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No. 356

October 2022

# Old Huntsville

HISTORY AND STORIES OF THE TENNESSEE VALLEY

# Lewter's Legacy

*Also in this issue:* **Mountain Farm Witch; Jones Valley Memories; No More Soldiers in Huntsville; Ol' Heidelberg Celebrates 60 Years; Taylor's Merchandise in Big Cove; Lee High Magnet School Recipes and Much More!**

# Lewter's Hardware Store

In 1928 our great-grandfather, D.A. Lewter, and our grandfather, J.M. Lewter, started the family business in a small store on Washington Street. They believed in offering fair prices, treating each customer with special respect and hiring great employees.

We are the fourth generation, proudly carrying on the same tradition.

While our prices have gone up slightly and we have a few more employees, we still provide the same quality service our fore-fathers insisted on. We are the same family, doing the same business in the same location. Stop by and visit with us.

Donnie Lewter
Mac Lewter

**A Hardware Store....**
**The Way You Remember Them**

**222 Washington St - (256) 539-5777**

# Lewter's Legacy

*by M. D. Smith, IV*

Lewter's Hardware Store was bought in 1928 by J. M.. Lewter, the great-grandfather of the current family. The original building construction was in 1907. Unfortunately, related to the passing of James Donald Lewter, Jr., age 64, this past July 20, partially because of Covid, the store plans to close on October 8, 2022. That's just six years shy of 100 years that the family business has been successfully operated at the exact location on Washington Street by four generations of Lewters.

A customer recently said, "I'm sure gonna miss this place. There's nothing like it in town, and I don't think there ever will be again."

But the Lewter family association with the business on Washington Street goes back further than the purchase in 1928 by J. Malcolm Lewter. His father, D.A. Lewter, worked in the store previously (1916) when it was owned and operated by G.N. Robinson. D.A. left the store and moved out of town after his wife died in 1918.

When great-great-grandfather D.A. Lewter worked for Robinson, son J.M. Lewter sold Acme Paint for ten years (1918-1928), no doubt to Mr. Robinson, where his father had worked for a time. Then J.M. went to work for Robinson.

D.A.'s son, J.M., wanted to buy the store later in 1928, and his father, D.A., helped him out with the money to make the purchase. They placed an ad in the Huntsville Times announcing the acquisition of the hardware store, formally known as Robinson Paint and Roofing Company. The ad mentioned carrying a complete stock of "Shelf Hardware, Acme Quality Paints, Oil, Glass, Roofing, Wire Fencing, De Laval Cream Separators and Farm Implements of all kinds, including Luedinghaus Wagons. May we serve you?"

Of all the things mentioned above, I knew everything but the De Laval Cream Separator. There is one currently for sale on eBay for $350 and I found a photo of one. It was to separate cream from milk on farms. I don't know how it worked, but at least I now know what one was and what it looked like. Yep, Lewter's had just about everything and still does up to present day.

The last sentence about "serving you" has been their motto ever since. That is one of the most memorable things customers then and still mention often—how

**"Once I'm done with first grade, I'm gonna find me a wife."**

***Billy Sams, age 6***

Old Huntsville
History And Stories of the Tennessee Valley

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helpful and friendly the staff has always been to them.

Their phone was JEfferson-2-2271 in the fifties, as shown on the Chevrolet delivery truck being loaded with fencing for delivery. It was merely 2271 before the prefixes. In 1928, the phone number was 125. The Chevy in the photo is a newer one than Don senior learned to drive during WWII. That was a '39 Ford. One of the hired men, Walter (Hamp) Lacy, was "little" Don's friend and taught him to drive it in the vacant lot next door. Later, Don could drive on city streets and remembered taking a trip to Tennessee. With Hamp napping on the passenger side, Don got the truck going faster than Hamp would have let him. But later, Hamp said he didn't have to look at the speedometer to know because "that ole engine was really humming".

Don told another driving story during the war years, well before he got his driver's license. One day when the family was gone, he took the keys to his mother's '41 Buick to go out for a spin. He collected a few buddies and headed over the mountain and said the roads were virtually deserted because of gas rationing during the war, and people didn't drive unless they had to. When he returned, he parked the car exactly where it had been and replaced the keys. He'd gotten away with it. When his parents returned, his father parked near the Buick and felt the heat from the hood. Inside, he said to Don, "Where'd you drive to in your mother's car?"

He knew he was caught and then confessed. Don said his father, J.M., later laughed about the episode, but his mother certainly did not.

## History and High Points

The original address of the store was 225 Washington Street but became 222 after an original structure was torn down and another building acquired closer to Pratt.

The store has enlarged multiple times, merging two buildings by building over an alley that separated the stores (Huntsville Glass and a drugstore). All became an enlargement of Lewter Hardware. You walk through passageways today as you go deeper into the store. The view from the parking lot door spans the long aisle between buildings and almost resembles mirrors in an endless reflection to the other side a few hundred feet away.

In October 1933, a Huntsville Times article mentioned that the Peters Ammunition Company was recently in town at the store. "The power, accuracy, and cleanliness of Peters ammunition," proprietors of Lewter's said, "were demonstrated, and all sizes of shells and cartridges are handled by our firm."

A July 1933 Huntsville Times article stated: "Ten years of experience selling Acme Quality paints have convinced J. Malcolm Lewter, owner of Lewter Hardware Co., that he is handling one of the best grades of paint now manufactured."

Mr. Lewter sold Acme Quality paints before he bought the Huntsville store and he continued to feature the same line. "A steady increase in the sales of Acme paint that we have had can be attributed to its quality and price, that has at all times been in trend with other articles,'" Mr. Lewter said.

J.M. Lewter ran an ad in the Huntsville Times in September 1945. It was a re-print of a tele-

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gram announcing that "Post-War Vita-Lux synthetic enamel has just been released for civilian use. You may place your order now for immediate shipment. Post-War Vita-Lux was adopted for use on the Atomic Bomb Project at Oak Ridge, Tennessee, because it had to withstand extreme acid, gas, and fume conditions without discoloration or destruction of the film. — This is the finest enamel that can be manufactured. "

The ad had a tag at the bottom that read: "Just received our first shipment of this Famous Post-War Enamel. Gallons, quarts and pints—now in stock." Lewter's prided itself on selling only the finest paints over the years.

Store Manager Caleb Hipp talked with me at length on the morning of August 17th. He said he's been with Lewter Hardware for sixteen years. I asked about his best memories.

He beamed when he told me. "I really enjoyed some of my early years doing a lot of 'pump' work in the fields," he said. When asked what that meant, he said, "Oh, people needed wells in the county, and we'd take the hole in the ground and go from there. We did the pipes, plumbing to the house, the well pump and all the electrical, right into the home. We did everything but dig the hole. I liked that and working with Donnie a lot." Caleb was referring to the recently deceased James Donald (Donnie) Lewter, Jr., who passed away on July 20, 2022.

When asked about his best and most difficult customers, he replied, "The ones who come in here with a project in pieces are the most fun to help. Together, we can sort, look for parts and eventually help them complete their project. It's good when we can help them finish their project because we have just what they need." Then he stroked his thick dark beard, considering the more difficult type of customer. "I guess it'd have to be the real rocket scientists. They'd come in here with a precise specification. Then, as we'd go through small parts, they would pull out their pocket micrometer, measure items to the thousandth of a millimeter, and then pass and go on to something else. They were hard to satisfy."

## Peanuts and Cats

Many years back, the store kept a bucket of peanuts on the checkout counter for customers to snack on while ringing up the sales. That left hulls and a few peanuts on the floor that found their way into cracks and crannies. That attracted mice and rats, as you can imagine. Rather than get rid of the peanuts customers liked, they decided on a cat. Coco was the first mouser, and Caleb told me she was a real hunter-killer. She kept the place free of rodents, as well as an occasional dove or pigeon that strayed too close to the building.

Don Lewter senior told me on a phone interview that he remembered when Coco came, and one day, amongst the peanut hulls, a mouse scampered between an employee's feet. He managed to catch it and held it up to Coco and said, "We're feeding you too well, and you gotta be hungry enough to hunt for your dinner." They reduced Coco's food, and she kept the store free of mice and rats.

After Coco died, her replacement was a pair of cats, at the urging of Don Lewter's wife, so that the single cat wouldn't get lonely at night. They named them after characters in "Family Affair," a popular sitcom T.V. show of the day. Thus, the second generation of cats were Buffy and Jody. Jody

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has since been replaced with Lu. People think Lu is short for Lewter, but its full name is Lustig. He is an orange-striped cat, while the other is a tortoiseshell-colored female. They are extremely friendly with customers, and you can see them walking around or lounging on store shelves whenever you visit. Buffy is in her late teens, but Lu is only four years old.

I mentioned the cats to one customer outside the store. He said, "Oh, I always enjoy them when I come in. I pet them, and they are quite friendly. Sometimes Lu is by the glass side door, and I hold it open for him and ask if he wants to go out, but he always declines. I guess he's quite happy where he is inside in the air-conditioning and attention whenever he wants it."

I found Lu lounging on top of one of the plastic airplane model kits that fill a small shelf. The peanuts still sit on the check-out counter, the reason for a cat in the first place. As I talked to Caleb, we walked over to the plexiglass-covered countertop with photos underneath. Behind the counter was Allen Edison. Speaking to Caleb (bearded), Allen said he'd loved the peanuts for years. "Unfortunately, my teeth aren't in good enough condition these days to eat them." Everyone laughed. You never know when some of these guys are joking or telling the truth.

On my third visit to the store in a week, I got photos of the upstairs storage area. I arrived at about 7:45 (7 a.m. opening), and there were already plenty of employees. I was there to buy a new hand-held metal shower head on a flexible chrome line. Yes, they had exactly what my wife wanted, and unfortunately, it was also the most expensive one.

When I went to the check-out to pay for it, I found Cindy Smith near the counter, sweeping up the previous day's peanut hulls and getting the floor shipshape for the coming day. I told her it was interesting she had the same last name as me.

She laughed and said, "You don't know the half of it." I asked what she meant.

She replied, "I've been married twice to a Smith. My son calls me 'Smith Squared' for a name." When I inquired about other jobs in the store she did, she named things off so fast I couldn't write them all down. The conclusion is that she can do just about anything, including wait on customers, and her attitude of doing whatever needs getting done, seems to be the same as everyone who works there. Friendly, helpful and cooperative.

### The Rope Elevator

Close to the parking lot entrance and check-out counter is an X-marked square on the floor and a looped coil of rope vanishing into the ceiling. This is the manual rope-pulled elevator. The rope is nearly two inches in diameter, similar to that used to secure cruise ships to pylons in port. It has been there for as long as the store, providing easy access to large items on the building's second-floor storage area. In the hundreds of square feet above the main shopping area, they conveniently stored both extra inventory and seasonal items for use when needed. Counterbalanced, anyone can lower and raise the four-foot square platform, loaded or empty. Caleb said it's easier to lower when full and easier to raise when empty, as you'd expect, but not all that difficult if fully loaded because of the counterweight system. Two small ropes set or release a safety brake to lock the platform in place.

Don Lewter senior told me in a phone conversation that he, as a kid, and his kids, have swung on those ropes

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over all the years it's been there.

"Did it ever break?" I asked.

"Oh yes, more than once, but not from a little kid on it. We sell rope and had some available to replace with new, but it's an endless loop, and no one knew how to make 'a sailmaker's splice' until we found a specialist. Then it would go over the pulleys without a problem. We've had to splice it more than a few times over the years."

Fifty years ago, a company offered to make the elevator electric at a reasonable cost, but the Lewter in charge at the time, being cost conscious as well, declared that it worked just fine, "and if it ain't broke, don't fix it."

Since we're discussing the elevator to the second floor, I climbed the original hundred-year-old wooden steps with a large pipe handrail bolted with pipe flanges to the main brick wall of this part of the group of buildings. The doorway to the stairs is just behind the elevator on the ground floor. Flicking on the light switch at the bottom, fluorescent lights illuminated the stairs and upper part of the building brightly.

Customers rarely browse around in this area, although there is a display wall of lighting accessories and fluorescent tubes. The two-story brick wall gives you an understanding of how narrow this end building originally was next to the big parking lot.

Traveling further into this storage and seasonal merchandise area, you walk around the wire cage elevator area that's open with a gate on only one side. Through the alcove, you enter another upstairs storage area about the same width, with another brick wall marking the end of the second building. The alleyway would be beyond this wall, which was covered and made a part of the entire first floor that leads into yet a third (and maybe fourth) building that have been merged over the years into the single giant shopping area on the ground floor.

As I was leaving the upstairs area, my guide (not Caleb) and I noticed an open box sitting on two others, and jar tops could easily be seen. He picked a couple up and handed one to me when I saw the large print that showed the word "SORGHUM." Yes, it was a case full of one-pint canning jars of thick dark syrup with an old-time-looking label of black printing on what looks like brown paper sack material. It's made by the Mazelin Family of 4570 Muddy Pond Road in Monterrey, TN. Haven't I stated earlier that you can buy just about anything from this store? (If you can't get this from Lewter's before they close, try www.muddypondsorghum.com, which is the new name for the same family syrup.)

**Merchandise Sales of Years Ago**

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tricycles beginning at $6.95.

A large ad in the newspaper for Christmas 1953 had a short list of things for "Father," and you can imagine what all that could be. For the "Kiddies" besides wagons and tricycles, they had all types of sporting equipment like balls and gear, including air rifles and knives. However, the list for "Mother" was more interesting. The ad listed these items and categories: Cory Coffee Makers, Automatic Electric Irons, Turkey roasters, Automatic Electric Coffee Makers, Pinking Shears, Carving Sets, Waffle Irons, Grills, Toasters, Electric Heaters, Dishes, Rubbermaid Stove Mats, Rubbermaid Drainers and Step-On Garbage Cans. Wow, won't Mom be surprised?

In February 2015, a winter weather advisory came from the weather service, forecasting three to six inches of snow in the coming days. I (the author) checked my sleds and found the large one had a broken runner and no time to fix it. I was in a long line that day at Lewters to buy sleds, but they'd stocked up, and I got mine. Later, their supply ran out.

## Customer Comments

(from website) "One of the neatest local stores in the area. It's a nationally famous hardware store because they carry such a variety of things that most stores would not. They also have genuine answers and in-depth knowledge. You can also get just 1 of nuts and bolts in many sizes instead of having to buy a pack." - Clint P.

I recently talked with my old Chief Engineer, Robert (Cactus) Gay from Channel 31, WAAY-TV, about what he remembered from his time at the T.V. station from 1958 to 2000 and visiting Lewter's. He said they had more items than any single store that has ever done business in Huntsville. He remembers the second floor with not only seasonal items stored but all the farming equipment. They had horse equipment—a harness for a buggy, bridles, saddles, and about anything for a horse owner. He said there were leather goods, including enormous sheets of leather, that could be cut to size and sold for making belts.

He remembers giant log chains that could hold a yacht, sold by the foot—rope of every size, up to the type used on their in-store elevator. For rope and chain on spools, and brass markers in the floor every ten feet to measure long lengths of rope or chain before cutting. (Note: markers span 100 feet— the exact width of the building). Lewter's is not your average hardware store—it has never been. And if they didn't have it in stock, they'd get it for you in a week.

Cactus recalled big kegs of tar to be melted for roofing repair and construction, along with tar paper, roofing felt and shingles. He also remembered seeing an anvil and other blacksmithing tools for sale years ago. (Note: in the '30s, Lewters bought horseshoes in 40,000 pound lots to sell to all the blacksmith shops in the area. Three shops - were within a block of the store.)

He remembered the multiple round bins forming trees from floor to head high filled with nails of every length and thickness, all sold by the pound—you helped yourself to the quantity you wanted, and they weigh and bag it for you in heavy-duty brown paper sacks. They still sell nails out of those round metal bins.

Finally, Cactus remembered they sold the world's most expensive product per pound. They sold tomato seeds in the garden supply area.

Another longtime customer of Lewter Hardware is our publisher of Old Huntsville Magazine, Mrs. Cathey Carney. She's been running an ad for Lewter's for over twenty-five years. She was heartbroken to hear of the passing of Donnie Lewter, as were so many others. When asked about the things she liked best about the business, she said, "You walk in the main door and someone is there to help you."

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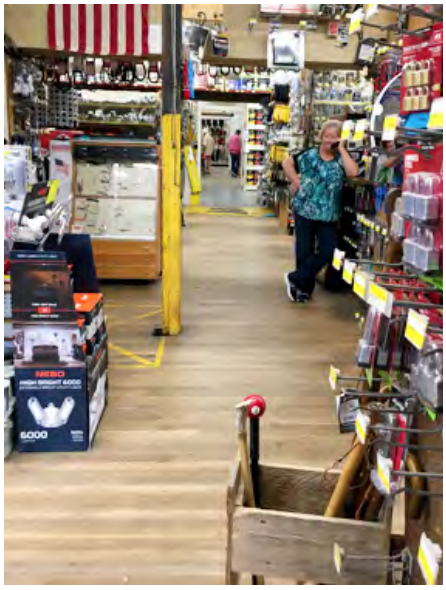

Cathey said that her husband Tom Carney had a construction crew and was a regular customer in Lewter's. When he and Cathey started Old Huntsville magazine, Tom put a small ad for Lewters in the early issues, which has continued to present day.

Over the years, the helpfulness of the staff never changed. She remembered going in once for a replacement air filter for her A.C. system. What she described was all metal and quite expensive. Yes, they had them and that size in stock. But the Lewter rep said, "Mrs. Carney, you don't need anything that expensive. You can buy a couple of these others for only $2.50; that will do just as well. Just change them out every three months." They may have lost money doing that, but she certainly appreciated his honesty. "Their gardening and kitchen items are just timeless, and I have been picking up keepsakes I'll always have from Lewter's, like some wind chimes, kitchen items, etc." She remembers Donnie saying, "If you don't find it here, you don't need it!"

Bobby Ikard has been keeping the books for a long time. He remembers the old manual system, when many customers would charge to their monthly account. They used the old ticket pads. One copy was for the customer, and the other went into a metal meat-loaf size pan. Bobby would collect the various registers' pans and sort the tickets by customer name into their monthly stack. He told me recently that he'd wait until the next morning and post the tickets to the customer's account card because tickets came in right up to closing at 5:00 p.m. Then, at the end of the month, he'd total up the posts to the account and send out the statement for payment. Today, the computer register system puts charge sales into their account, automatically sorted and ready to print and mail.

Caleb said, "I don't see how in the world Bobby could manage all that and his other bookkeeping duties in the old days."

The Lewter family has been a dynasty on the Hardware store scene for nearly a hundred years. The photo of the two brothers with father Don senior is a great way to remember them and the down-home way of doing business. It's a tragedy that Donnie came to such an untimely death at age 64, complicated by Covid. I'm sure the decision to close the store on October 8 was difficult. Brother Mac is not around the store because of being constantly bombarded by offers of condolences and inquiries about buying the business. That would make the loss of family member, Donnie, all the harder.

Until early October, customers can still walk into the store, make some purchases, and at the register when it's totaled, just say, "Charge it to my account," and leave. Where else can you do that these days?

When I left the store after the meeting, I told Caleb that this story would be in the October issue of Old Huntsville Magazine, and I appreciated his time for the interview.

He replied in the old southern style, using a pronoun before the first name, and said, "Thank you, Mr. M.D."

You are most welcome, Mr. Caleb.

I want to conclude with a comment Don Lewter told me about in our phone conversation. He talked about the unwritten motto his father J.M. taught him and the staff. He passed it along to his sons.

"When a person comes through that door, they are your guest and should be treated so."

And thank you to the Lewter family for nearly a century of operating such an amazing store that sells "everything." Down-home service is included at no extra charge.

***About the author: M.D. Smith has written 124 non-fiction short stories for Old Huntsville Magazine in the past nineteen years. He's nationally published in Good Old Days and Reminisce print magazines, Like Sunshine After Rain short story anthology, and digitally in Frontier Times, Flash Fiction Online, and other flash fiction sites. He's published three romance novels, two Flash Fiction collections, and three non-fiction books. Holds MFA degree in Popular Fiction Writing.***

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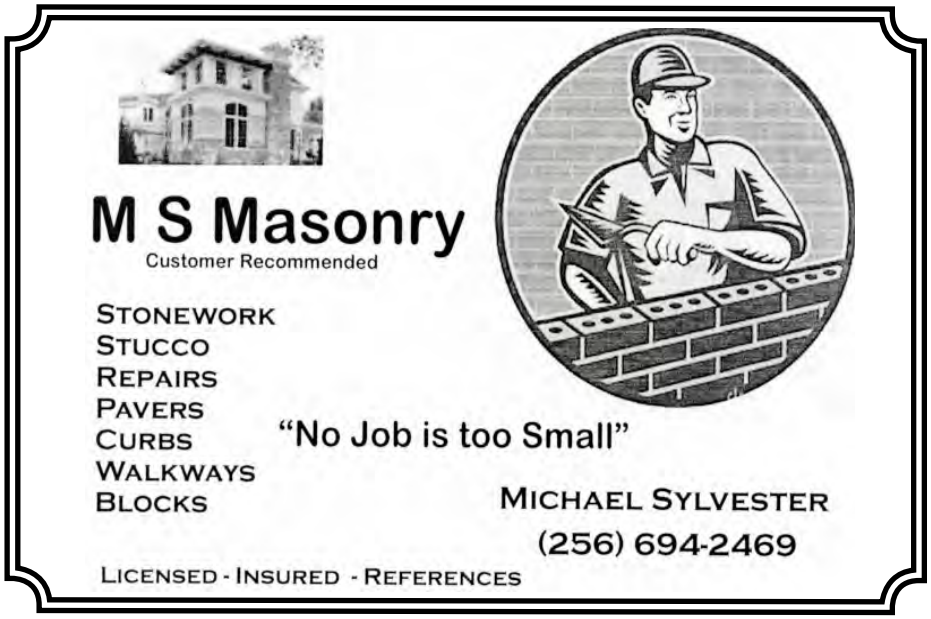

# A Kid in the Country

*by Clarence Golson*

My father ran a 400 acre dairy farm about 7 miles from town. Here are some of the memories of life until I was 10 years old when we moved.

Fishing was my favorite pastime; we had two ponds and a creek on the farm. The Back Pond was special. The biggest fish in that pond was about the as long as my little finger but they were always hungry. One day my family and I went fishing for these little fish, the younger of my two sisters tired of the little fish and she put an entire worm on her hook with ends dangling and dropped her line in the water. Immediately, her cork was dragged under the water, it was a small cork, she lifted her pole and there was TWO little fishes, one on each end of the worm. She dropped them in the bucket and continued fishing for little fish.

You might wonder what we did with such small fish. We just scaled and gutted them, cut off the heads and fried them crispy. It was like eating fish chips. I really enjoyed the fish chips. You just had to bring home a few hundred of them to feed my whole family.

Daddy thought there should be larger fish in the Back Pond. He went to the creek and caught 7 red breasted bream and put them in the pond. A few weeks later, the husband of my older of my two sisters went fishing in the Back Pond and caught all 7 of the red breasted bream.

The pregnant cows of the dairy were kept in the Back Pasture. One of the heifers had been raised by Daddy because her mother had rejected her at birth. As you might imagine, the calf had become quite attached to Daddy. One fine day, Daddy and Pluto, the farm dog, were walking across the dam while checking on the cows. When the heifer saw Daddy with Pluto, she started running at Pluto and almost knocked Daddy in the pond. Such is the complete jealousy of a hand raised heifer.

One winter was especially cold and the Back Pond froze over completely. While investigating the phenomenal sight, I picked up a rock and slung it across the ice, making a sound I had never heard before.. I looked carefully at the ice where it connected to the ground, It looked solid, solid enough to step on, WRONG!!! Immediately I was knee deep in ice cold water and my boots filled with this ICE COLD water.

We never had to dig for worms to go fishing. Some people called the process "Fiddling" but all it was, a stake would be driven into the ground and a saw rubbed against it. The vibration must have been irritating the worms because they quickly crawled out of the ground.

Another technique was to get two dowels, drive a nail in to the end of each and grind the end sticking out of the dowels and wrap the loose ends of an old extension cord to the nails. Once stuck in the ground, any worm within a few feet would almost jump out of the ground. One place we did dig was the drainage ditch from the milk barn, it was real "juicy". There were a lot of worms but it was a messy process.

# Area News from 1873

- We are informed that five or six prisoners broke jail and escaped on Thursday night. They were at large at last accounts.

- Bill Thompson, arrested on Wednesday by Captain Forman, on the charge of stealing a cow from Mr. River, and offering the same for sale at market in Decatur, was taken to jail on Monday last for safe keeping. He made an attempt on Friday night to escape from the guardhouse by removing the iron bars from one of the prison windows. He got stuck.

- Telegrams received at Huntsville Saturday, from Houston, Texas, state that Joseph Aquero, charged with the murder of Jack Snow, of this city, last May, has been acquitted.

- A heavy wind and rain storm occurred on Thursday night in New Market. The roof of the gin-house was blown off and the blacksmith shop leveled with the dust. Considerable damage to fencing was done in the neighborhood.

- A little girl, between thirteen and fourteen years of age, the daughter of Mr. Zach Elliot of Madison County, brought to this place on Friday last a bale of cotton weighing nearly five hundred pounds, which she made by her own labor, plowing the ground, planting the seed, working it during maturity, picking it, and selling it herself. She made from its sale nearly one hundred dollars. The cotton was purchased by our fellow citizen A. S. Curtis, who gave the little girl half a cent more to the pound than the market value. We know of many boys loafing about the city in idleness, that might assist their poor widowed mothers in making a support, by following the example of this industrious little girl.

- An ex-Federal soldier was seen near Triana paying court to one of our young lasses. Local lads persuaded him to make a speedy departure to the northern region from whence he had come. He won't be seen again.

**"Unattended children will be given a double espresso and a free kitten."**

***Seen in Decatur coffee shop***

## Blueberry Cobbler

1 cup flour, self-rising
1 cup sugar
1/2 cup milk
2 c. blueberries
1/4 c. lemon juice
1-1/2 tsp. vanilla
1 stick butter, cut in pieces

Pour blueberries/lemon juice into a pot with about 1/2 cup sugar, heat over medium stove til boiling. simmer 5 minutes. Remove from heat and add 1/2 teaspoon vanilla. If necessary to thicken a little, cook with a bit of sugar, but don't make it too thick.

Mix flour, sugar, milk and 1 teaspoon vanilla in bowl til smooth. Spray a 9 x 13 pan with vegetable spray, then pour flour mixture into pan. Smooth out to the edges.

Pour blueberries over flour mixture, dot with small pieces of butter. Bake at 350 degrees for 45 minutes.

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Halloween decorations are in the stores, but Christmas ones began appearing at the end of August. Thanksgiving is mixed in there somewhere. Summer sure went by in a hurry, it seems.

I think this year I'll just leave the tree up and after the first of the year I'll just throw a sheet over it. Then, maybe add a few more ornaments next year and call it quits.

My grandchildren are already making out their Christmas lists. Maybe I'll start doing the same. One of my grandchildren said, "Mimi, you might not live much longer. Why do you need anything else?"

My reply was, "You might get run over tomorrow, so do you really need a new computer?" That shut her up real fast.

Something coming up again this year in October is the annual Maple Hill Cemetery Stroll from 1:30 to 4:30—no admission charge. Donations accepted. It's on October 16th, 2022. This Sunday event has over 60 characters dressed up like the famous people buried there, and they relate their life's history and interesting events. There will also be music, scavenger hunts for students, and a great exhibit of antique cars from the local NAR division of the national AACA, Antique Automobile Club of America.

With Halloween on a Monday this year, just a few weeks away, why not check out the thrift stores for decorations and costumes, which probably have only been worn once, if that much. Just make sure the little ones have an adult to watch what they eat and carry a flashlight. Masks can cause accidents if they slip over the eyes or don't fit properly, and children can trip and fall. Think about face paint instead to solve that problem.

Right after Halloween on the 31st, we will change time, falling back an hour on the first Sunday in November, which is the 6th.

Speaking about Daylight Savings time changes, the Senate voted to have permanent Daylight Savings starting in March 2023, but the bill has stalled out in the House. If they approve it this fall, it will go to the President to sign. The hang-up is some in the House think it should be permanent but on Standard time, so they tabled the vote with other more important things this past summer like inflation, gas prices and gun laws. But for sure, we'll change to standard on November 6th. I think the country should vote on it to see what the majority of us want to do.

Thinking ahead to Thanksgiving dinner? I lean toward something quick, easy, and good on my list. Thank goodness for freezers. If I start now, just making one item a week, it might not be too stressful this year. If you are expecting a houseful, why not ask each family member to bring a casserole or dessert? I'll do the turkey. That way, no one has to spend hours in the kitchen making up so many main course items or cakes and pies.

Our state football teams got off to a good start this year. I hope it continues. I pull for all the teams until the last game in November, and then I have to say, "Roll Tide." Having friends over to watch the games is a great fall pastime. Want a great and easy dip to make? Simply brown one pound of sausage, drain and cool. Add one can of Rotel tomatoes and one block of cream cheese. Melt in the dish you cooked sausage, stir, and serve with your favorite chips. It's a favorite around my home.

Enjoy the present and coming holidays. Until next time, Stay Safe.

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# GOLF

*by Bob French*
*Condensed from THE LAWyer*
*Hit and Drag Shorty*

The year was 1946. Passing to the 7th grade at Decatur Junior High School, he laboriously delivered 360 papers on his old used red bicycle to earn extra money for the family.

As school started in September, he became fast friends with another newsboy who lived near the Decatur Country Club, an old nine-hole golf course. When school was out that year, both boys agreed that they were tired of delivering papers. His new friend suggested that they go to Decatur Country Club and become caddies.

"Why they pay you $1.50 for carrying a bag 18 holes. Most golfers will tip you a quarter or fifty cents. Two dollars for three and a half hours work is not bad. Plus, those golf bags don't look that heavy."

The boys visited the pro shop where they were soon hired. They were the only white boys there, but they didn't know it. Times were different then. The hard times of the war were over, the soldiers were coming home, and it seemed like the idyllic times would last forever. The housing boom and the baby boom that would change the face of America had begun to flourish.

The big golfing days were Wednesday afternoon when the stores were closed at midweek and all day Saturday and Sunday. Most weekends they could catch a bag in the morning and another in the afternoon. If all the caddies didn't show up, they could manage a double, carrying the bags for two golfers - twice the money!

Monday the course was closed and caddies could play all day free while the greens crew cut the fairways, roughs, tees and greens. The boys played golf every Monday when they could share clubs with a caddy who had some clubs. None of the caddies had a complete set.

For most rounds all the friends had was a three wood (then called a spoon), an eight iron and a putter. Within a few weeks they could score in the 80's with the three clubs. They hooded the eight iron for long iron shots and opened it up for the nine and wedge placements.

They rolled up their overall pants and looked for balls in the water hazards. The word jeans had not entered the lexicon at that time. They were constantly in the roughs and woods looking for lost balls when they weren't caddying. The good balls they found were sold to golfers for a dime or quarter a piece. They kept the rest to have balls for their game.

They were always begging the pro to look at their swings. Most of the time, he was too busy to be bothered by the insisting boys. One day, when it was raining, the pro agreed to take a look at their swings and down to the basement they went.

The first golf club he ever owned was home made. He searched around his rural house until he found the branch of a small tree that resembled the shape of a golf club. He cut the branch with the coping saw he had used in shop at school. Then he stripped the bark off the shaft part and shaped the head with his Boy Scout knife. The "club" needed a face. So he tacked a Campbell's Soup tin can lid on the front of the head part of the limb as a face to strike the ball. He used the remainder of the lid, bent under the "face" as the sole of the club. It didn't look like much, but it suited his purpose. He swung it re-

**"Some call it multi-tasking. I call it doing something else while I am trying to remember what it was that I was doing in the first place."**

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lentlessly practicing his swing.

When he was not working at the golf course, he would tee up a cheap ball, a U.S. Knobby or Firestone golf ball, on a clod in the cotton patch adjoining his home and hit balls down the furrows of the field. He would walk through the dusty plowed ground, locate the balls, and hit them back. He would do this for hours, usually in the boiling hot sun, practicing the golf swing the pro had taught him.

When caddie's day rolled around, he took his stick to the club and played with it as a driver on the course. The other caddies laughed at him when he pulled it out of his "golf bag", made from the remnants of an old cotton sack his mother stitched together for him, but they stopped laughing when he out drove them. He could hit a new Titleist a little more than two hundred yards with his homemade club. The other caddies tried their hand with the stick, but they couldn't hit it. His best friend could do pretty good with it, but he said it needed a grip. They bummed friction tape from the pro shop and wrapped the top of the white wooden shaft overlapping the tape like they wrapped their baseball bats. They were in business with a driver that had a grip.

The summer of 1948 joined the pair to golf for life. That year, they both had a complete set of used clubs with metal shafts. There were not more than half a dozen players at Decatur who could beat them. They could easily beat the men they caddied for but they kept quiet about it. They analyzed every swing they saw and they were critical of every golfer's swing silently.

They made the high school golf team. When they turned sixteen and got their driver's licenses, they began to travel across North Alabama in the friend's '37 Chevrolet playing strange golf courses. Their favorite was the Jasper Country Club in Jasper, Alabama, because the greens were so lush and fast.

After high school both boys were caught up in the Korean War. By the time they had finished their military service and college, they joined the work force and found themselves going their separate ways. They still found time to play golf and keep up with each other. Weddings, best man, wives and children came along. Still, they continued their love for golf together and they and their families vacationed together, always near a golf course. The women and children did whatever women and children do while the men played golf.

They played Sawgrass before the TPC discovered it. They played Arnold Palmer's Bay Hills the first season play was allowed. Their favorite courses were Hidden Hills near Jacksonville, Florida, now paved over as a commercial development, and Eagle Vail where the ball went great distances in the high thin air of the Rockies. And so it went - Doral, Pebble Beach, name it, the lifelong best friends, and golf.


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# Good Huntsville Memories

*by Ken Priest*

I'm certainly not fond of growing old. I don't really think many are thrilled about it. But, looking back, I am thankful that I have lived in the time that allowed me some of the wonderful memories I have. I remember the old Courthouse and preachers on the steps preaching on Saturdays. Folks would gather around the Square back then. Someone may be singing and playing an instrument on one side of the Courthouse while a preacher preached on another side and a politician campaigned on another.

I remember the old Cotton Row on West Side Square, Ward's and Krystal on the Northside, an Army surplus store and Harrison Bros. Hardware on the South Side. I remember doing business with both the Harrison Brothers and eating hamburgers at Wimpy's Grill on the East Side. I know the Lewter's and have shopped there for years for things I couldn't find anywhere else. Did you know that they had sleds when no one else did?

I remember Big Jim Folsom and his wife standing on a hay wagon on the southwest corner of the square singing "Ya'll come to see us when you can!"

How about that Sesquicentennial in 1955? Women would wear dresses from the period 150 years before and the men would all grow beards. If they didn't grow beards, they would be mock arrested and put in a mock jail and had to be bailed out. I don't remember a lot about this. I was only 5 or 6. The mock jails were set up around the Big Springs where the celebration took place and fun was had by all!

Moving around behind the South Side Square and some years later, I was one of the Superintendents on Constitution Hall State Park. This was the re-creation of the buildings existing there when and where the Alabama Constitution was signed. The two people I remember the most from this experience were Harvie Jones, the architect and an elderly carpenter named Mr. Smith. Harvie was the south's foremost architect dealing with antebellum construction. It was a privilege and pleasure to work with him. His knowledge of period construction was incredible! Mr. Smith was a carpenter and craftsman from Sand Mountain. He was making handrails and spindles from cedar with hand tools. His chisels were kept in a lined wooden case and were never filed, they were honed! I asked once if an electric router wouldn't be faster. He replied, "Son, I understand how these chisels work. I don't know nothing about one of them things!" He was 86 at the time. I apologized for bothering him and told him I was going to go find something constructive to do!

I remember the milk man bringing glass bottled milk to the door and the vegetable man driving down Ward Ave. in his pickup ringing his bell at each block for the folks to come out and buy vegetables. When I was little, I would wait on the corner of Dement St. and Ward Ave. for Grandpa to come home from work. When he turned the corner, I would stand on the running board of his truck and hold on and ride the last half block home. I remember mama and my aunts and uncles and Grandma and Grandpa all sitting down together to eat! We were all Family back then. Grandpa would start to eat and say "This sure is good!" After he had eaten for a while, he would say "This isn't nearly as good as it was when I first started!"

You didn't get chickens packaged like they are now. Grandma would put them in hot water then pluck the pinfeathers out. Several years later, on Saturday night, Aunt Nina would make fudge and we would watch Perry Mason on the old black and white TV. Fudge wouldn't get hard if it was raining.

Oh, and I remember Grandma's fried apple pies. They weren't fluffy and crispy like the ones we get now. Nope, they were soggy and greasy and cooked in lard and the best things you ever put in your mouth!!

In the 50's a trip to the river or even to the mountain from Five Points seemed like a serious journey to a little boy. I'd look forward to family reunions on the mountain once a year. We'd put a wash tub in the truck and fill it with ice and Double Colas and head for the mountain. We'd stop on the way and pick up a watermelon. When you bought a melon then, you would stick it with a butcher knife and cut a square out of it to see if it was good. This was called "plugging it."

Women and families would bring fried chicken and coleslaw and hamburgers and hot dogs and potato salad, chips and pies and cakes and other goodies. All us kids would ride in the back of the truck. There wasn't much traffic back then and Papa never drove over 20 miles an hour anyway. Folks didn't refer to the Parkway as a four lane or the Parkway. They called it the "dual highway!"

Guess memories are the nicer things about getting old!

**"I made a huge to-do list for today. Now I just have to figure out who's going to do it."**

***Ken Owens, Huntsville***

# Chipmunks and Chocolate

*by Charley Chipmunk and Connie Carter*

We live in tornado country. Because of that, we built a storm shelter that I keep stocked with crash helmets and emergency supplies. An open air vent on one end and a small fan on the other keep it ventilated.

One of my emergency foods was a can of nuts with a plastic lid. You guessed it. A chipmunk got in through the vent and bit right through that lid. He nibbled away the whole edge of it and then helped himself to the nuts!

I dug out the messy part and saw that there was a layer of chocolate drops he never even touched. So chipmunks don't like chocolate! Should I encircle the whole perimeter of the shelter with chocolate to keep him out? The plastic vent cover didn't deter him at all.

(In case you're wondering how I know it was a male, any wife knows that men are nuts about nuts!)

I can see us now, at the next tornado warning, sitting in the shelter in our lawn chairs, helmets on, with a scared little chipmunk in my lap. Maybe some chocolate drops would calm his nerves, or mine.

If not, and you would like to contribute to the cause, he also likes those little round crackers that come in a tube. Much handier for munching. He would really appreciate it. Thank you.

No he is not a pet, just a pest!

*Message to Old Huntsville Magazine - I hope you don't get swamped with Ritz crackers from well-wishers!*


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# Heard On the Street

*by* ***Cathey Carney***

It was hard to find but we have a winner for the hidden water bottle in the September issue. It was on page 43, just above **Judy Smith**'s right shoulder. See it now? **Bell Buchanan** spent a while and two readovers before she found it and called. She loves history and sure has sharp eyes.

Then the baby of the month last month was **Jill Wood**. Many remember her as the super-talented publisher of Valley Planet, that many of us still miss, it was a great current events newspaper. The winner was **Patricia Reed**, a long time reader of Old Huntsville and lives in Gurley, Al. Congratulations to both Patricia and Bell!

Truist Bank on Church Street is staffed by some of the most helpful and knowledgeable banking people you'll find anywhere. One of them is **Ianthia Bridges**, who you'll see often at the drive-through window. I asked her recently what impportant dates she has in October and she has a lot! On Oct. 7th she will celebrate 25 years as a Breast Cancer Survivor (Whoo-Hooo!) That is a big one. Then her niece **Carla "Cee-Cee" Jowers** has a birthday on Oct. 4th. Her cousin **Bridgette Pettway** has an Oct. 7th birthday. And Ianthia's sweet uncle in Heaven **(Leonard "Craddock" Ramsey**) has his special day on Oct. 20th.

Many in this area remember the company **Ashburn and Gray**, who built a majority of the roads in North Alabama. We received a sweet message from **Bob Hawkins** recently, as well as a story, and wanted to pass along what he said. "I remember **Cecil Ashburn** so well and worked for him for years, when I was just a young man. I operated the first new piece of paving equipment that Cecil bought. And the first job was paving the Parkway back in 1956. I was raised in the Maysville and Gurley area, and just really enjoy the Ryland area stories from **Austin** and **Beirne Miller**, as well as **Malcolm Miller**. A great family."

The "2022 World's Largest Pet Walk was recently held end of September in thousands of cities across the U.S. including Huntsville. Pet Partners is the national leader in animal-assisted therapy, activities, and education. Their registered therapy animals include nine species of creatures, including dogs, cats, rabbits, guinea pigs, llamas and alpacas.

Pet Partners teams visit with patients in recovery, people with intellectual disabilities, seniors living with Alzheimer's, students, veterans with PTSD, people who have experienced crisis events and those approaching end of life.

They hope to raise more than $100,000 nationwide. If you would like to read more information on them, visit petpartners.org/wlpw.

As you know I hide one tiny item each month in the pages of the magazine. If you can find it and are the first to call you win a $50 annual subscription to Old Huntsville magazine for yourself or a friend. What I want you to find is a small **paint brush**. Be the first, and if you haven't won in the past

## Photo of The Month

**The first person to correctly** identify the youngster below wins a one-year subscription to "Old Huntsville"

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year, you're the winner!

**Margaret Lipscomb Esslinger** was 97 when she passed away on August 29 this year. For many years she owned and operated Margaret Ann's Florist in Huntsville. She was a lifelong, selfless volunteer who in 1953, as the mother of polio survivors, she organized the Mother's March for Polio in Madison County and was a lifelong March of Dimes volunteer. For the American Red Cross she served as a Gray Lady, did disaster work and worked in the blood program. She was a volunteer there for more than 25 years. She was preceded in death by her husband of 62 years, **Bill Esslinger,** and her son, **William Thomas Esslinger "Tommy**". Survivors include her children, **Linda Morrell (Edward)** of Marietta, Georgia, **John Esslinger (Betty**) of Scottsboro, Alabama, and **Tim Esslinger (Sue)** of Double Springs, Alabama; daughter-in-law, **Teresa Esslinger** of New Market, Alabama; 8 grandchildren, 12 great grandchildren and 2 great great grandchildren.The family is grateful to her special caregiver, **Elizabeth Cannon**. She was such a good role-model for so many and will certainly be missed.

I ran across a really spooky video showing the **Historic Lowry House** that is known to be haunted. Check it for yourself at www.historiclowryhouse.com/hauntings.html. Gave me chills. The home is very old and is known to be haunted. They usually have some really different Halloween events going on during October so be sure and check the website for upcoming events at www.historiclowryhouse.com.

When doing strenuous work or a workout, don't overdo it. Try a lighter workout if you're feeling extremely anxious or depressed. High stress levels can reduce your concentration on what you're doing and can lead to an increased chance of injury.

There are lots of events coming up in October for newcomers as well as all residents! Here are just a few:

Oct 2 - 2nd Annual Good Music & Arts Festival, Sunday 3-8pm at Big Spring Park, 200 Church St. SW, Huntsville

Oct 6 - Tennessee Valley Old Time Fiddlers Convention Thurs Oct 6 - Sat Oct 8 at Athens State University, 300 No. Beaty St. in Athens

Oct. 15 - Bluegrass & BBQ Festival, Sat. 2-8pm, Southside Park, 16159 Chaney Thompson Rd. SE, Huntsville

Oct. 21 - Lauren Daigle at the Orion Amphitheater, Fri 7:30-9:30pm, 701 Amphitheater Dr. NW, Huntsville

Oct 22 - Annual Antique & Classic Car, Truck and Motorcycle - Sat 1:30 - 6pm, 7 Town Center Dr. NW, Huntsville

Oct 31 - Stevie Nicks in Concert, The Orion Amphitheater, Mon 7:30-9:30 pm, 701 Amphitheater Dr. NW, Huntsville

Enjoy this beautiful cool weather and get out and walk! It helps to have a 4-footed friend to go with you.

And if you're ready for a furry companion please adopt or rescue if possible.

**"I make my practices real hard because if a player is a quitter, I want him to quit in practice, not in a game."**

***Bear Bryant/Alabama***

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# Lee High School Magnet Art Cookbook

### Lynn's Broccoli Salad

1 lb. chopped broccoli
1 c. seedless red grapes, halved
1/2 c. red onion, chopped
1/2 c. sunflower seeds
12 slices bacon, cooked crisp and crumbled

In a large bowl, mix all the ingredients.

**Dressing:**
1 c. mayo
1/2 c. sugar
2 T. wine vinegar

Mix and chill dressing. Add to other ingredients just before serving.

Joyce Kendall

### Beer Nuts

6 c. raw peanuts
1 c. sugar
3 T. butter
1-1/2 c. water

Combine all ingredients in large saucepan. Boil together over medium heat until all liquid is gone, stirring to prevent scorching. Put in large shallow pan and sprinkle lightly with salt. Bake 1 hour at 300°, stirring every 15 minutes.

John Cole

### Hot Chicken Salad

2 c. cooked chicken, diced
2 c. chopped celery
1/2 bunch green onion, chopped
1/2 c. chopped toasted almonds
1 can sliced water chestnuts drained
1/2 t. Accent seasoning
1/2 t. salt
2 T. lemon juice
1 c. mayonnaise
1/2 t. tarragon vinegar
1/2 c. grated sharp Cheddar cheese
1 c. crushed potato chips

Combine all ingredients except cheese and chips. Place in greased casserole. Heat 30-45 minutes until hot and bubbly. Sprinkle with cheese and top with chips.

R. Gibson

### Crab Dip

1/2 lb. flaked crabmeat
1 T. milk
1 8-oz. pkg. softened cream cheese
1/4 c. sour cream
1 T. lemon juice
1 clove garlic, pressed
3 T. chopped green onions

Blend cream cheese and sour cream til smooth. Stir in remaining ingredients. Season to taste and chill for a few hours. Stir and serve with vegetables or crackers.

Mary Ayers

### Squash Casserole

2 c. fresh squash
1 onion, chopped
1 pkg. Ritz crackers, crumbled
1/4 c. melted butter

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1 c. grated cheese
2 eggs
1/2 c. milk
Salt & pepper to taste

Cook squash and onion until tender. Drain and add eggs and milk. Mix cheese, butter and crackers. Add half to the squash. Pour in buttered casserole and sprinkle with remaining crumbs. Add salt and pepper. Bake 30 minutes at 400°.

Bobby L. Cole

## Drunk Hot Dogs

1 pkg. hot dogs
3/4 c. whiskey
1/2 c. water
1/2 c. brown sugar
1-1/2 c. catsup
2 t. minced onion

Cut hot dogs into bite size pieces or use cocktail hot dogs. Combine all ingredients and let simmer a couple of hours on low. Serve from chafing dish with tooth picks.

## Mexican Meatballs

1 lb. ground beef
1 c. fine dry bread crumbs
3/4 c. milk
1 egg, well beaten
1 small onion, minced
1 T. butter, softened
4 T. minced chili
1/2 t. oregano
Salt & pepper to taste

In a medium bowl, combine the beef, bread crumbs, milk, egg, onion, butter, chili, oregano, salt and pepper. Mix well and shape into balls. Bake on a greased baking sheet at 350 degrees for 15 minutes. These can be frozen for use later. Serve with toothpicks.

Mary P.s husband

## Cherry Crunch

1/2 t. lemon juice
1 (1-layer) pkg. white cake mix
1/2 c. chopped nuts
1 16-oz. can cherry pie filling
1 stick butter, melted

In a 9 inch square dish, put cherry pie filling. Sprinkle with lemon juice. Mix the cake mix, nuts and butter (will be lumpy) and spoon this over the cherries. Bake at 350 degrees for 45-50 minutes.

Charlotte Barkley

## Banana Dessert Bars

1/2 c. butter
1/4 c. sugar
1-8 oz. carton sour cream
1 t. vanilla extract
2 pkg. Martha White banana nut muffin mix

Preheat oven to 350°. Grease a 9x13 inch pan. Melt butter and add to remaining ingredients. Mix well and spread in pan. Bake 20 to 25 minutes. Cool in pan and drizzle with glaze.

**Glaze:**

Combine 1 cup confectioners sugar and 2 tablespoons milk. Stir until smooth. Drizzle over dessert.

Debbie Ivey

## Deep South Pecan Pie

1 c. sugar
3/4 c. white Karo syrup
1/2 c. butter
3 eggs
1/2 T. vanilla extract
1 c. pecans
Unbaked pie shell

Combine sugar, syrup, butter, eggs and vanilla in large mixing bowl. Beat well. Add the pecans, fill shell and garnish with pecans on top. Bake at 375 degrees for 45 minutes.

Try toasting and rough-chopping the pecans for easier slicing!

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# Georgia On My Mind

*by John H. Tate*

Come, grab yourself a big glass of sweet tea, and let me tell you a story about a love that extended nearly seven decades, a love that stood the test of time, a love that was a safe harbor from the world's ills. To say it is a once-in-a-lifetime love story would almost reduce the account to a cliche and not do it justice. It is virtually impossible to take the solid emotional life-supporting aspect of deep, profound love and reduce it to the written word. Let's take this journey together and see if we can see through the thin emotional vale.

Our guide on this journey is Mrs. Georgia R. Bearden, the surviving life-long partner of sixty-six years to Mr. James O. Bearden, Sr. Throughout the rest of this story, I will refer to the love birds as Georgia and James, trusting that Mrs. Bearden will not feel disrespected.

As Georgia starts us on our journey, she describes how her lifelong love for James started. With softness in her voice, she says, "Actually, we started having goo-goo eyes for each other the year he lost his limb." But what was the moment when everything started? How did the man Georgia would call, "One of the sweetest men who walked the face of the earth," endear himself to her? After losing a limb, he did not play sports or was involved with the band like the other boys.

James lost his left foot in a Twickenham Hotel elevator accident when he was thirteen. These were some incredibly challenging times for little James. Little did he know that a small gesture of trust on his part would endure him to a love that would be by his side for seventy-seven years, counting from the time he was thirteen.

Listen to how Georgia describes that fateful day, "We used to play together, running up and down the street, played hopscotch. After he lost his foot, I was sitting at a neighbor's house, diagonally to James' house. There was no screen door, so I could see inside. He was lying there in his mother's bed. He raised his leg to show me the stump. I decided that I wanted to do something for him."

"He loved reading funny books like Dick Tracy, Blondie, Archie, and Peanut. I carried him some funny books. Since he couldn't come out and play anymore, I would go in and speak to

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him. After recuperating enough, he got a pair of crutches and we started walking to school together. He lived up the street a few houses from me. I would wait until he got to my house and we would go to school together. We went to all the school activities together and went to the prom together. Then we went on to A&M (Alabama A&M University) together."

James felt comfortable and safe with Georgia, but the neighborhood boys picked on him, called him names and just made fun of him. James must have felt extra pressure being around Georgia; after all, she was no wallflower. Georgia recalled, "I was a cheerleader, I sang in the choir at school I also enjoyed being voted the most beautiful girl in my eleventh-grade class." She did add, "James was voted the best dressed." With some prompting, Georgia admitted that she influenced how well James dressed.

It is amazingly easy to see the passion Georgia had for James. Based on the celebration of life highlights video produced to celebrate James' life, he loved Georgia passionately and with great respect. When the question of why she wanted to share her private life with the Old Huntsville Magazine, she responded with words straight from her heart, wrapped in love.

"We were so privileged that The Good Lord honored us with sixty-six years to enjoy our best life. It was indeed a journey; although my husband was an amputee because of the accident when he was thirteen, he had many other abilities working for him. I thought it was so fitting to let people know, a person in that situation, how he ran his dash. The dash from our beloved wedding day, February 27, 1955, to the day he died, December 27, 2021." With tenderness in her voice, one could imagine that it is reserved only for James, Georgia opens her heart just a little more, "My generation is rapidly passing on, and so is the history of our love story. The reason it is a love story of a lifetime, we got out of the way and allowed God to use us. In so many ways, my husband was one of the sweetest men ever to walk the face of the earth.""

"James was born on February 12, 1931, the youngest of ten kids. I was born on December 6, 1931; this was the time of the Great Depression. The worst financial disaster the world had ever known. People lost everything on the stock market, businesses, homes, and jobs and waited in line for a free loaf of bread."

Georgia recalled the added extraordinary challenges she and James faced as part of everyday life. "We had to suffer through segregation, through segregated schools, separate bathrooms, and separate water fountains. We couldn't try on the clothes we bought at the department stores; and had to stand in line until all white customers were served. We had only God and each other. While society called me the "n" word, my husband softly called me 'sweetheart.'"

James and Georgia did not allow the hatred in some people's hearts to stop them from enjoying the world together and living their best lives. They traveled to every state in the United States except two, Oregon and Wyoming. In a moment of fond reflection, Georgia recalls, "We enjoyed going to Hawaii, the Bahamas, we went to

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Europe; where we visited London, England, Germany and Paris. We always found a Black church in all the places we went; that was especially important to us." James and Georgia enjoyed visiting and experiencing many aspects of the African American culture through their travels.

Georgia becomes even more reflective as she recalls James's challenges and what he did in his life. "After the elevator accident, his childhood friends bullied him something terrible. They were always telling him what he couldn't do, telling him he would be in a wheelchair with a tin cup asking for handouts, and he would be a ward of the state."

James' bullying and teasing as a child motivated him all his life. That motivation and the undying love and support of Georgia allowed him to achieve much in his life. Some selected entries from his obituary highlight that those bullies were nowhere near the truth. "... member of the Lakeside United Methodist Men, the Sanctuary Choir ... former Trustee of Lakeside LUMC."

James' accomplishments were not limited to his church. Other selected passages from his obituary, "... Program Manager at IBM for 25 years; he was awarded The IBM Means Service Award; he was the first African American to serve on the organization's Board of Directors at IBM."

As if in defiance to the young tormentors of his youth, according to his obituary, James was far from being dependent on society; instead, he served society well. Passages from his obituary continue, "... his mantra of assisting and providing for the less fortunate ... 'Service is Sovereignty,' ... founding member of the Fraternal Club, Masonic #6, Ad Hoc Committee to establish the Land Trust of Monte Sano, Deputy Voting Registrar, Board of Directors of Habitat for Humanity."

How many of those boys from his youth would be impressed? Yet, his obituary had more to say about James' service to the community, "... Board of Directors Member of the Huntsville Emergency Medical Services (HEMSI)... recipient of The Multigenerational Family of the Year Award, the Community Service Award as a Public Servant for his dedication and service to family and at-risk youth ... Model Citizen of The Year award."

Even though he was active in his church and community activities, he never lost sight of what was important. James genuinely loved his wife; three children, James Jr., Deborah, and Roset'ta and the two grandchildren. There was plenty of love in the Bearden household.

Georgia said, "We both came from humble beginnings; we didn't have two nickels to rub together when we were married, but we had each other. We were both shaped by those humble beginnings. We were always into each other, communicated, and showed an expression of love to each other every day."

"We always traveled, worshiped and raised our three children together. Helped with our two grandchildren and nurtured our five foster children together. We were pillars of the community; we shared a commitment to a life of service to our community."

The more Georgia shared with me, the more it became clear that this process was part of her healing and continuous adjustment. After all, it had only been going on seven months since she said goodbye. Goodbye to the love of her life—the love who had comforted her for sixty-six years and

**"A life spent making mistakes is not only more honorable, but more useful than a life spent doing nothing."**

***George Bernard Shaw***

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had gone on to be with The Father.

Georgia said it best, "The most challenging part of saying goodbye to my husband was when I looked at his hands lying in the casket. His hands were cold and still; I thought about the many times he embraced me with his hands. He often embraced our three children, our two grandchildren, and our five foster children with his hands. There was the realization that we would not ever feel that touch again."

"I know what love looks like, and I know what love feels like. If you have never experienced it, allow me to share mine. So much wrong was going on; we wanted to live our best lives and let the world see our love shine through. Hostility toward our culture did not stop us from enjoying all of God's blessings. I could prove that when I said, 'I do,' on our wedding day, it was until death do us apart, and it was forever and always. I never knew a man needed that level of love and nurturing he enjoyed all those sixty-six years. It was pure beauty and pure joy."

By the sound of Georgia's voice and the expression on her face, it is easy to see that the amount of love and nurturing James needed was precisely the amount of nurturing and love Georgia needed to give. Not for the sixty-six years they were married, but for the seventy-seven years since they were thirteen. Theirs was such a deep and enduring love, which Georgia wished the whole world could understand.

Georgia went on to talk about how much James loved his children, grandchildren and foster children. She spoke of how all the children loved him and how they were "Boots on the ground, holding his hands, rubbing his shoulders, feeding him, and praying for him in the last four years of his life. She also spoke of the pride he and she have in their children. James often thanked Georgia for giving him such a wonderful life!

Although there is more Georgia could and wanted to share, it is time to put this love story to the side for now. Having it nearby for when we need to be reminded of how true love looks.

May the final words Georgia has for James find a place of comfort in your heart. "Sleep on, sweetheart, and take your rest. We love you dearly, but God loved you best. We will see you in the sweet by and by."

She will remember that megawatt smile he was known for, while singing, GEORGIA ON MY MIND.

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# The Mountain Farm Witch

*by Joe Cadotte*

The original farm property remains between the peaks of an ancient mountain range that cuts above the greatest lake in the world. Yards perpendicular to the front door look like crop rows in satellite images above the neighborhood's original homestead. Fog is thick enough to blind nearly everyone in all seasons. Misty, cool layers of lake air roll through the shadows of the woods where thin, sharp brambles spiderweb in dead black tangles across and through the silver landscape. A lot of people die of alcoholism and depression down and behind the mountain. The moon draws mist from the summer thawed soil and clay. It smells like peat amidst some of the cleanest water and air of any city in the United States.

At six years old, I'm the first put to bed in the room painted pink in the land's original rebuilt farmhouse. I shut my eyes and can see a woman watching me through the thickets across the driveway. I keep my eyes open for as long as possible as I feel her old gaze across the yard, through the window into the bedroom. She watches me fall asleep. I can see her with my eyes shut, floating above me, staring with opaque eyes as infinitely silver as the foggy afternoons across the crumbling mountain.

She's visited me several times since then, and definitely doesn't like anyone living there. I can almost hear the discomfort when I'm on her farm.

They thought it was because my brothers watched horror movies all the time. I could see her sometimes in the back seat at night during long road trips with my parents. I'd casually talk about it. "She's with me right now," I told my dad one night in the car. "What's she look like?" He asked. "She looks like a man sometimes, and a sad old woman. Sometimes she looks mean," I said. "Where is she now?" he asked. "On the roof," I said. He busted out laughing, driving through the winding, wooded roads of northeastern Minnesota and northwestern Wisconsin.

After my parents divorced, I spent time at the house with the pink and blue rooms, as well as the house on the bottom of the mountain. My bedroom was on the second floor and the bathroom at the bottom of the stairs. I'd run down and up the stairs as fast as I could to make sure nothing could follow.

One night, I rushed into my bedroom where I had left the lights on. My mom was sitting on the edge of the bed. I was relieved she was there because she would rarely comfort me in the new house. I was talking with her about why I was scared to use the bathroom in the middle of the night and how I was glad she was there. After a few minutes, I noticed that she hadn't said anything. She hadn't moved. Her facial expression was frozen. She sat and stared at me. I started to say, "Mom... Mom are you OK?" She sat on the bed,

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staring at me. I started crying her name, "Mom! Mom! Why won't you say anything, Mom! Say something!"

I heard her voice behind me while I talked with her in front of me, "Joseph, it's OK." I turned around and screamed, seeing my Mom behind me, after having just talked with her on my bed for five to 10 minutes. I turned back and who I thought was my Mom had vanished from the bed. It must have taken a long time for that witch to find the house at the bottom of the mountain.

Twenty-six years later, I was riding on a bus towards that old mountain farm from the cities. I was one of three passengers on the overnight ride. There was a teenage boy ahead of me, three seats on the right, and an older, slender blonde woman towards the back of the bus on the same row. I was traveling from the far south, wearing a tank top. I was cold from the air conditioning and made passing eye contact with the woman on my way to the restroom where it was much warmer in the back of the bus. I switched seats so that I was sitting behind the woman on the other side of the aisle where it was warmer. I started getting overheated and switched to my original seat.

I repeated this every half hour or so. I noticed on my way towards the back of the bus that the woman's face had changed. I looked at her for a few moments until she made eye contact with me. Her face aged a lifetime in moments and her eyes were hollow as she said, "Can you please stop looking at me." I knew she wasn't a person, and didn't let the static pressure in my nerves turn to fear in my equilibrium. "I'm sorry," I said.

I didn't make eye contact with her again during the rest of that long, hour and a half ride towards the ancient mountains. I let the boy and the woman get off the bus before me. My friend, who had been watching the bus arrive at the airport, said I was the only person who had gotten off the bus.

That night, in bed, on another peak across the ancient range, I could feel her searching for me in the fog.

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# Taylor's General Merchandise in Big Cove, AL

*by William Sibley*

Taylors' General Merchandise was located in Big Cove at the intersection of Highway 431 at the eastern end of Sutton Road, east of Highway 431 and south of Old Highway 431, across the highway from Sublett's Gin. The store carried a complete line of groceries and also sold small and large appliances, including radios, televisions, electric stoves and refrigerators. Taylors' also sold hardware and dry goods. Their prices were competitive with supermarkets, dry goods stores and hardware stores. They also sold children's toys.

Proprietor Leonard Taylor gave trading stamps to his customers, and he also gave out tickets from a large roll similar to those used for admission to entertainments. Each Saturday night, Mr. Taylor would have a drawing of tickets, and the winner would get $5 worth of merchandise. Five dollars would buy a lot of groceries. If there was no winner, the $5 would be added to next week's winnings.

I recall that Roy Osborne won $50 in merchandise, and Alma Taylor Drake bought a hand-cranked ice cream freezer with money she won with her tickets. Later, Mr. Taylor and some other merchants formed a Shop-Ezy and those merchants gave away a new car.

Mr. Taylor had two sons, Sammy Lynn "Sam" and Douglas. The Taylors delivered groceries in a blue pickup truck. One day Douglas was delivering groceries to my maternal grandparents when Douglas yelled, "Mrs. Sadler, there's a snake out here!" Grandmother Charlotte Sadler brought Douglas a hoe to kill the snake. Douglas raised the hoe high into the air and came down with all his might, missed the snake, and broke the hoe handle. The snake crawled away.

When Sam was a student at Bethel College in McKenzie, Tennessee, he bought an old pump organ and housed it in his dormitory room. Sam, Douglas and I were driving to Bethel College in the blue pickup truck to bring the organ home, and we broke down in Capshaw. The next day, we got as far as Savannah, Tennessee, before breaking down again. I don't know if Sam ever made a successful delivery of his organ.

It was three nights before Christmas, 1955, and we had finished rehearsing our church Christmas pageant. Paul Drake, Mr. Taylor's nephew, drove his uncle Will Drake's large farm truck, loaded with hay and Christmas carolers, and we stopped at Taylors' Store and sang to customers, after which Mr. Taylor threw hard candy up to us. Next stop: home of elderly Mr. James. Two of our carolers, Sam Taylor and Allene Lyle, sang "0, Holy Night" to Mr. James, and their beautiful voices

**"People who ask me what I'm doing tomorrow are probably assuming that I even know what day of the week it is."**

***Eric Brill, Retired***

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**Ropers Flowers has sold more than 5 million roses since 1938.**

**Gibson's Bar-B-Q has sold more than 29 million Bar-B-Q sandwiches since going into business in 1956.**

*Originally Published in Old Huntsville Magazine in 2003*

ringing out on that crystal clear night is something I'll never forget. Allene, my father's first cousin, was a gifted pianist and had an operatic voice. She had sung and played music at local theaters during the era of silent movies. Sam later became pastor of a large Presbyterian church in Brooklyn, New York, and sang opera professionally while living in that city.

1955 was a very good year for the Taylors, and they decided to have a give-away on Christmas Eve, drawing tickets for the prizes. Prizes included bags of apples, oranges and potatoes; cow, horse and chicken feed; picnic hams; sheets and pillowcases; boxes of chocolates; hard candy; small appliances; pecans; and the grand prize - a table model TV! My maternal grandfather, Henry Sadler, sat in the Taylors' blue pickup truck and watched as all the prizes were given away. He and my grandmother had married on December 24, 1905. Mr. Taylor gave them a picnic ham that night in observation of their golden wedding anniversary.

Mary Ann Ikard Blakemore was present at Taylors' Store when the first shipment of sheets and pillowcases arrived, and she was impressed with them. Mr. Taylor's wife, Madge, promised that when Mary Ann married, she would give her a set. She kept that promise. Mary Ann also cherishes two unusual Pyrex bowls her father bought at Taylors' Store decades earlier. Mary Ann's father, Ed Ikard, owned a large farm which had several pecan trees. Mr. Taylor told Mr. Ikard he could sell all the pecans he could get. Mr. Ikard would pull his large farm truck under a tree and Mary Ann's brother, James, would shake the limbs, causing the pecans to fall like rain into the truck bed.

Four men clerked at Taylors' Store, part-time or full-time. They were Ed Solmon, Joe Andrews, Pierce Ellett, and Emmett Fleming. Perce Ellett was Big Cove School's bus driver. Ed Solmon and Joe Andrews were farmers. Emmett Fleming, a Black man, delivered groceries, pumped gas, made bank deposits for the store, and drove Douglas back and forth in the Taylors' luxury car when Douglas was a student at Vanderbilt University. All four clerks were present at the giveaway, and many prize-winners went home happy that day.

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# Jones Valley

*by Jack Harwell*

The history of Huntsville is reflected in the names of its streets. While the city itself is named for its earliest settler, many people who came here about the same time as John Hunt are remembered on signposts all over town. Some of them, including a Virginia planter named Drake, made their homes in the area we call Jones Valley nearly two centuries ago.

James Drake was born in Botefourt County, Virginia in 1780. On September 18, 1809, he staked claim to a quarter-section (160 acres) in Madison County at the land office in Nashville. He arrived in Huntsville, according to census records, with a wife, a son and a daughter.

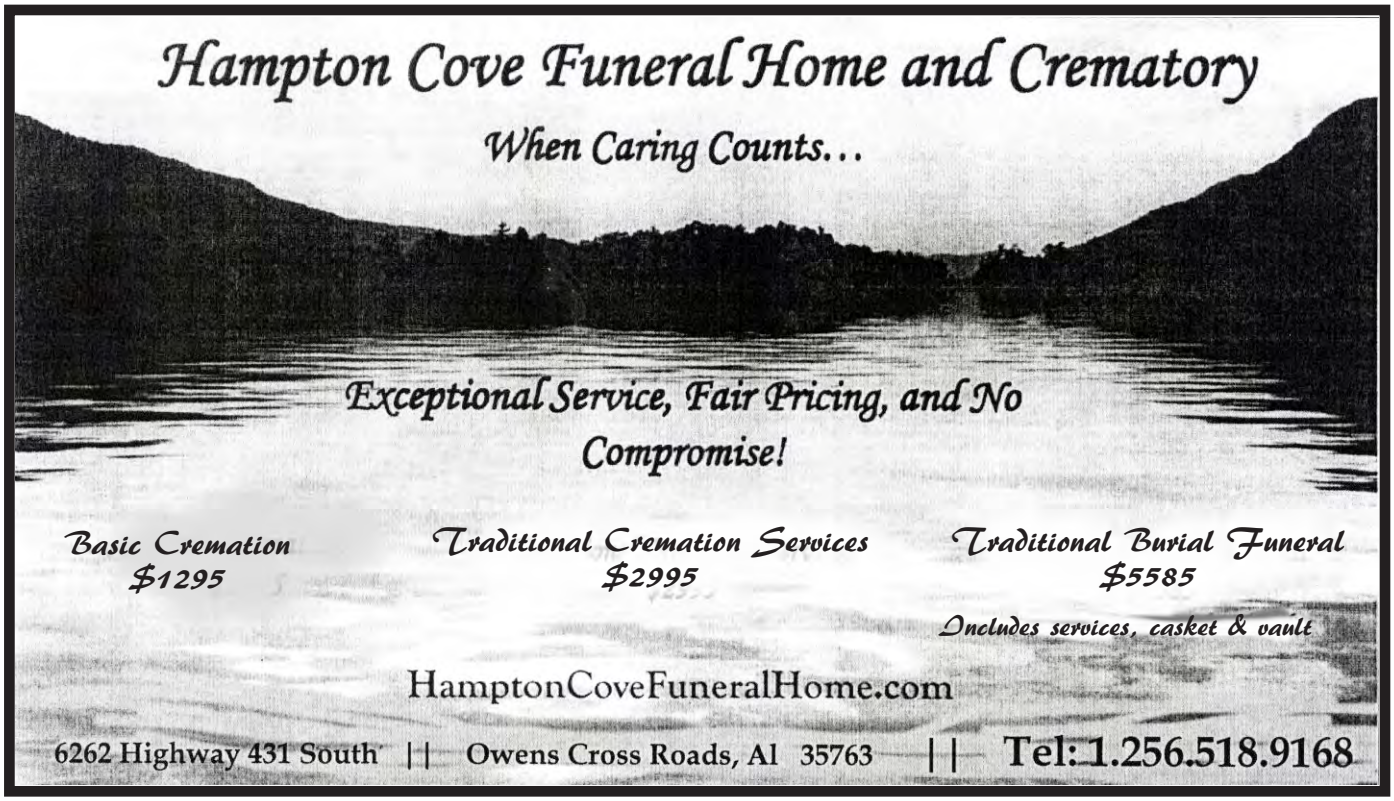
The land he had purchased was located in a narrow valley a few miles southeast of town. Drake was not a pioneer in the Daniel Boone mold; he simply wanted some land on which to start a farm. His brother, William, bought an adjacent parcel at about the same time. Over time, the Drakes increased their landholdings, eventually owning nearly all the land in the valley.

If James Drake was looking for privacy, he chose his land well. The valley that he bought lay from 100 to 800 feet lower than the surrounding mountains, yet the head of the valley was only three miles from Huntsville.

During the 1820s - nobody knows exactly when James Drake built a house in his valley. It was a two level structure with the bedrooms upstairs and the dining area on the lower level, which was 30 inches below ground level. Curiously, the house initially had no interior stairway, although one was added later.

James Drake died and was buried in a small family cemetery on his land, in a section known as Drake Cove. His family held onto the valley until 1881, when it was sold to Winston Garth.

Garth was a wealthy landowner in his own right. He was the son of William Willis Garth,



a former Congressman who had a fine home on Franklin Street. The younger Garth was quite active in community affairs, and served on the boards of many civic organizations. His home, Piedmont, was located across the mountain from the Drake house, on the east side of Whitesburg Pike. Garth and his Vassar educated wife were well known around Huntsville in the 1890s for their social activities, and Piedmont was the scene of many Saturday night gatherings a century ago.

Winston Garth was also a man who was used to having his way. In her book, "Changing Huntsville 1890-1899", Elizabeth Humes Chapman described a humorous incident involving two young men who arrived at the Garth home one evening to double-date the Garth daughters. Hoping for some privacy, the would-be suitors arrived in separate carriages. When he saw these arrangements, Garth informed the gentlemen that they could ride in one carriage, and the girls in the other. This was definitely not what the young men had in mind, but they consented - at least until they had left the premises.

Once out of Mr. Garth's stern gaze, one of the fellows nudged his companion, telling him that now was their chance to switch carriages with their respective dates. The other young man, who knew Mr. Garth rather better than his friend, told him to do whatever he wanted, but Mr. Garth had told him to ride that carriage, and that was what he was going to do!

In 1940, the Drake-Garth land was sold to Carl T. Jones. Jones was himself a prominent citizen. He was the grandson of G. W. Jones, who founded the local engineering firm which still bears his name.

Jones has since passed on, but his descendants live in the valley, now called Jones Valley, to this day.

In nearly 190 years, this land has changed hands only three times, and is still being used for its original intended purpose - farming. The current owners grow Kentucky fescue and graze cattle there. Nowadays, all of Jones Valley lies within the Huntsville city limits. It is still a beautiful place.

When a road was first put through the valley, it was called Drake-Garth Road, for the land's first owners. The north end of the road connected to the east end of Donegan Lane. Donegan was eventually extended westward toward Brahan Spring, and became Drake Avenue. Drake-Garth Road then was renamed simply Garth Road

In the mid 1980s, the city decided to build an east-west road across the valley. No one was sure what to call the road, since it connected the end of one existing street (Airport Road) to another (Bailey Cove Road). The street was finally named for the man whose land it traversed - Carl T. Jones.

So it is that all three of the families who have lived in the valley are remembered by the names of the three major thoroughfares there. The house that James Drake built over 160 years ago is still there, and can be seen from Garth Road. The best view, however, was from the scenic overpass on Governors Drive before it was closed. From there, you could see not only the house, but the entire valley.

It isn't difficult to picture the valley as James Drake saw it such a long time ago.

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# Halloween of 1955

*by Bill Alkire*

Halloween had always been an interesting, exciting time of year for my friends and me. At 14 it did not take a whole lot to get excited about. Part of this story is true, part myth, and part ... well, questionable. It has been told so many times by others, and myself, I am not sure anymore. I know however from experience that the main gist of this story to be true because it happened to me.

The event, which unfolds here, like I said, did happen. Kids had been pulling pranks and this had been going on all week. Electrical power boxes had been turned OFF, leaves then thrown on occupants when they came to investigate. This was THE night, Halloween... the ghostly of nights.

It was 28-30 degrees; winds blowing from the northeast around 10-15 miles an hour, and the clouds obscured the full moon. It was bitterly cold! It was not the kind of night a person would want to be out alone. The weather conditions alone made it little scary - okay big time scary.

Don Ware and I were making our way south from my house and doing quite well on the treat side. We had just passed Emory Row's house; his wife always gave homemade treats. We passed up Spidel Moore's house. Spidel was a strange man and the meanest of the mean. It was said he always cursed and spit on anyone who went and knocked at his door. This night was no exception... Spidel was sitting in a rocker on his front porch, in the shadows where he could not be seen. When a child stepped onto his porch he would jump out and scare them and then laugh his hyena laugh. Well, I might be regressing here.

The word had spread quickly that some older boys had caught Spidel sitting in his outhouse (he kept his homemade Elderberry wine in there), on what he called his throne and turned it over with him inside. This of course made us all chuckle and wish we had been a part of the celebrated event. If truth be known, Don and I would have been afraid to do anything like that. Mostly out of fear of being caught and we just were not

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that kind of kids. Still... it was funny.

The evening grew late, the clouds thickened, it began a light misty rain and get colder. Don, some other boys and I decided to go home.

As we made our way down the alley behind Spidel's house, one of the boys screamed "Watch out! " Spidel had a gun and was aiming it right at us. We took off running as fast as our young legs could carry us. In haste I dropped my bag of goodies and stopped to pick it up. . . Kerr-Boom!

There were dogs that begin barking in the distance. Something had knocked me flat to the ground. I grabbed my bag... Kerr-Boom... Dirt flew near my ankles and all over my jeans. I ran as though the devil was after my soul - I knew he was! My shoulder was burning, stinging, my jacket was torn... something was not right.

Don was concerned about my injures, offered to help. I just wanted to get out of range. My pride was hurting as well. What was I going to say - I had done nothing. In the wrong place at the wrong time - a painful lesson!

When I got to the house my Grandfather McDonald was standing on the back porch. "What's wrong laddie?" I tried to tell him my story through the tears - he did not want to hear my story.

He never said a word, cleaned the rock salt from my shoulder, and poured peroxide in the wounds. He motioned me to go home.

Grandfather never told anyone—neither did I. When I was questioned about my ripped jacket... I shrugged... no truth was ever requested. No comment was ever made.... until now. This story has been repeated many time... my name was left out.

I could not ask any more than that.

# "Please - No More Soldiers!"

*by John Crow*

When the Spanish American War began in 1898, the Huntsville Chamber of Commerce sent representatives to Washington D.C to establish Huntsville as a troop encampment. At that time it was claimed that next to West Point, New York, the healthiest place in the country was Huntsville.

As many as 14,000 troops were scattered in and around Huntsville. The 5th Ohio, the 5th Cavalry regulars, and the 69th New York were at or close by Brahan Springs. The 10th and 2nd Cavalry were in West Huntsville. The 2nd Georgia was on the William Moore place. The 5th Maryland, Co. D. Engineers, and the 1st Florida were on the Steele Place. The 8th Cavalry 3rd Pennsylvania, 7th Cavalry Regulars, and 16th Infantry Regulars were on the Chapman places. The Provost Guard consisted of twenty-eight tents pitched on the Calhoun lot near the Square. It seemed that Huntsville was a merry place to be at this time with the increased social activities taking place for the soldiers. Many of the more prominent families even used some of the soldiers as local estate guards.

All was not "sweetness and light" however as there was a marked increase in the number of local taverns and other undesirable houses.

In one instance a group of drunken, rowdy soldiers were arrested and temporarily interred in the basement of the Courthouse. They discovered boxes of papers and set fire to them, "for the fun of it." Before the fire was discovered and put out, many valuable county records were destroyed.

Apparently this and other incidents didn't sit well with many Huntsvillians. When the Chamber of Commerce moved to secure Huntsville as a permanent encampment they were turned down by the War Department which cited a "Petition signed by a number of Huntsville citizens begging, that no more troops be sent here."

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# 60 Years and Going Strong (1962-2022)

*by Sonja Schrader*

In the spring of 1962, in Wichita, Kansas, I went on a blind date with a man named Dieter Schrader. Turns out, he had seen me before, and arranged for us to go out for coffee—chaperoned of course. By December that year, we were married.

I was born in Byron, Oklahoma. It was a farming community of only a few houses and a single unit school building housing all 12 grades together which formed a square surrounding the only real local entertainment —a basketball court. My Great Grandparents were full blooded German. They were in the "Oklahoma Run" — farmers all their lives. From them, I learned to make sauerkraut and speak a little German. The kraut was made the hard old-fashioned way in wood barrels. The German I learned are words & phrases I probably should not repeat.

My family moved to Conway Springs, KS, another small town of mainly German descent. It was after moving to Wichita, KS when I shared that cup of coffee, in the nation's original Pizza Hut, with Mr. Schrader.

Dieter, a structural building engineer, was in Kansas working on the construction of the Titan II missile bases. While he was in the U.S. Army, he met a German butcher with whom he shared the idea of opening a German deli someday. So in 1963, we headed to Huntsville to make it happen.

With a $3000 loan from Dieter's German mother, Charlotte, and his stepfather Jack Jones and a $3000 investment from the butcher, the Bavaria Delicatessen was created in the Heart of Huntsville Mall. (Today, $3000 dollars couldn't even buy a kitchen stove!)

We opened with eight tables, a lot of shelving for items from Germany, and a deli case to hold European meats and cheeses. Well, the butcher just couldn't get the metric conversation system down. It confused him so much that everything was full of "way too much salt." So, he said goodbye and headed back home to New Jersey.

Charlotte, Dieter's mother, taught me how to prepare the German core staples like red cabbage, potato salad and traditional specialties such as Sauerbraten and Schweinebraten. She was responsible for bringing the first German gummi bears to Huntsville by making contact with a company in Germany that set up a relationship with an importer in New York to bring them in.


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The restaurant was doing well and it didn't take a long time for the demand for table service to become greater than that of takeout. So, we increased the table space and decreased carry-out items. One year later, we decided to open the Bavaria Restaurant downtown on Washington Street next to the old Martin Theater. The location was the old Ready Bakery. It had a beautiful high vaulted oval ceiling with recessed lighting. It had been a working bakery so the back part was three times as large as the front.

Marvin, Huntsville's famous, sweet, homeless pushcart personality washed dishes for us one time for two whole days in that back area. I always continued to give him a sandwich every time he came around after that.

We started in that back kitchen with used refrigerators and two old white noncommercial electric stoves from the junk store.

But, then we got lucky. We found a German cook who was new to Huntsville; she was able to prepare some very good quality German fare with what little equipment we had to work with.

Dieter and I worked together in the restaurant, in the kitchen and in the front of the house — I mean really worked! Sometimes the tomatoes flew across the kitchen (and not into the food) if you know what I mean! As a reward for all the hard work we did, we traveled well, mostly in Western Europe, when we had the time. Later, we would always try to take our children with us. That is how they learned new and different foods.

One night, the famous composer Montevanni was in Huntsville for a performance. He and some people came in the restaurant for a late dinner afterwards and I was serving them. I mentioned to Montevanni that Dieter and I had just seen his show at the posh Fountainbleu Hotel in Miami Beach the previous weekend. He looked at me funny, I don't think he believed me —but, it was true.

Dr. Wernher von Braun and his wife would spend their special celebrations (birthdays & anniversaries) dining at the Bavaria. I still have a menu he signed for us in 1963.

In 1965, we got a "wild hair" to open a wig business in the old Huntsville Times building downtown. We started with four sample wigs and took orders with a deposit of five dollars down for each. The ladies lined up at the door and thus our new venture, "The Wig Room," was under way. The Mall at University and the Parkway was being built at the time. We leased a small space for "The Wig Room" there and we were very successful. It was a lot of fun.

Dieter had wanted to go to law school and the success of the business was able to provide the funds. He commuted to Cumberland School of Law in Birmingham

## Auburn Waiting for Last Dog to Die

*from 1977 Newspaper*

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

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

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where they called him "The Commuter" and he finished in three years.

Those were the days of "The Carriage Inn" - THE place to dine and dance to live music in Huntsville. We had our date night there every weekend. In fact, we were there the night before our daughter Aunia was born. We had reservations on the New Year's Eve that our son Vaun was born. We didn't make the reservation that December 31, 1969, but Dieter showed up at the Inn later with free cigars for all.

Jump to 1972. We sell the wig business and go back into the restaurant world. We opened Ol' Heidelberg Kitchen. (Now known as Ol' Heidelberg.) It was the first of its kind in a mall setting. It was a lovely, quaint place with its blue and white checkerboard table cloths and a real fireplace. It was the beginning of alcohol sales and the choices were slim. Three to four wines were available, (can you say "Lancer's Rose," "Mateus," and "Zeller Schwartz-Katz")

Some of the reds went into the refrigerator, if that tells you how much we knew about wine. Liquor was only sold in little airline miniature bottles. Like the first gummi bear, we sold Huntsville's first Schnitzel — for the price of $2.35!

Some of our employees who started working over 40 years ago are still with us. Luisa Lanzillo was "fresh off the boat" from Italy. She spoke no English, started as the dishwasher, advanced to line cook as her English improved and eventually became our main cook for many, many years. For 40 years Luisa worked closely with Claudine who was from France. They often had their own little personal Italian/French Revolutions with each other. One time, they did not speak to each other, except on business matters, for three months.

My brother, Gary Jack, the man who can repair, re-invent and do anything needed to keep the restaurants going, still works with us today. He always said I would work him 8 days a week if there were 8 days.

Our daughter Aunia started working when she was 10 years old. She ran the old fashioned cash register but had to stand on a milk crate because she was so small. The personal contact with the customers cured her shyness problem real fast.

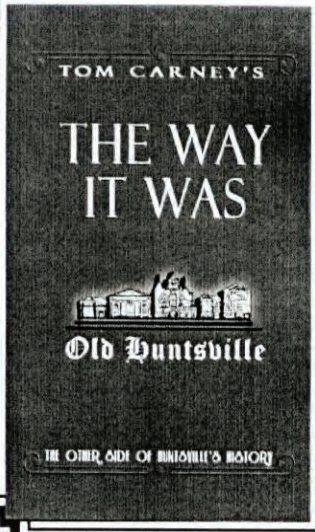
Our son, Vaun, started working as a busboy. We could never find him. He was always running around the mall somewhere. So I told him I was going to have to fire him. His reply was, "I'll just go apply for unemployment compensation." He was nine at that time!

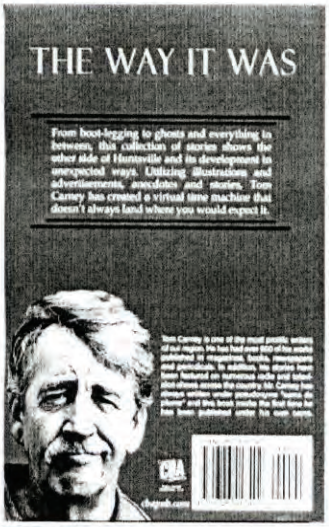
Later, when he was 14 and working with Luisa one day, she said, "I can't find Vaun any where." So, I looked and found him out back, sitting on a box peeling potatoes without a shirt on, sunning himself and drinking a beer no less!

My dear mother, Ruth Bond, worked for our businesses for 40 years as our office manager. She called me early one morning— frantic — saying that she found the chef drunk and passed out on the office desk after a private party he had the night before in the restaurant.

AND - Dieter. When Dieter would work at night as the food expediter, his rule was "no conversation allowed." So, Elaine, who has been our head server for the last 30 years, had to resort to flashcards to communicate with him. There was always something interesting going on and never a dull moment.


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

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In 1980 Ol' Heidelberg moved to University Drive in between the former Fogcutter Restaurant and the Steak & Ale. We remained there until 1989 when we moved to the present location on University Drive near Madison Square Mall (now Mid City) and Research Park. People thought we were crazy for moving that far away. The customer response was fantastic though, and look at the growth happening in that area now.

Huntsville grew in all directions and, after the tornado of '89 we eventually decided to open Cafe Berlin so that our customers on the south end did not have such a drive. It was the first full service restaurant to enter the new shopping and dining market along Airport Road. People lined up out the door and it was a huge success.

Aunia moved back to Huntsville that same year after college to help us open the business and in 1992 Vaun returned from the New England Culinary Institute of Vermont to help develop our next restaurant, Tortellini, specializing in Italian fare. Tortellini became the property of Aunia who brought it up to new heights of food and service.

Vaun was a wonderful chef with "million dollar taste buds" and in 1993 he developed the whole menu for his true passion in his new restaurant Sante Fe Grille on Airport Road. I would truly say he was ten years ahead of his time in regards to culinary talent and creativity.

In 2000, Aunia and her husband Tom Chapman opened Chefs Table, Huntsville's first tapas dining establishment. It closed in 2009.

Like as in life, we start with the best, and the best still remains in the end, but there's a lot of life in between. We started with the best of German with Ol' Heidelberg and Cafe Berlin. We went from Italian at Tortellini and Luciano and Bacchus to fabulous French fare at Cafe Paris; from gourmet southwestern at Sante Fe Grille, to premium steaks at Prime; from international tapas at Chefs Table to BBQ "before it's time" at High Noon Saloon. We've had some great food and great times — but the originals still remain.

Cafe Berlin, unlike Ol' Heidelberg, was a small European bistro where you were able to get the tried and true German favorites but also new additions with an emphasis on fresh seafood, salads and international specialties.

Ol' Heidelberg is still more of an old fashioned German restaurant that owes much of its success to the credit of Luisa, Barbara, Melanie, Claudine, Mary, Elaine, Ruth and others for the constant, continued loyalty to our customers over the years. It is home to a third generation of guests.

It's great to see people who were children, bring in their children. We hope this trend continues. Thank you for your loyalty as we will always strive to live up to our motto: "Basic Good Food, Good Service, Reasonable Prices, In a Friendly Courteous Atmosphere."

I want to say about this journey.....

In working with your family members, it's a work in progress. You're "close to the fire" so to speak. But, it was wonderful, and still is, to be able to still like and love someone you spent a great deal of time with. It is a wonderful miracle.

I am so blessed to have had this life to be able to work, fight, and kiss & make-up with those we love and have loved.

I miss so much my mother Ruth, my husband Dieter, and my son Vaun, who are gone, but by no means forgotten.

What a road trip.

60 years and still going!

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# A Long Time Ago

*by Bob Hawkins, Hazel Green, AL*

A long time ago in the year of 1940 in the little town of Gurley, AL, as school started there were 3 boys and 3 girls who started first grade that year. They spent the next 12 years together in school. One school and one principal.

Mr. W. O. Woolley was the Principal at Madison County High School for over 20 years. He left Gurley and went to Hazel Green where he spent another 20 years or more.

He could not survive in the school system of today. He once paddled 27 kids for smoking on school grounds. He visited me several years later and told me his arm was so sore the next day he could not raise it up. He was also the coach at one time.

In 1952 the graduation class consisted of 32 students, out of that number there were 15 boys of whom 7 went into business for themselves.

Some became prominent developers and home builders, some auto parts, some restaurant owners, club owners and some in construction.

As for the 3 boys and girls, 3 or maybe 4 are still with us and 3 of us were having breakfast together once a month until Covid made that more difficult.

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***Maxine***


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# Pet Tips from Angel

## Cool Weather Tips

Autumn is beautiful. Earthy smells, refreshing temperatures and vibrant colors create the perfect environment for long walks with our canine companions.

But pet parents beware! Halloween isn't the only thing to fear this season. Keep these fall safety tips in mind the next time you and your furry friend head outside.

**1. Keep him warm**

In some regions, the temperature drops quickly once fall hits. Put a blanket on the porch for your dog if he spends a lot of time playing in the yard, and don't leave him out for extended periods of time in the late evenings and early mornings. Most breeds are well-equipped to withstand cooler temperatures, but others - like Chihuahuas, Greyhounds and Salukis - are not.

**2. Be careful around mushrooms**

This time of year, mushrooms start popping up on forest floors and around your yard. While most of these fungi are safe to eat, others are highly toxic to your pet and it's best not to take the risk. Prevent your dog from ingesting them by supervising independent play and keeping him close during off-leash walks and hikes. If you suspect he's eaten one, contact your vet or the ASPCA Animal Poison Control Center immediately.

**3. Watch out for wildlife**

It's almost hibernation season! This means that wild animals - like skunks, bears, and snakes - are out and about, busily preparing for their winter snooze. If you and your dog find yourself in the woods, keep a close eye out for these creatures and keep your distance! If you live in an area that's home to venomous snakes, consider keeping your dog on-leash until the snow falls.

**4. Let there be light**

As the days get shorter, it only makes sense to plan for walks in the dark. Invest in reflective gear for yourself and your dog.

**5. Consider his joints**

It's typical for dogs with arthritis or other joint problems to experience more discomfort once the temperature drops. Keep an eye out for signs such as limping and reluctance to exercise. If your dog is whimpering when he moves, it's time to seek help from your veterinarian. Ask about giving your dog a glucosamine supplement, which can help ease inflammation around your dog's joints.

**6. Check for ticks**

The end of summer doesn't necessarily mean the end of tick season. In fact, many species of ticks can survive well into winter. Exercise caution when playing in fallen leaves, as these blood-sucking pests thrive in damp environments. Continue using natural bug repellents, and always check your dog thoroughly after returning from the outdoors.

**7. Avoid allergy aggravates**

Fall allergens like ragweed and mold can cause your pet to itch, sneeze and cough all season long. The first step is avoidance - but this isn't always possible, especially if you don't know exactly what's causing your dog's allergic reactions. If you suspect he has seasonal allergies, talk to your veterinarian about getting him tested to determine the best natural treatment plan.

**8. Keep his nutritional needs in mind**

Chances are, your dog will be livelier now that the air is fresh. Take his activity level into account when reassessing his diet for the season - does he need more calories to account for the energy he's expending? Should I rotate his protein to ensure he's getting the nutrients he needs? Seek answers to these questions by talking to your vet.

**9. Dog-proof your environment**

Do a daily sweep of your yard to ensure it's safe for your canine companion. Break off any bare sticks that your pet can get caught on while playing - as they shed their leaves, they also pose more of a danger to your pet's eyes. Keep an eye out for needles, nails, anything sharp. If you've already put anti-freeze in your car to prepare for the first frost, be sure that no spills have pooled anywhere that your dog can access. Just a few licks of anti-freeze can kill a dog and it's easy to prevent.


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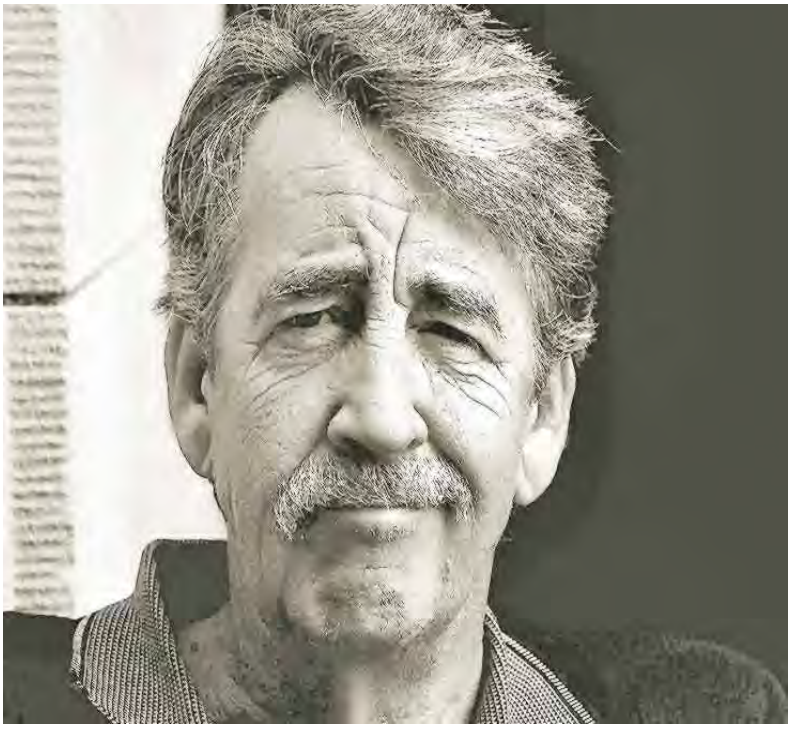
# Accused of Witchcraft

*by Tom Carney*



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

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

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

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

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

The presiding judge, who seemed to have been in deep study, now seemed quite relieved upon hearing the young lady's testimony. He straightened in his chair and announced that the young woman's testimony was proof positive of the old woman's guilt. His opinion was that she should immediately be locked up in to jail.

A controversy arose, however, when one of the spectators inquired as to just how they intended to confine a witch. If she had the power to transform herself, then surely no jail could hold her.

The judge, as well as the whole courtroom, seemed perplexed at the unusual turn of events. Finally, unable to reach a decision, the judge adjourned the court while "Taking the issue under advice."

As far as is known the issue never came before the court again.

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# Long, Long Ago Christmas

*by Mary Jane Miller,*
*Grand Prairie, TX*

My family consisted of a good hard-working mother and father. We never had much, other than the love of our parents. Therefore our Christmas consisted of things we needed. Barrettes for our hair and wearing apparel and always an apple or orange.

But, one Christmas there was a big surprise. My sister and I received a doll. Now this was not just a doll. This doll did exactly one thing, she opened and closed her eyes. These dolls were special which later in our lives we discovered they were Madam Alexandra Dolls. We both, never even to this day, know exactly how our parents could have even afforded to buy them. These dolls were special.

Years later we both still have our dolls. My sister has her doll sitting royally on a pedestal under glass. I, on the other hand, have mine sitting in a doll chair with new clothes which my mother had made for a Christmas gift later in my life.

My doll has been well traveled in her life due to my own circumstances. But she has made the entire trip.

It is her early stage of my life which made her suffer. I was a little younger than my sister therefore my Doll Baby was left with her scars. I played with Doll Baby constantly, dragging her around with me. I tried to make new things for her and show her the world outside in our little Red Wagon. She sometimes had a chicken along for the ride

Doll Baby doesn't have much paint left for her hair and her feet are missing some toes, but now as I look at her I don't have to see any of the mistreatment which I put her through.

As I previously said, my mother had new clothes done for my Doll Baby as a Christmas gift later in my life. She now has a new bonnet, new dress and even crocheted booties. Very few of her earlier life scars can be seen.

Looking back, I often wonder why and how my parents decided to make this a Special Christmas for my sister and I so long, long ago.

## STARVING LAW STUDENTS CASSEROLE

*by Robert H. McCaleb, Esq.*
*Huntsville, Al*

1 lb. ground beef
1 can red beans
1 onion - chopped
1 bell pepper - sliced
1 can sliced mushrooms
Salt/pepper to taste
1 box Jiffy cornbread mix

Brown ground beef in skillet; drain. Mix in red beans, onion, bell pepper and mushrooms. Simmer for 2 to 3 minutes.

Prepare Jiffy cornbread mix according to package directions. Put beef mixture in 8 x 8-inch casserole dish and top with cornbread mix.

Place in 350 degree oven until cornbread is done.

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# Don't Do This!

*by Elizabeth Wharry*

I am from Mentor, Ohio. Originally, the cemetery was at the east edge of town. The first police station was at the southern edge of the cemetery. By the time I was a young girl, the cemetery was at a fairly busy intersection. The police station was still in use.

My friends and I were way too old to go trick or treating, and too young to be allowed in the local pool hall. We were bored! That year, Halloween was on a Saturday. I'm not sure which one of us had the bright idea of "haunting" the cemetery, but it seemed like a good idea. We dressed in dark clothes and bought some cheap day-glo skeleton masks.

We decided to hide behind the gravestones closest to the intersection. We took turns standing up slowly and watching the drivers' reactions. Most people laughed.

It was Lauren's turn, and she stood up slowly. That's when everything went south...the car was a patrol car! He pulled over, lights going and contacted the station. It seemed he did this slowly and deliberately.

The three of us scattered. I hid in a newly dug grave and pulled the boards over the opening. It was cold and damp. I turned into a corner, and made sure the mask was well hidden. I wasn't sure where Lauren and her sister disappeared to. After things quieted down, I managed to crawl out of the grave. Eventually, we met up by my car.

I dropped them off at home and went home myself. The Chief of Police was a friend of my parents as well as a neighbor. He lived about half a mile down the road. They were waiting for me when I got home. Chief Agard gave me "The Look". For once, my parents were silent. The Chief made me an offer I couldn't refuse. Give up my friends, or go to Juvenile Hall then and there.

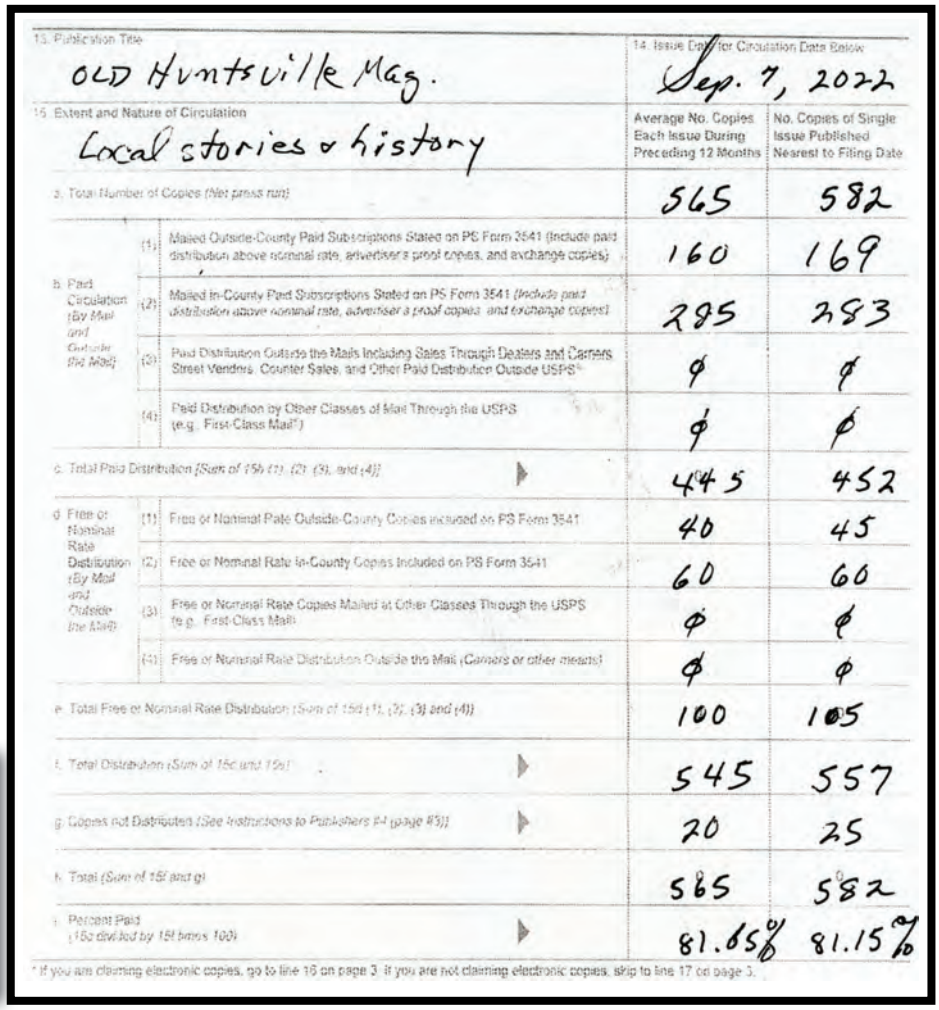
The next day, we had to appear at the police station. We were escorted around the cemetery to make sure we didn't damage anything. We were then taken back to the police station. Since we were minors, our parents had to accompany us. Chief Agard was in full dress uniform, and we girls were escorted into his office. He had us remain standing as he lectured us about the dangers of scaring drivers.

Apparently, he must have found our antics amusing as he had a hard time keeping a straight face.

Happy "Haunting"!

**"So a burglar broke into my house. I just put the red dot on his chest and the cat took care of the rest."**

***Josh Terry - Athens***



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# The Elixir of Life

*by Gerald W. Alvis*
*The Poet of Greenlawn*

Coffee! Otherwise known as the elixir of life! We got up a little early, and the unwritten rule is whoever gets up first makes the coffee. I do it most of the time. My wife has now joined me on the front porch this misty Sunday morning. The rain has all but erased the chalk from my granddaughter's play. The bricks on the front steps were piano keys of the rainbow. Each was carefully drawn in a sequence known only to her.

My wife said, you know the first taste of coffee needs a bite to it; uncomfortably hot! I agreed as she sipped past the whipped cream perched precariously on top of her mug.

Me, I pondered this and thought I like when that first sip touches your soul! It's the official start of my day, indeed a ritual, a pause which is easy with rain still coming down. Transient geese honk noisily, and now the 5 neighborhood crows have arrived, bringing their chorus.

Rituals, customs, and habits become traditions. They can carry great importance, but to me, the capricious ones are the most fun. Come to think about it, they are important as well. You see, we talk about everything and nothing. We communicate, which is the most important thing we humans can do. It's misunderstandings that cause many problems that could be avoided or worked out if we could learn to listen and then reply with weighed, thoughtful consideration. Rhetoric, stereotypes and cliches could become less frequent if not obsolete.

There is an inherent human need not only to be heard but understood. If we are drinking coffee, we have to at least stop for a moment and ponder those communicating with us. If alone, it gives the subconscious time to raise its hand for a turn. It can then share the deep things it wants the mind to explore. The coffee warms our hands and provides a physical comfort and a relaxation response.

I'm not saying we are going to have world peace from a bean, just that it provides an environment conducive to unhurried thought. That's the playground of the imagination, where relationships are formed, and the best decisions made. Yea, I'm going to need a second cup!

Good morning neighbors!!

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# Old Huntsville

## From The Year 1932

## Lindbergh Baby Kidnapped

Charles Augustus Lindbergh Jr., 20-month old son of Colonel and Mrs. Charles A. Lindbergh, was kidnapped between 8:30 and 10:00 last night from his crib in the nursery of the second floor of the Lindbergh home in Hopewell, N.J.

Apparently the kidnapping was carried out while the Lindberghs were eating dinner or shortly thereafter. The baby's nurse, Mrs. Betty Gow, visited the nursery about 8:30 and found everything in order there. When she returned at 10:00 the crib was empty.

Muddy footprints that left trails across the floor from the crib to an open window bore mute testimony as to how the baby had disappeared. Mrs. Gow dashed downstairs. "The baby's been kidnapped," she shouted. Colonel Lindbergh raced to the nursery, followed by his wife. Mrs. Lindbergh recalled that earlier that day she had tried to fasten a screen on the window in the nursery but had been unable to.

Satisfied that there was no mistake and the baby really was gone, Colonel Lindbergh telephoned Chief of Police Charles Williamson.

The chief drove to the home accompanied by another officer.

Outside the door they found Colonel Lindbergh. He was bareheaded and wearing an old black leather jacket such as he frequently wears on his flights.

Scanty information is available at this time but authorities express confidence that the perpetrators will be brought to justice within a matter of hours.

Leaders of the American Nazi Bund offered a $1000.00 reward for the safe return of the Lindbergh child.

The announcement came only minutes after the Bund received word of the kidnapping. In a prepared statement released to the press early this evening the party called for its members to be vigilant and help the authorities in any manner possible.

## 20,000 Veterans March on Washington

**Washington**: Over 20,000 veterans have descended upon Washington demanding immediate payment of bonuses they were promised for their service in the Great War.

Congress had earlier passed a bonus bill but payment was to be delayed until 1945.

Today Washington is under a virtual siege with many government buildings taken over by veterans groups, many of whom are wearing their decorations from the war.

Soup kitchens, organized under military lines, have been set up on many street corners to feed the columns of men pouring into the city from every direction.

With the police powerless to control the marchers, the military authorities will assume control of the city in this time of crisis.

Meanwhile, in other business on Capital Hill, Congress voted itself the largest pay raise in history.

# News from Here and There – 1932

## Miracle Plant Introduced to Madison County

**Huntsville:** Crowds began forming early this morning at the Farmers Market as officials began giving out free seedlings of the famed Kudzu plant.

Kudzu is highly prized in the Orient as a food and livestock fodder. More importantly for the farmers in this region is its ability to stop and control erosion on lands depleted by continuous growing of cotton.

Kudzu is reputed to be able to grow and thrive in any type of soil and under the most adverse weather conditions. The plant was introduced to Georgia two years ago and, in one experiment, completely covered a barren section of land (7 acres in size) in less than eight months.

Mr. J.C. Lowery and Mr. Kenneth Perry have announced plans to grow and market the plant commercially. "We could be the Kudzu capital of the world," Perry said as he made the announcement.

The plant with its plush foliage is considered very attractive and several farmers have announced their intentions of planting the vine next to utility poles to decorate the roadside.

**"Complete set of Encyclopaedia Britannica, 45 volumes for sale. No longer needed - just got married, wife knows everything."**

***Recent Classified Ad seen in Florence newspaper***

## Al Capone Goes to Jail for Tax Evasion

**Chicago:** Reputed mobster Al "Scarface" Capone was convicted today on charges of defrauding the government out of almost thirty million dollars in income tax. Capone's lawyers have announced plans to appeal on the grounds that the income was made by others and not all his.

## Kildare Hotel Opens

**Huntsville**: Plans were announced today to reopen the former McCormick estate on Oakwood Ave., as a hotel catering to business people visiting Huntsville.

Mrs. W.T. Williams has been named as manager and plans are under way to hire a chef from a large northern hotel.

# Get Out of My Garden!

***by Noel D. Tallon***

It was the fall of 1964. Ray was from Sylacauga. I was from all over the U.S. Both of our families came to Huntsville to help put men on the moon.

We met after work at my house. Ray worked at the A & P on the corner of Jordan Lane and Bob Wallace. I worked at the new Kroger store in the North end of Haysland Square. We were dressed in the customary outfits of grocery store baggers, that is, blue jeans and white shirts. He had a maroon clip on bowtie and I had one in bright blue. After work we wore them dangling from our unbuttoned collars. That was the cool thing to do. It said that you had a job and worked hard (i.e. it impressed the girls, at least we thought so). We were both 16.

I had a '55 Chevy in pretty rough shape. But what do you expect for $150. Ray had a well preserved '54 Ford.

It was late on Friday night since both the stores closed at 9:00 and we usually had to stay and clean up.

There were a number of places that teenagers could go for a thrill on a Friday or Saturday night in Huntsville in the mid-sixties. Some of these places you wouldn't care if your Mom and Dad knew about and some you would rather they didn't.

One might head to the old airport, which at the time wasn't the old airport. It was THE airport. The airport had runways running from the north heading south and east going west. As I recall, planes usually came in heading south over the new fancy Strobe lights at the corner of Drake and Parkway. And they left going from east to west.

If you knew your way around the back roads, you could find the dirt road running just past the West end of the East/West runway and park in the center. From there you could get out and watch the planes coming straight at you and just get off the ground soon enough to clear the trees on the other side of the road. Or at least it seemed they were that low.

Another place to go might be the newly finished limited access Rideout Road (Research Blvd.). I believe that before the tar dried on the road, there were two white lines painted across the North bound lanes that just happened to be exactly a quarter mile apart. But as I said, the old '55 was not in good shape. I never remember seeing a policeman on that road. I guess they thought that if the kids were going to be there it was as good as any with two lanes headed in the same direction and very little traffic at the time.

We might have gone to a high school ballgame but it was probably too late in the evening. Back in those days a football game would fill Milton-Frank stadium to overflowing. I remember many a basketball game in gyms at Butler, Lee, or Huntsville with standing room only. If they had the three point lines back in those days, no telling how many points Randy Hollingsworth, Danny Treadwell and crew would have scored. Most games had scoring in the low 100's anyway. I remember one game in which Butler beat Lee in double overtime. What a game.

Ray and I didn't have steady dates at the time or we might have headed to the Whitesburg Drive-in and then up to Monte Sano to look at the city lights or whatever teenagers looked at up there. Ray had come to my house in Holiday Homes and we elected to head to the "loop" in his car. The loop was where most kids in the '60s spent Friday nights. In Huntsville, the loop could be either two or three pronged. The parkway at the time was four laned but not limited access. The loop always included Jerry's and Hardee's. Jerry's was a drive-in that was between Bob Wallace and the Huntsville Times. Hardee's was in front of what is now Office Depot, but was then Miracle City (a Walmart like department store).

Jerrys' had inside seating and curb service. Hardee's had neither and was an octagonal shaped building made mostly of glass. Jerry's was the most popular but Hardee's was cheaper.

At times you might extend the loop to include Shoney's just South of Drake and the Parkway. If you were on a regular date with a girl, you would probably go to Hardee's for a 15 cent burger and head down to Krispy Kreme for a donut. If it was a really, really special date, like the senior prom with the girl that I later married, you might borrow Dad's new '65 Chevy and spring for Mr. Steak at Airport and Parkway.

Most of the time the loop between Jerry's


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and Hardee's was solid with cars. Motorcycle police patrolled Jerry's to control the traffic entering and exiting the Parkway.

This particular night we had hoped to meet up with some of our classmates, meaning girls, but, that was not to be - we ran into Jon and Lanny.

Jon and Lanny were fellow classmates at Butler High School. Not the new Butler, the old one across from the Dairy Dip on Governors Drive, that was later Stone Middle School. We were one of the last classes to graduate from there in 1966.

When we ran into Jon and Lanny, they were all excited about Sally. For all of you foreigners (or Yankees as the case may be), Sally is a ghost.

Legend has it that a beautiful sixteen year old girl (beautiful being the operative word here) died from a childhood malady while visiting her family in Huntsville. She died some time ago in the 1800s and was buried in a family cemetery that was just Northeast of what is now the intersection of Drake and Whitesburg.

A couple of boys at Jerry's had gotten Jon and Lanny interested in going up to see Sally.

They wanted us to go but Ray and I didn't want any part of it. Not that we were afraid of ghosts or didn't want to see a beautiful sixteen year old girl, but we had heard that the people living near where Sally was buried were calling the police when teenagers came up there. I don't remember how Jon and Lanny got to Jerry's but do know that they needed wheels as we called it (transportation), so we did agree to take them and wait in the car.

One of the other boys led us there and we parked in a church parking lot just East of Sally's property. Jon, Lanny and the other boy went down through the woods. They were only gone about 5 to 10 minutes when here they came back.

Neither Jon nor Lanny were athletes but they could probably have made the track team that day. They jumped in the back seat and hollered, "Let's get out of here." Ray took off as they requested, but we asked them what the problem was.

The conversation went something like this, "We saw her." "You saw who?" "Her, Sally". "Yeah, right." "No, we really saw her."

I asked what she looked like. Out of breath, they said she was really pretty, with long blond hair, and dressed in a beautiful white dress. I asked if she said anything to which they said. "Oh yeah." I asked, "Well what did she say?" They replied, "Get out of my garden!" Me, "That seems like a strange thing to say."

We may have discussed going back with them but never did.

We took them to Jon's house and left them. We could hardly keep a straight face. Ray had to stop the car about a half block down the road, we were laughing so hard.

Just after Jon and Lanny had entered the woods another car pulled into the parking lot.

The headlights were off so Ray and I were afraid that it might be the police. We slid down in the seat so that we couldn't be seen. But the car proceeded to the other end of the parking lot. The other boy that had been at Jerry's got out of the car with a white sheet and wig in his hand and ran down into the woods. Jon and Lanny came out shortly thereafter running like the dickens. I am sure the boys that planned this trick had a real hoot.

I don't remember if Ray and I ever told Jon and Lanny what really happened. They may be telling their grandkids about seeing the really pretty 16 year-old ghost in the beautiful white dress.

P.S. They developed that property into a housing area and had to move the caskets in the little cemetery. There was nothing in Sally's casket.

Wooooooooooooooo.

# FRITZ

Hello, my name is Fritz. I came to the Ark Shelter in July 2022. I am a male cat about six years old and am very friendly to all the people who come in the room. I came to the Ark because my owner passed away and I had nowhere to go. Thank goodness there was room for me here or I don't know what would have happened to me.

I love to be brushed and petted and greet the volunteers and visitors who come in the room where I live. There are four other cats in the room and we all get along and are friendly to each other. I especially like to eat treats and will come running if I hear the shake of a treat bag. I've been to the vet and am healthy and up to date on shots. The Ark Shelter ensures that all animals are healthy before they are adopted and are spayed or neutered **prior to finalizing an adoption. I am a sweet and friendly orange tabby and** would like to have a kind family and a home where I can live the rest of my life and not be orphaned again. It's a scary thing to lose your home. If you come to the Ark, will you ask to see Fritz? That's me.

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# When life was simple...

In 1953 the popular Pub Restaurant was located on Pratt Avenue at the present site of Propst Drugs. That same year the Reverend J. Otis King held a revival at the White Castle, an infamous honky tonk located at the intersection of Meridian Street and Winchester Road. Citizens were incensed at the newly installed parking meters around the courthouse square and Huntsville Hospital had become so crowded that beds were placed in hallways. Downtown merchants lobbied the city council to block the proposed Memorial Parkway.


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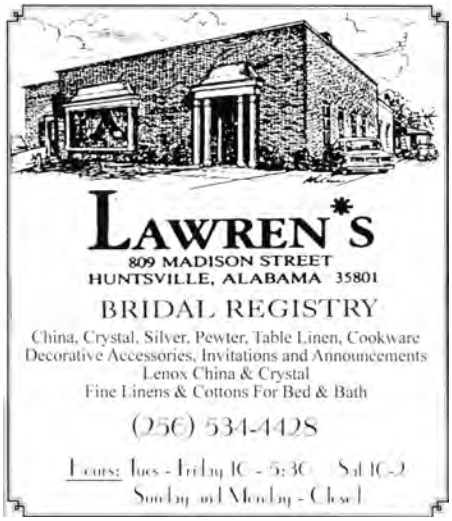
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