

The Shining Stone

By Joseph Xavier Martin

The swamps and the lowlands, of Southern Georgia and Northern Florida, like that of Cherokee Bayou, are places of rugged beauty and quiet menace. The hanging strands of dark gray "Spanish Moss" drape from the Cypress trees like tastefully strung garlands or carefully arranged feathers. The wide canopies, of the tall Cypress trees, come together far overhead to create a leafy green prism through which the sun's bright rays sparkle intermittently.

The waters here are murky and scum covered. The dark tannin, from the trees, tints most things with a swamp-brown coloration. Water bugs skitter across the murky surface and dozens of air born insects skim just above them. Birds of all types feed heartily on the many species of insect life here in the swamp. You can hear the lilting cry of the whooper will, far off in the trees, or the harsher cry of many other things a bit closer. The alligators slide along, through the dusty water, slithering, submerged predators, looking, always looking for prey whose attention has wandered, even for the briefest time, in the mist and murk of their primitive home. These creatures are water-born, saurian, hunting machines whose menacing shapes have changed little in many millions of years.

There are flowers scattered here and there though, splashes of bright color amidst the dim light and dark waters of the hot and stifling swamp. And there is food here, to those who know how and where to look for it. One such hunter, Pelican Bay, was even now scouting the swamp, paddling his small canoe, seeking fish and game for his family.

Just above him, the sharp crack of splintering wood echoed across the quiet expanse of Cherokee Bayou, like a loud clap of thunder in a rising storm. The noise startled into flight a whole covey of snowy white egrets that had been nesting in the branches of nearby Cypress trees. In a rapidly descending arc, the tall and weathered Ponderosa pine fell with a thud onto the bow of his small birch bark canoe, fracturing the left and right femurs of the young man paddling the craft. He cried out, both in pain and surprise. The weight of the fallen tree pinned him to the soft bottom of the muddy swamp beneath him, half filling the canoe with murky water.

In great pain, the young man used his powerful arms to roll the heavy log from across the canoe. His legs hurt too much to put any weight on them. Grimacing in pain, he dragged both himself and his craft to a nearby hummock of tufted grass. The brief spasm of effort left him sweat faced with exertion. Though his fractured legs ached painfully, he did not surrender to panic. For in the swamps, panic could be fatal. He said a brief prayer for help to the Spirit of the Pelican, his namesake, and then thought about extricating himself from the unexpected predicament. He calmly removed the shells from his gun. Then, he thoroughly cleaned the dirt and slimy water from his prized Remington shot gun. He inserted two new double aught shells, into the empty chambers of the magazine, and snapped the gun shut. He pointed the shotgun towards the clouds, pulling first one and then the second trigger. The throaty roar of the firearm echoed across the expanse of swamp in a spasm of sound that startled all manner of animals, both flighted and water born. He repeated the procedure several times, hoping that his mother and sister would hear the shots and come seeking an explanation. In the swamps, all things had a sound and rhythm to them. The noise of his shotgun, fired repeatedly, he hoped would be a signal to them that he needed help.

He loaded his Remington a last time and then lay back against the stump of a fallen Cyprus tree. He looked anxiously at the surrounding stand of trees and into the water for any creature that might seek to take advantage of him in his injured state. The swamp was neither sympathetic nor merciful. The code here was kill or be killed, eat or be eaten. He had no plans to end up in the belly of a crocodile, or serve as food for a pride of young panthers.

The afternoon sun rose slowly across the dusky Bayou. It was early June and the swamp heated up quickly, as the sun rose higher across the horizon. Most of the local animals sought shade from the fierce rays off the noonday sun. Time seemed to drift by in a dreamlike haze for Pelican, as if he were in a misty vision state. He endured the pain in his legs and awaited help. After an hour or so, he looked up and a smile creased his face. Off in the distance, he saw the flashing motion of two paddles churning furiously in the murky waters of the Bayou. The small dark shapes, of his mother and sister, were immediately recognizable to him. They had heard his signal and come quickly. Thank the Spirits for their swift answer to his prayers.

Turtle and Bayou Bay made quick their passage across the water. They could see Pelican lying against the withered Cyprus by his shattered canoe. They knew that he was hurt but were glad that he was still alive. Not all accidents in the swamp were resolved so favorably. They beached their craft on the tufted hummock and quickly tended to his injuries. Pelican's legs had been hurt, but there were no protruding bones or broken skin. Though discolored and bruised, his legs seemed to be in fair shape, though his bones appeared to have been fractured. They helped him to his feet and managed to lie in him in the bottom off their dugout. They loaded his shotgun and other gear into the small craft and set out for their log cabin some few miles into the Bayou. The heavily laden canoe rode low in the water, but managed to stay afloat. They quickly paddled the injured Pelican to their home.

Turtle mentally said a prayer of thanksgiving to her name sake Spirit god of the Turtle. If Pelican had been a few miles further into the swamp or they themselves had been away on errands, they might never have heard his signal. The Spirits had been kind to them this day. At the cabin, Turtle helped Pelican to his bed and then made him comfortable. She set a small kettle of water over the hearth fire and prayed again, a thanks to the Spirits of their ancestors for watching over her son. In the back of her practical mind, the worry of their future arrived like an unwelcome visitor. How would they manage things with Pelican laid up for several weeks recuperating? But, that worry was for another day. Her son was alive and well and she was thankful. They had both food and resources to see them through the next few weeks. After that, they would have to trust the spirits to take care of them. She looked across the Bayou and said a silent prayer of Thanks.

The Cherokees, her people, had lived in this their ancestral land for hundreds of years. Of those dragged from their homelands, off to far away Oklahoma on the "trail of tears," some few wandered back, after many years in exile, to claim their birthright. One of those clans who had returned and prospered, in the swamps of Northern Florida, was the clan of a revered elder, named Turtle Bay. She and her two children, Bayou and Pelican lived in harmony with the land. Her husband Heron had died of the swamp fever several years past. He had been a loving and devoted husband and father, who had cared for them all. And then quickly, after a brief illness, he had passed into the spirit world. It had been a difficult time for them. It was hard for Turtle to fend for herself and her two children, but she had managed. With great effort, and the blessings of the Spirits, she had raised her son and daughter to become the pride and joy of her life. They fished, trapped and drew food from the lands and the waters as their people had before them for hundreds of years. Even now, in the early part of the twentieth century, they survived on a level

of existence that would have been commonplace two hundred years before. In 1912, Florida was still mostly undeveloped, agricultural land. A formal education, and jobs that payed cash money, were both still hard to come by for most of the native inhabitants in the back woods of rural Florida.

The only ripple in their existence was the outlanders that increasingly crowded in on their land. Government taxmen, politicians, oil drillers, and a score of others, who sought to change the existence around them, were viewed warily like the dangerous predators that the Bays encountered in the wild. Only these two-legged vultures were more deadly. They attacked with paper and regulations that none could defend against. Occasionally one of the paper fighters would come up missing, his car submerged in the depths of the murky swamp. No one ever really knew what happened to the invader, or indeed after a time even asked. It became an established wisdom of the Bay's swamp that if you went in there unfriendly, you might not come out.

For a time Turtle and her family were left alone. But, unspoken among them, was the fear that one day the outlanders would come in great numbers and spoil the land for those who lived there. Her ancestors had spoken of such a time in the dream state. The change was coming and Turtle and her clan must adapt or die. They pondered this fear over many a fire, unsure of what or how they should proceed, finally trusting to the spirits of their ancestors to tell them how they should proceed.

In those lean years, when the supply of gator skins and farm products could not meet the annual levy, government officials would come and trouble them for money that they did not have. This was one of those years and the family stood in peril of losing their land. The major difficulty that they all shared was something called land taxes. The government of the white

people, who had previously taken their land, now demanded payments that equaled many alligator pelts, snake skins and other emblems of their sparse resources, as permission to live upon these lands that their ancestors had once roamed free. It seemed unfair to them but it was the law of the land. In previous years, her son Pelican had been able to trap, fish and farm enough so that the family had enough money to pay these levies. But now, calamity had overtaken them. Pelican's accident had sidelined him. They could not earn what was needed.

As they sat around the smoky hearth fire, Turtle Bay looked with great pride on the two beautiful children she had raised and who now sat thoughtfully by her side. She looked first at her eldest, Pelican Bay.

"How are you feeling son?" she asked.

Pelican smiled at her.

"I am fine mother, just a little restless. I have many things that need doing."

Pelican's injury in the swamp had taken the heart from him. His broken legs had rendered his powerful body useless in accomplishing the many chores that needed doing around their farm. He couldn't hunt or help provide the things that they needed to pay the outlanders. Turtle Bay looked on him with pride, affection and a mother's concern. The immobility from the injury ill suited her strapping lad.

Pelican Bay is a creature of the wind, she thought.

Turtle Bay, herself a full-blooded Cherokee Amerind, had named him after that graceful, soaring avian that is so ungainly upon the land. She meant for her son's spirit to soar amidst the clouds and commune with the gods in a union that would open the nether world of their ancestors to him. At six foot, four inches and a trim 190 pounds, Pelican, like his namesake, was an impressive figure that caught the attention of all who came into contact with him. His mother's

raven hair and the piercing blue eyes, of a father he had never really known, had a striking effect in his level gaze. You naturally wanted to please this man.

The unstated fear of an implied physical danger from him also made Pelican more interesting. The copper skin of his ancestry melded with the sun baked bronze of an outdoorsman, forming an attractive portrait of coiled energy beneath the rippling muscles of an athlete's frame. Few words escaped Pelican's lips. It was his eyes that carried his meanings. An unfriendly glance or a sunny smile from him could convey volumes without ever a word spoken. His childhood was spent amidst the snake and gator filled swamps of Northern Florida. The ways of the wild were ingrained in him like a second awareness. His senses were those of the predator and the outside walls of their communal shack were adorned with alligator and snake skins, drying and ready for sale at the local trader's store. They lived upon the land as elemental an existence as the wind and the sea around them. And now he could not help his family when they most needed him.

Since Pelican's injury, they had all realized that they must do something to stave off the outlanders, lest they be forced to leave their home in the favored coolness of the shady swamps.

“Maybe Cousin Floating Feather can give us advice, “ said Pelican.

Turtle looked at him.

“Yes, he would know what to do about these things,” said Turtle.

“But he is so far away in St. Augustine, How will we contact him?” said Bayou.

“Yes, it will be difficult. Pelican of course cannot go. And I must stay here and care for him,” said Turtle

“Well then I can go. I have walked as far on many trips and I have the spirits to protect me,” Bayou said confidently.

Turtle looked at Bayou with new eyes. Her young daughter was fast becoming a woman to be proud of. Perhaps it would be wise to let her make the journey.

They discussed the matter for some time. The trek was not to be taken lightly. They must think carefully of the preparations to be made and the dangers to be encountered by young Bayou. Finally, it was decided that Bayou Bay must indeed journey forth into civilization, to seek help from Floating Feather who knew about such things and could help them through this time of trouble. Floating Feather was a blood cousin to Turtle Bay. He lived amidst the outlanders in a far place called St. Augustine, many walking miles from their forested home. Young Bayou would now be the woman needed to make the difficult journey.

Pelican's sister, Bayou, was made from a different mold. Her raven hair and sparkling turquoise eyes framed a classically chiseled face, made peaceful by an inner serenity. It was a face of calm and beauty that made people stop and take a second look. Smaller in stature than Pelican, she was possessed of a lithe and athletic frame that enabled her to take on any of the tasks that her older brother had once managed. Her quiet determination often elicited a warm smile from both Pelican and Turtle, when the girl's strength of will fought against the laws of physics. She had no innate sense of limitation in attempting to accomplish any task. Fear, of all things living, was unknown to her. As determined and hard as Bayou had grown physically, there existed within her an innate kindness that bred a contented geniality that made her easy to be around. Though quick witted and intelligent she was, like her brother, naturally reticent in speech and manner.

First to help and last to ask for anything, her mother thought with affection.

The spirits had given her a loving and beautiful daughter that any kinsman would be proud to claim relationship with. Since Pelican's injury, Bayou had assumed all manner of the

family's chores. Bayou tackled everything, from hunting and skinning small animals, to repairing the cabin roof and maintaining their farm acreage. Her slender build masked a strong and determined woman, who would never give in to any obstacle. Both Turtle and Pelican relied on her for everything. And now, at a very young age, she had become the rock upon which her family's future rested.

Early the next morning, after breakfast and chores were completed. Turtle and Pelican Bay loaded Bayou's pack with dried alligator meat and a gourd of water. Turtle hugged her warmly, wishing her strength and courage in her journey.

"Mind well, the travelers you encounter. There are those who would do you ill." Pelican said.

Turtle looked at her beautiful daughter and said through misted eyes

"Be careful Bayou. Hurry on your way and seek out Floating Feather quickly."

Bayou nodded and smiled at the two most important people in her life.

"I will be fine, Mother. I have the spirits to protect me and Floating Feather to help me. I will hurry and be back before you know it," she said.

Bayou hugged them both, picked up her pack and started walking towards the green wall of the swamp. Pelican and Turtle watched as the slim girl walked into the cypress swamp. They said a silent prayer to their ancestors for her safe return. The girl's safety now rested with the Spirits now and the Spirits had been good to them.

After many days walking, Bayou came upon the place that was called Saint Augustine. She made her way into the town at night and settled in under a gnarled oak tree, in a grassy field. First, she washed herself of the grime and sweat from her journey. then pulled from her pack

some dried alligator meat. She ate the meal slowly, drinking water from a small skin gourd and savoring the food. She was weary from her travels and soon after fell quickly into a deep sleep.

When the sun rose the next morning, the birds began their daily chorus. Bayou awakened and looked about her, confused momentarily by the noise of the traffic and the unfamiliar sights and sounds of Saint Augustine. Though small by city standards, it was a concentration of people and noises unknown to a child of the land, like Bayou. In the marsh and swamplands of her homelands, there was only the soft rustle of the wind in the treetops and the high-pitched whirring of the cicadas to distract the ear. Here, there seemed everywhere about her something new and intimidating to assault her senses. The brightly clad people, most carrying cameras and dressed in their bright and funny clothes, were as alien to Bayou as people from Mars. And the accents from their speech were so strange to the ear.

What far place did these people come from, she wondered ?

As Bayou walked down St. George Street, heads turned to watch her pass. The long raven hair of her mother and the sparkling, turquoise-blue eyes, of a father who had passed many years before and was a distant memory to her, framed and lit her face like a work of art on display. The unlined and beautiful skin set her apart as an exotic creature that drew ones eyes to her immediately. Her mother had taught her to read and write, so Bayou was able to follow the street signs. A small map, that Hiram had given them on a previous visit, showed her the path to follow.

And now, just in front of her she came upon another oddity. A dirty and raggedly dressed man appeared to be searching through a barrel of garbage for something he had lost. Most of the brightly clad ones gave the man a wide berth. Bayou however, came from a land and a people who helped each other in all things. The idea of seeing a person in distress, and not stopping to

assist them, was so foreign to her so as to not even register mentally as a list of possible alternatives.

"Can I help you?" she asked politely.

The man at first did not hear, or did not realize, that this beautiful young girl was addressing him. Most people treated him like one of the "invisible ones," creatures who walked amongst them but did not interact with anyone or become noticed. At the second request, the grizzled face looked at the beautiful young woman with puzzlement. Was this mockery or a ruse of some kind, he wondered? Finally, the man reasserted himself, calling from deep within the shreds of dignity and civility long ago ingrained in him by thoughtful parents.

"No, Miss. It's all right. I was just looking for some food."

The answer at first confused the girl. In the swamps, you caught, killed or grew what you needed to eat. And why would you look for food in an old refuse barrel? But, Bayou's natural sense of presence told her that something was different here.

"May I help you then? I have a few dollars from the sale of our turtle shells. It would please me if you would share them with me to buy food."

The man's natural suspicion, bred in him from many years on the skids, warred with the offer of help from this beautiful and gentle child. There was a quality of serenity in her face and manner that was disarming, even to one as ragged and hardened as he had become.

"That would be very nice of you," he said slowly.

It had been some time since he had had an actual conversation with another person and his skills were rusty. One could hear the rolling cadence of the Carolinas in

his speech. For it was from there that he had wandered after a string of tragedies that took his wife and children, then on the way down, everything else.

Bayou sensed the man's unease. Her instincts were honed in the depths of the swamps, where you needed all of your wits about you to survive. She gave the man one of her best smiles, the radiance from which made the poor man actually wince. Bayou proffered her last few dollars towards him and wished that he would buy some food and be at peace with himself.

“Thank you Miss. Please accept this in return,” he said.

It was a worn leather bag with something small and hard within. Embarrassed for the man, and wanting to give him a sense of dignity, she accepted the bag, tucked it into her pocket and set off.

Bayou walked hurriedly on her way, wanting not to make the man feel any more wretched than he already appeared to feel at having to accept her help. Now, she had nothing for herself. But, there was always Floating Feather. He would extend hospitality to her as a friend and member of the family. And that poor man, he had lost much more than physical possessions. She sensed that he appeared to have lost his hope and reason for living. That was something, Bayou knew, that killed much quicker in the wild than any adder's fangs or alligator's teeth. But, she had done what she could for the man and now must set off on her own mission.

Hiram Floating Feather lived in a small house on Flagler Ave. He had emigrated to St. Augustine, from Cherokee Bayou, many years ago. He had come in search of a

future that the swamps could not offer. The public schools of Florida had educated him in the ways of civilization. He had worked hard at his education and attained a law degree from Florida State University. He had been the among the first of the indigenous natives to achieve this lofty goal. He now had a small legal practice in Saint Augustine. Among his clients were the indigent, tribe members among them, who could not afford to pay for legal services. So, it was

no real surprise to him when Bayou showed up in his small office, on a sunny Tuesday morning, asking for help.

Hiram was used to extending assistance to his people. It was not a "pro bono chore" for him to help friends and relatives like this, but rather a debt of blood and honor that he was happy to repay. After the initial polite inquiries, Hiram and Bayou Bay talked of their joint heritage and the many friends and family they had in common. Turtle Bay, Bayou's Mother, was Hiram's cousin. He held a special place for Turtle in his heart, from the time when they were youngsters together, growing up in and roaming about the Cherokee Bayou Swamp. The warm feelings extended to this beautiful child before him. He listened to the tale that she spun for him, of costly taxes on the land and threats of eviction from their home. It was a common enough saga amidst the rural poor. What few possessions they could amass by hunting, trapping and bartering were often not enough to pay the hefty levy of the government taxmen, who demanded payment year after year for services and schools these simple folks did not use and could not afford to pay for.

The immediate solution of course was to offer a small loan of money to the Bays that would meet their tax obligations. But, these were proud people who were used to taking care of themselves. They were reluctant to take handouts from anyone, family included. It was a delicate situation that Hiram had encountered many times before. How can we work this out, he wondered? His eyes momentarily wandered to the small sparkle of light that emanated from a leather string that Bayou wore around her neck. The girl was so breathtakingly pretty that he had not at first noticed the small leather necklace that she wore.

"What is that you are wearing around your neck?" he inquired.

The girl looked puzzled at his question until a flicker of understanding flashed across her face. Hiram was talking about the shining stone that the poor man digging in the garbage barrel had given her. She held it in her fingers now and watched the sunlight sparkle through the faceted prism and reflect a ray of yellowish light.

"This, you mean?" she said, as she held up the shining bauble on the leather neck string. "A poor man, who was hungry, gave me this after I gave him my last dollars for food," she said unselfconsciously.

For it would never occur to Bayou to look for praise for doing a kindness that all of her people would have done as readily.

"Yes, let me look at that please," Hiram said.

Bayou pulled the leather string over her head and handed it to her cousin. Hiram inspected the item for a few seconds and asked again where Bayou had gotten the shining stone. Bayou relayed, in a matter of fact tone, the encounter with the poor man digging in the trash barrel for food.

"The poor man was hungry. He insisted I take this leather bag, even after I told him it was not necessary to thank me. I found this stone in it. I only agreed because it seemed to give him some dignity in receiving my help. It seemed important to him," she said.

Hiram pondered the situation, and the girl's sincerity, for a time. Truly, the Great Spirit works in mysterious ways, he thought. Bayou's act of kindness had been genuine. The poor hungry man's gesture equally as sincere. What he was holding in his hand was a flawless diamond of at least two carats in size. The stone's worth would pay the Bay's taxes, and many other expenses, for several years to come.

Slowly, he explained the objects value to Bayou, who had never seen a diamond before, nor had any idea of what a precious stone was or its value. The look on her face was one of pure shock, as she realized the import of what Hiram was telling her. But, her thoughts went immediately towards the man who had given her this thing of value. She must return it to him at once, so that he could enjoy the value of the stone himself. There was not even an instant's thought of keeping the stone in her mind. It belonged to another and must be returned immediately.

Hiram had expected this reaction, for he knew well of the decency and kindly nature of Bayou and her people. The pang of wanting to keep the stone, and use it to address the Bay's problems, was soon dispelled. He knew Bayou's instincts were sound. They talked a bit longer and decided that they both should go immediately to downtown St. Augustine and look for the stone's rightful owner, so it could be restored to him.

Several hours that day and for the next succeeding few days, were devoted to searching for the illusive benefactor. But, it was to no avail. The shelters, food pantries and all other spots in St. Augustine, where the man might have turned, had no report of him.

Hiram and Bayou sat in his law office late that afternoon and talked of the stone and what to do with it. In Hiram's mind, the stone had been given by the Spirits in exchange for the girl's kindness to the man. It was their way of solving a problem people who were good and decent. These were hard concepts to explain to a child of the rural backwoods of Florida, whose formal education was limited to what basics her mother had taught her of letters and numbers. Generosity of spirit was an ingrained way of life with Bayou and the Seminoles, not an abstract concept that they only talked about. Bayou could not readily understand the notion of being Thanked for her actions. It was a concept alien to her. People did things to help one another

because they were supposed to help each other. She had learned this from her mother at an early age, and knew it instinctively as the proper course of action to take.

Finally, Hiram had some success in explaining that it was the will of the great spirits that had brought the stone to her. It would be considered rude and ungrateful of her not to accept their help. This argument made some sense to Bayou, who only now saw that maybe the spirits had decided to help her, Pelican and Turtle in their predicament. Still, the regret of using another's wealth tugged at her emotions.

"What if we were to sell this stone and provide a good sum of money to the homeless shelters? In this way, you could use the poor man's generosity to feed many hundreds of others, who go hungry like him. There would still be enough to solve your mother's problems, for a few years. The generosity, that the man repaid you for your kindness, can be used to help others for quite a time as well," he said.

The logic, of this argument, and the thought of feeding many more people who had nothing, appealed to the girl.

"Yes, that sounds like a good idea," she agreed.

She smiled at the wisdom of her clan member. Turtle Bay had been wise to send her to Floating Feather to seek advice on these matters. Bayou could now return to her mother and brother with good tidings. She was anxious to set out for Cherokee Bayou and her home. She missed the rasping song of the cicadas, the soft green of the swamp and the pungent smell of bayou.

"I think it is time to go home now. Mother and Pelican will be worried about me," she said.

“Yes, you are right. They will be worried about you. I do insist on driving you back to Cherokee Bayou.” Hiram said.

Bayou readily acceded to his wish, because it seemed to please him. He had been a great help to her family and she wanted to do anything she could to make him happy.

“Yes, that will be nice Hiram. Thank you,” she said.

The ride home was a novelty to her, a child of the rural swamps in 1912. Bayou had seen cars before. Several had driven near her home, even in the far depths of the back country. But, she had never ridden in one before. The sensation of flying through the countryside, at a dizzying gait of 25 mph, was strange, yet very pleasing. She could see how the ways of civilization could easily tempt one. A few miles from home, the road ended and Bayou left the car.

“Thank you, cousin Hiram, for your good counsel and assistance. I will see you next whenever the spirits will it in the future,” she said.

Hiram smiled and hugged her warmly.

“Remember me fondly to Turtle and Pelican Bay,” he said.

“I will,” she said.

With a friendly wave, Hiram got into the vehicle, turned the car around and soon disappeared down the dusty lane.

The familiar quiet of the bayou and swamp surrounded her like the peaceful serenity of a welcome night. Bayou walked under the cypress canopies and again enjoyed the cool greenness of the swamp and the cheerful chatter of the birds above. She was home at last in her beloved Bayou. Just ahead, Bayou could see smoke rising from the log home that she shared with Turtle and Pelican. They would be pleased with her news and grateful to Floating Feather for his counsel. Now, they could rest for a time before the next peril confronted them. For in the swamp,

you always had to be ready for something that might be dangerous. Nature had taught them that. For now, she, Turtle and Pelican could enjoy their quiet life a bit longer. They were safe in the knowledge that this land was still theirs, a legacy from their ancestors, who protected them in time of danger.

From a nearby hummock of grass, through a leafy screen of trees, the “hungry man” watched Bayou walk into the cabin. Then he smiled, turned and walked back into the mists of the spirit time from whence he had been sent.