathey Carney
Editor - Cheryl Tribble
Gen. Manager - Sam Keith
Copy Boy - Tom Carney
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For the men there were plenty of cigarette papers for rolling your Country Gentleman, Old North State, Bull Durham, or Prince Albert tobacco. For chewing tobacco there was Red Ox Twist or Red Apple. A good chew of tobacco could be made to last a half a day.

The store was large for a country store with four counters running the length of the building and we stocked a lot of different things. I still have part of the old ledger that my mother kept. Here is a list of some of the things that they sold in 1924: axle grease for 25 cents, lye for 15 cents, a file for 20 cents, raisins 10 cents, slippers 2.25, lap link 5 cents, hay wire 1.25, dope 5 cents, 2 shoes 20 cents, trace chains 1.25, overalls 1.75, single trees 50 cents, pitch forks 1.25, jar rubbers 10 cents, moon pies 5 cents, work shoes 4 dollars and gasoline 17 cents a gallon.

School was two rooms, one teacher for first, second and third grade. The other room for the third, fourth and fifth grade. It was walk to school or ride your horse, since for most of us it was less than two miles so most of the time we preferred to walk.

For me, growing up in the twenties, I never tired of hanging out at the blacksmith shop and watching the mules get two pair of new shoes. The blacksmiths would tap the mule on the shoulder - the mule would raise his hoof and the blacksmith would take his sharp knife and cut it down flat just like a manicure. Then he would heat the shoe red hot and shape it to the hoof. Then dump the red hot shoe in a tub of water and check it for size. He had done this so many times the shoe always fit perfectly.

Of course that was not all. The shoe had to be nailed on. I never saw a mule or horse acting up when it came time for this operation. Somehow they knew they were getting two pairs of new shoes and simply stood there with a proud look.

Uncle Tom Hawkins didn't know it

but he had the first Day Care Center. To add a little spice he would let me turn the blower on for the forge.

We didn't have lawn mowers but we did have some four legged kind called goats. We sometimes hooked the goats to a little wagon and of course we had plenty of goat milk and cheese.

It wasn't always happy days in the twenties. My baby brother named Robert Edward died in the terrible influenza outbreak that swept the country. As an infant I contracted pneumonia; the doctor was there and when I turned black he said well he's gone and walked out to his car.

My great grandmother had some onions frying on the stove so she grabbed them up and applied a poultice to my chest. They said I kicked and started breathing. They called the doctor back and he said he'll be alright now.

Later in the decade, I think I was seven years old, I became sick with malaria fever. For several days I lay flat of my back and watched these horrible things crawling on the ceiling, dancing on the furniture, or



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"I can't use my cell phone while I drive. I have to keep my hands free for making insulting gestures to other drivers."

Maxine

climbing the walls, I can see them now but I don't have the words to describe them. It was like the worst horror movie I've ever seen. The only medicine they had to treat it was iodine, and I'm sure they soaked me in it.

Part of the decade of the 1920s we lived in the big house on what had been a plantation during and before the Civil War. Aunt Judy lived in one of the slave cabins. At the time (1925) she was about 85 years old, which means that she was born in 1840. She had been freed when she was 20 but she had never given up her little cabin. She had garden privileges, smokehouse privileges, corn crib privileges, and orchard privileges. She had a son named Big Jim and a nephew named Sam who worked on the farm. She cooked on an open fire and when I would come in from school she always had a glass of buttermilk with corn bread for me.

Big Jim was a giant of a man and my favorite. I would guess that he weighed near 300 pounds and he wasn't fat. He could pick me up with one hand and put me on my horse. While ordinary people could pick the cotton on two rows, Big Jim could pick three rows. Big Jim was born too early. Later he would have likely been a star for the New York Giants football team.

Sam was younger and more mechanically inclined, as far back as 1926 he drove our Fordson Tractor.

These were happy days for me, the big house had a first floor porch and a second floor porch. I don't ever remember there being a hot night and in the winter the big fireplaces kept the whole house comfortable.

There were no power lines

in Killingsworth Cove so we made our own electricity with an outfit called a Delco system. In 1938 when I resigned from farming I met the power company coming to string the lines.

My teachers for grades 1-2-3 were also my aunt and our next door neighbors. Her name was Mae Gray, wife of my mother's brother Doug. He died in 1937 from being kicked by a horse.

In order to get her teacher's certificate Aunt Mae volunteered to be my babysitter. And so she practiced on me. I guess she had enough of me so she shoved me up a grade or two so as a result I went through high school as the baby of the class. Aunt Mae taught elementary school at Riverton for many years. She was a good teacher.

After all of the good years of the 20s came the crash of 1929. The bank at Gurley closed its doors. The hard times of the Depression had arrived. But for now that's all I'm going to say about that.

Most of what I have written so far is about a kid growing up in the twenties, but what about the grown folks? I knew several veterans from the great war, World War I. One or two that I knew had been gassed. It was not good times for them as they never got over it.

I was acquainted with two veterans of the Civil War. They would come by the store on special days, always proudly dressed in their gray uniform, complete with medals shining.

Although I was less than ten years old, I was impressed by one veteran who came by the store frequently in his buggy. He sold my mother a Singer sewing machine. He lived just a few houses down the road and his name was Captain Frank Gurley.

Every Saturday night they had barn dances, square dances, hay rides, swim parties and you name it. Every community had their string band, a fiddle, a guitar, a mandolin, a banjo and a bass fiddle. I was just an observer but I believe they were having



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a good time. My father was a Justice of the Peace. So he stayed busy marrying the young couples.

My family was always interested in politics but they had a hard time in 1928 when the choice for President was a Republican. Herbert Hoover was definitely a no-no and his opponent, Al Smith, was a Catholic. Killingsworth Cove had a low turnout in that election.

They followed carefully the county races because my grandfather was County Road Commissioner starting in 1923 and old friends like Joe van Valkenburg was the chairman. We also followed the Huntsville races. Mr. A. W. McAllister was elected mayor in 1926 and was re-elected through 1952. Thus when I and Pat Gray, my uncle and business partner, came out of World War II in 1946 and started Ashburn & Gray. Mr. Alex was still mayor. I am proud that I knew him, he was one of a kind. It took a lot of courage on his part to entrust a young outfit like us with city contracts.

One of the fun things we looked forward to each year was the Madison County fair. My grandfather's two-horse, two-seat surrey would get over full so we would hitch up a hay wagon. The loose hay was just the thing for us kids to sleep on during the return trip. The merry-go-round, the ferris wheel, hooche-cooche line, the dare devil motorcycle riders, the cotton candy; this was heaven for a ten year old.

There was one booth where we could always win prizes - the shooting gallery. Having grown up with rifles we quickly figured out how much they had bent the barrel. I won so many kewpie dolls one night that they made me quit.

When crops were laid by (which means you had it planted and plowed and you stood back and prayed for rain) one not so fun thing the men would do was to go to the mountain and cut timber.

Much of the mountain land still belonged to the government, in other words it had never been sold

since they took it away from the Indians. Since it had never been surveyed a little timber cutting here and there happened. If it was a large tree mules would snake it down the mountain to a wagon road. Then using cant hooks they would load one log on a wagon pulled by a two horse team to be delivered to the nearest sawmill.

To the best of my recollection most of the people worked for Mr. Henry St. Clair. In later years I had the privilege of working at his saw mill and he taught me how to calculate the number of board feet you could get out of a round log. I have forgotten how to do it but let me assure you it isn't simple.

Mr. St. Clair of Hurricane Creek was one of the smartest men I ever knew. He was a one man conglomerate. In addition to the sawmill he had a cotton gin, a coal mine and extensive farming operation. Plus a country store and a blacksmith shop.

One of the best things that happened for the economy of Killingsworth Cove happened, I think, in 1926. This was the National Prohibition Act. The big companies had to shut down their stills so the enterprising farmers in places like the Cove started to see if they could fill the gap. The two main ingredients in wildcat whiskey were corn and sugar. They had the corn and my father, in his store, couldn't keep enough sugar. He had a T Model pickup truck so he would get ten 100-pound sacks of sugar at a time but even then he was quickly sold out.

These people making the whiskey were known as moonshiners. They would bottle it in gallon fruit jars having it ready for the people to pick up. These people were known



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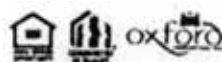
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as bootleggers. Their stills were tucked deep in the head of the coves and hollows and hidden from the officials called revenueurs.

A story is told on me, which I don't think is true but it goes something like this. A revenueur drove up to the store one day and offered me a dollar if I would go with him and show him where the stills were. I insisted on being paid in advance. "No," he said. "I will pay you when we come back."

And I said, "Mister, if I show you where the stills are, you won't be coming back."

Like I said, I think this is a made up story, because I was acquainted with three or four of the still operators and they were the kindest folks you could imagine and wouldn't hurt a flea. I believe Uncle Sam didn't care about these people making whiskey; he just wanted his cut.

Our store was located at the entrance to the cove on a major highway then called the Bellefonte Road at a place then called Hill Crest. When U.S. 72 was built traffic bypassed our store. In later years Ashburn & Gray built a lot of bypasses and I always had a lot of sympathy for the businesses that were bypassed. For instance, Memorial Parkway got practically every business downtown.

I am not proud of that. But of course similar things happened in Athens, Scottsboro, Decatur, Arab, Gurley, New Hope and many other places.

"Warning: Driver carries less than \$50 and is fully naked."

Sign seen on back of food delivery truck

A Very Genteel Southern Lady

A very genteel Southern lady was driving across the Tennessee River Bridge near Huntsville recently. As she neared the top of the bridge, she noticed a young man getting ready to jump.

She stopped her car, rolled down the window and said, "Please don't jump dear; think of your sweet Mama and Daddy."

"My parents are both dead," he replied. "I'm just going to jump."

"Well think of your wife and children, then," she remarked.

He replied, "I'm not married and I don't have any kids."

Being a true Southern lady, she said, "Well then, think of our hero, Robert E. Lee."

"Who's Robert E. Lee?" he asked.

She replied, "Well, bless your heart, just go ahead and jump."



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My Korean War Veteran Cap



by Giles Hollingsworth

There it is! There it is, in all it's glory! That's my Korean War Veteran's cap, and it produced a story that I feel needs to be told.

My daughter, Lisa, bought that cap for me a few months ago. Lisa buys a lot of things for me, most of them being things that I need more than I realize, but also lots of things that maybe I barely need, or don't need at all. I thought of this cap as being one of those things, because I had mixed feelings about wearing it. Yes, I'm a Korean War Vet, but I have never felt any need to advertise it. I am one of the North Alabama National Guard combat engineers who were mobilized in August of 1950 and sent to Korea. Sure, I acquired pride in the process, but I never really thought of me, or my unit, as being heroic. We were just doing our duty to our country, the very best country that has ever existed.

"Will you please send someone to fix our broken sidewalk? Last week my wife tripped and fell on it and now she's pregnant."

Seen on local apartment complaint letter

Fast forward to April, 1952. By then practically all of us were back home. And again, sure I was proud, proud of having served, but that was a time for me, and all of us, to count our blessings. It was a time to remember, honor, and be thankful for, those who went there and died there, those who did the hard fighting, the fighting that allowed us, the 1169th Combat Engineer Group, to come home.

Now, back to the cap. I didn't tell Lisa, but I felt a little self-conscious wearing it in public; felt it might be a little showy. There are probably scores of Korean vets in the North Alabama area that could be wearing such a cap, but are not. Certain other descriptive words come to mind, like gaudy, ostentatious and braggadocios. Even so, I have worn the cap a few times, mainly because it was a gift of love.

Now fast forward again, this time to two weeks ago. Lisa surprised me with another gift... tickets to a Saturday night Alison Krauss concert at Chastain Park Amphitheatre in Atlanta. The park seats about 7000. It's in a residential neighborhood with narrow streets, making traffic and parking there real problems, so we went there by Uber. We knew there would be lots of up and down steps to negotiate, and I'm 95 now, so I took my walker. And because of a last minute suggestion by Lisa I wore my cap. And I'm here to tell you that cap worked wonders!

The Uber driver took us right to the security check-in point, where we were taken aback by what I could call a reception. There were several thanks

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for my service. I knew right then that no one there found the cap to be gaudy. A young man and young lady, concert attendees, who were onlookers to our check-in, insisted on helping me down the first flight of steps, and to our seats, which were on that level. They then headed back toward the check-in point.

Our seats were high up, about a hundred yards from the stage. But that was okay with us, especially after the welcoming treatment. We were early, so we sat there for about twenty minutes, enjoying our delicious Chick-fil-A nugget snack that Lisa had brought.

Then...WOW! A young lady came to us and asked us to follow her to our upgraded seats. We were floored! Then when she led us on and on, down the side ramp we were amazed... because she had brought us all the way to a special handicap seating area about fifteen feet from the left side of the stage. Unbelievable!

A few minutes later the young couple that I mentioned earlier showed up to congratulate us on the upgrade. They didn't say so, but without question, it was they that made it happen. During the brief conversation, thinking about my age and physical condition, I jokingly said something like, "At my age I don't mind a little charity now and then". The young man replied, "It isn't charity, it's to honor you for your service".

That was a profound statement that I will always remember. I was stunned, and speechless, except to whisper "thank you". I'm sure he didn't expect to moisten my eyes but he did. They left, and I fought back the tears and regained my composure.

As we sat waiting for the concert to start, several people thanked me for my service, and

two of them, both ladies, made their thanks a conversation. Both of them were daughters of Korean War vets.

Obviously this concert was special for me. Not because of the music and/or singing, but because of that cap, what it did. It taught me that people care more than I knew. Maybe it is a little gaudy, and maybe some people somehow abuse the use of such caps. But my thinking now is to put those negatives aside and realize that most people do appreciate, respect, and honor war vets, but they need, and even appreciate, reminders, like my cap, and also like this story hopefully will be.

Thank you, Lisa, for the cap. I will be wearing it much more often now. Thank you, Chastain Park attendants and concert goers, for the honor gift and for a night of enlightenment. Thank you, America for the privilege of serving you in a special way. Thank you, God, for the 250th birthday of this great nation.



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Blue Ain't Your Color

by Bill Alkire, 1969

It was a beautiful spring morning on the Peninsula. The trees had their cool green foliage readying themselves for a sweltering summer. It was the kind of day you just wanted to breathe in. The sky was a soft colonial blue, white fluffy clouds were beginning to dissipate over Tidewater Virginia. A light breeze was filtering through the trees from the James River to the east

My friend and work colleague Jack had gotten up earlier than usual. He had opened the window, and the sunshine and cool air had aroused him from a Rip Van Winkle slumber. He had made coffee, strong and black, and eaten his usual oatmeal with honey. He was ready to attack the day.

"I had a terrible childhood. I was probably the only kid who was bitten by the tooth fairy."

Peter Kay

Jack and "Piggy", our boss, lived across the street from each other. It was Piggy's week to drive. Jack took a cup of coffee to Alice, his wife, and fixed the way she liked it, cream and two sugars. Alice was also awake and reading her morning devotionals. Jack placed the coffee on the night stand, kissed her goodbye and headed out the door for his ride to work. Alice reminded him to lock the door as he left.

Jack finished his coffee. Rinsed his cup and bowl and put them in the dishwasher. Looking out the window, he decided to walk around the yard while waiting on Piggy to pick him up.

He went out the front door, locking the door behind him as he had been instructed. He wandered around the yard, checking foundational plantings, noticing that the grass needed trimmed.

As he approached the flagstone walk that led to the road, he noticed a small bird had apparently fallen from its nest. He contemplated what to do with the little creature as it was squawking loudly. He could see a nest just above his head. He was thinking he could reach the nest and prepared to pick the small bird and set it in the nest.

Without warning, two blue bombers were on attack. One bird came from the right, the other from the left. Their aim was right on target. Jack's bald head was within their target zone.

The two birds alternately made their attack, pecking Jack's head. In a panic. Jack ran back to the house. The door was locked. The two birds regrouped for another planned attack.

The small porch at the doorway provided Jack cover. The two Blue Jays marched around the baby bird on the ground giving it reassurance that it was safe from the mean human.

Piggy, seeing Jack's situation, pulled into the driveway allowing Jack to make a valiant run for the car. Piggy handed Jack his clean handkerchief to wipe the blood from his bald head.

Piggy sat there laughing, unable to drive for a while after seeing this ordeal.

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Stories about Lisa:

"Catch Me Daddy!"

by John H. Tate

In May 2026, I celebrated my 70th birthday. Around that same time, I had a text conversation with my daughter, Lisa. She is the oldest of my two children and has always been an independent, direct person. After our conversation, I found myself wondering when that independent streak first began to reveal itself.

As I thought about it, I remembered a time when Lisa was not only independent but also possessed the absolute trust and unconditional love that young daughters often have for their fathers. Like many dads, I experienced those precious years when my daughter believed I could do anything, fix anything, and always be there when she needed me.

Of course, once children start school, things begin to change. They discover new influences and new sources of wisdom. Sally from the same grade has opinions worth sharing. Then there is cute little Jimmy from the grade above, who suddenly seems to have profound insights about life and the world.

But there is one evening, months before Sally or Jimmy entered the picture, that stands out vividly in my memory.

It was 1983, just a few months before Lisa's third birthday. We were visiting my mother's home on Oakwood Road, across from Ed White Middle School and only a couple of blocks from Highlands Elementary School.

Mother lived in a tri-level house. The front entrance opened onto the middle level.

The bedrooms were upstairs, while the den and laundry room occupied the lower level. Each level was connected by a short flight of six to eight stairs.

That evening had been pleasant and uneventful. Lisa went upstairs to use the bathroom while I remained on the middle level talking with my mother. My back was turned toward the staircase.

A few moments later, I heard a sound that still gives me chills nearly four decades later.

I didn't hear Lisa coming out of the bathroom. I didn't hear her walking toward the stairs. What I heard was her little voice.

"Daddy, catch!"

When I spun around, there was my almost three-year-old daughter in mid-air. She had already launched herself from the top of the staircase. She was in mid-flight and her arms were stretched wide like a bird in flight. She wore the biggest grin imaginable, and there was not the slightest trace of doubt in her eyes. She was completely convinced that her daddy would catch her.

Even now, just thinking about the jump I had to make to reach her in time makes my knees and back ache. Fortunately, I was still in my thirties. I sprang forward with what I can only describe as a desperation leap and managed to catch her safely in my arms.

Well, mostly safely. In the process, she bit her lip, and it was bleeding. There was a walk-in medical clinic nearby, so we took her in for an examination. The doctor looked her over and assured us that she did not need stitches. What she did need, he said, was a little extra pampering for the next few days.

During our visit, the doctor learned that I had recently become a partner in a newly formed construction company, Buris & Tate General Contractors.

That unexpected trip to the clinic turned out to have an unexpected bonus.

The doctor hired our company to build his new home, and his father hired us to build a home in the same neighborhood.

Just like that, Lisa had generated two new customers.

I've never really thought about it before, but perhaps I owed her a sales commission for those contracts. Then again, maybe the private-school tuition we paid over the next several years covered her share.

Forty-three years later, I still remember the trust in her voice and the confidence in her smile.

The words that best capture both Lisa's independence and her love for her daddy are the same words that still echo in my memory today:

"Daddy, catch."

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Ask Grandma

by Mimi

Back when Grandma was fourteen, we'd spend Huntsville daytime summers outdoors. With no AC, houses were hot anyway from late morning till dinner time. The city pool, where the Art Museum stands today, was a center of attraction. I could have walked from the other side of town, but there was a bus that rounded the city and I could usually scare up a dime. Sometimes my mother would just give me a dime and I'd ride the bus for an hour, enjoying all the scenery or chatting with one of my friends.

Spending most of the day either in or sitting beside the pool was fun and relaxing. Always plenty of my friends to talk to, and that was one of my strengths...I always had something to say. Got me in trouble with my daddy sometimes, who thought little girls should be seen but not heard.

Roller skating with steel skates was another summer activity, and with sidewalks in town, I could also get to the pool, then cool off from skating, dress, and off again.

THIS summer, we celebrate America's 250 years, and celebrations around the Fourth of July will be outstanding. Look at this list to see fireworks.

- Independence Day Celebration at MidCity

- Trash Pandas 4th of July Festival
- Spirit of America Festival-Point Mallard-Decatur
- 4th of July at Village of Providence
- North Alabama Gin's 4th of July Bash
- Space and Rocket Center Fireworks.

The City of Huntsville is inviting residents to downtown Huntsville on Saturday, July 4, for a full day of patriotic, family-friendly events as part of Huntsville's America 250 celebration.

The City says this year's Independence Day event will feature music, history, food, and fireworks, marking the lead-up to the nation's 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence.

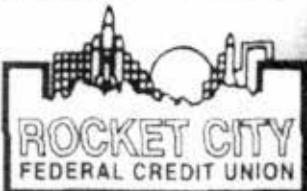
Mayor Tommy Battle said planning for the celebration began about a year ago with the formation of the Huntsville Salutes America's 250th Committee.

"Huntsville needed a July 4th celebration that matched the significance of the moment," Battle said in a press release.

Organizers say the day's events will take place in Big Spring Park and include:

- 4 p.m. — Vendor market, food trucks, DJ, historical reenactments and educational experiences
- 5 p.m. — American Eras Parade beginning on Monroe Street, telling a story line of American history
- 6 p.m. — Live music in the park featuring Groove, followed by Huntsville's Jazz McKenzie and her 10-piece band
- 9 p.m. - A 25 minute fireworks finale accompanied by the Huntsville Concert Band

Have a Happy July and summer everyone...until next month.



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The City Councilman who Met His Wife by Placing an Ad in the Newspaper

First Published in the Huntsville News

Huntsville City Council member Bill Kling and his wife Tanjie have been fixtures on the city scene for decades. They are frequently seen at events such as neighborhood association meetings within his City Council District, social affairs at local fraternal lodges, as well as events throughout the city. They recently celebrated their 25th wedding anniversary. Not many people know how they met, which is a story unto itself.

Bill has always been a conscientious elected official. When he first ran for City Council, he promised that he would be accessible and hold monthly town meetings, which were similar to the parents' meetings that he held as a member of the Huntsville City School Board. As was his practice in those days, he would frequently place small ads in newspapers to promote his town meetings.

One ad he placed was in The Huntsville Times for a meeting at the Huntsville Public Library

on April 10, 1991 to discuss public transit. Tanjie, who was an employee at Constitution Village, and a graduate student at Alabama A&M University, saw the meeting notice in the newspaper, and happened to mention it to her friend and former employer, Tommy Brown, who was the director of the Public Transit Department. Tommy encouraged Tanjie to attend the town meeting and to take notes. Tanjie did attend the meeting and took down copious notes. At the end of the meeting, Bill and Tanjie had a discussion. She mentioned that she had been a temporary summer city employee for Public Transit for six consecutive years and was enrolled at Alabama A&M University, pursuing a master's degree in Urban Planning. Bill told her that he had graduated from Alabama A&M, receiving a master's degree in Urban Studies.

Bill invited her out afterward to get a bite to eat, where they found they had a lot of similar interests. During the meal, Tanjie mentioned that she was the niece of "Aunt" Eunice Merrell, the owner of Eunice's Country Kitchen. Bright and early the next morning, Bill went to Eunice's for breakfast and told her that he had met her niece, Tanjie, at his town meeting the previous night. Bill asked Eunice to put in a good word for him. Aunt Eunice visited Tanjie that afternoon and told her that Bill was a good guy and she was pretty sure he would be calling her.

The next day, Bill called. They became good friends and dated for over a year and a half, when Bill proposed on December 31, 1992. They were married the following July.

The couple have celebrated many milestones together, including their 10th anniversary at a police precinct hot dog cookout, and their 25th anniversary campaigning door to door for Bill's city council re-election last summer.

And now you know why City Councilman Bill Kling can say that he met his wife by placing an ad in the newspaper.

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The Nurse Aide and the Resident

by Trey Cornelius

Several years ago, I took a job as a nurse's assistant in a vibrant nursing home near New Hope. At first, I was hesitant as there was so much to learn, see, and do. In addition, I required a vast amount of precision. Eventually, I learned the ropes and strived through so many hardships. I find it amusing that the place I worked at still talks about my time at the nursing home.

Being a nurse aide did have its successes as well as hardships. Working with the elderly had its rewards; but at the same time, it had its moments. Working with Alzheimer's and dementia patients sometimes had its shortcomings. Sometimes I felt like being told to carry two large boulders and swim upstream. It wasn't always easy, but I enjoyed it.

One of my favorite things to do is spend time with the elderly. I love how getting to make one's day puts a smile on their face. I feel that it's important for them to know that someone cares.

As I said, being a nurse aide had its moments particularly with the residents. This one resident in particular was authentic. For protection reasons, let's call her "Sophia." For her, I have chosen the name Sophia as she was just like Sophia from the Golden Girls. Sophia was a native from the outskirts of Claysville near Grant. I had family from that area also.

Sophia was definitely one of a kind. She was friendly, yet

social. She was quiet and sassy, yet humorous. She was gentle, yet warm. She was the kind of resident you'd love to know and grow together in friendship, kindness and love. I had the privilege to know her, to care for her, and to form a bond with her. Though she had dementia, she was as strong as a bull with a heart of gold that never meant any harm. She was always so cheerful.

There were good times as there were plenty of hardships. Fortunately, she was easy to get through it. All we had to do was talk through it together. Some people might say it isn't enough, whereas one might compare dementia and Alzheimer's to a whole village and raising children.

I say even though it can be trying at times, simple communication is enough. After all, the patient and the nurse aide have to work together, don't they?

For Sophia, it didn't take much for her spirits to perk up. All I had to do was come in and be as random as the left field and she'd sit there just laughing her head off. She even had a sense of humor as big as the ceiling. Once she began to look confused. I asked her: "Are you okay? Do you know where you are?" Her response was "Yeah! I'm right here. Where are you?" Before I knew it, we both got a kick out of her humor.

Another time, I looked lost in my own thought, and she said "I'm right here. Here you are! I found you!" I said, "Yes, you are. You found me. Now it's my turn to hide." Her face lit up as she thought that was so funny. It was a good day.

The time came and I left the medical field as I found better opportunities to grow from. She was my favorite resident. A few months after I left, I learned she gained her wings. My heart sank. One of the biggest hardships I ever had to face when working with the elderly was the bond you get when you spend time with them. So when she gained her wings, I felt like Patsy Cline and fell to pieces. Soon after, I learned that she and I were related. I learned she had some family on her side that were family by marriage to family on my Mom's side. Therefore, we were distant cousins from a very long line.

In my family, our hearts are big and full of love, and when someone is called Home, it gets to be really hard sometimes. It was hard when she went Home, but I knew she was safe in the arms of the Lord.

In all my time in the medical field, I have had so many experiences with working with the elderly. There were plenty of stories and there were plenty of good times to be had. Perhaps this article will bring back memories to those that read it. Maybe some of you reading this article have families that have gone on, that have dementia or Alzheimer's, or have a story of your own to tell.

Food really affects your moods! For instance, if you're angry or depressed, DON'T eat a sugary snack or pastry, either one may make you feel worse. Have you ever noticed that you'll get in a worse mood after a big bowl of ice cream? If you're stressed out avoid coffee, chocolate, alcohol or sugar. Instead try fresh or dried fruit, rice, baked potato, cereal or whole-grain bread.

Today's Tale from the Legal Twilight Zone - The Good Samaritans in My Court

by Judge Billy Bell

Some of the toughest cases emotionally I had to try were the "Adult in Need of Protective Services" cases brought by the Madison County Department of Human Resources. The cases were filed by DHR to obtain the necessary care and protection for a person who could not properly care for themselves, usually because of age or disability, and had no one ready, willing and capable of providing for their care. They may have been abused, neglected, or taken advantage of financially.

The cases would be tried before a 6 person jury, and a lawyer, called a "guardian ad litem," would be appointed to protect the person's best interest and rights in the trial.

She was an elderly, frail black lady, who was found by HPD wandering the streets in a cold rain one Christmas Eve, pushing a grocery cart with all of her meager worldly possessions in it. She didn't even know her name, and notices were put out on local media seeking help in finding out who she was, and if she had any family.

As the evidence was presented, it was discovered who she was, and that she was homeless and without anyone to care for her. That she would regularly sit outside a local Walmart, and had been brought food and other things she needed by the employees

of the store, who had compassion for her plight. The predictable result would be that the person would be declared legally to be "an adult person in need of protective services," under a special Alabama law, and placed under the care of DHR. They would then be placed in the "least restrictive care facility available," usually a nursing or assisted living facility.

I believe that this poor lady had already been placed there pursuant to a temporary order. I noticed a woman sitting in the back of the courtroom, with a young girl sitting with her. That was unusual, because these poor people who were the subject of the case normally had no one - no friends, no family.

When it came time in the proceeding to appoint her a conservator or guardian, I was told that the lady in the back of the courtroom had made it known that she would agree to be appointed. She was an employee of the Walmart where the old lady had regularly hung out, and she had befriended her, buying her food, snacks and

what she needed. She wouldn't be paid anything for her services, because the old lady had nothing.

That woman in my court was also the organist or pianist at her church, and the reason she wanted to be appointed was so that she and her daughter, who was in court with her, could go pick her up at the nursing home on Sunday mornings and take her to their church. Otherwise, the old lady could not leave the facility, except for medical care.

I was stunned....I told the woman and her daughter "You are both truly living examples of the Good Samaritan in the Bible," and that I would grant her request to be appointed. They would not be paid earthly wages, but they would be showered with God's blessings on earth and in Heaven, because of their kindness and love for an old lady who had nothing.

I left the bench, and went in my chambers for a good cry....

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was fit for a king -
here King!"**

Henny Youngman



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Aunt Nelda's Timeless Kitchen Tips



- Don't crowd food in your refrigerator, this cuts the circulation of air around them. If you put onions, fish or cantaloupe in your refrigerator, put a piece of charcoal in the box also. This will keep the flavors from mixing.

- Juice left over from canned fruits is excellent, thickened and served over plain cake or cottage pudding.

- Try chilled milk in pie crusts instead of water. They will brown much better. After rolling top pastry or strips, brush with milk using a pastry brush. The rich brown will show up in the very spots touched by the milk-moistened brush.

- If you want your meringue to keep its shape, add the sugar gradually, one tablespoon at a time, and beat extremely well after each addition. After all the sugar is added, the meringue should be beaten until it is very thick and glossy and the peaks stand up well when the beater is withdrawn.

- When your celery goes limp, just submerge it in ice-water along with a thin slice of Irish potato and it will perk right up.

- To give freshly popped corn a different flavor, add a spoonful of peanut butter to the butter just before pouring it over the corn.

- Is your soup pale and colorless? Add a small beet to the soup while it is cooking; remove when done and the soup will have a clear golden color like old fashioned chicken soup without the taste of beet.

- To keep your salt flowing freely, mix a level teaspoon of cornstarch with three-fourths cup of salt and fill your salt shakers with this mixture. The corn-starch isn't noticeable to the taste.

- To prevent your bacon from curling, dip the strips in cold water before frying.

- A rib of celery in your bread bag will keep the bread fresh for a longer time.

- To get odors out of your fridge, put a small bowl of charcoal (the kind you get for potted plants) on a shelf - it will absorb odors very rapidly.

Auburn University Waiting for the Last Dog to Die

Reprinted from 1977 Newspaper

Ms. Elinor E. Ritchey, heiress to the Quaker State Corp., left her entire fortune to her 150 stray dogs. She died in Ft. Lauderdale in 1968.

The will was contested, however and the original 4.3 million dollars had become over fourteen million dollars by the time the will was settled and there were only 73 dogs left. They were carefully tattooed and kept apart so as not to produce more heirs.

When the last dog dies, Auburn University will receive all of the remaining fortune.

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Heard On the Street



by Cathey Carney

Congratulations to **William Berry** of Huntsville, who was the first correct caller to identify the little hidden squirrel I put on p. 46. It was on the Old Huntsville ad, left top of graphic. See it now? William was born and raised in Huntsville 76 years ago, and is retired from Parker Co. where he worked as a tool & die maker. He gets a free subscription for being the first to call!

Ladies, there is no need to spend so much money on make up remover and cleaning your face. Just a bit of coconut oil rubbed in

and taken off with a warm washcloth does the job beautifully. Also it will leave your face soft and tender! I would avoid the eye area tho to not get oil in your eyes.

Another tip from **Celebrating Appalachia** - great gardening/cooking show on YouTube - don't become immobile - your body needs to move. Even if you're in a wheelchair you can do arm stretches. The body wants to move!

I wanted to take a minute to just thank our loyal readers. You continue year after year to buy the magazines and call with great feedback. As I get older there are a few changes I'll probably have to make, but I will let you know well in advance. 38 years ago, I started this at age 40, with Tom.

Jack Moore was a railroad man in Muscle Shoals many years ago. He was born in 1935 on July 25 and would have been 91 this year. Sadly Jack passed away May 27, 2024. His wife **Earline Moore** loved him during all the 69 years they were married, and will never stop loving him. They made such a good couple, traveled together and shared many wonderful experiences. Earline is 91 now and still lives in their home, and she misses him every day. Happy heavenly birthday to you, Jack!

Can you believe **college football season** is only 50 days away?? And then Halloween, Thanksgiving and Christmas follows soon

after. Time is just moving so fast.

Birthday celebrations for the **U.S. Army's 251st anniversary** have already begun at Redstone and all over Huntsville. In June Army's Birthday Bash began with over 70 vendors, food, music and more. There is a deep connection between **Team Redstone and the Tennessee Valley**, with a partnership shared for 85 years when the installation first opened in 1941. A really good local newspaper you will want to pick up is the **Redstone Rocket**, it's free and is full of information about RSA and all of the celebrations taking place!

A very special wedding anniversary was just celebrated for **Giles and Helen Hollingsworth**, May 30 was their 73rd! Giles is one of our regular writers and lives in Roswell, Georgia, but spent years here. Helen is his love. Happy Anniversary to the lovebirds!

A special hello to **Joan Johnson** who recently moved from here to Twinsburg, OH to be with family. We know you're still reading Old Huntsville and wanted to send love to you!

Bill Kling wanted to let us know that on June 7 he and his love **Tanjie** celebrated their 12,000th day of marriage! How can that be when Tanjie barely looks 8,000 days old?! He told us the next milestone is July 31, when they will celebrate 33 years of marriage. A very special couple for sure.

It's really hot and your garden is loving the humidity - but it's not too early to be thinking of your fall plantings! Our knowledgeable staff will be there to answer all your gardening questions. Walking through the gardens at Bennetts is like fresh-air Therapy to brighten your day!

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Right Next Door to Across the Pond

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Happy birthday to my handsome brother **Ken Owens** who will be 77 on July 31st. Happy Birthday to you with LOVE.

We've had a few questions lately about stories generated by AI. Old Huntsville stories are all written by the writers, and we accept NONE that are AI generated. It's interesting - if you receive anything in written form you can ask AI if it is AI generated and it will tell you! Let's keep Old Huntsville real!

Many remember and loved **Shaver's Bookstore** when it was located on the corner of Bob Wallace and Madison St. near the hospital. Shaver's was the place to go for local authors who didn't sell their books anywhere else, and he had a wealth of information about the history of Huntsville. **John Shaver** ran the "Top Ten Books of Local & Regional Interest" in each issue, and many of those books now are out of print. The very first list John ran was in 1993 - issue #36. It's been a long time. He ran a new one in each issue through 2007, issue #187.

John thought it would be interesting to re-run those lists each month, to give you an idea of the top selling local books at that time. We will be running those old Top Ten lists each month, starting with the oldest one. So on p. 31 this issue you'll see the very first one that was included in 1993 issue 36!

M.D. and Judy Smith celebrated their 65th anniversary on June 8. That is a lot of good years and a beautiful family as a result. There was lots of celebrating going on! Happy Anniversary to you two.

Jean Millsaps Berry passed away on June 6 at the age of 98. She was born on March 14, 1928, to **Essie and Arthur Millsaps**. Her parents operated the only store in the Maysville, Alabama, area when she was growing up.

She graduated from Madison County High School and received her BA in Education from Athens State Teacher's College (now Athens State University). She taught school, primarily first grade, for almost forty years, at Riverton and Chapman. Many many people remember her as the best teacher they ever had.

Survivors include her daugh-

ter, **Lynne Berry**; niece, **Susan King (Austin)**; and grandnephew, **Travis King (Candace)**. She was preceded in death by her husband, **John Thomas Berry**; her parents; and her siblings, **Arthur Millsaps, Jr., Gerald Millsaps, and Ophelia Millsaps Fulton**.

Jean had so many who loved her and will cherish her always.

Stuart and Lois Currie live in Owens Cross Roads and just let us know how much they love reading about the rich history of our area. Thanks for the great feedback, Stuart!

A good tip I heard recently if you are a lady and love wearing sleeveless shirts or dresses, but your arms are saggy or heavy, whatever and you don't want to draw attention to that, just wear jewelry with it! When you break up the length of the shoulder to wrist with bracelets or rings the eye goes right to that and doesn't see whatever you don't like about your upper arms! It's all about tricking the eye.

Theresa Anne Carlisle, 66, of Huntsville, passed away May 16, 2026. She was a beloved daughter, sister, and friend to many. Born in Huntsville, the family later moved to Pensacola, FL, where she graduated from Pensacola Catholic High School.

After several years of working as a dental hygienist in both Pensacola and Huntsville, she decided on a career change and purchased a Hallmark store in the Five Points area, where she and many of her customers became dear friends. Following the passing of her husband, **Kirk Carlisle**, she moved her store into the Carlisle Gallery. She had the most unique gift items and her sense of humor was the best. She will be very much missed.

Survivors include her mother, **Barbara Tran**; brothers, **Ralph Jeffrey Pearsall and Adam Gregory Pearsall**; other extended family; and many dear friends.

In this issue I am hiding a **tiny American flag**. I am going to make it SO small that no one will find it. But if you think you see it and are the very first to call, you get a year of Old Huntsville magazine which is worth \$50. So get out those specs!

Old Town Hidden Garden Tour was a success thanks to the mostly hot sunny weather. Only one heavy shower that Sunday but it felt good to all who got wet including me! So many in and out of towners walked through the district to see the unique and lovely gardens that homeowners had prepared many months for. For the next several months you'll see walkers and dogs and bicycles all through the historic districts. So interesting to watch progress on renovation of these old unique homes. Have a great July and 250th anniversary!



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Just Sweets

Lemon Bars

Crust:

2 c. plain flour
1/4 c. powdered sugar
1 c. butter

Filling:

2 c. sugar
4 T. flour
4 T. fresh lemon juice
4 eggs, beaten fluffy

For crust, mix like pie crust and press into pan. Bake at 325 degrees for 20 minutes. For filling, mix sugar, flour and lemon juice. Add beaten eggs, mix well. Pour over hot crust. Bake at 325 degrees for 25 minutes. Remove from oven and dust with powdered sugar while still hot.

Layered Dessert

Crust:

1 c. plain flour
1/2 c. butter, softened

1 c. chopped nuts

1st Layer:

1 c. powdered sugar
8 oz. cream cheese
1 c. Cool Whip

2nd Layer:

1 pkg. vanilla instant pudding
2 c. milk

Mix crust and press into 9 x 13" pan. Bake at 350 for 20 minutes. Cool. Mix powdered sugar, cream cheese and Cool Whip, spread on cooled crust. Mix pudding and milk, spread over first layer and top with more Cool Whip.

Peanut Butter Popcorn

6 c. warm, popped popcorn
1/4 c. butter, melted
3 T. sugar
2 T. peanut butter
1 T. Karo syrup

Mix butter, sugar, Karo and peanut butter. Pour over popcorn and mix. Cool well and store in gallon Ziploc freezer bags.

Fresh Apple Cake with Caramel Glaze

2 c. sugar
1-1/2 c. oil
2 t. vanilla extract
2 eggs, well beaten
Juice of 1/2 lemon or 3 T. lemon juice
1 t. salt
3 c. plain flour
1 t. cinnamon
1 t. nutmeg
1-1/2 t. baking soda
3 c. peeled and chopped apples
2 c. chopped pecans

Combine sugar, oil, vanilla, eggs, lemon juice and salt in a mixing bowl. Beat well. Combine flour, spices and baking soda. Add this to first mixture and beat well. Add apples and pecans, mix well. For family use, bake in a greased and floured tube pan at 325 degrees for 1-1/2 hours.

Glaze:

1/2 c. sugar
1/4 c. buttermilk

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- 1/2 t. baking soda
- 1 T. corn syrup
- 1/4 c. butter
- 1/4 t. vanilla extract

Combine all ingredients in a pan and bring to rolling boil over low heat. Boil 10 minutes, stirring occasionally. Pour over hot cake immediately

Mandarin Orange Cake

- 1 box butter recipe golden cake mix
 - 1/4 c. Crisco oil
 - 3 eggs
 - 1 sm. can Mandarin oranges, juice and all
- Mix in order, cook in 3 round layer pans per box directions. Let cool before icing.

Icing:

- 1 - 9 oz. Cool Whip
 - 1 lg. pkg. instant vanilla pudding
 - 1 lg. can crushed pineapple
- Mix in order; whip and spread between and over all layers.

Amaretto Liqueur

- 2 c. water
- 3 c. sugar
- Lemon peel from 1 lemon
- 6 T. almond extract
- 1 T. chocolate extract
- 3 c. good vodka
- 1/2 c. bourbon
- 2 T. vanilla extract

In large pot add the sugar, water and lemon peel. Bring to boil; simmer for 20 minutes. Remove from heat, add almond, vanilla and chocolate extracts. Remove lemon peel and add vodka. Enjoy this in coffee, on ice cream, in a cocktail glass with sweet cream on top.

For Praline Liqueur: Use the same recipe but substitute maple flavoring for the almond.

Coconut Balls

- 1 c. sugar
- 2 beaten eggs
- 4 t. butter

- 8 oz. box chopped dates
- 1 t. vanilla extract
- 2 c. chopped pecans
- 2 c. Rice Krispies
- 1 sm. can shredded coconut

Mix sugar, butter, eggs and dates together in a sauce pan and cook for 7 minutes. Add vanilla, nuts and Rice Krispies. Butter hands, roll into small balls, then roll the balls in coconut.

Tea Tassies

Crust:

- 1 stick butter
- 3 oz. cream cheese
- 1 c. plain flour

Filling:

- 1 egg
- 2/3 c. light brown sugar
- 1 T. butter
- 1 t. vanilla extract
- 2/3 c. chopped pecans

Mix butter, cream cheese and flour, refrigerate for one hour. Make into small balls, press into small muffin tins. For filling mix the egg, sugar, butter, vanilla and pecans. Top the crust with 2-3 teaspoons of

the filling and bake at 325 degrees for 30 minutes.

Peanut Butter Candy

- 2 c. sugar
- 1 c. milk
- 1 stick butter
- 1 jar marshmallow creme
- 1-12oz. jar crunchy peanut butter

- 1 t. vanilla extract

Cook sugar, milk and butter for 15 minutes. Stir. Add marshmallow creme, peanut butter and vanilla. Continue stirring. Mix well while cooling it a bit, then pour into buttered dish. Break into pieces.

Caramel Brownies

- 1-2/3 sticks butter
- 1-1/2 c. brown sugar
- 2 eggs
- 1 c. self-rising flour
- 1 c. chopped pecans
- 1 T. vanilla extract

Melt the butter and mix with the sugar til creamy, then add rest of ingredients. Bake at 350 degrees til done.

Old Ad run in Old Huntsville magazine in 1994 and yes, it's still there!

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COURTEOUS SERVICE!

Celebrating 250 Years

by Iolanda Hicks



Here we are, 2026, celebrating 250 years of independence and our country is having its "first major, nationwide celebration since 1976". We are observing, especially on July 4th, the day that we have all been taught was the signing of the Declaration of Independence by the men of the Second Continental Congress.

If I did my research right, the following few sentences will briefly summarize the period before and after the signing of that famous document.

Before the initial signing, the Revolutionary War had started and lasted from 1775 to 1783. History reveals in this time period that the colonies won their freedom from Great Britain, with the signing of the Treaty of Paris (1783). This document officially recognized the independence of the U.S. Years earlier, the delegates to the Second Continental Congress officially made their Declaration of Independence (from British rule) on August 2, 1776 in Philadelphia.

We all were taught July 4th, 1776 was the date of that signing, but only 2 of the 56 signees of that document signed that day: John Hancock and Charles Thomson certifying that the Declaration was formally adopted. It was on August 2, 1776, that 56 delegates, representing the 13 colonies, began signing the final copy, declaring "that all men possess unalienable rights to Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness".

America is a diverse nation with almost all of its 350 million or so inhabitants. Many have ancestors born in a multitude of countries, that came to this new world seeking a better life. Others have chosen to adopt this country as their own. The ending of the sonnet "The New Colossus" written in 1883 by Emma Lazarus is inscribed on a plaque inside the pedestal of the Statue of Liberty. Those words have symbolized a "welcome to immigrants

and refugees" coming to America: "Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to be free, the wretched refuse of your teeming shore. Send these, the homeless, the tempest-tossed to me, I lift my lamp beside the golden door!"

Some of the seekers of truth feel that the indigenous people, Native Americans, who were guardians of this land, are the true Americans. Others believe that one is an American, regardless of where he or she were born, if there is a belief in certain religious or social practices, pay taxes, obey the law and contribute to society.

A national poll was taken in 2018 by Selzer & Company (The Grinnell College National Poll) asking the question of what makes a real American. 90% polled believed treating people equally; 88% felt that taking responsibility for one's actions was important; another 81% polled said "to have the ability to accept people of different racial backgrounds" and lastly, 78% said accepting religious backgrounds.

The last two percentages were considered to be the important traits of a "real American."

I am sharing a few of our "born on American soil" icons: Neil Armstrong (Ohio) first person to step on the moon July 20th, 1969; Susan B. Anthony (Massachusetts) played a key role in women's rights movement; Orville and Wilbur Wright (Ohio/Indiana) flew the first successful piloted aircraft; Betsy

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Ross (Pennsylvania) credited with sewing the first American flag; Nikki Haley (South Carolina) first female governor of South Carolina and John C. Calhoun (South Carolina) champion of states rights.

Wernher von Braun and many of the German rocket team of Redstone Arsenal all became American citizens on April 14, 1955. All contributed much to the exploration of space and beyond. A few notable Americans that we may not have realized were from other countries, becoming citizens of the United States, are as follows: Albert Einstein (Germany) who fathered modern physics; Nikola Tesla (Austria) revolutionized how electricity is generated; Elon Musk (South Africa) co-founded PayPal, Space-X, Starlink & other achievements.

Also Levi Strauss (Germany) created the jeans many of us love; Irving Berlin (Russia) helped to shape American music and composed 1500 songs with White Christmas and God Bless America, being 2 of my favorites; Arnold Schwarzenegger (Austria) the bodybuilder, the actor, the politician and more; Madeline Albright (Czechoslovakia) became the first female to hold the office of U.S. Secretary of State; and the list goes on!

My mother, a full blooded Italian, came to this country, becoming an American citizen in 1952. From a family of 12 siblings, living in a crowded house with a dirt floor, surviving Mussolini tyranny, she married an Army soldier, my father. It was a big change for a young woman of 21 to leave her home, but the change gave her a better life. In turn, she influenced her family, close friends and casual acquaintances, throughout her lifetime, living to the age of 95, just 20 days shy reaching 96.

Then, there was a young Viet-

namese man of 15, trying to find a way out of Vietnam. He had lived around the Cam Ranh Bay area his entire young life. Food was rationed, fear was always present but he found his way to America, arriving in Louisiana in 1982. He was determined to live a better life and make a difference, soon traveling to New York. After some years of education, he came to Huntsville. That brave and determined young teenager became a doctor. Today, he and his family, as Americans, make a difference in the lives of so many.

This 250th or Semiquincentennial commemoration has had celebrations for the last several months, peaking on this July 4th. Researching for this article, I found people that have made, not only our country but parts of the world, a better place.

Let's end, with not just one but 2 quotes: "Liberty is the breath of life to nations". (George Bernard Shaw) and "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal..." (The Declaration of Independence). Give thanks and appreciate all the freedoms we enjoy!! May we continue to celebrate all our 4th of July's with gratitude.

"Please excuse Ronald from PE today - yesterday he fell out of a tree and misplaced his hips."

Parent's school excuse for absent son



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

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

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MOVING TO HUNTSVILLE, ALABAMA IN 1958

by Bill Cooper

1958 late winter was a decision point for the Orval Cooper family. Following a visit to Huntsville, Alabama, Dad was determining if our family would relocate from McLean, Virginia.

As a 9-year-old finishing the fourth grade, I understood many of our relatives and friends in northern Virginia, Maryland and Washington D.C. didn't think this was a great idea to relocate to Huntsville. Dad was offered a 2-grade increase by the Army Missile Command to come to Huntsville. Despite all the negative clamor, Dad decided to make the move and accept the opportunity to improve his family's economic position. I say it was a grand decision based on the way things turned out.

In May 1958 the family (my younger sister Bonita; older brother, Robert; myself William; and Mom, Bonnie) relocated to the corner of Holiday Drive and Bob Wallace in West Huntsville where we lived for about 6 months. That fall as I entered the 5th grade at Joe Bradley Elementary School, Dad bought a property on Grote Street where we lived for about 4 years.

During our time in West Huntsville, Robert and I built a paper route serving

some 450 customers located along Grote, Fairview, Emm Ell Streets, Fairacres Road to Cerro Vista Street between Belvoir Drive and Asland Drive and between Holiday Drive and Hillsboro Road, Mariposa Road, Ventura Road, Oleander Road, Flamingo Road and Azalea Road - very good income for a couple of pre-teens on bicycles. All the while after Joe Bradley Elementary, I attended Westlawn Jr. High School.

I believe during 1961, Dad, as a Financial Officer, transferred from the Army Missile Command to Dr. Wernher von Braun's NASA's Redstone Arsenal Marshall Space Flight Center Space Flight Program. Yes, the launch vehicle that took the astronauts to the moon is a Huntsville product. Eventually, Dad retired from NASA in 1975. He then pursued other opportunities in horse ranching, fertilizers for farmers' fields, hunting preserve management and septic tank businesses with full retirement circa 1994. He also enjoyed participating in the North Alabama Retriever Club and the competitive training of bird dogs.

During 1962-63, Dad bought a parcel of land on Weatherly Mountain and built a house on Hampshire Drive. Meanwhile, I entered ninth grade at Whitesburg Junior High. Since we were still outside the city limits hunting rabbits, squirrels and quail on the mountain was permitted, it was a wonderful time to grow up. My friends (Tom DeFreez, Bill Blue, Steve Schlendering, Gene Holt, and others) and I went camping at Honey Comb (near Guntersville) and on Parson's farm near the junction of the Tennessee and Flint rivers. We were hunting and fishing and learning about living off the land by eating ripe (not green) persimmons, pork and beans, cooking the fish we caught and drinking sassafras tea all the while ending my secondary education at Huntsville High School (HHS) from 1964-1966.



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During the 1964 school year, at my dad and mom's encouragement, my uncle Major George Wortham Holt retired from the Air Force as a Jet Fighter Instructor Pilot and relocated his family (Goldie, Sandra and Gene) from San Antonio, Texas to Huntsville. Uncle Wortham eventually owned Management Services Incorporated (MSI) a business that provided flight and ground transportation services to Marshall Space Flight Center. Uncle Wortham's notable achievements include flying the first T-38 across the Atlantic. He also flew Dr. Wernher von Braun, astronauts and other dignitaries associated with the space program around the country. A T-38 NASA trainer is located at the Huntsville U.S. Space and Rocket Center/Space Museum off 1-565. I like to believe that was the one he flew across the Atlantic, but I'm not sure of that.

The picture to the left shows the cockpit of one of the NASA planes showing Dr. Wernher von Braun on the left and Uncle Wortham on the right. This picture shows a note of appreciation from Dr. Von Braun to Uncle Wortham.

"Have you ever noticed that the first piece of luggage on an airport carousel never belongs to anyone?"

Erma Bombeck

Such was my family's and relatives' connection to the U.S. Space Program through 1975.

From 1966 to 1970 I went to Auburn, graduated as a U.S. Army 2nd Lieutenant Transportation Officer, serving in various locations in the U.S. and overseas. I retired from the service October 31, 1990.

After 27 years away, we returned to Huntsville in January 1997 to assist our aging parents. I provided contractor support to the Logistics Support Agency (LOGSA) and Configuration and Data management services to NASA's Space Station and Constellation programs as well as smaller projects until 2009. Afterwards, Ann and I founded Peridot Data Inc. and operated that organization until December 2019 when we decided to fully retire.

Since our return, we have enjoyed the connection with our 1965-66 HHS classmates and our friends over the last 29 years. Our youngest son Matthew and his wife Sharon live here in Huntsville, Tommy and his family (Tricia and Joey) live in Henderson, Colorado and Andy and his wife Cate live in Alexandria, Virginia. Of all the places we lived and visited in the U.S. and the world, Ann and I still find Huntsville a beautiful place to live, work, play and make lifelong friends.


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News in 1923

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- Wanted: good cook. Phone 629 or see Mrs. June Martin, Lowe Avenue

- For Sale - one flat top mahogany finished desk. Call and see. 427 White Street.

119 Arrests in October

One hundred and nineteen arrests were made by the Huntsville police department during this month. Arrests for violating the Sanitary laws, 21, lead the list. Stock at large coming next with 16 and drunks, 14 coming in third on the list. There were 12 arrests for traffic law violations and eleven for affrays, the balance were scattered among a large number of other causes. The total fines assessed amounted to \$1,398.25, collections being \$1,053.25. Fines worked out totaled \$300.

Mrs. Thompson Truant Officer

Mrs. W. I. Thompson has been appointed truant officer of Huntsville, succeeding Mrs. T. A. Rankin who recently resigned the position. Her duties will be to see that no child of educatable age is kept out of school for other than valid reasons.

Prominent Farmer Hurt in Sheffield

Chris Sterit, one of the best known farmers of this county, lost control of his car here this morning, plunging into an excavated lot and turning over with the driver pinned under the wreck. Sterit was rushed to a hospital and the attending physician says he is probably fatally injured.

New Hope Barn Burned

During the heavy electrical storm of Wednesday night a barn belonging to James Bryce, New Hope, was struck by lightning and destroyed together with its contents of feedstuffs and farm machinery. The damage will reach approximately \$2500 with no insurance.

Boy Kills another with Pick Handle Used on Head

In Florence, Ala Keeton, an 18-year old boy, was struck on the head with a pick handle by Morris

Nickols, age 16 at Wilson Dam last night and died at a local infirmary today. The two boys were employed on the night shift at the dam. The violence that resulted in the death of Keeton arose over an attempt on his part to throw water on the younger boy, according to a statement of the foreman in the adjoining section. Nickols was placed in jail on the government reservation and later removed to the Lauderdale county jail in Florence. Keeton's body was shipped to Tennessee for burial.

It was learned that Nickels had been fined in city court here last fall for striking a boy named G. C. Craig on the head with a wagon spoke at the Florence Wagon Works.

Mayor says "Collect Back"

In view of the fact that Huntsville people are so good, the police department has been instructed by Mayor Adams to collect "Back Fines". In other words, the City wants what is coming or "Bring them to the Jail." If upon reading this you recall a slight fine or a fine other than slight which has not been paid just drop it at the City Hall and Clerk Matthews will take the money and issue you an "Exemption."

Athens, Al Boy Hurts Self and Takes Life

Joseph Hill, eight years old, had two fingers blown off Sunday by a dynamite cap. His first words were: "This'll break mama's heart." Tuesday he is dead, having sent a bullet from a revolver through his body soon after being taken home. The boy recently passed the seventh grade grammar school.

Scottsboro - Man Coughs up Bullet

Daniel Healy, young man of Scottsboro, coughed up a bullet that has been lodged in his throat for 3 months. It was badly needed as evidence in the trial of Peter McLean for murder. Physicians had feared to operate but now won't have to.



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Play Ball



by Elizabeth Wharry

When we still lived in the Cleveland, Ohio area, I won 2 tickets to a baseball game. The seats were right behind home plate; Seattle Mariners vs. the (old) Cleveland Indians. Bob, being an electrical nuclear engineer, had to work that weekend. My daughter Miriam was 11 years old. This was our first, and only, professional baseball game.

While the Mariners were warming up, I spotted one of the coaches. I called him over. I told him Miriam was 11, and this was our first professional game. I asked him to tell his team to please watch their language. He said that he would let his team know, and would also get word to the Cleveland Indians. I thanked him and sat down. I wasn't sure if my request would be honored.

Once the last note of the National Anthem sounded and an official shouted "Play ball", both teams turned to where we were sitting, kept their caps in hand, grinned and waved. Even the referees gave a wave! Every time a player came up to bat, that player would give a cheeky wave. I don't remember which team won that day, or how many innings were played. I do remember Miriam asking me if the last two words of the National Anthem were "Play Ball!"

Happy birthday America!

"Winning is everything. The only ones who remember you when you come in second are your wife and your dog."

Damon Hill

Whistling

As a new, young MD doing my residency in OB, I was quite embarrassed when performing female pelvic exams. To cover my embarrassment I had unconsciously formed a habit of whistling softly.

The middle-aged lady upon whom I was performing this exam suddenly burst out laughing which further embarrassed me.

I looked up from my work and sheepishly said. "I'm sorry; was I tickling you?"

She replied with tears running down her cheeks from laughing so hard,

"No, doctor, but the song you were whistling was 'I wish I was an Oscar Meyer Wiener.'"

Dr. xx (Wouldn't submit his name....)

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UNFORGETTABLE BOAT TRIP

by M. D. Smith, IV



Over the years, beginning when I was scarcely tall enough to see over a gunwale, I've been on more boat trips than I could ever count. Some were lazy pleasure cruises drifting like leaves across summer water, others were fishing expeditions scented with diesel fuel and salt, and many involved scuba diving or cruises where the horizon unrolled endlessly like blue silk.

I remember dozens fondly, but it's strange how the trips where something goes sideways are the ones that calcify into legend, polished brighter by time until they still make you grin decades later.

The standout happened in 1972. I can tell it now because my father has long since crossed his final horizon.

We both earned pilot's licenses in the sixties and eventually added twin-engine ratings. In 1969, my father bought a twin-engine Piper Aztec, a beautiful aircraft that cut through the sky like a silver shark. It gave us easy access to the Destin airport in Florida, where our family owned the radio station WNUE in Ft. Walton. Every trip magically became a "business flight," with Smith Broadcasting cheerfully footing the bill. We also bartered advertising with Huntsville Aviation for charter aircraft, which helped when I needed airplanes for news coverage around the Southeast.

Now, another important detail: my father loved Canadian Club whiskey with the devotion of a sailor to the sea. I ran the television station while he managed the radio operation from a small office behind his house, and it wasn't unusual for him to begin sipping CC and water over ice in the late afternoon and continue long after midnight, like a steam locomotive refusing to coast into the station.

He also owned a black Labrador named Chip. That dog lived for retrieval. My father had trained him to leap into the swimming pool beside the office whenever a beer or soda can splashed into the water. Chip would launch himself like a furry torpedo, seize the can proudly, and paddle back as if recovering downed enemy aircraft.

Dad also kept a thirty-two-foot Chris-Craft cabin cruiser in a slip at Shalimar, Florida, across the bay from the Destin airport.

So one Friday night in July 1972, after several geological layers of Canadian Club had accumulated in his bloodstream, inspiration struck him sometime around two in the morning. He called Huntsville Aviation, which answered phones twenty-four hours a day, and chartered a Piper Cherokee for an immediate flight to Florida.

Naturally, Chip came along.

The pilot, who knew my father well enough to recognize bad ideas in their infancy, hesitated when he saw the Labrador climbing into the back seat. But Dad was persuasive in the way only wealthy Southern broadcasters lubricated with whiskey can be.

By dawn, they landed in Destin. Dad grabbed a taxi, Chip panting happily beside him, and headed straight for the marina. Soon he was easing the Chris-Craft across Choctawhatchee Bay toward Destin Pass while the sunrise spilled molten gold across the Gulf like God tipping over a paint bucket.

To steady the hangover stalking him like an unpaid debt, he bought a cold six-pack of Budweiser.

And then came the moment. He finished his first beer while navigating the narrow pass where the currents boiled and twisted like underwater tornadoes. Without thinking – without even a flicker of awareness – he casually tossed the empty can overboard.

SPLASH.

A black streak flew past him.

Chip.



M. D. IV in 2000

The dog hit the water instantly, instinct overriding survival. Dad spun around just in time to see Chip proudly clamp onto the can and attempt to swim back through the savage current pouring through the pass.

Then panic arrived.

Dad was alone aboard. The boat rocked awkwardly in the tide while Chip struggled in the churning water, slowly losing ground. My father tried turning the cruiser without backing over the dog with the propellers. Each approach drifted wrong. The sides of the Chris-Craft towered four feet above the water like castle walls.

Chip's eyes, Dad later told me, changed from excitement to confusion... then fear.

On the third desperate pass, with the dog nearly spent, Dad lunged across the stern, caught one front paw, and hauled seventy pounds of exhausted Labrador aboard in a spray of saltwater and beer fumes.

It scared him sober.

Nearly.

He immediately returned to the yacht club, tied up the boat with trembling hands, and phoned my mother. By then it was around nine Sat-

urday morning. She called me and explained the whole saga in the exhausted tone of a woman entirely unsurprised by her husband's behavior. Then she asked me to fly the Aztec to Florida and bring both adventurers home.

I reached Destin by noon. Dad and Chip arrived by taxi, looking equally worn out.

I'd never flown with Chip before, but apparently near-death experiences improve a dog's travel manners. Once airborne in smooth air, he curled across the middle seats behind us and slept like a sedated bear.

Dad, meanwhile, narrated the entire adventure in glorious detail while occasionally using the supplemental oxygen tank we normally reserved for high altitudes. We were flying only forty-five hundred feet, but he insisted oxygen was "the greatest hangover cure known to modern aviation."

Maybe he was right.

That remains my most unforgettable boat trip, even though I never actually stepped aboard the boat. Still, I can see every moment as clearly as if I'd stood there beside him—the sunrise over the pass, the silver beer can spinning through the air, and one loyal black dog leaping after it without hesitation into the hungry Gulf waters.



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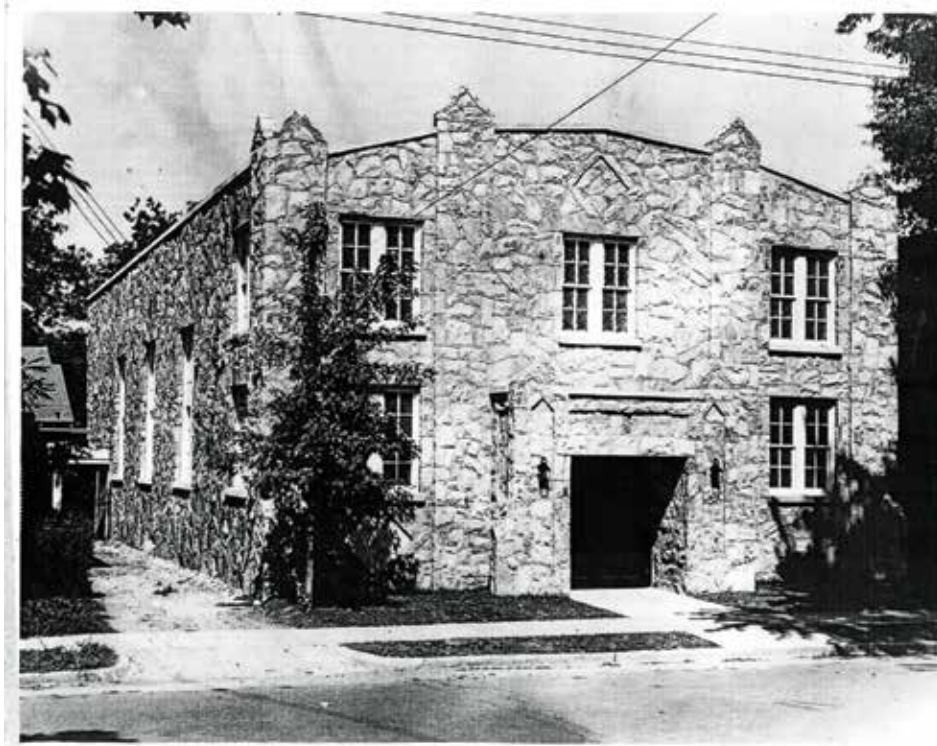
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Back to the Future with the Central Family

by Jon Canterbury

Huntsville has always held a special place in my heart because I grew up here and have witnessed the growth of a small cotton town into a thriving city that you see today. The Central Church of Christ also has a special place in my heart because I am a descendant of Julia Ann Canterbury, my grandmother, who was one of the founding members of the Central congregation. She, along with her son, Henry Canterbury (my Dad), and some one hundred eighteen others, founded the Central Church in 1929.

They met in the Grand Theater building on Jefferson Street three blocks North of the Courthouse Square. In 1930 a lot at 407 Clinton Avenue was purchased and the original building was completed in 1937. In an article in the Huntsville Times dated September 16, 1937, announcing the first Sunday assembly on Sunday, September 19th.

It was also noted that the structure was built using native stone (Limestone) with beaded masonry. It is interesting to note that there are still several structures in the

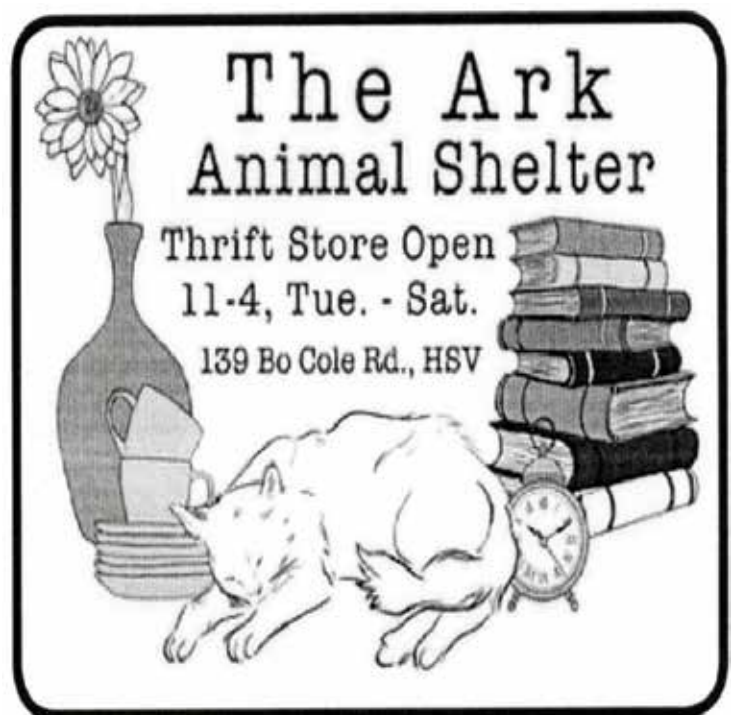
downtown area such as Goldsmith Shiffman Field which are of similar construction. It was also noted the building had toilet facilities, a modern lighting fixtures and a hot air heating system.

The most interesting feature of the building was not the "modern fixtures" but the construction costs. Keep in mind that this was accomplished during the depression. Members donated pocket change to buy concrete, donated other materials, and provided most of the labor, therefore the building was debt free at a cost of \$10,000, which would be about \$236,200 in today's dollars.

Following World War II, new homes and businesses began springing up in the southern area of the city. Central recognized a need for a congregation in the developing area, so Central provided assistance and funds to establish the Mayfair congregation. During the 1950s, Central was growing also. Central had purchased the two-story house next to the church and used it for classroom space.

As a child I can remember that you really felt special when you got to the fifth grade and you had Sunday School in the upstairs room. We called it the upper room.

As growth continued the original building was



renovated, the house was removed and an educational annex was added which included classrooms, fellowship hall, a kitchen, offices and a library.

In the late 1950s Central had grown to the limits of the existing facilities so to accommodate Huntsville's growth to the Northern neighborhoods; funds were provided for a group to leave Central and establish the Memorial Parkway congregation.

In the 1960s Central also provided support for the Martin Lake and Meridianville church locally and also several mission points including Keel Mountain in Eastern Madison County, Oswego, New York, and Suva, Fiji Islands in the South Pacific.

As the 1970s began Central saw a dramatic demographic and economic shift in Huntsville. In response to this a full-time youth and educational director was added to the staff.

As the 70s unfolded it became apparent that the nature and role of the downtown church would need to be radically different. By the late 1970s new younger families were coming but even that could not offset the diminishing numbers.

Central's average age during this period was approximately 63.5 years old.

A reassessment of the role of the old downtown church resulted in Central becoming a church at large, serving a need rather than a location. For these reasons, the facilities were expanded to include a Family Life Center, larger kitchen facilities, and more classrooms.

The 1980s began with an outreach effort focusing on the young people in apartments and on college campuses. This proved to be an extremely fruitful effort, especially at Alabama A&M University which continues to this day. By 2000 Central had outgrown its origi-

nal buildings, so yet another major renovation and addition to its facilities were needed. The entire educational facility was virtually rebuilt to comply with existing codes and regulations and a new Family Life Center which is also used for the Sunday assembly was added along with an improved playground for the Happy Times Preschool, which began in the 1980s.

In the late 1990s, Central recognized a need to reach out to the those suffering with alcohol and drug addiction and established the Bridge Group Ministry. In 2007, His Way was established and now is a separate entity from Central. Many Central members participate in the daily operations as well as volunteers and contributors to His Way.

To sum all this up, Central has defied most modern church growth models. Central stayed downtown, assessed the needs, prayerfully sought counsel, and proceeded where others have feared to tread. Being willing to make a radical shift in its nature and role has led Central from an old dying downtown church into the Central Family as we prefer to be called, that reaches across the racial, social, and economic spectrum.

The best way to describe Central is a Family Gathering of the most eclectic group of folks you can imagine. As Jesus told his disciples in John 1:39 "Come and See."

**"Never slap a man
who's chewing
tobacco."**

Will Rogers

**Shaver's Top Ten was first run
in OHM issue 36, in 1993.**

Shaver's Top 10 Books of Local & Regional Interest

1. The Sword of Bushwhacker Johnston - The Civil War in Madison & Jackson County (\$19.95)
2. True Tales of Old Madison County - Reprinted by the Historic Huntsville Found. (\$5.00)
3. Historic Limestone County - Stories & History by Robert Dunnavant, Jr. (\$9.95)
4. Huntsville Heritage Cookbook - Silver Anniversary Edition. 95,000 Copies in Print (\$14.95)
5. The Mid-South Garden Guide - The Best Guide Available For Zone 7 (that's us) Gardening (\$14.95)
6. Treasure Hunter's Guide to Middle Tenn. & Ky. Antiques, Flea Markets & Junk Stores (\$10.95)
7. Alabama One Big Front Porch - Kathryn Tucker Windham's Classic Book of Tall Tales (\$14.95)
8. Wild Flowers of North Alabama - Over 100 Full Color Photos With Descriptions (\$15.95)
9. Glimpses Into Antebellum Homes of Huntsville & Madison County (\$10.00)
10. Trout Fishing in North Georgia - Complete Guide to Rivers & Public Streams (\$12.95)



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Funny Family Memories

by Jim Vann

My mother and father in-law used to sit on their front porch steps when the weather was nice.

When brother-in-law was about 9 years old he approached his mom and dad about the bump in his sister's stomach. When brother-in-law asked that question, father-in-law got up and went to the backyard to avoid having to explain anything.

Mother-in-law, who was a very caring and genteel person, went through her explanation about the birds and bees and planting a seed, etc. When she finished a wonderful explanation of her daughter and his sister being pregnant, brother-in-law quipped "you gotta be kidding" and walked away.

A few months later, myself, my mother and father-in-law were at the hospital ready to visit our new born baby daughter Beth. Their first grandchild was born at 10 minutes before 7 pm and the nursery visiting hours started at 7 pm.

In those days, you held a 3 by 5 card up to the nursery window with the baby's last name on the card and they would place your baby, front and center at the nursery window. After they had brought our baby up there for us to see, an older couple (probably grandparents) came up beside us at the nursery window.

Not realizing which baby we were looking at, the man pointed at our baby and said to his wife, "Hey Hon, look how purple this baby's hands are," to which my mother-in-law replied "Well you damned fool, she's not 10 minutes old."

I had never heard this Southern Belle from Virginia ever say such a word before or since. But you don't talk about a first grandchild in such

a way. The poor fellow looked as if there were a crack in the floor, he would have crawled into it.

We had a tradition at mealtime at our house of taking turns offering the blessing for each meal we had at our kitchen table. One of my "pet peeves" has always been for a child to very nastily say "no" for any reason. Daughter Beth was about 5 years old when I told her that it was her time to say the blessing, to which she curtly replied "no". I proceeded to pick her up and proceed down the hallway to the bathroom where I usually executed any punishment. On the way down the hallway, Beth said every prayer she ever knew from "God is great, to now I lay me down to sleep, etc. Needless to say, I was laughing so hard by the time we got to the bathroom that I could not spank her. She accomplished what she needed to get me over my "pet peeve". She's been good at that all of her life.

Younger daughter "Sunny" was given a brand new pair of white tennis shoes that her mom had bought that Saturday. With those new shoes on, she went down to the creek that crossed under our street and got her new shoes terribly muddy. When she got home with her new shoes in a mess, her mom gave her a good talking to.

We had a ritual of asking our kids on the way home from church what they studied in Sunday School that day. We asked Sunny that question and she replied that they had learned about Moses and the burning bush. She added that "God told Moses to take off his shoes because he was on muddy ground."

Youngest daughter and I had a ritual on Sunday morning back when we got the "Huntsville Times" newspaper and the Sunday comics that came with the Sunday paper. She had just started first grade. She would come sit in my lap and we would read the comics together.

I had a rule at our house that if you happened to pass gas, you would just say "excuse me" and go on like nothing happened.

One Sunday morning, while sharing the comics, I unintentionally passed some gas and I followed the rule and said "excuse me".

My smart first grader informed me that "At Blossomwood, they called that farting."

I appreciated her telling me what she was learning in school at Blossomwood. That rule still applies at our house today.

We had a minister at our church that was a chaplain for the Tennessee Air National Guard. He had a vanity tag on the rear of his car that spelled "CHAP". One Sunday evening I carried some black electrical tape to church and carefully changed the "H" to an "R".

He drove the car like that for a couple of years never noticing the change until one evening, his son pulled in behind his car and saw what the tag now spelled.

His son went in the house and said "Dad, do you know you have "CRAP" on the back of your car"? I never told him I had anything to do with the change and he never asked.

We have had a good, funny life so far for 62 years and hope it will continue like that.

A Story About Love

by Ann & Meredith Luden



Someone in the Postal Service needs to be rewarded.

This is a beautiful story about pure love.

Our 14-year-old dog Abbey died last month. The day after she passed away my 4-year-old daughter Meredith was crying inconsolably and talking about how very much she missed Abbey.

She asked if we could write a letter to God so that when Abbey got to heaven, God would recognize her.

I told her that I thought that we could, so she dictated these words:

"Dear God,

Will you please take care of my dog? Abbey died yesterday and is with you in heaven. I miss her very much. I'm happy that you let me have her as my dog even though she got sick.

I hope you will play with her. She likes to swim and play with balls. I am sending a picture of her so when you see her you will know that she is my dog. I really miss her.

Love, Meredith"

We put the letter in an envelope with a picture of Abbey & Meredith, addressed it to God in care of Heaven. We put our return address on it.

Meredith pasted several stamps on the front of the envelope because she said it would take lots of stamps to get the letter all the way to heaven.

That afternoon she dropped it into the letter box at the Post Office.

A few days later, she asked if God had gotten the letter yet. I told her that I thought He had. Yesterday, there was a package wrapped in gold paper on our front porch addressed, "To Meredith" in an unfamiliar hand.

Meredith opened it. Inside was a book by Mr. Rogers called, "When a Pet Dies."

Taped to the inside front cover was the letter we had written to God in its opened envelope.

On the opposite page was the picture of Abbey & Meredith and this note:

"Dear Meredith,

Abbey arrived safely in heaven. Having the picture was a big help and I recognized her right away.

Abbey isn't sick anymore. Her spirit is here with me just like it stays in your heart.

Abbey loved being your dog.

Since we don't need our bodies in heaven, I don't have any pockets to keep your picture in so I'm sending it back to you in this little book for you to keep and have something to remember Abbey by.

Thank you for the beautiful letter and thank your mother for helping you write it and sending it to me.

What a wonderful mother you have. I picked her especially for you.

I send my blessings every day and remember that I love you very much.

By the way, I'm easy to find. I am wherever there is love.

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God"

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Something Fishy About a Cold Day in May

by Charles Flanders



Everyone has heard the phrase "A cold day in July", but I distinctly remember a cold night in May.

Actually it was about mid-May on an extremely hot day. I was 10 years old, running around just in my bathing suit, no shirt, no shoes, when Dad came home early from work. Dad was an avid fisherman, who knew everything about fishing. In his lifetime I guarantee you, he spent much more time on the water than he ever did on land. He used to say "God put 3 times as much water on earth than he did land - therefore he must have intended that we fish 3 times as much as we work."

I asked Dad why he was home so early. He said that he was going with some of his friends "Mullet Jumping". I asked "What's that?" He said, "You know that mullet is a fish," to which I replied "Yes, of course, but what is 'mullet jumping'?"

He then explained that when you go out on the water at the dark of night and carry a

lantern, the mullet will jump toward the light, hoping to catch a bug flying around the light, and fall into the boat.

I thought he was joking, but then he said I'd better get ready if I wanted to go with them. He advised I put on a long sleeve shirt, long pants, shoes and maybe carry a sweater. I just laughed, the temperature that day was around 100 degrees. I did put on long pants but just a T shirt and no shoes.

Then we met up with his fishing friends and we headed to the river. All of them were carrying heavy waterproof jackets. Halfway there, I noticed that we did not have any rods or reels for fishing. Dad said we do not need any of that, the fish would just jump into the boat. Of course, again, I knew he was kidding. Then I asked, "Where's the boat?" To which he replied, "We have to use flat bottom boats and none of us has one, so we will be renting the boats." None of this was making sense to me.

Finally, we arrived at the river, and rented four flat bottom boats. There were 12 of us, so that meant 3 to a boat. One at the front to hold a

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**"I'm getting into swing dancing.
Not on purpose - some parts of
my body are just prone to swinging."**

Jack Harrison, Athens

corner of a blanket, one in the middle to hold the lantern, and one at the back end to hold the other end of the blanket and run the motor. About this time (now about 10 o'clock P.M.), and no moonlight on the water, I was beginning to get cold. Then all of a sudden we hit a bed of mullet. They went crazy, jumping at the light from the lantern, with a powerful thrust coming out of the water, so they could jump high enough to reach the lantern.

The lantern was being held as high as possible by the man in the middle of the boat, in order to get the fish to jump toward him. The men at each end of the boat held the blanket up high, stretch from end to end, forming a wall, that the mullet could not jump over, allowing them to fall into the boat.

Now I was really getting cold, (the temperature on that water with no moonlight had dropped to about 50 degrees) and I was being hit from every angle by these powerful jumping fish. Tears were forming in my eyes from the pain. Every time a fish hit me, it felt like a prize fighter knocking you in your chest and back and head. I'm not sure but I think my tears had turned to little ice cubes and were flying from my eyes like bullets from a gun. I knew I was about to die from frostbite and being beaten to death.

Just as I was ready to give up ever making it home again, Dad hollered, "We have a boatload of fish and we're going to sink if we don't turn off these lights and head home." I was never so happy to hear those words.

Finally, we arrived back to the campground, I was soaking wet, frozen to the bone, no shoes, no sweater. As soon as we hit land, I jumped out of the boat, asked Dad for the car keys, then ran and jumped in the car and turned the heater on high. It was now about 2 in the morning, and I fell asleep immediately, wet clothes and all.

I know nothing about the ride back home, and Dad said it took them about an hour to load all the

fish. Then when we got back to town, they had to be divided. We got home about daybreak. I was still asleep when we arrived home.

But I do remember the unbelievable way those fish were caught, and what I remember most was being almost frozen to death in the middle of May with fish jumping in the boat.



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Wesley Mullins and Mullins Creek

by Mason B. Daniel, Sr.



My wife and I moved to Ardmore, TN in January of 2018 to be near families in Nashville, TN and the Huntsville, AL area. Growing up in Huntsville, plus spending many days with relatives in the Ardmore AL/TN area, I knew the roads and towns very well. My wife, who grew up in Bronx, NY did not know the area very well. To acquaint her with the area, we would take short day trips to various areas around Ardmore.

On one such trip we drove down Pulaski Pike, and when we neared Randall Mullins Drive we pulled in front of a little white church building and thus begins my story of Wesley Mullins and Mullins Creek.

My grandfather, Albert Clay Mullins, was the son of Andrew Jackson Mullins. Andrew's grandfather was the son of Antonio Molina who emigrated from Italy and fought in the Revolutionary War. He changed his name to Anthony Mullins at the recommendation of some of his friends, including Thomas Jefferson. A marker dedicated to Anthony Mullins is in the Blanche, TN cemetery, next to some of his close family members.

Andrew was the father of many children including Albert Clay and Henry Nicholas Mullins. Henry fathered several children, including Wesley Herman Mullins. Henry settled in the area of Randall Mullins Drive, which crossed Mullins Creek (I think the actual name of the creek is Limestone Creek) to Old Railroad Bed. There was no bridge over the creek when I was spending time there, however I understand a bridge was built, but was later washed out and never rebuilt.

Today, there are large concrete barriers on each side of the creek to prevent passage.

The home at Pulaski Pike and Randall Mullins Drive was owned and occupied by Wesley and Deoma Mullins. The white church building was once a country general store owned by Wesley. Next to the store was a Gulf Oil wind vane with a man's torso, head with orange colored hat and arms that looked like ceiling fan blades. The torso would spin and the arms would turn with the wind. There was also a small block house on the right side of the house that was occupied by Wesley's son Randall Mullins. A large barn was in the rear of the house.

Summer is All About Love



Sending Love to all Old Huntsville readers
and especially the Huntsville High
Class of 1966

from Oscar Llerena

Wesley owned and operated a North American Van Lines franchise located on Dallas Avenue in Huntsville. My nephew George Towry and I lived a short distance from the business, so on many summer weekends we would pack some clothes and grab our fishing gear, and head to meet Wesley at his office.

He drove a 1950s Chevrolet pick up truck. We would hop in the back along with some of his employees and head to his house. It was a great ride unless it was raining. We stayed at his house unless we wanted to camp out in the screened-in camp house on Mullins Creek.

We spent the daytime fishing and swimming in the creek. Some nights we would go cat fishing with Wesley, as he loved to fish. Wesley was big man, not in height but in girth. In today's terms he would be considered obese. Some days we would go before dark to allow Wesley to take a bath. His home had a modern bath, but he liked to bathe in the creek.

Our nights were spent chit-chatting, except for Saturday evenings. WSM, Channel 8 out of Nashville would telecast wrestling matches, I believe from the Hippodrome. Wesley had one of the few television sets in the area, and it seemed like everyone around was in his living room watching the matches. His favorite wrestler was Rowdy Red Roberts. (Note: Some of these wrestlers would wrestle in Huntsville at the old National Guard Armory). The excitement was such, you would think you were at an Alabama/Auburn football game.

One Sunday afternoon while fishing at Mullins Creek, we saw a large group of men and women headed to our fishing spots. None of the people had fishing gear and/or picnic baskets. We grabbed our gear and quickly moved away. As the group neared the water's edge they

stopped except for one man who went in the water to waist deep.

People began to sing and pray. We finally realized we were witnessing a baptism service. Many churches at that time did not have indoor baptism facilities, so the congregations would go to a creek and Mullins Creek was one of the places to go.

Wesley was a big baseball fan. He would sponsor amateur teams. He loved the Birmingham Barons. One of my biggest thrills was when I went with him and other family members to a Birmingham Barons and Chattanooga Lookouts baseball game in Chattanooga TN.

Wesley was the son of Henry Nicholas and Sallie E. Mullins. He married Luta Crabtree and they had one son named Henry Nick Mullins. He was also married to Deoma Nunley and they had three children: Wesley Herman Jr., Mack and Randall.

Henry Nick (HN) owned Alabama Bike Shop in Huntsville, plus leased the bait and restaurant facilities at Salt Peter Cave near Scottsboro, AL.

Wesley Jr. died at a very young age, while Mack was killed in a car accident at age 22. Randall operated the trucking business after Wesley's death until his death in 1990.



**"It seems these days about half
the stuff in my grocery cart says
'For Fast Relief'."**

Sadie Forrester, Meridianville

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Legacy

*by Gerald Alvis, the
Poet of Greenlawn*



It's been almost 7 years since I saw it. It bothered me then, and it wasn't till this morning that I understood why.

I was attending a family funeral when I noticed a particularly large headstone in the

graveyard with many inscriptions. I mean, it was almost a bulletin. After the service, I walked over to it and read the words that he wished to be said about him, now chiseled in stone. It was an impressive curriculum vitae. It would grab the attention of any HR manager.

It stuck with me all these years, and the pondering reappeared of all times just before 6 this morning. My wife has an appointment, and I was rushing to get the coffee ready.

I wanted her to awaken to a gentle touch, a word, and a hot cup of motivation (with whipped cream on top) rather than the blaring of her alarm.

I made it, at 5:59, I turned off that annoying but necessary sound that beckons us from our dreams.

I was still thinking about it, in the near darkness of our private space. After a few sips from my cup and with a

wrinkled brow, it came to me. I mean, we have all done cool stuff, and that's fun to share. I worked some weeks 80+ hours and climbed the ladder just like you, the reader.

The difference I see between this occurrence and how I feel is that my work was never my identity.

So, in reflection, I'd rather have someone know, than me say, that I loved life and lived it, and that my priorities were three: my country, family, and God. I wanted that inscribed in the hearts of those I meet, and especially those closest to me that I cherish.

Engraved not with man-made tools but with love. That lasts longer than a marker in a field, that's how I want the world to know I was here.

A tombstone is inanimate, but love remains and is alive long after we are gone.



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PET TIPS FROM ANGEL

Cats and Summer



Outdoor Eating

When grilling and entertaining outdoors, keep in mind that many of those foods are not appropriate for consumption by your cat. Provide a trash can nearby for guests to empty their leftover food so kitty can't gain access. And speaking of eating, if you feed your cat outdoors, keep in mind that food will spoil more rapidly in the heat. It's also more susceptible to contamination from insects.

If you enjoy gardening, plant a small garden just for your cat, with cat-safe herbs and flowers. Ideally, it will be inside an outdoor enclosure, but any corner of your yard will do, as long as your cat is carefully supervised while enjoying his own garden. You haven't lived until you have seen a cat roll around in a fresh bed of catnip!

Monitor the Cat's Indoor Environment

If you live in a home or apartment without air conditioning, your cat may be at risk of heatstroke if the temperature soars. Ensure proper air circulation by using fans that are placed safely out of the cat's reach. Ensure the water in the water bowl is kept filled and fresh. The occasional ice cube dropped in the water will not only help maintain a cooler temperature but it may encourage your cat to drink more water as she bats at the ice cube.

July 4th Safety

Fireworks are loud, dangerous and extremely stressful to most pets. Keep your cat indoors during this holiday to prevent injury and reduce her fear. For an outdoor cat, the sudden loud sounds of fireworks can be very startling and may cause her to bolt into oncoming traffic.

Cat lovers who want their cats to enjoy fresh air, sunshine and the ambience of trees, bushes and plants, often feel guilt by confining their cats to the indoors. Today, however, we understand the hazards of allowing cats to roam freely, either by personal experience, hearsay, or through the media, including the Internet. On the other hand, there are some safe compromises to offer your indoor cat the best of both worlds, without the potential hazards of free roaming outdoors.

Use Common Sense

Chances are, if the outdoor temperature is uncomfortable for you, it's also uncomfortable for your cat. A cat with moderate heat stroke (body temperature from 104 to 106 F) can recover within an hour if given prompt first aid and veterinary care (normal body temperature is 99.5-102.5F). Severe heat stroke (body temperature over 106F) can be deadly and immediate veterinary assistance is needed.

If you believe that your cat is suffering from heat stroke, you must first take immediate measures to cool him down. Move him to a cool area, apply wet cold towels or immerse in cool water.

Remove the cat from the hot area immediately. Prior to taking him to your veterinarian, lower his temperature by wetting him thoroughly with cool water, then increase air movement around him with a fan.

CAUTION: Using very cold water can actually be counterproductive. Cooling too quickly and especially allowing his body temperature to become too low can cause other life-threatening medical conditions. The rectal temperature should be checked every 5 minutes.

Once the body temperature is 103F, the cooling measures should be stopped and the cat should be dried thoroughly and covered so he does not continue to lose heat. Even if the cat appears to be recovering, take him to your veterinarian as soon as possible. He should still be examined since he may be dehydrated or have other complications.

Allow free access to water or a children's re-hydrating solution if the cat can drink on his own. Do not try to force-feed cold water; the cat may inhale it or choke.

Indoor Cats and Water

From experience I found out my 15 year old cat will be slow to drink water that's been in his bowl more than a day. They really like fresh water, even more so than those expensive cat water fountains. Change water in the bowl several times a day.



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From the Desk of Tom Carney

The Witchcraft Trial

by Tom Carney

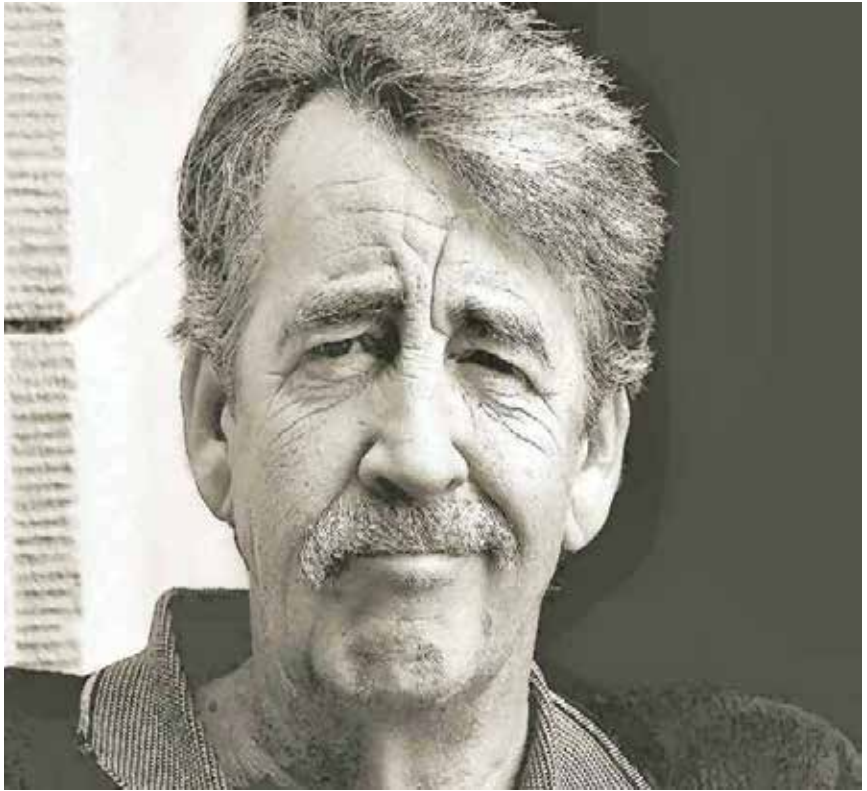
The courtrooms in early Alabama history normally dealt with horse thieves, murderers and bushwhackers, but in the late fall of 1822 our courts of law were forced to deal with something totally different. The courts had to render a decision about a woman accused of witchcraft.

History has forgotten the old woman's name. All we know about her is that she lived on the banks of the Flint River. A friendless old crone who had strange ways and was rather aloof, the woman was the talk of the local area. At first, she was spoken of only in whispers, then more boldly until she was publicly accused of being a witch. It culminated in a warrant for her arrest signed by one of the landed gentry of the community.

The day of the trial was fixed. Excitement ran high and people came from far and near to witness the unusual event. The trial proceeded on time and a great number of witnesses were called to testify, but nothing positive resulted from any of their testimony.

"You know you're getting older when your best friend is dating someone half his age and isn't breaking any laws."

Shawn Fredericks, Hazel Green



Then a young woman was called to the stand. Her testimony went as follows: One day she was washing down at the creek, and became extremely tired. She sat down at the foot of a beech tree to rest. Soon, the old accused woman came down the tree in the form of a squirrel, with its tail curled over its back, snarled at her and put a spell on her.

The sickly girl testified that she had been ill ever since and couldn't sleep due to pain in her stomach that started the day she saw the old woman in the form of the squirrel.

The presiding judge, who seemed to have been



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in deep study, now, seemed quite relieved upon hearing the young lady's testimony. He straightened in his chair and announced that the young woman's testimony was proof positive of the old woman's guilt. His opinion was that he should immediately send her to jail and began writing the order to put her behind bars.

Shock and dumb amazement settled on the faces of every sensible person in the room except that of a young Irishman named John Gallagher. Gallagher seemed calm and self-possessed. He rose and modestly asked permission of the court to make a single remark, whereupon he was told by the judge that he could make as many remarks as he wished.

"Then, Sir," began Gallagher, "allow me to remind you that it would be useless to send this woman to jail, for if she really is a witch she could escape through the keyhole; and if she should be innocent, it would be a great pity for her to be sent to prison."

The old judge was now more perplexed than ever for he was in a dilemma as to what to do with the old woman and asked young Gallagher his opinion.

At this, the sensible young man suggested that the case rest where it was until the Grand Jury met at which time it could be laid before them.

That course of action was accepted, but for one reason or another the case was never taken before the Grand Jury and was never brought up again. It is assumed that the poor old lady lived out her days in peace, left alone, by the banks of the Flint River.

And so ended the only witch trial that was ever held in Alabama's colorful history.

Getting Older

Three ladies were discussing the travails of getting older. One said, "Sometimes I catch myself with a jar of mayonnaise in my hand, while standing in front of the refrigerator, and I can't remember whether I need to put it away, or start making a sandwich."

The second lady chimed in with, "Yes, sometimes I find myself on the landing of the stairs and can't remember whether I was on my way up or on my way down."

The third one responded, "Well, ladies, I'm glad I don't have that problem. Knock on wood," as she rapped her knuckles on the table, and then said, "That must be the door, I'll get it!"

Overheard in the halls

"I've sure gotten old. I've had 2 heart bypass surgeries. A hip replacement, new knees. Fought prostate cancer, and diabetes. I'm half blind, can't hear anything quieter than a jet engine, take 40 different medications that make me dizzy, winded and subject to blackouts. Have bouts with dementia. Have poor circulation, hardly feel my hands and feet anymore. Can't remember if I'm 85 or 92. Have lost all my friends.

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SUCCESS IS NOT AN ACCIDENT

by Bruce Walker



Momma Walker never talked much about success, but she knew exactly how to recognize it.

She did not measure a person by the shine on his shoes, the size of his paycheck, or whether his name appeared on some fancy sign downtown. Around her place, success looked a whole lot plainer than that. It looked like bills paid on time, children raised right, food on the table,

and a man or woman who kept going when life gave them every reason to quit.

Momma had a way of making big truths sound like something you might hear while shelling peas on the porch. She did not use fancy words, and she surely did not sound like one of those motivational speakers trying to sell you a brighter tomorrow for three easy payments. But if you sat with her long enough, you would hear more wisdom in twenty minutes than some folks learn in twenty years.

She believed a good life had to be built. It did not happen because you wished hard, prayed loud, or waited around for your ship to come in. She would have told you plain as day, "If you want something better, get up and go after it."

That was Momma's first rule, though she never called it a rule: get out of your comfort zone and stay out of it. She may not have used those exact words, but she lived them. She knew nothing much grows in comfort except laziness and excuses. If you stay where everything feels easy and familiar, do not be surprised if your life stays small too.

And she had no use for quitting.

I can almost hear her now: "You rest if you need to, but don't you stop." Momma had lived long enough to know that some of the hardest days come right before things turn around. Folks give up too soon. They throw down the load because it feels heavy, when all the while they may be only a few more steps from the top of the hill.

When trouble came and it always does Momma be-

lieved in looking it square in the face. She knew fear gets

bigger when you let it hide in the shadows. She wanted to know how bad a thing could get, what it might cost, what could be lost, and what could still be saved. Once you name a trouble, it loses some of its power.

She also knew better than to spend all day fretting over what she did not want. Her mind always leaned toward what needed doing next. While other people wrung their hands, Momma reached for a broom, a skillet, a hoe, a Bible, or a child that needed tending. She focused on what could be done, not just on what could go wrong.

She believed in deciding and then moving.

Not foolishly. Not recklessly. But once the thing was clear enough, decide and go. She did not admire people who stood in one place wringing their hands until the chance

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passed them by. In her world, hesitation could cost you a crop, a paycheck, or your peace of mind.

And once you decide, keep moving forward.

Momma knew there are seasons when forward does not look impressive. Sometimes forward is a stride. Sometimes it is a shuffle. Sometimes it is just putting your feet on the floor and facing another day when you would rather stay in bed and pull the covers over your head. But forward is forward, and she would have told you that even a limp beats sitting down in defeat.

She was big on taking things one day at a time. "Don't borrow trouble from tomorrow," she used to say. "You can't see over the hill or around the corner anyway." That was not denial. That was survival. She understood that most people wear themselves out carrying tomorrow's load before sunrise today. Handle what is in front of you. Tomorrow can wait its turn.

Momma also believed that anything important had to be watched over. If you do not keep an eye on your money, it slips away. If you do not tend your marriage, it grows cold. If you do not guide your children, the world will be glad to do it for you. If you do not watch your own spirit, bitterness will move in and make itself at home. Anything not managed starts heading downhill.

She did not waste much time comparing herself to other people either. She had her own row to hoe. She knew looking over somebody else's fence too long was a good way to let weeds grow in your own garden. Pay some attention to what others are doing if you must, but pay more attention to what is in your own hands.

And let me tell you something else about Momma Walker: she was kind, but she was not weak. She would feed you, pray for you, and sit up with you through the night if you were hurting.

But she was not about to let anybody push her around. There was iron in that woman. She knew the difference between having a sweet spirit and having no backbone.

She also never expected life to be fair. She had lived too long and seen too much for that kind of foolishness. She knew good people sometimes get the hard end of the stick. But she also knew sitting around pouting over unfairness would not pay a light bill or mend a broken heart. You take your lickings, say your prayers, and keep going.

And one thing I dearly loved about her she knew how to laugh. A little humor, in her world, was like salve on a sore spot. It did not erase the pain,

but it made it easier to bear.

Most of all, Momma believed there was always a reason to smile.

Not because life was easy. Not because nothing ever hurt. But because smiling was sometimes an act of faith. It was her way of saying, "This trouble may walk up in my yard, but it does not own the deed."

So when I think about success now, I do not think first of money, titles, or applause. I think of Momma Walker. I think of steadiness, grit, backbone, and grace. I think of somebody who gets up, does right, bears what must be borne, and still manages to smile before the day is done.

Momma Walker never talked much about success. But she sure knew what it looked like. Sometimes success is simply not stopping!

contact: bruce. walker2@gmail.com



ALEX

Hello, my name is Alex. I am a friendly and sweet 2-year-old male cat living at the Ark Animal Shelter. I have been here for a few weeks living in a room with a lot of other cats. I get along with all the other cats and greet all the visitors that come into our cat room. The cats here live in free roaming rooms so if you come to visit you can play with me and pet me. I have been neutered and have had all my shots and been micro-chipped. I love all the volunteers and visitors and I am the first cat to greet everyone who comes into the room. If you come to see me I will follow you around to let you know I like you. If you are thinking of adding a new cat family member I am ready to go if you will give me a chance. If so, come to the Ark Animal Shelter. Ask to see Alex, that's me!

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LETTERS FROM LONG AGO READERS



From Basil Anest Berchekas, Jr.,

This message is for the contributor Cathey Carney: in the May 2015 issue she had a request from a reader who wondered about the name of the club and motel that used to be located about where North K-Mart was...that motel and club was the Diplomat Inn, facing directly on North Memorial Parkway.

There was also a 24 hour cafe north of the Diplomat with a large hot dog on the roof that did much of their business after club closing hours; don't remember the name of the place next to the Diplomat. My late wife and I ate at the Diplomat's restaurant since they had excellent inexpensive food, since liquor laws at that time required food to be sold at clubs like the Diplomat. Hated to see the Diplomat burn down!

From Nolan Myrick

Was Huntsville, AL or Huntsville, TX here first? Kevin Brady, US representative of Conroe and Huntsville, TX had a lady in his office look it up. Huntsville, TX was founded in 1836 by a man named Ephraim Gray who established a trading post. In 1837 he named the place after the town he had been to in Madison county, AL. after the place he had moved from. Leroy Friendly was the man who called me. They are straight due west of us. He knew that name was from here, but who was Ephraim Gray - good question.

"If you're sitting in public and a stranger takes the seat next to you, just stare straight ahead and say, 'Did you bring the money?'"

How to have fun in retirement

From Lawrence Traglia Sr.

I grew up in Huntsville Park. We knew a family named the Yarbroughs who made home-made hot tamales. I have been trying to find this recipe for years. They were just the best.

I knew at one time there was a lady who had a food stand behind Floyd Hardin's barber shop on Andrew Jackson Way. She made hot tamales that were very similar to the Yarbrough's. I would love to find this recipe if any of your readers has it.

When I was growing up in the Park, I had an uncle Bob Adcock who would buy these tamales and we would really look forward to that every Saturday evening.

From Janet Miller

Here are my two favorite "isms" from my parents. They are buried in Ryland at the Shiloh Methodist Church Cemetery.

While fishing one spring day I asked my father Alton Miller if he wanted a second rod and reel to fish with. After a thoughtful moment he responded "Baby, the way I have it figured is if the fish are biting, I can't handle but one and if they're not, I don't need it."

I found the statement both simply profound and hilarious at the same time.

After the birth of my first child my mother Dot Miller told me to remember one thing - "Other than the grandparents, no one will think your kids are as cute or smart as you do." In the 45 years since, I have found this statement to be mostly true.

Thank you for the opportunity to share this with you and the readers of Old Huntsville. I can barely wait each month til the new one comes out.

William M. Yates, CLU, ChFC

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From Calvin L. Holder

My mother, Ruby Lee Richardson, died November 1942. I was born on the 6th of November. I was one of the first boys to be delivered at Huntsville Hospital when they first opened up the Delivery section.

I was raised by my grandmother Flora R. Crownover, and my grandfather Holder Adcock and my step grandpa Horace H. Adcock. Horace was a tree surgeon from Deckard, TN in the 1930s. He worked for the Davis Tree men.

As I grew up I started school from the first grade at St. Mary's, Rison, East Clinton, West Clinton and finally Huntsville Junior High on Randolph for the 9th grade.

Can you imagine how I felt with my grandparents walking with me to and from school each day to keep me from being picked on or mistreated by others older than me?

Also to keep me from getting in trouble.

But as I look around me I can truly say I'm proud of every step they took to keep me safe and out of trouble. One would walk me to school, one would walk me home. Hall Bryant, Jr. can verify this.

When the County Fair came to town in September my step Grandpa would go down there and get a job putting up lights, tents, or whatever was needed to get a pass, so my grandmother and I could get in free each night if we wanted to go.

I remember he would carry me to G. S. Martin Grocery Store.

During this time my Dad, C. T. Holder, was in the U.S. Navy on the ship USS Nathan Hale.

"When you are courting a nice girl, an hour seems like a second. When you sit on a red-hot cinder, a second seems like an hour. That's Relativity."

Albert Einstein

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COMING HOME TO HUNTSVILLE

by Chuck Bobo, June 2014

I was born in Limestone County and grew up in Madison & Morgan Counties. As a young man I moved around a lot; Missouri, Illinois, Florida, the Bahamas but I always had a soft spot for my home here in Huntsville, Alabama.

In my youth, years 1928 to 1941, I remember my father moving a sawmill from the Madison Cross Roads area to Lacey's Spring and driving a wagon pulled by a team of horses across what is now the Arsenal. I remember that a black man, Porter Moore, worked for my father and he and I drove the wagon. We made arrangements to stop for a night with a farmer, and we had our horses

with us. The man told me I could sleep in the house with him and his wife but that Porter would have to sleep in the barn. I remember that I wouldn't stay in the house with them but preferred to stay with Porter in the barn. The lady cooked breakfast for us the next morning and Porter was told he could eat on the back porch. Again, if Porter ate on the back porch, I did too.

When I was a little older my friend Jim Webb and I lived at one period in the Gladstone Community north of Huntsville on Pulaski Pike. He was three or four years younger than me but we had some common memories. Both of us hunted squirrels in the hickory woods on the farm of Mr. Robert White. We swam in the swimming hole on Beaverdam Creek at Pulaski Pike.

Jim's father managed Huntsville Wholesale Nursery at Gladstone and most of the boys in the community had summer jobs at the nursery.

Mr. Ozzie Beverly was the blacksmith for the nursery. He taught me how to shoe horses, a knowledge which served me well some 12 years later when I got on the staff of one of my generals in the Air Corps. General Archie Oldham who was from Texas, had horses with him and I boasted to him that I knew all about horses. I got the job of taking care of his horses when he was away from the base, meaning I had to arise at 5 in the morning to go to the stables.

I remember the cafe in Huntsville that used to be just north of the Big Springs and made the best hamburgers in town. I could come to town with a quarter on Saturday and could go to the movies, get a bag of popcorn and then a hamburger and still go home with 5 cents left. Later when I got older I moved out of town and found that for the price of a round trip air fare from the Los Angeles area to Huntsville, I could fly to Nashville and get a rental car for a week and have enough money left over to buy gasoline for a week.

Several times when I would come back to Huntsville to visit, I would inquire at the Times or the Huntsville News about a newspaper job. Almost every inquiry brought a job offer and weekly pay at about the same daily rate I was getting elsewhere. On a couple occasions I asked about public information or writing jobs at Redstone Arsenal. While the pay there was somewhat higher than at the Times, it was still not as much as I was making in the other cities I had lived, so I had to pass them by.

I realized when I retired that I had to get back to the town that I loved. I am still amazed at the difference in this area when I moved back in 1999 from those early days of my youth, in the 30s and 40s. But I've never regretted coming back home.

Aunt Thelma Parks



by Bob Everest

My family never lived in Huntsville, but we often went there to visit my mother's only sister, Aunt Thelma, when I was a child.

Aunt Thelma was the most unconventional person I have ever met. She was born in 1900 and lived all her life on a small farm about five miles outside of Huntsville.

She never married, saying "there ain't a man on this earth I could put up with for very long."

One of her passions was fighting roosters. She never fought them herself but every Sunday morning she would inspect her roosters, telling her hired-hand, Rufus, which ones to take and how much to bet. She would then go to church and pray for the sinners.

Aunt Thelma never learned to drive and always depended on someone else for a ride. In 1934 she decided the time had come to learn how. She sent Rufus to town with a wad of cash and instructions on exactly the kind of automobile she wanted.

Rufus was pressed into service as a driving instructor. The lessons quickly proved disastrous. She would yell for the car to stop, blow the horn instead of shifting gears and turn the steering wheel in the wrong directions.

Finally, after several weeks, Rufus informed Aunt Thelma that he did not believe God ever intended for her to drive. He also threatened to quit if he had to give another driving lesson. The car was consigned to the barn and once a month Rufus would drive it to the front of the house where Aunt Thelma would sit in it and wave at the neighbors who passed by.

Once a month Rufus would wax the car and once a year he would change the oil, even though the longest trip it ever made was to the front drive-way.

In 1987 Aunt Thelma died and I went to Huntsville to settle her estate.

Most of her property was sold or given away but I had one item shipped to my home in Arizona where it remains as one of my prized possessions

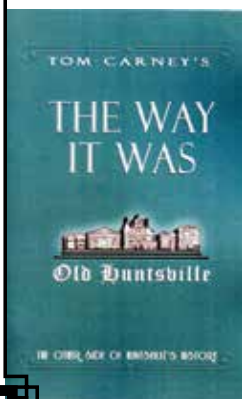
A 1934 black Ford with 163 miles on it.



BY TOM CARNEY

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