

ue to be in demand. New building construction in developing areas has been reasonably strong, though not booming. Younger citizens seem to want to live here where churches and schools are available for some of the best basic training offered anywhere.

Not only is the availability of educational opportunities here, but higher, advanced colleges and universities are within easy reach. Resources afforded by the cultural, civic and business districts of Anderson, Greenville and Atlanta are only minutes away.

Travel from here to just about anywhere can be arranged quickly and yet we are not burdened with some of the more complex problems of the densely populated areas.

Beside these things, we are blessed with good, clean mountain streams and lakes. As yet, pollution, prevalent in many places, has been held in check, apparently. We must make sure that our natural resources are not sacrificed. We all depend upon our land and water for life itself.

Recreation is here for one and all to enjoy. We are fortunate to live in such a great place endowed with so many beautiful natural resources. The seasons, themselves, change just enough to let you appreciate each one. The truth is...with slower, more deliberate growth we are probably much better off...as opposed to sudden bursts of activity than can generate all kinds of stress.

If I thought for a minute there was a better place to be living right now...I'd be making plans. Right now, I don't know where that utopia could be.

June 1, 1994

It Was Almost Like "Cuckoo's Nest"

No doubt many of you have seen the movie, "One Flew Over The Cuckoo's Nest" starring Jack Nicholson. It was a classic. One that brings back memories of experiences just after WWII as a tuberculosis patient in Navy and VA hospitals.

At that time in the middle of late 1940's, if you contracted TB, you either got better or died. There was little or no treatment. Bed-rest for 24 hours a day was the usual order. Sometimes an operation

called a thoracoplasty procedure was prescribed. It was a surgical operation where ribs were cut or removed to allow a lung to collapse on a diseased portion of a lung. Hopefully, calcification of the infected area would effect a "cure." Sometimes it worked; sometimes it didn't. Then there was the "air" treatment. Called pneumothorax or pneumoperitoneum, air was injected in between ribs of the pleural wall which actually pushed the lungs upward allowing less motion in breathing, giving a cavitated area a chance to heal. It was before streptomycin had been effectively developed, thus the infection was potentially fatal if not checked.

In reality, your body must heal itself from infection. Only certain medicines can aid the process. At that time there were no known drugs to fight the "bug" as are widely used today. Streptomycin became one of the first antibiotics to attack the TB germ effectively, but one could easily become immune from its potent dose. To keep this from happening, it was discovered that a drug known as P.A.S. (para-amino-saly-cilic acid) helped. This, however, was one of the worst tasting doses of medicine ever devised by man. I know from experiencing 240 shots of streptomycin plus 940 doses of P.A.S.

However, it was this combination that eventually gave me another shot at life. Having spent a total of more than 37 months hospitalized, I had plenty of time to evaluate life's priorities. And rearrange some. This was not always a painful or devastating experience in many respects. While being confined was sometimes unhandy, I suffered very little physical pain most of the time, but I came closely acquainted with the difference between life and death.

I saw some get well whose diagnosis suggested they would probably die. Others died who seemed to have a minimal amount of disease. I surmised there must be a factor involved other than Divine Intervention and the efforts of the very best medical personnel. It was my firm belief that a patient's attitude must be in the right direction, for practically any cure to be effective.

Many modern medical people will confirm that belief, though the exact reasons why are not known. Anyway, if you believed you could handle the "problem," odds were in your favor. While being

younger had its advantages in some ways, it also was a temptation to a younger person to indulge in things not conducive to good health.

The wards and personnel were a mixed conglomerate of America. There were patients of all kinds. Some were professional people; others were somewhat less. Most were interesting studies, and each had his own story of how he happened to be where he was. Nearly all had hopes of returning to civilian life and productivity. Some made it; others were not so fortunate. The facilities the Navy and VA offered at that time were first class. Hospitals in Norfolk, VA, Sampson, NY, Moore General in Swannanoa, NC, and VA hospital in Oteen, NC were the best anywhere in the world. I've always considered myself very fortunate to have survived this long.

June 8, 1994

Pigeon Whistles And Other Things

Before I met Marjorie W. Young, there were several things that had not been called to my attention. One especially was an interesting object called a "Pigeon Whistle."

Mrs. Young, a writer, photographer, diplomat and highly intelligent lady, recently passes away at age 91. She and her husband, James R. Young, have been Anderson County residents many years. Both were, until recent years, employed by the Anderson Newspapers. Recently, until about eight years ago, they published their own newspaper, *The Safety Journal*.

Prior to moving to Anderson, both lived in Japan, where Mr. Young published an English newspaper for thirteen years. At various points in their journalistic journey, they worked for *International News Service*, *Hearst Newspapers*, and E. W. Scripps, founder of the *Scripps-Howard Publications*.

Both were instrumental in covering many of the activities in Japan that precipitated the attack at Pearl Harbor in 1941. For a story that James R. Young had filed that infuriated the Japanese government, he was imprisoned for 11 months prior to the beginning of WWII.

It was Mrs. Young's persistence, patience and perseverance that

eventually helped get him freed from the Japanese prison camp where he spent 11 months for writing about unusual bicycle movements in an area where it was believed poison gas was being manufactured. The story was valid. It later proved to be worthy of suspect by Young who was not bashful about reporting. However, it did cause him considerable problems as a Japanese prisoner...and this happened prior to the sneak attack at Pearl Harbor!

Just what does all this have to do with "Pigeon Whistles?"

Only background information, perhaps, but through all the travels in the orient and other parts of the world, Mrs. Young was able to bring interesting items home. The little wooden "Pigeon Whistles" were part of her collection. At a particular city in China, where she had traveled and even done favors for Madame Chiang Chi Shek, there was a city-wide tradition. Little wooden whistles were made in such a fashion they could be attached to the tail feathers of pigeons. As the pigeons were released each morning they would fly around all over the city and it came "alive" with a strange kind of oriental music, according to Mrs. Young. Apparently, these were homing pigeons that performed. Thus, after a morning flight, they found their way back to the nesting area.

Too, they were able to secure some ancient scrolls of oriental art that were said to be 1200 and more years old. Unusual items, they are destined for museum display at pre-arranged points of the Scripps headquarters.

The encounter James R. Young had with the Japanese prison was certainly enough to make him form definite opinions. He came back and lent a hand to the war effort by publishing a book, "Blood On The Rising Sun," which was also made into a movie starring James Cagney.

Mrs. Young was on the set in Hollywood when Cagney was filming the story. She gave technical advice to enhance the effort. This may prove to be a WWII classic and is also available for TV, VCR viewing.

Mr. Young, who continues to live in Anderson, has also made many hours of tape recordings with interviews by W. E. (Buddy) Hall and Gerald (Shorty) Shore. The release of this material at some future

date promises great insight from one who had first hand experience.

June 15, 1994

W. L. "Shack" Norton Almost Got Hired

If you happen to visit the "coffee club crowd" at Martha's on Main in Walhalla some morning, you'll surely be entertained if nothing else. With input from some of the original characters such as Richard Addis, Blake Griffith, Randy Abbott, Raleigh Martin, Bill Burley, Harrison Orr, and many others, there's literally no end to stories and legends that erupt freely.

There is, on occasion, a basis of truth, for some of the funny unusual anecdotes. The stories about W. L. "Shack" Norton's various business experiences are amusing. Perhaps he got the nickname because he built, owned or somehow managed so many little modest homes that he rented. For whatever reason, Mr. Norton as known by nearly everyone as "Shack." He did operate a successful business in Walhalla where he would "wheel and deal" in just about any kind of farm supply, farm animals or farm properties. He owned and payed taxes on sizeable tracts of real estate in Oconee County and was one of the holders of a large tract of land in the area that Duke Power's nuclear station now occupies. He was particularly known for the old "beat up" Jeep he would drive around to visit farms or properties. The Jeep looked very much like it had been in action in a war zone. It was bruised and battered from one end to the other. Generally it ran very well, and most of the dents were the result of "Shack" not coming to full stop after jumping field terraces or whatever was out there. When the old Jeep slowed down, he would simply alight and let the vehicle go its way. Sometimes it would be stopped by a tree or whatever was available to bring it to a standstill.

Mr. Norton was an intelligent man who did a considerable amount of business, had a keen sense of humor and was a respected citizen.

According to the story, and I forgot who told it, he found a bit of fun in an unexpected offer one day as he was cutting the grass in front of his home.

“Shack” had the lawn mower out in the yard and was doing the thing a lot of men do a this time of year when the grass grows tall. Apparently, she was impressed with the way he was handling this yard work. Obviously, she must have been a stranger in the territory, for as he made a round with his mower, she stopped him to ask questions.

She was interested in his work in the yard and proceeded to ask “Shack” a lot of questions about his ability to operate the mower and to inquire, perhaps, about his ability to “clean up” grass clippings and do additional “trim work.”

She showed a definite interest in hiring him to do some of the yard work at her home. Not aware that “Shack” was a successful, self-employed businessman, she finally got around to asking him how much he charged for his services.

Realizing the lady didn’t really understand that he was simply cutting the grass in his own yard, he went right along with her inquiry.

“Well,” he explained, “I don’t really charge this lady here very much, but she’s really a very nice person, and really a very good cook,” he went on.

“Besides that, she lets me sleep with her,” he emphasized.

He never explained it was his wife, and the stranger left hurriedly.

June 22, 1994

You Can’t Fool “Them Goo-loo Bugs!”

Sometimes it seems like we’re living in a period when we’re aware of the price of everything and don’t know the value of anything. The “bottom line” in nearly all things is money. Our society is based on monetary income. With it, you can darn near buy your own brand of justice in the legal system. If you have enough of it, you can purchase medical miracles that didn’t exist only a few years ago. Without it, you’ll just have to do the best you can as long as you can. The government is not going to be your salvation. It will be lucky if it can salvage itself from a downhill slide toward bankruptcy.

While the average American is exposed to the highest standards of living perhaps ever known to man, there appears to be less pleasure and happiness. Even during and immediately after the Great Depression, the consideration one human had for his brothers in distress were often examples of benevolent kindness. It wasn't a matter of buying or paying for goods and services. Very few people were privileged to have cash funds. Some had an opportunity to work and were willing to tackle any task at hand. Hard work was what nearly all did, but most never lost sight of human values. Consideration of others who may have been less fortunate was a matter of daily concern and a way of life for many Americans.

Few government programs existed. It was the raw backbone and determination of great Americans who scratched out a living on farms and worked from daylight to sunset in plants or any business where they could find a job that kept this country going during this crisis.

Present generations have come along under different circumstances. To be sure, the challenges have been tough for many of them. The dangers today are perhaps as great as any in our history. They are different, for certain, but nonetheless challenging.

No one individual has the answers to all our problems whether they be material needs, social concerns, educational, religious or moral. One cannot expect mere man to heal himself from a largely self inflicted malady. It just ain't likely to happen.

Only a Higher Power can balance this equation. It will have to be born and nurtured in the home as it once was. We cannot expect our schools, churches, government or any other agency to do the job of instilling moral values that only comes from parental care. All the money and material gain possible will never do that important job.

We may be in a situation not unlike the tourist who was driving through South Georgia, so the story goes. Suddenly, his car was simply covered with bugs. They hit the windshield so hard they nearly blinded him. Finally, he stopped at a service station to try to remedy the matter.

He asked a fellow who came out to pump his gas and help him clean the windshield, "What kind of bugs are these?"

“They is goo-loo bugs,” the attendant answered.

“I’ve never heard of them,” the fellow answered. “Where do they live, and why are they so many of them in the road?”

“Well, they lives around barns, mules and horse’s asses,” the attendant explained.

The vehicle driver quickly took offense. “Are you insinuating that that I am a horse’s ass?” he fired back at the attendant.

“Naw suh,” the fellow replied. “I ain’t sinuating nothin’, but you can’t fool them goo-loo bugs!”

June 29, 1994

He predicted “A Big Sale-A-Bration”

Not only was he a respected family doctor, Henry Kuemmerer, MD, was a visionary. I think that means he could see things a little “further down the road” than some.

He sometimes spoke of events that may take place after his death. He had a pretty good sense of what was likely to happen to his estate. Especially, he mentioned there would probably be one helluva “sale-a-bration.” I really think he may have liked the idea, all along, for he seemed to always be preparing for the event.

On many occasions when we made trips to the mountains, other points of interest up and down the east coast, he delighted in seeing how many yard sales he could visit and how many “treasures” he could capture. If he was with friends, in their vehicle, more than likely all the available space in the trunk or wherever would be filled. To try to understand why he purchased many of the things he did would defy any logical reasoning. It was simply because he wanted the items or they were offered at a sensationally low price. It hardly mattered if it were used, new or old, if it caught his interest, the price was right, Henry had no reservations about buying.

It may have satisfied some special cravings he had to collect all manner of things. If there was a bit of history connected, all the much better. If it was a “set” of books or a “collection” of items, this also had special appeal. Each one, large or small, meant something to Henry. He loved the idea of going to an auction, flea mar-

ket or yard sale where the things offered may have been passed down through several generations.

It fell to principal heirs, his surviving three sisters, Louise, Margaret and Helen, and their husbands, "Buck," "Hank," and "Art," to sort through years of collection and make reasonable disposition. This they have been doing with a lot of diligent hard work each day, and on recent weekends offering items to the public at one of the most interesting yard sales ever held.

Those who really knew Dr. Kuemmerer on more than a professional basis are not nearly so surprised at some of the things he collected. Others who may have simply been curious about why this fellow was always busy moving about, buying and hauling things have had their appetites whetted with unusual offerings.

It was really no secret that Dr. K. liked to collect old cars. Some of them were, perhaps, collector vehicles while others are less desirable. For whatever reason, he had about 38 of them at last counting. Also, there is sure to be some unusual pieces of furniture that may eventually find their way to the auction block as the big "sale-a-bration" continues.

To try to understand the "reason why" Doctor Kuemmerer had such a wide and varied interest in so many different things stimulates the thinking of friends and curiosity seekers for miles around. For this reason, crowds gathering at the yard sales have probably broken all records for attendance. And they are still coming by each time an offering is made.

I've got an idea Henry knew all along just about how things would be progressing along now with this "sale-a-bration." He's probably "up there" in that "special space" observing and thinking, "Why that should have brought more money than that!"

July 6, 1994

Keeping In Touch With Real People

About this time each year folks down here in the South begin to gather at reunions. Sometimes they are in the form of "cookouts" or "barbecue" dinners, "catfish" supper class reunions. It is usually a

festive event where you have a chance to meet and talk with friends you've known for years, but seldom see on a regular basis. It is fun time -- remembering experiences past.

Recently, Jacob (Jake) Henry Barnett, Sr., his wife and family, were hosts to relatives and friends at the Oconee State Park. Jake is one of the sons of the late "Mish" Barnett. He has been retired several years from the Southern Railroad where he was an engineer. He has a business card that states; "Work is for people who don't know how to fish." Apparently Jake has perfected his retirement and fine tuned it. He cooked enough catfish, bass and bream to feed a small army of friends and relatives. He explained that each year, the third week in June, the Barnett clan gathers at the park, to meet and eat together along with a few other invited guests.

Jake and my brother, Bruce, were more closely associated since they went to school together at Westminster High and later at Clemson. Both served in the Army during WWII, and Jake became an Engineer for Southern. He and his wife now make their home in Winnsboro, where they live on a lake with a view of water on all sides. It is here that Jake had perfected a system of catching catfish. He explained that he doesn't use baskets anymore. Instead, some way, he uses old car tire inner tubes. Exactly how it gets the fish is sort of mystery to me, but Jake says they aren't trapped.

Whatever he does to get them certainly works, for he brought the evidence to the park this year. Also, he has his own specially built cookers that does 'em jut right, along with the "hushpuppies." To see and talk with these family members and friends is refreshing. It restores the spirit to a level of understanding that is probably better appreciated by Southerners than in other parts of the country.

Too, about this time each year, specifically on the Fourth of July, it has almost become a tradition to attend a real barbecue supper with Jim and Mildred Ann Spearman. These folks know what it takes to stem the craving for ole fashioned barbecue.

Jim is a native of Westminster, has operated a business here for several years, and Mildred is associated with the Oconee School District. Their home is located on property that is near or maybe part of the old original Marett Seed Farm. In a beautifully land-

scaped setting, it lends itself to this kind of "outing." And, believe me, the guests enjoy the event.

Where else would you likely meet Marshal and Martha Parker, Sidney and Morrel Harper, Harold and Margaret Brock, Bob and Evelyn Grogan, Rick and Denise McCormick, Charles and Dell Barrett, Marshall and Dot Abbot, Ed and Betty Watkins, just to name a few.

Jim Spearman probably knows as many interesting stories about the "characters" of this area as anyone. He has a good recollection of people and events that have transpired down through the years. Too, he has almost instant recall of "what happened."

This "Fourth of July" special is about to become a tradition in these parts. Whether or not they intended this to happen this way may be another matter. Preparing barbecue with all the trimmings, for a big yard full of guests is no small order.

These are some of our really "real people."

July 13, 1994

He Appeared To Be "Ready To Go!"

Mule barns used to be one of our favorite places for gathering, trading, buying, selling farm animals or just idle conversation. At one point, in the earlier part of this century, Westminster had several. Mr. Bennie Dickson operated one such establishment on property where First Citizens Bank now is located. Marett's Gin & Fertilizer Co., and Seed Farm had another located in the general area where Barrett's Hardware is on East Main Street. Another just up the street was located in the general area where Westminster Ice & Fuel stands.

All of these places of trade were interesting and important to the community. There were probably others that I don't recall, or ever heard of, but these three distinctly stand out in memory.

The barn operated by Marett's had the distinguished "sales manger" in the person of Mr. Joe Duncan. He and Jule Marett did most of the trading. It was interesting to me, as a youngster, to hang around these barns, chew a little tobacco and spit on the sawdust or

shavings floors, and receive what later proved to be a rather “liberal education.”

I recall one instance when “Uncle Joe” and Jule had sold a horse to a man in the Oakway section. The animal was a beauty and was “guaranteed” to be an excellent “work horse.” However, it turned out the horse did almost everything except “work” when he was “hooked up” to a plow. The owner knew he had to take some action and the folks who sold him were not likely to “take him back” since the trade was already completed.

He took the liberty to dye the horse a different color, and brought him back to town where Joe and Jule didn’t recognize the animal. A quick trade was effected. In the process, they arranged to pick the horse up and bring him back to his original owners of the barn. During the trip back a quick shower of rain developed. By the time the “fresh dyed” horse got home, he showed this original color. To say the least, these two experienced traders had some choice words when they learned they had again traded for the “dud” which looked great, but nothing else.

In later years after the Bennie Dickson barn closed, Tom Poore, a relative of Mr. Bennie, kept some cattle in the building and often did hauling for the public. He, in fact, did quite a bit of hauling of animals, cattle that were going to the area auctions each week. A skilled man in handling cattle or moving heavy equipment, Tom Poore, was a good man to know if you really had a tough moving job of any kind. He understood what was needed.

It was unfortunate, indeed, one morning several years past, when he preceded to load cattle out of the stalls in the barn into his stake body truck. Moving, loading and unloading beef cattle is not easy. It requires special skills, and Tom had them. However, on this day, the trip was not to be made. After the strenuous job of loading, he climbed into the cab of his truck cranked the motor and suffered a fatal heart attack on the scene.

Someone discovered the tragedy, and Tim Duncan, printer of The Westminster News, ventured to the nearby scene to investigate the matter when he saw several gathering around Tom’s truck.

A few moments later the word “flashed” through our small town

and some kind of a "pine pole preacher" called Tim at The News office to inquire:

"Tim, was he ready to go?" the preacher asked.

Quick-witted Tim had an answer for him immediately, "I guess he was, sir, he had all them cows loaded on his truck and the motor was running!"

You can't hardly be any more ready than that.

July 20, 1994

What Is "Fair Market Price?"

I once asked Bruce Rochester how he could place a value on a piece of real estate, building, house, timber, or whatever.

His answer has always stuck with me: "It is only worth what someone else is willing to pay for it."

Bruce was widely known for developing in Oconee County. He seemed to understand what was needed in the way of utilities, homes, building etc., just after WWII. He also had the experience of dealing in timber. Thus, he knew values from the forest to the finished product. He was a college graduate, Clemson, but more importantly, he understood what the people in Oconee County wanted and could afford. He had extremely good perception and vision.

All of this comes to mind as citizens of Oconee County are considering the most recent tax assessment notices. Some are expressing shock at values assessors have assigned. Perhaps there may be some that appear "way out of line" with reality. It all depends upon your own agenda.

Probably, most of us would prefer our tax base to be at a lower level when we are compelled to pay property taxes. Of course, if we are planning to sell, then it would naturally be better to have a higher appraisal. It all depends upon your own relative position.

If the rule of "fair market price" means this is a price which a willing buyer would pay and at the same time a figure at which the owner would be willing to sell, then each individual item needs just consideration.

It seems to me that appraisal that is based on substantial fact should be a guide for all concerned.

Since I'm not in the appraising business, it may be wrong for me to guess what criteria is used in the decision process. Experience has taught a few things such as the importance of "location" in valuing real estate. Obviously a half-million dollar home is more likely to be located near others in the same category. Land values around your property, the proximity of schools, churches, shopping centers, roads, utilities, and the general neighborhood will affect selling price. These are only a few things one might consider in arriving at a "fair market price."

The point is many in Oconee County are discovering, according to tax assessment, that some of this land that was once so "pore" a rabbit had to carry his lunch with him when he crossed it, is considered very valuable under present conditions.

One thing that we may be overlooking in this matter is the millage rate. If property is appraised high, all over the county, then the millage rate of taxation should be lowered to stay in keeping with our real needs of government. Not some fictitious figures. If this is done, we should not have any real fear of fair and accurate appraisal as it relates to "fair market price." Otherwise, the questions will rise to a great crescendo of rebellion, and justly so!

Most do not object to paying a "fair share" for reasonable government if convinced that "fair share" is being administered to one and all alike.

Land values, here in Oconee, as in many places, have advanced with some inflationary influence as well as the old maxim of "supply and demand." All of our resources, cultural and otherwise are factors, but we must always be ready to ask the "reasons why" questions.

July 27, 1994

There may be a different drummer "Out There"

If you've ever served a military organization and participated in "close order drill," you know, for sure, when you're "out of step" with your platoon. The sergeant can get your undivided attention.

More than likely, you can get a bit of extra instruction.

Away from the regimen of military, out here in the real world, if you choose to follow a path different from the norm, you may subject yourself to all kinds of conjecture. To follow a road less travelled, to paraphrase the poet, Robert Frost, you may expect to be considered an “odd ball” by fellowmen.

These thoughts surface this week when I consider, for a brief moment, the untimely and unfortunate departure of Arvel Robinson. Arvel, for sure, had his own agenda. He was an expert welder, perhaps one of the best in the business, as well as a skilled machinist. Too, he could solve most mechanical and electrical problems pertaining to heavy equipment, trucks or cars. A wide range of businesses and industry, particularly loggers and sawmillers depended heavily on Arvel’s skills to help keep equipment running.

He had the skill, know-how and determination to get things done. At the same time, he had his own personal philosophy that he did not compromise. It appears that he may have been far ahead in some ways. For example, his welding shop on the Walhalla highway had a sign that advertised the FSSJKVB Church. One could assume that this church, of which Arvel was reported to be one of the founding charter members, may have also owned the business that he operated. If that, indeed, was a fact, then he surely must have had some skill in organization and may have understood tax law and Internal Revenue’s rule much better than a majority. For whatever reason, Arvel was not bashful about telling anyone of his personal religious convictions. I asked him, one time, exactly what those letters on the sign stood for. As best as I can recall, he replied: “Father, Son, Soldier, King Jesus Virgin Born.” I didn’t go any further with the questions. But he was ready to answer.

The late Dr. Henry Kuemmerer often carried his mechanical problems to Arvel for his repair skills. Sometimes Arvel would proceed to give Henry a sample of his religious convictions. While Dr. Kuemmerer certainly had his own agenda, religious wise and otherwise, he took time to hear him. The two seemed to communicate really well on most things, which was a complete surprise to me.

At one point, when our space program was getting a lot of attention, Arvel began building his own module. The News made a picture of the production, and it drew a lot of attention. While, it apparently was never completed, a lot of interest was generated. Gene Rensch, a planted "Yankee" who did some mechanical work for The News at one time, went by Arvel's place to view the module. Gene said that Arvel told him he was going to develop his own engine, called the "Vork" to power the ship. It appears that he never completed the project. However, there was little doubt to his serious intentions.

At one point, many years past, Arvel had some trouble with the law. He was sent away, in the process, for complete psychiatric evaluation. Soon after he returned he encountered his friend, J. Walter Duckworth. Walter was curious about this experience and began to ask questions. Arvel explained it this way, "Well, Walter, I've got some papers here in my pocket that says I ain't crazy; have you got any?"

August 3, 1994

Dr. Shuler's Bird-watching Experience

Doctor E. L. Shuler, retired founder of Westminster Medical Clinic, and partner of the late Dr. H. R. Kuemmerer, has a sort of claim to bird-watching fame. Several years past when he and wife, Patsy, occupied the home of Walhalla road where Larry Sobczek and wife now live, he began a hobby of bird-watching.

From a vantage point at home, he had feeders to attract visiting feathered friends. It was here that he spotted a most unusual bird, Lazuli Bunting. From the moment he saw the bird, he realized it was unusual in these parts. With the help of his son's wife, Mrs. Ned Shuler, positive identification was effected. The news of this "spotting" excited bird-watchers from a wide area. Visitors began coming to the Shuler home hoping to catch a glimpse of the bird. Some considerable distance, as far away as Atlanta, to see the unusual bird. Seldom seen anywhere east of the Mississippi, the

Bunting is described in Peterson's Guide to Eastern Birds on page 274. The male *Passerina amoena*, about 5-5 1/2 inches, is a small turquoise-blue finch, patterned somewhat like a Bluebird (blue upper parts, pale cinnamon across breast and sides,) but with 2 white wing bars. Female, rather nondescript; a small tail, 2 pale wing bars (stronger than in female Indigo Bunting.) Hybrids are very frequent where the ranges of Indi and Lazuli Buntings overlap.

Presently, Dr. Shuler and wife, Patsy, are living in the retirement center at Clemson Downs. While they continue to have their home in Cheohee Valley on a private lake, they have the Clemson residence as their primary abode. Here again, Dr. Shuler is watching the birds visiting feeders on the patio of their Clemson residence.

So far, Dr. Shuler hasn't made any unusual "spottings," but he has a host of visiting birds feeding every day. Presently, he is recuperating from heart by-pass surgery, and is progressing very well. While he has slowed his routine a bit, he is gaining strength daily after a 5-bypass operation at Providence Hospital in Columbia.

An experience last week reinforced the belief that wildlife and many species of birds are more prevalent now than maybe 25 years past. While Arthur Potts, husband of Helen Kuemmerer Potts (brother-in-law of the late H. R. Kuemmerer, MD) was delivering Doctor Shuler's desk and chair to his Cheohee Valley home on the lake, a big brown eagle landed on a point just above the Shuler lake home. Arthur says he saw the eagle when he ever-so-gently landed. I only spotted "him" when the great, majestic bird took off on a fishing expedition over the secluded lake. With a wing-span that appeared to be five or six feet, the eagle made low passes over the water, no doubt with that "eagle-eye" looking for fresh fish dinner.

It was a moment etched in memory, since I've only seen one other in South Carolina. I spotted a big brown eagle on Hartwell lake several years past. Too, I'm aware that many eagles, particularly the American Bald Eagle, is said to be making a comeback in the state. It's just that I haven't been privileged to see them.

When this experience was related to Dr. Shuler, he said that he had seen an eagle on the lake previously and one day spotted "him" with a recent catch. The eagle was seen flying away with a delight

for dinner; a writhing snake, firmly held in the strong grasp of the claws of the big brown bird.

Not only are eagles again living amongst us, but also Black Bear are again with us, and Dr. Shuler, as an eye-witness, has confirmed this fact. With age, most have a greater reverence for all living things.

August 10, 1994

R. C. (Russ) Carter, III, Hangin' In There

Well into his eighties, R.C. Carter, Walhalla citizen, once Probate Judge of Oconee, is still "hangin' in there." For several years, Russ has been a patient at Pinnacle Care Nursing Center, now under the new owner name Mariner's. While suffering from Parkinson's disease, Russ is bedfast, but his ability to think and remember is about as sharp as it ever was.

Last week, Ashton Hester, Keowee Courier Editor, and I visited with Russ for a while at his nursing center home. His wife Lillian, a former English teacher at Walhalla, happened to be there at the same time and was amazed at how well Russ could recall and relate many interesting stories.

Russ served two or three terms as Probate Judge of Oconee, and was always interested in the political scene. Lillian, his wife, came from a very active family in state and national politics, the Dorn family, and is a sister of Bryan Dorn who served in the U. S. House of Representatives for 26 years. Politics still runs in the blood of the Dorn family with Bryan's daughter, Debbie, a candidate in this week's primary as a Democrat for the 3rd Congressional District.

One of the stories Russ wanted to talk about concerned a trip he and Curt Bearden had made to Georgia. Russ and Curt often looked for good places to eat in the territory, and somehow located a little restaurant in Homer, Georgia, called "Tiny Town." If you've ever been to Homer, Ga., you know there are several sharp curves in the road, no matter which angle you make the approach.

According to Russ, it was on one of these curves in the Homer area the vehicle wandered from the road, struck a ditch and

embankment that completely turned the car around. While there was no real harm done or physical damage to the car, the direction of travel changed 180 degrees. It was only after they finally came upon the much-travelled I-85 expressway they discovered the fact they were travelling in the wrong direction.

Russ, for many years after his retirement, continued to make his daily rounds visiting the Keowee Courier, and particularly the coffee shop at the Courthouse when Ray Alexander was operator. Ray loved to hear Russ and his friend, "Jude" Thode, tell experiences. It was particularly entertaining to Ray especially when J. Walter Duckworth was on hand to urge them on a bit.

While Russ can remember interesting things of the past, he could also take the "kidding" of friends who had a few laughs at his expense. For example, I think it was the George Brown who said that Russ was once helping his father with chores at the old Piedmont Service Station in Walhalla. He was pumping gas into a vehicle back during the days when most stations furnished an operator for that purpose. The gas was going in the tank OK, but Russ was not watching the tank nozzle carefully. Unexpectedly, there was an overflow with gas pouring out on the sidewalk.

The vehicle owner happened to be outside the car and saw what was happening. He commented rather quickly, "Hey! What's going on here?"

Russ didn't hesitate to give an answer, "Just trying to stop the meter on even money, Sir!"

Still maintaining a sense of humor, though bedfast, Russ manages to laugh heartily at funny stories of the past.

August 17, 1994

They Came, They Saw, They Bid And Bought!

It may have been the largest personal estate auction ever in Oconee County...The Kuemmerer Estate sale held four days last week. The weather relaxed enough to let traffic move freely, and the chant of auctioneers rang out on Walhalla road for three days and finally closed on Sunday p.m. at the old Westminster High School

buildings on College Street where he kept some of his “junk” treasures.

Everything from a motorcycle to a Rolls Royce, from a can opener to pencil sharpener, from a set of wire-crafted chairs to a self-player piano, from knife collections, antique clocks, a rare collection of old “dollar” watches to a valuable collection of very fine railroad watches. It was there, it went on the “block” and there were bidders from many places. Some from Florida, Jerry and Dianne Church and Lynn Ivory came from the Fort Lauderdale and Tallahassee area with special objects in mind. Somewhere along the way, Dr. Kuemmerer had acquired an old plantation desk that had once been the property of Bud and Mary Sam (Ma) Stewart. Granddaughters Dianne and Lynn wanted this item to stay in the family, so they made a special trip here to bid and buy. Too, there were paintings that “Ma” Stewart did that were in Dr. K’s collection they wished to keep for children and great grandchildren.

It was not a festive occasion, perhaps somber in many ways, yet the opportunity was there to see old friends that will never again gather for such an event.

Ray Brock, who grew up just down the street from the Kuemmerer home admitted to being 74 years old, though he doesn’t look it, had a lot of memories of the old house when the Frank Shirley family lived in the late 30s or early 40s and had a chicken incubator in the basement portion of the home. Previously the George Weldon family lived in the home. Dr. Kuemmerer bought it from Mr. and Mrs. Julian Pruitt soon after he began practicing medicine here about 30 years ago.

The yard was full of folks from daylight to dark, looking, waiting and wanting to find the right item at the right price. Many did, and all seemed to be pleased to have anything or maybe some special item that has been the private property of the very popular and competent Dr. Kuemmerer.

I recall one time he was being introduced to a person who caught the introduction title of “Doctor” but didn’t quite understand what kind of doctor. Perhaps the fellow thought he was some sort of Ph.D type, not expecting a really sharp answer, he inquired:

“What kind of Doctor are you?”

Without batting an eye, and no ill-intent, Henry replied instantly: “I’m a damn good’un!”

Howard Adams, next door neighbor to Dr. K. wondered how he knew which items to buy that would become more valuable. A very good question, but with a complex answer. It appeared Dr. K. had the knack of knowing about older items which would not be reproduced as they once were. Handmade, custom-made, old furniture and furnishings were especially liked. If there were items, such as knife collections, watches, etc., Dr. K. made it a point to know people who had expert knowledge of such.

He was a brilliant man who utilized all his talents and those of his friends, when necessary.

August 24, 1994

Information Flowed Freely From A Stranger

The man was standing along Highway 123 in front of Thrift Lumber Company. I thought I recognized him when I slowed and stopped. He was a clean looking gentleman, wearing jeans and a cap and carrying a small back pack. Not in the habit of picking up strangers hitching a ride, I started to pull off, but the face looked familiar, though I couldn’t associate it with a name. For whatever reason, I allowed him to get in the vehicle and told him I was heading toward Toccoa, Ga.

He thanked me for stopping for him and asked if it were OK to smoke. He had a cigarette burning in his hand. Having kicked the habit myself more than 20 years ago, I gave verbal approval, and we were on our way.

With no prompting whatsoever, the fellow began explaining to me that the Bible was written in code, but he claimed he had decoded it and the messages were clear. I just sat and listened with little or no comment as he went through a bit of “mumbo-jumbo” that sounded like some scripture mixed with other utterances. He didn’t seem to be any kind of threatening character.

The man spoke calmly and outwardly did not seem to be emo-

tionally disturbed. It was difficult, however to follow his reasoning.

We came to the Tugaloo Rive bridge and he commented about the beauty of the lake. Along about this time, he confided to me that he was really a “scientist” and had some very important data that he was working with in his back pack.

“I would like to find a place somewhere along the lake or river where I could just camp out a few days and collect my thoughts,” he commented. I told him that as much rain as had been falling this summer, he would need more than a back pack to stay dry, if that had anything to do with his ability to mediate.

Finally, the stranger had to divulge at least part of his secret information: “I have a new energy formula that I’m working on that will be the wave of the future.” According to him, all our energy needs would be met from the natural rays of the sun; no more need for fossil fuel or even to eat as we now do, he explained. In the future, even the furniture in your home would be designed that you would receive all the energy a body needs as you sat around the house, the source being from the sun.

Before we reached the outskirts of Toccoa, the man said, “By the way, if I were an angel in form of a human, you probably wouldn’t know it!” I agreed and was becoming a bit more suspicious of the man’s mental stability. He never did admit outright that he was some kind of celestial being, but the implication was clear.

He then asked how far it was to the lake. The lake is about 8 or 10 mile behind us, I explained as we approached Highway 17 in Toccoa. “Well, I may want to go back there and camp,” he commented. Just before I stopped for him to get out, he asked, “Is there any wish you would like to have?” I told him I appreciated his offer, but I had everything I needed, including this safe trip. He uttered some kind of ritual “mumbo-jumbo” and departed.

I really felt relieved, lucky and wondered; “Is this man leaving Bull Street in Columbia and trying to make his way back to Milledgeville?”

August 31, 1994

Things Aren't What They Appear To Be

Printers and those involved in graphic arts production have a way to project ideas. It is this facet, I suppose, that makes the craft attractive. Some can produce thoughts of great virtue that have lasting philosophy...as did the great Ben Franklin. He was a deep thinker who used his talents to train and educate as well as entertain. Few have been so gifted as "Ole Ben," but many have utilized the systems for fun and profit.

One may think that with all the modern means of communication, there would be a decline in publishing. Not so. It continues to be a growth industry that has, indeed, been enhanced by much of the electronic magic.

Aside from the routine printing production, sometimes a bit of humor is injected. Several years ago when Carolina National Bank located an office here, (now First Citizens) Larry Dellinger was serving as the city "exec." Denise McCormick, now with Blue Ridge Electric Co-op, was his able assistant and later a city "exec" at the same location. The idea presented itself to me one day to have a little fun with some real money...like sure enough bonafide dollar bills.

With the help of Larry and other bank personnel, I was able to secure uncirculated, fresh off the press, one dollar bills. I carried these back to our printing department at The Westminster News where there were several printers doing their "thing." It may have been Tim Duncan, John Cash, Floyd Payne, DeWayne Moorehead, or Jerry Smith...any or some of the above who assisted me with the project.

Nothing illegal, but I requested a big stack of these bills be padded on the end with rubber cement...so they appeared as a scratch pad, only with real dollar bills. The idea was amusing and offered a wide range of possibilities. Over in the afternoon, I found myself leaving the Toccoa airport for nearby McDonalds for a sandwich. As the young girl behind in counter took my order and was waiting to collect in advance, as most of them do, I had a neat pad of \$1 bills sticking in my shirt pocket.

I flipped the pad down on the counter and asked, "Ma'm, how many of these do you need? as I was busy tearing the single dollars apart.

When I looked up, the young lady, holding her hand to her head was sort of mumbling to herself, something to the effect, "You know, I didn't feel good this morning and started to call in sick...by the way sir, are those dollars in a pad?"

Without a smile, I assured her these dollars were in a pad: "Yes, Ma'm, they are certainly in a pad!"

She commented again, "Well, I've never seen that before," and was again holding her hand to her head as if she had a headache.

Finally, with reluctance, she took four of the fresh uncirculated bills and gave me change along with my order on a tray.

I sat down and watched her as I ate. It wasn't long before she had a young man, apparently her supervisor, looking in the cash drawer and giving the dollar bills a thorough examination. There was a puzzled look about them as I left the restaurant.

Bill, Ceri and Craig Ratkovic, of Mission Viejo, California, may enjoy this experience reported here, since I am told they are avid and fervent readers of *The News* each week. Ceri is the daughter of the late Harry Strickland, and made a special visit to friends and relatives here two years ago. It's about time for them to report back in to Westminster.

September 7, 1994

A Few Hours With George Ballentine

There are a few in the area who recall the impact of R.G. LeTourneau, when he located a plant near Toccoa, Ga., in the 1930s. It was a big economic boost for a wide area. No one here had ever heard of the man with the funny sounding name. It didn't take long to realize this was a most unusual industrialist who knew how to get the job done. One of his secrets was finding the right kind of talent to help him.

George Ballentine of Greenville was one of those who shared his aspirations and had the talent to make positive things happen. The

success the company had was in developing, perhaps the first, heavy duty earth moving equipment in history. The impact of that early research and practical engineering has had far reaching results all over the world. It still does, for the principles are continually used every day where construction is in progress.

It was my brother, the late Bruce D. Hunt, who was working with George at the Toccoa plant prior to entering the army in the early 1940s. I did not know the man at the time, but the two became close friends, and George still speaks fondly of their experiences together.

Last week, sitting with George in the pleasant surroundings of his beautiful home on the shores of Lake Toxaway in Sapphire Valley, NC, it was almost like stepping back 50 years or more. While he is nearly 80 years old and has a few health problems, his ability to recall events is perfectly clear.

While assisting LeTourneau with complex problems of research and development, he was exposed to many interesting adventures. He also found the ingredient that pushed him into his own business, Precision Research and Development, located just off I-85 near Greenville.

The business continues with the youngest of three daughters and her husband carrying on a tradition. George made many trips at the request of R.G. One that stands out clearly concerns a ride in the company's airplane, a Lockheed Electra. On a venture to the LeTourneau plant in Peoria, IL, the plane was loaded with 14 personnel when the "Ole Man" directed the crew to load a transmission on board for the return trip. It was almost too much. With the heavy load in the nose, George said the plane just barely cleared the runway on takeoff and was suddenly on top of a big corn field, "I don't know exactly how many acres of corn we clipped, but it was considerable and the company had to compensate the farmer," he explained. Finally climbing out, the trip was safely completed but not without anxious moments.

George said he has been privileged to do many things that others may have only thought about. He later owned and flew his own aircraft and survived a crash near Cordele, Ga. Too, he built and raced his own boats. Besides his work which has also involved "hinging"

gates on Hartwell Dam and “balancing” big fans at the nuclear station of Duke’s Keowee-Toxaway plant, he has completed many completed many complicated projects and modifications in the textile industry.

George has had help at home with his gracious wife, Eleanor, in all of his adventures. They have three daughters, all married, with children and grandchildren. Eleanor is the sister of Alice Zachery, wife of the late “Dap” Zachery, who also worked for R.G. “Dap” was an athlete who played baseball at Oconee Mill park when the Georgia teams competed with the “Mountaineers.” Bob Grogan and others will recall the competition when baseball was really a fun game.

France Harbin Hunt of Chattanooga, Tenn., made this story possible with a great luncheon meal at the old Edwards Inn in Highlands, NC last week. A good meal and a good time was had by all.

September 14, 1994

Billy Cooper, John Reynolds and Brasstown Creek

Doctor E.L. Shuler said he believed Billy Cooper could play a piano better than anyone he’d ever heard. He oughta know. He knew Billy Cooper as well as anyone. Actually, I only met Billy once or twice. I carried one of our staff members to his home on Brasstown Creek, just off highway 76 the first time. Another time, our paths crossed somewhere along the way, but I’m not sure where or why. On this particular visit, John Allen Reynolds had asked to be delivered to the Brasstown residence. It must have been in the 1970s and John had been down with the “flu.” He was trying to get his head “on straight” and felt sure Billy had some medicine that might help. Evidently, John’s case was more severe than he thought. He felt it necessary to be confined at Billy’s “clinic” for several days.

Exactly what the diagnosis and prognosis was, I’m not sure, but eventually John did “come around” and reported back to his duties at the newspaper. Whatever was administered finally worked.

John Allen was no slouch at playing the piano, either. He was particularly good at gospel music and reportedly had several songs published. He loved to sit down at a piano and play! Too, he understood the score when it was written in "shape notes." That reaches back a few years. Since I understood little about any kind of music, I never did know how musicians, singers and professionals could interpret those little funny looking notes and make the best harmonic sounds you've ever heard. It was not only skill, it was a special gift!

Brasstown Creek is a picturesque stream tricklin' down a little valley as peaceful as any God created. It was a source of rejuvenation of mind, body and soul just to ease along the winding road near the banks. It was a pleasant experience to see what scenery would emerge. In addition, a fellow I had personal contact with lived along the road. Silas Butts, known far and wide, made his home here. He built his own little school building to house and teach children at his "unofficial orphanage." Too, he didn't have county, state or federal aid. He paid the teacher from his own limited resources.

One instructor there for several years was Ms. Mater Watkins, sister of M.D. Watkins, Sr. She did a remarkable job of training these youngsters who could have been easily overlooked were it not for her efforts.

In the late 1940s, I had been on a fishing trip to trout streams in the North Georgia mountains. A history professor from the University of Georgia came along and was really impressed when we met some real mountain men near Lake Winfield Scott. It was early spring. There was plenty of ice spewed up along the road and here comes an adult, with two young boys about 16 or 17, walking barefoot. Weather and ice along the road was no problem for them. We wore all the heavy clothing we had, trying to stay warm in sub-freezing temperatures that morning. There this trio comes along the road, barefoot and in shirt sleeves, too!

The professor had heard of Silas Butts and wanted to meet him. On the way back to Athens we stopped in. Some of the young un's run under the house and others peeped around the corner as we pulled the old Hudson convertible in to the yard.

Silas came out and greeted us. When he found out who the visitor was, he decided it would be better for him to just sit in the car while we conducted a little business above the house near the lake. Just a precaution, he assured me.

It was a fun trip on a spring break. One that history professor probably recorded in his notes as worth remembering.

September 21, 1994

Dates, Places, Events Registered Forever

One of the peculiarities of aging seems to be the ability to recall what happened 40 years ago... and, at the same time, the inability to remember where you placed your glasses 15 minutes ago.

Furman Simpson, local citizen, has almost total recall when it comes to specific matters, such as birthdays, anniversaries and some special events. Exactly why some have this unique memory system is not full explained by any authority I know about. It may be a God given talent or through some genetic structure. Or maybe it's a learned discipline as some contend.

There are systems for learning that appear to work for some people. Simply put, matters committed to memory are associated with items called memory "pegs." The "pegs" represent the ridiculous, but when "tied" to an item one wishes to remember, recall can be accomplished. Just exactly how and why this works is beyond my comprehension.

Most of us have to be convinced there is reason to learn before any worthwhile matters are committed to memory. If you've ever been in jail and recall, exactly, the events that led to your predicament, that may be just reason for remembering "what not to do."

The old "calaboose" in Westminster is no longer in use. That was a slang term for jail, but since all these civil rights law suits have been around, this structure has long since been replaced with more modern facilities. It still is jail when you are locked up and can't get out. This brings to mind a story about a fine old fellow who once operated a corn mill in the area. Not often, but sometimes, he would over indulge in corn, the liquid variety.

At one point, he and his son became intoxicated and both were confined to the local jail. No real harm was done. Both were simply drunk, no more, no less. In the old jail there were two holding cells, the old man was placed in one, the son in the other. An overheard conversation went kinda like this:

“Ormond, we are locked up here in this jail...why don’t you go and get us out of here?” the old man urged the son.

“Paw, there ain’t nothin’ better I’d like to do right now than that, but you’re overlookin’ the fact that I’m in here too!” he explained.

Sometimes events of the past are clearly “in place” while others elude me.

The other day John Barnett called with a question that I haven’t yet been able to answer. John said that around 1939 or 1940 there was an instructor at Westminster High School, a single man in his 30s who was especially skilled at teaching math and science. According to John, this fellow had the unique talent of being able to get and hold the attention of restless youngsters with his spell-binding teaching methods.

“He made the subject matter so interesting, you were afraid not to learn and listen to everything the man said,” according to John.

However, there was a tragic ending. The instructor, it seems went home one day and suffered a fatal heart attack. John said he thought the man rented a room from Mr. and Mrs. E.G. Poore. But he was not absolutely sure of this point. If anyone recalls such an instructor, his name or any kind of identification please pass the word on to John Barnett or to me.

September 28, 1994

Evidence Refutes A-Bomb “Guessing”

There is plenty of documented evidence that American use of the A-bomb in Japan in 1945 was justified. James R. Young, now 92, living in Anderson, said there was no doubt about it then or now. Having been in Japan for 13 years prior to Pearl Harbor in 1941, he was imprisoned by the Japanese for publishing a story concerning the manufacture of poison gas by the Japanese Hiroshima. He

worked for the publisher of an English newspaper in Japan and was a correspondent for Hearst newspapers. His reporting was accurate and to this day is testimony the fact that Hiroshima was the "hotspot" for poison gas the Japanese were going to use against an American invasion

One article, he wrote of the matter in 1955, in *The Anderson Daily Mail*, where he served as Associate Editor: "In 1945, Hiroshima had many government agencies. It housed the regional offices of dozens of government agencies. It was the Southern Headquarters of the Japanese army. It was the replacement depot for tens of thousands of Japanese troops moving overseas. Government was its business and state funds were its lifeblood. Poison gas was an industry.

"The Japs had 12,000 tons of poison chemicals and 3000 tons of mustard gas in 100 Ton steel storage tanks on the isolated isle. The supply was removed after the war by Major W.E. Williamson from the U.S. 1st Cavalry Division who was lent to the British Commonwealth Occupation Forces in the Hiroshima sector for the job.

"Major Williamson used 900 Japanese personnel who took six months to decontaminate the heart of Japan's gigantic arsenal of chemical warfare.

He built concrete cofferdams for the poisons, flooding them with salt water to insure decomposition. Other stocks were taken 230 miles to sea and dumped in 300 fathoms.

"Hiroshima was a war boom-town. There were 60,000 troops quartered in the prefecture, under Field Marshall Gen. Shunroku Hata. Hiroshima was the center of Japan's poison gas supply, manufactured near Kure, a big submarine base. On a small island across the bay was a poison gas plant copied from a French process. Another was an American type plant. The equipment, built in the early 30s was complete with warehouses, power plants, railheads and docks. The finished gas product was shipped from the manufacturing point to Hiroshima where the Japanese maintained a sizeable depot.

"There were 344,000 people in Hiroshima when the first atomic

bomb ever used in war was dropped, killing 78,150 and injuring 37,425 with 13,083 missing.”

Ten years later an article by Ray Falk reported the population at 365,000.

The point of this matter is the “second guessing” today that this bombing was a mistake. For those who served their country during WWII in any capacity, it was no mistake. Undoubtedly, many living today, both Americans and Japanese would not be here if there was an invasion.

As awesome and awful as this mission was for General Jimmy Doolittle and the crew of his bomber, the “Enola Gay,” it was necessary to put an end to WWII. President Harry Truman, himself a combat veteran of WWI, did not hesitate.

James R. Young knew first hand the circumstances and has maintained a file of information on this matter to this very day. It had to be done and was a justified act. No doubt about it then or now!

October 5, 1994

“Boot Camp” Buddy Gone, Not Forgotten

Some people you meet are never forgotten. Some you’d rather forget as soon as possible. A picture this week, made nearly 50 years ago, brought back flashes of the U.S. Navy Boot Camp in Bainbridge, Maryland and a friend I met there.

The way it happened, Ed Tannery, whose Circle T Plumbing Company, does business over a wide area, called to say he had a picture that had been sent to him. It was from the son of H.C. Bonner, Sr. of Spartanburg, a Plasterer by profession. Henry Bonner, Sr. and I had been together as “boots” at the U.S. Naval Training Center in Bainbridge during the middle 1940s. His son, now operator of his father’s business had found the snapshot of Henry and me and sent it to Ed Tannery since he knew Ed and I both were from the same area.

Henry Bonner, Sr. became the victim of cancer a few years ago, but we had a chance to communicate a couple of times before his death. One was the occasion when he was in Westminster doing the

plastering work on Hardee's restaurant. He was a primary plastering contractor for Hardee's according to Ed Tannery who has also been a primary plumbing contractor for the same company for a number of years. It was their work that brought their friendship together. Ed was a great admirer of Henry, Sr., and says that his son, H.C. Bonner, Jr. and a grandson are doing a great job of carrying on the business.

H. Bonner was a few years older than I when we met in Bainbridge, but he spoke South Carolina "Southern" real well, and I certainly did appreciate being near someone I could understand and relate to during the "trying" times of boot training.

As it happened, somewhere in our adventure in Bainbridge, I borrowed \$3 from Bonner. We got separated after leaving camp and I never did take time to try to find him and pay him back. He had a keen memory and a great sense of humor, so about 35 years later, he had Ed Tannery deliver me a statement. I'm not sure whether he had the interest calculated or not, but I got the message and sent him some money. I think he got a big "kick" out of the communication, and a few months later he was in town doing the plastering work at Hardee's. He came by the newspaper office and we had a great reunion, rehashing the trials and tribulations of "boot camp."

A young, aspiring seaman can get depressed really easy unless he has the steady hand of a more experienced friend to keep things in perspective. Henry Bonner was a positive force during those critical times. The snapshot of two "boots" as members of company 3107 is a gentle reminder.

Enclosed with the photo was a business card of H.C. Bonner, Plasterer. On the back of it, the following was printed:

*I notice when a fellow dies,
No matter what he's been,
Some saintly chap or one perhaps
Whose life is stained with sin,*

*His friends forget the bitter words
They spoke but yesterday*

*And now think up a multitude
Of pretty things to say.*

*Perhaps when I am laid to rest,
Someone will bring to light,
Some noble deed or kindly act,
Long buried out of sight.
But if it's all the same to you, my friends,
Just give to me instead,
The business while I'm living,
The knocking when I'm dead.*

October 12, 1994

Goat Man Report Alive and Well

Enough of this Haitian stuff, too! And while we're at it, we've just about had enough of this Saddam mess, also. He should have been put away years ago when we had the opportunity.

Be that as it is...what gets attention this week is a report that would have been printed sooner if I had picked up my mail that was sent to *The News* office instead of my home address.

A letter dated April 24, 1994, brought some news about The Goat Man. He was the subject of an article in the March 30th, issue of *The News*. Mr. W.O. Tribble, brother Robert Tribble, filed this report:

I enjoyed your column on The Goat Man which ran in the March 30th issue of *The News*. In it you wondered what ever happened to him and speculated that he is probably dead by now.

On the contrary, The Goat Man is alive and well and living in Macon, Georgia. His name is Ches McCartney, and a small farm in nearby Twiggs County was his base of operations during the winters when he was not on the road (and passing through Westminster).

Ches is now a resident of a retirement home in Macon, and claims that he is over 100 years old. Some people who know him, however, say he's closer to 90. His goats have long since gone to goat heaven, which is just as well, as the retirement home wouldn't take them, anyway.

Ches still has some of his post cards and other items, and will offer to sell them to anyone who drops by to hear about his travels (they get longer and more fanciful every year). Who knows, he might soon claim he rood that goat caravan to the moon!

He is in good health and good spirits, but I doubt if he'll ever get up to Westminster again.

I just thought you and your readers might like a follow-up on the old fellow.

Mitch is my nephew, and sends me the paper. I visited aunts in Westminster many years ago (Mrs. George Hull, Mary Mitchell) and enjoy your column about the old days.

The letter was signed Bill Tribble. He lives in Macon, Georgia, and was in the television broadcasting business, I've been told.

It was good to get this report on this unusual fellow. It is also news welcomed to know he was doing well despite his age. Or at least he was when the letter was written.

The Goat Man and The Goat Woman, who were widely known in Oconee County would have, perhaps, made a great "team" had they chanced to meet.

Certainly, there was no one who loved goats any more than Estelle Cox Moore (better known as The Goat Woman). She was dead serious about them. She almost went into hysterics one day when I told her that I thought the game warden and some deputies had captured some of the goats and had staged a big goat bar-b-cue. I was only joking, but Estelle was serious as a train wreck when she threw her arms up and screamed out:

"Don't tell me they've killed my darlings!"

I had to back up real fast when I saw her reaction. It was no joking matter with her.

October 19, 1994

AA Experience Long Remembered

Once an alcoholic, always an alcoholic. You can sober up and be forever a recovering alcoholic...which is the ultimate goal of Alcoholics Anonymous, as new candidates qualify.

It is perhaps, one of the most exclusive clubs in the world. Literally millions, and yes, billions are spent by prospective members as they work with great religious fervor toward becoming an out-of-control drinker. It costs not only money, but families, jobs, homes, self respect. Many lives are wrecked or lost in the process. It is probably one of our nation's greatest problems, yet we are a group of "slow learners" in handling the matter.

It is not the job of most recovering alcoholics to go about the community condemning booze or those who imbibe in moderation with no apparent problems. For those who are "out of control" and have hit the "bottom" and bounced and have decided to make a change, AA can help if there is serious effort. I have seen it work, and have been the benefactor of learning why I am "different" and must never forget it.

Several years past when I was attending AA meetings with greater regularity, a friend and fellow traveller in the organization, Bill B., asked me to make a few calls with him on some of his friends who were needing help. The visits we made were often in vain. It seemed the drunks we were trying to reach didn't want to be reached. If it had not been for some humor in the midst of tragedy, one could easily have said "the hell with it" and moved on to a more productive endeavor.

On one call, Bill B. and I met a big, hound dog with a mouth nearly as wide as an alligator. Every step Bill took, the dog was snapping right at his butt. For some reason, he didn't bother me. He must have been looking for a better target. When we reached the house, it was obviously in disarray, with the lady of the home

sweeping a host of things out the door. We inquired about the man of the house. He was our main reason for the call. The lady informed us he was asleep in the bedroom.

When he failed to arouse and greet us, the woman decided she would go back to urge him to “get up!” Little did we know the man was sleeping, lying nude on his stomach. It was during summer and rather humid. Finally, the little lady came back from the bedroom one more time and was sort of muttering to herself “...if that don’t wake him up, I don’t know what will.”

Only later we discovered she had poured a solution on his nude rear end...Clorox, to be more specific, and even that failed to get a positive response at the moment. A few days later, the man was wondering what had been administered. He had to be “tough” to survive this ordeal, but he did, and for many years has been active in trying to help others find a sober path. Too, the woman of the house, who was also having some problems, got her “act” together. The two have made many worthwhile contributions to humanity for a number of years since.

Bill B. said he wouldn’t go so far as to recommend the “Clorox treatment” for everyone, though it may have helped in this case. He said he decided to check out the solution by pouring some raw Clorox in his hand. “That stuff got so hot in just a few seconds I thought it would burn a hole right through my palm,” he declared. I never will understand how he stood that stuff poured on him raw from the container. “It don’t like much being hot as hell,” he observed.

November 2, 1994

A Few Day In The Desert Southwest

This is a great and wonderful country. It has beauty that defies description. It has many more good people than bad. It has promise and hope for those who are prepared to experience it. We are not a nation of complete idiots, though we sometimes do not exercise our best judgement. America will forever be as strong as the people who love this land are willing to make it.

Last week, it was refreshing to visit our daughter, Rachel Ann Hunt, in the Desert Southwest. For about eight years, she has made her home in the Phoenix, Arizona area. Previous to that she lived about seven years in Wyoming. We have visited her in both locations several times. It is amazing to me the natural beauty that abounds in the West. It is equally amazing the spirit and attitude of these Westerners. To look at the rugged Superstition mountains in the Phoenix area and try to visualize wagon trains pushing across them staggers imagination.

The early settlers who came this way must have been the very "Salt of The Earth." To think we can easily leave Charlotte, North Carolina, and climb to more than 30,000 feet in a great silver bird, that ever-so-gently slides into Phoenix's Sky Harbor in a little more than four hours, is more like a dream than a daily occurrence. It probably took these early wagon trains four to six months to make the same trip. Not to speak of the trials and tribulations encountered along the way.

In many ways, the metro area is no different from others. There is more than enough traffic in the cities. The growth and expansion is a continuing process. With it comes jobs and opportunity along with the woes of progress. There is an abundance of natural beauty and intrigue in the area. Rachel has been employed with a pre-school center in Casper, Wyoming, and, since its inception has been working with an expanded facility that accommodates about 200 each day serving the Phoenix area.

To observe her interest in her work reinforces my belief that it matters not what your job or profession may be. If you are happy with what you're doing, you will probably be very successful as well.

I can recall my dad telling of his experience working as a ranch hand (or cowboy) in Montana for about six years prior to entering the army where he served in WWI. He always remembered fondly the life of a ranch hand, though it was sometimes tough and required effort in bitter weather.

Somehow, I can see some of those genetic qualities in Rachel as well as some from my mother who dearly loved her job as a school

teacher. She read relentlessly and was constantly thinking of children -- especially those who had unusual problems or challenges. There may have some interesting genetic structure from her mother's side of the family, but there's no point in getting involved in discussing all the possibilities.

It should be pointed out that Phoenix is blessed with many "thrift shops," Salvation Army stores, great libraries that sell "used books" as well as loaning new ones. Rachel knows where every one of them is located, and even volunteers to help them with the operation at some. Too, she is also quite involved as a volunteer in the Maricopa County court system where she serves as an assistant to a Judge.

A few days visit to Arizona is well worth the effort.

November 9, 1994

Phil Recalls Mixed Up Communication

Phil Batson is known as one of the better builders in the business. He has worked with some of the best and his productions of quality work are evident throughout the area. At one time Phil worked for the city where he assisted with all kinds of engineering problems. In this capacity, he worked with the late Knox Kelly, an electrician. On special assignments he would sometimes work with Knox, in private, completing jobs after their regular jobs with the city. "Moonlighting" was a rather common practice as they tried to supplement the pay scale.

On one assignment, a friend had just completed a beautiful new home. There was only one thing lacking. In the hallway, the owner wanted an extra electrical outlet installed.

Knox engaged Phil to help him with the work. He sent Phil under the house with a long drill bit. According to Phil, Knox was stationed in the hallway where new carpet was installed, the walls and baseboard finished and freshly painted.

The job required a hole to be drilled for the additional outlet. Knox allowed he would be watching for the entrance hole and would advise of any problems.

Phil cranked up the drill and long bit and began boring through the floor joist timbers.

Every now and then he said he would stop and yell out: "How about it, Knox?"

Knox would reply, according to Phil, "Come on, Phil!"

It was rather hard to make the messages heard since one was under the floor drilling with the other on topside listening. There was flooring, sub-flooring, insulation and several walls muting sounds and communication.

After drilling a while once more, Phil would yell out again, "How about it, Knox?"

Again the reply would come back, "Go ahead, Phil!"

This procedure was repeated several times. Knox looking for any entrance signs on the topside, while Phil drilled away with a super-long bit underneath.

Finally, there was a break through.

As he withdrew the bit, Phil said he could see daylight through the hole. He had a feeling that something had gone terribly wrong. He made his way from under the house to the hallway.

As he approached, Knox was doing everything except commending him, according to Phil.

The hole had "shot through" some of the new baseboard and had perhaps wound in some newly laid carpet, among other things. Knox was fit to be tied. He had already thrown his hat on the floor and was using some choice descriptive words.

In his own defense Phil said, "Knox, I kept yelling to you and each time you would yell back saying 'Go ahead, Phil!'"

"No! No! No!" Knox yelled, "That's not what I said, I said...very loud...Stop it, Phil, you're tearing hell out of it!"

Phil said he had a lot of fun working with Knox even when the communication was all mixed up. He was a "fun guy" to work with.

November 16, 1994

“Junk” Ain’t Necessarily Cheap

You’ve heard the saying, “One man’s junk is another’s treasure. If you’ve had experience at any estate auction lately, you surely understand that what one may consider “junk,” another is willing to pay a handsome price for ownership.

Collectors who are obsessed with special interests will pay big bucks to land an item. It happens over and over again and especially at auctions where competitive bidding situation develops. The price shoots up and the gavel comes down making the buyer, auctioneer, and owner very happy.

Thinking of all the old vehicles Dr. Henry Kuemmerer had in his back yard collection that sold at auction reminded me of a time in the late 1930s when Lloyd “Sass” Hudson, Bryan Whitmire, Bill Hudson and perhaps, Donald Singleton, bought an old 1924 T-Model Ford Touring Car for the tidy sum of \$25. This car would actually run and had all the windows in it with the original upholstery intact. I know the car was well cared for along the way. The four owners drove it for several months before they, too, sold it again for \$25. The new owner may have been Mr. Jim King who also had a wood-sawing business. T-Model Ford cars and A-Models were often used in the wood cutting business. Some would carry a cut-off saw on a truck or pull it on wheels to a home with a load of fire wood to be cut. I have seen the rear end of a T-Model jacked off the ground and a belt run directly to a cut-off saw pulley for the jacked-up wheel.

A-model Fords were sometimes used as a power source to run a cut-off saw. Some would attach a special type pulley to the outside of a rear wheel, jack up the rear end and run a belt to the cut-off saw. With a fast spinning circular saw a couple of willing workers, a big load of fire wood could be piled up in short order.

A-models were very tough as were T-models. Any of them today will command a handsome price from a collector. I recall buying an A-model “strip-down” from Bob Grogan who had obtained the car from a co-worker at the LeTourneau steel plant in Toccoa. This particular car had only two seats in front. The body was completely

removed except for the hood over the motor. the hood was painted red and had a name, "USS Gladiator" lettered on it.

The motor was in good shape and if you could manage to hold on, it was a lot of fun - but highly dangerous - as I recall. One could push the spark on an A-model, cut off the ignition switch, let the accelerator build a gas flow into the engine, cut the switch back on, and the result was nearly like the explosion of a 3-inch gun battery. It would nearly rock the rafters of any building along the street.

This was a sometimes dangerous practice for the explosion could actually blow the muffler and tail pipe off the vehicle. One experiment of this nature happened on Retreat Street near where the home now occupied by Jim and Tina Hunt stands. Mrs. James Breazeale, the original owner, had a group of ladies playing bridge on the little side porch of the house.

As the "Gladiator" approached, and the ensuing explosion happened, the bridge party was all but terminated. There was no injuries, but there was considerable screaming and one could hear breaking glass as the frightened ladies turned over tables and spilled whatever all over the place. I was thankful at the time that no one knew exactly who owned that A-model.

November 23, 1994

Who Is To Say When To Pray?

What a joke it is, beside a waste of time and money, to have a political system unduly concerned about prayer! The technicalities of law have invaded the boundaries of common sense and decency in the business of schools and just about everything else.

A moment of silence, a time when one may reflect or pray to God of choice, to begin the school day, work day or any day is a habit long revered down here in the deep South.

Whether or not it is official has never made any difference to me and probably not to the Higher Power, I sometimes try to reach. I'm sure He has handled far more complex problems and surely must be amused or dismayed that reasonable people are trying to make the channels a political issue.

If prescribed by law, or if not prescribed by law, one has the option to pray at any moment where there is need. The law, in all its intent, will not have much to do with the action. I am reminded of a statement I read years ago that stated, "Man has enacted more than 600,000 laws...but none have improved on the Ten Commandments." The number has probably reached higher by now, but still no improvement.

As a youngster, I was exposed to basic beliefs of Protestant faith, both home, and in school. Teachers were allowed to conduct a morning devotional in the classroom; there was a devotional period with most chapel programs, and no one seemed to be offended.

While there are other religious beliefs among many public schools students, they too, can exercise their prayer options if a moment of silence -- or reflection -- is allowed. If it isn't allowed, one can still exercise the mental state of prayer. Who is to say you can't and who can rule out your will to contact the God of your choice at any given moment?

I am reminded of a time when I found myself in an airplane "spin" with an instructor who had intentionally kicked a rudder to induce the action. After I somehow recovered from about 3 turns, heading straight down from 4500 feet, he handed me the little radio microphone with instructions:

"Call the base...tell them who you are (ident.), where you are and what you intend to do."

I was in a most grateful degree of shock and surprise from having recovered from the "spin."

I began to slowly call out the aircraft ident numbers but stopped in the middle of the call and turned to the instructor with a word to him:

"Sir, you can call anyone you wish to...tell them anything you wish...and it'll be OK with me...for the One I've been in touch with for a while now doesn't require a radio or mike." He was amused, but I was dead serious and more than grateful to a Higher Power.

The other day, a renowned "Sky Diver" in the person of Bob Frierson, a former resident of Westminster, dropped in for a class reunion at the home of Johnny and Marilyn Jones on Retreat Street.

Bob has made nearly 5,000 jumps from aircraft over the years and I'm sure that he, too, must be aware of a Higher Power. When one steps out of an aircraft that is running perfectly good and puts his life on the lines and threads of a man-made material, there is a sure need for faith.

It was a most unusual arrival for a high school class reunion, but Bob and his brother, John Frierson, have always been interesting studies in human endeavor. They, and twin daughters were residents here when Dr. Frierson, their father served as Presbyterian minister. Dr. Frierson is also credited with introducing many species of holly and azaleas to the area.

November 30, 1994

Cars And Distinguished Owners

Minnie Owens called the other day to talk about the old A-model and T-Model cars mentioned in a recent column.

She wondered if I ever heard of a special A-model that was once owned and operated by Otis Mason and perhaps some of the Cashin boys. According to Minnie, this A-model presented a problem in some mechanical way. After many hours of hard work, the vehicle was running but not to the satisfaction of the owners. In a fit of disgust, one of the owners "lost his cool" and actually attacked the car with a hammer. This may have happened. I do not recall the instance, personally, but I have been provoked to that point, myself. While it seldom cured the ailment, it did seem to be a relief valve of sorts.

Mr. O. E. Cashin, a professional sign painter, once owned an A-model that he used to travel to job sites. This car was painted green and was referred to as the "Green Wave" or the "Green Hornet." He and his sons drove this car quite a bit/ and it was easily recognized. This could have possibly been the vehicle Minnie mentioned, but I'm not sure.

Back in the early 1930s when the horse and buggy was giving way to motorized transportation in these parts, local doctors in town were among the first to make the change over.

Dr. F. T. Simpson, a distinguished general practitioner, bought

himself a nice T-model Ford and used it successfully most of the time.

But T-models, like people, had distinct personalities. Sometimes they then would run like a “charm,” and again defied all efforts toward ignition. The T-model Dr. Simpson owned was no different. According to my father, C. R. Hunt, Dr. Simpson often struggled-trying to crank this car. There was no automatic starters for those early models. They had to be hand cranked. If the T-model decided to run, it would, and if it wasn't in the “mood,” all the adjusting and cussin' wouldn't get the job done. Dr. Simpson was a professional man who liked for things to happen according to plan. The T-model did not always cooperate. My dad recalled seeing the doctor so disgusted that he would twist the crank until near exhaustion and then begin to throw rocks at the vehicle. Most of the roads were dirt back then, thus there was a plentiful supply of rocks close by most of the time.

Minnie mentioned another fact that distinguished that period of time. While all the early model vehicles had hand cranks, this was also a health hazard for people. Trying to hand crank one of these early models carried with it the risk of a broken arm. On nearly any given day, a trip to town would reveal several men walking around with an arm in a sling. The engine crankshafts had a bad habit of “kicking” backward from the spinning position. This sudden “kick” resulted in a lot of sprained and broken arms. Cranking and driving a T-model Ford was not a job for the weak or faint-hearted.

Too, there was another problem once the T-model was running. The tires on early cars were less than reliable. A puncture was risky, if for no other reason than changing a clinch-rim which could easily knock your head off. If you were going any distance, say more than 20 miles, it was also wise to take an arm load of Monkey Grip patching for the tubes. There was a really good chance you'd need it.

December 7, 1994

Lifting One's Eyes Unto The Hills

One of the bonus benefits from living in this area is the close proximity to the mountains. It is difficult to describe, but there is something strengthening and refreshing about mountains. Even those, like ours, which are not giants by comparison. A quick trip up highway 11 on into Hendersonville and Asheville gives the day new meaning. Or to go up highway 76 into Long Creek and the Clayton area offers a special form of beauty and relaxation.

Maybe its because I have fond memories associated with many of our local mountain areas. It was in the 1940s, when most of the GIs from WWII had returned home and joined the "52-20" club in some form of training, when I first learned about trout fishing on Chauga. Frank Cashin was operating a radiator repair shop when he wasn't fishing the creeks, rivers and lake back then. He learned a lot about the mountains from Levis Jaynes. He pretty well knew when and where - catfish were "hitting" along with trout. One trip took us off highway 76 down a little dirt road called "Spyrock." The road didn't go all the way to the river. It stopped rather abruptly on top of a ridge. The rest of the way you walked down to the water. It was probably about 2 or 3 miles straight down -- going in. Coming out after fishing all day, it was straight up and tough going for any not conditioned.

It was down on this rocky, beautiful stretch of Chauga that I first caught a rainbow trout. Fishing just beneath swift shoals of clear, cool, gushing water with "jack-dog" for bait, a big rainbow hit my line I couldn't believe it when I finally landed him on the big rocks. Cashin was laughing and casually observing. "Watch it," he cautioned, "He'll get away."

His word of caution could not have been more prophetic. In an instant, that big rainbow squirted from my grasp and re-entered the cool, clear Chauga water.

It was an experience I'll never forget. Frank Cashin always had fun telling folks about the big rainbow I let "get away."

Nearly every little road back then was dirt or gravel if you turned from the main highway. Each, in a special way, offered unique expe-

riences with perhaps the most honest people to ever inhabit the earth.

Now, when you reach highway 441 in Clayton, it's nearly a super highway as it turns from 3 to 4 lanes. An escape route for Atlanta, and who can blame 'em?

Even Tallulah Falls, once a quiet little community has been turned into a state park area with construction going on in all directions. The Gorge -- the one Wallenda walked across -- has been the scene of many fatalities. With visitors trying to get just a little better view, wandering from the trails, clearly defined, challenge the rescue squads who go in and bring out bodies of the fallen.

Jimmy Durante, one of the great entertainers of the 20th Century, often teamed with a favorite star, Tallulah Bankhead, who adopted her name from this beautiful place in Northeast Georgia.

Who would have thought it, this week Tallulah Falls had a special celebration for the Christmas Season. With a parade in the community, a specially decorated and lighted tree was floated out into the lake by citizens and public spirited Georgia Power company.

December 14, 1994

Hot Dogs And Then Some

It seems only a few restaurants ever master the art of makin' hot dogs. Especially the kind we're use to down South...You know...the kind with all the good stuff, chili, onions, mustard with "sho nuff" quality beef dogs.

Years ago, Ed and Lil Melton ran a little restaurant on the corner of what is now Quick and Main Street. The buildings are no longer there, but you could smell the cookin', especially the hot dogs, way down the sidewalk. Or maybe it was the onions mixed with other ingredients that made you so hungry you could "see shadows of biscuits" as Louie Elrod use to say.

Lil discovered the secret and did a booming hot dog business on this little corner. Of course, it didn't hurt any that the pool room and a barber shop was located in nearby adjoining buildings. Customers from Boon Brock's pool room, Ferdinand Anderson's Barber Shop,

and Jess Freeman's Grocery Store, piled into the establishment to eat those famous dogs.

There was a group of pool room regulars that livened up the corner with conversation and business. Henry "Goat" Batson, was one of the better pool "sharks" of the period. He practiced with great religious fervor and could "clean you" quicker than John Butler's Dry Cleaning. It didn't matter the game...eight ball, nine ball, straight pool just name your poison and "Goat" would administer the dosage.

R. S. King sometimes visited the area, playing pool, or just talking with friends. One evening R. S. was standing on the sidewalk between the pool room and Melton's restaurant talking with friends. For some reason, according to James "Coot" Batson, R. S. hollered out kind of loud, a sort of nonsensical saying of the day, "Let her hop." Lil was in the restaurant and didn't hear the message clearly. Instead she thought someone was ordering hot dogs. She came to the door and stuck her head out to confirm the order, "Did you want those with onions?" she inquired. The locals got a big kick out of her mistaken response.

Melton's also served beer to qualified clientele, mostly in bottles...more often than not, Red Top, or Atlantic beer and ale. It wasn't made from the choicest "hops" like Schlitz use to claim, but it wasn't too far removed. If you wanted, you could have it poured in an aluminum "glass." This was the first place I ever recall seeing a "glass" made from anything other than glass. Melton's had ice cold aluminum "glasses" that were very popular. While Lil tried to control her business, and did so very effectively most of the time, her husband, Ed, liked to help himself to the cold beer as time and Lil would permit.

She was a short woman who worked both the kitchen and the counter. Willie Hawkins said he has seen Ed, many times, slip a bottle of Atlantic from the ice box, flip the cap off, walk behind Lil while drinkin' the beer so she didn't catch a glimpse of him face to face. Willie said Ed could darn near suck the bottom out of one of those Atlantic ales before Lil could walk from the front counter to the kitchen.

Ed nearly always had a cigarette rolled from the newsprint and Golden Grain tobacco, hangin' on his lower lip. They were all great people.

December 21, 1994

Beacon's Christmas Star Brings Memories

The lighted Christmas star on the stairwell tower at Beacon's plant brings back memories. The star has been a Christmas tradition at Beacon for many years. It is there, near the top of the tower, where it is had signalled the Season for about as far back as I can recall.

This plant, and its economic stability has been a welcome stream of "lifeblood" for this community for many years. It has been effectively passed through several owners in the past 40 years. The continuity of its product and dedication of the employees who make the wheels go 'round, has made it a national trademark in the blanket and home furnishings industry.

The star has remained in place during the Christmas season, but there is a bit of humor in its history. When J. Walter Duckworth, "Roddy" King, J. L. Holland, and a few other crew members of the Carpentry Shop were in place, it was their job to affix the star on the tower.

Walter Duckworth, the appointed "leader," on the job of installing the star. Years ago, he was standing on the ground in front of the mill discussing the work at hand. It was in late November or early December. Time for the star to go up. He turned to J. L. Holland, one of his fellow workers, and remarked, "We've got to get a ladder and get the star up."

J. L. apparently wasn't thinking on the same frequency as Walter. He stood in front of the plant, looking straight up about five stories high, and had a few comments of his own.

In effect, he said, "Walt, you're crazy as hell if you think I'm going to climb a ladder up there"...as he grazed skyward.

Walter was somewhat baffled by his reaction. For a moment, he couldn't figure what J. L. had in mind. Then he realized that J. L.

had the idea that the ladder should reach from the ground in front to near the top of the tower.

As he realized what was going through J. L.'s mind, he commented, "Why, there ain't enough ladders in Oconee County to reach from here to the top of the tower...you'd have to back them all the way out to the railroad to do that."

Then, he explained, "All we have to do is get up on the roof and use a standard ladder form there." J. L. heaved a sign of relief. The job of hanging the traditional Christmas star was accomplished.

A lot of the "Old Timers" at Beacon have gone to that "Big Plant" in the sky. Many of them made a special effort to keep this mill "going" when "going" was sho nuff rough.

Many years ago when Charlie Owen, Sr., owned the company, a favorite story unfolded. Mr. Owen, who spent a great deal of his time at corporate offices in Swannanoa, N. C., would sometimes visit the plant here. He had the reputation of showing up unexpectedly.

Too, he did not always dress in a suit, shirt and tie as many executives.

One day, while wearing simple sun-tan slacks and open shirt, Mr. Owen, suddenly stepped through a back door in a manufacturing space. A worker was busy cleaning lint and other materials from pipes and machinery.

"You always keep this place this clean," Mr. Owen inquired.

The worker didn't recognize the plant owner as he commented: "Hell, no, we don't have time to do this all the time...we're expecting some "big shot" company from the main office in Swannanoa tomorrow!"

Mr. Owen chuckled as he made his way on through the plant.

January 4, 1995

"Perception" Is Very Important

Sometimes we get "hung up" with words, phrases and clauses and forget what the mission was in the first place. It is easy to do. Then, again, there are a few terms it would be well to remember. "Perception," is one of them.