

November 2025

THE *Old Town* GAZETTE

**MERRY CHRISTMAS AND HAPPY
NEW YEAR TO OUR NEIGHBORS!**

It's Almost the End of Another Year!

What's in this issue



ANNUAL CHRISTMAS DINNER – DEC. 4TH

**LUMINARY PREPARATION AND DISTRIBUTION (BAGS, TRUCKS, SAND
AND CANDLES) – DEC. 13TH**

GARDEN TOUR 2026

LETTER FROM BILL KLING

HOLIDAY SAFETY TIPS

HOLIDAY RECIPES

PRESIDENT KATIE DAVIS

LETTER FROM KATIE STAMPS



HAPPY HOLIDAYS OLD TOWN NEIGHBORS!!!



Message from the Old Town Historic District President, Katie Davis



Fall in Old Town is one of my favorite seasons as the colors start to change, the leaves fall from the trees and the cool breeze brings us all out and about again. It was great to see a lot of you at Old Town's 4th Annual Spooky Fest this October. We had a fantastic time and hope that you did too. Thank you to those residents who supported by helping with set up and donating candy. We couldn't pull off such a fun event for the neighborhood without you! Wasn't Dawn and the Osborn Band incredible?! We'd love to hear your- feedback on how Spooky Fest went as we look forward to planning our 5th Annual OT Spooky Fest for next year.

Speaking of next year, the Old Town board has been hard at work planning for the 2026 Old Town Tour of Hidden Gardens. If you have already volunteered your garden for the tour, we are grateful to you! Keep an eye out for more information to come. If you'd like to be featured on the garden tour or just would like some more information, please let us know. This is such an exciting time for Old Town to show of the charm and character that makes our neighborhood so uniquely special to hundreds of visitors from all over! Tickets will go on sale in early 2026!

Luminaries is our next big event for Old Town. If you missed it last year, we put out thousands of bags with flickering candles lining the streets. It was truly magical! We hope the weather cooperates again this year so we can create a little holiday magic once again. Keep an eye on the website and social media for updates.

Thank you for a truly wonderful year! It has been an honor to serve the community as Board President. You've made it an easy position to fill with all the positivity and care to foster the preservation of that community charm through porch party get togethers, big events like Spooky Fest, and sharing ideas to promote the beautification of our historic district home.

All the best, Katie Davis



NEIGHBORHOOD INFORMATION YOU NEED TO KNOW!

The 2025 Annual Old Town Christmas Dinner will be held on Thursday December 4, from 5-9pm at the Holmes Street United Methodist Church.

You and the whole family are invited to join us for an old fashioned pot-luck dinner and bring a side dish of your choice that can be shared. Old Town will provide meat, iced tea, lemonade and water.

No reservations necessary - just show up! This is also a good time to meet our new neighbors and renew your membership for the year - we look forward to seeing you!

Fingers crossed that this year's beautiful Luminary evening will be dry and rain-free. Mark your calendars for Saturday, 9 am, Dec. 13 to come help us prepare luminary bags, sand and candles to be put in front of all homes in Old Town.

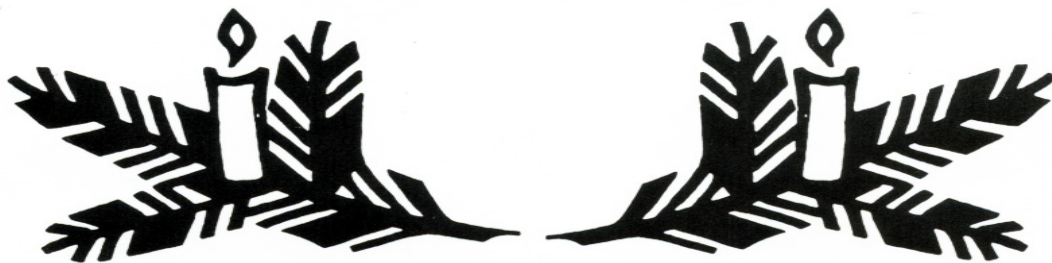
Meet us at the West side of Providence Classical School (Calhoun St. side) and you'll see our trucks and trailers. We just need you to help put the bags together with sand and candles. We'll have hot chocolate and coffee to keep you warm!

Crime Prevention Tips for Your Home

1. If someone calls you asking for credit card info, social security #, bank #s, etc. NEVER give out the information - you will be amazed at how persuasive these people can be, especially with older people. If anyone asks you for money over the phone, even charities, consider it a scam and just hang up.
 2. Every night before you go to bed, remove anything of value from your car and trunk. Lock up. Thieves are breaking into cars in record numbers, to get anything they can find. They usually work in groups.
 3. Try to get your shopping done in the daytime hours; parking lots are very scary places to be in the dark, especially during the upcoming holiday season.
 4. NEVER leave your purse or other valuables in your car when you are going to be away from it for a while - it takes just seconds for a thief to break in. Lock all your doors to your home while away.
 5. When you are driving through your neighborhood, watch for anything that looks suspicious - if you have any doubt call the non-emergency number 256.722.7100 and an officer will come out. Sometimes your tip may just be that missing piece of information police are searching for to get these people off the street.
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Happy Holidays from City Councilman Bill and Tanjie Kling



Contact Me!

email: bill.kling@huntsvilleal.gov
Phone: (256) 534-7704 Cell (256) 337-3045
I Promise You - I will Respond!

Hidden Garden Tour Of Old Town - 2026

Hidden Gardens Tour of Old Town for 2026 is going to happen on the first Sunday in June 2026. We NEED Gardens - please if you think your have a garden you'd love to show off we need you. It doesn't matter if it's tiny or very large. Every garden has its unique magic and new ideas for other gardeners.

Contact Dwight Wright or any board member if you can put your garden on the tour. Remember only the gardens are viewed - no home or porch entry.

This event only happens every three years and draws people from out of town and out of state. You need to show off your beautiful garden!

Old Town Historic District Officers and Board of Directors - 2025

President	Katie Davis	kmdean89@gmail.com
Vice President	Alice Lawler	sfalia39@gmail.com
VP for Membership	Kyle Scholl	kyle_scholl@yahoo.com
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	Andrea Jones	andreanjones@comcast.net

A Message from our Preservation Planner for Huntsville (HHPC) Katie Stamps

Dear Old Town Residents,

City of Huntsville - Historic Preservation Office
November 2025

Dear Old Town neighbors,

I hope you're enjoying this beautiful fall season in Old Town! I wanted to share a few quick updates from the City's Historic Preservation Office.

Our team is currently working on new historic district street sign designs for the Dallas, Lincoln, and Lowe Mill Village Historic Districts. These updated signs will help highlight each district's unique character while creating a consistent, recognizable look across Huntsville's historic neighborhoods. We're excited to debut the final designs soon—they'll be a great way to celebrate our shared history.

In October, I had the pleasure of leading a walking tour of Old Town for the Huntsville/Madison County Convention & Visitors Bureau. It was wonderful to showcase our neighborhood's architecture and stories to visitors and to share how residents' ongoing care helps keep Old Town vibrant and authentic.

Another major effort underway is the Huntsville Depot Master Plan, which will guide the preservation and future use of one of our city's most significant landmarks. The plan will honor the Depot's railroad heritage while opening new opportunities for public use and interpretation. We've appreciated the community's feedback throughout this process and expect to share new updates soon.

As a friendly reminder, exterior changes in Old Town require a Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) before work begins. If you're thinking about a project, please reach out—I'm always happy to help answer questions or review ideas.

Thank you for helping preserve the beauty and history of Old Town. Your care and enthusiasm make this one of Huntsville's most special places to live.

Warm regards,

Katie Stamps
City of Huntsville Preservation Planner
katherine.stamps@huntsvilleal.gov
256-650-4779



Local News from the Year 1923

- Whether because of an accident or an attempted joke, street cars on Holmes Avenue were unable to make their schedules for an hour or two yesterday because of a veritable lake of molasses on the right of way in that section. The sticky substance had to be shoveled up and placed in carts and a liberal supply of sand placed on the tracks before traffic could be resumed. A reward of \$500 is being offered for the apprehension of the party who placed the molasses on the track. If caught and the act found to have been committed as a joke, the joker will be prosecuted.

- Mrs. C. T. Graves, of Dallas, TX was one of the most seriously injured in the wreck of the Southern passenger train near Scottsboro last week, is still at the Huntsville infirmary, where she was taken immediately following the accident. Mrs. Graves is, however, reported to be doing well. She is the only one of the several brought here who have not returned to their homes.

- Two boys, Lonnie Jones, 16 and Warren Sanders, 14 will be held in Huntsville for the arrival of their parents this week. They said they lived near Scottsboro and were taken in charge by Chief Hackworth. Their parents had telephoned the chief to notify him that the boys had traveled to Huntsville, after telling them that they "wanted to see the world." They were without money and seemed quite ready to return home after seeing enough of the world and its hardness.

- Sunday, while riding his bicycle on Walker Street, Howard Larkin, a small boy, was knocked from his wheel by an automobile driven by Henry Thomas. Young Larkin was jolted but not seriously injured.

- Messrs. James McGill and Lee Guy have perfected a new automobile light which they intend to apply for a patent. The light will contain a revolving fan on one end and colored lights on the other, the lights being generated from a dry battery and being operated by the car. The gentlemen have tried out their light with complete success. Investors are encouraged to contact the gentlemen.

Making Pomanders

People will wonder if you've been cooking all day!

The basic premise is simple: stud whole cloves into pieces of fruit. This practice has been around for centuries, especially during the holidays.

Generally speaking, the more your fruit is covered in cloves, the longer it will last. Simple clove studded fruit can last a month or so. But if you want it to last longer, you'll find directions below for making pomanders that last months, even years!

You will need:

Oranges

Lemons

Limes

Whole cloves

Wooden cooking skewer or thin knitting needle

Optional ingredients for longer lasting pomanders:

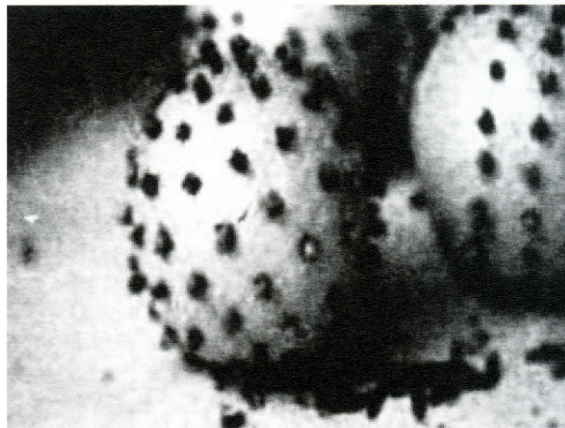
1/4 cup ground cinnamon

1/4 cup ground cloves

2 tablespoons ground nutmeg

2 tablespoons ground all spice

1/4 cup powdered orris-root (this ingredient will help the pomanders last extra long - find it in stores like Whole Foods, Fresh Market, etc.)



Instructions: Take the wooden skewer or thin knitting needle and poke holes in the fruit where you want the cloves to go.

You can make patterns (like the swirled orange or other designs) or just randomly stud the fruit with holes. Insert a whole clove into each hole, firmly.

In a large bowl mix the spices (If you have more than 2 oranges increase the amounts). Carefully place your pomanders into the dry spices and cover with the mixture. Leave for a week or so and you're ready to display or hang with ribbons or other decorations. The good smells will put you in a holiday mood!

**A Local Magazine Full of Good Stories to Help you
Remember the Good Old Days.
Local Authors provide stories of Huntsville every month to
make you laugh, cry, think.
Read some Good News for a Change!**



No. 393

November 2025



Old Huntsville

HISTORY AND STORIES OF THE TENNESSEE VALLEY

Mystery on Green Mountain



“In the 1950s when Redstone Arsenal was first firing up as a missile development center, American Machine and Foundry Co. began to buy up Green Mountain. Their plan was to quarry out the inside, sell the rock, then make the hollow mountain into an underground missile plant. Although they and the city Chamber of Commerce used “strong-arm” tactics to get mountain residents to sell, a few people held out and refused.

Also in this issue: Dead Children’s Playground; Goat Island; Family Affairs; Sally the Hat Lady; The Terrible Storm of 1920; Boogertown; The Real Birth of Huntsville, AL 1958; Thiokol Chemical Corp.; Fall Recipes, Tips and much much more!

**Thank you for buying and reading Old Huntsville magazine for 36 years!
Check out the new website at www.oldhuntsville.com to subscribe for
yourself or as unique gifts your recipients will LOVE.**

GOOD HOLIDAY SWEETS



Sweet Dixie Cake

4 eggs
1/2 pint heavy cream
1-1/2 c. sugar
1-1/2 c. self-rising flour
1 t. vanilla extract
Powdered sugar

Break the eggs into a bowl and beat til light and foamy - 5 minutes. Add cream, beat another 5 minutes. Pour in sugar, beat well. Blend in flour and extract. Pour in a greased tubular or Bundt pan and bake at 350 degrees for 50 minutes, or in two 8" pans for 30 minutes. Dust with powdered sugar.

Tea Time Pastries

Pastry:

1-3-oz. cream cheese, softened

1/2 c. butter
1 c. plain flour
1 T. sugar

Filling:

1 c. pecans, chopped fine
3/4 c. brown sugar
1 T. vanilla
Dash Salt

Use miniature cupcake tins. Roll out the pastry and place in tins. Drop filling into lined tins. Bake at 375 degrees for 25 minutes.

Chess Pie

Pastry for a 9-inch pie
4 eggs
1-1/2 c. sugar
1/2 c. butter, softened

2 T. yellow cornmeal
2 T. heavy cream
2 T. lemon juice
2 t. vanilla extract
Dash salt

Preheat oven to 325 degrees. Prepare your pastry or thaw one out. Beat eggs, sugar and butter for 3 minutes in medium bowl on high speed. Beat in the remaining ingredients, your mixture will look curdled. Pour into pie plate, lined with pastry. Bake for one hour or until set, cool for 15 minutes. Refrigerate til chilled.

Melt-in-Your-Mouth Balls

2 sticks butter, softened
5 T. powdered sugar
2 c. plain flour
2 t. vanilla extract
1 c. chopped pecans

Mix all ingredients in order listed. Roll into balls about the size of large marbles. Bake at 325 degrees for about 25 minutes. Check to make sure bottoms don't brown. While still hot, roll in a bowl of powdered sugar, set on waxed paper to cool. Store in airtight container. So good!

Chocolate Cafe au Lait

1/2 c. heavy cream
2 T. sugar
1 t. vanilla extract
1 oz. German sweet chocolate, grated (1/4 c.)
2 c. hot brewed coffee
Pieces of milk chocolate, lace candy or chocolate curls
In a small mixer bowl beat whipping cream, sugar and va-

nilla with an electric mixer on low speed til soft peaks form. Fold in the grated sweet chocolate.

Pour the hot brewed coffee into 4 coffee cups. Spoon a fourth of the whipped cream mixture over the coffee in each cup. Top with chocolate curls and serve at once. This looks beautiful if served in tall glass coffee cups with a red cherry added on each for color.

Apricot Balls

Wash and run thru food chopper one pound of dried apricots. Add 2 cups sugar, juice of one orange and a little grated orange peel. Cook and stir 10 minutes.

Cool and add one cup chopped pecans. Roll into balls, then dip and roll in powdered sugar.

Rich & Creamy Fudge

18 oz. semi-sweet chocolate chips
1 14-oz. can sweetened condensed milk
Dash salt
1 c. chopped walnuts or pecans
1-1/2 t. vanilla or almond extract

In a heavy saucepan over low heat melt the chips with the condensed milk and salt. Remove from the heat, stir in nuts and extract.

Spread evenly into wax paper lined 8 or 9" square pan. Chill for 2 hours or until firm. Turn fudge onto cutting board; peel off paper and cut into squares with very sharp knife. Store loosely covered at room temperature.

Hot Spicy Cranberry Juice

4 c. cranberry juice
1/4 c. orange juice
3 whole cloves
Honey to taste

Combine above in saucepan and simmer for 10 minutes. Remove cloves and pour into mugs, add cinnamon sticks to stir.

Home for Christmas

by Kate Watts

Our family was never well-off. We didn't take vacations, we shopped at Goodwill and we were pretty familiar with spaghetti for dinner. And we always began saving for Christmas long before Labor Day. Still, the holidays never felt lacking; we relished Christmas just like any other family.

But one year, my mother was diagnosed with thyroid cancer just before Christmas. At the time, my brother and I were still young enough to find Christmas magical — and innocent enough for my parents to remain circumspect about the potentially negative outcome.

When Dad told us, then, that the doctor had detected a lump in my mother's thyroid, he prudently presented the situation as little more than a case of a misbehaving gland that surgery would resolve. An operation to remove Mom's thyroid needed to be performed without delay, however, and the date was set for December 21. Though we hoped Mom would be home by Christmas Eve, it was equally possible that she wouldn't.

Nevertheless, our family prepared for Christmas as usual. We played Christmas carols and decorated our tree; we hung wreaths and our stockings. And we bought presents, because regardless of the diagnosis, we'd saved for Christmas for months and we still intended to enjoy it.

The day of Mom's surgery arrived, and the operation went smoothly. But unexpectedly, the doctors discovered two different types of cancer in her thyroid. As a precaution, then, her hospital stay was extended. She wouldn't be home by Christmas Eve after all. So our family had two options. We could celebrate Christmas without Mom. Or we could save our Christmas celebration until she came home, even if that meant postponing the holiday until the new year.

Many kids would protest delaying Christmas for even one day, but my brother and I agreed: No Mom, no Christmas.

So while everyone else was vacuuming up pine needles, tossing out eggnog and finishing off sugar cookies, our tree stayed up and our stockings stayed empty. We kept the poinsettia on the table and the wreath on the door. And our presents waited, unopened, under the tree.

On the morning of December 27, Mom was released. By mid-afternoon, she was home. Pale, tired, and weak — but home.

Most importantly, though, the doctor had caught the cancer. She would be all right. We could have delayed Christmas until the next morning. Traditionally, Christmas commenced when we kids jumped from bed to raid our stockings; then, after an eternity of begging our parents to get up, we opened presents. Yes, we'd maintained our Christmas traditions so far this year and maybe it was the middle of the day, but Mom was finally home.

Still, my brother and I insisted we observe some protocol. If Christmas always began when we jumped from bed, then this Christmas should begin the same way. So the two of us tripped over ourselves running to our beds, where we drew the covers and pretended to be fast asleep.

When Mom and Dad finally sounded the all clear, our feet hit the floor and, laughing, we ran out to raid our stockings. Middle of the day or not, it was Christmas morning.

I suspect my gifts that year were humble, as always — books, stuffed animals, drawing supplies. But I don't recall any of them. I remember only this: That year, we saved much more for Christmas than ever before.

OLD TOWN HISTORIC DISTRICT MEMBERSHIPS FOR 2025



Gabriel & Catherine Day
James & Karen Cotton
John & Mary Jennings
Anna Baker Warren & Robb
Hereford
Ann Brown
Max & Susan Gurgew
Nancy Sheppard
Karen Maroon
Cathey Carney
Steve & Penny Sumners
Richard & Michelle Buchanan
Lisa & Wayne Gregg
Mike Olheiser & Nicole Bock
Alice Lawler
David & Tera Wilder
Kyle & Alyson Scholl
David & Lori Smith
David & Becky Carstens
George & Laura Jo Hamilton
Cathy & Mike Self
Ron & Ree Ann Jolly
Barbara & Michael Holbrook
David & Margaret Powell
Bill & Tanjie Kling
Edgar & Frances Dalrymple II
David & Jodi Nutall
Rick & Jacquie Taylor
Jean Montgomery
Blakely Sherrod
Emile & Linda Alt
James & Suzanne Fordham

Laurie Grande
Taylor Hubbard and Joseph
Shaw
Don & Sherry Woody
Charles & Andrea Jones
Mandy & Brian Roberts
Ramu & Lakshmi Nallamala
Thomas & Phyllis McAlpin
Pat Payne
Curt & Janine Harrelson
Rob & Kathryn Van Peursem
Karen Totten
Jerry Barclay
Jacqueline Davis
John & Lori Walters
Charles & Barbara Hopkins
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Beth & Ray Morring
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Cindy Howard
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Renda Campbell
Lisa Norton
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Donna Brown & Kevin Smith
Graham & Sarah Burgess
Ralph Peterson Jr.
Matt & Katie Carter

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Sandy & Bob Hovde
Charlotte Dombrowski
Steven Clontz
Angie Jackman & Paul Mc
Connaughey
John & Peggy Richard
Tom & Allen Young
Ron & Joanna Collins
Chris & Emily Sayers
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Billy & Rachel McDaniel
Diana Davidson
Jacquie Williams
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Coy & Brenda Hallmark
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Ricky & Reginia Stockton
Cason & Emily Elam
Dorcas Harris & Dick Reeves
Michael & Sheri Belmont
Richard & Shannon Raleigh
Jim & Patty Grier
Bob & Laura Hash
Randall & Claire Cox
Jeff & Stephanie Hyatt
Melissa & Todd Dodgen
Katharine Barnhart
John & Kelly Wygal
Monroe Lanier
David & Dawn Pumpelly
Nancy Gill
Barry & Judy Carden

**Memberships are good from
January - December. Your
donations are tax deductible as
the Old Town Historic District
organization is a 501c3 organiza-
tion. Every penny you give goes
to the improvements and special
events in Old Town - such as the
Christmas Luminaries, Garden
Tour, Summer Social, Community
Safety Events, Porch parties, etc.
We are a special
neighborhood and your
involvement is so appreciated!**

Old Town Historic District Association Membership Form

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Amount Enclosed:

_____ \$ 25 - Sponsor

_____ \$ 50+ Patron

All membership dues and donations are tax deductible and are based on a calendar year.

Please send to Cathey Carney, Treasurer
716 E. Clinton Ave., Huntsville, Al 35801

**We're looking forward to meeting our neighbors and being
part of the Best Historic District in Huntsville!**

**We Need your Ideas. Contact us with Suggestions.
Please let us know if you would like to be involved
with our Board and Committees.**

