

## THE POSTSCRIPT

## Wearing my new fancy dress

By CARRIE CLASSON  
Columnist

I was excited to wear my new dress.

It was slimming, I thought:

all black and covered with flounces from the neckline to the hemline. I wore it with high heels — which I rarely wear—and red drop earrings. I was feeling much more sophisticated than I usually do when I went over to my sister's house for dinner.



"Nice dress!" my mother said. I gave my new dress a little twirl and set the ruffles flying in all directions.

"You look like a car wash," my sister said.

This is why it's good to stay close to family.

My husband, Peter, and I moved across the country to the Midwest in large part so we could be closer to family. It's good to see my parents on a regular basis. Peter's oldest sister is battling cancer, and we can now be near her. We have dozens of cousins, nieces and nephews, aunts and uncles, and now most of them live nearby.

My family members (and my sister in particular) absolutely do not care what I say about myself. They do not care about my New Year's resolutions or recent accomplishments or nice things other people might have said about me.

They remember when I was 13 and wore a green felt hat all the time out of some sort of weird superstition. They remember when Dad had to drive back two hours to fetch the green hat after I left it someplace. And they will never believe that the green felt hat-wearing person has entirely changed.

I look at pictures of myself as a young teen, very shy, trying to become invisible beneath my peculiar

green hat and only drawing more attention to myself in the process.

There was a lot I didn't understand as an awkward teen. I didn't realize that lots of people were shy. I didn't know that, by starting a conversation with someone, I would be doing them a huge favor. I didn't know I'd see the relief in their eyes when they realized they could talk to me and forget about feeling awkward themselves. I didn't need a green hat to become invisible. To take the pressure off me, I just needed to direct the attention to someone else. If someone had told me that sooner, I wouldn't have had to wear that silly hat for so long.

I like to think I've changed quite a bit since then, but my family knows better.

I firmly believe in the power we all have to change ourselves and follow our dreams wherever they take us. I hope to continue trying new things for quite a while. But, while chasing my highfalutin dreams, it's good to have family around to keep me grounded. It's good to remember that, no matter what grand schemes I take on, there are people who have known me before and know me best.

They will always cheer me on, but they will also know that I am still the same person, in a fancy dress, trying new things, sometimes succeeding and sometimes failing miserably. And they still love me.

"It doesn't really look like a car wash," my mother said.

My mother has been saying reassuring things to me all my life. But I suspect, now that the image is in her mind, my fancy-schman-cy dress will never look quite the same. And that's OK.

My self-esteem has come a long way since my green hat-wearing days. Nowadays, I can put on my fancy car wash dress with a pair of heels and not care who sees me.

Till next time,  
Carrie

Carrie Classon's memoir is called "Blue Yarn." Learn more at [CarrieClasson.com](http://CarrieClasson.com).

## Back in the Day

## 100 Years ago This Week

William D. Smith, a chemist of Washington D.C., claims to have developed a chemical formula that can be applied to cotton plants, which will completely eliminate the boll weevil

Annie Julia Poole, the little six-year-old daughter of Mr. and Mrs. B.B. Poole, was badly burned Tuesday evening and her sister, Mary, 12, suffered severe burns on her hands. Annie was standing before an open grate in her nightgown when the garment caught from the fire in the grate, and Mary probably saved her little sister's life by her presence of mind and bravery in smothering out the blaze with her hands.

O. Fortson has sold to Gabriel Toombs the agency for Ford automobiles and Fortson tractors, along with all stock on hand. Mr. Toombs will operate under the name of Toombs Motor Co. and his place of business will be at the old stand next to The News-Reporter office.

At the very last minute, J.H. Griffin announced that he would run against Sheriff Callaway for the position of Chairman of the Wilkes County Board

## 75 Years ago This Week

H.H. Johnson has succeeded Adjutant General J.E. Stoddard as captain and commanding officer of Battery "B", 214th Coast Artillery, of the National Guard.

Dr. C.L. Smith, who has practiced veterinary medicine here for 21 years, has opened a modern, fully equipped veterinary hospital on Court Street. The operating room is thoroughly up to date and there are plenty of kennels and stalls.

A contract for construction of a power line to Rayle and vicinity has been signed and the project will start immediately. E. W. Armour and Austin Barnett obtained a final agreement with the Rural Electrification Administration and with Somers Construction

Company of Vidalia. The honor roll of the senior class at Washington High School for the first semester includes Sara Amason, Hugh Bernard, Lucile Ellison, Mary Fortson, Charles Irvin, Charles Jeremias, Mary Elizabeth Mansfield, Stella Massey, Sara Newsom, Marcus Pharr, Harriet Smith, Marion Armour, Frances Echols and Nannie Williamson.

## 60 Years ago This Week

The "ticket" of incumbent councilmen who announced as a team in the city election, won handily Martin, Corry, Garrett, Randall Rider and Wickersham were swept back into office. Unsuccessful challengers were S.P. McGill, J.H. Blackmon, and M.P. Pope, Mayor WA. Slaton was unopposed.

Today is Mr. J. Luke Burdette's 90th birthday. He is spending the day quietly with his family but there have been numerous expressions of appreciation, congratulations and good wishes.

As part of his program of expansion and improvement, James Baston, owner and operator of Cloverdale Dairy Farm, announces that as of January 1, installation of his new equipment for pasteurizing milk was completed and all milk furnished since that date has been Grade A. pasteurized milk.

Secretary of State Ben W. Fortson Jr. has announced the appointment of Joe N. Burton as his Chief Clerk.

## 50 Years ago This Week

At its regular monthly meeting on January 13, the Wilkes County Board of Commissioners passed an ordinance requiring permits for the construction of any new building, remodeling of existing buildings, removal of a building from one lot to another and for removal of a building from one spot on a lot to another spot on the same lot.

James Marion Newsome Jr. will be ordained to the gospel ministry in the evening services of the First Baptist Church here Sunday, January 23.

Rev. William O. Boyd, new vicar of the Episcopal Church of the Mediator, and his family arrived in Washington the first of this month from Cedartown where he was Vicar of St. James Episcopal Church.

Darrell M. Johnson of Thomson has  
Continued on page 5

## Book Review

By MORRIS BRANSON  
Staff ReporterThe Measure of a Man: a spiritual autobiography-By Sidney Poitier  
Published June 1, 2000

"I have no wish to play the pontificating fool, pretending that I've suddenly come up with the answers to all life's questions. Quite that contrary, I began this book as an exploration, an exercise in self-questing. In other words, I wanted to find out, as I looked back at a long and complicated life, with many twists and turns, how well I've done at measuring up to the values I myself have set."

Sidney Poitier, who died last week at 94, was an iconic figure. This autobiography, written when he was 73, looks back on his acclaimed life and career. His influence on cinematic history cannot be underestimated. He was the first black man to win the Best Actor Academy Award in 1964 for the film Lilies of the Field.

In this illuminating memoir Poitier explores elements of his character and personal values and takes his own measure as a man, a husband and father and as an actor. He was born in Florida but grew up on tiny Cat Island in the Bahamas. He credits his parents, and his early childhood, for his sense of morality and self-worth; qualities that he maintained and which sustained him throughout his life. "In the kind of place where I grew up," recalls Poitier, "what's coming at you is the sound of the sea and the smell of the wind and momma's voice and the voice of your dad and the craziness of your brothers and sisters...and that's it."

When he was 15 his father gave him \$3.00, told him to "take care of yourself", and sent him to live with

his brother in Miami. Florida didn't suit him so he moved to New York when he was 16. There he met a man who would make a profound difference in his life. He was working as a dishwasher and this man took the time to stay after work every night and teach Sidney to improve his reading, grammar and punctuation by using the newspaper.

Poitier joined the American Negro Theater and that led to his big break as a troubled high school student in the film The Blackboard Jungle. He also used his time there to rid himself of his Bahamian accent. (If you have ever seen one of his films his elocution is perfect)

This autobiography offers an inside look at what informed his life and by extension the movie roles he took on. He speaks of the criticism leveled at him by people who thought he was playing roles that fed into white people's perception of what a proper role for a black man was; however, he only took parts where his character said something positive, lasting and helpful about the human condition.

I found this memoir to be fascinating and uplifting. The first film of his I remember making an impression on me was Guess Who's Coming to Dinner although Lilies of the Field and In the Heat of the Night also left lasting impressions. What stood out to me was that he developed a sense of personal integrity and values that he never wavered from. Although he retired from his career, which included acting, producing, and directing, in 1997 his legacy remains very much with us.

## Examining the allures of Miami, Florida

By LORAN SMITH  
Columnist

It is the water that makes Miami so alluring. That has been the case since post World War II when air conditioning, mosquito control and air travel made deep South Florida an accessible garden spot. The azure waters and the white beaches have been an attraction historically, but development and transportation did not become entrenched for years.

The land boom of the twenties, The Great Depression and a couple of hurricanes set Miami back, for the most part, until the late forties when development became rampant and tourism was over the top.

Dating back, if you recall, the incumbent rich—the Rockefellers, the Gould's, the Goodyear's and the Morgan's—made Jekyll Island their winter playground.

In the early years of the 20th century, Aiken, South Carolina became a haven for many of those with Northern addresses, espe-

cially those of the horse set. This is why Cot Campbell, an erudite Atlanta advertising executive, set up shop across the Savannah River and became the first syndicated racing entrepreneur. Dogwood Stable produced a number of champions including Preakness and Belmont winners and had a plethora of stakes winners in his years of owning Dogwood.

Weather in the Aiken/Augusta area had always been a little more favorable than vacation spots in undeveloped Florida. The famous Wilcox Inn, with its white pillared Colonial Revival construction, was frequented by the well-to-do heirs of those who became wealthy during the American Industrial Revolution.

The area was well-known to the famous golfer, Bobby Jones, which is how the Augusta National Golf Club came to be located in Augusta. Sportswriters, from distant sections of the country, have always asked that question upon seeing the club for the first time.

World War I had interfered with the super-rich traveling to the French Rivera which meant in the U. S., the wealthy were first attracted to Aiken and subsequently Augusta after the first world war. Traveling south for the winter became the thing to

do. At the time, Florida was pretty much a wilderness. The railroads did make South Florida accessible but there wasn't much going on when you arrived.

Major league baseball teams began flocking to Florida after the second world war and that made the "Sunshine state" more popular as Northern tourists, including an abundance of Canadians, made their way south.

Interestingly, the retirement homes and villages then brought so many tourists to Florida, traffic eventually created a negative for many of the baseball teams. This is why the Atlanta Braves, with a plush facility at Disney World, chose to move to its current location, south of Tampa, so it would be more convenient to schedule games with teams in the area.

Florida experienced a land boom in mid-twenties, almost a hundred years ago. That brought land speculation, swindling and shoddy construction and unending bankruptcies. Yet, sunshine-in-winter got the attention of the masses.

One unflinching Miami Beach developer, Carl G. Fisher, purchased an oversized billboard in Times Square that blathered, "It's June in Miami." Those without the resources to buy land, found their way to Miami to work in

construction and other jobs.

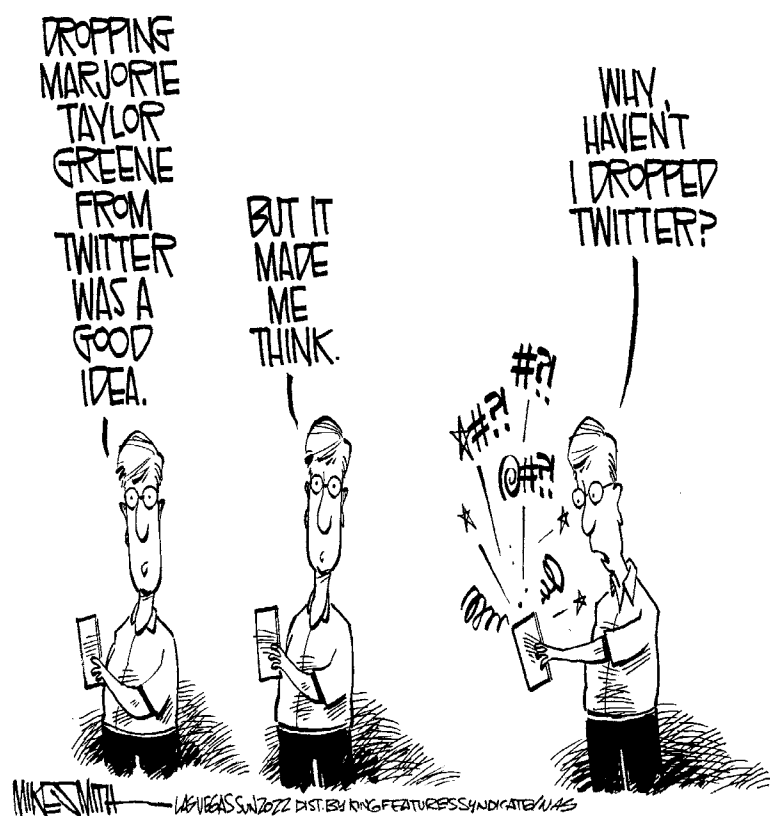
If you were gainfully employed, the living environment was hard to beat. There were those white, pristine beaches and palm trees waving in balmy weather.

Suddenly things turned bleak across the board. Those with intent of buying land and flipping it soon discovered there were no buyers. The boom fizzled. Everybody went broke. It filtered on down to the working class which brings about recall of this story.

A couple of guys from Valdosta had gone to Miami to find work during the boom, but were unsuccessful. Flat broke and not sure how they would get home, they walked by a restaurant that advertised big, thick steaks and strawberry shortcake for dessert.

Undaunted they went in, ordered two big steaks, all the trimmings and dessert. When the check came, they moseyed up to the cash register. One asked the proprietor what he would do if two guys came into the restaurant and ordered steak dinners that satisfied their hunger but had no means of paying.

The proprietor said, tersely, "Why I would kick them square in the rear." With that, the penniless diner bent over and said, "In that case, take out for two."



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