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Old Huntsville

HISTORY AND STORIES OF THE TENNESSEE VALLEY

SNAKE HANDLING – DID IT REALLY HAPPEN HERE?



Inside the building one had the eerie feeling of being transported into a time warp where different cultures had collided and created a new one, where neither the past nor the present was reality.

The women, all of whom wore their hair in tightly wrapped buns and were dressed in long dresses extending almost to their ankles, sat in a small group clapping their hands in time with music coming from an electric guitar in front of the pulpit. One woman was furiously shaking a tambourine in an effort to keep up with an electronic version of "I'll Fly Away."

Also in this issue: Days at Butler High School; S&H Green Stamps; A Caretaking Journey; The Typhoid Home in Huntsville; 1904 Local News; Habits of Cats; The Goat Man; Saturday Nights in Madison, AL; Sweet Recipes from Union Hill; Curing Barking Dogs and Much Much More!

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Snake Handling, Did It Really Happen Here?

by Tom Carney

The first thing that most people noticed when they pulled into the crushed gravel parking lot of the church was the variety of car tags. One car was from Georgia, another from Tennessee and two from Madison County. The car from Georgia boasted a bumper sticker that read "My Child is an Honor Student."

The building had not originally been built as a church. A faded metal RC Cola sign near the door gave the impression it had been a country store years earlier. Nearby, a 1974 Chevrolet, minus its motor and left front fender, was perched precariously on concrete blocks. Kudzu vines, the scourge of the rural south, had almost completely covered a large mound of unidentifiable trash near the back fence row.

**King Solomon to his
thousand wives:**

**"Who doesn't have a
headache tonight?"**

Inside the building one had the eerie feeling of being transported into a time warp where different cultures had collided and created a new one, where neither the past nor the present was reality. The women, all of whom wore their hair in tightly wrapped buns and were dressed in long dresses extending almost to their ankles, sat in a small group clapping their hands in time with music coming from an electric guitar in front of the pulpit. One woman was furiously shaking a tambourine in an effort to keep up with an electronic version of "I'll Fly Away." The guitar player's belt buckle was an advertisement for John Deere tractors.

The men, all dressed in long-sleeve shirts despite the heat, stood in a tight bunch off to the side of the pulpit, some of them tapping a foot to the music and occasionally raising their arms as if beseeching an unknown power to acknowledge their presence. Even before the last chords of the guitar had faded away one man, the preacher, stepped forward and began his testimony.

He told of a life caught up in sin, racked by drugs and alcohol, that finally led him to jail where he met his Lord.



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He told of how he wasn't long for this earthly world and how he was going to a better place. He said sinners who did not repent would burn in an everlasting hell. The congregation was standing now, swaying back and forth as the preacher continued his message in a singsong cadence. Every few seconds he would be interrupted by someone shouting an "Amen," or "Praise Jesus." One woman constantly repeated the refrain "Sweet Jesus."

A woman moved into the middle of the aisle. Her body was stiff, yet shaking all over; her eyes glazed as if in a hypnotic trance. She seemed to be talking, yet the sounds coming from her lips were unidentifiable, an unknown tongue that others in the congregation found familiar. Another woman, the "Sweet Jesus" woman, joined her in the aisle and a few moments later also began shaking and twitching and speaking in the unknown tongue.

The preacher was really sweating now. He had moved near the pulpit and every few seconds, as if to emphasize his message, would slap it loudly before hopping across the room on one foot while waving his arms wildly in the air. The guitar player tried to keep up, trying to hit a chord every time the preacher slapped the pulpit, but finally gave up and contented himself by attempting to adjust the various knobs on his amplifier,

Another man, dressed in blue polyester slacks and a cowboy shirt with a buffalo head above the left pocket, joined the preacher and began shouting his testimony as he stomped loudly from one side of the building to the other while holding a Bible in the air. An envelope bearing a State Farm Insurance return address stuck

out of his back pocket. The building reverberated with Amens, Sweet Jesus's and stories of sin. All the other people, except for two small girls sitting in the back playing with a game, added to the frenzy. Some were clapping, some were shouting and some were doing both.

The man who had joined the preacher near the pulpit suddenly reached down into a wooden box that had been placed there earlier. Without missing a beat in his praise for the Holy Ghost he raised his arms, revealing a four foot long timber-back rattlesnake coiled around his right arm, its head darting back and forth as if trying to find the source of its anger. A strange dance began as the man moved the snake from arm to arm, placing it around his neck and draping it over his shoulder, all the while keeping a running commentary on his faith in his religion. Another man took the snake from him and the same strange ritual was performed again as the congregation urged them

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on with more cries of Amen. The Sweet Jesus woman joined the men, passing the serpent back and forth and letting its body slither across her chest and around her shoulders. The next snake, another diamondback rattler, was taken from the box and passed from hand to hand, often with one person handling both snakes at the same time.

The guitar player had left his amplifier and stood near the side of the room watching. Nearby a woman was rolling on the floor as she talked in the unknown tongue.

Almost as suddenly as it had begun, it was over. The snakes were back in their box. The woman who had been shaking uncontrollably minutes before was now complaining about the food in a restaurant where she and her husband had eaten earlier that day. The men were talking about the war. "God's Will will be done," noted the preacher in a somber tone. The other men nodded their heads in an understanding way. Someone, a newcomer, asked him if he had ever been bitten by a snake. "Everyone's faith," he said, "will be tested someday."

He later admitted to having been bitten nineteen times.

There is no written history of the "Snake Handlers" in Madison County but by most accounts the first local "handling" took place near Maysville around 1917, when George Went Hensley, a traveling evangelist, held a brush arbor revival. Local youths who had heard of

the new religion caught three large and vicious rattlesnakes, placed them in a box and carried them to the service. Undoubtedly they thought Hensley's snakes were "fixed" in some way and wanted him to try his faith on the real thing.

Hensley was reported to have ignored the youth's taunts at first. Halfway through the service, however, Hensley, who was already holding a snake he had brought with him, reached down and took up the other ones, holding them high in the air, caressing them and at times even seeming to talk to them. People in the congregation, who had never witnessed anything like it, were deeply divided in their beliefs. Was it a miracle? Was it the Devil's work? Or was there another explanation?

George Went Hensley was a bootlegger and moonshiner turned preacher who, in 1909, was sitting on the side of a mountain in Grasshop-

per Valley, TN meditating about a passage from the Bible. The passage was Mark XVI: 17-8.

"And these signs will accompany those who believe; by using my name they will cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them. They shall lay hands on the sick, and they will recover."

According to one story, Hensley then saw a rattlesnake lying on a nearby rock and picked it up. When he was not bitten, this served as a sign to him that he was anointed by God. At his next church service he preached about the Bible passage, explaining it was God's will and the true believers would not be bitten. Toward the end of the sermon he opened a wooden box and pulled out a large snake, holding it in the air



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and letting it curl around his arms while daring the congregation to come forward and take the snake as a sign of their own faith. "Non-believers," he warned, "would burn in an eternal Hell!"

Members of the congregation joined him at the front of the church, and when they were not bitten, a new religious movement was born.

Hensley traveled throughout the Southeast with his message, winning many converts among the hill people who desperately wanted to believe they were the chosen ones. His personal life, however, continued to be a problem. At one point he returned from a preaching tour and caught his wife having an affair with a neighbor. Infuriated, Hensley attacked the man with a knife and was sentenced to a term on the road gang.

He returned to making whiskey but after several years trying to eke out a living decided to repent and become an evangelist again. Strangely, although he was a leader of a religion that believed a divorced person could never enter Heaven, he had married and divorced four times. He died in 1955 after being bitten by a Diamond-back rattlesnake during a church service. In the preceding forty-six years Hensley had been bitten over four hundred times.

As the movement began spreading, its beliefs began to change. At first it was believed that if a person was "anointed" he would not be bitten. After many people began suffering snake bites it was decided the bite was merely a test of faith, that their belief would make them immune to the poison. Then when people began dropping dead, it was taken as a sign that God was calling the "true believers home to a better place."

This actually served as an impetus for more people to handle snakes.

Other members of the group began the practice of drinking poison as a test of their faith. In many of the churches the preacher would dissolve powdered strychnine into a jug of water and invite the believers to join them in a poisonous communion. Producers of the television show "Dateline" tested the poison used in a service in Jackson County and found it was diluted to a point where it was not harmful. Another test, however, at another church, showed the members drinking one hundred per cent pure strychnine, potent enough to kill anyone.

Many of the members also believed in handling fire; a practice which is believed to have began on Sand Mountain in the 1920s. A preacher at a revival, perhaps sensing that the congregation was getting tired of the same old snake handling, thrust his hand into a pot bellied coal stove and grabbed a handful of red hot coals, declaring that his faith in God would protect him. When the members saw that his hands were not burned, they too went forward for a handful of hot coals, proving, at least to themselves, that they were the chosen ones.

As coal stoves became obsolete the practice has largely died out, although members still occasion-



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ally use kerosene heaters or candles; holding their hands or bare arms over the open flames for long periods of time.

In Madison County the sect saw its heyday between 1920 and 1950. A church was started near Gurley and drew a fair number of members until its minister picked up the wrong snake during a meeting and was killed. Other churches were started near Woodville and New Market and although they initially drew large crowds, they too died out, mostly as a result of local prejudice.

When Lewis Ford died from snake handling in 1945, in Grasshopper Valley, it led to the official banning of snake handling in Tennessee. In the next few years, after a spate of deaths by snakebite and strychnine poisoning, Alabama and Georgia followed by passing their own laws.

In 1951 Ruth Craig, of New Hope, took up serpents during a service that was being held at her home with the warning, "I'm going to handle this snake and anyone who doesn't believe had better leave." She was bitten four times and died shortly afterwards. A few years later a sawmill worker, Jim Thomas, died during services in Fort Payne. When Lloyd Hill of Birmingham was killed by a twenty-four pound rat-

lesnake at his church, over a thousand people filed by his open casket to pay respects.

With all the resulting publicity the religion went underground, confining its presence mostly to small rural churches in the mountains of Tennessee, Kentucky and Alabama where the authorities would turn a blind eye. Occasionally, as late as the 1980s, one could hear advertisements on the radio on Sand Mountain inviting people to a revival and telling them to "bring their boxes."

Locally, members met in private homes or garages, often with dire consequences. One member who lived on 9th Avenue got in his car to go to work one morning and discovered a large and very angry copperhead snake coiled on the floor. On the steering wheel was a note: "If you want to handle snakes ... handle this one."

With its members scattered far and wide, and with few churches to attend, the movement took on a nomadic nature. Members would drive hundreds of miles to attend services and handle snakes in some hidden cove in the mountains, and then drive back home the same night. Oddly, the geographical distance between them served to draw the members into an even tighter knit group where the men would greet one another with a kiss on the lips and everyone was



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**"I asked my father if I could
 go ice skating on the lake.
 He said, 'Wait til it gets
 warmer.'"**

Rodney Dangerfield

known as Brother and Sister.

Snake handling in North Alabama began a resurgence in the early 1990s when Glenn Summerford rented a converted service station near Scottsboro and started his own church, "The Church with Signs Following." Summerford, a small time hood who had been convicted of grand larceny and burglary, proved to be a highly charismatic and flamboyant leader who drank poison, handled snakes and red hot coals and often, if the spirit moved him, would stick his fingers into live electrical sockets.

Hundreds of people flocked to the church three times a week to listen to Brother Glenn and other traveling snake-handling evangelists. John Wayne Brown, who had began handling serpents at the age of seventeen, and his wife Melinda, were regular attendees. Dewey Chafin, who had been bitten over one hundred times, brought snakes from Tennessee and took his turn at the pulpit. When his sister Columbia suffered a fatal bite, Chafin had the snake stuffed and kept it as an eerie souvenir.

Unfortunately, while the church itself was moving forward, Glenn Summerford's life was beginning a downward spiral of backsliding, fueled by prodigious amounts of vodka and orange juice. When his wife began to suspect he was having an affair with another women in the church she had good reason to fear him; he had already broken her mother's jaw in a fit of anger during a family dinner.

It was later alleged that he had promised to marry his mistress on a certain date, which was probably the reason he decided his wife had to go. He attempted to accomplish this by grabbing her by the hair and forcing her to stick her hand in one of the cages holding his seventeen

snakes. When she survived the first bite he repeated the same procedure the next day.

That evening after Summerford had passed out in an alcoholic stupor, his wife made her escape. A few days later the errant preacher was arrested and charged with attempted murder.

Summerford was convicted and sentenced to ninety-nine years in the penitentiary. Several weeks later Clyde Crossfield was bitten at the church and had to be flown by helicopter to Chattanooga. He survived the bite but many of the members believed he would not have been bitten at all if Summerford had been there to pray over the snake.

With Summerford in prison, attendance at the "Church with Signs Following" began to die out. John Wayne Brown died in a nearby church while handling a four-foot timber rattlesnake. His wife had died three years earlier after being bitten.

Dewey Chafin, who had stuffed the snake that killed his sister, also handled the wrong serpent and met his maker.

Today it is estimated that there are approximately 1500 people in this country who practice snake handling as part of their religion.

Many of them live only a short drive from Huntsville.

"Just for today, I will not sit in my living room all day watching a boring TV show. Instead, I will move my TV into the bedroom."

Jerry Ferguson, Arab

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- For nervousness - throughout the day, sip apple, pineapple, prune, grape and cherry juice. Drink them at room temperature, not chilled.

- When you wake up in a sad state of mind and don't know why, wear bright colors to help cheer you up. The rose colors - pinks and scarlets - are good. Also effective is the orange family for a good picker-upper.

- If you feel especially moody, drink peppermint tea. Drink it warm and strong.

- According to European folklore, celery helps you forget your troubles from a broken heart and soothes your nerves at the same time.

- For a painful case of shingles, try a paste of Epsom salts and water. Place the paste directly on the affected area. Repeat as often as necessary.

- The fastest way to do away with a blister is to have a snail crawl over it.

- If you are still young enough to have pimples on your face, try eating brown rice. It contains amino acids that are good for skin con-

ditions. For blackheads, before going to bed rub lemon juice over the area. Wait til morning to wash off the juice with cool water. Repeat several evenings in a row and you'll see results.

- If you are prone to nightmares, eat a small evening meal 2 hours before retiring. When you go to bed, sleep on your right side with your right hand under your head. Then tell yourself that you will have a happy dream and try to visualize it.

- To improve your memory, drink half a glass of carrot juice together with a half glass of milk, daily. Or try 4 whole cloves added to a cup of sage tea. Drink a cup everyday.

- For a fever, bind sliced onions or peeled garlic to the soles of your feet. It may give you garlic breath. Or eat grapes throughout the day.



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Turn to the experts

Enigmatic



*by Gerald Alvis, the
Poet of Greenlawn*

So, there I was with the same old sheepish grin on my face. We were having the laundry discussion. You know, picking stuff up (evidently, you're not supposed to leave your clothes along the way to the shower).

She slowed her speech and said "in one pile" with over-enunciated, amplified and simplified tones. Okay, I replied as I began consolidating my multi-piles along with several stragglers found in various rooms.

The laundry discussion piqued my interest. This challenge I then undertook is a mystery that has puzzled men for ages! What are those 5 short, pastel-colored plastic boxes with holes in their sides that rest on the laundry room floor? It's controversial, I know, so I'll provide the research, and you decide. Here are the possibilities:

They are decorative. My wife loves decorating and does so with each season of the year, and sometimes I don't notice it right away. But these seem to stay there year-round on the tile, so plausible but unlikely given the fixed location.

"All God's children are not beautiful. Most of God's children are, in fact, barely presentable."

Fran Lebowitz

They are step stools upside down! That's a good one. She could turn them over to reach the items on the top shelves of the cabinet. Possible, but I picked one up, and they are kinda flimsy, probably not the best practice. They are boundaries to keep damp towels and stuff from resting against the baseboard and the wall... a protective barrier against moisture, and oh, it could also be a beacon: put laundry in front of these, maybe like a starting line. Who knows, maybe?

Dust covers for the tiles? Bumpers for the Roomba fleet of robot vacuum cleaners she deploys?

Fully utilizing my staunch and powerful observation skills, I've noticed that sometimes there are clothes in these boxes. I don't judge her if she slips up and some that's supposed to be on the floor lands in these cartons or containers (you know, I bet there is a name for these things).

And then it hit me, she put them in there on purpose, perhaps things aren't as random as they seem. Then a phrase from long ago resonated in my mind. "One of these things is not like the other." It's a stretch but just maybe they're sorted!

I'll keep you posted, but with further examination, it looks like clothes with zippers go in one basket and shirts with buttons go in another. But that still leaves 3 others! Oh well.

Gotta go; there are other mysteries to solve today. I'm talking quantum mechanics stuff, how my clothes get teleported from the dryer to my closet. I mean, how does it know??!



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Duchess and The Toad 1983



by *Bill Alkire*

The whole family was outside doing various activities. The weather was nearly perfect. The cats had found a toad to aggravate. My wife and daughter were discussing school events and the upcoming science projects. My son and I were engaged in one of our cars or working on the travel trailer.

It seemed to Duchess, our cockapoo, that everyone was busy having an enjoyable time except her. She had gone from one person to the other receiving only a pat on her head. She found that her humans were not concerned about her welfare at all.

She put her short stubby tail down. She was sad and felt she was being totally ignored ever since those cats came along, life had been different at home.

"I was going to buy a copy of *The Power of Positive Thinking* and then I thought: 'What the hell good would that do?'"

Ronnie Shakes

The cats had been getting all the attention since they were kittens and even more now that they had grown. The only redeeming quality was, the cats did not live indoors. Sharing the house with Guinea pigs was bad enough... but cats? Thank God they stayed under the house.

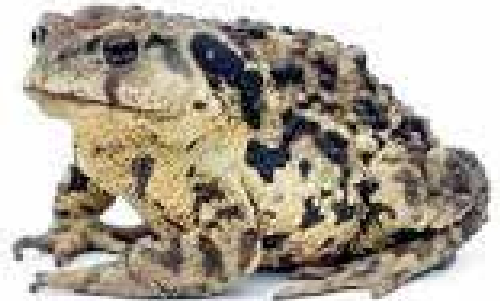
That little gray cat, DeLorean, was sneaky and mischievous. Duchess had to set him straight nearly every day. Cats were problematic!

That's when she noticed that the cat's fascination with Mr. Toad had waned. She decided it was her turn to torment the little critter and possibly get attention. She begins pawing Mr. Toad ... Mr. Toad made no response. She jumped at him off and on ... again no response. She wasn't prone to barking at other animals, just people, however she tried that as well with no response. Duchess walked up behind Mr. Toad; he couldn't see her. She grabbed hold of Mr. Toad with her teeth lifting him off the ground. That was a mistake! She quickly dropped him!

The only defense mechanism a toad has to defend itself is to urinate. The foul smelling and tasting liquid that it secretes, especially when it's frightened or is in danger.

Mr. Toad had urinated on the dog. Duchess began shaking her head, jumping around, sneezing, and frothing at the mouth. Our daughter ran into the house and retrieved a syringe and liquid Benadryl. Duchess was not happy with receiving the Benadryl. She almost at once was better. She never messed around with Mr. Toad again.

The cats never bothered Mr. Toad after seeing what happened to Duchess. They decided they no longer needed to torment Mr. Toad or any other small critter like that in the future.



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It seems like only yesterday we were dragging lawn chairs into the shade, listening to cicadas sing louder than a country band, and wondering if the thermometer would ever dip below ninety. Now the days are growing just a little shorter, mornings have the faintest hint of coolness, and before long we'll be reaching for a light jacket instead of another glass of iced tea.

I love summer, but I have to admit I'm ready for those crisp evenings that smell faintly of wood smoke drifting from someone's fireplace. I just wish autumn didn't arrive with such enthusiasm. One day the trees are dressed in their finest colors, and the next they're standing there in their underwear.

Of course, September means one thing to folks across Alabama: Football.

There's something magical about Saturdays in the South. Neighborhoods become strangely quiet just before kickoff, grocery stores mysteriously run out of chips and soft drinks, and the aroma of hamburgers, barbecue and chicken wings floats across backyards.

On September 5, Alabama opens the season against East Carolina in Tuscaloosa, while Auburn takes on Baylor. Whether you're wearing crimson and white or orange and blue, that's shaping up to be one fine Saturday. Dust off your favorite recliner, gather the family, and don't forget the popcorn.

While we're celebrating football season, it's also a good reminder that fall is nature's way of nudging us to take care of a few things around the house before colder weather arrives.

If you have a fireplace, now's the perfect time to have the chimney cleaned and inspected. Nothing says "cozy evening" like a crackling fire – unless, of course, it's crackling somewhere inside the chimney where it shouldn't be.

Summer's heat and occasional thunderstorms may have loosened shingles or opened small gaps in caulking around windows and doors. A little maintenance today can prevent a much bigger re-

pair bill tomorrow. As my father used to say, "It's a whole lot cheaper to replace a few shingles than half a ceiling."

Nothing welcomes autumn quite like colorful mums on the front porch. Their bright yellows, oranges, burgundies, and purples seem to smile at everyone who comes to the door. Keep them watered, and when the season ends, plant them in the yard.

Most of us have clothes hanging there that haven't seen daylight in years. If you haven't worn something in two or three seasons, pack up those jackets, sweaters, pants, and shirts and donate them to your favorite charity. As temperatures begin to drop, many families are grateful for every warm coat they receive.

Children, of course, seem to grow faster than weeds after a summer rain. Jackets that fit perfectly last winter suddenly have sleeves halfway to the elbows. While you're sorting through closets, take a look in the toy box too. If there are toys gathering more dust than attention, another child would probably treasure them. Sometimes the greatest joy comes not from getting something new, but from giving someone else a reason to smile.

I suppose I should wander down to check the heating and air-conditioning filters. They always seem to need changing at the most inconvenient time. A clean filter helps everything run more efficiently and may even save a little money on those utility bills.

By the time all these chores are finished, I suspect I'll be tired enough to reward myself. I'll settle into my favorite chair, pour a steaming cup of coffee, and spend a few quiet minutes simply enjoying the changing season. After all, fall has a way of reminding us that even endings can be beautiful.

Now... how about you pull up a chair? I believe there's just enough time to enjoy a cup before kickoff.

 The advertisement for Rocket City Federal Credit Union features a background image of a rocket launching with a large plume of smoke. In the top left corner is the Rocket City Federal Credit Union logo, which includes a stylized city skyline and the text "ROCKET CITY FEDERAL CREDIT UNION". To the right of the rocket, the words "MEMBERS HELPING MEMBERS" are written in a decorative, cursive font. The main text of the ad provides the following information:

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 At the bottom left, there is a small icon of a house and the word "Equal Housing Lender". At the bottom center is the NCUA logo, which includes the text "NCUA" and "National Credit Union Administration".

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My Days at Butler High School



by Sandy Mitchell Hughey

We moved here in 1957 from Milan Arsenal, Milan, Tn. We arrived here at the end of March, and for some reason we were put in an old school until the end of May. I think it was Rison Elementary. I started Butler High School in the 10th grade. 1958-59. I loved art and my art teacher's name was Mitchell just like mine. I soon became friends with the smart kids. We didn't call them nerds. The lowest grade they made was an A minus. Why they liked me I don't know because the highest grade I made was not A. We stayed friends through the 12th grade. Some were living on the arsenal and some were in Lakewood neighborhood with me. We all had a bike and rode everywhere together. We formed our own gang.

Anyone new that wanted to join, had to be initiated. I had a couple of friends that had a car. We would take them to a huge house on Monte Sano Mt. It is now the Burritt Museum on the mountain. Back then it was dark up there. We would tell them to ring the doorbell and they could join. When they got out, we would drive a little. They would be screaming, chasing the car. When we let them in, they would swear something was chasing them. No one ever made it to the house.

Other times, we would take them to Sally Carter's grave. But we never stayed long because someone would hear something and we would run for the car.

The very best times were at Shoney's, Jerry's, or Mullins drive in. We could get a Big Boy hamburger, fries and a large coke for \$1.25. Mullins had the best slaw dog I've ever eaten. We would cruise around each of these places looking for our friends.

I had one friend named Jerry. His dad had a pink Cadillac convertible. It was beautiful. It was during final exams and we could leave when we finished. He lived in a neighborhood not far from the school. So, we walked to his house and went riding all over Huntsville. We had to be back by 2:30 to catch the bus home. Jerry said we have to put gas back in the car. We stopped and filled up. We chipped in and filled up a Cadillac for \$3.90. Gas was .29 cents a gallon. A Coke was a nickel.

We also had a good time going roller skating. We went to Rocket City Rollers and Carter's Skateland. It cost 50 cents - 75 cents to skate all evening. We also had movie drive-ins. We had Woody's, 231 North Parkway near Across the Pond, 72 West and Whitesburg Drive-In that I remember. I think we saw "Psycho" at Woody's. We had no idea what we were in for. We were eating and laughing and by the end of that movie no one was saying a word. We were so scared!

In 1961 I was in the 12th grade. My mother bought me an outfit of slacks and beautiful sweater for Christmas. When school started back in January, I wore them proudly. About 10:00 I was called to the office. When I went in to the principal's office, Dr. Crim, he said "What are we wearing?"

I answered, well you are wearing a black suit and I am wearing dress pants. He replied, don't get smart young lady. You know it is against the rules for you to wear pants. I told him my mother bought these, and boys get to wear anything they want. That is not fair! He replied, it's the rule and you are expelled until you come back with the proper attire.

I ended up coming back to school in a dress, unfortunately. I knew he loved horses, and I was a pretty good artist. I drew him five pictures of Tennessee Walking Horses. He was so proud of them, he put them up on the wall. So, I guess I got back in his good graces and finished my senior year and graduated.

In the mid-70s they started getting away from that strict dress-code. Women's fashions started becoming more casual and comfortable. But it was too late to prove my point though.

Overall I had a pretty good life at Butler. It is sad that our school is gone now. But we still have our memories. I have one friend that I started out with in 10th, 11th, and 12th grades - Carol Estrada. We have been friends for 68 years.



THE WOODEN BOWL

from 1951 Newspaper

A frail old man went to live with his son, daughter-in-law and four-year old grandson. The old man's hands trembled, his eyesight was blurred, his step faltered.

The family ate together at the table. But the elderly grandfather's shaky hands and failing sight made eating difficult. Peas rolled off his spoon onto the floor.

When he grasped the glass, milk spilled on the tablecloth.

The son and daughter-in-law became very irritated with the mess.

"We must do something about father," said the son.

"I've had enough of his spilled milk, noisy eating and all the food on the floor."

So the husband and wife set up a small table and chair in the corner of the kitchen.

There, Grandfather ate alone while the rest of the family enjoyed dinner.

Since Grandfather had broken a dish or two, his food was served in a wooden bowl.

When the family glanced in Grandfather's direction, sometimes they saw a tear running down his cheek as he ate, sitting alone.

Still, the only words the couple had for him were sharp admonitions when he dropped a fork or spilled food.

The couple's four-year old son watched it all in silence.

One evening before supper, the father noticed his son playing with wood scraps on the floor.

He asked the child sweetly, "What are you making, Joey?"

Just as sweetly, the boy responded, "Oh, I'm making a little bowl for you and Mama to eat your food in when I grow up."

The four-year-old smiled and went back to work. The words so struck the parents so that they were speechless. Then tears started to stream down their cheeks.

Though no word was spoken, both knew what must be done. That evening the husband took Grandfather's hand and gently led him back to the family table.

For the remainder of his days he ate every meal with the family. And for some reason, neither husband nor wife seemed to care any longer when a fork was dropped, milk spilled, or the tablecloth soiled.

**"In San Francisco,
Halloween
is redundant."**

Will Durst

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What We Have

by *Iolanda Hicks*

The beginning of the month of September, right after Labor Day in my youth, meant going back to school. It was the sign that those 3 months of summer had ended and time to buckle down for a new school year.

As I got older, I started appreciating the month of September. September has been considered the first month of fall leading into Autumn, bringing cooler weather and the brilliant colors of the changing seasons. My dear friend Jay's birthday is on September 11th and she once told me that since the 9-11 tragedy of 2001, her day has felt so different when celebrating on that day.

I want her to know that she is special and that on the day she was born, another bright star lit up the night sky.

9-11-2001 put a shadow on September that will never go away. It was the day dubbed the deadliest terrorist attack in world history and happened on U.S. soil. Lives were changed.

With over 80,000 first responders, including fire fighters, law enforcement, paramedic and other medical personnel that came to help, nearly 3,000 souls were still lost. That day has been memorialized, officially known as Patriot Day, The National Day of Service and Remembrance.

"I take my children everywhere, but they always find their way back home."

Robert Orben

We never know from day to day, what might happen, good or bad. Not too long ago, I ended up at the Crestwood ER. It was the second time within a 3-month span. I was eventually admitted for observation and had the benefit of being cared for by many unique individuals.

As I have gotten older, I realize that we are truly not alone, (not referring to the others in a Galaxy Far, Far, Away) but referring to this world, where we now live. I, for the most part, will go to Crestwood Hospital for emergencies, out-patient services or in-house stays. It's quiet, less crowded, with caring, efficient medical personnel.

I was admitted and checked out in one of those little ER rooms. Three sweet girls got me hooked up to the different diagnostic equipment, one gently inserting an IV "port" in the left arm. A few tests were conducted while it was decided if I needed to stay in the Cardiac unit on the 4th floor.

We waited. My David was with me and he provided the entertainment...just kidding! I want to tell you about some of these extraordinary people that cared for me. After waiting what seemed like a longtime, we asked the young woman checking my vitals if it were possible to get something to drink and maybe some peanut-butter crackers. In about 15 minutes she was back with a few small packs of Graham crackers and 2 small decaf sodas. It was heaven!

So thankful for this sweet lady dressed in pink, who restored our energy! I wish I could spell her name correctly but I don't want to make a mistake. All I can remember is her name was unusual and started with a J. A young Daniel came in soon, wearing the neatest pair of reddish glasses. He said, in conversation, that he was from Tennessee, where he had worked in a hospital but transferred to Huntsville. He had only worked at Crestwood for a few months and was still trying to get use to the way things were done.

Brian was another gentleman who came in to check vitals. He didn't stay long, but I, with that natural reporter personality, pulled out the fact that this was a happy man, who had just cel-



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celebrated his 25th Wedding Anniversary several months before.

After 6 PM Jamie, a very pretty young lady, came in to say that a room had become available upstairs and I was being transferred. We were tired after waiting for about 8 hours and were a little snippy with Jamie by that time. Apology Jamie. She was very patient with the both of us ancients!

My David did not want to leave my side at all and go looking for food. It had been a very unusually busy day in the ER, with patients lining the hallways, while waiting for a room. I was lucky to have gotten a room. By the time I got to my 4th floor room, I was ready for the change and the best part was having my own bathroom. Isn't it kind of funny how as we get older, it's those little things that makes us happy! Yep, I was a happy camper!

Since the night staff was on duty, there were new folks coming in and out of my Room 455, still taking vitals and drawing blood. I think I had become an enigma. With the many different tests preformed during my stay, the end results appeared to be linked to my elevated blood pressure. It had not been a heart attack. The markers in my blood, pin pointing a heart attack, were basically normal.

My main nurse was a really sweet, concerned lady with the wonderful name of Jenesis, and pronounced as in (the Book of) Genesis from the Bible. She was the mother of a young girl named Nyomi, after Naomi from the Book of Ruth, but changing the second letter of her daughter's name to y. I am thinking, "Yes, I am in good hands for sure!"

Hopefully, I have spelled all my "care" warriors' names correctly. A name is an important part of who we are individually! As many patients as she had that night, she treated me as if I were the only one on that floor and I knew her hands were full.

As the night became day again, I added a few other names to the medical staff that saw me through my stay. There was Ashton, Heather who had 3 younger children, all enjoying gymnastics and Ty, a very attentive young man. I believe, by the time I was dis-

charged at around 3 PM the next day, I must have been seen by at least 5 to 6 different doctors, 3 of whom were cardiologists.

One thing that I remembered, that was said to me, from every medical personnel that took care of me, on parting was the phrase "Is there anything you need?"

I wanted to share my recent experience as an example of an unexpected event, meeting strangers who offered help and in-turn giving reassurance that there was someone else I could lean on.

What we have learned in that 9-11 attack, 25 years ago, was the unexpected, a horrendous disaster, with a tremendous loss of innocent lives. Strangers helped one another, saving many and heroes emerged. "What we have" is our faith, ourselves and others in this crazy world we live in and we never know what to expect from one day to another.

In this month of September, enjoy "what we have" now, one day at a time. Help one another and realize that every single person you see around you has a story. The colors of fall are beginning to show, with Labor Day weekend unofficially marking the end of summer.

Enjoy this new season!

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"I grew up in a very large family in a very small house. I never slept alone until after I was married."

Lewis Grizzard

Heard On the Street



by Cathey Carney

I can't believe so many found my hidden butterfly and called to ID it. It was so well hidden. If you did NOT find it, look on page 35 of the Aug issue and in the top graphic, right bottom - see it now? The first caller who won the subscription was **Janice Miller** of Harvest. She said it took her 3 tries so that made me feel better. Janice is a stay at home mom who is also doing alot of canning now, so she loved the feature story about Victory Gardens and growing much of your own food. So many have gotten sick from Cyclospora on

leafy greens and peppers in the store, hard to figure out what's safe to eat these days.

Many of us like to be outside taking care of our gardens but we are being eaten up by mosquitos. I have found the best ever repellent and it's a lotion, no spray. It has no scent and the mosquitoes will NOT land on you. It is called **Sawyer Picaridin** and lasts for 14 hours. I had to order mine on Amazon because it is just easier, but I promise you it works! Thank you to Evan for this tip.

Special Happy Birthday to **Jerry Barclay** who just turned 71. That's middle age these days. Jerry knows so much interesting history of Huntsville and needs to write a few stories for OHM! Lucy Brown hosted a party for the neighbors to celebrate both Jerry and Anna Warren's Aug. 13 birthday. Happy Birthday to both of you!

Football season has started and college football to me is great to watch. No matter who you like it's just fun to make some good snacks and watch all the drama. So in honor of football season I have hidden a teeny tiny football somewhere in this issue - if you find it call me and if you're the first you're a \$50 subscription winner! I expect no calls however.

I have a 2001 Ford Ranger that I

love so I keep it in great condition. Recently I took it to **Goodyear** downtown to do some work on it and I didn't realize that Goodyear has been in the downtown area since December of 1948. That is a long time for business to stay in operation. The folks who work there are honest and knowledgeable and explain what they are doing. They took care of what was needed and nothing unnecessary.

Happy Birthday to **Sam Keith** on Sep. 28. There's lots that could be said about Sam but it would take up several pages and most of it is good! One of the best Dads, grand pa and loyal friend to many, you'll ever find.

Here's another tip you'll love. I recently had **wasps that were building nests** just outside my door to get into my home. So I generally left them alone. But the other day one bit me on the front of my neck and talk about hurt. I am not allergic thank goodness. Called my pest control guy **Jeff** who owns **Critter Catchers**.

When he arrived he had a very lethal looking large bottle of bright blue liquid. He sprayed them and in seconds they were dead, nest and all. I asked him what this magic spray was and guess what - it's 50% Dawn dish soap and 50% water. Put in a spray bottle, shake it up and it's ready to use. Jeff

Chrysanthemums and Pansies are ready for your fall gardens.

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said these type insects have an oily substance on their bodies and Dawn just melts it. And no chemical smell or residue at all.

Of course that same day I made up my own spray bottles and have them ready. I have used them a couple times on stray wasps trying to find their old home and it continues to work in seconds.

Remember this is our secret. Don't tell Jeff I told you this.

If you haven't visited **Bennetts Nursery** on No. Parkway you're in for a treat. They've been the go-to for Huntsville gardeners since 1965 and so many remember and loved **George Bennett**. George passed away in March 2022 and **Jeff** his son runs it now. The nursery is large, shady trees everywhere, paths leading to multiple greenhouses. It's soothing to just walk around there and breathe and take it all in. The quality is exceptional. When you are reading this it'll be time to get your chrysanthemums and pansies, as well as bushes and trees that are best to be planted in the fall.

There's been a lot of road construction on No. Parkway so remember you can still access Bennetts that way but also you can go north on Meridian Street through Alabama A&M University to get to it. If you take the Meridian Street route just turn left on the little road past Winchester, right on Parkway and you'll be right there. You will not be disappointed, I promise!

I cater to a 15 year old cat **Pumpkin** who lives with me, he is quite spoiled. As we all know, cats don't drink nearly enough water and are often hit with kidney infections that can be deadly. I have tried all the stainless water bowls for cats, and I have discovered something pretty simple. Cats will not drink water that is stale or has been out a day or two. It has to be fresh. So I have 2 bowls of water that I just top off a few times a day. That way the water stays fresh but you're not having to wash bowls every day. I just pour a bit of fresh on top a few times a day and Pumpkin loves it. Still washing his bowls but not that often.

Happy Birthday to **Barb Eyestone**

on Sep. 17. I love how she always goes to a good bakery and orders herself a delicious birthday cake. We all need to pamper ourselves and do it often. We're certainly worth it!

UPCOMING EVENTS:

Concerts on the Dock at Lowe Mill are free to attend, and parking on-property is just \$10. Carpool with your crew to save gas and cash! So bring friends, family, drinks and pets (on a leash) to Huntsville's most accessible concert series!

FALL 2026 DATES

9/4 - Billy Buchanan

9/11 Michael Goldsmith Band

9/18 - Quantaphonics

9/25 - Tomas Gorrio

Jazz in the Park Returns to Big Spring Park in September

Jazz in the Park is back at Big Spring Park every Sunday in September, running 5 to 9 PM and free to attend.

Each Sunday features three acts at 5, 6, and 7:30 PM, mixing national names with regional and local talent.

Here's the full lineup:

- Sept. 6: The BrightLight Experience, Evan Taylor, Nathan Mitchell

- Sept. 13: Richard Shaw, Cameron Sankey, Julian Vaughn

- Sept. 20: Arkose, Patrick Lamb & Trey Calhoun, Eric Darius

- Sept. 27: Carol Albert, Jeff Ryan, Kim Scott

Bring a lawn chair or blanket and grab something from the food trucks.

Have a good September!



Kathleen Vaughn, the Toboggan Lady

"Be the things you loved most about the people who are gone." This was Kathleen Vaughn's favorite quote and she lived it every day. Kathleen passed away at 89, in Harvest, with her beloved son David by her side.

Kathleen married the love of her life, Frank, on December 26, 1955. The short time they lived in Chicago Kat worked for Time magazine. Frank and Kat moved to Alabama where they had and raised their family. Kathleen loved her family fiercely. While Frank served in the US Army, Kathleen took care of their home and children.

She made many sacrifices over the years for her children. To make extra money, Kat baby sat many children over the years, some calling her Mama Vaughn. Several she kept stayed in touch with her for years and had Kat keep their own children.

Kat was known for her kind heart and her generosity. Over the years, Kat had crocheted hundreds of toboggans, for which she gave to the homeless. Also, she crocheted many black toboggans for the Huntsville Police Officers and pink ones for Liz Hurley's Annual Breast Cancer Run. During football season, she crocheted SEC team toboggans and put them in her "Lil library". She loved her Lil library that was built by her son, David, for her 84th birthday, in honor of his baby sister, Tracy.

Kathleen also made hundreds of homemade quilts and baby blankets. She was so talented at all things crafty. Cross stitch, plastic, canvas, and homemade jellies all won her numerous blue ribbons at the county fair. Kat loved puzzle books and reading the Old Huntsville Magazine, for which she wrote many articles.

Kat's most treasured times were keeping her grands: Ethan, Colton and Maizie. She loved her great-granddaughter, Everly.

Kathleen was the widow of Retired Sergeant Major Franklin D. Vaughn, whom she loved and missed dearly. Kathleen was preceded in death by her parents, Fred and Myrtle Smith; brother Arthur, of Athens, TN; her husband of 50 years, Franklin Vaughn; eldest daughter, Brenda Lowe and youngest daughter, Tracy Dyess.

Kathleen is survived by her son, David (Teresa); two grandsons, Ethan (Paige) and Colton; granddaughter, Maizie; great-granddaughter, Everly; brother, Glen Smith (Nora); sisters, Kay Bivens and Karen Haney (Jerry); many nieces, nephews, and very dear friends.

It is said you've had a successful life if you leave this earth just a little better than you found it. Kathleen did that, she is an angel in Heaven now and will never be forgotten.



Sweets from Union Hill

Crusty Coconut Pie

- 1/4 c. butter
- 1 c. sugar
- 1/2 c. canned milk
- 1 t. vanilla
- 3 eggs
- 1 c. coconut

Cream the butter and sugar, add the eggs and blend well. Add the milk, coconut and vanilla, pour into unbaked pie shell. Bake 30 minutes at 350 degrees.

Million Dollar Fudge

- 4-1/2 c. white sugar
- 1 lrg. can evaporated milk
- 2 sticks butter
- 18 oz. chocolate chips
- 1-1/2 t. vanilla
- 2 c. broken nuts

Bring the sugar and milk to a boil and boil constantly, while stirring, for 10 minutes. Have butter and chocolate chips in another large pan. Add boiling sugar mixture to the chips and butter and beat quickly. Keep beating.

Pour into an 8x12" pan and let cool.

No-Bake Cookies

- 1 stick butter, melted
- 1/2 c. cocoa
- 2 c. sugar
- 1/2 c. milk
- 3 c. quick oats
- 1/2 c. peanut butter
- 1 t. vanilla extract

Cook butter, cocoa, sugar and milk til bubbles form around side. Remove from heat and add oats, peanut butter and vanilla. Drop on waxed paper and cool.

Carrot Cake

- 1-3/4 c. sugar
- 1-1/4 c. cooking oil
- 4 unbeaten eggs
- 2 t. baking powder
- 2-3 t. cinnamon
- 3 c. very finely grated carrots
- 2 c. plain flour
- 2 t. soda
- 1/2 c. chopped pecans or walnuts

Cream sugar and oil, add eggs and cream til soft. Sift together the dry ingredients and add to the egg mixture, mixing well. Fold in the grated carrots and nuts.

Bake at 325 degrees until done - about 35 minutes - and a straw comes out of the cake cleanly.

Fill and frost with the following frosting that is made from powdered sugar, butter, drained pineapple, cream cheese and vanilla.

Carrot Cake Frosting

- 1 pkg. powdered sugar
- 1/2 stick butter
- 1 small can crushed pineapple, drained
- 8 oz. cream cheese
- 2 t. vanilla

Allow butter and cheese to get to room temps, cream together with the sugar and add the drained pineapple.

Frost but make sure all crumbs are brushed off the cooled cake before frosting.

Fresh Apple Cake

- 1-1/4 c. cooking oil
- 2 c. sugar
- 3 eggs
- 1 t. vanilla
- 1 t. cinnamon

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2-1/2 c. self-rising flour

3 c. chopped apples

1 c. chopped nuts

Mix all the ingredients together and add the chopped apples. Add a cup of chopped pecans or walnuts and bake at 350 degrees for 40-50 minutes in a large pan, 12x12 inches.

Sweet Potato Cake

1-1/2 c. cooking oil

2 c. sugar

4 eggs, separated

4 T. hot water

2-1/2 c. plain flour, sifted

3 t. baking powder

1 t. vanilla

1/4 t. salt

1 t. ground cinnamon

1 t. ground nutmeg

1-1/2 c. grated raw sweet potatoes

1 c. chopped nuts

Combine cooking oil and sugar and beat til smooth. Add hot water, then dry ingredients that you have sifted together. Stir in the potatoes, nuts and vanilla and beat well. Beat egg whites til stiff and fold into mixture.

Bake in three greased 8-inch layer cake pans at 350 degrees, for 25 to 30 minutes. Cool and frost.

Date Nut Cake

1 c. butter (2 sticks)

2 c. sugar

4 eggs

1-1/2 c. buttermilk

4 c. plain flour, sifted

1 t. soda

2 T. grated orange rind

1 pkg. dates, cut and pitted

1 c. broken pecans

Glaze:

2 c. sugar

1 c. orange juice

2 T. orange rind

Cream butter and sugar, beat in eggs one at a time, dissolve soda in milk. Add sifted flour to butter mixture alternating with buttermilk. Beat til smooth.

Add orange rind, dates and nuts which have not been floured. Bake in tube pan for 1-1/2 hours at 325 degrees, cool in pan.

While still hot spread on the sauce that is made from 2 cups sugar, 1 cup orange juice and 2 tablespoons orange rind. Stir til dissolved but don't heat the sauce.

Bread Pudding

2 c. dry bread cubes

4 c. milk, scalded

3/4 c. sugar

1 T. butter

1/4 t. salt

4 slightly beaten eggs

1 t. vanilla

Soak bread in milk 5 minutes. Add sugar, butter and salt. Pour slowly over eggs; add vanilla and mix well. Pour into greased 1-1/2 quart baking dish. Bake in pan of hot water in moderate oven at 350° until firm, about 1 hour. Serve warm with lemon sauce. Add 1/2 cup seeded raisins, if desired. Makes 8 servings.

Variations of Bread Pudding: **Butterscotch** - substitute brown sugar for white. **Chocolate** - Melt one 1 ounce square unsweetened chocolate in hot milk before adding bread. If desired, serve with butter sauce.

Pecan Chews

Beat 2 egg whites til stiff. Add 2 cups brown sugar, 1 teaspoon vanilla extract and dash salt. Fold in 2 cups finely chopped pecans. Bake at 350 degrees on greased cookie sheet for 8-10 minutes. Cut in squares when still warm. Cool and enjoy!



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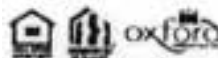
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Foraging (Or Madison County, a Cornucopia)



by Giles Hollingsworth

In a previous issue of Old Huntsville I talked about foraging by picking plums and blackberries in Madison County. About their deliciousness, the jams, jellies, and wines they became, and about reasons for NOT picking them...snakes, chiggers, and vine thorns, or stickers.

Well, of course, you can never say enough about snakes, and I was scared to death of them. Nobody could convince me that some of them are harmless and actually good to have around to eat mice, rats, and poisonous snakes like copperheads. All snakes were my sworn enemies! That's hard to understand, because I ventured into snaky places much more than the average farm boy, being an avid forager. Furthermore I had never even seen a rattlesnake, the villain of them all. But in my mind they, and the copperheads, were out there by the hundreds, and I was just one lucky guy to not get bit.

But I was not lucky at all with chiggers. They were out there by the millions and they feasted on me. In July of 1950, during summer vacation from school, we lived on Pea Ridge, a very low rent housing area just west of Huntsville Park Mill Village, and pretty close by was a small creek running through a pasture with lots of blackberry vines. Cows kept the grass well mowed, so snakes couldn't hide there, making it too good of a set-up for me to pass on. So I picked those berries day after day, and sold most of them readily in Huntsville Park.

Unfortunately, also day after day chiggers bit me, so much so that I developed a special kind of itch that lasted for about two months.

Moving on past plum and blackberry picking time, there was never much for me to forage there in the area from mid-July to Sep-

tember. In later years, while living in Georgia, I discovered an abundance of crab-apple that ripened in August, but strangely I never ran across any in Madison County. Same thing with huckleberries; I found those in Georgia mountains. They were probably there on Monte Sano, but that was an area out of reach for me, having no car. We did live very near a couple of small mountains in the forties but I never found any huckleberries on them. (Could be my fear of snakes pretty well kept me from exploring them.)

There is one other food that was just right for foraging during the summer, but few people bothered with it. It was the leaves from that tall, red-stemmed weed with purple berries, the pokeweed, otherwise known as poke sallet, or poke salad. It is in fact pretty tasty when cooked just right, but that takes some doing, because the plant is toxic. It requires boiling at least twice, then it is usually sauteed in bacon grease. But my mother knew that the word, "toxic", meant "poison", so she avoided poke sallet.

But come September I was in seventh heaven! There were plenty of muscadines there for the picking. For those who don't know, muscadines are wild grapes, dark purple in color, with thick skins. They are usually about the size of a marble. I found most vines of them on roadsides and at the edge of wooded areas. The vines grow right up the trees, so a forager always hopes to find them in younger trees with low limbs so you can pick at least some of them by reaching up. But often you had to climb the tree and shake the berries loose. Typically the ground was covered with grass or leaves, providing a soft landing for those beautiful little purple treasures.

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Muscadines are simply wonderful for wine or jelly-making. My mother always claimed all we could pick for jelly making, but many years later I discovered just what great wine they make. In fact, they seem to have magical wine-making power.

Here's why I say that. About 27 years ago, in 1999, I made two gallons of muscadine wine. It seemed to be a little too sweet so I let it sit for about four years, being in no hurry to drink it. Then I started treating visitors with a sample of it, asking for their opinions. Everyone found it delicious! So I kept the aging process going, offering very few samples.

Writing this article just reminded me to taste it again, which I just did, and it is now better than ever. So need I say more about muscadines making good wine?

Later in the fall my dad, my brothers and I would go tree hunting, looking for nut-bearing hickory trees, and we usually found enough of them to bring in a good winter supply of hickory nuts, which, of course, we called "bicker-nuts", as did most other area folks. Boy, were they hard to crack open! Very thick, hard shells. But the nut meats, which we called "goodies" were worth the effort. Pretty much the same thing with black walnuts, except that in addition to cracking the hard shells you also had to deal with the black stain from the outer, soft shell stain that was really hard to wash off your hands.

Pecan trees were almost non-existent there. There was one, however, near downtown Huntsville, probably on East Clinton Avenue, at or near the grammar school there, and in 1944, when we lived in Madison Heights subdivision. Daddy and I went there early one Saturday morning and found a small bucketful. It was a bit of a surprise to find any at all, with 30 or 40 residences in the area, but we guessed right, that most city folks are not very forage minded.

I have to mention possum grapes. Most people are not, and were not then, familiar with them. But Daddy was, because they were more common in the middle Tennessee mountains where he grew up. They are small, wild grapes, about the size of English peas, on tree climbing vines. They are bunched in much larger and tighter clusters than muscadines. I have read that they make good jelly but we never used them for jelly.

To us they were fun to find and

to eat as a snack, or to be adventurous, knowing they were more or less an oddity, and that some people were afraid to eat them, thinking they might be toxic. They were not really delicious, being too acidic and not sweet enough to really savor.

One final thing for our family foraging...honey. We lived right at the foot of Bell Mountain in Farley in 1945-46. Maybe someone told my older brother Richard about bees nesting in hollow trees, or maybe he just discovered it on his own. But somehow he learned of it, and being the daredevil that he was, he decided to try to "rob" one of those trees; to reach in and pull out portions of the wax honeycombs.

He made himself a cloth hood with a screen wire face opening to avoid facial stings, and bought some cloth throw-away gloves, and proceeded with the task. For him it was so easy - like he was born to be a bee-tree robber. The honey was simply the best we had ever tasted. And as you might expect from a forging family, Richard then found more bee trees and furnished us with enough honey to last for months.

Foraging might not have been an absolute necessity for the Hollingsworth family but it came close. And if not for the need of keeping our forage sources secret, Richard and I could have been known as Madison County's top berry picker and bee-tree robber.



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MOTHER'S BROWN BISCUIT BOWL; WHAT MEMORY DO YOU HOLD DEAR?

by Bruce Walker

Tap. Tap. Tap.

That is the sound I still hear when I think of my mother.

It was the sound of her wedding ring striking the bottom of a well-worn brown mixing bowl as she stood in the kitchen making biscuits large as a cat's head. Before the rest of us were fully awake, Mother had already greeted the day. By the time our family gathered around the breakfast table—seven children, our dad, and whatever worries the day might bring—she was there with a smile, hot food, and a quiet steadiness that held the household together.

Dad would pray over the food, and then we would begin our day.

Mother was the center of our family life. Her cooking, her faith and her gentle manner were the glue that held us together. On a pastor's salary and with a large family, she learned to stretch a food budget until it squealed. She could make chipped beef and gravy one morning, boiled egg gravy the next, and somehow convince us we were not poor—we were simply eating creatively.

Every Saturday afternoon, she began cooking for Sunday dinner, never knowing who might end up at our table after church. There was always room for one more plate, one more chair, one more hungry soul.

Looking back now, I realize the effort she poured into those meals. At the time, we just ate.

One Sunday, she served a coconut cake that brought the house down. We praised the flavor, admired the texture, and declared that fresh grated coconut must be the secret. Only after everyone had gone back for a second slice did Mother reveal that the "coconut" was actually sauerkraut.

That was Mother. She could feed you, fool you, and make you ask for seconds.

One of my earliest memories is of her kneeling beside my bed, calling my name out to God in prayer, asking for divine protection and salvation for me. Now, all these years later, my mother's desire for me to become the best I could be still spurs me on.

Young parents, do not underestimate the power of praying over your family. Children may not understand it at the time, but there are some prayers that keep walking beside them long after the one who prayed them has gone home.

As children, we rarely consider that our mothers once had dreams of their own. We assume we are the whole story. We forget there was a girl before there was a mother. After my mother died, I found an old photograph of her sitting on the steps with friends in front of her dorm at Massey Draughn Business College in 1940. She was young, pretty, dark-haired, and full of possibility. Family members later told me she had a job waiting for her in Washington, D.C., working for the U.S. congressman who represented her district.

Then World War II interrupted everything.

Instead of Washington, she found herself working in her father's restaurant in Pell City, Alabama. One day, a skinny, tall, dark-haired boy came in after working all night at the defense plant. He sat down at the counter and was immediately smitten by the dark-haired beauty taking his order.

When he went to the cash register to pay, my future mother rang up his ticket, winked at him, and handed him back his money—all twenty-five cents.

That began their courtship. Months later, they eloped.

Dad managed to buy a rundown Model T Ford for twenty-five dollars, and the two young sweethearts hatched a



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plan. He would drive by her house, blink the lights, and she would run out, jump in, find a preacher, and get married.

At eighteen years old, Mother married my sixteen-year-old father.

My grandfather's plans for his daughter did not include a teenage interloper with a Model T Ford and a pastor's calling. He showed his disapproval by refusing to talk to Dad or even stay in the same room with him. That lasted over a year — until the first grandchild appeared.

Grandchildren have a way of softening hard opinions.

Mother traded one dream for another. Instead of dressing up and working near the chambers of the United States Congress, she became the wife of a defense plant worker and the pastor of a small rural church. With so many able-bodied men drafted during the war, jobs were filled by whoever was available. Life moved fast. Babies arrived steadily, each one demanding attention, and I landed in the middle of seven.

Life was hard. There were ration books, wartime worries, the birth of a special-needs child, tight money, and all the ordinary troubles that come knocking at the door of a young family. But Mother's strong will and faith in God steadied our home.

As we grew older, she would not tolerate her children berating each other — or anyone else, for that matter. Her words still ring in my ears:

"If you can't say something good about someone, don't say anything at all." She said it quietly, but we heard it clearly. Mother also had to learn how to fit into the gregarious, boisterous Walker clan. Her people were quiet, serious, and valued education. The Walkers were preachers, salesmen, farmers, storytellers, and kinfolk living by their wits.

On her first visit to her husband's family, Mother was driving. As they topped the hill and started down into the front yard of her in-laws — people she had never met — the brakes failed. The car rolled straight into a corner post of the front porch, and the whole thing collapsed.

Her new mother-in-law and father-in-law climbed through the rubble, laughed, and said, "Welcome to the family."

That pretty well explains the Walkers.

"The problem with eating Italian food is that 5 or 6 days later, you're hungry again."

George Miller

Mother was always there — not merely telling us how to live, but showing us. She fed us, calmed us, corrected us, prayed for us, and made room for laughter. She would dance around the room with her coal-black eyes sparkling, making us laugh while never showing the full weight of the burdens she carried.

Every now and then, she would steal a quiet moment in her straight-back, cane-bottom rocking chair, reading her Bible. That is how I still see her: strong hands, dark eyes, worn Bible, steady faith.

I know we all have different memories of our mothers. Some are tender. Some are complicated. Some are painful. But every life begins with a mother, and the fortunate among us had one who not only gave us life but stayed around long enough to teach us how to live it.

When I think of mine, I do not first remember a sermon, a lecture, or a grand occasion.

I hear a sound.

Tap. Tap. Tap.

A wedding ring against a brown bowl.

And biscuits rising like grace.

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Remember S&H Green Stamps?



by M. D. Smith IV

In June 1963, my wife, Judy, and I bought a small house in Northeast Huntsville and moved in with a new baby boy. We were on a tight budget, and we welcomed every bonus we could get. That included S&H Green Stamps she got shopping at the Winn Dixie, our favorite store in Tuscaloosa, and now less than a mile from us in town.

We moved into a house we built on Monte Sano on Crescent Circle in 1964 where I was close to work, and both the TV station (Channel 31) and my family got gas at Phil Bentley's Enco gas station at Governors Drive and Franklin Street. They gave green stamps for gas purchases, too.

I remember the saving books had pages that it took 50 stamps to fill. Some places for larger purchases gave out a single stamp worth either 10 or 50 points. Saved a lot of licking to have lots of those 50 stamp singles. You got 10 stamps for each dollar purchased. Each book had 24 pages, so 1200 points filled a book, and most anything worth having took somewhere between 2 and 6 books.

I seem to remember we had a S&H Redemption store on North

Parkway by the Kwik Chek. We were lucky because smaller towns had to mail order their gifts. I found an old S&H shopping catalog from 1965 that was called the "S&H Ideabook" and the catalog contained 178 pages of items from dish towels and ashtrays to fishing poles, bicycles, furniture and appliances. It was like a small Sears "Wish-book" catalog. They printed 35 million of them.

I read in a "Huntsville Revisited" post by Kathy Barnes that said: "My mother saved enough green stamps to get a washer and dryer."

In another post at the same place, Ginny Williams Alford said, "Oh yes!! I remember..... My first roller skates came from there!!! Key and all."

My wife remembers us getting small things like a set of eight painted glasses in a steel carrier with a handle for only three books. She said the largest thing we ever got was a toaster-oven which we really needed and used a lot, but she doesn't remember how many books it took.

Seems like the peak for Green Stamps was in the fifties and sixties. At one time, the daddy of all stamps was S&H, founded by Thomas Sperry of Cranford, NJ, and Shelley Byron Hutchinson of Ypsilanti, MI (Sperry and Hutchinson Co.) in 1896. They made money by selling the stamps to retailers who would then give them to then customers. It wasn't until after the 1930s anyone really noticed and they reached their peak in the 1960s, it was estimated that 80% of American households collected them.

It was said that at the peak, in the mid 60s, S&H issued three times more stamps than the U.S. Postal Service. Millions. You got merchandise from filled books

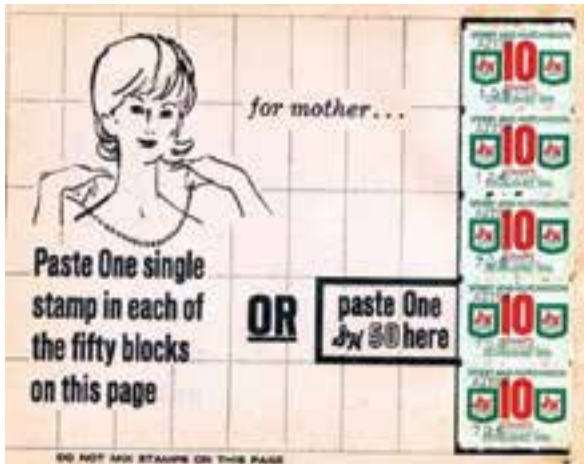
at the S&H redemption centers, which numbered 600 nationwide by the mid-1960s. In 1966, Pennsylvania school children even collected 5.4 million stamps to buy a pair of gorillas: one went to the Pittsburgh Zoo in Highland Park, while the other one, a female named Samantha, went to Glenwood Park Zoo in Erie to serve as a mate for their male gorilla, Lonesome George.

At its peak in the mid-sixties, S&H grossed over \$1 billion, but a few years later in the 70s, less than a million dollars.

But you know...anyone who invents a good thing, there are going to be those who copy it and try to outdo the original. Thus, Plaid Stamps came in as competition, offering a slightly better deal to retailers to use them instead of Green Stamps. A&P was responsible for half of the Plaid Stamp sales.

In 1972, A&P dropped Plaid Stamps in favor of lower prices. Fearing the Plaid Stamp redemption stores might fold, there was a run on them in New York in particular and guards had to be hired to keep order in the lines outside the centers.





On October 12, 1972, the New York Times printed, in part, "Thousands of New Yorkers clutching brown paper bags filled with books of trading stamps, have been collecting in long, shuffling lines at Plaid Stamp redemption centers in frantic moves to redeem stamps that will no longer be issued by the 200 A&P supermarkets here."

"The rush at the 18 Plaid Stamp centers throughout the city has been caused by consumer fears that A&P's phasing out of trading stamps may mean that the redemption centers are going out of business."

The people, according to Plaid Stamp executives, "are buying lots of things they don't need—even though we reassure them that we'll be here with or without "A&P."

That was the beginning of the end of Plaid Stamps.

The third most popular behind the top two leaders were the little yellow "Top Value" stamps, competing in the market and further watering it down. It was a hassle trying to keep three or more books to paste stamps in and then save enough of one to get an item of value on redemption.

Not to be left behind, there were also G&S trading stamps that worked the same as the others. Neither of these "copy cats" made very much of an impact on the saving stamp market and faded before the top two did later.

The most popular stamp of all, S&H Green Stamps, were in use from 1930 until

the late 1980s. Between 1973 and 1974, S&H stock fell from \$52 to \$26 a share. It continued downward. By the 80s the majority of businesses stopped using them. Yet the memories of the S&H Green Stamps are around today. A comment on "Huntsville Revisited" came from Bebe Heasley Packard who said, "I have a set of copper molds I got from S&H stamps."

Another memory is from Clarissa Landry Worthing who remembers, "I was one of the last ones in the store before it closed. My mom gave me all of hers, and I had a few. I got a pressure cooker with them."

Lastly, Susan Gattis Turner recalled, "My first bicycle was bought with green stamps!"

My wife, Judy, thinks we got an electric blender as the last item. We still had loose stamps in drawers but never filled many books after that, which would have been the late 70s, and finally, we gave them to one of our children, to lick and paste into coloring books. There were at least remnants of four colors of stamps in the bottom of that drawer.



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HABITS OF CATS



by Ted Roberts

Sometimes when an author/writer looks at a blank piece of paper, he sees a blank piece of paper. He gropes for a subject and all he gets is a blank. I usually holler to the wife. "Hey Shirley, anything newsworthy happen to us lately?"

"Oh, your oldest son, Harry, got married, but he's done that before."

Nothing. But lately in the absence of wars in the Congo, new children born in the family, the house burning down, or car wrecks - there is one category of events that always serves up material - our two cats. They are so predictable, so unpredictable. Take their nighttime habits - and this one could win a prize at the planetary cat show: We're all laying in the bed watching TV. We're in our pajamas, they are nekkid, as we say down here. They like crime shows with a lot of action; explosions, fires, gunfire.

Well, when 9:30 rolls around the male sedately, almost priggishly, heads for the door and with a sniff over his shoulder leaves the room. Bear in mind he carries no watch strapped to his leg as he leaves the room.

Why? Maybe because once or twice earlier I ran him out at 9:30 and he remembered. They have another crazy habit even more mysterious. They love to drink water out of the flower bowls. Bowls of clean water on the kitchen floor and these connoisseurs are lapping water full of fiber, worms and microscopic algae out of the flower bowls.

Outside, they also favor mud puddles wherein stray bipeds have relieved themselves. Maybe there are more vitamins in it - maybe we oughta try it. Maybe it's the long hidden remedy to cancer. Ever hear of a cat getting cancer? Or maybe the cure is a diet of mice - even though mice hunting is not a habit of these two free renters. They'll only eat cat food. Hold up a bowl of pate foie gras to their lips and they'll look at you like you're crazy and turn aside.

Nothing other than cat food tempts them - not even ice cream.

And do you think they know how to conserve energy? One minute they're sleeping - the next they are streaking across the yard chasing an aggressive grasshopper. They gave up on birds as soon as they caught on to that flying trick.

But maybe their most endearing habit is to jump in any enclosure - like a box. Nothing makes a cat happier than to sit in a box, survey the world, and mistakenly think they're safe from any hungry predators. They're wrong, of course, but it's like you locking yourself in your room, hiring a Doberman and hiding under the bed. It makes you feel good.

Well, regardless of my cat's foibles, they're lovable, furry balls of delight. And did I tell you they're brother and sister? They're lovable, yet full of the wild.

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The Pain of Loving You

by Trey Cornelius

Love is difficult because it demands constant effort and often brings disappointment. Keeping someone happy is challenging and relationships can be marked by unhappiness or incompatibility. The hardest relationships are shaped by tough emotions – tough love, aggression and resentment. Though love is present, it isn't always sustainable. Beyond love, basic needs like air, water and money are essential. Love alone can't guarantee survival.

Another issue is whether or not it's real. There are relationships that don't look like they're real. Some just stay in it because they are afraid to go at it alone. It doesn't look so happy because they've settled for less than they deserve. Is there any kind of compatibility? Or are you just stringing them along? It's never OK to lead them on.

I've learned from my last girlfriend that when it comes to love, love has got to be real. I learned that it wasn't. After all you can't love if you don't love yourself. There are times when love doesn't work out or it ends badly. Love hurts just the same. Some will chase after a person they want more than anything and there is no reciprocation.

Some will show ways that hurt like fire in your soul after ignition. For example, I loved a girl who came from the outskirts of Nashville. She soon dumped me for another man and then dangled him in front of me, about how terrific he is. She ended up paying for it some time later when the reality of the truth came in like the devil on a drunken rampage. But God took care of her. He had a plan for her just the same.

You don't need love to make you happy. It is okay to love yourself and make yourself happy. I struggled with self-esteem for a long time and became a Doubting Thomas. I was a Lost John that got snubbed for being single and ready to mingle. Eventually, I got to a

point where I liked being single. I will probably stay that way, too. When you have a lot of things to look forward to, it gets easier.

There are so many hardships in love. There is nothing easy about love. For me, getting the girl to even look at you without hesitation is hard. I have ADHD, and so girls don't like guys who have overflowing energy. Once I loved a girl who was in the same boat as me. I thought we'd be together forever. After seven months, without a fair reason, she decided she wanted to stay single.

Dating apps are not enough. Yes, they help you meet new people, but at the same time, they aren't sufficient. Why waste your time on a girl who comes in like a robot? Why waste time just to get ghosted? In truth, girls are particular about what to look for, as are the guys. Just when things go well, they soon drop you and someone gets hurt. Everybody hurts sometimes.

For me, the hardest part is watching everybody else run off together. Some of them look down on you while others treat you like you don't matter. In reality, you DO matter. You are more than enough. Count all your blessings. See what He has done for you. There may be pain in love, but love is unconditional.

Love and take care of yourself. You are so worth it.



**It's never too late to rescue a friend.
Really listen to them when they
tell you what's going on.
Hear what they're not saying.
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**Special love to the Huntsville High School
Class of 1966**

from Oscar Llerena

Town Gossip from 1899



From 1899 Newspaper

* One of the best known men about town, who is reported ill with La Grippe, is laid up from the effects of injuries received in a fight at a gambling house. The melee occurred several nights ago, and the gentleman in question was badly beaten over the head with a chair. One of the others present was a traveling man from Augusta and the balance of the participants, as far as I can ascertain, were mere card sharks.

* I questioned not long ago to the open liaison of a beautiful young society woman, who is encumbered with a hubby somewhat her senior, and a young clerk in a downtown Huntsville business house. About two days ago somebody notified a male relative of the frisky matron and he came to Huntsville at once to see the lay of the land. He called on the clerk and notified him that he would fill him full of holes if he continued his compromising attentions and is supposed to have read the riot act to the madame. His visit has certainly had a restraining influence upon the couple and they have refrained from scandalizing the public

* A young man who poses as an Alabama leader of local

society and who is, as a matter of fact, about as contemptible a cad as one could find in a year's travel, boasted at the Huntsville Hotel the other night of his intimacy with several women who move in the right circles, mentioning them by name. A gentlemen present mentioned the matter to the brother of one of the ladies, and he promptly went on the warpath.

When cornered, the young puppy denied everything and declared the informant was a liar. This stirred up the man who carried the news, and he also started out looking for gore. The society gent has been laying low ever since and hasn't been found. It is a wonder, by the way, that this fellow hasn't had the top of his head blown off long ago. He makes use of the names of women in a manner that would mean certain death in some communities.

* A very shocking story is making the rounds at present, about an elderly Physician who is well known to almost anybody in town. If false, it is a horrible situation that no fair gentleman should tolerate and there may be some after developments.

* I understand that a very warm reception is awaiting a certain drummer when he next turns up at New Market. He engaged in a flirtation with a well known married lady and chancing to see her pass, he wrote a very tender little note on the back of a business card, and sent it to her by one of the servants. The lady's husband was out of town at the time, but when he returned she gave him the missive. Meantime the drummer has left town. The husband swears that he will thrash him within an inch of his life when he reappears. Moral: don't write notes.

Weak, Nervous Spells March 1916

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Everybody knows about Cardui and what a help it is in woman's troubles, so I thought I would try it myself. I used five bottles. I knew before I had used one that it was helping me.

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Story from the "Legal Twilight Zone: It Only Takes One to be Incompatible

by Judge Billy Bell



The most commonly used ground for divorce in Alabama is "Incompatibility Of Temperament," which is also referred to as "Irreconcilable Differences." The only proof it required was for one of the parties to sit in the witness chair and testify that the parties had different views, goals, and interests in life; and that he or she was unhappy in the marriage, and could not ever again live happily as husband and wife.

One of the saddest divorce cases I tried as a judge involved parties who had been married for 42 years, when the husband went back to where he grew up to a high school reunion, and the wife did not go. They had what appeared to be a happy, normal marriage, with two beautiful adult daughters who sat on the mother's side of the courtroom.

At his high school reunion, the husband ran into an old high school sweetheart who had a house on the lake, and they rekindled their relationship. When he came back home, he told his wife of 42 years that he wasn't happy any more, and wanted to move up to where he grew up to be with that old girlfriend.

The wife was crushed emotionally and didn't want a divorce. The husband testified in

the trial to what had happened, and admitted that his wife of 42 years had been a wonderful partner, homemaker, sexual partner, wife and mother; but that he wouldn't ever be able to be happy again, unless he moved up to be with that old girlfriend.

The witness chair was between the two counsel tables, and he was sitting about 6 feet from his wife, who was crying her eyes out, uncontrollably. She had given her life to her husband and daughters, and her world was falling apart right before her eyes.

After the husband finished his testimony, the wife took the witness chair, and began her testimony by describing what she thought was a wonderful marriage and family life, at least until her husband came home from the reunion.

She sobbed as she told me "Judge, we don't have any problems that cannot be fixed. I will do anything to save my marriage. Please, Judge Bell, don't end my marriage; I am begging you."

Everyone in the courtroom was crying.

Unfortunately, the law of Alabama required me to enter a final divorce, based on the husband's testimony. I am assuming that the husband moved back to be with that woman with the lake house. He sure left a trail of emotional destruction behind...

**"I have yet to hear a man
ask for advice on how to
combine marriage and a
career."**

Gloria Steinem

This Shaver's Top Ten
Listing was originally published
in Old Huntsville Magazine
Issue 48, in the year 1995

Shaver's Top 10 Books of Local & Regional Interest

1. Hard Times - The Civil War in Huntsville And North Alabama by Charles Rice (\$15.95).
2. Railroad War - Nathan Bedford Forrest's raid through North Alabama by Bob Dunnivant (\$16.95).
3. Mountain People - The Real People Who Settled Alabama by Steve Maze (\$12.95).
4. Maps Of Old Huntsville - Reprints of 1861 and 1871 Maps (\$10.00 each).
5. The Way It Was - The Other Side of Huntsville's History. Rich and bizarre stories of Huntsville's past by native Huntsvillian Tom Carney (\$15.95).
6. True Tales of Old Madison County - Reprinted by the Historic Huntsville Foundation (\$5.00).
7. Handbook Of Alabama Archaeology - Arrowheads (\$17.95).
8. Glimpses into Antebellum Homes of Huntsville and Madison County, 8th Edition (\$10)
9. Antique Athens and Limestone County - A Photographic Journey 1809-1949 (\$19.95).
10. Salvation On Sand Mountain - Snake Handling And Redemption by Dennis Covington (\$20.00).



Shaver's Bookstore

Harold "Stew" Steward: Life is a Juggle

by John H. Tate



Have you ever known someone so remarkable that simply having them in your life makes it richer? Not because they are perfect. Not because you agree with every opinion they hold. But because their character, curiosity, and outlook on life challenge you to be better.

That is how I feel about my friend and neighbor, Harold "Stew" Stewart. I have known Stew for nearly twenty-six years. When Bertha and I moved to the country, he and his wife Judy were the first neighbors we met.

I will let Stew introduce himself to the readers:

"My name is Harold Wilson Stewart. My friends and co-workers call me Stew because that's how I introduce myself. Harold Wilson was my grandfather, my mother's father, who died when she was only three years old. Since he didn't have any sons to carry on the fam-

ily name, my parents named me after him."

"In the military, your last name is on your uniform. If it's more than one syllable, it usually gets shortened. That's how I became Stew."

Time will not allow us to cover every chapter of Stew's life. Instead, I want to share a few glimpses of the man through a lens that seems fitting: selected verses from Proverbs 12.

"Whoever loves discipline loves knowledge." If there is one trait that defines Stew, it is his determination to learn. After leaving the Navy, he took a civilian position with the Army in St. Louis as an Aircraft Equipment Specialist. His job involved producing technical manuals used by soldiers in the field.

"I was very good at writing technical material for soldiers," Stew said. "The problem was that once it left my desk, it had to go through a lot of civilians who had no idea what I was talking about."

Rather than accept the limitation, he enrolled in English composition classes at Florissant Valley Community College.

"I learned how to write for normal people," he laughed. "While I was there, I also took a math class to brush up on my skills."

That response is classic Stew. If there is a weakness, he studies it. If there is a skill he lacks, he learns it. In 1997, the Army's aviation logistics mission relocated from St. Louis to Redstone Arsenal.

"We moved to Madison County during the Fourth of July weekend in 1997," he said. "The realignment brought 1,926 families from St. Louis to the Huntsville area."

At first glance, that story sounds familiar in North Alabama. Military service, civil service, defense work - those stories are woven into the fabric of our community. But then I discovered something I had never known about my neighbor.

Stew was a juggler. Not someone tossing a couple of balls around in the living room. A genuine juggler. And the path

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that led him there was pure Stew.

"Diligent hands will rule." The journey began with table tennis. While working in St. Louis, Stew and several co-workers started playing during lunch breaks. What began as a casual pastime gradually evolved into organized competition.

In Stew's own words: "The competition got serious," he recalled. "Eventually I was competing in sanctioned tournaments throughout an eight-state region and became a nationally rated player with the United States Table Tennis Association."

Most people would have been satisfied with that accomplishment. Not Stew. He wanted to improve his hand-eye coordination and reaction speed even more.

So, in 1985 he enrolled in a beginning juggling class. "I believed that if I improved my hand-eye coordination, my table tennis game would become unbeatable."

Only Stew would take a juggling class to gain a competitive edge in another sport. What happened next even surprised him.

"My hand-eye coordination improved, but table tennis stopped being fun. The juggling became the fun part."

The instructor became a mentor. Stew apprenticed with him for three years, helping build and repair props and develop new performance routines.

By 1989, Stew was teaching juggling classes himself through the Ferguson Florissant Continuing Education Program and later at a local community college.

"Those who work their land will have abundant food." When Stew relocated to Huntsville, his passion for juggling came with him. A former co-worker named Rick, whom Stew had taught to juggle years earlier, had also transferred to Redstone Arsenal.

"Rick had become as bonkers about juggling as I was," Stew said with a grin. The pair practiced during lunch breaks in the grassy area

near the Sparkman Center. "People would stop and watch us juggle."

A reporter from the Redstone Rocket eventually wrote an article about them. Later, they began practicing at Big Spring Park on Sunday afternoons.

"We'd be out there working on techniques, and before long crowds would gather. Even though it looked like a performance, we were really just practicing."

As I listened to his stories, I felt like a ten-year-old boy, hearing tales of adventure. Then he casually mentioned some of the props he uses.

"I've juggled swords, large knives, hatchets, tomahawks, bowling balls, car tires, chain saws, and flaming torches. I've also done fire eating."

I nearly fell out of my chair. But perhaps the most revealing part of our conversation had nothing to do with chain saws or fire.

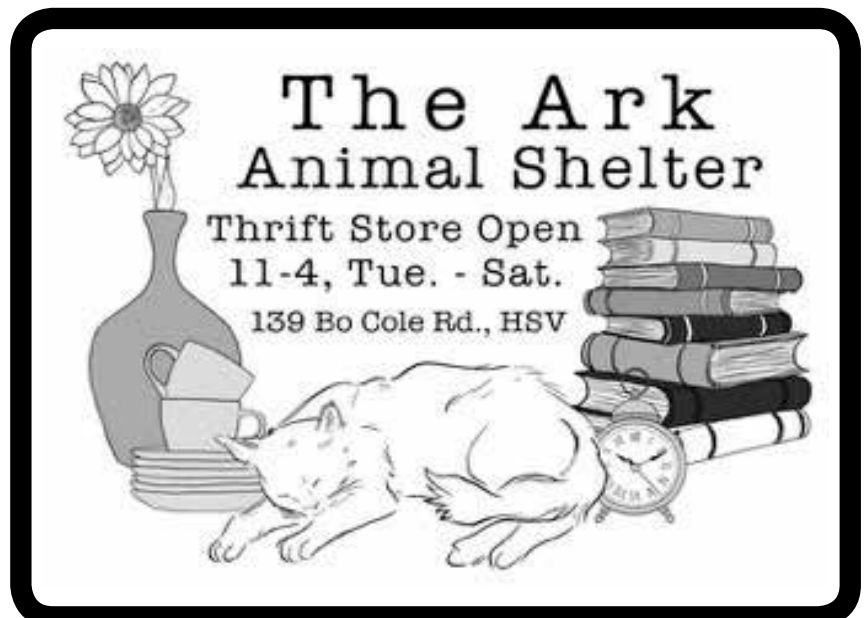
Stew is a member of the International Juggling Association, and he shared an unofficial philosophy embraced by jugglers around the world.

"Jugglers take care of one another." The creed emphasizes mentorship, encouragement, and helping others succeed. The more I thought about it, the more I realized that those words describe Stew perfectly.

For twenty-six years, I have watched him help neighbors, encourage friends, share knowledge, and invest in people. Yes, Harold "Stew" Stewart is a world-class juggler. But the most impressive thing he balances isn't clubs, knives, or flaming torches.

It is a life built on curiosity, discipline, humility, and service to others. If Stew had a message bubble floating above his head, it would simply say: "Jugglers take care of one another."

After twenty-six years of friendship, I have learned that Stew lives by that creed every day. The only difference is that in his world, you can replace the word "jugglers" with "neighbors".



DAISHA WILKS AND DALTON HAMBY; A STORY OF ADVENTURE, STORYTELLING AND TAKING THE LEAP

by Daisha Wilks

Daisha Wilks and Dalton Hamby are a young couple from Alabama who left traditional career paths behind to pursue a life centered around travel, storytelling and adventure. What began as a dream to see the world has grown into a passion for documenting cultures, connecting with people and inspiring others to embrace experiences beyond their comfort zones.

Daisha grew up in the small town of Flat Rock, Alabama, where she spent her childhood playing sports, fishing and enjoying the outdoors. While her upbringing reflected the simple joys of country life, her parents also made it a priority to expose her to the world through family travel.

Some of Daisha's favorite childhood memories came from traveling during the school year. She would occasionally be excused from school to explore new places with her parents, returning home with photographs, souvenirs and stories to share with her classmates.

"I would be excused from school, but I had to do a report on the place I visited and share it with my classmates," Daisha recalls. "Looking back, I think that's when I really fell in love with sharing my adventures with other people."

Those experiences sparked a lifelong curiosity about the world and planted the seeds for what would eventually become her passion for storytelling.

After graduating from Pisgah High School, Daisha attended Northeast Alabama Community College before transferring to Jacksonville State University, where she earned both her bachelor's degree and later her master's degree in Biology. Although science fascinated her, she always felt drawn toward travel, adventure and sharing experiences with others.

Dalton Hamby grew up in Weaver, Alabama. Born in Birmingham, he was adopted at

just six weeks old and raised by a loving family. As the son of a longtime coach, his childhood revolved around sports, academics and the values of hard work, discipline and perseverance.

After graduating high school, Dalton attended Gadsden State Community College before transferring to Jacksonville State University, where he earned a bachelor's degree in Emergency Management. While he loved the life he built in Alabama, he often felt that a part of his story was still waiting to be discovered.

Being 99.7% Filipino, Dalton had always dreamed of visiting the Philippines to connect with his roots and experience the culture firsthand. Although grateful for the opportunities he had been given, he hoped to one day better understand the heritage that was part of his story.

That opportunity came after meeting Daisha at the end of 2023. The two quickly discovered they shared a love for adventure, creativity and living life intentionally. Shortly after graduating from Jacksonville State University, they began dreaming about building a life beyond the traditional path they had envisioned. At the beginning of 2024, they took a leap of faith and purchased one-way tickets to Southeast Asia. Their first journey took them through the Philippines,

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Thailand, Vietnam, Singapore, and Malaysia. For Dalton, stepping onto Filipino soil for the first time was an emotional experience that fulfilled a lifelong dream. For Daisha, it was another reminder of why she loved exploring new places and sharing those experiences with others.

"Dalton had always talked about wanting to visit the Philippines one day," Daisha says. "I finally told him, 'Life is too short to wait for the perfect time. Let's just go.'"

Throughout their travels, they documented their journey on YouTube through their channel, @Daisha.Dalton, combining their passion for filmmaking with their desire to inspire others to explore the world. What started as one trip quickly became a lifestyle.

Since then, the couple has traveled to more than 30 countries, immersing themselves in different cultures, trying unfamiliar foods and building friendships with people from around the world.

When they're home in Alabama, Daisha and Dalton own and operate a videography business, creating films for weddings, sororities and blue-collar businesses throughout the Southeast. Their work has allowed them to sharpen the same storytelling skills they now use to document their own adventures.

"Storytelling has always been what we love most," the couple says. "Being able to combine videography with our own adventures has been incredibly rewarding. We imagine ourselves one day sitting in rocking chairs with our kids and grandkids, watching these memories together and reliving the places we've been."

Travel has taught them that some of life's greatest lessons come from stepping outside familiar surroundings. Whether exploring new countries, learning from different cultures, or sharing meals with strangers who became friends, Daisha and Dalton be-

lieve the people they meet along the way are just as meaningful as the places they visit.

Their goal is to encourage others to embrace adventure, experience different cultures, and realize there is rarely a "perfect time" to chase a dream. Through their travels, they have learned that adventure does not always require an international flight or a trip across the country. Sometimes the greatest experiences can be found much closer to home.

After exploring so much of the world, Daisha and Dalton have gained an even deeper appreciation for the beauty, history, and hidden gems found in their own backyard. From the mountains and rivers to the small towns and communities that make Alabama special, they believe "Sweet Home Alabama" truly has so much to offer.

Since purchasing those one-way tickets, Daisha and Dalton have continued documenting their travels while growing their videography business in Alabama. Online rumors and spoiler sites have suggested that the adventurous couple will appear on the upcoming season of *The Amazing Race*. While nothing has been officially confirmed, fans of the show have speculated that the Alabama duo could soon be racing around the world on one of television's most iconic competition series.

The show challenges teams of two to navigate different countries, complete physical and mental challenges, and race toward the finish line for the chance to win the grand prize of \$1 million.

Whether behind the camera or in front of it, Daisha and Dalton remain committed to telling meaningful stories, creating lasting memories and proving that sometimes the greatest adventures begin with a single leap of faith.



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The First Bridge Party



by Jack Burwell

In the early part of ninth grade, my mama decided I needed some social polish. While I never talked to anyone about my total failure with Margaret Little, my mama knew I didn't want to take girls to dances. Of course, there were my Hi-Y trips on which I had temporary girlfriends who I didn't tell my mama about, but those trips were few and far between.

So my mama decided I needed to learn how to play bridge. I very much liked poker and blackjack, so learning another card game was okay with me. However, learning how to bid was a real chore. Bridge was a lot harder than poker.

After playing with my mama several mock games, she decided it was time to add two new players. One evening, she arranged for Nancy George and Suzy Yates, who were in the carpool, to come over and play with us. Apparently, Nancy and Suzy were also getting some instructions from their mothers.

I felt a little bad that Dianna Jenson, who was also in the carpool, wasn't asked over but my mama made the fourth player. I didn't like some carpool members being invited over and others not. I knew

personally how it felt to be the person left out. Still, Jergen Kampmeier, who was our fifth carpool member, wasn't asked over either.

Somehow though, I felt that Jergen was less likely to have his feelings hurt for not being asked to a bridge party than would Dianna.

We played for about an hour and one-half, and I don't remember winning. When I didn't win at a game, I would grow restless. At some point, we ate some sandwiches or something. After eating and having a drink, we went back to the bridge table. I pulled back in my chair, patted my stomach and said something to the effect that "that was yummy in my tummy."

I thought I was rather cute about it, even adorable. However, my mama didn't think that at all. She said it was awful that I used the word "tummy."

I thought to myself, "What about yummy. Is yummy also terrible?" The way she carried on, one would think I had profaned God.

She just wouldn't quit. I told her that the word "tummy" was a perfectly good word, and I would not apologize for using

it. After all, I was not going to let my mama push me around. I had always been the dominant party in the relationship.

Within a couple of minutes, my mama sent Nancy home across the street, and she drove Suzy home. That was the end of our bridge get together.

Apparently that night, my mama was not into "cute and adorable." She wanted "sophistication." I personally preferred cute and adorable. It was a clash of generations and cultures.

She was determined that I was going to lose, and for the first time in our relationship, she was going to be in charge. I didn't want to hurt her feelings, but it was a little too late for that.

On the other hand, under certain circumstances, the right fifteen year old girl could cause my brain to go into a tailspin, with me doing anything she might request.

**"Some guy hit my fender,
and I said to him,
'Be fruitful and multiply,'
but not in those words."**

Woody Allen

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"I am So Confused!"

by Elizabeth Wharry



Kansas, in particular Wichita, is more of a baseball town than a football town. People cheer on their favorite football teams, but follow college and minor league baseball closer.

When we first moved here, I was a bit shocked to see people wearing red shirts with a capital A on them. I was thinking of Nathaniel Hawthorne's "The Scarlet Letter". When I asked our realtor about that, she laughed, and straightened it out. Scarlet and crimson are very close shades of red.

To me, SEC always meant Security Exchange Commission. I was really confused! I couldn't understand why people were excited about such a stodgy governing board. Were they people THAT heavily invested in the world of high finance? Oops! Wrong SEC.

Roll Tide? Why would anyone do anything so strange. Is it the regular Tide or hypo allergenic? When and where does this odd contest happen? Which laundry detergent is the competition using?

Then, someone was kind enough to clarify that.

Auburn? War Eagle? And the shirt is orange and blue? What madness is this! What am I missing?! Auburn is a shade of brown. Oh... it's a rival of the University of Alabama. Another "bless your heart" moment.

Let me tell you something that I absolutely love about my adopted home state. I can ask just about anyone something that I'm baffled about, and I will get an answer. I may get a "bless your heart" look, but for the most part, folks here are willing to pass the time. Roll Eagle! Um.. War Tide? Just Kidding!



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"THAT'S ALL I CAN DO!"

by Arthur Werkheiser

My wife and I went shopping at Redstone Arsenal's Commissary today to purchase a few food items. She was pushing a cart and I was trudging after her. The cart serves as a support for her. She's 91 and I will be 91 next month. At our age, we need to go careful to keep from falling or tripping.

She saw something on one shelf as we were passing and stopped. The item she was interested in was on the bottom shelf. She asked, "Would you see if what I want is in the rear of the shelf?"

I bent over. I couldn't reach it. I tried harder and still couldn't reach it. So I got down on the floor on my knees. Now this is a very vulnerable position for me. I wasn't sure I could get back up. I reached way in the back and dragged out the last box. I held it up to Bitsy.

"No, that's not it. Put it back," she said. I did so. Now, for the hard part - getting back up. I managed to get one knee off the floor - then the other. Slowly, painfully, I straightened my legs and stood up. And I managed to do it without holding onto any shelves.

Once I was sure I had made it up, I bent backwards, slightly, to relieve my back.

That's when I heard some noise behind me. An elderly lady in an electric wheelchair and her slightly younger companion were behind me and looking at me, smiling, and clapping their hands for the feat I had just performed. What else could I do?

I smiled, nodded my head to them and said, "That's all I can do for today!"

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PET TIPS FROM ANGEL

My Dog Won't Stop Barking!



- Always have treats or something that your dog likes. Whenever he hears a noise and is about to bark give him a treat. Then for practice purposely duplicate the sound and give him a treat or toy before he even gets a chance to bark. This tells him that if he hears this sound and doesn't bark it means that he will get something he likes. It takes a lot of practice but make sure you keep a positive attitude towards doing so. If he hears the sound and starts barking, don't reward him for it. If you do, it will make him think that whenever he barks he gets what he wants.

- One of the most important things is to not yell or say his name when he barks. His name should only be said with a positive association when praising or calling him to you. Yelling just makes him think you're barking with him.

- Try and remove the temptations to bark. Since he barks at people walking by outside, close the blinds, if he barks at people while he is outside, bring him inside.

- You can also try and ignore his barking until he stops. This means don't give him any attention or eye contact and don't touch him, just don't even act like he is doing it. If you give him attention, he feels rewarded for barking. Once he finally stops barking, give him a treat. Even if he only stops to take a breath or something, if he is quiet - he gets a treat. Once he catches on that being quiet gets him a treat, try to lengthen the time he is quiet and keep rewarding him for each longer amount of time he is quiet (5 seconds... 10 seconds... 30 seconds... etc).

- In addition to that step, you can try adding a command into the mix, such as "Quiet", "No Bark", "Zip It"... whatever you wanna use. Attempt to teach him this command in a calm environment so once he encounters a noise that makes him bark or get excited, then he will be more likely to listen to you.

- Another tip is to distract him. If he is barking, ask him to do another command, such as "sit", "lay", "roll over". Then maybe his mind won't be on the noise and rather on the command that you want him to do, especially if a treat follows. Eventually maybe he would just automatically lay down or sit when he hears a noise rather than bark.

- Ensure he is getting ample exercise and playtime. Dogs that bark a lot tend to just have a lot of pent up energy. If he is barking from nerves, try and reassure him that there is nothing to worry about.

- It is important to be consistent and try to do the training as much as possible every day until he stops

his barking. This includes anyone living in the house with you. It won't help if you try and train him to stop, but your husband or someone else just ignores the barking and lets it happen.

- Daily exercise. Go on an extra walk or jog, play fetch for 15 minutes, play with a tug toy, etc. Work in some mind games, too, like puzzle toys and training. A lot of dogs react to things in their environment because they just aren't getting enough outlets for their energy throughout the day.

- Cut back or eliminate his normal meals and start hand-feeding his food (mixed in with some yummy treats)

throughout the day. When a noise triggers the barking, be there with the food and keep it coming until the noise goes away. Often, the barking is just an expression of anxiety. By pairing the noises with a food reward, you're shifting his mind set from experiencing the noise as scary to something that leads to good things.

- Keep a spray bottle of lavender/chamomile mist at the ready. When my dogs bark, I spray the mist at and near them. It has a calming scent for them and they relax a bit. I make my own spray using a bottle of water, and drop a little oil in. Lasts a while - and the house smells better-too!

- Block triggers: Close curtains or move crates away from windows to prevent your dog from seeing mail carriers or passersby.

- Meet physical needs: Ensure your dog gets enough daily exercise and mental sniffing time so they are calmer indoors.

- Reward silence: Give your dog a treat during quiet moments to reinforce that being silent brings rewards.

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From the Desk of Tom Carney

THE GOAT MAN OF DIXIE

by Tom Carney

For over 50 years he was a familiar sight, traveling back and forth through Huntsville, on his way to nowhere; a happy-go-lucky vagabond who enthralled natives and tourists alike with his rustic ways and nomadic lifestyle.

His name was Charles "Chess" McCartney but to many of our town he was simply known as the Goat Man.

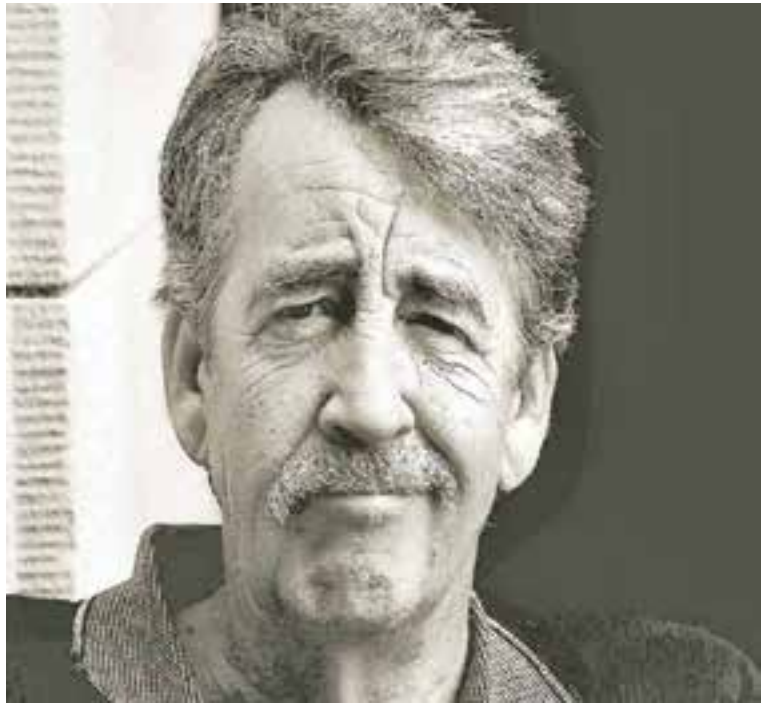
Dressed in his familiar overalls, boots and scruffy cap, the bewhiskered old man would pull into town, unhitch his goats, set up camp and begin talking a mile a minute, telling tales of his travels and his life. And all the time he would be holding a few old postcards, with his picture on them, trying to talk you into buying one.

Depending on the mood he was in, you may have heard tales claiming that he was the son of a famous Confederate General, (or Yankee) or you may have heard that he was a self-made millionaire, and had given up the life of luxury in order to roam the beautiful highways of Alabama with his goat wagon.

But whatever the story, you were sure to be entertained — at a distance of about 50 feet. His goats smelled pretty bad.

Charles McCartney was born in Iowa, to a family that raised goats. Having spent his childhood on the family farm, wanderlust struck him, and after hitching his inheritance to an old cart, he headed south.

The few pennies he earned, he got by selling postcards of himself and picking up bottles on the side of the road. Fortunately, goats would eat anything. He claimed to be no stranger to poverty, as he had been raised "dirt poor." If you can believe a story



that he told to a storekeeper in Hazel Green, his family was so poor "they could not afford to buy clothes for me, but when I got to be 14 they bought me an old hat and let me stand in the window."

He met his first wife during the Depression, but when she gave him a choice between her and the goats, out she went. Married three more times, he claims not to remember their names. "They weren't around long enough for me to worry about trying to get their names straight." He had a son by his first marriage that was raised by his ex-in-laws.

In later years, when the son became a old man himself, he also became a vagabond with a goat wagon.

Looking back at his traveling days McCartney described himself as a "self employed business man." Some of the businesses he was involved in were peddling medicine (snake oil?), repairing pots and pans, sharpening knives and axes. Unfortunately his business as a medicine man ended on a sour note when the goats took a liking to his wares.

The goats also suffered some terrible hangovers.

In his heyday, McCartney also claimed to have preached the gospel as an ordained minister and was compared to another itinerant wanderer Johnny Appleseed. The cheerful vagabond enjoyed the comparison, often remarking that he and the legendary Appleseed would have made a good pair, "He a'doin' the plantin' and me a'doin' the talkin'."

McCartney estimated that he and his team of goats trekked over 200,000 miles and in all that time claimed that he had never slept in a bed or a house. Always camping out, the Goat Man insisted that he had eaten more pork and beans than any other living person - mostly out of a can - and had burned over 75,000 tires

to keep warm on cold nights.

Charles McCartney spent his last years in a converted school bus along Highway 80 near Jefferson, Georgia. His food and supplies came from a local welfare office and a church in town that occasionally sent him a sack of groceries. He got his water from a nearby well, and cooked over a campfire in front of the bus.

Few people are left in Huntsville who remember the be-whiskered old man. The only memories left are a few grubby postcards.

When he died some years ago, newspapers throughout the South immortalized him as the "Goat Man of Dixie."

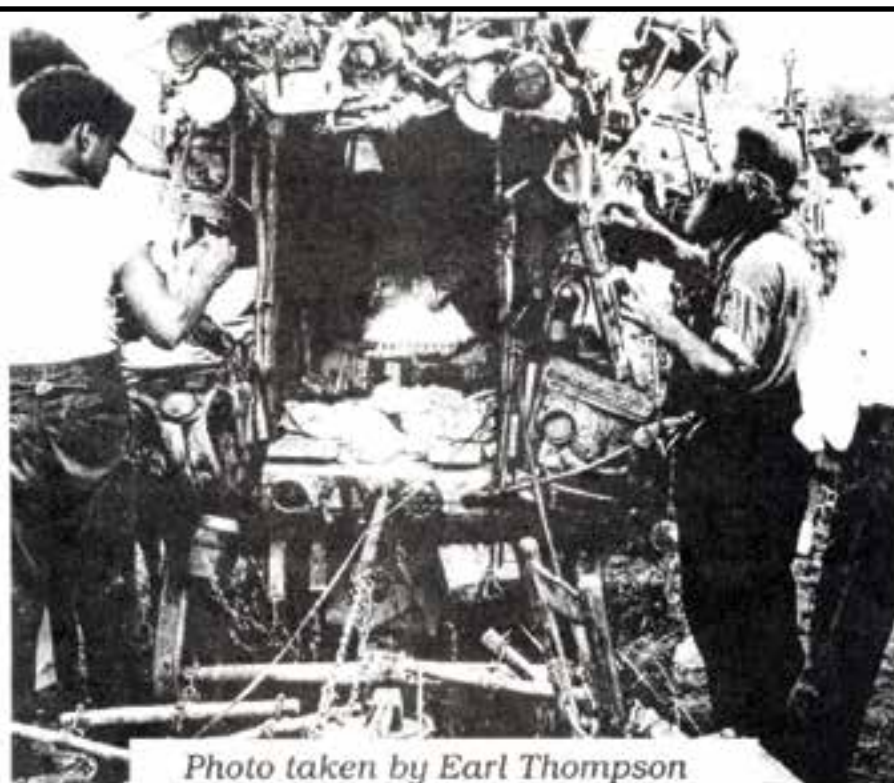


Photo taken by Earl Thompson

The Goat Man Selling his Wares In Huntsville

A Thorough Exam

A woman and a baby were in the doctor's examining room, waiting for the doctor to come in for the baby's first exam.

The doctor arrived, and examined the baby, checked his weight, and being a little concerned, asked if the baby was breast-fed or bottle-fed. "Breast-fed," she replied.

"Well, strip down to your waist," the doctor ordered.

She did. The doctor proceeded to conduct a very detailed breast examination, leaving nothing out.

Motioning to her to get dressed, the doctor said, "No wonder this baby is underweight. You don't have any milk."

"I know," she said, "I'm his Grandma."

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NEWS FROM HERE AND THERE OVER THE YEARS

Cocklebur Fatal to Magic City Boy

Orlando Banks Stinson, aged 15 years, who died at a Birmingham infirmary Thursday morning at 10 o'clock, was the son of Mr. and Mrs. Waverly Stinson who now reside in the Birmingham district. Mr. Waverly Stinson was born and reared at Falkville, his father being postmaster there for more than 30 years, and is a brother of Mrs. J. B. Dinsmore of Falkville.

It is said that more than a year ago the young man told his parents he had swallowed a cocklebur while out hunting. Efforts were made to locate it by X-ray and failed. A short time ago it was coughed up, it is stated, but too late to save him for infection had set up in the lung. The body arrived at Falkville this morning, and interment will be in the city cemetery there.

The deceased is a close relative of Messrs. Pre-witt and Wooster Stinson of this city.

How He Did It

The old folks in Linden, Alabama still marvel at the city's most famous resident, Charles Rentz. It was reported in a 1937 newspaper that Mr. Rentz played the piano, drove a car, used a typewriter and an adding machine, and rolled his own cigarettes. Although several others in this sleepy hamlet could claim the same skills, Charles did it having been born without arms below his elbows and legs below his knees.

Affording a Taxi

It was 1949 when the Welfare Supervisor in Council Bluffs, Iowa declared that any indigent client who called at the Relief Headquarters in a taxi cab would be denied government benefits after December 1st of that year. "I walk to work every morning," he was quoted as saying. "If I can't afford a taxi, I'm not paying welfare to someone who can!"

Blowing Out a Match

After drinking a quantity of vodka, a workman named Stobb tried to blow out a match with which he was lighting a cigarette, with fatal result. Flames shot out from his mouth. An explosion followed, with Stobb falling to the floor unconscious and dying shortly afterward.

A Banana Peel

Bobby Leach, who went over Niagara Falls in a barrel in 1911, died from injuries received when he stepped on a banana peel while walking quietly along a street in Christchurch, New Zealand in 1927.

A Card Collection

Frank Damek, of Chicago, compiled a complete deck of cards by picking them up from time to time in the street. After 10 years he was 15 cards short. It took another 20 years before he finally completed his collection in 1890 — though friends and relatives continued to doubt that he had ever "played with a full deck."

A Severe Shock - 1923

While standing over her stove Thursday night a bolt of lightning entered the home of Mrs. Alex Bryan, of Arab, severely shocking her. She will recover but her doctor said it will be a slow process. The lightning is supposed to have entered the kitchen over an electric wire.

"Animals have these advantages over man: they never hear the clock strike, they die without any idea of death, they have no theologians to instruct them, their last moments are not disturbed by unwelcome and unpleasant ceremonies, their funerals cost them nothing, and no one starts lawsuits over their wills."

Voltaire (1694-1778)

Have You Ever wanted to Read Really OLD Past Issues of Old Huntsville magazine? Now you Can! They are right here on this website!

Created by Deane Dayton, who has been working on these collections for over 10 years.

www.huntsvillehistorycollection.org

**The Huntsville History Collection:
A Portal to Huntsville's Past**

The Collection now includes all issues of Old Huntsville Magazine through 2020, as well as:

- The Southpaw postcard, Harvie Jones, and other Huntsville collections.
- Information about notable people and families of Huntsville plus the work of local historians and artists.
- Huntsville's historic buildings, districts, markers and cemeteries with pictures, maps, and links to digital walking tours.
- The Huntsville Historical Review, the Historic Huntsville Quarterly, Valley Leaves and the Madison County Bicentennial Bookshelf.
- Audio and other stories by some of Huntsville's best storytellers.
- Historical Probate, court, deed, tax, and mill records.



The Entrepreneurs

by Charles Flanders

About 20 years ago, I arrived home from work, to find 2 of my grandsons, Will and Logan, standing in the driveway waiting for me. They hurried to the car and jumped in before I had the chance to get out of the car. They were so excited and demanding, telling me I needed to take them to Burger King and buy them each a large Coke and a large hamburger. Of course, I had to ask them, why?

Without hesitation they both started explaining to me, that they just saw on TV that if you buy a large Coke and a large fry that you would get \$10,000.00. I tried to explain to them that I was sure that they meant that... IF you got the winning ticket, you would win the money, but that they might not get the winning ticket. They both said no, I was wrong that all you had to do was buy a large Coke and fry and you would definitely win.

Seeing no way out of the situation, Will, Logan and I head to Burger King. On the way, I told them that a large Coke and fry was more than they could eat. But that didn't matter to them.. It had to be the large. Both declared they didn't care about the drink and food, they just wanted to get the \$10,000.00.

After placing their order in the drive thru, I pulled up

to the window and was handed two large Cokes and two large hamburgers. Both boys in a heartbeat pulled the stickers off the drink cups. Logan did not win anything and Will won a small hamburger. Will tore the free hamburger ticket into pieces and said "I don't want a hamburger, I want my \$10,000.00."

Logan just sat there looking very disappointed. Then, all of a sudden Will told me that I had to go back thru the drive and purchase them another large drink and hamburger. He wasn't very happy when I said NO.

On the way home, with two very unhappy kids, I asked them what they would have done with the money, had they won. Will immediately said that he was going to use the money to buy a toy store. Logan instantly said "No Will, we would just buy Walmart, because then we would have everything."

Will replied "Good idea." Then Will turned to me and said, "Grumpy, would \$10,000 be enough to buy Walmart?" I said, Almost, but you would be a little short...Logan then perked up and said "That's ok. Will, my piggy bank is full of money, we can use that to pay the difference."

Today, Logan is a BAMA graduate and in the medical field. Will is a University of Colorado graduate and in the legal field... Neither one of them ever pursued their little boy dream of owning Walmart.

"Reminds me of my safari in Africa. Somebody forgot the corkscrew and for several days we had to live on nothing but food and water."

W. C. Fields (1880-1946)



AMEER

Hello, my name is Ameers. I am a gorgeous grey blue color that is hard to describe unless you see me in person. I'm friendly to people and love to be petted. I'm living at the Ark Animal Shelter and have been here a few months ever since my owner passed away and a family member brought me here. I am 2-1/2 years old and weigh about 10 lbs. I have been neutered and have had all my shots and been micro-chipped. While I am a friendly boy, I am still a bit shy when visitors come in to the free roaming room where I live. So you may not see me right away. I love to spend my time outside on the patio so sometimes it's hard to catch me in the room. Even on hot days I love to be there. Are you looking for a new family member? The volunteers think I am a sweet boy and would make some person or family a great pet. Please come and see me at the Ark Animal Shelter. Ask to see Ameers, that's me!

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MY CARETAKING JOURNEY

by Allison Williams

I have not looked at the color pink the same way since July 1, 2024. For most people, pink represents love, pink flowers blooming in the spring, and beautiful pink sunsets during peaceful summer evenings. But for me it became the color of hospice care, drawing up half a milliliter of bright pink liquid morphine to give my pawpaw three hours before he died.

Hearing the words "I am sorry, but he is gone we can call the funeral home when you are ready" at 9:32am on the morning of July 1, 2024 shattered a piece of me. Three and half months of around-the-clock care for my pawpaw while he was under the care of Compassus Hospice offered me a raw first-hand experience of end-of-life care.

Having a physician assistant that was willing to guide me and teach me how to set my personal feelings aside to care for my pawpaw in his final months showed me a side of medicine I had never considered.

Since my pawpaw passed I became more interested in end of life care. I began working at Terrace Lake Assisted Living where I was responsible for administering medications, assisting patients with daily living tasks, and supporting them during an emotionally straining life transition. Additionally I have been able to support families who felt alone and lost just like I did the first time I experienced caring for a dying loved one. Seeing first hand how dismissed the geriatric population can be I knew I belonged working for them and their families. As a physician assistant I want to be able to embrace the side of medicine that allows people to pass peacefully and advocate for the most vulnerable patient populations.

Building relationships with my residents at Terrace Lake has drawn me to want to further my education and career as a physician assistant. I took grace in being a part of their care during such a vulnerable time.

One of my residents whom I had the privilege of caring for, LD Rogers, took great pride in writing a story each month about his childhood and publishing it in The Old Huntsville Magazine. Before his death I was

gifted a collection of all his stories and being able to share these memories with him up until he passed is something I will cherish.

Interactions like these have taught me that my patients are far more than a checklist; they are individuals with rich personal stories.

My goal is to build a career centered around individualized patient care, collaboration, and opportunities to continue expanding my knowledge. Shadowing in a variety of settings with different providers has continuously reinforced my decision to continue my career as a physician assistant. For example shadowing a PA at an allergy and immunology clinic I was able to witness the delicate balance of a PA's job when a nervous parent came in for an emergency appointment after their child experienced a life threatening allergic reaction. Seeing this provider sit eye level and thoroughly explain all her options while being calm enough to ease her anxiety helped me understand the influence PAs have in their patients' lives during such a stressful moment.

I was also able to see first hand the collaboration between PAs and physicians during patient procedures, interpreting test results, and building treatment plans. The balance of being able to work alongside other providers to generate the best care for patients while having autonomy and informed patient focused care reinforces my decision to pursue a career as a PA.

Dedicating the past several years to this career path has not been without challenges. During the spring semester of my sophomore year, I had to navigate my parents' divorce while simultaneously grieving the loss of my grandfather. Ending the semester with two withdrawals on my transcript was disappointing but I learned the importance of taking a step back when becoming

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LD Rogers, center, with 3 other residents of Terrace Lake in Guntersville, AL

overwhelmed. Since that turning point, I have been able to successfully balance upper-level courses, leadership roles, and dedicating time volunteering to organizations that are meaningful to me while maintaining meaningful personal relationships. Knowing when to push forward and when to step back has shown me that setbacks can often be the foundation for growth.

My time caring for patients during the final moments of their life has profoundly shaped my view and approach to medicine. Witnessing first hand how health care can provide comfort and alleviate someone's suffering has taught me that medicine is less about "fixing" a patient and more about preserving a patient's quality of life. Learning how to deeply listen to my patients, provide individualized care, and advocate for them during their most vulnerable times are pillars I strive to build my career around.

I am fully prepared to carry these skills over into any medical specialty ensuring every patient I see is informed and treated with respect, dignity and compassion.

"THE WAY IT WAS,"

THE OTHER SIDE OF HUNTSVILLE'S HISTORY

BY TOM CARNEY



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THE TYPHOID HOME IN HUNTSVILLE



In the 1800s typhoid was one of the most deadly diseases in much of the South. No one knew what caused it or how to treat it but that did not stop many newspapers from printing what they believed to be sound medical advice. The following is from a 1892 Huntsville newspaper.

- Typhoid is a disease which runs a definite course. It cannot be stopped or cured by medicines.

- The chief thing to be done at the outset of an attack is to send the patient to bed, so as to have strength from the beginning.

- Cocaine can relax the patient and make him receptive to treatment.

- As the fever develops, and the strength grows less, light food should be taken at short intervals - water, toast water, barley water, milk and water, light broths not made too strong or too gelatinous.

- If the fever settles in the brain then it is helpful to have the patient repeat his name, and the names of his family, at regular intervals to prevent a complete loss of memory.

- The restlessness or wakefulness in fever is best remedied by the careful giving of wine or spirit with the food, or in water. No more than one quart a day is to be administered.

- The bed room is to be kept at a temperature of 62 degrees. (They did not explain how to accomplish this in the age before air conditioning.)

- Great care should be taken to keep the bed clean and sweet. This is most easily done by having a second bed in the room, to which the patient can be removed for two or three hours daily, while the other is thoroughly aired and the linen changed.

- All fatigue is to be sedulously avoided. No visitors are to be admitted and no other person but one nurse and one attendant to help her.

- Patient's room never to be left unattended for a moment, as in delirium of fever patient might jump from the bed and injure himself.

- All fireplaces should be carefully cleaned and floors scrubbed with lye ashes.

- All windows in the sick room should be kept closed and shuttered to prevent the night air from entering the patient's lungs.

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Saturday Nights in Madison, AL

by John W. Hughes

Saturday nights in downtown Madison in the late 1940s and early 1950s were usually calm and uneventful. The stores stayed open until around 9:00 p.m. The streets were crowded with shoppers. Not that they were buying all that much - money was scarce. They had come to town to socialize. There was no television or movies in Madison, so walking up and down the street talking to friends was my evening entertainment.

An old farm couple from just outside Madison would come into town and park in front of the Farmers and Merchants Bank and just watch the parade of humanity. Around 8:30 p.m. they would buy two fountain Cokes from my father's drug store. When they finished those, it was time to go home.

About every other month there was some sidewalk entertainment. A medicine man named Jake set up his table in front of the drug store. He had several herbal medicines of his own concoction. Two of his best sellers were a liniment that he guaranteed would cure the aches and pains brought on by working in the cotton fields. The other was an elixir that he claimed would rival today's Cyalis and Viagra.

My father said Jake's father was a black man and his mother was a Cherokee Indian. Jake would gather a crowd with several magic tricks that included card reading and steel rings joined together. No one could ever separate the rings, but Jake would cover the rings with a scarf, tap it with a wand and the rings would be separated when the scarf was lifted. His routine seldom varied. Near the end of his magic act a voice would come from the large cardboard suitcase Jake had on the table. When the suitcase was opened a ventriloquist dummy would scold Jake for keeping him locked up. Jake would take him out and they would begin a dialogue that was risqué for the time. Some of the jokes would be considered racist if it had not been a black dummy and a black ventriloquist performing the act.

"The problem with the designated driver program is it's not a desirable job. But if you ever get sucked into doing it, have fun with it. At the end of the night, drop them off at the wrong house."

Jeff Foxworthy

When the act ended a line would form to purchase Jake's medicines. However, not all Saturday nights were calm and quiet. At times things could get as rowdy as Dodge City when the cattle herds came in. One particular night a gunshot was heard and someone screamed "She's done been shot!"

The shooting took place at the west end of the street. The crowd began to exit in a hurry toward the east end. My father's drug store was in the middle. He was Mayor of Madison at the time. There was only one policeman/night watchman on duty and he came to the side entrance of the drug store and told my father that he needed help.

Normally, my father's 12 gauge shotgun would have been in the prescription room, but on this occasion it was behind the front door of our home on Church Street. So my father and the policeman jumped in his pickup truck to go get the gun. When they went out the front door of the drug store the crowd had cleared out and the gunman was walking down the sidewalk declaring that he would kill any SOB that stood in his way.

After getting the shotgun from home, they drove back downtown. The streets were deserted. The gunman had gone. An advantage to living in a small town is that everybody knew where everybody else lived. They drove to the gunman's house. When my dad stepped out of his truck the shooting started from the direction of the wood pile. My dad fired back with his 12 gauge shotgun expending all 5 shells. When the gunfire exchange stopped the man screamed "You have done killed me!"

It turned out that he was not killed as he claimed; only peppered from head to toe with birdshot. It also turned out that the girl who had been "killed" had not been harmed. Only frightened. If the man had not been so drunk he might have been a better shot.

About two years later I was driving toward Madison and passed a man walking in the direction I was headed. I offered him a ride and when we were underway he asked me if I was Mr. Walter Hughes' boy. I told him that I was and we drove on to downtown Madison. I let him out and went on home to dinner.

When my father came home to dinner he said, "Guess who came in the store this morning? Old XXXX who got into the gunfight with us that Saturday night. He's been in Kilby for a couple of years and stopped by to apologize for all the trouble he caused."



Times Have Changed



A Winter Day in Huntsville in the 1930s

This is Highway 431 going over
Monte Sano Mountain.

#1 is heading towards Huntsville and
#2 is going to Owens Cross Roads and present day
Hampton Cove.

Lots less traffic in those days.