

# The Southerner

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Vol. 1, No. 4

## ***A REPRIEVE FOR THE OKEFENOKEE?***

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the Palmetto State**

**Southern Belles  
Tackle Football**

***The Slippery South***



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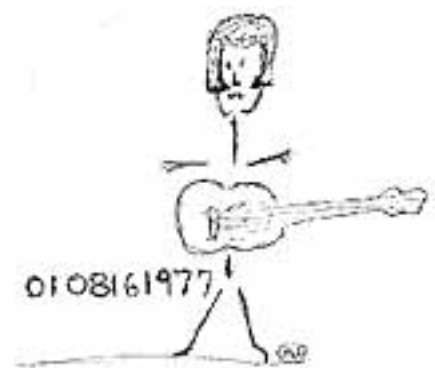
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# Editor's Note

*From too much love of living,  
From hope and fear set free,  
We thank with brief thanksgiving  
Whatever gods may be  
That no life lives forever;  
That dead men rise up never;  
That even the weariest river  
Winds somewhere safe to sea.*

— Algernon Charles Swinburne, *Félice*, 1866

## By Glynn Wilson

Sometimes there is no accounting for hope. Thanksgiving is upon us, and what do we in the South have to be thankful for?

Alabama voters rejected a lottery to fund education in a statewide referendum in October, meaning bold proposals are dead in my home state for the next 10 years at least. We didn't even bother to cover the Alabama lottery vote failure in this issue, since the newspapers tell a sad enough tale.

But we couldn't resist David R. Osier's cover piece on the Okefenokee swamp, his sidebar on Walking the Bog in Lab & Field, or the cartoon from Sam Rawls. DuPont wants to mine the Okefenokee swamp in Georgia, but they will desist if the taxpayers agree to pay them some percentage of what they would have made off the titanium mine. The Fifth Amendment notwithstanding, this looks like corporate welfare at least, extortion at worst, and even the major national environmental groups are in on the settlement. DuPont needs to take a hike. But if it saves some important upland habitat in the Okefenokee, more power to the stakeholders in this fight.

In South Carolina, David Duke says he loves the people and promises to move his family there, if only officials will keep the Confederate Battle Flag atop the Statehouse. Meanwhile, the NAACP is threatening a tourism boycott if the flag stays up. In some quarters, people can't seem to figure out how to win for losing.

The South may be a slippery concept, in the words of John Brummett, and some may not agree with his Arkansas assessment. But it's a thought worth pondering in Essays.

Myself, I've been thinking about how I miss being in the midst of the migrating Monarchs on the Gulf Coast this time of year. In Secret Vistas, Andre Bergeron would rather be chasing trout on Rock Creek, and you can't blame him. It matters not whether the fish are biting.

But there is serious business to attend to on Beale Street, and on the family farms of



Tennessee, Kentucky and Virginia. John Elkington, the man who is largely responsible for bringing the people and dollars back to downtown Memphis, now wants to kick Judy Peiser and the Center for Southern Folklore off Beale Street. It's a sad state of affairs. Read

the entire tale in-depth in Southern Culture. And the drought in the South's center is reaping the worst soybean harvest in 30 years. That's the Bottom Line.

But then there's always the diversion of football, practically a religion in the South. In R&R, some Southern women speak out on the game as a social institution, and admit it's not a bad way to spend a Saturday in the fall.

If you want to know where to hang and escape the tourists and their prices in New Orleans, listen to the local French Quarter wisdom of Lee Dresselhaus. Then find out the best place to hear Texas blues and get Tabasco in your ribs in East Tennessee. Shhhh. Don't tell anyone about Sassy Ann's at Fourth & Gill in Knoxville. We like it the way it is. While you're at the Bar & Grill, Jack Neely's tryin' chitlins. Not so sure he likes 'em.

We all know no party's worth a damn without good tunes, so Ron Sitron gives us the lowdown on the hard times of Wilson



"Wicked" Pickett and more blues than you can listen to all at one time in Southern Sounds.

David R. Mark helps us introduce a section on Books in this issue, and we mourn the passing of another great Southern columnist this time around. Carole Ashkinaze gives the Atlanta Journal-Constitution's Celestine Sibley her due in another new section, In Passing.

With any luck, you will help us figure out how to take the news that there is life in outer

space after all. It turns out Elvis is alive and well, at least if you believe Thomas Fortenberry and the lead-in to our first virtual short story. Play along and help us flesh out this conundrum on the eve of the new millennium.

Y'all come back now after the first of the year, when the Y2K thing blows over. We will be cookin' up some superb fiction in the special issue featuring the winners of the Robert Penn Warren Prize for Fiction.



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# Reader's Forum

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Editor:

Here are some general impressions of The Southerner:

First off, it's a sharp looking online mag. It's easy to navigate and there are no crazy clashing colours that dazzle my eye. This doesn't seem too important maybe, but I've been to some sites where the text was unreadable because of violent background colors and clashes.

Y'all chose well, the mag is very tasteful, right down to the cartoon images of the staff here and there.

The tone is very friendly and down-to-earth, very Southern. Being a displaced Yankee, Southern is a little foreign to me, so I recognize it when I see it, and the mag "feels" Southern. That's kinda abstract, maybe a bit intangible I know, but these are general impressions.

I especially like the coverage of music, and the perceived openness for bands to submit their stuff for review. That's a class act, in my opinion. What kind of guitar did they give away at the throwing contest? Might have to go next year if it's a Strat!

Keep on talking up the older blues musicians! They are getting up there and people NEED to know about them, even if they don't KNOW they need to know! Everything else seemed really relevant to the tastes and mores etc. of people in the South, at least the cross-section that I'm familiar with.

Take care,  
Brian Spencer  
fangorn@cei.net

Editor:

I accessed your site expecting to find an e-zine illustrating all the South has to offer — past and present, young and old, black and white, conservative, moderate and liberal. I was sorely disappointed.

In the first article I read, I realized your view of the New South is a lottery-funded, planned unit development governed by Ivy League liberals, whom you call "progressives", (sic) You stereotype and hurl epithets at conservative Southern governors — labeling them "Bible-thumping", (sic) "do-nothing," "recalcitrants" — giving away your political leanings. The article refers to civil rights being "set back by Reaganism," when in fact the rise of the Black middle class was a hallmark achievement of the Reagan Era.

You play up the fact that that in South Carolina, liberal Democrat Governor Jim Hodges defeated conservative Republican David Beasley by championing a state lottery. You conveniently failed to mention that the hottest issue in that race was that "progressive" Hodges pledged to keep the Rebel flag flying atop the state capitol but "Bible thumping" Beasley campaigned to remove it for the sake of racial harmony.

You have an obvious agenda for the South, and all the kudzu from Richmond to Birmingham won't cover up the fact that The Southerner's view of the South is Boston baked beans under a thin veneer of barbecue sauce.

Sincerely,  
Will Haynie  
Editorial columnist for the Asheville  
(N.C.) Citizen-Times and the  
Hendersonville (N.C.) Times-News  
whaynie@ioa.com

# A Reprieve for the Okefenokee Swamp?

By David R. Osier

Cynthia Loftin was walking through the tangle of lily pads and bladderworts in the warm, shallow water that covers the peat bog of Chesser Prairie on the eastern side of the Okefenokee Swamp one August day, about three years ago, when she suddenly encountered a spring. Loftin was a Ph.D. candidate in wildlife biology at the University of Florida at the time; she was studying the surface hydrology of the swamp under contract to the Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge.

Loftin recalls: “The water was about 95 degrees and I hit this patch that was about 70 degrees. It was about 10 feet in diameter and my assumption is that it was water coming from underneath [the peat].”

The key word here is “assumption,” because no one really knows exactly how the Okefenokee’s underground plumbing works. A sure way to find out would be to dredge a 50-foot deep titanium strip mine for 50 years along Trail Ridge, the ancient barrier island that impounds the swamp’s eastern edge. By then, of course, it might be too late. Yet this was exactly what E.I. DuPont de Nemours & Co., the chemical giant, proposed to do when it began assembling parcels and mineral rights on Trail Ridge in 1991. And despite the fact that the company knew as much as anybody else about the swamp’s hydrogeology æ which is to say, very little—it insisted the mine would have no impact on the



PHOTO/DAVID R. OSIER

Minnies Lake on the Suwannee River in the western swamp, a favorite with canoeists.

Okefenokee’s natural functions, or at least no “significant” impact.

It was probably inevitable that such corporate arrogance would provoke an environmental war, which is exactly what happened. But environmental wars seldom turn out the way this one did, and although the settlement essentially came down to a buyout of DuPont’s mining interests that may take years to complete, the company says it is prepared to be patient. Does this mean the Okefenokee is safe again? Only time will tell. It is safe to say that DuPont’s attitude has evolved considerably. It still thinks it could have strip-mined Trail Ridge without harming the swamp, but the company clearly is proud to have led the settlement process, so much so that it is touting the attributes of collaboration over confrontation. As DuPont spokesman Rick Straitman told me in November, “We believe it will serve as a model



for the solution of future environmental disputes.”

The first time I saw the Okefenokee was from the air. It was the summer of 1990, at the height of a prolonged drought. Fires were breaking out in remote areas, and I had hitched a ride on a fire patrol helicopter leased by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service.

As we lifted off to roughly 600 feet, arrayed before me was a vast muted watercolor of blues and greens and reddish-browns stretching across southeast Georgia from horizon to horizon. Then, as we glided across a monotonous blur of cypress heads, alligator holes and aquatic prairies, I began to feel mesmerized, as if I were suspended in time. There was nothing here, save the swamp itself, so big I could not see where it ended. No houses. No bridges. No roads. No electric lines. Not even jeep trails so common elsewhere in the flatwoods of the region.

The Okefenokee embraces 730 square miles, roughly the size as Los Angeles, the largest freshwater wetlands in the contiguous 48 states. Most of it (85 percent) is the refuge, the largest on the Eastern Seaboard. It is the source of two untamed rivers, the Suwannee and the Saint Mary's, creating a continuous wetlands system that separates the peninsula of Florida from North America.

It is so wild no one has explored it all, except from the air. Most of it has never been

surveyed, though it has been 500 years since the European occupation of the Eastern Seaboard.

It harbors a rich diversity of flora and fauna, from rare insect-eating pitcher plants, delicate swamp iris, water lilies, cypress and live oaks to great blue herons, osprey, anhingas, sandhill cranes, great egrets, white ibises, red-tailed hawks, barred owls, water moccasins, river otters and bobcats. It is among the last sanctuaries of even more precious species, among them the black bear, gopher tortoise, indigo snake, red-cockaded woodpecker, wood stork and bald eagle. Perhaps its most famous denizen is the alligator; once-endangered, it now flourishes.

This is the Okefenokee's power, and more amazing when you realize that within 40 miles are one million people along the Atlantic coast from Brunswick, Ga. to Jacksonville, Fla. No other wetland wilderness in North America that is so big, and remains so intact, is so close to such a large

human population.

The fact the Okefenokee exists at all, in its present condition, is one of the great ironies in our nation's history of environmental protection. Timber companies took less than 40 years, from the late 1890s to the mid-1930s, to rob the Okefenokee of its thousand-year-old cypress and virgin pine. By 1937 an estimated 93 percent of the



Photo/David R. Osier

Blackjack Lake is in the southern swamp. Almost no one sees it except from the air. The area is closed to the public. In fact, only about 20 percent of the refuge is open to the public.

aboriginal forests were gone, and the Okefenokee's owners were more than happy to take the government's offer of \$460,000 for what was largely a denuded landscape of stumps and logging debris.

The rapacity with which the loggers exploited the Okefenokee evokes a compelling analogy to what is taking place today in the rain forests of South America and Asia. We cannot yet know the full impact of the eradication of the world's rain forests; scientists do tell us the destruction is likely permanent. The Okefenokee, at least, is still here. A precious few stands of towering, millennial cypress in remote areas escaped the crosscut saws, and the rest appears to be recovering so well only knowledgeable eyes can spot the scars. The Okefenokee is rare in this regard among such wild places altered by man. The resiliency of nature is a powerful force, and the Okefenokee offers further confirmation. Indeed, it is part of the allure for the thousands of canoeists and day visitors who come here every year seeking the solitude that is getting more difficult to find in a world of dwindling wilderness.

Trail Ridge, averaging 30 feet higher than the swamp basin, lies just beyond the refuge's boundary (there are no fences), but scientists consider it part of the swamp's ecosystem; bears, for example, range freely between the swamp and the ridge looking for food. There is considerable anecdotal evidence that some kind of "groundwater exchange," as Loftin puts it, takes place between the sandy pine ridge and the wetlands, but nobody knows that for sure. The ridge is a relict barrier island, formed 250,000 years ago when the coast was 30 to 70 miles farther inland during a succession of the Pleistocene ice ages. It runs from around Stark, Fla., to Jesup, Ga., with occasional breaches by the Satilla and Saint Mary's rivers. In other words, it is an ancient beach. Its components are the same as the sandy shores of the Golden Isles, which is to say, the ancient peaks of the Appalachian Mountains, eroded by wind and rain, washed

to the Atlantic by mighty rivers, and returned by waves and tides. It is rich not just in titanium, but also zircon (used in metallurgy) and staurolite (used in sand blasting).

Titanium mixed with oxygen makes titanium dioxide, a white pigment used in everything from paint and suntan lotion to the white letters on M&Ms candy, toothpaste and Oreo cookies. DuPont is a world leader in titanium dioxide production, and mines ore at two other sites on Trail Ridge in northeast Florida, one near Lawtey, the other near Maxville. The Lawtey mine is 50 years old and is expected to be played out around 2006; the Maxville site started in 1993 but is expected to be depleted by 2014. DuPont officials said the Okefenokee site contains the most valuable body of ore the company has found in North America. They have yet to reveal its estimated value for competitive reasons, saying only that they invested "millions of dollars" in the site.

The Okefenokee basin essentially is a giant bowl of clay perched atop the limestone aquifer 120 feet above sea level behind Trail Ridge, which is only 30 feet higher. Scientists can't agree on how this depression formed. They do know that 20,000 years ago it didn't exist. It may have been an estuary of several rivers, much like the salt marshes on today's coast. Or it could have been a saltwater lagoon left by the receding ocean at the beginning of the current Holocene epoch.

Peat began accumulating about 7,000 years ago, gathering dead plants, coalescing, evolving, building, until a layer had formed four to eight feet deep, and in places 20 feet. Peat is everything to the Okefenokee. It is what gives the water its tea-stained hue, from the tannin yielded by the decomposing verdure, only apparently black on the surface, an illusion of perspective. And it is the peat bog prairies that give us the Okefenokee's legendary name, bestowed by the Creeks, who were here when surveyor Samuel Savery recorded it on a map in the 1760s. The word is a corruption of *ikan-finoka*, or *yakni*



*finoke*, meaning “quivering earth.” And if you have the rare fortune to walk on one of these bogs of legend, you will find that the earth does indeed quiver, a bit like fruit gelatin quivers in a bowl.

It is actually more a lake than a swamp, which connotes a dank, stagnant place. The Okefenokee is never that. Its water is always moving, imperceptibly, toward two great rivers, the well-sung Suwannee in its northern reaches heading to the Gulf of Mexico, the St. Mary’s in the south. So dearly does the Okefenokee hold its hydrological secrets that no one has yet located the watershed, even with Landsat images. I have seen places where water appears to flow toward both rivers at once.

The Okefenokee gets most of its water from rain, about 70 percent, according to bio-hydrologist Cynthia Loftin. Scientists know most of the remainder comes from small streams, or “branches,” all around the swamp, including Trail Ridge, but largely in the northwestern corner. Standard thinking is the swamp’s clay bowl is watertight. But, as Loftin may have discovered during her walk through Chesser Prairie, some water must come from springs. Explorers also found springs in Honey Island Prairie and Blackjack Lake. I have visited one spring on Floyd’s Island deep in the interior. The refuge’s first manager, John Hopkins (who surveyed the swamp for the Hebard Lumber Co. back in 1910 or so), reported finding “many springs” that “keep the water sweet and healthy.” How many? Who knows? In the northeastern corner, adjacent to Trail Ridge, Loftin found water levels remain higher even during drought. Is

the area fed by springs? “Nobody knows,” she said. Her study looked only at surface water.

The question then becomes whether the springs are connected somehow to the surrounding uplands, including Trail Ridge, where they would be recharged through the sandy soil to the limestone aquifer deep below, or to so-called hardpan layers of clay that channel the water into the swamp. One study by a doctoral candidate at the University

of Georgia, Keun Bai Yu, suggested in 1986 that “groundwater beneath the swamp and beneath the uplands is connected to the swamp water body through the peat . . .” We know there are springs on Trail Ridge. When the Suwannee Canal Co. attempted to drain the swamp a century ago, workers digging into the ridge encountered springs at 32 feet, which forced additional expense and contributed to the enterprise’s ultimate demise. Even DuPont’s Jon Samborski admitted: “Certainly Trail Ridge has

some kind of contribution to the water budget of the Okefenokee.” But in the company’s view, it’s insignificant.

Trail Ridge consists of highly stratified soil that has been compared to a parfait. Among the layers are hardpans of clay. Sidney Bacchus, who conducted doctoral research in ecology at UGA, was quoted in *The Okefenokee Swamp*, a commemorative magazine published by the Georgia Wildlife Federation, as saying that when surface water seeps into Trail Ridge and hits the hardpans, it slows down, and instead of percolating to the Floridan Aquifer, it flows laterally into the swamp. DuPont’s mine would have cut deep into the hardpan and mixed it with other types of soil, after which the land would be



Photo/ *The Wilderness Society*  
An egret fishes the Okefenokee.

replanted in pines. “DuPont will be able to regain the approximate contours of what was there before,” Bacchus told writer Pamela Holliday, “but they will have homogenized the clay layers, they won’t exist anymore. We don’t know how long it will take to reform the clay.”

It is easy to understand what was at stake for both sides in the mining dispute. I first learned of DuPont’s mining plans in August 1993 when a friend in Folkston called, agitated about a rumor he’d just heard. The refuge’s eastern entrance is 9 miles south of Folkston, and for many of its visitors, the town of 2,500 residents is a jumping-off point. Tourism is one of only two industries in Folkston and Charlton County worth mentioning—the other is timber—and my friend, whose business caters to eco-tourists, was concerned that a strip mine so close to the refuge would hurt his livelihood. I soon learned that DuPont had acquired 16,000 acres of commercial timberland on Trail Ridge adjacent to the refuge from Union Camp Corp. expecting to begin operations in about 10 years.

I reported the essentials for a weekly political newsletter, but no one else took notice until July 1996 when stories began appearing in newspapers around the country and on CNN, publicity generated largely by the Georgia Sierra Club. By then DuPont had leased the mineral rights on another 23,000 acres next to the refuge—for 39,000 acres in all—and had announced plans to begin applying for mining and wetlands permits, with operations to commence in 2002.

As DuPont’s Straitman told me in November, “The DuPont people involved in developing [the] mining proposal underestimated the emotional reaction to the

plan. And once it became public, the company did not anticipate the breadth of organized opposition to it.” Everyone from U.S. Secretary of the Interior Bruce Babbitt and Georgia Gov. Zell Miller to a host of conservation groups and even some DuPont stockholders weighed in on the side of environmental common sense, telling the



*Photo/ The Wilderness Society*

A titanium mine operated by DuPont in Florida.

company, in essence, to get the hell out.

Babbitt was particularly combative. “It is apparent on the face of it that this refuge and this mining project are not compatible,” Babbitt said during a visit to the Okefenokee in April 1997 that made headlines around the world. He warned DuPont it would face “protracted” regulatory and legal battles unless it abandoned the project. Shortly thereafter Babbitt followed up with a letter

to DuPont CEO John Krol expressing the same sentiments.

DuPont could have chosen to duke it out. Instead, it chose diplomacy. Less than a week after Babbitt's visit, the company announced it was "suspending" its mining plans and forming a "collaborative" of "interested stakeholders" to determine whether the mine would harm the Okefenokee. DuPont promised it would abide by the decision of the mediation committee, chaired by an independent "facilitator" picked by the company. The committee eventually included 28 members, a mix of environmentalists, mining and timber operators, canoeists, eco-tour guides, Native American tribal representatives, local government officials and regular folks. Notably absent were federal officials, whose presence might have "sent a false signal regarding the possibility of compromise," as Babbitt put it in 1997. Georgia state officials did not participate for similar reasons.

My initial response, and that of many others, to DuPont's "collaborative" idea was skepticism. As Josh Marks, conservation organizer for the Sierra Club, told me at the time, "I think, from the beginning, the collaborative was a way to shut down public outrage and media attention and they succeeded in part." It may well have been the company's plan to win by attrition what it probably could not win by confrontation, a

consensus for the mine. Indeed, for several months DuPont continued to adhere to the mining option: "We are open to all possible outcomes, which range from mining to no mining," the company's Samborski told me as the collaborative he organized was beginning its work the summer of 1997. If that was the plan, however, it was overcome by events. The war of attrition turned in favor of the opponents in a most interesting way.

In February 1999, after more than 18 months of meetings, marked initially by mistrust, testiness and some vitriol but ultimately mutual understanding, DuPont signed an agreement with the collaborative in which it promised to abandon its mining plans and retire the mineral rights in return for unspecified compensation. The agreement also commits the collaborative committee and DuPont to help compensate the local area for revenues and other economic benefits it would have realized from the mining operation.

At one point DuPont predicted the mine would have created 85 local jobs, and another 50 people would have been transferred to the Folkston site when it shut down its Florida operations. The company said that, in all, the operation would have added more than \$20 million a year in payroll, property taxes, goods and services to the local economy. What local folks who depend on tourist traffic for their livelihoods worried about was the specter of giant dredges and suction pumps operating







24 hours a day, possibly visible from the refuge access road, and as many as 400 trucks a week hauling ore down the two-lane highway to the company's Florida processing plant. Tourism adds more than \$55 million to the economies of Charlton, Ware and Clinch counties.

So the local compensation specified by the agreement largely is in the form of tourism development, the centerpiece of which is the creation of the Okefenokee Education and Research Center to be operated by the Georgia Wildlife Federation, a key participant in the collaborative negotiations. DuPont and the committee agreed to help raise funds for the center, and the company guaranteed it would provide matching grants for several other projects, including renovation of the Charlton County courthouse, a number of historic and public buildings, road improvements, and tourism promotion.

Where the money for all this will come from is an open question. At one point the collaborative committee floated a figure of \$90 million for the whole package, but everyone I talked with now agrees that amount is unrealistic.

The arrangement by which the mineral rights on Trail Ridge would be retired is complicated, since DuPont owns only 16,000 acres of the land outright and would have paid royalties to another landowner for mineral

extraction. The issue is further complicated by Interior Secretary Babbitt's view that the mineral rights are virtually worthless because DuPont has no prospect of acquiring the mining permits. So far, Babbitt has resisted including any money in his department's budget request for the buyout.

And, here's an indication of how tough it's going to be to get federal money: U.S. Rep. Saxby Chambliss, the Republican in whose district the Okefenokee is situated, tried to have \$16.7 million inserted in the Interior

Department's budget for next year. The request did not make it through either appropriations committee in Congress for several reasons. For one, it probably lacked support from Babbitt's department. For another, it was made too late in the budget process. And for still another, U.S. Rep. Jack Kingston, the Republican who represents Georgia's 1st District and who sits on the House Appropriations Committee, is philosophically opposed to acquiring more federal land.

The money would have come from the Land and Water Conservation Trust Fund that is endowed by royalties from federal oil and gas leases. The appropriation would have gone toward acquiring 10,000 acres to be added directly to the refuge and restored for wildlife habitat; those 7,500 acres of DuPont land and 2,500 owned by a local timber company (and long coveted by the refuge managers) had been thrown into the deal to sweeten the pot. The money would have also purchased DuPont's interests in another 8,500 acres. The remaining 23,000 acres of the mining tract are subject to appraisal to determine the value of DuPont's mineral rights, and royalties DuPont would have paid to the local timber company.

Until the land issues are settled, the focus of everyone's attention is the Okefenokee Education and Research Center, the plans for

which were revealed in November at perhaps the final meeting of the collaborative. The OERC will be housed in three historic school buildings in downtown Folkston that will be renovated into laboratories, classrooms, a scientific research station and a natural history museum. The center has attracted strong support among several local Georgia legislators and hopes are high for a \$5 million appropriation from the Georgia General Assembly next year to get it started.

"That's probably going to happen," said Roger Wangsness, president of the local chamber of commerce who runs a bed & breakfast inn in Folkston. "The local community felt like it was a turning point. We feel very good about it."

Clearly the center represents the most visible outcome so far in DuPont's campaign to redeem itself in the eyes of the local and larger environmental communities. "We believe that the OERC will be the key enduring legacy of this process and we're working to support its establishment," said DuPont's Straitman, who was in Folkston for the unveiling. It should be noted, however, that

despite DuPont's enthusiasm, it has not yet offered any money to get it started.

The overriding question, of course, is whether DuPont will keep its promise to abandon its mining plans, considering that it might take years to receive compensation.

"We believe that DuPont negotiated in good faith and have no reason to believe that they would back out," said Jim Waltman, director of refuges and wildlife for The Wilderness Society in Washington.

"DuPont has said it is willing to work real hard to make the no-mine agreement work, and I'm willing to take them at their word," said Sam Collier, regional representative of the Sierra Club.

And what does DuPont say? "We understand that the funding process will be a lengthy one, and we're prepared to be patient," Straitman told me. "We have stated publicly – many times – that mining by DuPont is 'off the table.' However, we have an obligation to our owners, that is, our stockholders, to do our best to obtain fair compensation for our investment."

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# Flag-Waving in the Palmetto State

By Barry L. Paschal

When the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People began threatening an economic boycott of South Carolina because of the Confederate Battle Flag flying over the Statehouse in Columbia, tourism officials began to worry.

After all, the biggest industry in the Palmetto State is tourism. And even though the NAACP hasn't actually voted for the boycott, and in any case didn't intend for it to begin in January, three dozen organizations have already pulled their conventions and meetings from the state.

But while tourism boosters are frantic, the boycott has begun to pick up support from an unexpected quarter: white supporters of the flag who scarcely conceal their glee at the prospect of fewer African-Americans visiting South Carolina.

History minded Confederate flag boosters continue to fight those who characterize the banner as a symbol of racism and slavery. But some of the people on their team are turning out to be their own worst enemies, undermining the claim that the flag flies in South Carolina out of reverence for the state's Southern heritage.

The fight to focus on heritage, not hate, hit a low point at an Oct. 9 rally at the Statehouse, under the shadow of the only Confederate flag flying over a state Capitol. There, former Ku Klux Klan Grand Wizard and Populist Party presidential candidate David Duke promised to bring his family to

South Carolina for a vacation in support of the flag if the NAACP moves ahead with its threat.

"And I am telling the NAACP that if they do not give up this fight, I am going to move to South Carolina because I love the people here," Duke thundered to scattered and sometimes tentative and uncomfortable applause.

Duke's rhetoric was tame, though, compared to that of some other participants in the 300-strong rally. "They are trying to destroy our heritage and culture," said A.J. Barker, North Carolina state chairman of the Council of Conservative Citizens, referring to black opponents of the battle flag. "They are the enemies of God and the enemies of our race, supported by people with baggy pants and earrings in the eyes and noses and other places like in the heart of Africa."

That sentiment was echoed by Robert Clarkson of Sumter, S.C., who claimed the NAACP boycott has "cut down on shoplifting."

The Council of Conservative Citizens—called a "hate group" by the Southern Poverty Law Center—plans another rally for November, but could find fewer people willing to stand and cheer for "Dixie." Many of the participants at the October rally which had been expected to draw more than 1,000 spectators backed away and quietly left as Duke began to speak.

Though other CCC members had opposed





Duke's appearance, he was nonetheless brought in by a Charleston board member. "David has some good ideas, but he is identified with the Klan," said CCC Chairwoman Frances Bell. "That's not the message we hoped to send."

The NAACP voted later in October to proceed with the tourism boycott. Already, the NAACP says, 42 state and national organizations have canceled meetings or

conventions in South Carolina.

South Carolina Gov. Jim Hodges, a Democrat who said while campaigning in 1998 that he wouldn't try to remove the Confederate flag from the Statehouse but would instead agree to a "compromise" if passed by the Legislature, is conducting a series of private meetings with lawmakers, business leaders and university officials to discuss the flag and the tourism boycott.

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# Virtual Short Stories

The Southerner announces the Virtual Short Story Competition. This is a unique tale that will be crafted from the approved weekly short fiction additions of worldwide contributors.

The storyline will be established with an initial 500-word installment. Thereafter, each 7-day period (Monday - Sunday) will be open to submissions for the following 500 word installments. Installments should try to adhere to style, yet develop the storyline and characters in striking ways. The goal should be to craft the most superb story possible. All installments will be judged and approved by the staff.

Each week, the winning installment will be posted on Monday to allow development of the overall story, provided a submission worthy of publication is chosen. If not, the contest will continue the next week and the deadline will be moved back a week. At the end of the contest, the 10th week in which an acceptable entry is chosen, submissions will cease and a final "wrap" installment will be posted to end the story.

The completed virtual short story will be posted in the winter issue of The Southerner and published in a special limited edition (both print chapbook and CD e-form) by Mind Fire Press. Each winning contributor will receive a copy of this edition. There is no monetary award or compensation for this contest. The Southerner retains all rights to the completed text, though the contributors

will be permanently and individually listed in conjunction with the story.

Rules:

1) The competition will run ten (10) weeks or until the judges believe the story is ready for completion.

2) The competition is open to anyone, anywhere.

3) Submissions should be of 500 words or less. One submission per contributor per week.

4) Submissions should be made by electronic mail to [mail@southerner.net](mailto:mail@southerner.net). Include the words Elvis Lives in the subject line in all caps, like this: ELVIS LIVES.

5) Submissions will be judged by staff members solely for quality and coherence of storyline.

6) One winning submission will be chosen and posted each week that an acceptable entry is chosen. This piece then becomes the official continuation of the story. No exceptions will be made.

7) The weekly period of submission ends each Sunday night at midnight. Chosen installments will be posted each Monday to begin the new week, when an acceptable entry is chosen.

8) Submissions will be closed when the story reaches approximately 5,000 words and an acceptable climax is written. The contest is complete and the final completed text of the story will be published in the following issue of The Southerner.

*Please contact Editor In Chief Glynn Wilson [mail@southerner.net](mailto:mail@southerner.net) with any questions or comments.*

*To submit your 500-word contribution, just type it up and e-mail it to [mail@southerner.net](mailto:mail@southerner.net). Please include the words Elvis Lives in the subject line in all caps, like this: ELVIS LIVES. The first deadline is Sunday, Nov. 28 at midnight.*

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## Fiction

# Thank You, Thank You Very Much

By Thomas Fortenberry  
and Glynn Wilson

When the story broke, the news jackals descended on Elmore Reddy's house in Hollywood, Mississippi, like flies on blackberry cobbler at a church picnic. This story had everything: High science, raw spirituality, soul shock, kooky humor, stomach-churning fright, and just plain old wow. It shook up a great many people around the world, but at least it accomplished one thing for sure. It answered the age-old question: Are we alone?

After all these years of searching, it turns out we aren't.

Reddy was shown on CNN and quoted on the front page of every newspaper in the civilized world as saying, "Wouldn't you know it. The first message from outer space comes from a dead white man with a black man's voice wearing a satin jumpsuit. Long live the King."

Now Elmore was something of a local legend. As a computer hacker who had been busted for breaking into the FBI's Top Secret files on UFO's and electromagnetic pulse radiation, his mugshot was plastered on the front pages of newspapers around the country, causing him to become something of a recluse about the time the Internet got fast enough for half the country to get online.

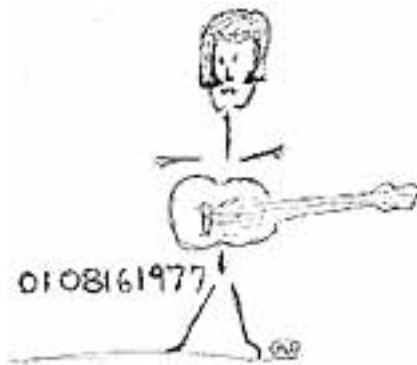
Elmore's father, D.B. Reddy, had spent his life studying the stars, "looking at heaven" he always claimed, and tinkering with electronic devices. The neighbors considered him eccentric for his crackpot inventions until one day the editor of the local Clarion Call heralded him as "Mississippi's Einstein." Elmore was not an athletic child, or musically inclined, so he took up the science habit at an early age. He was one of the first to sign up for the SETI@home program, where you

download software from the University of California at Berkley to search for Extraterrestrial Intelligence. He had logged more CPU time analyzing data than anyone save the SETI@sun team and the Luke Mester, searching for a whistle in the hiss, down there on the electromagnetic spectrum in what scientists call the "water hole," a quiet region of the spectrum off

limits to commercial broadcasters.

Late last spring in the basement of their plain brick house in Hollywood he used as a lab, Elmore finally perfected an apparatus his dad had been working on since the Pentagon boys killed Kennedy. This device could distinguish ultra-EM emissions from the cosmic background noise, which was something of a miracle. It was so faint as to be almost impossible to pick up. It moved so fast — faster than light, like a quantum Zen koan — that no one else had even believed him when he first published it.

But it was true and he'd built the technology to finally prove his dad's theory correct, allowing him to narrow in on a source of noise in the direction of Alpha Centauri, the nearest star to earth, and to interpret what other scientists could only get in modulated code. The first message came in the form of a





picture, which showed what looked like a stick man playing a guitar. Then a series of dates showed up in the parity bits: 0 1 0 1 0 8 1 9 3 5 0 1 0 1 0 8 1 6 1 9 7 7 0 1 0 1. It'd taken him the whole summer to crack just the initial sequences.

Then came the real shocker. There in the scrubby north Mississippi uplands just down the river from Memphis where Rock 'n' Roll was born, in that concrete-brick basement scattered with computers dating back to the

first Atari's, the first communiqué from beyond this world had warbled out of Elmore's tweeter-cracking, woofer-fuzzing hardwood cabinet Altec Lansings. It was startling, unnerving. And he'd literally heard it all before.

The day the world changed Elmore Reddy heard Elvis Presley in concert, finish singing a song and mumble, "Thank you. Thank you very much," to heart-felt, all too human applause.

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## Two Talks: *Many Moons of Weeping*

An excerpt from *Tehano*, a novel by Allen Wier, Chapter XVI

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In the *tipi* of *Murawa*, Crooked Nose, there was little buffalo meat left, but these were green grass days, so *Waha Tekwari*, Two Talks, and his family ate their fill anyway. The *tipi* was hung with pouches of fresh-picked berries; in a horn bowl of water floated onions from the river's edge. A small herd of buffalo had been spotted just one sun's ride from this large camp where Two Talks, his family and other, former, *Pehnahterkuhs*, Honey Eaters, now lived with their new *Kwahadi*, Antelope, brothers in a large camp beside a water with no name that ran down from *Ekahohtipahi Hunubi*, Water Colored by Clay, that the

*Tehanos* called Red River, a hard sun's ride away. In the yellow grass days to come, huge herds of buffalo, heavy with fat and thick fur for the winter, would darken the grass for as far as Two Talks could see, and the band would have good hunting. Perhaps this year, when the yellow grass days came, Two Talks would kill a buffalo by himself. But, now, the down was on the cottonwoods; this was the time to ride the war trail, and his father had just returned from a raid on the *tabebo*, the



blue-bottomed soldiers—the first time any of the former *Pehnahterkuhs* had ridden with the warriors of this Antelope band.

Crooked Nose's *tipi*—near the brush arbor lodge of the *Kwahadi* warrior, Sure Enough Hungry—was surrounded by more *Nimi* lodges than Two Talks had ever seen in one encampment. Having lived so long in a small *Pehnahterkuh* band, Two Talks had never before felt the sense of power and well-being that came from being part of such a

large camp. His breath swelled his chest and tightened his throat. He was *Kwahadi* now. Tonight, it was his turn to join other boys his age watching the band's herd of over 90-tens of ponies, more than 900 horses, including *waha-eh-sa'-im-en eh sik-way-wiya*, two-tens with a half roped to them, 25, of the big *tabebo* horses without spots that the antelope raiding party, including *his* father, had stolen from the blue-bottoms. Surely this was the mightiest of all *Nimi* bands.

The raiding party had been small, only five braves: Sure Enough Hungry and Crooked Nose; Long Teeth, a short-tempered man always ready for a fight and strong as a bear; Smoke Hair, whose hair had been gray since childhood, who was the best tracker in the band; and Ten Buffalo, who had taken the medicine bag from his father, Corn Eater, and joined the *Kwahadi* when Corn Eater went on the reservation. Their women had stayed behind to gather berries while they were ripe. The raiders had left eight sleeps ago, late in the night, after fires and dancing but before Father in Heaven shone down on them. They had returned just the day before with the blue-bottom horses, and the entire band had celebrated, honoring Sure Enough Hungry and his fellow warriors with roasted buffalo and story-telling and dancing long into the night. All day, Two Talks had been tired, a good-feeling tiredness, from the late-night fun. The Cherokee girl, Small Nose, had slipped from her father's *tipi* and crawled beneath Two Talk's robe in the brush arbor, where he now slept by himself. She had thrashed and bucked against him until Father in Heaven had reddened the sky. Soon Two Talks would seek his special totem and become a warrior and capture enough ponies to purchase Small Nose or a *Nimi* girl to be his wife and sew buffalo hides or cut willow limbs for Two Talks' own *kahni* or lodge. He would sit in that *tipi* and recount his own victories on the warpath. This evening, in his father's *tipi*, he listened with hungry pride to his father's words.

"We rode south like a strong wind," Crooked Nose said. He puffed his cheeks and blew out, making the lonely, whine song of wind. Embers in the small fire in the center of the floor glowed red with Crooked Nose's howling breath. He grabbed the green stalk of a wild onion from the horn bowl and flipped the wet, pale bulb onto the coals. Drops of water hissed in the ashes and pale green smoke filled the *tipi* with sweet onion-singe that stung Two Talks' eyes. His father chomped down on the browned onion and continued his tale while he chewed. "First sun, Smoke Hair found a live trail of many *tabebo* horses. Sure Enough Hungry had good *puha* and a warrior's eye," he said.

Sure Enough Hungry, a civil chief of the Antelope band, was the warrior who had proposed the raid. Not only had his *puha* been strong and the raid successful, he had also been generous, dividing the stolen horses among the other raiders and keeping none for himself. Crooked Nose had been given *nabaeh-te'*, six new horses. Now Crooked Nose's own herd numbered over 100. Two Talks thought his father was now a rich man.

Crooked Nose's eyes glowed red like the fire coals. He raised his fist as if gripping his bow, and he said, "The second day of our ride Long Teeth killed a young buffalo with a single arrow from many steps away. I have seen few finer bow shots."

"Perhaps coyote had chased the young bull away from his herd in order to give you fresh meat," Grandfather Red Dog said. The old man leaned back and got a deerskin pouch, opened it and offered his son and grandson spicewood leaves. They both shook their heads. Crooked Nose waited to resume his story while Red Dog dug around in the pouch for the leaves he wanted. Two Talks watched his grandfather, listening for anything further he had to say about the appearance of the lone buffalo in Crooked Nose's recitation. Red Dog's arms moved, his elbows up like wings, bringing brown pinches of leaves to his lips, and his shadow arms flew like Nighthawks,

crisscrossing the glowing coals of the fire. In the red fireglow, the old warrior's tattooed scars shone like the blades of steel knives. He grinned and nodded for Crooked Nose to continue. Specks of leaf blackened Grandfather Red Dog's shining teeth, and inside the *tipi* woodsmoke wafted sweetpepper scent that tickled Two Talks' nose.

"We drank the buffalo calf's blood but left the heart inside the ribs to honor Coyote," Crooked Nose said. "That night Coyote's pups tore at the carcass and yipped their thanks to us. I knew Sure Enough Hungry's *puha* was strong for this raid. We crossed the River Colored by Clay, and followed the red water toward the rising red sun."

Crooked Nose stopped talking long enough to chew the rest of the onion, green stalks disappearing into his mouth. Two Talks made a frowning face. Grandfather Red Dog chuckled. Two Talks did not like the bittersweet, fire-blackened onions. His father loved them as much as his grandfather loved the shredded spicewood leaves. Prairie Star kept green onions in the *tipi* whenever she or Persimmon could find them, but both wives teased their husband about his craving for the burnt taste.

"We rode all the way to the Blue Water River, *Evivit Paa Pia Hunubi*, that the Mexicans call, in their talk, *Brazos de Dios*, Arms of Our Father in Heaven," Crooked Nose said. "On the other side of the Blue Water we made camp with no fire and waited. When Our Father in Heaven rose to light our way, we walked our ponies up a hill near enough to the *tabebos*' Fort Belknap to see cooking smokes rise. A short ride beyond, smokes rose from their Camp Cooper."

Two Talks remembered his trip, many suns ago, to Camp Cooper with Grandfather Red Dog, both of them on the back of White Rump, who had carried Two Talks to victory over the big black stallion the blue bottoms had mistreated so. Thinking of the black and of the Cherokee girl, Small Nose, they'd won

that day in the horse race, Two Talks smiled at his grandfather, but Red Dog stared into the fire coals.

"I had ridden my strong, slow pony, Red Ears, the day before, resting Sugar for the raid," Crooked Nose said. "I think Sugar smelled the blue bottoms. She trembled so, I almost wrapped her head. I whispered into her ear that she must be calm and save her strength for our attack. Then she grew as still as a boulder on the hillside."

"After White Rump, Sugar is the fastest horse I know," Grandfather said.

Two Talks had an urge to go find White Rump and hold the horse's big, boney, one-eared head in his arms and stare down into the always-looking-up eye of the horse and thank him again for being the fastest ugly horse that ever lived, thank him for running so fast that now-gone day when Two Talks had won Small Nose from the *tabebo* soldiers.

Small Nose was outside with Prairie Star at the cook fire. Crooked Nose had said he would sell the girl soon, unless a warrior left horses at their *tipi* for her. Listening to his father recount his adventures, Two Talks ached for the time when he might seek his own vision and prove himself on the war trail. He determined to seek Red Dog's counsel. His grandfather would help Two Talks choose the moon he would walk under when he went on his vision quest. If he could become a warrior soon enough, he could capture horses of his own to tie at his father's *tipi* to ask for Small Nose as his bride.

"The blue bottoms rode out of their Fort Belknap as small-looking as ants in a line as long as *cuuna wobi-puc*, the fire-wagon-horse, the *tabebo* call Locomotive," Crooked Nose said. "Sure Enough Hungry has one of the looking reeds of the *tabebo*. It stretches to the length of an arrow and lets you look through it for as far as an arrow flies. He seized it many winters ago, counting coup on a long knife chief during a big battle."

But how, Two Talks wondered, could he possibly find his medicine and ride a war trail



and win ponies of his own, all before some other brave chose Small Nose? It seemed impossible, but if he had strong enough medicine all things were possible. Grandfather Red Dog had always told Two Talks that he'd been brought to their *tipi* by Brother Coyote himself. But when Two Talks asked Grandfather if that meant Coyote was to be his totem, the crafty, old warrior said that only Two Talks could find the answer to that question.

"When Sure Enough Hungry's looking reed touched my eye, the ants grew men's faces and appeared as close to me," Crooked Nose reached and touched, first, Red Dog, then, Two Talks, "as you are now, my father, and you, my son." Red Dog shook his head at the wonder of the looking reed. "These were the eyes of one that Sure Enough Hungry named as the *tabebo* chief, the Major Van Dorn."

"My ears do not know this blue-bottom name," Red Dog said.

"Sure Enough Hungry says the Major Van Dorn was sent from the white man's Great Father in Washington Land to kill all the *Nimi* he can see. His eyes in the looking reed blinked like *Mupitz*, Owl, when he looks beneath the moon for his prey. The eyes of this new blue bottom have the hungry look of *Mupitz* when he has not fed well."

The back of Two Talks' neck tightened. His father and grandfather and other braves in the band usually laughed about the long knives as warriors: how they formed lines when they fought—lines of blue that made easy arrow targets—how big and slow their horses were, how they carried no shields. This was different, to name a blue bottom as strong as *Mupitz*, a deadly night hunter. Could it be that the white Father in Washington Land was sending a different kind of blue bottom to fight for him? Could there be any blue bottoms as brave and as cunning and as strong as a *Nimi* warrior?

"All morning we hid ourselves in a grove of trees, made ourselves disappear as *Cuyoni*,

Turkey, does in a thicket," Crooked Nose said. "All morning, Sugar stood still and did not speak to the blue-bottom horses. The *tabebo* went by so close we could have each killed ten sticks of them with our arrows. The Major Van Dorn rode a big, red mare with white leggings above her front hooves. Blue-bottom braves at the end of the line led a herd of fresh mounts, and some drove wagons heavy with the corn they feed their horses."

"Why do they drag wagons of corn where Our Father in Heaven makes good grass grow for all ponies?" Two Talks asked.

"The blue-bottoms are sent from the *tabebos'* Great Father in Washington Land. Maybe there is no grass there, so their horses do not know how good it is?" Crooked Nose said.

Red Dog laughed his growling, frowning, head-shaking laugh that meant he was amazed by the foolishness of the blue bottoms in battle. Grandfather's laugh made Two Talks feel better, made him bold to speak again. "*Nimi* ponies are smart, that they do not tell the *tabebo* horses where to graze and find the sweetest-tasting grass," he said.

Red Dog laughed again. He said, "If the big *tabebo* horses knew our ponies' secrets, they would surely crop all the grass and leave it to dry up and blow away, as the *tabebo* hunters kill the buffalo for his robe and leave his sweet meat to Raven and Coyote."

"I have no respect for the blue-bottom band," Crooked Nose said. "I told Sure Enough Hungry that we should never let them cross our land. I wanted to send my arrow through one owl-eye of the chief Major Van Dorn, but Ten Buffalo said that Sure Enough Hungry's *puha* was strong against the *Tehanos*, not the blue bottoms. Sure Enough Hungry said he was grateful for the words of Ten Buffalo who carried the medicine bag. Sure Enough Hungry said that the words of Ten Buffalo were as weighty as a stone in your hand, as clear as the rings of water made when you drop the stone in a pool. Sure Enough Hungry said that this line of blue bottoms was

as endless as a line of ants at a buffalo kill, and he said the only *tabebo* chief the *Nimi* had to fear was the war chief, Captain Ford, and his warriors, those the *Tehanos*, Texans, call Rangers. These *Tehano* Rangers can ride fast and long, can move invisible, and fight almost as well as *Nimi* braves.”

Grandfather Red Dog nodded. “They are not so foolish as the blue bottoms who show themselves and move together in slow lines, as *Wiya-papi*, Rope Heads, our Kiowa friends do when they dance before their *taiime* dolls of stone.”

Two Talks shook his head. “Don’t the blue bottoms know the difference between a dance and a fight? How do they ever win a battle?”

“To have enough blue bottoms to send so many,” said Grandfather Red Dog, “I think the *tabebos*’ Great Father in Washington Land must make them very quickly. In his haste, I think he forgets to put in them the sense of a warrior. Even without the sense of a warrior, their many numbers help them give the *Nimi* a good battle, sometimes. But we always take many scalps, so there will be very few of these poor warriors to crowd the *Nimi* in the Good Hunting Land.”

Though he did not say so, Two Talks thought that he would never understand the ways of the white man’s Great Father in Washington Land.

“Sure Enough Hungry led us; without sounds we followed behind the blue-bottoms’ dust,” said Crooked Nose. “We stayed in the cool shadows of the trees. When Our Father in Heaven was high overhead the dust sat down on the trail, and the line of *tabebo* horses crossed the short grass to a small *Tehano* lodge made of the lying down tree trunks. Nearby there was also a horse lodge and pen. The horse lodge was bigger than the *Tehano* lodge. The blue-bottoms took their heavy saddles off their tired horses and put them on their unriden horses. Then they rode across the grass again to the trail, and the dust went with them toward the staked

plain. Only two *Tehanos* lived in the small lodge, and none of the blue bottoms remained behind to help guard the horses.”

Two Talks looked at his grandfather who grinned wide and whistled air through the corners of his mouth where he had no teeth. All three of the men shook their heads and laughed softly.

“I counted *paiste-eh-sa’-im-en*, three tens, 30, of the big horses. Sure Enough Hungry said ‘*paiste-eh-sa’-imen eh paiste*, three tens and three,’ he thought. The *Tehanos* took the best looking horses, *nameuat zeuh-te*, eight- of them, and closed them in the horse lodge for the night. Sure Enough Hungry had us wait until we were sure the *Tehanos* were warm in their sleep. It was an easy thing to open the pen and quietly walk the big horses out. But when we got inside the horse lodge, we found the eight best horses inside eight stalls, each stall with two, heavy lodge poles laid across its opening, each thick pole chained on both ends and held with iron locks. I could not think of a way to jump these horses over the poles. But Sure Enough Hungry grinned and took a *Tehano* rope from the wall. He signaled Ten Buffalo and me to crawl with him into the first stall that held the big mare with the white, front leggings. He ran the rope around all four of the mare’s legs and slowly drew the rope tight. I spoke to the mare that she would not be afraid and whine or whistle. Ten Buffaloes and I held her side and helped her fall soft into the dry grass piled in the stall. On her side she was not too tall to pass beneath the lowest pole, and we dragged her out, leaving the still-chained, still-locked stall empty. Soon we had all eight of these best horses dragged under the chained poles and out of their stalls. They were the fine, strong mounts of the *tabebo* chiefs.”

“What of the sleeping *Tehanos*,” asked Red Dog.

“Long Teeth said we should wake them with our knives. He said four of us could count coup, two first and two second coups,

and then hang their scalps on our poles. But Sure Enough Hungry said that would be foolish vanity. Were two first coups and two scalps worth risking these good horses? 'The *Tehano* lodge,' Sure Enough Hungry said, 'has no windows, only the small openings their guns spit through. And they may have the rifles that speak over and over without reloading.' Long Teeth said Sure Enough Hungry talked like a frightened *Nipanii*, Apache, before the *Nimi* drove them from their dirt farms."

Red Dog shook his head. "Long Teeth fights better than he thinks," he said.

"They say he is stronger and angrier than a bear," Two Talks said. Since joining the antelope band, Two Talks had heard many tales of the temper and the fighting fury of the brave, Long Teeth.

Red Dog said, "I have seen a bear caught in a pit the lowly *Nipanii*, Apaches, dug in the earth and covered with branches. They teased the beast for days, then let their women kill it. A *Tehano* rifle can speak once and fell the largest bear. A warrior is never afraid to die, but he does not choose death when he thinks of a way to fight for many suns to come."

"Long Teeth asked Sure Enough Hungry who was going to stop him from rousing the *Tehan*os and taking their scalps," Crooked Nose said. "Sure Enough Hungry said he was that one. We were still inside the *Tehano* horse lodge and none of us, not even the *tabebo* horses, breathed while Long Teeth

looked long and deep into the eyes of Sure Enough Hungry. I looked, too. There in Sure Enough Hungry's eyes, stretched out in the piled grass between the empty horse stalls, lay Long Teeth's body, his eyes staring back at me. He must have seen himself there, too. He went outside and mounted his pony and

rode away, leaving only four of us still on the raid. We followed Long Teeth's trail back here, driving the blue bottom horses. When we four reached this camp, Sure Enough Hungry cut out *nabaehte*, six, horses and then six more and again two more times until there were four sixes plus *simi*, one. Sure Enough Hungry gave Ten Buffalo, Smoke Hair and me each a string of six horses. He added the one remaining horse to the last string of six, and we thought he was keeping those seven for himself. But he said that while we had all ridden well and been brave, that among us

only Long Teeth had done battle—Long Teeth had fought with himself and won, won for all of us. Then Sure Enough Hungry led the string of seven to Long Teeth's *tipi*."

Crooked Nose stared into the darkening coals. Red Dog nodded silently. Two Talks wanted to hear what Long Teeth had said when Sure Enough Hungry gave him the horses, but Crooked Nose stood and said, "*Subeti*, that is all," and yawned, stretching his arms out and bending back his elbows as a rooster works his wings when crowing.

Prairie Star and Persimmon entered the *tipi* and knelt to the buffalo rugs, smoothing





the bed of Crooked Nose. Red Dog went to his bed on the far side of the *tipi*. After Crooked Nose lay down, Prairie Star and Persimmon and the Cherokee, Small Nose, followed. Prairie Star under the same robe as Crooked Nose, Persimmon next to Prairie Star, so that Prairie Star lay between her husband and his number two wife. Small Nose had a narrow place near the opening into the *tipi*.

Two Talks passed the empty brush arbor he had made for himself just outside the *tipi*. If he were not going to watch the herd this night, he might knot a length of rawhide around Small Nose's ankle so that if he wanted her to warm his bed inside the arbor, he would need only give a tug. Had he not been excited that he was being trusted to watch the horses, he could not have stayed awake after so many hours of singing and dancing and eating and listening to warriors recount raids and battles they had been on. For most of the band, the excitement was over now, and even the camp curs were sleeping.

Two Talks spotted White Rump in the quiet herd and made his way toward the rangy, old horse. White Rump came over to Two Talks, nuzzling the boy's arm, the horse's thick, warm tongue taking in the salt-taste of dried sweat inside Two Talk's elbow. A ridge of limestone rose along one side of the grassy field the herd grazed. Here, on a smooth outcropping, Two Talks settled himself. The old pony stood nearby and switched his tail in the night breeze.

There was no moon and White Rump was a pale shape of light in the darkness, as if a spirit ghost floated beside Two Talks. The steady, low breeze stirred the grass and sent a ripple down the horse's back.

"You beautiful, ugly one," Two Talks said and the horse shook his head, his bright eye a spot of shine hovering in the black air, a star hung low in the heavens.

By the time Two Talks began telling White Rump the third version of how he would prepare for his upcoming vigil to seek

his personal *puha*, a soft gray light was growing in the east. Two Talks pointed out how fortunate he was to have the guidance of Grandfather Red Dog who, as White Rump knew well, had made very strong magic in his day. "I will fast for four suns," Two Talks told White Rump. "I will smoke sumac leaves and pray and even open my flesh that the blood and pain might keep my thoughts focused and my heart pure." As he talked to the aging horse, Two Talks, who had slept little in the past two days, almost felt the waking-sleep feeling Grandfather had described as the part of the vigil that would precede a vision. Two Talks stared at White Rump, whose one good ear rose, like a distant mountain peak, dark against the light that came before Father in Heaven stood up above the edge of the earth. Then White Rump's ear twitched, and Two Talks heard something, too, a bleating that honked lonely, from high, high above—and he looked up for a goose. By the time his heart beat one more time, Two Talks was thinking how the goose cry was not a song of this green grass time. He remembered the one other sound that echoed a goose's call. He put his ear to the rock he leaned against and felt horse weight like thunder inside the ground, and he remembered the flash of gold against the kissing lips of the blue bottom at Camp Cooper when he'd played the mouth-drum the long knives call Bugle.

Two Talks leapt from the rock ledge onto White Rump's warm back, and the pony ran fast as the goose flies. *Tipis* and lodges bobbed up and down rushing toward them, goosecalls now strung together like running water. The *slap* and *clink* of leather and metal echoed all around him, and the *snort* of horsebreath and *whheeze* of blue bottom breath beat warm against his back. The band's huge herd ran with him and from him, all around him ponies scattered like hundreds of brown and tan leaves blowing over the grass and between the *tipis* and lodges. Two Talks' voice caught in his throat, so that his warning came out like the honking war cry of

the Bugle that chased after him. All the *Nimi* were slow to rise from their heavy sleeps of happy exhaustion. Two Talks' voice finally worked. "*Tabebo*," he cried.

Now the camp stirred: Everywhere dogs barked; one dog, run over by a stampeding horse, yelped and yelped. A cookpot clanged over and over, bounced and rolling between horses' hooves. Braves with wild, uncombed hair and no war paint poked out of *tipis* like brown moles from nests in the earth. Now the *tabebo* rifles barked louder than the frenzied dogs. *Nimi* hurried out of every *tipi* and lodge, women carrying and chasing children, men kneeling to notch arrows to bows.

By the time Two Talks reached the *tipi* of his father, Crooked Nose was putting Prairie Star and Persimmon both on the back of a horse he had caught. Two Talks yelled, *yee, yee*, oh no, oh no, and slid down off White Rump. Prairie Star, who had one leg up on the horse where Persimmon sat, dropped back to the ground and ran to meet her son. White Rump did not even completely stop in the second it took for Two Talks to dismount and Prairie Star to pull herself up by the pony's mane. Then White Rump was running, as if he knew he was to get Prairie Star to safety. Crooked Nose slapped the bottom of the other horse and it carried Persimmon off after White Rump. Then Crooked Nose tossed Two Talks a bow and a quiver of arrows.

In front of their *tipi*, Red Dog knelt, arrows coming from his bow as hornets rise from an angry nest. A horse screamed, and Two Talks turned. A *tabebo* horse collapsed and rolled in a dustcloud of its own making, blood running from Red Dog's arrow in the animal's neck. The old warrior hurried over to the blue bottom rider whose leg was caught beneath the writhing horse. Red Dog smashed a rock down on the man's skull and in one motion brought his knife across the man's forehead. "Aiee," Grandfather Red Dog cried as he jerked up on the hair and

peeled back the scalp, hacked it free of the skull with another flash of his knife. One more cut sliced the bucking horse's throat and stilled the beast so that Red Dog might crouch behind him for protection from the *tabebo* bullets that were ripping holes through the hide *tipi* and sinking into cedar lodgepoles and into the dead horse and into the earth itself with the soft, deep sounds of sighs and groans.

Groans and moans rose over the campground and filled every space between the lodges, the way smoke rises over coals and drifts wherever it wants. Now the long knives on their big horses made one wide wall of brown and blue that thundered across the camp. They threw torches everywhere, setting fire to *tipis* and thatched lodges, burning hide bags of dried meat, mesquite flour, fresh berries. Crooked Nose seized the rifle that the dead blue bottom still held, wrestled it from the dead man's grip and fired into the *tabebos*. By the time he emptied the rifle he hit three blue bottoms and two of their horses.

In the midst of dust and smoke and the cries and moans of humans and horses and dogs, Two Talks stood tall and still as a tree. He fitted an arrow to the bow his father had tossed up. Against his fingertips, beeswaxed buffalo ligament drew strength like the long muscle in his leg when he crouched for a jump. He looked down the straight shaft of the arrow. Dust-colored faces of charging *tabebos* stilled, and Two Talks knew he was seeing through the eyes of the arrow Persimmon had made. Mulberry, the shaft was straight and strong, light in air. The deadly arrowhead Persimmon had fashioned from a circle of soft iron that had held the pale image of a *tabebo* woman—a useless thing taken from a Kiowa captive and traded to Prairie Star for a poor deerhide. Persimmon heated the black ring that had held the woman's likeness until the iron glowed red as coals, tempered the metal in stream water, hammered it to a point, heated it again until

she could twist the edges into barbs. With the eyes of his arrow, Two Talks stared at *tabebo* faces—faces with lips and cheeks of fur, faces with red mouths twisted into animal snarls, faces baring teeth of yellow metal, faces with shining pieces like coins but clear as circles of ice fitted over the eyes. Looking through the arrow's searching, iron eyes, Two Talks found the big, watery eyes of *Mupitz*, Owl, staring back—the Owl-eyed chief, the Major Van Dorn from Crooked Nose's story. Two Talks felt the collected anger of tens of sticks of mice and squirrels and rabbits, and he wondered if his *puha* was going to come from the small creatures of the grass, the helpless ones who suffered over and over the talons and teeth of Owl and Hawk and Eagle. Then the waxed, tensed ligament leapt from his fingers and sent flying the arrow that raced so fast and so true that it seemed it sunk itself deep into the shoulder of the Major Van Dorn even before its buzzard feathers brushed Two Talks' fingertips for the last time.

"*Waha Tekwari, Waha Tekwari,*" Small Nose cried. Two Talks was just fitting another arrow to his bow that he might finish the Owl-eyed, long knife chief. Small Nose had never before spoken his name. A blue bottom who had jumped from his horse and grabbed the girl was back in his saddle, pulling Small Nose up with him. Two Talks loosed an arrow at the man's mouth of hair, but with one arm the man jerked Small Nose up in front of himself as if she were a shield. The arrow pierced the girl's throat; her eyes opened wide, but she did not cry out.

Still holding Small Nose, the *tabebo* spurred his horse. From deep in Two Talks' chest a growl began that came out of his throat like the howl of an angry wolf. On foot, he gave chase. The *tabebo* horse chopped sideways, then reared and bolted forward. In that moment of the animal's confusion in the din of yells and rifle reports and hoofbeats, Two Talks caught the horse's dark tail and pulled himself up behind the blue bottom. The man turned in his saddle and thrust Small

Nose between them. Two Talks was so close that the blue bottom could not use his rifle. The horse labored, galloping under the weight of the tree of them. The blue bottom threw his rifle at Two Talks like a club, but Two Talks knocked it away and it bounced off the side of a *tipi*. Two Talks grabbed for the man who thrust Small Nose between them, the arrow bobbing in her neck. Two Talks and the *tabebo* slapped at each other as the three of them bounced along beside the river, beyond the camp. Rifle shots behind them became no more than forest twigs snapping underfoot. The howling of a dog came to Two Talks as Coyote's distant nighttime wail. The moans of men, women and children whirled together as the whine of the plains wind.

Two Talks had never seen eyes that held so much white as this *tabebo's*. The man reached to his waist for a pistol, and let the horse's long reins drop. The ends of the reins hit the ground and bounced up, dropped back; the galloping horse stepped on one end of the reins and jerked its head down into its churning legs. The animal pitched head first into the ground. Thrown forward against the man, Two Talks wrapped his arms around the *tabebo* as a bear squeezes the trunk of a tree it climbs. Hurtling through the air, Two Talks groped for Small Nose, but she was gone. Two Talks landed on top of the man who was slammed hard into the short grass. Two Talks' chest burned, refusing to breathe. The earth trembled like the skin of a struck drum, and he felt like the drum club. When the earth stilled, the tremor moved inside his head and moved every one of his teeth. He seized the *tabebo's* head and lifted it from the grass, one hand gripping the man's chin and the other holding a clump of the hair above his forehead. Two Talks jerked both his hands against one another as if he were throwing a buffalo calf. He felt the give of muscle and then the snap and let loose of bone. Behind the man's neck several long points of bone broke the skin as pale wood pierces bark when a limb splinters; a white knob of bone rose



up from warm, pooling blood. Two Talks sliced the scalp off the front of the blue bottom's head. Two Talks stood, one foot planted in the middle of the man's broad back, and answered Coyote with his own wail of blood fury. The *tabebo's* big boots dug two smooth places in the grass, muscle spasms moving his legs back and forth as if he were trying to walk down into the inside of the earth. The horse, only stunned, had gotten to its feet and was now grazing, its yellow teeth loudly pulling the tough grass loose.

Two Talks ran to Small Nose who lay on her back as if she had stretched out to take a nap. When he knelt to her body, he was surprised to see a large bullet hole in her chest oozing black-looking blood. Her mouth rested in a straight line, her countenance unfrowning. Gray clouds had come to rest in her upward staring eyes. He lifted her and found the smaller hole where the bullet had entered her back. His arrow had gone through the side of her neck. She had landed so that the arrowhead was sunk into the earth. Cradling the back of her head in his palm, he pulled her up into his arms and held her close. Two Talks cut the skin of Small Nose's neck where it held his arrow and lifted the shaft out. With the barbed arrowhead that held the Cherokee girl's blood, he opened the flesh of his right hand. He held his bleeding hand against her neck so that his blood mixed with hers. He gripped the bloody arrow shaft and left his blood with hers there, too. This arrow he would save for a *tabebo* chief.

Two Talks picked up the reins of the still grazing *tabebo* horse, and he put his moccasin in the stepping place *tabebos* hang from each side of their horses and stepped up and swung himself into the wide seat of the saddle. How did the blue bottom ride in a saddle that was so stiff and heavy you could not feel the horse warm beneath you, could not know the tightening and stretching out of hide and flesh? When he sat in the blue bottom saddle, Two Talks' feet did not reach the stepping places where the blue bottoms held their feet

when they rode. He squeezed his knees and leaned into the reins and the big horse turned easily. He brought both heels softly against the horse's sides and the willing animal was soon at full gallop, headed back toward the center of the camp. He had arrows yet to spend.

It seemed he had drawn few breaths before he was back in camp, but the long knives were already gone. Like a wind full of lightning and hail they had swept over the camp. Women and children lay twisted over dead dogs and upended cook pots their heads and chests and backs gaped red, gored by bullets as a knife digs the red fruit from a melon. Here and there a brave was stretched in a pool of blood making a deep red mud of the settling clouds of dust. Quail Song knelt over the body of Long Teeth, her head thrown back, her knotted throat moving up and down with her loud, keening song. Without interrupting her grief wail, she took from his belt Long Teeth's hunting knife that he had had no chance to draw and hacked off the fingers of her left hand. Babies still on their cradle boards bled into the ashes of a cookfire, into piles of strewn blackberries from rent and charred hide bags, into the thorny spines of yucca or wild roses where their tiny corpses had been slung. Worse were the near- and not-yet dead—Lance Shaker who carried the medicine bag for the *Kwahadi*, as Ten Buffalo carried it for all the former *Pehnahterkuh* who had joined the band, sat staring at the white curve of his intestine that poked through the hole where a bullet had passed, his own innards slowing the painful flow of blood that would let him die; White Rose, a big, sweet girl Two Talks had played with as a child, screamed and thrashed against her mother and sister who tried to hold her still, her swollen belly soaked dark with the blood of the babe she would now deliver dead, hit by one of the many bullets that had missed its mother. Two Talks and Crooked Nose and Sure Enough Hungry rode a circle wide around the camp on both sides of the river.



The blue bottom tracks were many, including almost all the band's over three hundred horses. There were the slick trails of wagons, some deep with the weight of the big-as-a-man, loud *tabebo* guns that had made dry ponds in the spaces where *tipis* had stood. With his looking reed, Sure Enough Hungry found the red cloud at the place where the sky lies on top of the grass. Sure Enough Hungry handed the looking reed to Crooked Nose and shook his head. "The *tabebo* Father in Washington Land has emptied all the pocketsful of blue bottoms in his greatcoat and spilled them all in our path. Never before have I seen such a deep red dust of blue bottoms," Sure Enough Hungry said.

"Can we catch them, Father?" asked Two Talks.

"We might," said Crooked Nose, "just as you might leap after a rattlesnake that has bitten you once and land in the den where all

the rattlesnakes of the world wait to bite you many times to death. Better to stalk them, to kill them and cut off their rattles one at a time until you wear so many rattles the other snakes hear you coming and shake *their* rattles in fear and give away their hiding places."

Two Talks held out his arrow stained by the blood of Small Nose and himself. "My arrow knows the taste of blood now," he said.

The three returned to camp where the women were tending to the wounded and dying. Five sticks of ten plus *nabaehte*, six, fifty-six of the Antelope band had been killed, most of them women and children. But, even though they had been surprised at dawn, the Antelope warriors had put their arrows into many of the blue bottoms, including the chief Major Dorn who rode away with Two Talks' arrow still chewing his flesh. The *tabebo* raiders had left behind, as they always did, many of their wounded and dead where they fell. The *Kwahadi* women alternated their heartbreaking chores of treating the wounds and burying the bodies of their children, their families, and their friends with vicious exorcisms of their horror and their anger against blue-bottom corpses, which they painstakingly mutilated, and against the few *tabebos* so unlucky that their wounds had not been immediately fatal. These unfortunates were tortured in ways intended to keep them alive and suffering for as long as possible so that their screams and weeping might save the wounded bodies and the wounded hearts of this still mighty *Kwahadi* band of the *Nimi*.

While the *Kwahadi* women performed these rites of treatment, burial, and torture, the warriors and older boys gathered to make plans for moving the camp from this place of ghosts, to talk of the war trail they would all one day ride against all *tabebos*. Grandfather Red Dog was the only brave from the fourth age group. Most of those so old took themselves off somewhere to die, but Red Dog grew young again like a tree struck by

lightning and broken by wind that sends a new green shoot up out of its charred and broken places.

“Like the old dog from whom I got my name, I have had many good hunts. I should now be drowned in the river so that I don’t grow so fond of sleeping by the fire that I die as pitifully as an Apache farmer, wrapped in his blankets, blind, with no blood scent in his nostrils. But like the heart of the bitch whose litter has been eaten by a mountain lion, my angry heart will not let my body rest until I have tracked and killed that same cougar. I demand a good day to die, not this day of tears. I demand that my one strong pup, Crooked Nose, and his pup, Two Talks, have that same good day to die.”

Sure Enough Hungry stood up, and he took Two Talks by the arm and walked beside him before the rest of the warriors. “I have not known the joy of a close good friend—my children are all daughters. One sister buries the other. We know many moons of weeping. But I claim the shared fathering of all our good young ones who are soon to be men among us.” He put his hand on Two Talks’ shoulder and he looked long and steady into Two Talks’ eyes. Then he spoke to all the *Kwahadi* warriors, “This is a strong one, ready to be a great warrior as his grandfather and father before him are great warriors. I believe this one will have great magic against all our enemies. Now, our women have many wounds to wash, many bodies to stand in the rocks. While our women bind our hurts, we must seek the right time to travel the war road against the *Tehanos*, against all *tabebos*. This one, Two Talks, may be the one to lead us.”

Sure Enough Hungry nodded at the big warrior who carried the medicine bag of all the *Pehnahterkuh* who had joined the *Kwahadi* band, “Ten Buffalo,” even in your sleep, be prepared to assist this one when he hears himself call himself, and he comes to you for purification. With the death of Lance Shaker, you now carry the medicine bag for *all* in this band of *Kwahadi*.”

“I will be ready to assist any near-warrior of the *Kwahadi* in all the suns and moons to come,” said Ten Buffalo. “And now, as we must return to *tipis* where Coyote has us in his teeth and shakes us until he decides to let go, I will seek healing medicines for the *Kwahadi* that our wounds may scar over, that our rent places may grow back stronger for having been torn apart.”

“*Subeti*, that is all,” said Sure Enough Hungry.

Two Talks walked to the place in the rocks that Prairie Star and Persimmon had prepared for the girl, Small Nose. Though she was not born *Nimi* and had not been adopted or married into The People, she had become *Nimi* in her way of dying and they buried her as one of The People, wrapped in soft, beaded doeskin, standing in a deep hole in a rock cliff, facing Our Father in Heaven every morning where he stands up.

When the rock was rolled over the opening to Small Nose’s grave, Crow lighted on the limb of a hairy cottonwood and called out, *Caw*. Two Talks looked up and saw himself sitting there, high in the tree, beside the black bird.

Out loud, Two Talks said, “Crow, what do you want with me?”

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# The Slippery South

John Brummett

Michael Schoenfeld, vice chancellor for media relations at Vanderbilt University in Nashville, Tenn., opened his institution's four-day fellowship for 10 journalists from the South by saying the original idea had been to make Nashville's country music heritage the sole subject.

But he said it quickly became apparent among the planners from Vanderbilt's administration and faculty that a more appropriate study should encompass Southern culture in genera (which, naturally, presumes there is one).

Schoenfeld said a general Southern theme was particularly needed with a presidential election looming in which the likely combatants to replace a Southerner would be Southerners. Those would be George W. Bush (that is, if you count Texas as Southern, a controversial subject that inevitably awaited us) and Al Gore, if you count him as genuinely Southern considering the formative years he spent in a Washington hotel and at St. Albans School for Boys.

One thing quickly becomes obvious in an examination of Southern culture. It is that you have to make assumptions.

So, Shoenfeld said, we would consider not only the distinctive music of the region, and include blues as well as country, but extend our focus to these other supposed distinctions:

- Southern politics, which turns out presidents and seems to grow more Republican by the year.

- Southern storytelling, which turns out extraordinary writers and orators. "From Davy Crockett to Dale Bumpers," Michael Kreyling, an English professor at Vanderbilt who has written a book about Eudora Welty,

titled his presentation. His point was that Davy Crockett fashioned a political career out of embellishing himself with stories, and that Bumpers KO-ed the Republican case against

Bill Clinton by a combination of eloquence and down-home storytelling that he probably couldn't have pulled off had he not been Southern. "He's as good as Bob Hope," Kreyling asserted of Tennessee's former senator. (But Bob Hope isn't Southern; perhaps the professor contradicted himself. It can happen, especially on such an elusive subject as Southern culture).

- Southern economy, less elusive, which has evolved from agriculture, textiles and imported manufacturers lured by tax breaks to an uncommon disparity — the sparkling big-city wealth of Atlanta; Charlotte, N.C.; and Nashville to pockets of stubborn poverty in the Mississippi River Delta and the so-called Black Belt through Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, rural Georgia and South Carolina.

- Southern religion, also less elusive, a rural tradition that has exported to the rest of the country a so-called Christian conservatism grounded in what are generally called



fundamentalist, inerrantist, evangelical and charismatic groups. Those groups often disagree on such basic theology as whether speaking in tongues is a sign of holiness or devil possession, but they tend to come together on social and political issues, galvanized by preachers getting into politics to decry a supposedly permissive, or liberal, culture. Darren Sherkat, a Vanderbilt professor of religious studies, told the group about Jerry Falwell and Pat Robertson: Each believes the other will go to hell, but both vote Republican.

■ Southern history, which produces assorted peculiarities, guilt among them, over slavery, the Civil War and the ugly integration conflicts of Little Rock in the 1950s and of Mississippi, Memphis, and Birmingham, Selma and Montgomery, Ala., in the 1960s — over relations between white people and black people, when you get right down to it.

The point was to determine whether the South remains a nation within a nation, in spite of the homogeneous trends of the global economy, and to examine the region's considerable influence on the rest of the country through entertainment, literature, politics and religion.

Three days into the conference, Schoenfeld sat in on a session conducted by Paul Corbin, vice president for music industry relations for TNN, the growing Nashville-based cable television network now owned by CBS. TNN emphasizes country music, the outdoors and NASCAR, the fastest-growing spectator sport in the country, and, of course, a Southern thing.

## EXPORTED CULTURE

Schoenfeld remarked that the South is the only region of the country that could successfully export its entertainment culture to the rest of the nation, even the world. He cited country music, TNN and NASCAR.

One wouldn't want to accuse him of regional chauvinism. The fact is that he's from

New York. But could he possibly be right?

He is, of course, wrong. New York and Hollywood successfully export their entertainment cultures. And New York or L.A. has always controlled the Nashville recording industry, and now New York owns TNN. So if the South is an entertainment exporter, then New York and L.A. are the brokers.

On a smaller scale, Garrison Keillor's *Prairie Home Companion* successfully exports some version of Minnesota culture. You might make the case that San Francisco exported a culture, a counterculture, in the '60s. Seattle has exported several things of late: technology, coffee houses, grunge. One could go on.

But Schoenfeld had a point. Keillor himself admits he got hooked on live radio listening to the Grand Ole Opry from Nashville, and for his tribute to country music, he serves as the honorary chairman of the fund-raising to build a new Country Music Hall of Fame in downtown Nashville.

And discounting arguments about where rock 'n' roll began (we know that it was within a 90-mile radius of Memphis, drawn from the black man's blues and adapted to rockabilly, and is Southern, too), we know of no widespread popular American music born in, produced in and marketed on a sustained basis from the Midwest, New England, the industrial Northeast or the Rocky Mountain states.

The most popular syndicated television show ever probably would not have emanated from anywhere but the American South. That show is *Hee Haw*.

But does any other region of the country study itself as thoroughly, as narcissistically, as introspectively, as the South studies itself?

"Well, maybe New England, to an extent," replied Larry Griffin, a Mississippi Delta native who heads the American and Southern Studies Program at Vanderbilt, and who conducted a session on Southern culture. "But they're more positive."

Down here, we beat ourselves up.

What accounts for this peculiar Southern self-obsession? Are we different because we're different? Or are we different because we think so much about ourselves, if not of ourselves, and assume that everyone considers us to be different?

Walker Percy said it was simple. "We lost," he said to explain Southern distinctiveness.

We learned one thing in our studies: It's hard to get hold of the South, much less find any uniformity in its ways.

## GEOGRAPHICAL BOUNDARIES

First there's the matter of what and where it is. The best explanation is that there's a true South and a "peripheral South," as one Vanderbilt professor dubbed it, and that the peripheral South might or might not include Texas, Florida and Atlanta, which are big enough and distinctive enough to transcend our best generalizations.

The real South, sometimes called the Deep South or the Black Belt because of the soil, is Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, rural Georgia and South Carolina. You could call it the poorest Southern region, except that South Carolina is thriving and Arkansas is about as poor as Mississippi and Alabama.

The "peripheral South" is North Carolina, Virginia, Tennessee, Kentucky, Arkansas, Oklahoma and, if you choose, Texas, Florida and Atlanta.

Does Oklahoma even belong? You can get a newsroom argument started on that one.

Arkansas has its own identity problem. It has Deep South elements on the south and east, Texas elements on the south and west and Midwestern characteristics in the prosperous northwest corner.

Beyond that, practically every element of our discussion was subject to interpretation, challenge or dispute — certainly to nuance.

Take politics, for example. You can hardly argue that the South hasn't gone Republican. But the president is a Southern Democrat. The new governors of South Carolina and

Alabama, beacons of new Republican conservatism, are Democrats. Florida went for Bill Clinton in 1996.

Bumpers may be a special story-teller because he is Southern, that Northwestern higher education aside. And Clinton may relate easily to people because he is Southern, the stints at Washington, New Haven and Oxford aside.

But Al Gore can't tell a story or relate. He's not genuinely Southern, you might say. So let's look at Lamar Alexander, former Tennessee governor, product of the town where we convened, Nashville. Where did he misplace his Southern charm? Tell us a story you remember him telling. What was his most memorable speech?

## TORTURED COEXISTENCE

Take race, for another example. It may be that the South's heritage is the tortured co-existence of black and white, and it may be that the issue of black and white still vexes the region. But that seems most true today of the Deep South and the Delta regions.

Today, one Atlanta-area public school has more than 20 nationalities in its student body, or so our Atlanta fellows informed us. Hispanics have moved heavily into poultry regions to take jobs, primarily Northwest Arkansas and rural Georgia. The South, you could say, is not black and white anymore.

Larry Griffin, the head of American and Southern studies who hails from the Mississippi Delta, said he was stuck in the past of black and white. But he said that was because of where he came from. Black-and-white is still the color scheme of the Delta. Other racial and ethnic groups aren't moving in. Folks are moving out. Griffin said he'd pretty much given up on the Delta's chances of economic revival. The remaining whites tend to be too stuck in the past, he said.

If the South is beginning to transcend black and white because of the influx of other colors, what are we to make of the civil rights movement, which had its epic conflicts in the



'50s and '60s in the region? Little Rock's is not the only public school district in the South, or the nation, to have been rendered heavily black and poor by the flight of upscale whites.

## FRUITFUL STRUGGLE

Forrest Harris is director of the Kelly Miller Smith Institute on the Black Church at American Baptist University in Nashville, where nonviolent protest, the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., is a part of the curriculum. He had a ready reply. "What I say is thank God we've got the law."

He meant Brown vs. Board of Education and the Civil Rights Act. Racial division by class and attrition is one thing, and a bad thing. Racial discrimination by Jim Crow laws was a much worse thing, and the battles of the 1960s were worth it, he said, by making discrimination by governmental bodies illegal.

Even country music befuddled us. At the risk of an oversimplification that doesn't do justice to the powerful influences of Jimmie Rodgers or Texas swing, the conventional thinking is that Nashville's music stemmed from rural white folks' mountain music, best represented by the Carter Family and Roy Acuff, and is the poor white man's blues.

But some of the early fiddle-playing hillbilly groups were black, and the early recording executives intentionally excluded them. One of the most popular early performers on the Grand Ole Opry was DeFord Bailey, a harmonica whiz and black man.

And it is widely agreed that the richest country traditions were sustained most prominently in the '60s by Buck Owens and in the '70s by Merle Haggard, and Buck and

Merle came from a nest of country musicians in and around Bakersfield, Calif.

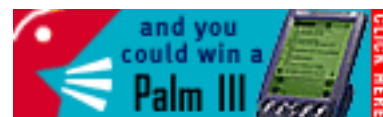
Anyway, what is country music? A man at the Country Music Hall of Fame said he didn't try to define it and resisted encouragement to do so.

Jim Foglesong, who ran Capitol Records in Nashville for years and now teaches a course in music business at Vanderbilt, told us he'd tell us the same thing he told Faron Young, Porter Wagoner and the late Tammy Wynette that year they came in to complain that the Country Music Association had given an award to Olivia Newton John, of all people.

It was that country music is whatever the country radio stations play and that award-winning country music performers are whichever ones the members of the CMA vote for. Foglesong, who headed the CMA at the time, said he tried to appease the group by putting Wynette on the board. But she never came to a meeting.

So it is with Southern culture. The South and its culture are whatever we say they are. An Atlantan's South may not be the same as a Delta farmer's South. But one thing they have in common is an instinct to ponder their regional distinctiveness, probably with a curious mix of pride and insecurity.

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## Bottom Line

# Drought and the Family Farm

By Julie Gause

An extreme drought coupled with depressed prices has caused a major disaster in farming communities throughout many Southern states. Three of the states most seriously affected by the drought—Tennessee, Kentucky and Virginia—suffered some of the worst conditions experienced in the past three decades.

A drought affects every farmer, from those who grow row crops (cotton, soybeans, tobacco, wheat and corn) to those who raise cattle. University of Tennessee Extension Agent Mike Gordon said early indicators suggest a very low yield from row crops. For example, in some areas of Tennessee, cotton production fell from approximately 713 pounds per acre in 1997 to 375 (projected) pounds per acre in 1999. The pastureland belonging to cattle farmers from all three states lies in ruins because the ground lacks the moisture needed to replenish the grass after the cattle grazes. In Kentucky, instead of harvesting their soybeans to sell, some farmers cut the dry, bare stalks to use as hay or even plowed the crop under to take a total loss, said Kathleen Keeney, an extension agent in the University of Kentucky Extension Office in McCracken County.

According to the National Climatic Data Center (NCDC), all of Tennessee and Kentucky experienced extreme drought conditions (minus 3.00 inches and more below normal) from July through September 1999. The Virginia state office of the Farm



Hay shows through a soybean field, which normally grows large enough to hide the stalks.

Bureau Federation reports even though recent hurricanes have returned moisture to the region, Virginia's crops remain in disastrous shape because of its dry summer. According to the Memphis office of the National Weather Service, total rainfall amounts during the crucial months of July and August fell short of normal by approximately 4.83 inches. Keeney said rainfall totals in Kentucky remained at least 10 inches below normal, despite the rain received in recent weeks. In the north-central counties of Virginia, springs, ponds and wells remain dry even after many inches of hurricane rain, said Pete Martens, a Virginia Tech extension agent in Rockingham County.

"Technically, Virginia is still in both a hydrological and an agricultural drought," said Patrick Michaels, state climatologist. "Springs will take a while to come back; it could take a year or more."

Tim Roberts, a UT extension agent, said Tennessee's crops looked great, even above average, until the end of July. When the dry weather continued into August, the farmers knew trouble lay ahead. The condition of the crops started to deteriorate toward the end of August, and now things appear hopeless, he said.

"The rainfall is too late," he said. "It might help the pasture land, but it's better for the soybeans and cotton to not get any at all."

Farmers in Kentucky and Virginia face the same problems. Rockingham County, Va., received five inches of rain from Hurricane Dennis, but it arrived too late to help anyone's corn or soybean crops. Extension Agent Martens said even though the rain helps farmers' pastures a little, after all the grass dies in December their hay supply will not be able to support their livestock through the

too late for all that," he said.

Low market prices for their harvest adds to the problems faced by all farmers.

The Farm Bureau Federation tracks issues concerning American farmers. Stefan Maupin, assistant director of public affairs and research for the Tennessee Farm Bureau state office, said a couple of factors drove prices down. The first concerns the location of the drought. In the major production states of the Midwest and the Plains, farmers project a record-setting harvest, such as the corn crop in Iowa. This over-abundance of product more than compensates for the low yields in Tennessee, Kentucky, Virginia and other states affected by the drought.

The second involves the surplus of agriculture products already held by the United States. A huge trade deficit exists in the agricultural market, with overall exports dropping from approximately \$60.4 billion in 1996 to \$49 billion in 1999, while agriculture imports increased by about \$6 billion, Maupin said. The Asian financial crisis contributed substantially to this deficit, as well as poor economies in Russia, much of Eastern Europe and Latin America.

None of this news bodes well for the American family farm.

"I've farmed for 45 years, and I've never seen farmers hurting as bad," said Jack Duer, a vegetable buyer in

Northampton County, Va.

After hearing appeals for assistance from farmers, elected officials from Tennessee, Kentucky and Virginia, along with representatives from other states, appealed to Washington for federal disaster aid. Maupin said two programs exist to grant relief from weather-related disasters. In September, U.S. Agriculture Secretary Dan



A good yield of beans in West Tennessee.

winter. Because of the drought, farmers had to feed their cattle hay in the summer, and without rain, the supply of grass and hay was never replenished. Kentucky received some rain in September, but it served only to raise spirits, as well as some streams and ponds, Barren County farmer Neil Allen said.

"As far as feeling better and looking better, yes (the rain did help). Cropwise it's





Drought-stricken soybeans (left) shrivel and lose oil content.

Martens said although all the programs provide relief to some farmers, many still hold little hope. In his county most farmers raise stock for dairy and beef and/or poultry. With a shortage of water, many farmers had to sell part of their herds, but disaster relief covered much of the loss experienced by cattle farmers. Poultry farmers, on the other hand, originally received no assistance. He said farmers earned a major victory for federal relief when the FSA, the agency that distributes disaster relief to victims of the drought, convinced Congress to include poultry farmers in

Glickman granted all 95 counties in Tennessee disaster status, and since July he has also granted that status to areas of Connecticut, Kentucky, Maryland, Massachusetts, Missouri, Montana, New Hampshire, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Texas, Vermont, Virginia and West Virginia. To date Kentucky and Virginia farmers have received Emergency Conservation Program allocations of over \$1.2 million and \$2.9 million respectively, according to the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA).

Maupin said farmers and state representatives addressed Congress about the need to expedite disaster aid. In one disaster relief program, the Farm Service Agency (FSA) makes low-interest (3.75 percent) government loans to any affected farmer. The FSA limits these loans to an amount equal to 80 percent of production loss with a maximum debt of \$500,000. In a second type of disaster assistance from the USDA, aid goes to farmers already enrolled in federal farm programs who qualify to receive grants based on production loss calculated from average yields in past years.

the aid bill.

The government designed these programs to help preserve the small farms of America, but without improved prices and trade-relations, the farms remain in very real danger, Maupin said. Some farmland preservation movements are picking up speed, but their design helps to protect the land from development and not necessarily to keep it in the hands of small farmers. Sometimes a business only profits when operated on a certain scale, and farming in the 21st century may be in that category, he said.

Land-grant universities, like UT, UK and Virginia Tech, offer extension services through their agricultural departments. Extension offices in each of the state's counties offer programs designed to help farmers through rough times. Extension Agent Gordon said his office offers financial services to farmers that help them plan for next year. They enter numbers into a computer to decide what to spend for next year's crop, including the amount of money to spend on equipment, seed, fertilizer and chemicals.

Another important decision concerns booking crops in advance of harvest to guarantee a price. The extension office gives information on market indicators needed to make that decision. An important piece of advice offered by Gordon involves scheduling a soil analysis for this fall to determine the needs of the soil. Because of the drought, the plants depleted the soil of the nutrients necessary for production, and through analysis the farmer learns how to prepare it for the next crop.

Keeney said in Kentucky many farmers, especially those who grow tobacco, show interest in supplemental crops—from horticultural products such as cabbage or mums to aquaculture, or catfish farming—about which her office supplies information.

Gordon said his office also provides referrals to counseling services to combat depression for those who seek help. Unfortunately, farmers are by nature a proud group and not likely to seek help unless the circumstances are dire.

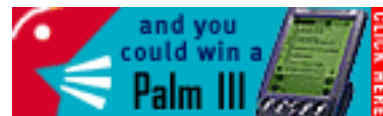
Roberts summarized the plight of Tennessee's farmers, as well as those in other



Soybean stalks, usually full with beans, are almost barren.

drought stricken states: "We can't take many more years like this."

*Julie Gause is a free-lance writer from Knoxville who's involved in Web editorial content at HGTV. The Tennessee, Virginia and Kentucky offices of the Farm Bureau Federation, as well as the University of Kentucky's College of Agriculture, contributed to this article.*



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## Secret Vistas

# Lift Your Spirit On Monarch's Wings: Catch the Gulf Migration in Fall

By Glynn Wilson

Every autumn, while most of the Southeastern United States changes its outward hue from a thousand shades of summer green to red, violet, amber, and ultimately winter's brown, coastal communities and barrier islands change in a different fashion.

In Gulf Shores, Ala., for instance (one of the most interesting geological and climatological spots in the country, where the Gulf Stream sometimes sweeps ashore to brush the delicate beaches almost white) the fall does not show up so much in the trees. You have to drive a few miles north to find the oaks and maples falling asleep with grace for the winter.

When the Shrimp Festival and the tourist season close down in October, the place empties out like a deserted village until the Snowbirds from points north begin coming in around Christmas. The air grows cooler and the humidity drops. Visibility out to sea increases, and the photosynthesis bounces off the clouds and chemicals in the sky like a distorting mirror, the old-fashioned kind you sometimes still see in county fairs.

But the greatest thing about autumn in Gulf Shores is the annual butterfly migration. If you find yourself there at the right time, usually late October or early November, you will begin to see the unmistakable orange-and-black wings of the majestic migrating Monarchs.

On their long trek from Canada to Mexico, they have to stop here for the night. The protected wetlands house the milkweed



Illustration/Skipper

and baccharis bushes they depend upon for the energy required to sustain them. Of course there are many spots from which to view this wonder of nature. You could go down the beach a bit further west and find a spot in the Bon Secour National Wildlife Refuge, or east to a secluded spot on Wolf Bay or Perdido Key.

If you have never sat amidst them fluttering tirelessly by you in ones and twos all day long, you are missing one of the South's unique spiritual experiences.

Go experience it for yourself, by all means. But do it on a bike, alone, with a close friend, or one you love, and shhhh! Don't tell everyone you know. We don't want to overrun the place, disturb the Monarchs, or extend the tourist season.



# Rock Creek in the Big South Fork

By Andre Bergeron

Traveling West on Highway 92, passing through Whitley County, Ky., and then into McCreary County, one initially observes a less than glamorous slice of Americana. The Big South Fork National River and Recreation Area, which is part of the Daniel Boone National Forest, straddles the Kentucky/Tennessee border. This region has led to some stereotyped depictions of both Tennessee and Kentucky. Washing machines and old hot-water heaters adorn the porches of many houses along these back roads, while trailers and collapsing shacks are scattered about the landscape

However, just as one cannot judge a book by its cover, one cannot base a conclusion about the character of McCreary County's residents by their dwellings. Each time I've made a wrong turn and stopped for directions, and each time I've asked locals to point the way to good fishing, I've always been courteously attended to. And yet, the question still arises - why is this pure wilderness area's entrance bespeckled by such man-made eyesores that visitors must drive past?

To this query I submit the fact that to get to Australia, a 24-hour flight is necessary. A lengthy, arduous drive is required to take the kids to Disney World. And don't you have to go through highly commercialized Pigeon Forge or Gatlinburg to get to the serenity of the Smoky Mountains? Surely, any worthwhile destination merits a few trials and tribulations.

My destination in this excursion is Rock Creek—a jewel in the crown of the Big South Fork, a diamond in the rough. This creek has



many faces. At its beginning, it is no wider or more impressive than an overflowing drainage ditch. Yet, downstream there are pools deep enough to swallow a school bus. Wading Rock Creek can be an equally changing situation. In differing segments, it is as easy as crossing a babbling brook or as demanding as fording a surging river.

I come to Rock Creek for many reasons. I long for solitude. I crave the undisturbed beauty of the woods. I want to enjoy the harmony of a healthy stream running its course. It has often been said that Rock Creek is one of the few, perhaps the only, bodies of water in Kentucky that has all the characteristics of a natural mountain trout stream. As a native of East Tennessee who grew up near the Smoky Mountains, I will



take every chance I get to visit anything that resembles the landscape of my youth.

The primary motivation behind my trips to Rock Creek is my quest for trout. The headwaters of the creek most favor the fly fisherman seeking a mountain stream experience. Rapids, shoals, deep pools, eddies, and riffles abound in the upper stretch of Rock Creek before it slows down to more sluggish, deeper pools. Almost 30,000 trout are stocked in Rock Creek every year by national and local wildlife and fisheries programs. These young trout are mainly fingerlings and some sub-adults in the 9-11 inch range. However, because the creek is heavily foliated on all sides, is at a fairly high elevation, and has deep pools, these fish can survive through the summers and live for years — growing to healthy proportions. In the deeper portions of Rock Creek, trout of three to five pounds have been reported.

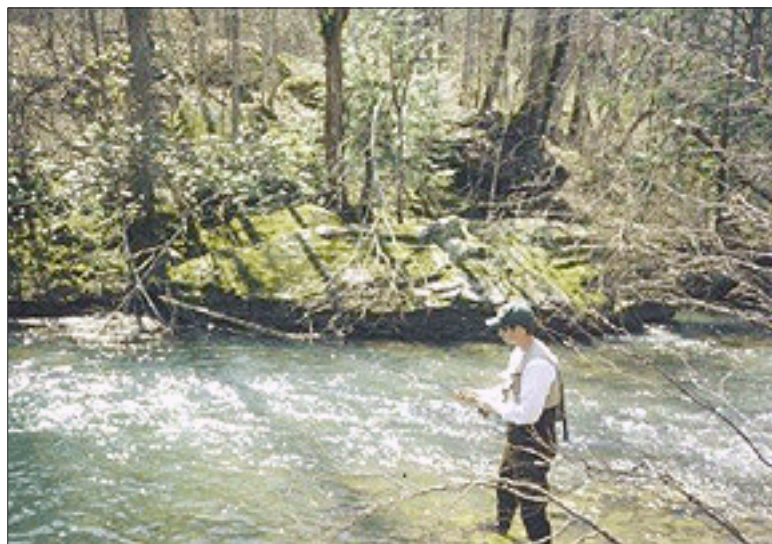
Most of my experience comes from the region near the headwaters of Rock Creek. First of all, the lower stretch is often crowded with bait fishermen standing on the banks, chucking worms and bobbers down into the depths of the long, slow pools. I have nothing against this method,

but I prefer to wade into the middle of a stream, to fight the currents, to navigate the slippery rocks and drop-offs, to become just another object in the water.

When practicing this type of wading stealthily, one can often come within a few feet of lounging trout. Undoubtedly, these are young stockers who haven't yet gained the wisdom of a few years spent avoiding the many hazards of stream life. When wading the shallow portions of Rock Creek, I slowly make my way to the back

of a pool and cast a dry fly upstream into the head of the pool. When fishing with dries, I usually use a caddis or cahill, as I have seen many of these in hatches, and have had decent luck with this type of fly.

Immense boulders, some larger than houses, are scattered throughout the creek and its banks. (Perhaps this is where the name "Rock" Creek comes from.) As the current flows around these obstructions, vast basins of water form where once were only shallow riffles. Casting downstream in this situation, I use a bead-head nymph or a tiny midge to float through the riffles and into one of the plunging drop-offs — hoping to attract one of the lunkers who lurk in these depths. I have





yet to encounter anything over the 12-inch mark, but that is fine with me. I would rather spend all day catching small, beautiful trout than sitting in front of a television or, worse yet, a desk.

The air is calm around Rock Creek. An occasional bird call and the constant murmur of the stream might be the only noise heard during an entire day. Also, my reflection in a still pool could be the only other human face I see. For the fly fisherman seeking such an experience, Rock Creek in the Big South Fork is a perfect location. However, I often go with a fishing partner, and I would recommend taking along such a friend with similar skill and temperament. Though the tight casting in some parts of the creek can be frustrating, the rewards of a pleasant, enjoyable day are best shared with a good friend.

There is another reason for going with a companion—the wildlife. As I have said earlier, this region very closely reproduces the experience of being in the mountains of East Tennessee. Those conditions are more complete than just similar streams with similar fish. Wild boar are plentiful in the Big South Fork, where they are hunted for sport. And in the past few years, black bear have been reintroduced to this area—which was once their domain. These two species could potentially pose a threat to the unwary, lone fisherman, though it is unlikely. To be on the safe side, take a friend or keep constant vigilance about your surroundings.

Besides fishing, canoeing and kayaking are possible on many portions of Rock Creek. Other activities include numerous hiking trails throughout the Big South Fork region that lead to scenic vistas and high mountain ridges overlooking vast stretches of the park. Access to nearly every part of the park, and to Rock Creek, is excellent. Rock Creek provides over 15 miles of public water, and



almost all of this distance is directly paralleled by Forest Service Roads 566 and 137.

### **How to Get to Rock Creek:**

**From the North:** If you are coming from points North in Kentucky, travel via HWY 27 South or I-75 South. In both instances, you will get off onto HWY 92 West. This will take you past the town of Stearns. You will eventually cross a bridge that goes over the South Fork of the Cumberland. Immediately after getting off this bridge, turn left onto KY 1363. Follow 1363 till the White Oak Junction, where you will turn left onto Forest Service Road (FS)566. This road runs next to Rock Creek for 7 or 8 miles. At the Bell Farm intersection, turn left onto FS 564 for a mile or so, then take another left onto FS 137, which follows the rest of Rock Creek up to its headwaters.

*\*Much of these FS roads are gravel, and fairly bumpy, but a 4-wheel drive vehicle is not needed. Occasionally you might have to get out and move a fallen tree or similar obstacle to get by. This just adds to the adventure.*

**From the South:** Take I-75 North till around Williamsburg (about 10-15 minutes north of the Tennessee border). Get off onto HWY 92 West and follow the directions above.



## Southern Culture

# Beale Street Culture Blues

By Ron Sitton

Memphis, Tenn. Birthplace of the blues and home of world-famous Beale Street, a thriving minority neighborhood in the 1930s, a jukejoint hotbed in the '40s and '50s, site of civil unrest in the '60s, a virtual ghost town in the '70s, and a multi-million dollar tourist industry at the turn of the new millennium.

To say the city is an enigma for some is a slight understatement. After driving through the Cumberland Mountains, Memphis is the first indication you've reached a different mindset. Instead of coming upon a city, you drive upon a spread of fabric spliced together through some commonalities, but maintaining cultural boundaries; sometimes to the benefit but often to the detriment of the community.

Judy Peiser would be excited about the reference to the differences Memphis has. She's afraid the South's cultural identity is disintegrating as cookie-cutter stores crowd the landscapes of suburbia. So she celebrates the region's multiple cultural experiences in hopes of mending the tears of a city known for its racial divisions.

It's a job Peiser's had since 1972. Operating under the moniker The Center for Southern Folklore, she and Bill Ferris began documenting the people and traditions of the Mid-South region, housing their collection in a bedroom of her parents' home in Memphis.

One of their first documentaries followed the last six years of the life of Ray Lum, a trader of horses and tales. A more famous documentary is the Center's award-winning



Photo/Dave Corbell  
Bill Ferris and Judy Peiser film Ray Lum in front of White's Store in Reganton, Miss.

film "All Day And All Night: Memories of Beale Street Musicians," narrated by B.B. King. Though Ferris eventually left to begin the Center, a more academic-based study at the University of Mississippi, Peiser stuck around.

"We've been doing this for 25 years, documenting everyday people," Peiser says. "People in the city and (Shelby) county are saying those documents are important. It's taken a long time for everybody to come around to that."

## COMING AROUND

In a city not known for preserving its past, it's definitely a new (and welcome) attitude.

"Memphis has torn down more history than most places have," blues harmonica player Charlie Musselwhite says. "It makes me sick the way they treat their own culture. The only reason there's anything left of Beale Street is because it finally dawned on them that they could make a buck off it. If the

French Quarter was in Memphis, it would've been torn down a long time ago."

Though he left in 1962, Musselwhite considers Memphis home and has pondered moving back. His family still lives there and he visits on breaks from his worldwide performances. Yet he says the world's view of Memphis is rather bleak.

"(World) opinion of how (Memphis has) treated their culture and history is they're a bunch of ignorant hillbilly fools," Musselwhite says. "It astonishes people how cold they are and how they could tear everything down. It leads (others) to believe they have no culture themselves."

Urban renewal projects in the 1970s cleared away many neighborhoods in Memphis, including one that supported the Beale Street business district. In 1973, George B. Miller Jr. founded the Beale Street Development Corporation to combat further decay of the district.

"(The city of Memphis was) involved in urban renewal, which I interpreted as Negro removal," Miller says.

With the help of the former Cassius Clay, Miller began trying to revitalize the neighborhood in 1979 by opening a movie theater, the Mohammed Ali Cinema. By 1982, the city of Memphis leased the Beale Street Historic District to the development company for \$10 million in federal grants.

The development company signed a 52-year sublease on all of the Beale Street property from 2nd to 4th streets (with the exception of BSDC office space and the Old Daisy building) with the Elkington & Keltner company to maintain the common areas (sidewalks, street, parking lots), hold and promote special events in the street, and act



Beale Street as it looked to John Elkington in 1983.

as the landlord for buildings and business in the district.

When manager John Elkington came to Beale, his first impressions were of a war zone. The former Vanderbilt University linebacker still has a picture of the fenced-in street covered in sand, surrounded by boarded-up buildings.

Seven years later, Elkington wrote a city official a letter which appeared in the Memphis *Commercial Appeal* saying the city-owned Beale Street district should be sold to private owners upon renovation to help recoup the \$13 million in public money invested in the project.

In 1993, he was praised for rejuvenating the district, though it allegedly cost him his marriage and \$2 million to make the project work. By 1997, the Beale Street Historic District was removed from the historical watch as it surpassed Elvis Presley's Graceland as Memphis' major tourist draw.

Beale Street is now Tennessee's largest tourist attraction, claiming 4.2 million visitors annually (counting local visitors), according

to Mary Schmitz, vice president of marketing for the Memphis Convention & Visitors Bureau. Elkington says the two-block district holds over 700 jobs and generates more than \$30 million in annual revenue.

“When we undertook this project, we had three mandates from the city,” Elkington told *Agenda Online* in 1997. “We had to return commerce to the street, make Beale Street a showcase for our music heritage, and create an atmosphere in which blacks and whites both felt comfortable. I think we have accomplished those three things.”

For the first time since Beale was placed on the historical list in 1966, the street is completely rented. Elkington’s success on Beale prompted similar development plans in Charlotte, N.C.; Columbus, Ga.; Jackson, Miss.; and Richmond, Va., under the direction of Performa Entertainment Real Estate Inc., the newest name for Elkington’s operations.

But with success comes scrutiny. Jimmy Ogle, Performa’s vice president of operations, says most arrangements are made with city governments, and many governmental projects are not popular for one reason or another. Some detractors are concerned with the possible distortion and exploitation of the African-American culture. In 1996, the editor of *The Jackson Advocate* ran a front-page article questioning Elkington’s motives and ability.

Others have candidly questioned his motives since a Feb. 7 *Memphis Commercial*

*Appeal* article found Beale Street Historic District operations cleared over \$130,000 in 1998. Neither the city nor the development corporation received any of the money, which was used to repay Elkington for personal loans made to the operation during the years Beale was broke.

Though Ogle says the money was made available, the bill remains unsettled because of a court feud between current and former leaders of the development corporation. In a twist of fate, the development company was recently evicted by Performa. Miller is taking the case to court Dec. 1.

“John Elkington is a tyrannical maniac,”

Miller says. “His intention is to force off Beale Street anybody who cannot pay the astronomical, tyrannical rents that ingratiate his personal wealth.”

Miller says Performa has not paid rent to the not-for-profit develop-

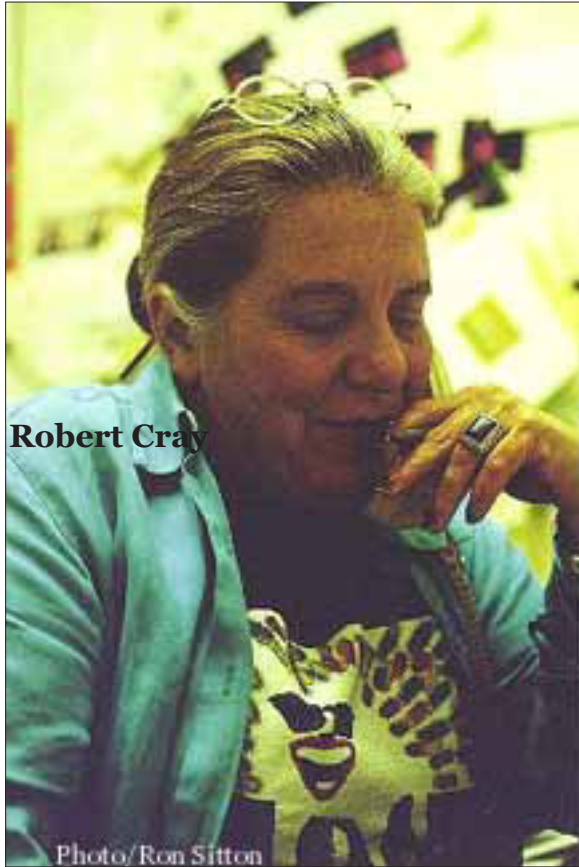
ment company in 17 years, but charges approximately \$6,000 per month to businesses. He is also critical of the lack of minority ownership in the district where, although about 35 percent of vendors are minority owners, only three beer or liquor licenses are owned by minorities, including the Center for Southern Folklore under Peiser. He claims Elkington is uninterested in the heritage and cultural appeal of the Beale Street Historical District, focusing more on personal enrichment.

“He doesn’t care about the blues or the African-American experience; the only feeling he has is in his wallet,” Miller says. “He’s



Beale Street, Halloween 1999.





**Robert Cray**

Photo/Ron Sitton

Judy Peiser conducts business over the phone.

just riding on the backs of the slaves from the previous generation who were whipped with leather, who today are whipped with economics—it's just as bad. What happens to the history and culture of African-Americans who were on Beale Street anyway? If we don't remain the guardians, who the hell will?"

Elkington maintains Beale Street is a nighttime district catering to adults, bus tours, and people with disposable income going out at night. Though culture is one factor in making an entertainment district, Ogle says a lot of things make up that package.

"We're an urban oriented district; we're not trying to be family entertainment," Elkington says. "We're not here to be a home for not-for-profit. Our priority is to find viable business."

And Elkington has more plans. In July, Performa signed a 30-year lease with the city

to maintain Handy Park, named after blues great W.C. Handy. Elkington promises to build a covered-stage and dressing rooms, an information center, an exhibition hall and public restrooms in the park. These improvements, to be financed from Elkington's pockets, won't keep street musicians from playing in the park, Ogle says.

"It's a pretty impromptu scene," he says. "The tourists and visitors like to see it. We're developing the district for about everybody who comes down here. We have a different variety of places to go, things to do. We're turning empty buildings into an area people are attracted to."

In late September, the city of Memphis signed a lease agreement with Pat O'Brien's to build a new building pending approval, Ogle says. Construction is expected to begin in January 2000 at the corner of Beale Street and Rufus Thomas Boulevard, across from the Hard Rock Cafe and Handy Park, and catty-corner to the property where The Center for Southern Folklore now resides.

## BEALE AND RUFUS THOMAS

However, the Center will not be at 209 Beale St. by the time Pat O'Brien's opens. That space has been rented to Wet Willie's, a chain-establishment known for its daiquiris. Elkington says the bar will be a massive juke joint in the Beale Street tradition.

Performa evicted the Center for not paying rent. The Center would have had to move by Halloween were it not for a mid-October "Save the Center" fundraiser and rally, which raised \$1,000 and bought the Center until at least Dec. 15 to find another residence.

The move will mark the Center's fifth home since it left a three-story house at Peabody and Bellevue in the early '80s, including stays at 329 Beale, 152 Beale, and the corner of Second and Beale in the former Lansky Brothers' Men's Store (now Elvis Presley's Memphis Restaurant).

Though Peiser garnered international acclaim for depicting the South in its natural form, her work and the attention the Center for Southern Folklore has subsequently received hasn't paid the bills.

According to the *Commercial Appeal*, the Center had annual operational deficits ranging from \$10,000 to almost \$33,000 in six of the eight years from 1991 through 1998, a problem compounded by careless bookkeeping. Surplus revenues from the two "good" years were used on the accumulated debt.

According to its mission statement, the Center serves to preserve, defend and protect the music, culture, arts and rhythms of the South. It tackles the broad-based mission by educating and entertaining local, national and international family-oriented audiences through traditional music, festivals, special events, traveling musical revues, lectures and educational programs.

The Center also conducts cultural tours, hosts an hour-long monthly television program in association with the Memphis Public Library and Information Center, operates a Web site allowing worldwide audiences to learn about Memphis and the South, and maintains an extensive multimedia archive which forms the basis of Center programs, exhibits, special events and public presentations.

Apparently the variety of programs are not enough to fulfill the lease statement that reads, "Notwithstanding anything contained here to the contrary, the tenant and the Landlord agree that the tenant shall make available upon a reasonable request the following services to the Landlord in exchange



Photo/Ron Sittton

Folk art hangs from the walls of the Center for Southern Folklore.

for a \$1,900 credit per month against rent due such as providing information about Beale Street and Memphis for tourists and the media."

Performa states that clause has not been successfully completed, and the Center "has not produced a new exhibit in 15 years." Peiser begs to differ, believing that there must be some misunderstanding.

"I still think people are not comprehending what we're doing today. There's a whole bulk of material they're not up to speed on," Peiser says. "We have provided documentation to (Performa) about all this, albeit some of the times we have not been able to give the information consistently because of our very small staff and the fact that we are busy doing this all of the time."

Even if the Center met the conditions stated on the lease, it would still be obligated to pay \$1,500 more a month plus a percentage of the utilities used by the building—a bill Performa's been paying. Ogle says not one rental payment has been made in the past six months.

Peiser doesn't deny the financial problems, but says there hasn't been enough "wherewithal" to conduct a sustained

membership drive or hire a business manager. Center Board Chairman Bobbie Shainberg notes the lack of a stable lease has inhibited efforts to raise adequate funding.

"The reason that the debt got up is we couldn't get a lease and couldn't raise money," Peiser says. "We're not dealing with lots of people with lots of big bucks. Our constituency has as much money as we do. For them to give \$30 is a lot of money."

Since they couldn't give money, a few decided to raise the awareness of the Center's fate. The campaign paid off.

"Overnight, people started calling in," Peiser says. "There's a lot of people that have really come to the aid of the Center. I never thought there'd be this type of outcry."

The response brought the powers of Memphis together to try and save the Center. A task force, requested by Memphis Mayor Willie Herenton and Shelby County Mayor Jim Rout studied the problems facing the center. Tom Jones, Shelby County public affairs officer, estimates it will take at least \$100,000 to pay the Center's immediate debts.

"The city and county are not in the habit of convening a task force to save nonprofit organizations. The fact that we're trying says volumes about Judy and the Center," Jones says. "The danger in downtown America is we're defunking America. We can't lose the funkiness of the Center. I'd rather not have to live without it."

Governmental involvement in Memphis's business affairs is not unprecedented. Kyle Masson, Memphis's chief administrator, noted that similar difficulties beset Memphis in May, when the city had close to \$600,000 in debt because of mismanagement before a group of public and private officials restructured the festival's board of directors. That led to the most profitable year the festival's had, he says.

The city-county task force created a five-page proposal of recommendations to help keep the Center open. The main

recommendations included:

- Creating a new regional board of directors
- Hiring an autonomous business manager to help the Center cure its financial woes
- Finding a permanent location for the Center's archival materials
- Keeping Peiser as executive director of the Center with control over creative and interpretive activities.

A similar proposal was put forth in 1992, but its recommendations were never implemented. Peiser is more comfortable with the current proposal, and believes the board of trustees will go along, even though they'll be required to immediately submit their resignations.

Though some say the eviction of the Center and the development company is purely a financial situation, Elkington disagrees. He notes Performa could have legally ousted the Center at the end of October, but left that decision to the city.

Elkington says he has personally raised the Center over \$200,000, and in 1997 proposed to set up an incremental sales tax to fund a permanent center. However, the lack of a financial statement from the Center dissuaded him from approaching the state legislature with the idea.

In addition, Elkington says Performa notified Peiser in 1998 that her three-year lease would expire Oct. 30, and offered the Center other space on the street, though that option is no longer available.

"All we want is accountability," Elkington says. "We think we've been maligned and taken advantage of. (Peiser's) thrown down the cultural card and this is not a cultural thing."

Scott Ellsworth, historian and author of *Death in a Promised Land*, begs to differ. "It's been said that the Mississippi Delta begins in the lobby of the Peabody Hotel," he says. "Well the hidden South begins in the corner booth of The Center for Southern Folklore at



the corner of Rufus Thomas Boulevard and Beale Street. As Southerners, we can't afford to lose the center. This is a battle about a lot more than money . . . it's about the soul of the South."

## THE SOUL OF THE SOUTH

Jones searches for words to describe intangibles The Center for Southern Folklore brings to Beale Street. However, he knows no business is indispensable to a city.

"Any district can afford losing any piece," he says. "The Center isn't exactly the heart, but surely the Center is the soul of Beale Street and that's worth something more."

Schmitz says the Center provides a daytime anchor for Beale, as well as a non-smoking establishment featuring "funky stuff" and artwork occasionally created before the visitor's eyes. Peiser's archival skills are well respected within the community.

"She's someone who's preserving a piece of Southern culture that's not being preserved otherwise," Schmitz says. "It's important from a business and cultural standpoint. It's much more touchy-feely, hands on. When visitors go in there, it makes folk art much more tangible; it's not so much a gallery where people can't touch things."

Visitors' eyes light up when viewing the Center's vibrant interior, designed by New Orleans folk artist Robert "Dr. Bob" Shaffer and Memphis artists Lamar Sorrento, Jim Esposito and Russell Wyle. Elizabeth "Lizzy" Beard, who sells her folk art in the Center, now has pieces all over the world.

"For me, it has been a way to get my campy, funky art out there," Beard says. "I am honored to have my work sit amongst all that cool stuff! Most of what I sell there is music-related, and where in the world could I find a better avenue for my work? What in the world would Memphis do without The Center for Southern Folklore? It is one of the few 'real' places on Beale Street."

Ellsworth claims the Center's annual Memphis Music and Heritage Festival, now

in its 13th year, was before its time in promoting primitive Southern art.

"This was a cool place but they didn't realize how much thought went behind what the Center was trying to accomplish. Americans had no knowledge of primitive Southern art," he says. "These primitive artists' impact on the culture is remarkable. It's not the big names coming to the festival, but they come and share their knowledge."

Visitors can view photography of early Memphis including a picture commemorating "the men and women, past and present, whose music, song, and dance helped create a place, Beale Street, that generations the world over will know and be inspired by for years to come." There's even a photograph of Elvis with one of his first girlfriends.

A "Wedding Museum" sits at the end of the coffee and beer bar. For a quarter, visitors can experience this homage to marriage as the cake turns, lights shine and historic newlyweds once again have their day in the sun. John Vanderslice, a first-time visitor from Conway, Ark., brought his family to look around the district.

"This is the only (place on Beale Street) we've felt comfortable coming into with a 3-year-old," he says. "We probably wouldn't be able to bring the family down to Beale Street (if the Center was gone). We like the city and we'll definitely come back."

A gift shop contains original Southern handicrafts and literature about the region, promoting itself as "one of the few locations where visitors may purchase folk art of the area, and take home a real piece of Southern history." Among the items for sale are "Slices of the South," a colorful cardboard box containing delicacies and items indigenous to the region.

Nightly performances of blues, jazz and gospel grace the stage where 82-year-old Mose Vinson plays every Saturday night, staying until the last fan leaves. The Center gives The Daddy Mack Blues Band an

opportunity to play Beale Street, while providing older bands like the Feldstones a smoke-free environment. On the first Sunday of each month, gospel music is the main fare.

Peiser hopes a Beale Street location will be found for the Center; if it doesn't work out, she'll move, though she believes it's culturally important for the Center to remain on Beale.

"Every street needs a soul—a soul that understands the past and present and is able to communicate that to audiences," Peiser says. "Over the years the Center has learned the soul of (Beale) from the many people with whom we've worked. It's important their soul is protected and presented by the Center for Southern Folklore."

## FLUID OR STATIC HISTORY?

Though Ogle is reluctant to call the Center expendable, he says there's not an exclusive "culture" to Beale Street. Elkington plans to open a 3,000-square-foot historical display named after the daughter of Robert Church, the South's first black millionaire, by May 1, 2000. Under the guidance of the Tennessee Historical Commission and regional colleges including the University of Memphis, the exhibit will primarily focus on African-American history.

"This community demands we have a real cultural attraction," Elkington says. "We're not going to settle for a beer bar on Beale Street. I think with the Roberta Church Exhibition Hall, we'll present an equally good presentation or better."

It's the type of display Peiser's avoided. Instead of the static history of a museum or archive, she believes discussing music and art excites the younger generations, connecting

them with a sense of place, their region and themselves.

"You build an audience who appreciate the everyday cultural experiences of the region. It's pretty important if you want to make everybody feel good about where they're from and about themselves," Peiser says. "You begin to celebrate differences. You don't have to be a cookie-cutter kid because differences are important, unique is special, and those differences bring the young and old, the black and white together."

Halloween in Memphis. Over 10,000 people pack Beale Street on Friday and Saturday night for a NASCAR/Busch series promotional. A film crew uses the district for the backdrop to a future movie. People applaud a boy who does continuous back-flips down the street. Ogle's not entirely happy, though.

"We've got a lot of good things happening on Beale Street, but bad things were on the front page of the paper three days in a row; tenants not taking care of their affairs making headlines," he says. "Good things are happening, but it gives us a black eye."

Peiser hopes that's not the case. For 27 years The Center for Southern Folklore has served the Mid-South as a fluid historical treasure. After working many of those years for free, Peiser's unapologetic about trying to ensure the Center's survival.

"I feel like it's important work because of what we've been able to accomplish," she says. "If I've been able to share the experiences of many different cultures on a plate that people can learn from, hold onto, and talk about, I think I've made this region a most special place."



## Dixie Notes

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### Blues Association Holds First Public Meeting

MEMPHIS, Tenn. (May 28th, 1999) — The inaugural public meeting of the Blues Music Association (BMA) was held in Memphis, Tenn., at the Center for Southern Folklore. BMA is the “Organization of Blues Music Professionals.” It is endorsed by the Blues Foundation. As a professional organization the mission of BMA is “To achieve greater economic success for the Blues by expanding the marketplace for Blues music.” The long term goals of the BMA are:

(1) Using the BMA’s research and marketing abilities to sell the appeal of the Blues music to the media: commercial radio, TV and print media (relates to #2 short term goal)

(2) Sell Blues music to retail as a PROFITABLE concept

(3) Provide business and technical support to artists (including the exploration

of GROUP INSURANCE)

(4) Measure/track the financial growth within the blues genre (related to #1 short term goal).

If you would like more information on how to join the BMA or for general correspondence send letters addressed to:

Blues Music Association

P.O. Box 3122

Memphis, TN 38173

Telephone number: (901) 572-3843.

Media contact:

Cary Baker, The Baker/Northrop Media Group

Tel: (818)501-0056

cary@bakernorthrop.com

— Eric Nyberg —

### Singing the Praises with the Reverend Al Green

Mon., Oct. 11, 1999, 10:53 a.m. Al Green performed his first concert at the church he pastored for years. For more than 20 years, singer Al Green has toured the world with his soul hits while quietly pastoring the Full Gospel Tabernacle church in Whitehaven, Tenn. Sunday night the international gospel singer and the local minister merged, as Rev. Green performed his first full concert at his church.

The concert, which also featured the Mt. Moriah East Baptist Church Choir (Memphis, Tenn.), members of his touring band and other solo gospel singers, drew more than 650 listeners and worshipers. Those gathered

were treated to a strong dose of old-time religious shouting, dancing and singing that rocked the church and attracted many newcomers. Before he took the pulpit, Green expressed his surprise at how many people had shown up. “I just want to say hello to all of the people,” Green said with a smile. “It’s standing room only and we still have people coming.” When asked about the possibility of future gospel concerts, Green said, “I’d love for it to be an annual event, but we’d have to have the convention center, some larger place.”

— John Semien, *The Commercial Appeal*





# Muscle Shoals Music Launches Web Services

Muscle Shoals Music Company announced it has selected Liquid Audio, Inc. (Nasdaq: LQID), a leading provider of software and services for the Internet delivery of music, to promote and sell music online that was mastered at this legendary recording studio. Muscle Shoals Music is also launching LAXrecords.com, a new recording studio and record label for independent artists that will make extensive use of the Internet to market and sell its artists' music.

Muscle Shoals music legend Jimmy Johnson will serve as chief executive officer of the new label and Ray Carolin will serve as president.

In addition to its traditional music studio production and mastering services, Muscle Shoals Music will help individual artists and bands signed to LAXrecords.com harness the potential of the Internet by designing, hosting

and maintaining a Web site for each group. As part of this program, Muscle Shoals Music will use Liquid Audio's new Liquid(TM) Platinum Studio solution to promote and sell music online as secure Liquid Audio digital downloads. Liquid Platinum Studio, [www.liquidaudio.com/signup](http://www.liquidaudio.com/signup) will enable Muscle Shoals Music to create secure, CD-quality audio files for its clients that contain album art, liner notes, promotional information and Web links.

The solution also includes distribution of these songs to more than 300 music Web sites in the Liquid(TM) Music Network. Fans using Liquid(TM) Player software can visit these sites to sample, purchase, and download music — or link back to the bands' Web sites to check on performance dates or purchase CDs and other merchandise.



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# Walking the Bog

By David R. Osier

The temperature is about 55 degrees on a cloudless night in October. A mist rises from the warmer blackwater as my three companions and I push our two canoes into the dark Suwannee Canal. A nearly full moon is quarter-high, rising, with Venus behind us in the east. The banks are overhung with dense shrubs. Tall cypress, bearded in Spanish moss, stand like spooky sentinels to our approach.

You travel as if on a mirror. Only the ripples from our paddles remind us that we are on water and not, somehow, in space. You feel a longing to be absorbed by the secrets of this place, to be possessed by them. Perhaps it is primal memory surfacing, that we are of the earth, not merely its inhabitants. The Okefenokee is young in geological terms — 7,000 years — but you find yourself imagining you are confronting a landscape much older, from the era of dinosaurs, before humans walked this way, before they stalked, hunted, camped and lived here, and later attempted to alter it beyond recognition, only to be defeated by its mystery and its immensity.

Our guide, Carl E. Glenn Jr., warns us to beware of cypress knees and logs that could capsize our canoes. If we do tip, he tells us, head for the nearest bank. “Don’t stay in the water. And don’t flail around. Gators will jump at anything moving in the water.” A soft-



The mysterious Okefenokee at nightfall.

Photo/David R. Osier

spoken South Georgia native of 57 with a full salt-and-pepper beard, Carl is sometimes given to exaggeration. This time he isn’t. The water is only about four feet deep. “You can walk to shore, if you don’t panic,” he says.

The marsh beyond the banks of holly and titi is silent. Then, from behind us, we hear the sudden, grumbling hoot of a barred owl. Its voice is almost human, and so close that for a moment I think Carl in the canoe beside me is having fun. He claims no such thing, but chuckles. A short while passes. We hear wings taking flight a few feet away on the bank. A heron, Carl says. The only other sounds are the dips of our paddles.

We round a bend. I shine my flashlight downstream, and a dozen pairs of orange-white pin-points emerge in the water, awaiting our arrival at 10-foot intervals. The sight is both frightening and exhilarating. This is Alligator Alley. In the faint distance

another set of eyes appears on the bank. A deer, Carl suggests. Gators are drawn to the waterway for prey by a recent drought. The deer come for water and forage. As we approach, each pair of gator eyes disappears into the black water.

We are encountering the swamp as the alligator hunters knew it. Alligator hunting was a dangerous way to eke out a living. Hides brought 80 cents a foot back in the 1930s, the price rising to as much as \$30 through the years. The result was that these reptiles, which survived 20,000 millennia, almost didn't survive this one. Alligators were once so plentiful that old swampers said it seemed as if "one could walk across an Okefenokee lake on gator backs," according to naturalist Francis Harper. By the time alligators were declared an endangered species by Congress in 1969, only around 5,000 were left in the Okefenokee. They have come back. The latest refuge census counted about 15,000.

Glenn, who was raised in nearby Folkston, explains how the old swampers hunted alligators. They poled across the marshes and streams standing up in 14-foot handmade cypress johnboats. Their weapon of choice was a .22 caliber rifle. "Big enough," Glenn says. "You give several grunts, and pretty soon the gator would surface. You shine your light into his eyes, and aim right between them." The gator's brain is walnut-sized. "If you didn't have a square aim, all you'd have is one riled-up gator."

Gators are notorious for swallowing all manner of debris along with their prey to provide gizzard grist. "The strangest thing I ever found in a gator's belly was a Charlton County license plate." Carl laughs. "I always wondered what happened to the rest of the car."

We paddle about two miles, then head down a trail into Chesser Prairie. My paddle hits the mushy bottom barely a foot from the tip. It is clear we cannot travel much farther. Under normal conditions, Chesser Prairie would be under 8 to 10 inches of water and

sprinkled with lily pads. But on this night we have entered the Okefenokee during the worst drought in 35 years, and it has exposed the prairie's floor of sphagnum moss and peat.

We beach our canoes on the boggy bank of the canoe trail. Through the mist across the prairie, a cypress head casts long shadows in the moonlight. Then Carl says, "You can go your whole lifetime and never be able to do this." He removes his boat shoes and socks, rolls up his trousers, and tentatively puts his feet over the side of the canoe. He is going to walk on the bog. Glenn owns the outfitting concession at wildlife refuge headquarters. He has never done this, and few people have ever walked across the entire swamp. The drought has created a rare opportunity.

I expect Carl to sink. He does not. He walks, then jogs in the muck. He beckons me to follow. My companions prod and cajole. I wonder about alligators lurking in the black shadows. Perhaps water moccasins. But the bog awaits. I must know.

The earth does indeed quiver, I learn. I feel as if I am walking in a gigantic bowl of melting fruit gelatin. The black water glistens in the moonlight. Fine roots and mud ooze around my bare toes. My feet are cold, but I am elated. I tread lightly on the sphagnum moss and gain confidence. I attempt a little dance, prompting some light applause and catcalls from my companions. I laugh, too.

My night is complete. To walk the bog of legend in the moonlight is to understand the meaning of an ancient name.

*David R. Osier is writing a paddling guide to the Okefenokee and environs set for publication in 2001.*

## **WHEN TO GO**

The best times to visit the Okefenokee are early spring and late fall, when the air is cool and insects are down. Mosquitoes are a problem at night, April through October. The heat and humidity of July and August verge



on suffocating, and the noise of frogs and toads is deafening. In the spring you may hear the bellows of male alligators seeking mates. "The gator will arch his back [and] let loose something that sounds two hundred times louder than a giant bullfrog," says Carl Glenn. "It's a real display. The water even trembles." In March, resident Florida sandhill cranes perform nesting dances. Osprey, heron and egret nests are active in April. Deer fawns appear in May; raccoons raid turtle eggs. In the fall, the prairies are usually ablaze with yellow tickseed flowers. In late November, migrating greater sandhill cranes stop at Gannet Lake, in the southern swamp. You're likely to see more otters at play because their nemeses, the gators, are sluggish. You may see an occasional bald eagle.

**Wilderness canoeing:** Overnight canoe/camping in the Okefenokee is restricted by permit — this is a wildlife refuge, not a park — and you can't always get a permit when *you* want to go. Permits are \$10 per person per night. The refuge has designated 12 trips, most of them for two days/one night and three days/two nights. Groups are limited to 20 people. You should be in reasonably good shape; the paddling is mostly slow-going across flat prairies sometimes choked by peat blowups, lily pads and bladderworts, and through narrow, shallow passages surrounded by vegetation. Call the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service exactly 60 days before the date you plan to go and take your chances: (912) 496-3331.

**East Entrance:** *Suwannee Canal Recreation Area* — The refuge headquarters, 8 miles south of Folkston off GA 121, starting point for most overnight wilderness canoe trips via the historic Suwannee Canal, with easy access to several day-use boat trails into Chesser and Grand prairies. The area offers a natural history museum, restored swamper cabin on Chesser Island, nature trails, boardwalk, observation tower, boat landing,

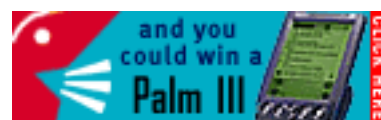
canoe & boat rentals, canoe shuttles, guided tours, bicycles, camping and fishing supplies. Concessionaires Kay and Carl Glenn will customize your camping trip and provide guides. The Glenns also offers wilderness tours on the St. Mary's River and surrounding areas. (912) 496-7156.

**West Entrance:** *Stephen Foster State Park* — The least visited entrance offers the only camping and cabin lodging adjacent to the swamp. About 7 miles northeast of Fargo. Starting point for a limited number of overnight trips, plus several day trips. Popular with day fishermen. (912) 637-5274 or <http://www.ganet.org/dnr/parks/>

**North Entrance:** *Okefenokee Swamp Park* — A private, non-profit theme park about 10 miles south of Waycross operated by lease with the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service. It offers wildlife exhibits and guided boat tours but no access to the Okefenokee's interior. (912) 283-0583 or <http://okeswamp.com/>

**Back to Nature Getaway:** *The Inn at Folkston* — Innkeepers Roger and Genna Wangsness discovered Folkston on a side trip from their home in Virginia three years ago and fell in love with it. They bought this 12-room 1920s bungalow and converted it into a charming bed & breakfast with full amenities, the only one in town. The inn makes an ideal base for exploring the Okefenokee and canoeing the wild black-water St. Mary's, Suwannee and Satilla rivers.

The couple helped establish the Georgia Nature Based Tourism Association and can recommend several guide services. (888) 509-6246 or [www.innatfolkston.com](http://www.innatfolkston.com).



# Most Small Chemical Companies Not Ready for Y2K, Senate Panel Warns

Small chemical companies may be prone to Y2K bugs that could cause accidents harming surrounding communities, according to a survey released Oct. 21 by the Senate Special Committee on Y2K and the Chemical Safety Board (CSB).

More than 1,400 small chemical firms, including some in Texas, were sampled by Texas A&M University researchers. Nearly 90 percent are unprepared for Y2K and have not coordinated contingency plans with state and local emergency response officials.

Download the report at:

**[http://www.senate.gov/~y2k/documents/sme\\_chemrpt.pdf](http://www.senate.gov/~y2k/documents/sme_chemrpt.pdf)**

Problem sources: Process-control computers, embedded chips, and power

failures. A CSB Y2K brochure for small companies is available at:

**<http://www.csb.gov/news/1999/docs/smefinal.pdf>** and the March 1999 report can be downloaded at:

**<http://www.csb.gov/y2k/docs/y2ko1.pdf>**

Other sources: Phil Cogan, CSB, 202-261-7620, **[info@csb.gov](mailto:info@csb.gov)**;

Mike Downey, Texas A&M, 409-845-5524, **[m-downey@tamu.edu](mailto:m-downey@tamu.edu)**

Companies may be on EDF Scorecard at: **<http://www.scorecard.org>** or check state environmental agencies or Chris Robichaux, Synthetic Organic Chemical Manufacturers Association, 202-721-4163, **<http://www.socma.com>**

## How's Your State Handling Coastal Pollution?

Polluted runoff chokes rivers, destroys fisheries, and has been blamed for the Gulf of Mexico's "Dead Zone" and deadly pfiesteria. Is your state meeting federal clean-up requirements?

The 1990 Coastal Zone Management Act (CZMA) required coastal states to develop plans for reducing runoff from farms, construction, roads, and urban areas. Thirty of 34 coastal states have submitted plans, **<http://www.ocrm.nos.noaa.gov/czm/welcome.html>**. But only Maryland is proposed for final approval by the December 1999 deadline. Another half-dozen states are expected to receive approval in 2000. But many others are lagging.

The Coast Alliance has analyzed federal findings for each of the states, **<http://www.coastalliance.org/runoff.htm>**.

The group also wants the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration to follow the law and make states establish enforceable requirements for cleaning up runoff. House Democrats are accusing Republicans of trying to gut the program in the newest CZMA reauthorization bill (HR 2669).

Contacts:

Jacqueline Savitz, Coast Alliance, 202-546-9554, **[jsavitz@coastalliance.org](mailto:jsavitz@coastalliance.org)**

Peyton Robertson, NOAA, 301-713-3098, ext. 137, **[peyton.robertson@noaa.gov](mailto:peyton.robertson@noaa.gov)**

B-Roll: "The Challenge on the Coast," CNN, 404-827-5104

## EPA Proposes Rule on Radon in Drinking Water

The rule on radon in drinking water that EPA proposed Oct. 19 will affect many localities in the South. The National Academy of Science estimates that radon in the indoor air of homes causes some 20,000 U.S. cancer deaths each year. EPA withdrew a 1991 proposal for a limit of 300 picocuries per liter (pCi/L) after small drinking water systems protested the cost. The new proposal gives systems a choice: Either meet the 300 pCi/L limit or conduct an indoor air campaign while meeting a 4,000 pCi/L limit.

Lung cancer from radon inhalation is the main risk, even from radon in drinking water. Call your state drinking water agency to

find out if local water has been tested for radon, and call local water utilities to find out how they will respond. For EPA background, go to:

<http://www.epa.gov/safewater/radon/proposal.html>. See the Oct. 19 press release at <http://www.epa.gov/epahome/press.htm>. EPA contacts: Sylvia Malm, 202-260-0417; Anita Schmidt, 202-564-9452. Or contact the National Cancer Institute at 800-422-6237 or <http://www.nci.nih.gov> for a Fact Sheet. You may get a filmable demo of how to fix home problems from local remediation specialists, often listed by county health agencies.

## Pesticide Battle Looms in Congress

Congress may be poised to reverse its mandate that EPA re-examine the safety of major pesticides. Bills (S1464, HR 1592) to rein in EPA's implementation of the 1996 Food Quality Protection Act have garnered 24 Senate and 183 House co-sponsors.

EPA announced in August it is limiting use of some pesticides <http://www.epa.gov/pesticides/announcement8299.htm>.

One pesticide of concern is atrazine, found at high levels in some drinking water in the Midwest, where it is used to protect corn. The Environmental Working Group claimed in July <http://www.ewg.org/>

[pub/home/reports/mouthsofbabes/mouthsofbabes.html](http://www.ewg.org/pub/home/reports/mouthsofbabes/mouthsofbabes.html) that babies drinking formula powder mixed with tap water can be exposed to dangerous levels of atrazine.

The American Water Works Association <http://www.awwa.org/atrazine.htm> also wants atrazine use restricted. The Farm Bureau criticizes the EPA's review and says atrazine is vital to farms.

To see if atrazine or other pesticides occur in your area's drinking water, query EPA's database at [http://www.epa.gov/enviro/html/sdwis/sdwis\\_query.html](http://www.epa.gov/enviro/html/sdwis/sdwis_query.html) or contact state health officials, EPA region offices, or your local water utility.

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**The Southerner** [www.southerner.net](http://www.southerner.net)



# Encephalitis, Mosquito Control, and Malathion

Media focus on September's West Nile-like virus outbreak in New York may have diverted attention from more urgent stories relevant to your area. West Nile is just one of a group of insect-borne viruses causing encephalitis — others are more prevalent and more deadly.

The Big Apple's weak mosquito control program (key to preventing such diseases) may have been a factor in the outbreak. How good is mosquito control in your region? While some health officials avow malathion's safety, environmentalists feared spraying malathion from helicopters onto dense urban areas may have been a cure that was worse than the disease.

Check these clips on Florida malathion spraying: <http://tampatrib.com/news/medfly.htm>.

Cool weather lowers mosquito risks, but it's a long-term story in places like Chicago, Connecticut, Florida, New Jersey, New Orleans, and New York.

To check on this issue in your area, contact Duane Gubler or Ned Hayes at the Centers for Disease Control, 970-221-6400,

<http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvbid/dvbid.htm>; Jonathan Day or Walter Tabachnick at the University of Florida, 561-778-7200.

Other links:

Mosquito control: <http://www.rci.rutgers.edu/~insects/njmos.htm>.

Malathion: <http://ace.orst.edu/info/extoxnet/pips/malathio.htm>.

EPA factsheet: <http://www.epa.gov/pesticides/citizens/mosquitocontrol.htm>.

# Photovoltaics Find a Place in the Sun

Photovoltaic (PV) cells are finding new uses, including home roofing tiles, road signals, isolated structures, and post-disaster relief.

Cheaper, more efficient PV cells that are thinner than human hair can be used on windows and building exteriors <http://www.napa.ufl.edu/99news/solar1.htm>.

PV roofing tile allows homeowners to be paid for producing power for the local utility <http://www.smud.org/info/98archiv/1021.html>.

For more information, check with utilities, university researchers, businesses, and homeowners in your area. Other links: Ameri-

can Solar Energy Society (ASES) this month held a tour of homes in 42 states: Larry Sherwood, 303-443-3130, <http://ases.org/hometr>.

Natl. Renewable Energy Lab. can help with local stories: George Douglas, 303-275-4096,

<http://www.nrel.gov/media/mediatools.html>.

Aaron Hoover, University of Florida, 352-392-0186. John Castagna, Edison Electric Inst., 202-508-5661, <http://www.eei.org>.

B-Roll: James Auclair, WGBH, 617-492-3079, [footage\\_sales@wgbh.org](mailto:footage_sales@wgbh.org), <http://www.wgbh.org/footage>.



# Small Cities Face New Storm Water Rules

Urban areas of less than 100,000 population and smaller developments must soon reduce pollution from storm water runoff as larger cities must do now. EPA head Carol Browner is scheduled to sign a final rule by Oct. 29. The proposed rule would require localities to establish "best management practices" to reduce pollutants including sediment, oil and grease, litter, and pesticides, and to educate the public about runoff.

Environmentalists hail the proposal as protecting human swimmers and the environ-

ment (see: <http://www.epa.gov/owm/sw/phase2/index.htm>). Local public works officials worry about the cost to taxpayers and the impact on development.

Contacts:

Robin Woods, EPA, 202-260-4377; Stephanie Osborn, American Public Works Assn., 202-393-2792, <http://www.apwa.net/>; Ted

Morton, American Oceans, 310-576-6162, <http://www.american oceans.org/runoff/draining.htm>.

# Towers Pose Hazard for Migrating Birds

As fall migration begins, birds face an emerging obstacle: "towerkill." An estimated 4-5 million migrating birds die yearly after slamming into TV and radio broadcast and wireless phone towers, experts say.

The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service convened bird experts at Cornell in August to discuss the problem. The toll is likely to mount as

wireless phone and digital TV towers spread. Some 10,000 Lapland Longspurs were killed at a Kansas site in January 1998.

Ornithologists will be researching steps to reduce towerkill, and are asking the broadcast and communication industries to help foot the bill.

Contacts:

Al Manville, USFWS, 703-358-1963, <http://www.fws.gov/r9mbmo/issues/tower.html>; Bill Evans (ornithologist), Cornell Univ., 607-272-1786, <http://www.towerkill.com>; Jeff Bobeck, National Assn. of Broadcasters, 202-429-5350, <http://www.nab.org/>;

Stanley Temple, Univ. of Wisconsin-Madison, 608-263-6827; Alan Shark, Amer. Mobile Telecommunications Assn., 202-331-7773, <http://www.imta.org/>.

# Scientists Find Pollution Plays Role in Frog Deformities

Agricultural pesticides and other industrial pollutants can trigger frog deformities by acting on thyroid hormones, which regulate development of everything from frogs to people — new findings in October's Environmental Toxicology and Chemistry.

Pollutants from lake water in Minnesota and Vermont triggered malformations in lab-raised frogs, but scientists find that naturally occurring chemicals in some lakes can exacerbate the pesticides' potency to deform limbs, jaws, eyes, and spine. The findings also suggest how pollution might heighten am-

phibians' vulnerability to other deformity-provoking agents, such as ultraviolet light or parasites.

Authors:

Douglas Fort, 405-743-1435; James Burkhart, National Inst. of Env. Health Sciences, 919-541-3280.

Other sources:

Judy Helgen, Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, 651-296-7240; Michael Lannoo, US Coordinator, Declining Amphibian Populations Task Force, 765-285-1050; David Hoppe, Univ. of Minnesota, 320-589-6304.

One sample story: [http://www.sciencenews.org/sn\\_arc99/10\\_2\\_99/fob1.htm](http://www.sciencenews.org/sn_arc99/10_2_99/fob1.htm).

For an 80-page environmental hor-

## Audubon Prints Fish-Eater's Scorecard

Grouper or bluefish for dinner tonight? Diners' seafood choices can affect the environment, National Audubon Society says. They've issued a wallet-card to guide seafood-lovers with their ratings of species impact. Thumbs up: Alaskan wild salmon, tilapia, and bluefish.

Thumbs down: shrimp (caught and farmed), snapper, swordfish, and grouper.

Sources:

John Bianchi, National Audubon, 212-

979-3026, <http://magazine.audubon.org/seafood/guide/>; Stephanie Dorezas, Natl. Marine Fisheries Service, 301-713-2370, <http://www.nmfs.gov/>; Ben Sherman, Sea Grant, 202-662-7095, <http://www.seagrantnews.org/>; Andrea Root, Natl. Fisheries Inst., 703-524-8800, <http://www.nfi.org>.

979-3026, <http://magazine.audubon.org/seafood/guide/>; Stephanie Dorezas, Natl. Marine

Fisheries Service, 301-713-2370, <http://www.nmfs.gov/>; Ben Sherman, Sea Grant, 202-662-7095, <http://www.seagrantnews.org/>; Andrea Root, Natl. Fisheries Inst., 703-524-8800, <http://www.nfi.org>.

*Information and links provided by the TipSheet, a biweekly publication of the Society of Environmental Journalists, the Radio and Television News Directors Foundation and the Environmental Health Center. These are emerging stories you should be hearing*

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**The Southerner**  
**A Magazine Online** [www.southerner.net](http://www.southerner.net)



# Wooooo Pig Sooie

By Kristal L. Kuykendall

As a child growing up in Central Arkansas, I knew there were two times a week during the fall that I could not disturb my father: during Dallas Cowboys and Arkansas Razorback football games. It wasn't that I couldn't talk to him; I just couldn't expect to be heard. You all know exactly what I'm talking about. But for some reason, it never bothered me, at least not during the Arkansas games.

The first thing I learned about sports was how to call the Hogs.

"WOOOOOOOOOOOO, PIG SOOIE!"

## STADIUM SIZE

**Up North:** College football stadiums hold 20,000.

**Down South:** High school football stadiums hold 20,000.

## GETTING TICKETS

**Up North:** Five days before the game you walk into the ticket office on campus and can still purchase tickets.

**Down South:** Five months before the game you walk into the ticket office on campus and will still be placed on the waiting list for tickets.

People who've never heard it just can't possibly understand. It renders chills among Arkansans—even those who don't necessarily love the Hogs, I believe.

I never really cared whether the Razorbacks

won their football games. Heck, during the early '90s, it was accepted as fact that the Razorback basketball teams would win more than lose, and the opposite was true for the football team.

But it didn't matter.

We Arkansans went to games or watched them on TV, cheered for the Hogs, had a damn good time, and got over it when we lost. It was the camaraderie and entertainment that mattered most, at least to me. And it was the goosebumps I got æ and still get, to this very day æ when I'm in the stadium, and the crowd, completely without provocation or leadership, calls the Hogs in perfect unison.

Every state should have this sort of thing. It might not be possible for other states to have such a singular rallying cry, since most other states have more than one major university football team. (In Arkansas, the state's second-largest university in the capital city doesn't even have a football team, much less a major one.) When I moved to Lexington, Ky., several years ago, I was shocked to learn that they didn't have a "Wildcat call."

I kind of felt sorry for them.

I mean, they'd go to the games with their hidden bourbon bottles and scream and yell, but after about a quarter it got old. At least for me. I wanted to call the Hogs. I did like the Wildcats. I witnessed the arrival of Hal Mumme and his "Air Raid," and the short but starry college career of University of Kentucky quarterback Tim Couch.

I wanted the Wildcats to do well with their new coach and their favorite homebred Kentucky son (who happened to be a "cutie patootie" as Rosie O'Donnell says).

But watching the games without a loud, mobilizing battle cry just didn't seem right.

In fact, it seemed downright boring. Or elitist, which even many UK students will admit is a fair description of some Lexington athletic events. (The "student section" is only about a mile away from the action; wealthy

season-ticket holders unseat the students.)

And then I moved back to Arkansas, earlier this year. I went to a bar recently to watch the Hogs take on ... oh, I don't know. Somebody. I really went to the bar because I knew that at least 15 times during the game I'd be surrounded by a bunch of half-redneck idiots chanting "WOOOOOOOOOOO PIG SOOIE!"

It brought tears to my eyes.  
Go Hogs.

*Kristal L. Kuykendall is a business reporter for the Arkansas Democrat-Gazette. She's also worked as a copy editor in Lexington, Ky., and a freelance sports reporter in Central Arkansas.*

# Why Love Doesn't Love Football

By Love Rutledge

Perhaps there are women in New Orleans who follow the Saints closely, maybe even watch LSU and Tulane games on a regular basis. I, however, am not one of them. Despite my southern upbringing, I feel no end-all-be-all connection to football.

Let me back up.

I was raised on Bama ball, a product of lower Alabama (L.A., as some of the more pseudo-stylish people from the Gulf Coast call it). I'm not sure how old I was when I realized that Paul Bryant's first name wasn't really Bear.

On game days, my mom would make her famous cheesy bean dip and we all would hoot and holler at the TV. The contents of the casserole dish would be gone by the time the fourth quarter started. Though the event afforded us the opportunity to spend time together, it was always truly Dad's day. Left to our own devices, we ladies of the house would never elect to watch football on television.

## GETTING TO THE STADIUM

**Up North:** You ask, "Where's the stadium?" When you find it, you walk right in with no line.

**Down South:** When you're near it, you'll hear it. On game day, it becomes the state's third largest city.

There are other reasons I never bonded with the game, even though my father is a sports writer and absolutely lives and loves

it. I went to a private high school with no football team. (Sacrilege you might say...We had homecoming celebrations for soccer, the sport for fans who don't want to drizzle barbecue sauce on their new Izod shirt.) There was never the anticipation of the big game, or a booster club, or the mythological hunky quarterback that roamed the halls. I went to a few football games during my high school days. I saw the couples huddled together under stadium blankets, hands in each other's back pockets. I witnessed the teased, dyed-blond hair on the girls in tight jeans. I smelled the Rave hairspray detectable at any southern sporting event. I yelled for the home team. I paid attention to the downs and the penalties.

But my heart was never truly in it.

When asked the quintessential Alabama question, "Who do you go for?" I always responded "Bama," but that response was inherited.

Don't get me wrong. I love sports. I'm falling behind in work because I can't get



enough of the World Series. I love that ball park popcorn—the kind that

leaves a painful burning sensation in the corner of your mouth because Jo Anna in the concession stand poured in too much salt. I love watching an underdog climb back to clench a victory. I love that 75-year-old fan that Coach lets on the team bus so he can keep up his 300+ games-watched streak. But I don't love football. I don't understand why people buy those little plastic-poled flags with their team's emblem and attach them to their vehicles.

I don't understand why people use hard-earned vacation time to travel to away games. I really don't understand how to pronounce the name Favre. (I'm relatively sure that no one in Mississippi can say it, either.) I don't understand how anyone could have the last name Booty—like one of LSU's players fighting over the quarterback spot. Last year I thought, maybe, that I would have a more sustained interest in men playing with their pigskin.

I was wrong.

As a junior at Tulane University during its once-in-a-lifetime undefeated season, I

#### PARKING

**Up North:** An hour before game time, the university opens the campus for game parking.

**Down South:** RVs sporting their school flags begin arriving on Wednesday for the weekend festivities. The real faithful begin arriving on Tuesday.

figured that since we were winning so much, I'd feel like I had a vested interest in there somewhere... school spirit and all...maybe. With a Bowden at the helm of our school's program, even

people back home asked about my school.

Bowden brought recognition. Bowden brought pride. Bowden left.

As quickly as he had come, he vanished. Like Santa Claus in green and blue, Tommy Bowden built up hopes and then crushed

them with the abrupt departure no one seemed to see firsthand.

Again this year, I found myself at a southern school with little football fervor, no chest painting, no mania over who was in the end zone, and a big, empty Superdome. And the city of New Orleans offers little in the way of great athletics. The Saints are, well, just there. All of the hullabaloo over their boy wonder with the funky hair seems to be much ado about nothing. Everyone and their brother in the Crescent City seem to hate Ditka. The Saints don't inspire me to fandom.

Oh well.

I'll never be one of those women supporting her city's team, screaming her head off for the ESPN cameras. This year (since turning 21) I have, however, learned the one thing that makes the sport tolerable. Nothing chases a shot of football down better than a large, overpriced beer bought from a man who wears a paper hat and calls you "Honey" and means it. Now that's something I can appreciate.

#### TAILGATING

**Up North:** Raw meat on a grill, beer with lime in it, listening to local radio station with the truck tailgate down.

**Down South:** 30-foot custom pig-shaped smoker fires up at dawn. Cooking accompanied by live performance by Atlanta Rhythm Section or Lynyrd Skynyrd, who come over during breaks and ask for a hit off your bottle of bourbon.



A promotional banner for NextCard Visa. On the left, the NextCard logo is displayed above the Visa logo. The text "Internet Visa" is written below the NextCard logo. In the center, "2.9%" is written in large green font, with "INTRO APR" in smaller yellow font to its right. On the right side, there are two orange buttons: the top one says "Online Approvals" and the bottom one says "Save Money". To the far right, the text "CLICK HERE!" is written in yellow.



# The Politics of the Pigskin

By Karin Beuerlein

Ah, October. The blaze of leaves, the chill of wind, the approach of the Alabama game. I can't remember a time when the passage of fall was not marked by the desire to squash the Crimson Tide like a bug. I am a Vol forever—to my bones. I love Tennessee football. It makes my heart swell up in a tacky Lee Greenwood kind of way. Growing up, it never occurred to me that I should not love football because I'm female. I mean, I admit to a certain girly tendency to watch the actual ball to the exclusion of everything else on the field ("Holding? Who? Where?"), but I love the game as much as your average male redneck. And I look better doing it. Still, it has occurred to me that there are other reasons not to love football.

I am the daughter of two University of Tennessee alumni and sports fans. My mother is a screamer; she has been known to burst veins during ballgames. My father is a brooder; he prefers the radio broadcast to the television and sips beer silently through fumbles and touchdowns, reacting to both with the same slight facial expression. In terms of football genetics, I am my mother's child. I am acrobatic and vocal during games, and beer only makes it worse. But although I'm a daughter of the South, I did not soak up all the trappings of my upbringing.

I love my mama's fried chicken, but I'm more of an olive-oil kind of girl myself: I do yoga, believe in the fundamental goodness of

## CAMPUS DECOR

**Up North:** Statues of Founding Fathers.

**Down South:** Statues of the Heisman Trophy winners.

the government program, and subscribe to *Mother Jones*. I don't trust corporate schemes or conservative religious politics,

which happen to be the two legs Southern football stands on. I am painfully aware that the commandments about clipping did not come down a mountain on stone tablets. Football is made up, like Santa Claus and Oz. Nothing tangible is lost or gained in the struggle for the end zone, except maybe broken bodies that will betray age at an unnatural rate.

Lord knows I don't get squat for being loyal to my national champions. Through my television set, I systematically controlled the 1999 Fiesta Bowl referees with concentrated bouts of cussing, but the White House did not call me when my team blew the lights out in Tempe. Coach Phillip Fulmer did not send me an FTD bouquet to thank me for my third-quarter prayers, which, frankly, won him a damn fine ballgame. So why do I hang around, when I look like death in this shade of orange? Pride in my alma mater? Yes, I went to UT, but no, I don't remember it fondly. But that's another essay altogether. Perhaps I appreciate the physical discipline of athletics. But to be honest, I don't even consider everyone on the football team an athlete—no matter what he tells you, that thing hanging over the offensive lineman's belt is not a muscle. Besides, I'm no slouch myself. I invest considerable time in torturing myself with aerobics, running, and basketball, yet Neyland Stadium never fills with well-wishers on my behalf. This seems unfair. I'm quite good at aerobics.



Well, what about the life lessons that sports teach? The hardest thing about watching a sports broadcast is hearing the inevitable references to the monopoly student athletes have on discipline and character. Sportscasters, recognizing the metaphors that keep them employed, allot a significant portion of their broadcast time to plugging the idea that sports teach us about life. I played basketball in high school, and the lessons I learned had more to do with meanness, jealousy, and the sacrifice of academics in the name of Almighty Sport. Okay, I guess I did learn about life. I somehow managed to acquire some character and discipline of my own without the aid of a ball, puck, or bat. Alert Brent Musburger. The thrill of the spectacle? Now maybe we're getting somewhere.

One of the things human beings are best at is suspending their disbelief: It's the principle that drives the movie industry and its attendant rites of celebrity veneration. We take ordinary things and make them larger than ourselves with advertising and group psychology until they become something we can worship. Just look at what we've done with football. In the fall, it's on the tube three days a week with superimposed graphics that require college degrees to produce. We accord major-network sportscasters up to a hundred times the purchasing power of the city employees who rescue us from burning buildings. And for what?

Sportscasters know exactly what you know about the outcome of the game—which is to say, nothing. They get their predictions right about as many times as if they'd drawn them out of a hat, making pithy observations like, "Whoever controls the first half is halfway there." If I tried to write down the stuff they say and sell it as a freelance writer, I'd be slinging shakes at McDonald's faster than you can say, "Big players make big plays." Half the time they're not even talking about the game they're watching. They're talking about themselves: "When I was

coaching..." or "When I was the best-looking wide receiver Nebraska ever had..." or "Well, John, when I was starting quarterback for Florida State, I ran a play sort of similar to that, or really not like that at all, but what a play it was!"

Still, I remind you that humans love to suspend their disbelief, and if I'm anything, I'm human. I fall for sportscasting shtick all the time, even though all the prognosticators, except poor old Beano Cook, picked Florida State in the Fiesta Bowl and then didn't apologize when they were grossly, horribly wrong. I will enforce silence upon an entire roomful of people just because Kirk Herbstreit utters the word "Tennessee." I will glue myself to the screen so that I can hear the hardest-hitting line man Washington State Beauty School ever had tell me why he likes Tee Martin in tomorrow's game. I will watch the graphics shine and twirl on the screen like candy.

Okay, that undefinable something? I didn't want to say it, but of course there's something about sports that can capture us without our permission. In

#### ATTIRE

**Up North:** Male and female alike: wooly sweater or sweatshirt and jeans.

**Down South:** Male -- pressed khakies, Oxford shirt, cap with frat logo, Justin Ropers; Female -- ankle-length skirt, coordinated cardigan, flat riding boots (with flask of bourbon), Oxford.

#### WOMEN'S ACCESSORIES

**Up North:** Chapstick in their back pocket and a \$20 bill in their front pocket.

**Down South:** Louis Vuitton duffel with two lipsticks, powder, mascara (water-proof), concealer, and a fifth of bourbon. Wallet not necessary; that's what a date is for.

#### WHEN NATIONAL ANTHEM IS PLAYED

**Up North:** Stands are less than half full.

**Down South:** 100,000 fans sing along in perfect three-part harmony.

its finer moments it is as much an art as the swell and crash of a symphony. How else to explain the glory of a 100-yard punt return? If there were nothing in a game to appeal to our natural sense of wonder, could we lose ourselves in the outcome the way we do? Something is strangely right about a hard-fought touchdown. It's good karma. A ball passes through the uprights, and somewhere in China, a soft breeze lifts a butterfly over the branches of a eucalyptus tree. Shut up, I'm serious. Of course, football is not always pretty, especially when it pretends to be something it's not, like a battle with actual consequences. Or a substitute for thinking and conversation.

In our beloved South, football is an unconditionally sanctioned drug with pre-game approval from a local minister. It's a socially permissible escape from the ticking in your mind; it replaces the alcohol most Southern Baptists won't touch. Make no

mistake, this drug has side effects for heavy users. The harder you want to win, the more it sucks to lose. I know a man who doesn't speak to his family for days after Tennessee loses a game. For the less fanatical, football is like cotton candy: sweet and fluffy while it lasts, and utterly gone when it's gone. Regardless of which type of fan you are, there is a thrilling meaninglessness in choosing a side and attaching yourself to a particular outcome. Or maybe the side chooses you. Orange jerseys and the sound of the band playing "Rocky Top" will always remind me of childhood Saturdays when the air was crisp and redolent of pure blue sky. When I raked leaves until game time. When my mama and daddy turned on their respective broadcasts and settled into their peculiar patterns of listening, and the house filled with sound. It's October, after all, and it's time to wish Bama ill. Somehow, that's a beautiful thing.

# The Thrill of the Game

by Angela Gillaspie

From January to August, people in the South are the friendly type æ most of the time. At the end of August, things change; almost everyone (especially women) gets a suspicious look in his or her eye. The AP Poll and the ESPN/USA Today Coaches Poll are posted, and the SEC (Southeastern Conference) affiliation and ranking determines what and whom gets placed and removed from one's social calendar.

We display banners of snarling tigers, angry bulldogs, or bright orange letters proudly on our houses, bosom, and small children. We create tailgate culinary masterpieces with honor using bourbon, Tupperware, and a small grill. Packing and preparing the right ingredients for tailgating is an important and coveted skill that can't be learned but earned.

Anybody or thing that dares to stand in

the way of our team should be wary. The quote by William Congreve stating, "Heaven has no rage like love to hatred turned, nor hell a fury like a woman scorned," somewhat describes Southern women during football season. My sister hits the nail on the head when she said, "Hell ain't got no fury like watchin' Momma in her Tennessee moo-moo argue during half time with Aunt Ruth in her Bama house shoes."

For example, as I was standing in line at Winn Dixie, the lady behind me noticed my Auburn shirt and sneered, "Nice game against





ALUMNI

**Up North:**

Take prospects on sailing trips to entice them to join the law firm.

**Down South:**

Take prospects on fishing trip so they don't leave for the NFL their senior year.

Florida." I smiled and nodded, because that's what you do with people that have raging elephants on their chest this time of year. She blew smoke in my face and continued, "I mean, bless their hearts, Auburn tried. Too bad they didn't lay a whuppin' on 'em like we did two weeks ago." I kept a frozen grin on my face while listening to

her crow about her team. Finally, through the grace of God, it was my turn in line. I paid, and as I was leaving I quickly said over my shoulder, "Did ya hear that the Rolling Stones are gonna play the Bryant-Denny stadium next year? Yeah, the early rumor has them as a ten-point favorite over Bama."

A Southern gal develops her love for football early. High school football games are taken very seriously, and whether or not your team wins defines your social status and sometimes affects the type of guy you date. The majority of colleges chosen by high school graduates have to do with the team's SEC standings. It's a given, the man of your dreams will attend the college of your favorite football team.

Each state has its own rivalries and rules on whom to hate. In Georgia, you are supposed to hate Tennessee and Florida.

Living in Florida, I learned you are supposed to hate Alabama, Auburn and Tennessee, and now living in Alabama, I've found that you either hate everyone that plays Auburn, or everyone that plays Alabama. There is one axiom that I've found: most everyone hates Florida (except a few Florida fans).

Here in Alabama, football is akin to religion. They talk of 'mixed marriages' (an Auburn fan married to a Bama fan), 'conversions' (a Georgia fan becoming an Auburn fan), and other rituals and beliefs. A friend told me, "I used to sit by a lady at the UT games who would put hexes on the players by pointing at them, circling her finger and saying what she wanted them to do like, 'fumble, fumble, fumble' She even asked me if there was any player that I wanted a hex on."

I readily admit to praying really hard during those Hail Mary plays, and I have a cousin in Atlanta who wears her lucky black bra whenever Georgia plays.

How can women actually like football? Football defines whom we date, it can define whom we marry, it may affect whom our children marry, and lastly it gives us something to discuss in the line at the grocery store.

War Eagle!

FATHERS

**Up North:**

Expect their daughters to understand Sylvia Plath.

**Down**

**South:**

Expect their daughters to understand pass interference.

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# Bar & Grill

## Off the Tourist Path, Around the Quarter

By Lee Dresselhaus

So you're thinking of coming to New Orleans? And naturally, since you're going to be in the neighborhood, you just might, visit the French Quarter. Okay, give it up. You're not fooling anyone. The whole reason you're coming all that way into da deep, deep South is to see the legendary Quarter. You've heard of Bourbon Street your whole life and seen it in scads of movies. Looks like fun, doesn't it? Well, guess what?

It is fun. Tons of fun. In fact, you can have all the fun you can handle, and sometimes even more than the law allows in those Bourbon Street places, and in the Quarter in general. You can have fun 24 hours a day because the bars don't have to close, so many don't. And if fortify yourself for it you can have the best time you'll never remember. There's only one small problem.

Along with that iron constitution you're convinced you have (or at least you had in college) you need to bring a fat wallet. Those places along Bourbon are fun, but they're geared for tourists. So, like tourist traps anywhere else, they're expensive. Sometimes they're really expensive. Don't get us wrong, you can thoroughly enjoy them, but you pay for the carnival atmosphere of Bourbon, and you can pay dearly. If you don't mind paying \$4.00 for that beer, okay, but there is an answer that's worth exploring if you think you might want an alternative to the bustle of Bourbon Street.

Scattered about the Quarter are unobtrusive little local bars and "Bar & Grill" type places. They are mostly geared for the locals, people who live and work in and around the Quarter, and these places often have the flavor — and sometimes the slightly seedy atmosphere — of a neighborhood pub. These places are wonderful, and if you really

want a taste of what it's like to live and work in a place like the Quarter, it is very much to your benefit—and your wallet—to seek them out. To aid in this worthy endeavor we have compiled a list of what we consider the top 10 local bars, or Bar-&-Grills, in the French Quarter. There were no particular criteria to go by in the selection process other than the preference of the locals—and the author's humble opinion.

In no particular order, check out:

### **Coop's Place, 1109 Decatur.**

Owned by Jeff Cooperman, this little Bar & Grill has some of the best food, most generous portions, and the friendliest atmosphere you're likely to find anywhere. The extensive menu specializes in local flavor. We recommend the gumbo, the crawfish and tasso fettucine, and just about any of its other seafood dishes. The jambalaya is great, the booze is cheap, the music from the jukebox loud, and the help friendly, if sometimes a bit too tattooed for Mom and Pop. But it's the Quarter, so get over it. Great prices too, by the way.

And right next door to Coop's, we have:

### **Molly's At The Market, 1107 Decatur.**

Jim Monahan is the owner and proprietor of this long-time Decatur Street hangout located near the famous French Market. Molly's is a hangout for the local media types and on any given day or night you might run into—or have to step over—one or another of those folks. Molly's is an Irish Pub kind of place, and it makes what is probably the best

Irish coffee on the planet. Molly's is a traditional not-to-be-missed stop on St. Patrick's Day. Sometimes it has food, sometimes not, and when it does, it's generally burgers and such.

Speaking of burgers, up the street and around the corner we have:

### **Port Of Call, 838 Esplanade Avenue**

You want a burger? This place has a burger. Boy, does it have a burger. Located right on the edge of the Quarter, Port Of Call offers what can be described only as a burger lover's dream. Its burgers are huge and always made-to-order. The atmosphere is dark, old-Quarter, mixed with a slight sea-going feel. The prices are right, and the service good. If you go there for lunch, go early, and if you go there for dinner, go either early or late, or you won't be able to get a seat.

### **Harry's Corner, 900 Chartres**

If you're looking for elegance, forget it. On the other hand, if you're looking for a place that fits the definition of a local bar to a 'T' this is it. The slightly seedy Harry's is located on the corner of Chartres and Dumaine and is most definitely a neighborhood pub. It doesn't serve food, it serves booze. Lots of it. The atmosphere is French-Quarter dark and smoky, and often decorated with various locals. Don't be surprised to see a dog or two hitched to the balcony support outside. Walking your dog is thirsty work, after all.

### **The Dungeon, 000 Rue Toulouse**

Now, this is not exactly a neighborhood pub. If you're looking for the peace and quiet or the quaint atmosphere of a local pub, look elsewhere. The Dungeon ain't it. In fact, the place doesn't even open until midnight. That's right, opening time is midnight. Does that tell you anything? Even though it's located near the heart of touristland on Rue Toulouse near

where Toulouse intersects Bourbon, we've included it in our survey because it's a great local favorite. The Dungeon is packed, noisy, and jamming every night with loud rock and people looking to dance. Business-like bouncers who look a lot like people you don't want to annoy are there to ensure the crowd stays nonviolent. The music is in the sonic-boom range, volume-wise. It closes around dawn each day, if you can last that long.

### **The Chart Room, 300 Chartres**

Another example of a genuine local pub. No bells and whistles here, and no food either, just good service, friendly bartenders, and reasonable prices. Dartboards adorn the back walls, and the patrons range from businessmen to bikers. The entire front of the place opens onto Chartres Street, so you can sit and watch the traffic going by, glad you're not one of them. Like a lot of the local places in the Quarter, the staff tend to stay around for years, so you may well see the same bartender you saw on your last visit.

### **The Jimani, 141 Chartres**

This is a fun place. The Jimani is a genuine Bar & Grill, with the grill actually in plain view behind the bar. The menu is limited to the usual burgers and chicken, but this place makes the best Rueben sandwich you've ever had. Eight televisions are scattered around the walls, and if you're looking for a place to watch football, this is it. It's dark, friendly, and comfortable as a well-worn pair of shoes. The night crowd there includes a lot of the bartenders, waiters, and waitresses from other places in the Quarter.

### **Snug Harbor, 626 Frenchman**

The locals just call it Snug. It's a couple of blocks outside the Quarter in the Faubourg-Marigny area, and if you want some great late-night music, this is definitely the place.



Snug always has some of the best local bands performing, and when you're talking about New Orleans, that says a mouthful. John Cleary, Charmaine Neville, and Ellis Marsalis are just some of the terrific acts you can find there. The prices are good, and Snug has a great little amphitheater area where you can really watch the acts do their thing. It serves food as well, and the menu is varied and reasonable. We highly recommend a visit to Snug.

### **Tipitina's, 235 North Peters**

No trip to New Orleans would be complete without a visit to Tip's. If you like music, Tip's has, well, the best you can find anywhere. Tip's rocks. The music varies and on any given night you can hear jazz, blues, rock, soul, and/or just about anything else you can think of. Tipitina's has a long history in New Orleans of providing the best in the way of local musical entertainment. This is attractions as they can be. You can eat, drink, and as the locals say, "pass a good

time." another highly recommended local place.

### **Cosimo's, 1201 Burgundy**

Cosimo's is the ultimate local bar. Located on the corner of Burgundy and Gov. Nichols in the Lower Quarter, Cosimo's is a local hangout with class. No food is served, but the place is clean and comfortable, the bar prices are good, and the drinks are strong. Cosimo's has been a landmark local hangout for generations, and the bartenders tell us that they get the occasional customer who tells "war stories" about hanging out there in the 'sixties. Cosimo's is definitely a worthwhile side trip.

Well, there you have it. If you are lucky enough to stumble into some of these places you'll see what we mean. They are as different from the mainstream tourist attractions as they can be. You can eat, drink, and as the locals say, "pass a good time."

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## Bar & Grill

# Ribs and Blues

by Ron Sitton

I rarely get to hear Texas blues in Knoxville. These people lean more toward the Chicago style with its jumpin' beat. Though that's great, sometimes I long for the sound that first turned me on to the blues.

Things were getting crazy in Knoxville when the blues-list alerted me to Jonny Moeller 3 playing at our local juke joint, Sassy Ann's. So I headed over on a steamy August night under the full moon.

The night started slowly, but as the band played, the beat picked up. Having never heard Jonny Moeller 3 before, the large dose of '50s-style rock 'n' roll these guys jumped into surprised me—Chuck Berry would've been proud.

A little bit of N'awlins-style piano cut through the din of the crowd as the band rolled into a laid-back rendition of Magic Slim & The Teardrops' "You Can't Lose What You've Never Had." The piano had just a hint of Professor Longhair with the tinkling of the keys running up and down my spine.

Nice—while the guitar wails, the piano supplies the undergirding, and the drums lay down this wide-assed beat the size of a coal-hauler. The drummer has the chops—he's using a ride cymbal for the crash, as he's only playing with two cymbals. The pianist plays bass when the guitar leads—the guitar pulls the rhythm while the piano takes off. Both the drums and piano are straight ahead.

Approximately 60-70 people take in the scene at Sassy Ann's—not a great night, but

not bad in a conservative town that loves Ted Nugent and thinks Taj Mahal is an abnormality. (A lack of enthusiasm for Taj's multi-cultural show was evident earlier in the week).



Jonny Moeller plays Knoxville.

I look for a menu—whiskey on an empty stomach ain't fun. Though the sear-roasted prime rib with Cajun spice and either a baked potato or rice and veggies sound good, I go with the slow-cooked pork ribs, cole slaw and fries. Sassy Ann's cook Jackie Lee Ellis guarantees they're the best in town. "We try to go with the Texas favorites since that's where (the band's) from," he says with a grin.

Wilson spotted the Tabasco in the sauce before the meal hit the table. Though his olfactory sense is muted, he claimed he could smell it. It's not my favorite combination, but the food didn't last long. The meat was so tender it fell right off the bone.

So I'm happy, catching a taste of Texas in Knoxville. What's even more incredible: This isn't the regular Jonny Moeller 3 line-up, but the group sounds as if they'd been playing together for at least 15 years. Jonny Moeller leads the trio with his '57 Stratocaster reissue, while his brother Jay beats the skins. Matt Farrell, the regular pianist for Austin's Keller Brothers, took Mike Flanagan's place on this trip without missing a beat.

A lil' Robert Johnson tremolo over a church organ. Back and forth, they light into a slow swing. A couple gets up and sways to

the music. Ahhh!! Organ feeling the air—letting everybody know he's in town leading the way. Maybe a lil' looser now than earlier in the set. And as low rumble moves in, a lil' staccato guitar gives way to raindrops and a jazz feel reminiscent of Stevie on "Lenny." The hair rises on the back of my neck Typewriters don't do this justice at all. Swing me low. Swing me low.

The drum rolls along and then stops to give super power to a decrescendo that brings applause from the crowd now sitting on the edge of their seats like a wave crashing and rolling onto a beach, and then the pull of the tide on its way back out. Then the guitar screams again. Torrid!! You can feel the blades of the fan cutting through the heat. Damn, I haven't heard anything this good since SRV. The Louisiana-Texas blues—I almost feel at home.

A duo between the guitar and piano captivates the crowd. It's almost like sunshine on the front porch, and a glass of lemonade waiting for you to come out of the sun. That's what you catch about the Texas blues. You can hear the rain settling the dust. It's not hard enough to cause a SPLAT but more of a SPLOOF. Like a storm rolling over the plain, the piano's thunder is accentuated by the lightning display from the guitar. People wanna hold up their hands like they were listening to a good sermon. Wilson walks by and says, "Sometimes you've gotta get Pentecostal about the Blues." Others nod.

Almost a crying guitar: Baby please come home. I know I done wrong but I swears I'll do better next time if you'll just give me the opportunity to walk through that door. A little rainbow at the end promising a sunny day

someday. A good dose every now and then to melt away a bad disposition, and sometimes it looks like it's all gonna fall flat in your face, but you can stand up and dance anyway.

Yeah, Texas blues—fading away at the end of the note. It's there in your face, but receding at the same time, like those old telephone bells with dampers. It's the kind of music that pulls the skin behind and below your ears to the top of your head. Texas blues has an effervescence, like steam rising off a hot blacktop produces a mirage, but this one's in stereo.

For a moment the musicians take a break and speak of an expected December release of a new album through the Dallas Blues Society. Jonny Moeller's impressed with the crowd, contrasting it with Austin's, which he says has become a haven for yuppies who don't care about the music. On this trip through

the Southeast, he's felt the crowds get into the music.

"Southern crowds are a lot more soulful," he says. "They clap when you play and are so attentive. Plus they eat cool food. Playing the blues is easy here, the people are with you."

So much so the band doesn't want, or take, a long break. The members start bringing up the locals to jam, including The Boogeymen's Lebron Lazenby and Andy Lewis, who provides a bass. As they cut into Lazenby's original "Just Keep Spendin'," Jonny Moeller makes it sound like he's played the song on tour for weeks on end, not at a moment's notice.

You can tell when musicians are on and when they're off. Occasionally, in even the best jam, the beat can turn on top. Experience will put you back in the groove after hanging with it. Then they turn it back over. Right there. No miss. You're waiting for it to fall



Jay Moeller lays the beat.



apart, but instead it becomes a Picasso turned into pointillism, all without a slip of the beat.

The Queen of Knoxville Blues takes the stage. Sarah Jordan is always a treat to listen to. If you've ever liked soulful Southern gospel music, you'd love it when she wails "I Don't Want No Man Telling Me What to Do." This lady can make people cry.

Then up jumps 14-year-old Danny Lee "Popcorn" Michael. Remember the name of this kid. He ain't going to do nothing but get better. As he ages, he's learning to play to the crowd instead of playing in his own cocoon.

And then it's like a family reunion. Roger Wallace, the original "RC" of RC and the Boogeymen, gets up to the delight of the crowd. Wallace is a Knoxville native now living in Austin. His roommate is Jonny

Moeller.

After a few more songs, the band finishes with a nice rendition of Professor Longhair's "Tipitina," a tribute to New Orleans' Tipitina's bar. As the band begins packing, Jonny Moeller delivers his take on blues heading into the millennium.

"It's cool here, depressing in Austin. It's getting harder to find the scene in big cities. People really dig it in Knoxville and a lot of cities in the South," he says. "In the South people go a little bit more crazy about it. It's in their blood. They feel it here, I don't know. In some places, they say Jonny Moeller 3 is too bluesy. I'm wondering 'Are you guys clueless?'"

Yeah, Jonny, they are.

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# A Culinary Adventure

By Jack Neely

I'd wanted to try them for 30 years, ever since I was at a semi-formal dinner in middle Tennessee where my great-uncle Leonard Neely was holding court. Uncle Len was born and raised in Williamson County, but lived in California, where it's a lot more fun to be a Tennessean than it is in Tennessee.

Picture a taller, balder Nelson Rockefeller in an Italian suit and a pencil-thin mustache who lives his life doing impressions of Davy Crockett as Foghorn Leghorn, and maybe you'll have some approximation of Uncle Len. An inventor who made a fortune in the oil industry, he lived a life more glamorously extravagant than any civil engineer has a right to expect. He boasted of riding Harleys with a motorcycle gang in California and about bagging wildebeest in Africa. He enjoyed showing off the watch that Generalissimo Francisco Franco had presented him in appreciation for some unspecified services I was always afraid to press him about. At least I knew he was with the good guys during World War II, when he constructed landing fields for Allied planes on Pacific islands.

Anyway, in Spain, in Africa, in Italy, in California, Uncle Len enjoyed playing the token Southerner. He stayed in character even when he was in the South. Uncle Len out-Southerned everybody in the room.

That's in spite of the fact that he spent



Illustration/Tattau

most of his life in Berkeley, Calif. He mostly liked Northern California, but he observed some shortcomings, and was happy to share them. He said that in Berkeley you couldn't buy catfish whole, with heads attached, which for him was the only way to eat them. He also complained that in Berkeley it was very hard to find good chitlins.

When he talked about loving chitlins when I was a kid, I remember witnessing the disbelieving awe around the table that an elderly, distinguished-looking man in a nice pin-striped suit and a pencil-thin mustache would be loudly extolling the virtues of eating pig intestines. From that moment I wanted to try chitlins too, partly so that Uncle Len and I would have one thing in common beside our last name and partly so that people would regard me with the same awe. For 30 years I wanted to. Recently, I did.

I found a recipe in the *Southern Cookbook*, which included a recipe for

“chitterlings” with some obvious misgivings. They called it “a recipe.” Not a good recipe, necessarily, just “a recipe.” Boil them in spices for a long time, then fry them in batter and deep fat. I figured I could handle that.

So I went to Kroger’s. Afraid to ask, I looked around until I found it, a plastic bucket full of chitlins for nine bucks. It cost more than I expected. Moreover, it was a good 10 pounds, a much larger volume than I expected. What if I just ate a little? What would I do with the rest? Bury it?

I figured it would be much safer to leave the details to the professionals. I went to a place in East Knoxville that’s allegedly “world famous” for its chitlins. Apparently it’s all they sell there. I’d driven by the place for years. I’d gotten out of my car and walked by it and peered in curiously. Once I even knocked on the door and was half-relieved to find the place closed.

On a recent Saturday evening, though, I went back, and I walked right inside.

My first surprise was the prices. I always thought people ate chitlins in large part because they were cheap, the byproducts of the production of more popular pork cuts. However, there was nothing on the menu for less than \$8.50; that dish, called the “Little Sister,” was basically a half-pound of chitlins, at about a dollar an ounce. For those of us who tend to judge restaurants by the cheapest thing on the menu — surely I’m not the only one — this chitlin restaurant may be the most expensive establishment in town.

You could order chitlins with spaghetti, but I didn’t. That may have been a mistake, but my thinking was that spaghetti’s a little on the intestinal side already. Serving it

together with chitlins seems somehow redundant. Anyway, even without the spaghetti, two side dishes came with it: a hot red pepper a little larger than a golf ball, and a small piece of cornbread.

My second surprise was that the chitlins weren’t fried in batter, as I’d read about in that cookbook that had dared to publish a chitlins recipe. They were just boiled, and heaped wet on the Styrofoam plate.

I tried to look as if it was exactly what I expected, took the plastic fork provided, and dug in. It’s fair to say I have never tasted anything like it. I don’t expect to ever taste anything like it again. The taste is strong and unlike anything else. Except, maybe, kissing an unconscious fat person with rotten teeth.

I ate more, expecting to get it. I figured maybe it was a little like cigars. That is, you try one, you hate it, you try another, you hate it, you try another, you still hate it, but you try another one and say, “hey, not bad.” And then maybe a few weeks later you find yourself craving it, and nothing else will do. With that in mind, I ate more and more plastic forkfuls of chitlins. I never got there.

I ate this uncommonly hot pepper just like I would have eaten a sweet peach on a hot day. It was fiery hot, but a great relief, and almost cleansed my palate for the next bite. I wished I’d had a dozen more hot peppers, and maybe some gin.

I left in awe of all the happy chitlin-eaters in the photo collage on the wall and of my late Uncle Len, even more so than when I was a kid.

Maybe in the future I will astonish Northerners by boasting of once having eaten chitlins. Maybe I’ll even say I liked them.





## In Passing

# Celestine Sibley: *Gone But Not Forgotten*

By Carole Ashkinaze

“Celestine Sibley, the prodigious chronicler of a half-century of Southern life, is gone,” *The Atlanta Journal and Constitution* reported in August.

Not a bad lead, by her standards. Crisp. Factual.

But a tad pompous. A “prodigious chronicler” she was, rising at 3 a.m. daily for years, to write books and start the kids’ breakfasts before heading downtown to cover murder trials and political hi-jinks for the AJC. But I think the phrase would have made her squirm. As would the tributes from the high and mighty, and the (yes) prodigious amounts of newsprint that her old newspaper devoted to retrospectives, reminiscences, and reprints of her past columns in the days following her death at 85.

Sibley, who by her own account wrote more than 10,000 columns and countless news stories for the paper between 1941 and 1999, preferred the workaday term “reporter” – though she was also the author of 25 books. She lived long enough to see herself described, in news stories shortly before her death, as a “legend,” and pleaded with her friend Bill Emerson, former Atlanta bureau chief for *Newsweek*, to “get them to stop this legend talk. . . tell them I’m not a legend.”

Emerson would not. As he said in one of two eulogies delivered at her memorial service in Atlanta, “There is a scarcity of legends in the journalism business today, and Celestine’s



Illustration/Tattau

death is a serious loss.”

“She was the best columnist that the Atlanta newspapers ever had, better than Bill Arp, Henry Grady, Ralph McGill, Lewis Grizzard or any of the others,” he said.

She was, former *Constitution* editor Bill Shipp said, “absolutely the best court reporter I ever saw. She knew how to bring a trial to life like nobody I’ve ever seen before or since.”

“That woman,” said food writer John Egerton, “could write a column while I was trying to figure out how to set the margins on my typewriter.”

Another late lamented figure in the *Constitution*’s history, the Pulitzer Prize winning editor, publisher and columnist Ralph McGill, doted on her. “If there is a queen of our news shop, it is Sister Sibley,” he once wrote. “She can put words down in a

manner to excite envy among the rest of us.”

Celestine did not always feel so appreciated, in life. She lived a hard life, in and out of the newsroom – raising three children without much help from an alcoholic spouse who died at 45; writing pulp fiction for “true confession” magazines, and novels as well as news stories to keep a roof over their heads; burying her beloved second husband, Jack Strong, in 1988; and in her later years, baffling “Generation X” editors from other parts of the country who could only scratch their heads at the vast following her prosaic “Sweet Apple” columns enjoyed.

“Like Sibley herself,” AJC staff writer Bo Emerson wrote after her death, “her columns were deceptive in their plain attire. She dealt in the homely and the homespun. She wrote about washing and starching curtains, digging in the garden, enjoying spring rain and summer vegetables. These topics she related without artifice, but with an abiding love of language and a natural raconteur’s ability to spin a yarn.

“Her sharing of the small and large moments of her life at her log cabin home, Sweet Apple, made for an intimate relationship with her readers, who were forever mailing her packets of seeds, cuttings from favorite plants, cakes and poems, books and music, and letters of undying affection.”

Sibley was already nearing retirement age when I joined the paper back in ’76, at less than half her age, and she was hard to miss in our newsroom, with her mismatched sweaters and skirts, flyaway hair, chortling laugh and sensible shoes. She was a Southern original, about as far from the Southern belle prototype as one could get, and a lot more authentic. She was a good ole girl, who valued food and family over fashion; who understood the pull of one’s home place; who loved a good story more than anything in the world; and who had absolutely no intention of being put out to pasture at age 65 or 75 or 85.

She wrote a book, *Dear Store*, about the Atlanta department store with a heart (Rich’s)

that endeared her to Buckhead matrons as well as country folk. (It was also novelist Pat Conroy’s favorite). She had a sense of humor that she regularly turned on herself, choosing an absolutely grotesque picture of her gangly, knock-kneed 9-year-old former self dressed as a “fairy queen,” for the cover of her 1988 memoir about the eccentrics in her life and family, *Turned Funny*.

She did not have to give the time of day to me, a relative nobody. But she accepted an invitation to address the weekly writing class I taught at Emory University, with glee – and then disarmed us with her candor. If you want to be a writer, she told the group, don’t be too picky about where you’re published. There’s money to be made in writing about teenagers who sell their babies, for pulpy magazines. Then she confessed that, in all her years of book-writin’, she had never used an agent. “Maybe an agent could have made me rich,” she mused, “but that isn’t why I write my books.”

Though she was eventually persuaded to “retire” from the AJC in the ‘80s, she continued to churn out newspaper columns for the AJC after her beloved Jack died, at a freelance rate so paltry that, notwithstanding the simplicity of life in a log cabin, she didn’t have enough to live on. She had been underpaid for so many years, in comparison with trendier columnists like the late Lewis Grizzard, that not working wasn’t an option either. It took a formal protest by her colleagues to win her an adequate post-retirement contract, even after all those years of yeomanlike duty.

Celestine, now extolled as a legend, also endured the indifference of boy and girl wonders, who breezed through the newsroom in the ‘80s and ‘90s on their way to greater glory in New York or Washington, without so much as a “How’s yo’ family an’ them?” for her. She knew that to some of those telegenic, upwardly mobile reporters, she was older than Moon Pies and as unappealing as a Chattahoochee mudslide after a heavy rain.

But Celestine did not depend on others for her sense of self. Heartaches, poor relations and personal embarrassments that would have been hidden by many a Southerner were trotted out as stars and emblems of her columns and books. She not only knew how to turn a good phrase, she also tapped a deep well of personal triumphs and terrors. Like good ole country songs, Sibley's stories tugged at the heartstrings of readers who had "been there," whether they continued to eke out hardscrabble lives in Dawsonville or had ascended to one of the stuccoed palaces along Atlanta's fabled West Paces Ferry Road.

Alexis Scott, a former AJC editor who left to become editor and publisher of *The Atlanta Daily World*, a black newspaper, admits she had never even read Sibley's columns until she was assigned to copy-edit them, having had virtually no interest in the life of North Georgia mountain folk. Once she started, however, she was stunned at how beautifully crafted they were – and how they held her attention, no matter what the subject matter.

Celestine was "not a goody-two-shoes," Bill Emerson said, in his eulogy. "You made a mistake if you thought she was a passive, accepting sort of person. She had mirth and instant wrath, but along with the fire came good taste and a keen sense of justice. If you knew her or read her carefully, you discovered that she was mischievous, insatiably curious, improvident and very bold. If you were seriously rude to Celestine or one of her friends or family, she would tack your hide across her next column."

Once, asked to cite her favorite among the thousands of columns she had written, she chose one she had written about the "Retreads" – men who'd survived fighting in two or more wars; her column, lambasting

civic leaders for failing to grant them free admission to the Cyclorama, a civil-war memorial, won the vets free tickets – and a Peachtree Street parade.

My personal favorite is one she wrote in 1976 when she joined a team assigned to cover the Democratic Presidential Convention in New York. With no floor pass, and an outsider's sense of the absurd, she strode into the convention hall in her freshly dry-cleaned raincoat and sensible shoes, an oversized "VIP" tag dangling from her lapel. Anyone who took the trouble to check the fine print on her "badge," which didn't look a bit like the press credentials her colleagues wore, would have discovered that it was her dry cleaner's way of apologizing for failing to get a stain out – even though it had received "VIP" treatment. Whether those standing guard at the entrance to the inner sanctum were intimidated by the sheer force of Sibley's determination or just appreciated a good joke wasn't clear; but her audacity got her in, and resulted in one of the most hilarious, and memorable, columns of the campaign.

Celestine was, and remains, an inspiration to me. I've never known anyone like her. But former Congressman Jim Mackay, a friend of the *Los Angeles Times'* Jack Nelson, may have said it best. As Nelson quoted him, in the second of two eulogies delivered at Sibley's memorial service:

"(Celestine) has loved the people in all walks of life in Georgia and she has received that love back – and it's not easy to be loved if you're a newspaper person."

*Carole Ashkinaze, a Washington-based freelance journalist, is a former columnist and editorial writer for The Atlanta Journal and Constitution, and Associate Editor of The Southerner.*

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# Civil Rights Leader Daisy Bates Dies at 84

Daisy Bates, a civil rights activist who led the fight in 1957 to admit nine black students to Little Rock's Central High School, died Nov. 4. She was 84.

As the president of the Arkansas NAACP, Bates played an instrumental role in the litigation that prompted Washington to use federal troops in the desegregation of Central High. In the 1954 case *Brown vs. Board of Education*, the U.S. Supreme Court declared segregation unconstitutional.

Beginning with the 1954 decision, Mrs. Bates fought for desegregation by nurturing and caring for black students seeking admission in white schools. Her novel *The Long Shadow of Little Rock* depicted the turmoil she went through during the '57 Central crisis, including having her house bombed and crosses burned in her yard. In *The Arkansas State Press*, a local newspaper published by her and her husband L.C. Bates, she frequently wrote about her attempts at registering black students in white schools. The newspaper was finan-

cially ruined after the confrontation in 1957.

Mrs. Bates was a key figure in looking after the nine children who were eventually accepted to enroll at Central. She and her husband escorted the children to Central on the first day school, where they were turned away by bayonet-wielding National Guardsmen. Gov. Orvall Faubus ordered the troops to use force if necessary to stop the children from attending, saying, "Blood would run in the streets" if they were allowed to enter Central High.

The confrontation sparked then-President Dwight D. Eisenhower to call in federal troops to enforce the 1954 Supreme Court decision.

Mrs. Bates is survived by four brothers: Emmitt Gatson of Detroit, Kucas and Lowell Gatson of Spearville, La., and Leo Gatson of Strong, Ark. On Nov. 8, her body lies in state on the second-floor rotunda of the Arkansas Capitol, only steps away from where in 1957 Gov. Faubus organized the famous confrontation.

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# Books

## History Through Books

### *Visiting Natchez, 100 Years Later*

By David R. Mark

Henry C. Norman took thousands of photos of Natchez, Miss., in the latter decades of the 19th century. Dr. Thomas Gandy and his wife, Joan, have spent the latter decades of this century cataloguing those photos.

The Gandys have, since 1978, published four books of Norman's photographs.

Two additional books are to be published this December by Arcadia Publishing: *Natchez: City Streets Revisited*, and *Natchez: Landmarks, Lifestyles and Leisure*

The photos are fascinating for students of Southern history as well as early photography. Henry Norman's work included portraits of Natchez's well-to-do, shots of the busy commercial areas, from the city's business district to Natchez-Under-the-Hill, where steamboats landed. Natchez was a wealthy city — in the latter part of the 19th century, it had more millionaires per capita than any city in the nation, save New York — and its structures were virtually untouched by the Civil War.

Norman captured details that might otherwise have been lost: the Omnibus that ran hourly from the river landing, the gorgeous interiors of the J.M. White and other steamboats, wagons piled high with cotton, and the devastation caused by flooding. Norman was there, as well as in nearby communities such as Bayou Sara and Angola,



La. His work remains one of the most extensive remaining collections of 19th-century photography. But if not for Dr. Gandy's dogged pursuit to preserve history, Norman's photographs might never have seen the light of day.

As the story goes, Dr. Gandy, an internal medicine specialist and history buff, was in search of a few good photographs of Natchez's rich history — steamboats on the Mississippi River, or perhaps the lively world of Natchez-Under-the-Hill. In 1961, he contacted the widow of Earl Norman, who like his father, Henry, had taken decades worth of photographs of Natchez and the surrounding communities along the Mississippi.

Mary Kate Norman kept several dozen boxes of negatives on her front porch, slowly being destroyed by their exposure to the weather. After a lengthy afternoon of tea and conversation, Dr. Gandy persuaded the widow Norman to sell him the lot: more than 30,000 glass plates and an equal number of celluloid negatives, extending over 100 years of work from the Normans. The photos date from 1870.

“It is such a huge collection and nearly a 100-year slice of this city,” Mrs. Gandy says. “It so typifies what was happening in a small town in the Deep South.” Dr. Gandy bought photography books and antique equipment and taught himself to restore the photos. Natchez’s elders helped identify many of the people in the photos and provided context for much of the history.

A second career was born. After restoring and cataloguing the photos, the Gandys held exhibits, traveling as far as California to display Norman’s work. Books followed,



including *Norman’s Natchez: An Early Photographer and His Town* (University Press of Mississippi, 1978) and *Natchez Victorian Children: Photographic Portraits, 1865-1915* (Myrtle Beach Press, 1981). An expanded version of the second book was published last year by Arcadia under the title *Victorian Children of Natchez*. The Gandys also published *The Mississippi Steamboat Era in Historic Photographs: Natchez to New Orleans, 1870-1920* (Dover Publications, 1987).

The Gandys — he’s 78 and she’s 60 — have been married for 25 years and have been writing together about the Normans for 21 years. But they aren’t done.

“Dr. Gandy is interested in doing a book on the fashions of the period,” Mrs. Gandy says. “And I’d like to do a book on the 1930s in Natchez, because it was a vibrant time for social history and architecture.”

With a treasure trove of photos to choose from, the Gandy’s quest to unearth their city’s history is ongoing.





# Good Tunes for the Holidays

Reviews by Ron Sitton



The holidays approach as does the Fire Sale, when I cull my discs for Christmas cash. It hurts sometimes, but it makes me annually evaluate the music I have. I don't see any traders in this group — they're going to be

stuck in my CD player for awhile. If you're clueless about Christmas gifts, give the gift of music. Any of the following would make a great stocking stuffer for your Southern music fan.

## Ratings

Wow! Find this disc!! — 

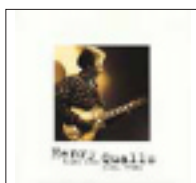
Sounds good to me! — 

Worth the extra cash — 

Some kewl stuff here — 


Ducks sound better — 

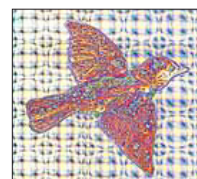
**Henry Qualls**  
"Blues from Elmo, Texas"  
*Dallas Blues Society*  
RATING: 




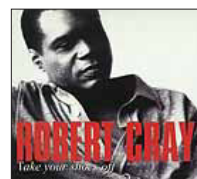
**Sharon Mosby**  
"I Can Handle That"  
*RiverBay*  
RATING: 



**Widespread Panic**  
"Til the Medicine Takes"  
*Capricorn*  
RATING: 



**Robert Cray**  
"Take Your Shoes Off"  
*Rykodisc*  
RATING: 



**Wilson Pickett**  
"It's Harder Now"  
*Bullseye Blues & Jazz*  
RATING: 



**Boogeymen**  
"Sister Blue"  
*Independent*  
RATING: 



**Delicious Blues Stew**  
"Stewed Alive"  
*Independent*  
RATING: 



**Sweet Pea's Revenge**  
"Bloodfire"  
*Independent*  
RATING: 



Send your tunes for review to Southern Sounds, UT Box 8820, Knoxville, TN, 37996. While all music is considered, priority reviews will focus on music by Southern bands- and music about the South or with definite Southern influences. Independent Southern artists are encouraged to submit their albums for review.

# Widespread Panic Catching —

## Best Southern Band of the 1990s

by Ron Sitton

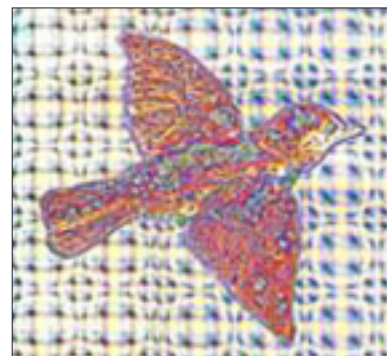
The holidays approach as does the Fire Sale, when I cull my discs for Christmas cash. It hurts sometimes, but it makes me annually evaluate the music I have. I don't see any traders in this group — they're going to be stuck in my CD player for awhile. If you're clueless about Christmas gifts, give the gift of music. Any of the following would make a great stocking stuffer for your Southern music fan.

Maybe this isn't fair. I'm clearly biased when it comes to Widespread Panic, the best Southern rock band of the 1990s. Only The Black Crowes come close, but Widespread's been more consistent. Anyone who knows me well knows I don't anoint this band lightly — I shaved my body hair to see its Nashville City Stages concert in 1998. This perplexed my sisters, who saw the band for free in Athens, Ga., not too long after that. But I had to go. And besides, another ticket “winner” swallowed a dozen live goldfish and proceeded to tell us how they were moving around (see Ma, I'm not the crazy one).

Widespread Panic makes you move and move and move — even if your mind says no. When you're ready to stop, the beat moves you again. I'm of the mind it's impossible to stand completely still (even your toes jiggle). This intensity is noticeable on the albums, but the live shows are what makes this band the tops (Panic's played more than 250 in the last two years alone).

The band caters to its Grateful Dead-type following through memorable performances and one of the best artist Web sites around. Widespread groupies can download a RealVideo version of Bombs and Butterflies' “Aunt Avis,” a Shockwave/Flash multimedia discography, or mp3 clips off Panic's old and new (see bottom of page) albums.

Though Widespread's last two studio albums have produced more hits, “Til the Medicine Takes” (Capricorn)



**Widespread Panic**  
“Til the Medicine Takes”  
(Capricorn)

is its most complete album since “Everyday.” Panic's sixth studio album and seventh overall features vocals and songwriting from the entire band, including drummer Todd Nance's vocal debut on the ballad “You'll Be Fine.” John Bell's vocals have never sounded better, while both he and Mike Houser wail on the guitars. Nance, keyboardist John “JoJo” Hermann, percussionist Domingo “Sunny” Ortiz and bassist Dave Schools comprise the best rhythm section playing today.

The tightly crafted album stresses songs over jams, but fear not: “Bear's Gone Fishin'” would fit perfectly at the end of Panic's rendition of Robert Johnson's “Me and the Devil Blues.” And they're not scared to try something new: Big Ass Truck's Colin Butler scratches on “Dyin' Man,” a song currently gaining airplay. You can also hear a lot of influences on this album: “Blue Indian” has a western swing feel punctuated by “N'awlins” Piano, and provides the line for the album's title. Producer John Keane's banjo pickin' gives “The Waker” a bluegrass tinge, while the Dirty Dozen Brass Band's horns make “Christmas Katie” a N'awlins-jazz favorite. “All Time Low,” one of the most powerful tunes on the album, features gospel singer Dottie Peoples' soulful growl punctuating the

song's end. Yet my favorite tune is the finale, "Nobody's Loss." Sounds like the fellas were sittin' on a porch ponderin' the complexities of life before comin' to the conclusion, "Nobody knows where to find us, cuz it ain't nobody's loss."

The fact is, if you don't get this album, it will be your loss.

## Robert Cray Wails



I'd never taken the time to listen to Robert Cray; never, that is, until recently. A comparison to Al Green piqued my interest enough to pick up "Take Your Shoes Off." I'm glad I did.

The Robert Cray Band's first "Rykodisc" album is a classic. Though known for blues, Cray and mates Jim Pugh (keyboards), Karl Sevareid (bass) and Kevin Hayes (drums) have made the best soul album of 1999 with the help of The Memphis Horns and The Nashelles among others.

"Love Gone To Waste" spares no punches in questioning love gone bad, while "That Wasn't Me" puts on the puppy-dog eyes in explaining away a mistake ("Could I have done something wrong?"). Though "There's Nothing Wrong" will help more than a few broken hearts mend, "Let Me Know" pays tribute to the mind games that can plague the end of a bad break-up ("Let me know, was it that bad?"). "It's All Gone" should cement Cray's place as a troubadour worthy of the pedestal many 1960s soul legends attained. He even pays homage to his blues roots on Willie Dixon's "Tollin' Bells," a powerful dirge which has you lookin' over your shoulder for the Grim Reaper.

If Cray's blues are anything comparable, I've got a lot of listening to do. Rate: \$\$\$\$

## 'The Wicked One' Back in Action



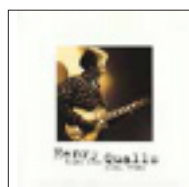
In the last line on "The Wickett," Wilson Pickett is no longer cool about his induction into the Rock 'n' Roll Hall of Fame in 1991. "It's Harder Now" (Bullseye Blues & Jazz), Pickett's first album since 1987, proves he hasn't lost a step; the Wicked One's voice has gotten better with age, producing the closest contender to Robert Cray for best soul album of the year.

"Taxi Love" displays Pickett's raw, soulful sound, while "What's Under That Dress?," "All About Sex" and "Hangin' Out With the Bad People" are clearly looking to hit the charts. "Stomp" is a funky groove — need anything else be said?

The movie "The Commitments" was based on the life of the man who recorded the classic hits "In the Midnight Hour" and "Mustang Sally." Pickett pays tribute to the times with "Soul Survivor," which notes, "We hit the big time in Memphis, but we came up in Muscle Shoals." The title track "It's Harder Now" reflects the mindset of a jaded lover, and you can hear it in Pickett's voice.

Maybe The Wicked One won't wait so long for a follow-up.

## The Hard Blues



I seldom review dated music, but a 1994 album available through the Dallas Blues Society. Henry Qualls plays the blues like I like 'em—slow and meaningful with the haunting Delta sound. Qualls' album "Blues from Elmo, Texas" is exquisite; the



voice feels the blues and the guitar doesn't detract from the story, but rather fills all the edges.

You can tell you're in for a good time when Qualls begins with "Bread and Butter," a surprising reinvention of the Newbeats' mid-sixties pop hit. His rendition of Little Son's version of "Rockin' and Rollin'" is lemonade in the front porch swing on a sultry afternoon. Listening to Qualls' "Death is Movin' Across the Land" is hearing a howlin' wind come across the Texas plains. "I Shall Not Be Moved," a traditional Southern gospel tune, becomes a defiant cry behind Qualls' bottleneck guitar and matter-of-fact vocal treatment.

It's been five years since Henry Qualls placed his signature on an album. Let's hope another five years don't pass before we hear something else.

## Boogeymen Gonna Get Ya

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It's hard to write about people you know personally. Actually, it's a Catch-22 — if you write good things about them, people will consider you prejudiced; if you write bad things, you may alienate a friend. So the best thing to do is to be truthful.

I first heard the Boogeymen in 1998 after moving to Knoxville. I didn't know who they were at the time, but their live show was contagious: Outside of Widespread Panic, the Boogeymen are one of the few bands I'll dance to. This may explain why they were BMI Showcase finalists in 1996 and 1997.

They're also some cool cats. Lead guitarist and vocalist Lebron Lazenby heads the Wednesday night blues jam at Sassy Ann's, Knoxville's premier blues bar, and on any given week, keyboardist Mark Caldwell and new bassist Andy Lewis join the jam.

So it was with a slight anticipation that I began listening to their new disc "Sister Blue,"



featuring former members Doug Cole on bass and Mike Ryan on drums. The disc showcases 13 original cuts, though one tune, "Call My Name," appeared on a widely distributed cassette, "Hey Watchiss!" If this debut disc is any indication, the Boogeymen are ready for the next millennium.

Sister Blue finds the band in fine form starting with "Going Down," a Southern fried rocker with a rhythmic feel. I kept waiting for the band to break loose on this one — its live version is much better. "Troubled Blues" combines a stomp with a Latin percussion feel, set off by Lazenby's soulful moan. The aforementioned "Call My Name" would make a great radio song that could get people bouncin' in their seats as they're driving down the interstate. Unfortunately, "Tell Me When" slows things down considerably with an almost sappy lovesickness, and "I'm Angry" just sounds sad. "Jagerman" is an instrumental masterpiece featuring Ben Phillippi's percussive rhythms, Lazenby's smokin' guitar and Caldwell's raindrop piano. Though Lazenby seems primarily influenced by the Chicago blues sound, one can detect shades of Stevie Ray Vaughan in his playing in the midst of "Killian's Dream." On a lighter side, "Genny X" is a hilarious satirical look at sex in the '90s.

All in all, this disc is a great demonstration of the Boogeymen. If they can ever harness their live sound on disc, look out! (BTW, Mark tells me he's got a backlog of material to cull for a live album. Prepare yourself, Southern brethren).

## This Stew is Delicious

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Delicious Blues Stew is a fun band with a Cajun-Zydeco-rockin' blues feel. Their musicality and off-the-wall antics earned them a place as a past



finalist in the International Blues Talent Competition in Memphis. Veteran Louisiana harp/frottoir player Shannon Williford, bassman Scott “Patio Daddio” Achord, and drummer Tom Larson have combined with Nashville session guitarist Brian Fechino on the band’s debut CD “Stewed Alive.”

The album mainly documents a performance described by Williford as “one of the strangest gigs that we ever did... in front of a handful of elderly country folks... (who) didn’t understand Stew at all, nor did we understand them.” Though it may not have been their favorite gig, it does a great job of showing how hard the band works.

You wonder how much dancin’ the crowd did, because the disc will move your feet.

“The Levee’s Gone Dry” describes fishin’—in a Cajun-styled blues. “Chicken” and “Communicate” are incorrectly listed on the CD cover, but that doesn’t detract from the sound. “Communicate” is appropriate, considering the audience and provides a sing-along tune that should get an audience involved in the performance. “Chicken” is a hilarious examination of fowl calls. Yet don’t think these guys just play around; “San Antonio” is a wickedly haunting bluesy treatment of long-distance love. But I’m sorry: Their disc can’t do justice to the show they deliver to an appreciative crowd. Even so, it would be worth it to have an example of some good N’awlins’ stew.

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## A Very Classy Woman

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One night, I’m at a bar . . . Likely you’ve heard such stories, but this is the honest-to-God truth. A friend in Knoxville gave me a disc to sample. I’d never heard of the artist, and though I respect my friend’s taste, I was totally unprepared for what landed in my CD player.



“I Can Handle That” showcases Nashville’s Sharon Mosby wailing on a mixture of original and cover tunes. It’s a shame she didn’t have Wendel Werner compose more songs. His “I Can Handle That” is easily the most poignant song on the album. “Mama’s House” is just plain fun with a boogie-woogie Bourbon Street feel. “The Day I See Jesus” makes you want to go to church for that spiritual lift.

Mosby and guest vocalist Sara Jordan, Queen of the Knoxville Blues, team up for Jordan’s “33 Days, 32 Nights” — a song about good lovin’ gone bad, bad, bad. The heavy-handed treatment of this tune is reminiscent of ZZ Top’s “Blue Jean Blues.”

I’m not a cover-lover, but if you do them, do them justice — Mosby does that and more. “Since I Fell For You,” “Feel Like Makin’ Love,” “Kansas City” and “My Funny Valentine” are but a few of the covers providing a great showcase for Mosby’s soulful, mellifluous vocals.

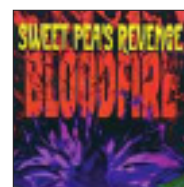
However, the reliance on so many covers may keep this voice from reaching the top. Even so, I’m thanking my friend for her recommendation.

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## Sweet Peas’ Revenge

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New Orleans’ Sweet Pea’s Revenge lies in the extended jammin’ vein of Southern Rock. The band released its debut self-titled CD in December 1997.



Since that time it’s shared the stage with Delbert McClinton, Government Mule and Better Than Ezra, among others. Its live shows have elicited comparisons to Widespread Panic, The Black Crowes and The Allman Brothers Band.

On its sophomore release, “Bloodfire,” Sweet Pea’s Revenge delivers 10 original tunes in the roots rock tradition. “Only One Way”

showcases the vocals and guitar of Jim Brown, and sounds a lot like Evan Chieda's funky bass and Stephen Randall's inspired drumming jumpstart, "Excuse Me," the song most likely to get a crowd moving. Kaye Dorian's bluesy wail compliments Brown's smoky sound on "Too Bad I Never Knew My Lover," yet not even Mike Wadworth's pounding the keys can save "Feed the Machine." "Primordial Gumbo" is a gem — Glenn Pearl's harp gives the song an elemental feel that goes to the marrow.

Sweet Pea's Revenge promises to be a band to watch in the next millennium.

Rate: \$\$

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