

April 2nd - April 15th, 2021

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Arrows Driving School Has A 5-star Rating On Google!

By Ali Elizabeth Turner

Selfless service is how and why Arrows Driving School was birthed. Arrows Driving School, which serves the Huntsville, Madison, Athens, and Decatur areas, was founded and is currently operated by an Army NCO Veteran, Mary Robbins. "Training



Mary Robbins, founder of Arrows Driving School

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Skier's Marine -- Tips For Boat Buyers

By Ali Elizabeth Turner

Buying a boat is a big decision. With so many options, how does one choose the right boat? Is there a difference between that blue one and this red one? Will the family like it? It is okay, we understand! Here at Skier's Marine, we want to be

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The 2021 Sylvan Mirage 8522, perfect for the waters of the Tennessee Valley

Cooking With Anna

Popping Into Spring...

Everywhere you turn, you can see the signs of spring. New buds on the trees, daffodils blooming, birds singing, bees buzzing...
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No matter what your escape requires, you'll find options in Athens-Limestone County...
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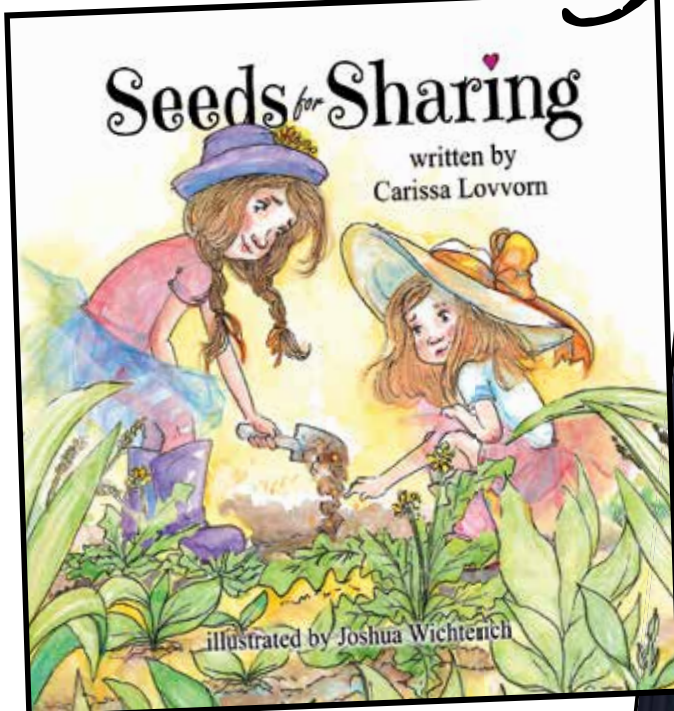
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Publisher's Point

If H.R. 5 Passes, Must Zaytuna College Comply?

Recently, a bill passed in the US House of Representatives that would cause the sexual revolution begun in the '60s to move even closer to completion. In my view, the resulting moral chaos would ultimately ensure the collapse of our country. If passed, H.R. 5 would grant (under what would be essentially an amended and expanded 1964 Civil Rights Act) anyone who identifies as any number of genders on any given day for any period of time special constitutional protection.

Enter the potential Zaytuna College "zeitgeist." Zaytuna College is the first accredited Muslim college in America, and is located near Berkeley in California. It started in 1996 as the Zaytuna Institute, and received its accreditation in 2015 from the same association that accredits Stanford University. It does not participate in government student financial aid programs, and it is Sunni in terms of its denominational approach to Islamic doctrine. Zaytuna students have to sign what is essentially a contract with the college each year they are enrolled promising that they will abide by a strict six-point behavioral, academic,

and moral code. Moreover, they agree to face expulsion if they don't comply. Below is from the Zaytuna College Honor Code:

The sixth principle requires sobriety and restraint. This means that alcohol, drugs, gambling and inappropriate relationships and behaviors are categorically forbidden. Restraint from aggressive speech and behavior, including dangerous or reckless behavior, is essential for the Zaytuna student.

So, what is the "zeitgeist" here? The word is a compound German term which literally means "time spirit." It is defined as "the defining spirit or mood of a particular period of history as shown by the ideas and beliefs of the time."

And therein lies the rub. Who gets to determine the "defining spirit or mood of a particular period of history as shown by the ideas and beliefs of the time?" It is no secret that officially Islam only considers heterosexual behavior to be pleasing to Allah, a position that has been consistent throughout the ages. So, if a "progressive, woke" Zaytuna student, whose gender assigned at birth was male,



US Congresswoman Rashida Tlaib, proponent of H.R. 5

wanted to wear a burqa and live in a female dorm, would the college have to comply under the so-called Equality Act? Could the Zaytuna College admissions board refuse to accept such a one as a student in the first place? And if they did, what would happen? Would there be arrests? Dismissals? A loss of accreditation, and they'd have to go back to just being The Zaytuna Institute?

What if gay Muslim men (and in America, that is actually possible) want to attend Zaytuna as a married couple? Same-sex marriage is legal in California, and they could demonstrate that they are in fact, lawfully married. Would the Quran and the hadiths be allowed to prevail in their condemnation of same-

sex activity, in or out of a civilly lawful context, or would the expanded Civil Rights Act trump the First Amendment?

While we are at it, what happens to the 1993 Religious Freedom Restoration Act if H.R. 5 gets passed in the Senate? And lastly, why did the three Muslim

members of Congress, i.e., Representative André Carson, Representative Ilhan Omar, and passionately anti-Trump Rep. Rashida Tlaib (who, upon getting elected, promised in front of her son to go to DC and "impeach the motherf---r")—why did they vote for a bill that potentially flies in the face of all they supposedly hold dear? At the very least, a younger Rashida might have decided that she wouldn't have been a good fit as a Zaytuna student. After all, they insist that students refrain from "aggressive speech and behavior," **as is their First Amendment right as educators.** May H.R. 5 die in the Senate because senators upheld their vow to protect, preserve, and defend the Constitution from all enemies, foreign and domestic.

Ali Elizabeth Turner

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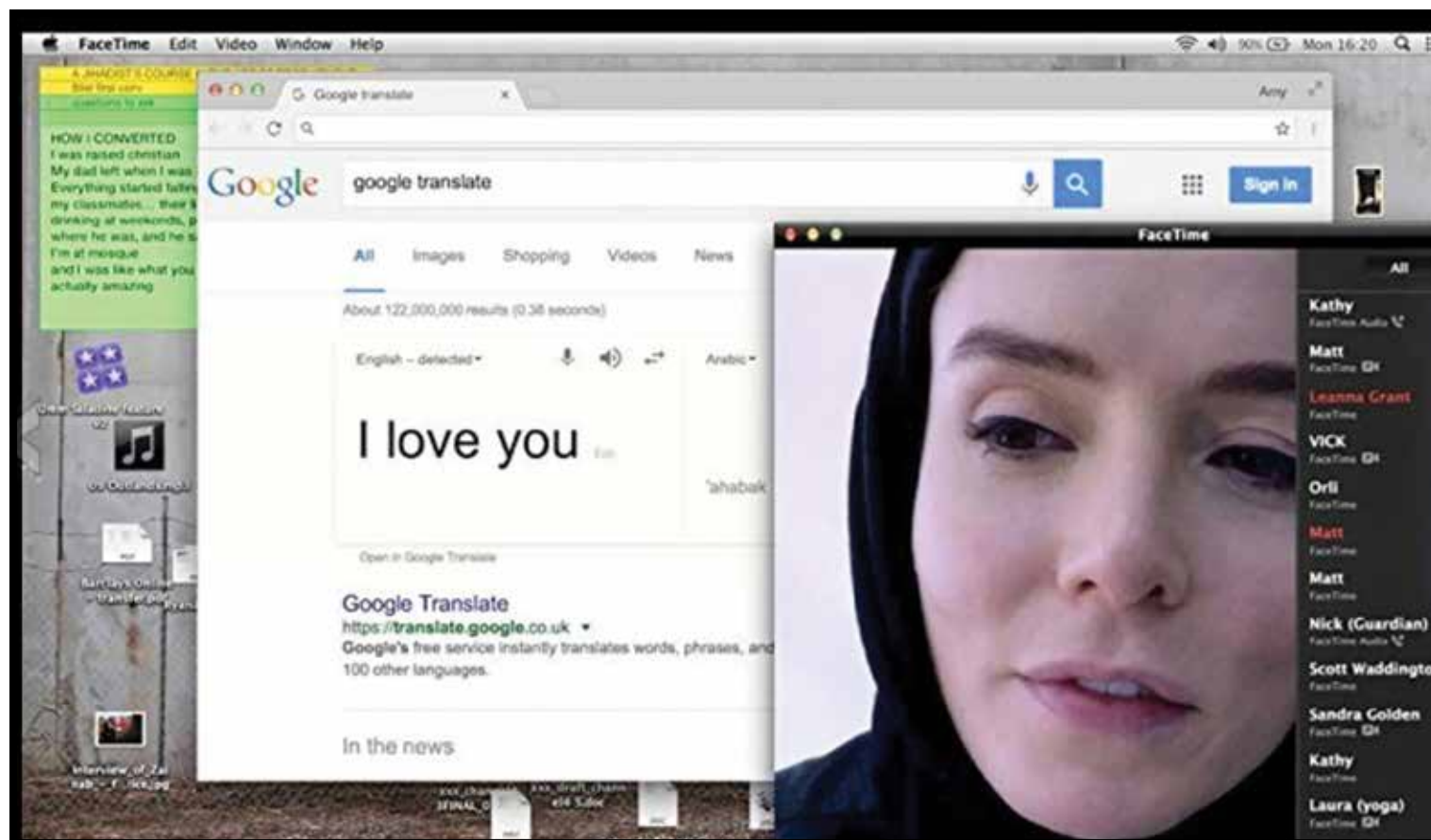
Profile Coming To The States May 14

by Ali Elizabeth Turner



The year 2020 was weird on so many levels, not the least of which was how central the “Online Global Nation” became to all of us. Virtual meetings, virtual school, virtual church services, virtual weddings, and virtual conventions became the norm. The wholesale move to having our laptops provide the lions’ share of our perception of reality and community set the stage for the US release of a disturbing and important documentary called *Profile*. It is important to this column because it underscores the fact that the War On Terror is far from over, in spite of the fact that bit by bit troops are coming home. We have probably only scratched the surface of warfare that is waged by keystrokes.

The true story is about an undercover French journalist who did a deep fake online in order to draw out and expose an ISIS recruiter. The woman’s cover story was that she was a 20-year-old recent convert to Islam, and was looking to grow spiritually and personally in her new faith.



It didn’t take long for her “new friend” to begin singing the praises of both Allah and the country to which he was trying to draw her. That country happened to be Syria, and one of his proposals was indeed that -- a proposal of marriage. “Syria is amazing,” the jihadist told her after making con-

tact. “We have everything here. Masha’Allah (an expression of joy to Allah and delight in a person or situation), you have to believe me. It’s paradise! A lot of women fantasise about us; we’re Allah’s warriors.”

The purpose of the “op” was to gain understanding of what the journalist,

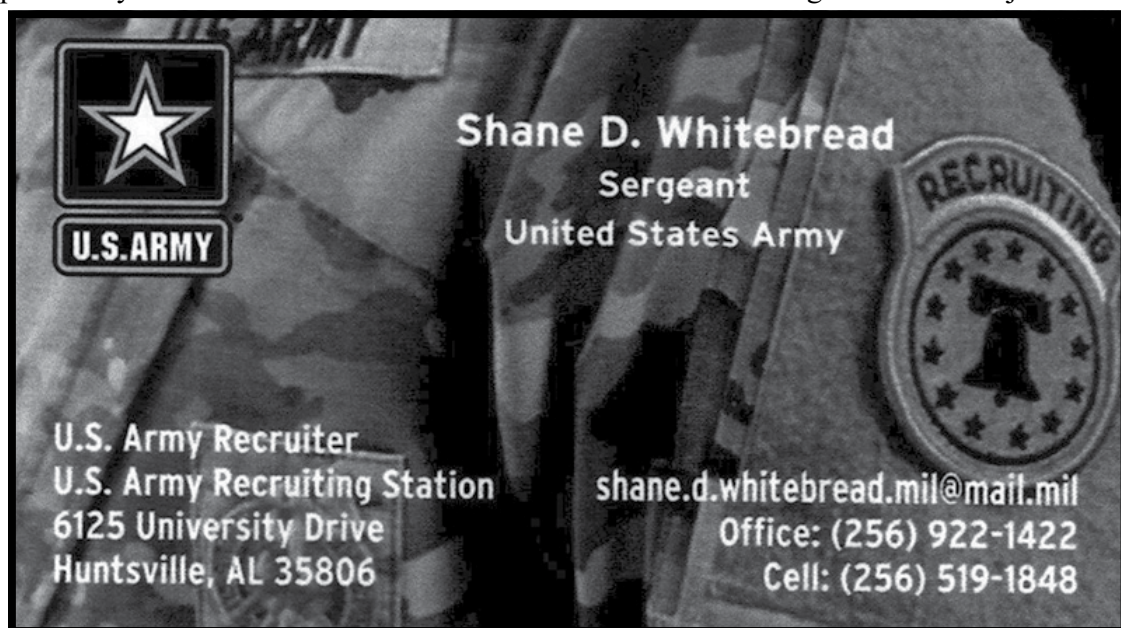
who had the manufactured name of Mélodie, described as an attempt to “grasp the mindset of soldiers who spent their days torturing, stealing, raping, killing, and their nights staring into their computers and bragging.”

It turns out that the recruiter, who went by the name of Bilel, was directly connected to Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, one of the head honchos of the Islamic State. Al-Baghdadi was killed in 2019 by Special Forces, and as always, his death was hailed and hated, depending on who you asked.

Mélodie went on to write a book entitled *In The Skin Of A Jihadist*, which was then made into the movie, *Profile*. The book was a non-fiction bestseller, and the movie pulled down several foreign film awards. Yet, it was not available for

viewing in the US. That all changed, though, when Focus Features made it possible to be seen in the States, and the release date is May 14.

Mélodie has paid a high personal price to produce this important piece. Eventually it was discovered that she was not who she claimed to be, and she had to be put into police protection. She is now officially unable to do any more work re: exposing ISIS because it is just too dangerous. She has had to change her phone number twice, her life has been disrupted, but at the end of the day she doesn’t mind. “Drastic safety measures have been implemented” is all she’ll say about her new role in the Global War On Terror, and may God send His angels to watch over her and hers.





Blake's Beat

Limestone Sheriff's Rodeo Pageant Committee Accepting Applications

by Blake Williams

The Limestone County Sheriff's Rodeo sponsors a Rodeo Queen Pageant. There are seven divisions for the Queen Pageant ranging from ages 3-4, 5-6, 7-9, 10-12, 13- 15, 16-18, and 18-26. Horsemanship is optional for all divisions aged 5 and up, except for "Miss Limestone Sheriff's Rodeo," the 18-26-year-old division.

Horsemanship for the 18-26-year-old division requires horsemanship

participation. Contestants in this division compete to win a custom-made trophy saddle, a custom belt buckle, a watch, scholarship money, and much more. The entry fee for this division is \$100.00.

Kellie Barron, pageant committee director, explains the main objective for participating in the pageant: "The main goal is to build strong young women through enhancing self-confidence along with more knowledge of horses,

rodeo, social and interviewing skills," she said. "These characteristics can carry them through the rest of their lives!"

Applications can be picked up at the Limestone County Sheriff's Office or downloaded from www.limestonesheriffrodeo.com, or by mail.

The deadline for ages 3-18 to submit their applications is April 16 and the deadline for ages 18-26 is May 1.



Dogwood & Magnolia Bakery Opens In Historic Mooresville On April 6

by Blake Williams

Historic Mooresville will soon welcome Dogwood & Magnolia Bakery to their business district, according to a recent news release.

The bakery will be located at 25062 North Street in

the newly renovated Richardson Country Store building (circa 1903.)

According to reports, the bakery will welcome customers all week with a variety of giveaways.

The bakery, owned by Alex-

is Smith, offers made from scratch treats like cinnamon rolls, decadent cookies, savory muffins, and delicious cakes.

The bakery will also serve freshly brewed coffee and old-fashioned candies. Patrons can also browse the candy and soda bars and look for gifts for their home.

The bakery will be open Tuesday to Friday 9 a.m. to 2 p.m., Saturday 8 a.m. to noon, and closed on Sunday & Monday.

For more information about Dogwood & Magnolia, follow the bakery on Facebook and Instagram.



REMINDER: Teams Needed For Annual Cornhole For A Cure Tournament

by Blake Williams

An upcoming cornhole tournament hopes to raise hundreds of dollars for the fight against cancer.

County for a Cure, Limestone County's American Cancer Society Relay for Life team, has scheduled the 2021 Cornhole for a Cure tournament, presented by Grayson Carter & Son, Contracting Inc., for Saturday, April 17, 2021, with a rain date set for the next day. Sign-in registrations and open courts begin at 11 a.m. and the tournament starts at

noon. Teams can pre-register by emailing County for a Cure team captain Michelle Williamson at michelle.williamson@limestonecounty-al.gov.

The tournament will be held at Lucy's BARge, located at 6049 Bay Village Drive, on the beautiful Tennessee River in Limestone County.

The cost to enter is \$50 per team of two. There is \$1,000 worth of prize money up for grabs.

Calendar of Events

National Walking Week

April 1 - 7

Hosted by AVA_America's Walking Club. This is a great time to get out and about on Athens-Limestone's trails, tracks and treks. This includes the AVA Athens Historic Volksmarch which will help you to explore and take steps to benefit your heart, mind and spirit. Trail brochures are available at the Athens-Limestone Visitors Center 100 North Beaty Street in Athens Monday-Friday from 8:00AM-5:00PM and a selection of guest favorites are available on the porch in the covered boxes year-round.

Community Blood Drive

April 2

Athens-Limestone Visitors Center, 100 North Beaty Street in Athens. 11:00AM-4:00PM. Covid-19 Antibody Testing will happen. All donors will receive a t-shirt. Register for your time slot at RedCrossBlood.org and use Zip Code 35611 and select Athens-Limestone Visitors Center to schedule your appointment.

Lindsay Lane Egg Hunt

April 3

Camp Helen, 14477 Baptist Camp Road in Harvest. 10:30AM-12:30PM. Three egg hunts will take place: Age 3 & under: 10:40AM; Ages 4-6 at 11:00AM; and ages 7-11 at 11:20AM with a golden egg for each age group. Each family needs to bring their child's Easter basket and a picnic lunch to enjoy. A special area for Easter photos will be available. Bring fishing gear if you would like to fish. Donations of plastic eggs filled with candy, stickers, and prizes can be dropped off March 31st at Lindsay Lane Baptist Church entrances (1300 Lindsay Lane in Athens) from 8:00AM-4:30PM. For more information: Dawn Mack Dawn@lindsaylane.org or Lori Carter Lori@lindsaylane.org

April Cruise-In on the Square

April 3

Downtown Athens from 6:00PM-9:00PM. No judging, no trophies-- just show and shine; enjoy the shops and eateries around the Square. All cars, trucks, and bikes welcome.

Athens Historic Walking Tours

April 3, 10, 17

Join the Athens-Limestone County Tourism Association at the Athens-Limestone Visitors Center (100 North Beaty Street in Athens) at 9:45AM for check-in and tour selection. Expect a 1-2 hour long tour which begins at 10:00AM. Comfortable shoes and a light jacket are suggested. Free. Donation Welcome. For more information: 256-232-5411 In this group environment event, close proximity to others outside of your household will occur. For the safety of everyone, please wear your mask,

sanitize and if you have been unwell or in the presence of someone who has been ill, please stay home for the safety of others and the community.

April 4th

Annual Community Easter Son-Rise Service

Alma will host the annual Community Easter Son-Rise Service on April 4th, 6:30-7am. Held at Swan Creek Park Pavilion on Hwy 31S next to Athens Middle School. Everyone is invited.

Shady Lady Trail Run

April 10

Joe Wheeler State Park. 4403 McLean Drive in Rogersville. Featuring a 5K and 10K run starting at 8:00AM. Day of onsite registration starts at 6:30AM. 5K is \$25.00; 10K is \$35.00. All age groups. Awards to top three overall finishers and top three in each age group. For more information: shadyladytrailrun.itsyourrace.com/event.aspx?id=14212

Annual Athens HS Booster Club

Golf Tournament


April 15

Canebrake Golf Course. 23015 Founders Circle in Athens. 8:00AM or 1:00PM Tee off times for this four-man scramble; Lunch served at 11:30. Teams of four: \$600.00; Mulligan Package \$100.00 per team optional. For more information: [Reene Hodges at 256-681-1300.](mailto:Reene.Hodges@athenshsboosterclub.com)

1st Annual AMVETs Post 21 Horse, Pony, and Mule Fun Day

April 17

Limestone County Sheriff's Rodeo Arena. AL-99 on the right past the Elm Street Intersection in Athens. 8:00AM-6:00PM. Open to riders of all ages. Come join the AMVETs of Post 21 for a day of fellowship and games. Class Fees are \$5.00 per class - cash only. Admission is \$5.00 non-riders; Children under 5 free. Concession available. For registration information or other questions: amvetsalpost21@gmail.com



For the health and safety of our volunteers and the public, we regret that the VVA Spaghetti Day has been canceled until further notice. Thank you for your support and understanding.

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What Makes Ronnie Roll

A Growth Mindset For Growing Well

by Ali Elizabeth Turner

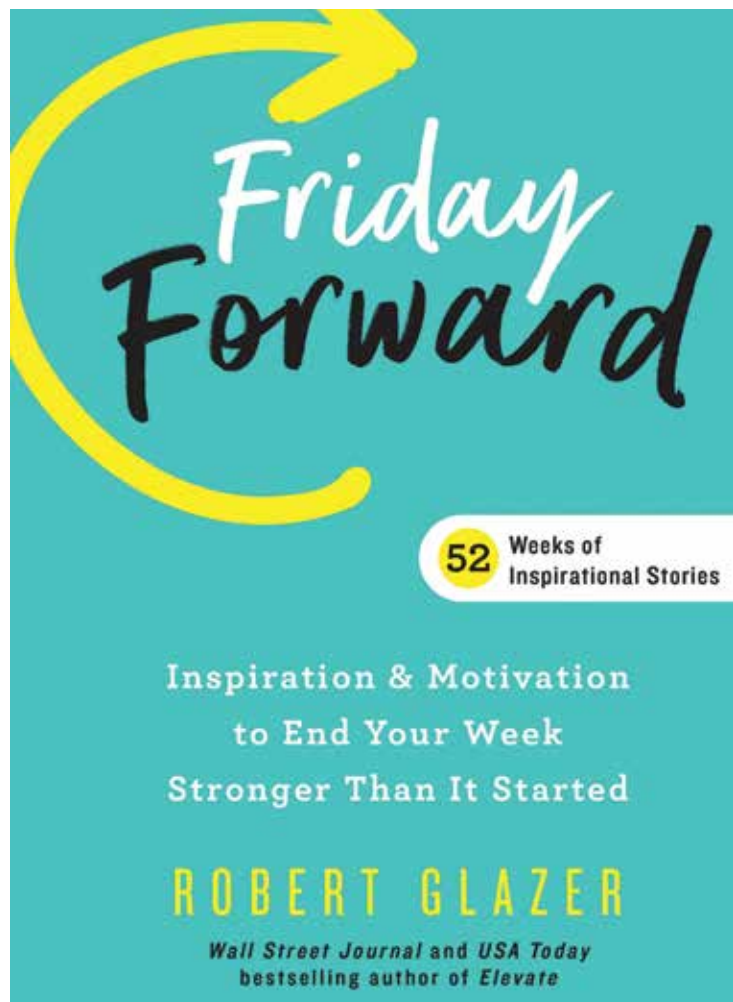


Many of our twice-a-month Mondays are spent talking about growth in Athens-Limestone County, and it was once again the case for this edition of “Ronnie.” As we have spent several editions exploring Robert Glazer’s *Friday Forward*, there was a particular application that came out of a further perusal of “intellectual capacity.” The most important part of intellectual capacity is not IQ or even education, it has to do with what is called the “growth mindset” as opposed to the “fixed mindset.”

Below are Glazer’s thoughts on the topic, which Mayor Ronnie read to me, and applied to Athens/Limestone County:

If spiritual capacity dictates the big-picture characteristics that guide your life decisions, intellectual capacity establishes the day-to-day actions that advance you toward your purpose. Intellectual capacity relates to how you think, learn, plan, and execute with discipline.

Intellectual capacity ultimately boils down to your mindset, planning, and daily actions. It sounds simple, but the first step of building intellectual



capacity is **believing you can**. A consistent quality of most high performers is intellectual curiosity—they’ve expanded their capabilities by always wanting to learn more and seeking out new information.

*If you think of your intellectual capacity as **fixed**, you won’t be able to get better. Adopting a **growth***

mindset and proactively seeking opportunities to learn is crucial to building intellectual capacity. This also means soliciting direct feedback and hearing honest input about where you need to improve and your blind spots.

So, an opportunity for the folks of Athens to help our area “get better,” to “seek out information,” as well



as give “direct feedback” is going to occur on April 22 when the comprehensive plan to grow our area will be rolled out at the City Council meeting. “We have always said that our biggest blessing is also our biggest challenge,” said Mayor Ronnie, and by that he meant the phenomenal growth occurring all around us. He then added, “I get asked what keeps me up at night, and I’ll tell you, it’s the quality of life in Athens. How do we maintain safety? How do we grow well?”

Last winter we celebrated the addition of Buc-ee’s to our local economy, and the mayor told me that there


is another retail development that is going in there. Of course, he couldn’t tell me what it was or anything about the project, but it is going to be a part of “growing well.”

When we are finished with *Friday Forward*, Mayor Marks decided that our next book would be the NYT bestseller written by Oscar-winning actor Matthew McConaughey, entitled *Green Lights*. From what the mayor has read so far, the native-born Texan is a far cry from what you would expect from someone who is a Hollywood A-lister. He has had several crises, is not overly impressed with his success, and feels that more than anything in life what he has been called to is be a dad. So, stay tuned for that. Mr. Matthew is a deep thinker and has a lot of common sense.

The time had flown, as it always does, and it was time to pray, which we did. Then, Ronnie had to roll.



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Slinkard On Success

Do Not Be Like The Rest Of The World

by D. A. Slinkard

D.A. Slinkard would love your feedback. You can contact him at da.slinkard@gmail.com



How do some people achieve more than what others do? Have you ever taken the time to think why some people are able to be successful while others are just barely getting by? If I could tell you how you could achieve everything you desire in life, would I have your attention? Sometimes we end up getting things we did not want all because we were not clear on what actions we needed to take to obtain our desired goal or result.

Many times, bad things happen to good people simply because they are not able to react fast enough to what is happening in their life. Businesses go under because the employees are not able to sell products fast enough

in quantities great enough to keep the creditors at bay. To find success in life, a person needs to learn how to take the right amount of action to achieve their desired results.

There was a study conducted by the Napoleon Hill Institute which suggests that over 95% of the entire world population are going about their daily lives without a single purpose. I was completely surprised by this number when I read this statistic, but then I quickly understood why the richest 1% of the world have as much wealth as the remaining 99% totaled.

This article is about finding the ability to separate yourself from the pack of people who have no purpose in life. I could not imagine waking up, going

to work, coming home, going to bed, getting up the next day, and doing the same cycle repeatedly. This is monotonous and is no way to live; yet we have so many people living this way. How do we avoid this lifestyle? We must seek and find our purpose in this life while we can. We have no idea how long we are here for; but when it is our time to go, it is our time to go. Why not find some purpose while you are here?

To find your purpose requires some honesty within yourself and doing a little digging to uncover what matters to you. I have developed a list of questions that I like to go to when I feel my life drifting in the wrong direction. When answering these questions,

you will want to take your time, be thorough, be accurate, and be deliberate. People do not achieve great things because they are rushing through life to get to the next day. The questions you want to answer are as follows:

1. Decide what your definite purpose in life is.
2. Write out a clear statement of this purpose.
3. How will you obtain the object of your purpose?
4. Create an accountability group of like-minded individuals, which is also known as a “mastermind” group, to help you achieve your goals.

You have two options when it comes to answering these questions: You can fly through them and

see how quickly you complete the assignment, which will have you walking away feeling much the same way you did prior to the exercise. You will rush through it and miss the entire purpose, seeing no benefit. The alternative way to handle this is to take some time to really reflect upon the questions and be sincere in answering them. I say sincere because after all, this is your future self you are writing this for. This exercise is for who you will become, not for who you are in this very moment. The hardest part is truly finding what that definite purpose in life is because we have too many external factors that dictate what we think we should be going after. Your definite purpose in life only holds meaning for you. It holds no weight for your parents, for your spouse, for your brother or sister, just you. Be honest with yourself when you write out the answers to these questions.

You want to write the answer to the first question and keep it in a place you will see every day. You need daily affirmation of what your purpose is to help achieve it. You will want to utilize your mastermind group to help you stay on course. You want to allow them to help guide you back on track when you get lost along the journey. You will find your true self when you find your definite purpose; and in doing so, you will separate yourself from the other 95%. Be willing to do what others will not.





Tourism

Come Escape Into History And Nature In Athens-Limestone Alabama

by Cayce Lee

Social Media Specialist, Athens-Limestone County Tourism Association

No matter what your escape requires, you'll find options in Athens-Limestone County. RVing, boating, fishing, swimming, water skiing, hiking, kayaking, canoeing, birding, or just simply relaxing -- there's a playground for everyone. Here are just a few events from the Athens-Limestone Tourism event calendar. VisitAthensAL.com has all the details you need and even more events to help get you out of the house and having fun.

HISTORIC WALKING TOURS...

Athens and Mooresville invite everyone to the April Saturday Historic Walking Tours. Come explore the local history, heritage, and architecture of two cities older than the State of Alabama. The free tours start with sign in at 9:45 a.m. Those interested in the Athens tours, which includes Athens City Cemetery, Athens State University, Beaty Historic District, Houston Historic District, and the Historic Donnell House, should check in at the Athens-Limestone Visitors Center at 100 North Beaty Street in Athens. Those interested in Mooresville's beautiful guided tour should check in at the Mooresville Post Office located at 24995 Lauderdale Street.

Though these events are outdoors, you will be in close contact with individuals outside of your household, so please wear a mask; sanitize your hands; and if you are ill or have been around someone who is or has been ill, please



Walkers enjoy the fresh air and the red buds on the Richard Martin Rails to Trails

stay home for the courtesy of those around you and the community.

HISTORIC WALKING TOURS...

RED BUDS ABLOOM...

The Richard Martin Rails to Trails is a 10.3 mile trail starting just south the northern border of Alabama in Veto and travels through the Civil War historic site, Battle of Sulfur Creek Trestle, before continuing through the heart of Town of Elkmont to finish at Piney Chapel Road north of Athens at Coffman-Mitchell Park. Walkers, bikers, and horseback riders can enjoy this scenic trail that is bespeckled with blooms and buds as spring arrives in the Tennessee Valley.

SUPPORT LOCAL MUSIC...

Music lovers will enjoy the variety of venues offering music in every corner of Athens-Limestone. From jamming on the river with Lucy's BARge to toe-tapping fun in the heart of the Athens with Mac's Sports Bar and Steakhouse to The Rustic Bucket Diner just west of Athens to several choices just over the border in Minor Hill and Ardmore, TN, to enjoy. Music is a big part of life in Athens-Limestone and you'll find a variety of genres at the local



The bronze statue of Judge Horton greets April Historic Walk attendees on the westside of the Limestone County Courthouse

music venues. Stop by the Athens-Limestone Visitors Center at 100 North Beaty Street for the live music brochure to help you get your toes a-tappin'.

SAD NEWS... BUT THINGS STILL REVVED UP...

The Athens Cars and Bikes on the Square car/bike show has been postponed until 2022. But don't let that disappoint you. The first Saturday Cruise-ins and second Saturday Truck Invasions are still a go from 6-9:00 p.m. respectively.

EARTH DAY...IN THE PARK

Keep Athens-Limestone Beautiful is going forward

with Earth Day on April 24 in Big Spring Memorial Park in Athens. Things will be a little different with vendors and demonstrators spread out over the park to make it socially distanced but there will still be plenty of fun for the whole family.

TROTting GOOD TIME...

AMVETS will be hosting their 1st Annual Horse, Pony, and Mule Fun day on April 17 with a variety of classes for riders and fun for spectators. This fundraising event is \$5.00 for spectators and free for children under 5. Those with horses, ponies, and mules can show their skills in competition for just \$5.00 per class.

TOSS IT IN...

County for a Cure's annual Relay for Life fundraiser, Cornhole for a Cure, will be on the Tennessee River at Lucy's BARge on April 17. Teams and spectators will get to enjoy the view as well as the competition and see who gets to take home prizes.

KIDS TO LOVE...

It's the annual Kids to Love fundraiser, Denim and Diamonds, at Davidson Farm in Ardmore on April 24 with a VIP concert with Shenandoah.

BRYSON STORYTELLING DAY...

Join Wise Ant General Store & Bakery for a day of storytelling with tales from the Bryson, TN community. Pack a picnic lunch and nestle in for this family-friendly time and a treat from Wise Ant's Bakery on April 25.

GET OUT AND STRETCH YOUR LEGS...

Athens-Limestone Tourism has a variety of brochures highlighting available trails, tracks, and treks in the greater Limestone County area including Ardmore, Mooresville, Lester, Elkmont, and Athens, AL area. These brochures are available at the Athens-Limestone Visitors Center 100 N. Beaty St., Athens, AL, between 8 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday or by visiting www.VisitAthensAL.com looking under "Plan Your Visit" or using the "Contact Us" form to request a copy. You can also reach the Athens-Limestone Visitors Center by calling 256-232-5411.

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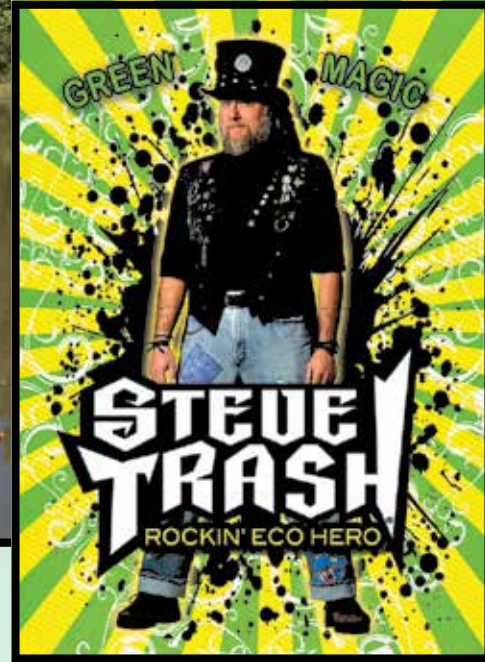



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Clean, Green And Beautiful

2021 Earth Day & Outdoor EXPO

by Leigh Patterson - Executive Director - Keep Athens-Limestone Beautiful



Keep Athens-Limestone Beautiful is very excited to host our annual **Earth Day & Outdoor EXPO** this year! The event will be held on **Saturday, April 24 from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. at Big Spring Memorial Park** (the duck pond) in Athens. Admission is free, although we do suggest a \$1 donation.

This year's event will look a little different than in years past, but it will still be a fun event for the whole family to enjoy. We plan to provide a completely outdoor socially-distant event, with vendors and exhibitors located throughout the park, who will offer kids' activities, make-and-take crafts, earth-friendly products, information to share, and more!

Thanks to Limestone County Water and Sewer Authority, **Steve Trash, Rockin' Eco Hero**, will perform his eco-magic show three times at this event (11:30 a.m., 12:30 p.m., and 1:30 p.m.). The show will be held in the

KALB/Gulf Museum parking lot on East Street across from the park.

Steve Trash is an award-winning performer who has appeared all over the world, and even has his own television show! He has a wonderful way of getting the message of conservation and recycling across in a fun, loud, crazy show loved by both children and adults. Visit SteveTrash.com for more information about Steve and his show.

Some of the other vendors include: Carissa Lovvorn, author; the Alabama Dept. of Conservation and Natu-

ral Resources with their Wildlife Enforcement Educational Trailer; Limestone County Sheriff's Office with their Armored Personal Carrier and Boat; Isabelle Lovvorn's Lemonade Stand for Charity; TVA; Girl Scout Troop 1922; Ladies Civitan; Athens-Limestone Recycling Center; and MORE!

KALB would like to thank the following sponsors for partnering with us for this event:

- Limestone County Water and Sewer Authority
- American Leakless Company
- Indorama Ventures
- Athens State University
- Tennessee Valley Authority

If you are interested in being a vendor/exhibitor or a sponsor of this event, please contact KALB at 256-233-8000 or email KALBCares@gmail.com. We will be happy to speak with you and provide you with more information!

Guided Nature Walk at Marbut Bend Walking Trail

Before you head out to the Earth Day & Outdoor EXPO on **Saturday, April 24**, we recommend taking a relaxing guided nature walk beginning at **8 a.m. at the Marbut Bend Walking Trail in West Limestone**. You won't want to miss this fun and educational walk located in a very beautiful area. This walk will take you across boardwalks through a wetland area and along the shoreline of two coves of the Elk River. Damien Simbeck of Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) will be leading the walk. He is an expert on birds and other wildlife, along with the plants and trees that call Marbut Bend home.

The walk will begin promptly at 8 a.m. Please meet in the walking trail

parking lot. Comfortable walking shoes and insect repellent are recommended. You may want to bring binoculars as well for bird and other wildlife viewing. This 1.1-mile walk is an easy, flat, and A.D.A. accessible trail, and will last approximately 1 to 1 1/2 hours.

Directions from Athens: Take Market Street (Hwy 99) west toward West Limestone. After crossing the Elk River bridge, Marbut's Bend is about 1.4 miles down on the left on Hwy 99.

We hope that you will consider joining KALB for both events on Saturday, April 24!

KALB UPCOMING EVENTS

REMINDER:

Household Hazardous Waste Collection

Saturday, April 10, 2021

8 a.m. to noon

Athens Middle School North Parking Lot

100 US Hwy 31, Athens

Visit the event page on KALBCares.com for information on items accepted

2021 Earth Day & Outdoor EXPO (Outdoors and socially distant!)

Saturday, April 24, 2021

11:00 am to 2:00 pm

Big Spring Memorial Park

350 Market Street East, Athens



Become a Fan



(256) 233-8000

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www.KALBCares.com



Cooking with Anna

Popping Into Spring

by Anna Hamilton

Everywhere you turn, you can see the signs of spring. New buds on the trees, daffodils blooming, birds singing, bees buzzing. Springtime has arrived. With new life popping up from the ground, I'm reminded of something my mom would always say to me growing up: "Popcorn is prepared in the same pot, in the same heat, in the same oil, and yet the kernels do not all pop at the same time. Don't compare yourself to others. Your turn to pop will come!"

Not all flowers bloom at the same time, not all trees put out buds at the same time. My favorite trees are crepe myrtles and they do not bloom until summer. If nature has this figured out, then why are we so slow to catch on! The daffodils don't compare themselves to the rosebush. The pear tree doesn't think less of the slow blooming crepe myrtle. The fact that all of nature blooms at its own pace should be example enough for us to stop putting so much pressure on ourselves to be just like everyone else.

You are right where you are meant to be! Enjoy where you are. I have spent a good part of my life wondering why parts of my life didn't just "happen" to me the way it did for other people. Now that I have turned 40, I realize that my life is happening the exact way it is meant to happen. The other people I see when I look around who

seem to have it all are struggling with things that I do not see. They look at me and wish they had what I have.

We do a good job teaching children to work hard for their dreams. We push them to achieve goals and dreams. Having the desire to go for your dreams is wonderful. But we need to also teach them that it is okay to fail, it is okay to not make the team, it is okay to not get the lead role. Your time will come. Keep trying, work hard, and be grateful for the life you have. Be gracious when you see others achieve things you are working towards, knowing that your time will come.

Enjoy your time in the heat because you are eventually going to pop. Your turn to pop will come. Until then, enjoy where you are. Take in the scenery. Be thankful for your blessings and keep working hard to achieve your dreams.

In honor of spring popping up all around us, this week's recipe is a delicious popcorn snack, Apple Cinnamon Popcorn. It is healthy, it is delicious, and it is sure to please a crowd!

"Ask the Lord for rain in the springtime; it is the Lord who sends the thunderstorms. He gives showers of rain to all people, and plants of the field to everyone."
Zechariah 10:1

Apple Cinnamon Popcorn

Ingredients:

- 4-6 cups plain popcorn, popped
- 2 Tbsps. coconut oil, or butter
- 1 Tbsp. honey
- ½ tsp. vanilla
- 1 tsp. cinnamon or apple pie spice
- 1 cup apple chips (dehydrated apples)

Directions:

In a small bowl, melt coconut oil or butter with honey, vanilla, and cinnamon or apple pie spice. Whisk to combine.

Drizzle and toss with popped plain popcorn.

Toss mixture with apple chips. Enjoy!



A Heat Sink?

by Steve Leland

A computer chip generates heat as it processes. Chips need a heat sink that will absorb the heat and remove it. A chip with less heat sink than it needs overheats and destroys itself.

Often, this is how people are. If they focus for a period of time on what is bothering them, the heat starts to build. Having a friend that they can share their concerns with can help dissipate the heat.

As a red-blooded American male, my first, second, and third inclination is to solve the problem. Because it is a problem, or it wouldn't be frustrating the other person.

And problems exist to be solved, don'tcha know! Except that, so much of the time, the other party just wants to process the problem...out loud and with feeling. What some of us might refer to as wallowing in it.

Yeah, in case it slipped your attention, disparaging remarks about the validity of processing are not perceived as being all that helpful. Also, matching their level of emotion in the discussion isn't all that great of an idea, unless your choice is to become a fellow wallower... which isn't always a bad choice, if their cause seems just.

Hmmm, *Team-building Through Wallowing...* I'm getting dangerously off-topic.

Back to the subject. You can either help someone blow a head-gasket or be a heat sink. Just another

iteration of: Are you part of the problem, or part of the solution?

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Arrows Driving School Has A 5-star Rating On Google!



by Ali Elizabeth Turner

continued from page 1

Soldiers” was a trademark of Mary’s while serving in the United States Army, and she continues this trend by teaching others to drive. Her philosophy is “seeing a need, meeting a need.” The driving school came about after learning that one of her church teens, age 17, did not know how to drive. What a great opportunity this was for Mary to “see a need, meet a need!” As she began teaching the 17 year old to drive, a question arose: How many others are there with the same need? And at that time the idea of becoming a driving instructor was birthed. Teaching someone a skill requires passion, patience, self-control, and empathy -- all of which Mary adopted over the years of training soldiers. Mary says, “I am highly motivated to give a new driver everything they need to be safe and competent on the roads of Alabama and beyond.” I asked, “I bet you have that brake pedal ready on the righthand side, right?” She laughed in the affirmative. And I, for one, am grateful she is selfless in her service once again for the benefit of others!

Researchers have found “a teacher’s experiences increase a teacher’s effec-



tiveness.” Studies show a teaching experience is positively associated with student achievement. The more experience the teacher has, the greater the learning of the student; and the effectiveness increases at a greater rate. These studies prove true at Arrows Driving School. As a result of her years of experience in training soldiers, training first-time drivers is a natural use of her skills.

Mary has had the pleasure of

not only teaching first-time drivers, but restoring the confidence of drivers who have been in serious accidents. She takes her job as seriously as looking out for soldiers in a combat zone, but does it with a twinkle in her eye. As her website says, “Getting behind the wheel is an exciting time; we teach you how to do it responsibly.” She will teach you how to safely

operate a vehicle, the rules of the road, defensive driving, and how to drive confidently. After speaking with her it is apparent that she absolutely loves what she does.

Here is a direct quote from one of the parents:

Thank you so very much for giving my daughter the confidence to drive. I can truly see that she is pumped up and ready to drive. Whereas, before she was depressed with driving. I will indeed continue to allow her to drive safely on the road. Thank you also for the many tips you have given her along the way. She most definitely was blessed beyond measure to have you as her instructor.

I hope that all is well with you and your family. I thought that I would let you know that Esperanza passed her Driving License Road Test. I am so proud of her!!! Thanks again for giving her exactly what she needed to pass her test. Have a great day!!

Arrows Driving School offers packages that are bundled in 1.5-hour blocks that range from 4 hours to 24, depending on the needs of the student. Each session begins on Monday and goes consecutively until Thursday. From November-February, classes are available from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.; from March-October,

they are available from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. CDT.

What are the advantages of learning to drive through Arrows Driving School? One-to-one training from someone who loves what they do and is the founder and CEO of the company. Upon successful completion of your training, you will earn a certificate of completion which helps with insurance discounts. Mary believes in putting both students and their parents at ease, and as part of Arrows Driving School’s service, students get door-to-door pick up and drop off. Her Army experience has uniquely positioned her to be, as she says, “called to serve, and equipped to train.” For further information on how to empower your child or yourself as a driver, contact Arrows Driving school today. You can book online at www.arrowsdrivingschool.com, or email arrowsdrivingschool@gmail.com for more information.




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Health and Fitness

Back To Basics – Good Sugar Vs. Bad Sugar

by Nick Thomas, owner of Prime Performance Training, and Certified Sports Nutritionist

The basics of a good clean diet have to include the correct intake of sugar. Sugar is a huge issue in food today. It is important to know the truth and how best to apply what has been learned.

Good sugars naturally occur in foods, bad sugars are added. Taste buds cannot tell the difference between naturally occurring sugars, which are found in foods such as fruit and dairy products, and added sugars, which manufacturers add to foods such as soda and candy. From a nutritional standpoint, there is a big difference between these sugar sources. Foods that contain naturally occurring sugar tend to be nutrient-rich, providing more nutrition per bite. Foods that have added sugars have little to no nutritional value, simply being empty calories that provide no benefit to our bodies.

Roughly 5% of daily intake should consist of added sugars. A very active lifestyle and/or regular exercise is maintained by some sugar in the diet which helps supply ready energy to fuel muscles and keep the brain active. The biggest issue most

have with this is the number of processed foods which are consumed. Being hyper-aware of clever marketing and not trusting what is on the front of packages but actually reading the nutrition facts is key.

Look at the carbs as sugars on the nutrition label. This will include both natural and added sugars. Less than 5g per 100g is low, more than 22.5g per 100 is high. Check the ingredients list for glucose, sucrose, fructose, lac-

tose, maltose, etc. These are all forms of sugar as are honey, agave, molasses, and syrups (corn & rice). The higher up the ingredients list these are, the more sugar the product contains.

A basic rule is to stick to the exterior of the grocery store aisles, choosing mostly fresh foods. The less processed, the less bad sugar. However, when buying from those interior aisles, it is best to avoid products labeled “sugar-free” they tend to

contain artificial sweeteners like sucralose, saccharin, and aspartame.

Keep carbs in check; things like white bread, rice, and pasta will contain more of those processed, bad sugars. Replace these with wholegrain options and balance this all out with lean proteins such as fish, chicken, and turkey which will help prevent extreme cravings due to slower digestion.

Cutting sugar out of your daily routine will not be

without struggle. The body has to adjust like it does to breaking any other addiction. Drink tons of water during this time. A dull headache may be experienced and cravings will most definitely be an issue! Go cold turkey and fight through it or have a few ounces of pure fruit juice to help. The symptoms will only last a few days, and soon life will be experienced with more mental clarity and potentially the loss of a few unwanted pounds.



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Skier's Marine -- Tips For Boat Buyers

by Ali Elizabeth Turner

continued from page 1

the boater's trusted education source and help make this process easy.

Let us get started with five things to consider when purchasing a boat for the first time:

1. What water lifestyle is most appealing?

There are several types of boats out there; so the first decision is what type of lifestyle is most appealing. Do early morning fishing trips produce happiness? Try a fishing boat. Have young kids that love to tube and learn to wake-surf? Look into wake boats. Alternatively, maybe a sunset cruise with the option to pull a skier sounds amazing - pontoons might be the perfect boat!

2. Where will the boat be used?

Many future boat owners do not know about the boat size requirements (or restrictions) on various bodies of water. Does the local lake get rough?

Consider a larger boat with a smoother ride. Live on the bay? Ensure the boat chosen holds up well to saltwater. Ask local dealers about the lake's restrictions. This can save significant money if it prevents a boat purchase that is not allowed.

3. Stick close to the budget! Even if that decked-out, red sparkly boat is pretty, it is not worth putting excessive financial strain on the monthly expense. Be sure to consider the boat trailer's price, boat registration, and possible storage options in the total number. Trust us. Time on the boat is much more enjoyable if the price is comfortably within the budget. If considering financing, ask the local dealer for their financing options.

4. Find a reputable brand.

MasterCraft, Sylvan, Supra, Moomba, Chaparral... These are all brands we stand behind at Skier's Mari-



2021 Chaparral 307 SSX

ne. We also acknowledge other good brands do exist. Do the required homework! Look for quality, read reviews, ask for a test drive. This time investment will help to ensure many years of enjoyment.

5. Find a trustworthy boat dealer.

There are many boat dealers around the country. The best service will usually be at local dealers invested in the local community. Visit se-

veral local dealers to get a feel for how they treat their customers! Read reviews online, ask friends for recommendations, and keep looking until an honest dealer and have a good service history is found. Many dealers help with registration paperwork and offer maintenance programs for convenience. Sticking with a reputable dealer ensures fewer headaches down the line.

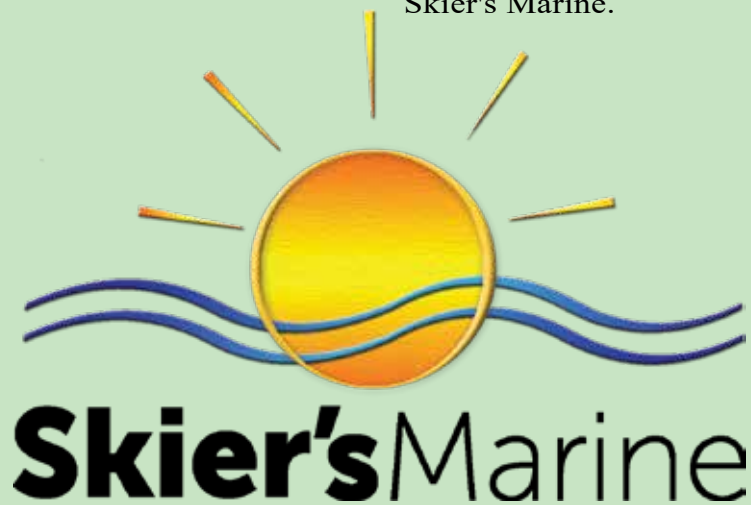
A boat is an investment in fun. We suggest taking the whole family along for the demo ride (literally)! Test the boat thoroughly. We highly recommend never invest-

ing in a product of this size without an on-water demonstration.

We hope these tips help in choosing the perfect first boat. Skier's Marine offers the highest quality boats from MasterCraft, Supra, Moomba, and Chaparral and luxury pontoons from Sylvan. Our partnership with exceptional manufacturers and our commitment to customer service and passion for boating creates a unique customer experience. Our team is here to be the boater's guide. Whatever boat questions you have can be answered at info@skiersmarine.com or by visiting your local Skier's Marine.



2021 MasterCraft X24



3 Fresh Trends To Inspire Your 2021 Garden

courtesy BrandPoint content

(BPT) - Home gardening offers plentiful benefits that support mental and physical health, and many people have decided to begin or expand their gardens during the pandemic. Whether you're a new gardener looking to learn or a seasoned green thumb who has been growing plants for years, you want inspiration for the upcoming growing season.

Following expert-recommended top trends can help set you up for success and make your garden the envy of the neighborhood. The 2021 Burpee GardenCast forecast, found at www.burpee.com/GardenCast, is an inspirational resource based on industry trends and cultural insights, combining expertise from Burpee horticulturalists, registered dietitian Marisa Moore and HGTV star and lifestyle expert Kelly Ed-

wards.

The GardenCast trends for 2021 include:

Immunity Garden

Health is top of mind for people across the country. An abundant garden full of vibrant vegetables like winter squash, radishes and tomatoes can help you commit to a nutrient-rich diet that strengthens your immune system.

A vegetable's color reflects the different phytonutrients and antioxidants inside, according to the Journal of Nutrition and Metabolism. Growing a rainbow of vegetables allows you to create multi-hued meals with health and disease-fighting benefits.

"Planting an Immunity Garden right in your own backyard will do a world of good," says Moore. "It offers unlimited access to nu-



trient-dense vegetables that help support your overall health and well-being. Tomatoes are a great example: they are rich in vitamin C,

which plays a vital role in a healthy immune system."

Garden of Joy

Gardening helps you reduce stress, move your body and enjoy the outdoors. The psychological benefits of caring for plants can support the mental health of people at any age. That's why individuals as well as families are planting gardens of joy, with blooms that are as pleasant as the process of gardening itself.

The garden of joy is a flower bed full of bright "faces", including pansies and violas, that are sure to inspire many smiles of pure happiness. Every time you tend to these happy blooms you will feel a little lift in your day, plus it brightens your outdoor landscape in a cheerful way.

World Herb Garden

Experiencing international flavors in food is an important part of traveling and with so many people pausing vacation plans, the

associated explorational eating has paused as well. Your palate is ready for something new and you can experience a world of flavors from your own backyard when you grow a world herb garden - no passport needed.

Herbs like lemongrass, dill and cilantro are easy to grow and offer bright flavors to enhance your favorite recipes, no matter the cuisine. Whether you use them fresh, dry or in custom blends, you'll have a bounty of flavor at your fingertips to complement meats, vegetables, pasta and more.

"We want to inspire all gardeners in 2021, which is why we launched the GardenCast," says Burpee Owner George Ball. "Through these trends, we're providing inspiration and creative ideas paired with techniques and product tips to give gardeners of all levels the tools they need to grow with confidence this season."



Ma And Pa Take Seattle

by Jerry Barksdale

Our beloved Barksdale has been gone for a year now, and is sorely missed. In his honor and by request, Athens Now continues to publish the tall tales of his antics as well as his anecdotes. Enjoy!

Six years of retirement doing nothing but sleeping late, reading, writing, and mowing grass had finally taken its toll. I was stressed. I needed a vacation. My good friend (and sometimes redhead) Pat and I decided to visit a foreign country - Seattle.

Alarm clocks are untrustworthy. I kept waking up and checking the clock and my cell phone to be sure they were working. Finally, I got up at 3 a.m. I was tired when we arrived at Huntsville International at 4:30 a.m. to catch our flight. At Houston, I purchased a dab of fried potatoes and toast for \$17 and had just sat down to enjoy a leisurely breakfast when we were told we were at the wrong gate. We ran to board our flight just before the door closed. Anybody have Rol-aids?

We were seated in the back row, just in front of the chicken coops. Pat was across the aisle near a sneezing and coughing guy. I was squeezed between a large, high-tech guy with ear phones, laptop and a nervous twitch. His elbow kept stabbing me in the ribs. A young woman in the window seat turned her butt to me and went to sleep. It was a five-hour flight to Seattle. I re-breakfasted on 14 pretzels and coffee. My butt went to sleep. I needed to pee. I reminded myself that I was happy, relaxed, and on vacation. Then, we encountered turbulence. "Holy

crap!" We just hit a hog in the road," I exclaimed. The woman turned around and smiled. I asked if she went to sleep. "Oh yeah, I'm retired Air Force. Did you sleep?" she asked.

"No way. I was on duty while everyone else slept, listening to every squeak," I said. "There are over 100,000 screws in this plane and any one can break any second."

She tried to reassure me and told about her flight from Iraq aboard a cargo plane loaded with equipment and soldiers. The Sergeant seated next to her was nervous. She patted him on the knee and said it would be okay.

"Lady, you don't understand. I'm Crew Chief of this bird and it's a piece of" I didn't need to hear that. Then she pointed out snow-covered Mt Saint Helen's, a volcano with the top blown off. "There are several volcanic mountains in the area that can blow at any time." I again reminded myself that I was happy, relaxed, and on vacation. We exchanged histories. She was divorced with a 13-year-old boy. I told her about my past troubles and eventual divorce.

"Anything with a uterus is trouble," she said. (I disassociate myself from that statement and demand that she apologize to all God's creatures with a uterus).

In Seattle, we rode a shuttle a hundred yards to our hotel, checked in, ate lunch and slept. The next morning, we shuttled back to the termi-

nal and rode another shuttle to Thrifty Car Rental where I had the deal of a lifetime. When all the add-ons were added up, I paid double. I told the clerk if I ever caught him in Alabama, I'd get my money back.

We departed in our upgrade Dodge SUV. Finally, our real vacation had begun. I missed the I-5 exit and wound up back at the Thrifty garage. It was noon on the second day of our vacation and we were still within 100 yards of where we had landed. Pat was sneezing and coughing. I gave her my handkerchief. (Memo to self: apply for a government grant and research why women won't carry a handkerchief.)

In downtown Seattle, we searched for our hotel. Pat pulled out her iPhone and asked Siri for directions. In a moment Siri said, "You-have-arrived." God Bless Siri. I parked in front of our hotel, walked inside, and informed the blonde that I had reservations. "I don't think so. This is an apartment house." I walked up the street. Wrong hotel. I blamed Siri for my troubles and wondered if she has a uterus. (I move to strike that thought and apologize to all women). Again, I reminded myself that I was happy, relaxed, and on vacation.

Finally, I walked into the Palladin and checked in. The following morning, I lost my wallet stuffed with cash and credit cards. We tore the room apart searching for it. That hussy Siri was harassing me again. Luckily, I found it in the lobby, undisturbed.

You know you are in Seattle

when you see half of the Japanese nation; smell marijuana smoke (I didn't inhale), and see young men and women dressed in black with eyes glued to a cell phone while clutching a \$5.00 cup of Starbucks. There are over 200 Starbucks' in Seattle. Marijuana is legal. I figured it out. Get people stoned, and they'll pay five bucks for a dollar cup of joe and think they're getting a steal.

We could have taken a cannabis tour and seen where pot is grown and sold, but instead decided to get high by going to the top of the Space Needle. Homeless people were occupying the nearby cafeteria. Pat gave her breakfast bagel to a young homeless boy (memo to self: but for the grace of God there go I).

I saw numerous "Bernie for President" signs. Bernie proposes to give away other people's money. Great idea! As long as it isn't my money. (Memo to self: What happens when Bernie runs out of other people's money?)

We dined at Ivar's on the waterfront. Verrrrryy expensive. Tips aren't expected. Our waiter said that the minimum wage had been raised to \$15.00 an hour. That's over \$31,000.00 annually, plus employees are paid 8% of the profits. Now I know why our meal was verrrrryy expensive. Didn't see a McDonald's and 62¢ senior coffee anywhere.

We drove south to Vancouver on the Columbia River, checked into a hotel, then walked up town for a sandwich. We passed three young people at a bus stop passing around a joint. (Again,

I didn't inhale). Back at the hotel, the plastic swipe key wouldn't open the door. That hussy Siri was back screwing me over again. I headed off to the front desk to give them a piece of my mind. Looked at the key holder. "Oops! Wrong floor." I'm happy, relaxed, and on vacation.

Across the river in Portland, Oregon, an enlightened city, "known for its eco-friendliness, microbreweries and coffee houses," cops were running off the homeless camped along the 15 mile walking and bike trail. The spandex-clad, Starbucks sipping yuppies, wearing ear phones and riding \$1,000 bicycles had a bellyful of the homeless. After all, poor folks are unsightly and often smell bad. Pat was incensed and said the Mayor should be arrested. (Memo to self: I prefer people-friendly over eco-friendly).

It's against the law to pump your gas in Oregon. At a Chevron station, I paid \$2.49 for regular. The attendant said he was paid \$9.75 an hour to pump gas. I suppose that's the reason the gas was expensive.

We drove to picturesque Cannon Beach on the Oregon coast where the surf crashed against rocky cliffs and seagulls squawked. Mother Nature was putting on a show. Then, I saw a disturbing sign: "TSUNAMI HAZARD AREA." Evacuation instructions were in our room. Mother Nature would just as soon kill us as entertain us. I didn't sleep well that night.

To paraphrase the comedic actor, W.E. Field, all things being equal I'd just as soon be in Athens drinking a 62¢ cup of McDonald's coffee.

Comforting To Know There Is Life After Death

by Joel Allen



Hello, folks! It has been almost 5 years since Zues passed. I don't know if I shared this with all my readers before, but I have a story to tell after his passing. In December 2016, approximately 3 days after Zues had passed, I was lying in my bed trying to sleep. All my pack was in the bedroom with me, a comfort I always treasure; and I was missing Zues badly when out of the darkness I could hear his tags ringing out as if he were in the room moving about in the dark. I was thinking, "There is no way that can be!" and I leapt out of my bed. No, I was not asleep, nor did I drift into sleep, for me to hear that distinct ring of his collar. When I went over in the darkness to the corner where I heard his collar ringing out from his big identification service dog tag with his picture and rabies tag together, I found his box of ashes laid on top of his collar. It was impossible for the tags to ring out because the box was laid on top of the tags. I even checked to see if another of my pack had their collars on with tags to ring. None of mine did. I sat and thought to myself that Zues is waiting on me; and I believe that now. Another example of Zues's presence still with me is from not long after that incident when I had a back procedure done and was put under.



When I came out of the procedure and was coming out from under the anesthesia, my mom was with me in the recovery room; and she told me I was pointing at the side of my bed and telling her Zues was there. Folks, you can't tell me that dogs don't have spirits. I think that those who believe they are not on the other side waiting for us have not lived and in my opinion are quite ignorant. I am ignorant myself on many things, but not on this issue. There are people I know or have known who have testified about similar experiences. I was reminded of this the other day, in fact, because my mom texted a picture of a paint-

ing titled, "Jesus and the Great Dane." It was beautiful to look upon. It showed the three crosses in the background with clouds above and Jesus reaching down from the clouds over the crosses toward a green and flowered mesa. Right there on the mesa was a fawn colored Great Dane looking back toward the viewer as if to say, "I love you. I will be waiting," and...well, you can look at the picture yourself and draw your own conclusions. When I first saw this, my heart was hit with a mixture of emotions and I got excited. I went to the store's website and ordered a copy of the painting. They have the painting of the same

background with different animals too, but let me say this, I was meant to see this one. I saw in this painting a truth that only the viewer of this painting could see and appreciate. I have made an effort to contact this company because I want to talk to the artist and see what he/she was thinking and see what influenced them to paint this picture. I saw my Zues immediately when I first saw this picture; and since then, I have seen other Dane's faces in this same painting as I have looked at it admiringly. If anyone wants to know the name of the store, call/text me and leave a message because I screen all my calls to prevent telemarketers.

Lastly, I felt the need to write and share this because someone out there needs to hear it and know they are not alone in missing their loved one(s). Sure, our dogs don't have the long life a human does, but they love us; and I can't think of anything better than being loved. Enjoy your April and plant a garden!

"Remember to love your dogs because they love you. Maybe not the way you want them to, like chewing up your favorite shoes or what not, but that is just love chewing. Be thankful for the time you have with them always."

**Joel Allen
256-651-2211**

Mental Health Minute

Dealing With Toxic People -- Part Two

by Lisa Philippart,
Licensed Professional Counselor

***"We teach people
how to treat us."***

- Dr. Phil

In my last article, I presented several strategies that you can use to handle those toxic people in your life who bring negativity and unhappiness into your world. Now, I would like to continue the conversation with some other helpful thoughts and techniques to propel you forward toward healthier relationships. It is important to look at yourself and to explore your reactivity.

Without taking blame for the dynamic, you should look at the degree to which you overreact or underreact in the relationship. You may be unknowingly intensifying the dynamic and keeping it going in an unhealthy direction. For example, when you underreact, a controlling or bullying person will regard that as permission to keep treating you in precisely the same way. On the other hand, toxic people often tend to be hypervigilant about cues that a relationship is heading south, and will become angry and abusive when threatened. This type of overreaction will make narcissists feel powerful and inspire them to keep playing games. The key here is to work on managing your emotions and set some goals for yourself in terms of handling the relationship differently. One technique I use/teach to embolden your implementation of a plan is "if/then" thinking. Prepare by focusing on what you will do/say if an exchange happens. For example, "If

my friend makes a nasty remark, then I am going to say, 'Why would you say something so hurtful?'" Or in the case of the gaslighter, you might say, "If my mother denies what she said to me, then I will simply say, 'You can't intimidate me into believing that. It didn't happen.'" I know this isn't easy, and it does take practice, but standing up for your perspective is important.

I encourage you to recognize the power of intermittent reinforcement. Most of us tend to be optimistic (wait before you disagree with me!). We tend to see a close loss more as a "near win." This is what keeps people at the slot machines!

There is an evolutionary reason for this. When the challenges of life were largely physical (hunting and farming), staying encouraged enough to keep going was often the difference between life and death. We are more motivated to hang in there when we get what we want some of the time. B.F. Skinner introduced the concept of intermittent reinforcement. Quite simply, when food was delivered to a rat through a lever that worked randomly, the rat was fixated and totally hooked.

The rat who pushed the lever and always or never received the food learned that lesson quickly and then lost interest. This type of behav-

ior shaping works in human relationships too. When a toxic person actually does something nice, your heart leaps, your optimism ramps up, and you think, "We are turning a corner!" This locks you in for that much longer, just like the rat. Now and again does not make a pattern...keep that in mind.

Finally, dealing with toxic people requires either boundaries or an exit strategy (or both). If the toxic person is someone you can't avoid -- like a co-worker, a neighbor, or family member -- you will need to set boundaries for behavior and the kind of contact you are going to have. You may be one who has trouble

recognizing what a healthy boundary looks like and may have no idea how to negotiate one. You don't need to be rude, abrasive, or accusatory. In fact, it's important that you aren't. Rather, be firm and decisive. If it's a work situation, go through the proper channels and put their inappropriate words or behaviors in writing. To the family member who makes jokes at your expense, you may say, "I don't find that's funny. I may not be the most organized housekeeper, but my family seems to be thriving nonetheless." For the toxic others, you can ultimately give them the boot. But make a plan for your departure.

It is quite likely that the toxic people in your life have their own "investment" in your relationship. Generally, they like controlling you or lording their power over you; so once you start setting boundaries and confronting them, don't expect them to go gently into the night. In fact, the chances are good that they will redouble their efforts through manipulation, gaslighting, or spreading rumors about you. Be strong. If you are struggling to end a toxic relationship, seek counseling for support and further boundary-setting approaches.

Lisa Philippart is a Licensed Professional Counselor, who divides her time between her own private practice in Huntsville and providing personal counseling services at Athens State University.





The Alternative Approach

We Love Our Country

by Roy Williams

Most of us were raised saying the Pledge of Allegiance, with our hand across our hearts, staring at the American flag. Many of us also quoted the Lord's Prayer before starting classes. It was part of our education and a way to help each of us understand that we live in a free nation with specific rights attached.

In school we were taught that America was a special nation with laws that set us apart from all other nations. Those laws guaranteed us freedoms such as freedom of speech, freedom to bear arms, freedom of assembly, freedom to vote, freedoms that gave the power to the people while limiting the power of the government.

Yes, most of us love this nation. Many of our family members actually paid the ultimate price for our freedoms. We stand for the National Anthem, we vote, we pay our taxes and, yes, we even pray for our nation and its leaders.

Now it's time for "We the People" to take another huge step toward freedom and that is to demand freedom of medicine. Many of you may think that we have freedom of medicine when in reality that was never given when the founding fa-

thers wrote the Constitution. To make matters even worse, the medical profession and the pharmaceutical industry, working with our legislators, established the FDA and gave them way too much power.

As a result, anything that can be proven to help the human body avoid or prevent disease can be controlled by the FDA. For instance, if you proved that eating an apple a day could stop diabetes, you would have to have a prescription from your doctor to purchase apples. Can you imagine how much apples would cost?

The laws are so strict that we can't advertise the truth about many supplements that truly do have healing qualities. If we put a thousand people on an all-natural supplement and all of them got over cancer, the nutritional industry would not be able to report the results without a double-blind, placebo-controlled study that cost well over three million dollars and the only double-blind, placebo-controlled study that will be recognized are the ones performed by the pharmaceutical industry.

Because we don't have freedom of medicine, only the medical profession can approve the studies and qualify who can perform them. It has been well-documented that



high doses of intravenous vitamin C can prevent and reverse many diseases, yet you would be hard-pressed to find a medical doctor or medical school that is willing to do the studies much less administrator the correct doses.

The problem is that you cannot get a patent on an all-natural ingredient. A patent gives exclusivity to the patent holder allowing them to mark up the price as much as they wish. This is how they keep competition from forcing prices down. This is also why they will never do the studies that prove that nutrients are more important than drugs when it comes to healing and prevention of disease.

Supplements simply can't be patented; therefore they aren't interested in them,

even if they are proven to cure disease. They lose control of the narrative, which is to maintain control and charge the highest prices possible without ever finding a cure. Now you may begin to understand why drugs, medical procedures, and insurance cost so much.

Can you imagine how much your phone bill would be without competition. Believe me, I know. Some of you will remember how much phone bills were when Ma Bell had a monopoly. If the government had not followed the Constitution and broke them up, no one could afford to use a phone today.

We are soon coming to the same situation with medicine but instead of breaking up that monopoly all they want to do

is for the government to take over the entire medical profession. Trust me that is not a good idea. What should be done is to give complete medical freedom to every citizen of the United States.

It is now time to take a stand. Demand freedom of choice in all medical issues. Move toward prevention and true cures instead of treating the symptoms just to make money. Only then will medicine become affordable to all people.

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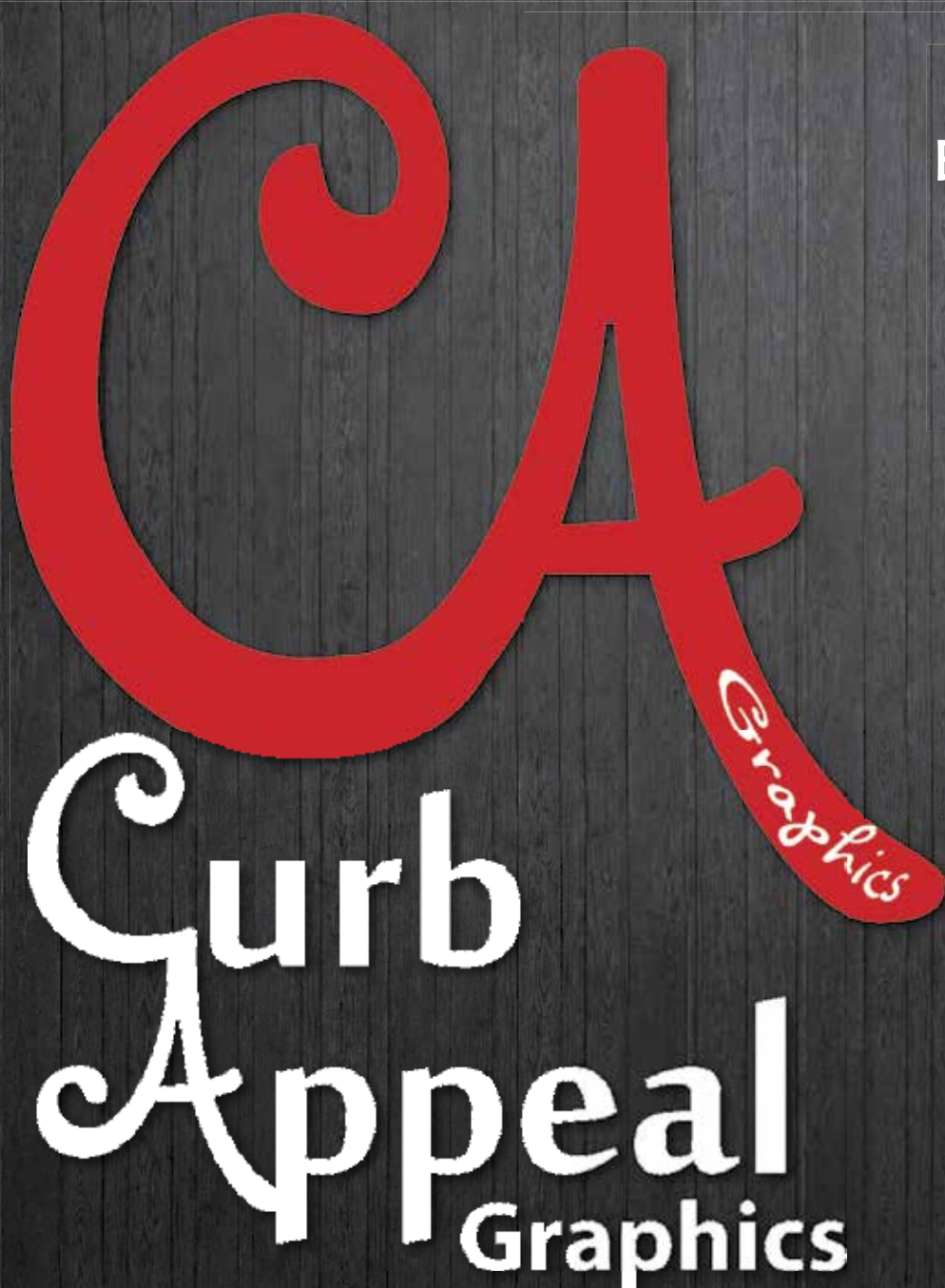


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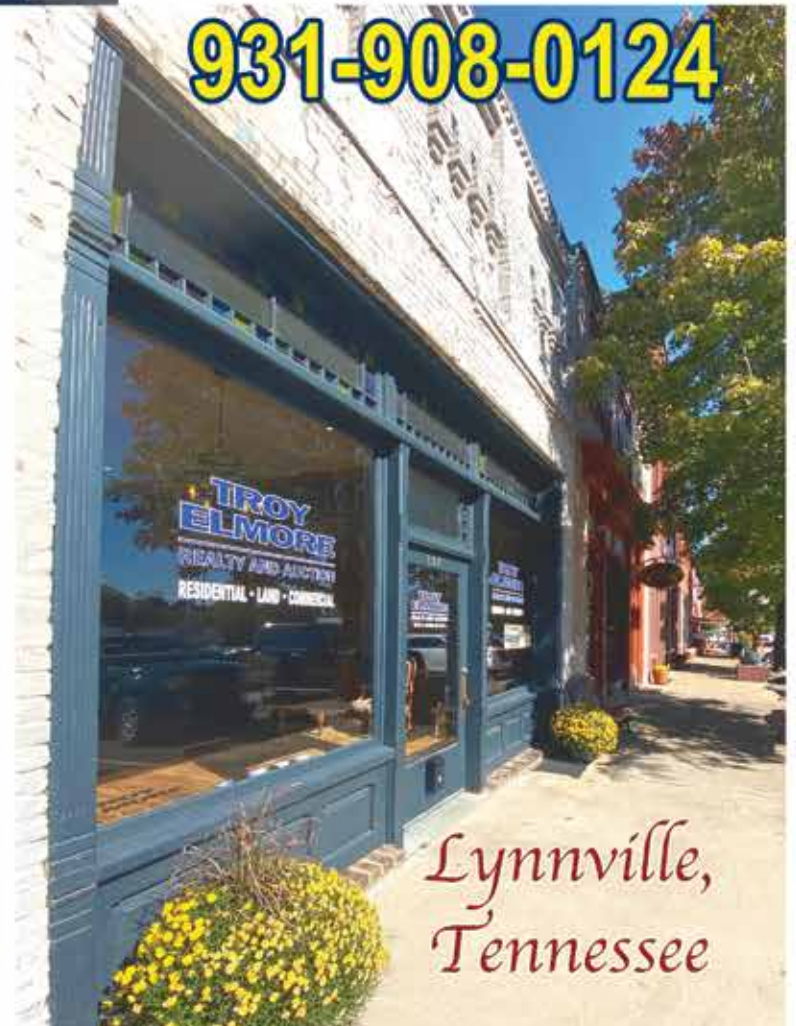
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“Doubt kills more dreams than failure ever will.”
 ~ Suzy Kassem



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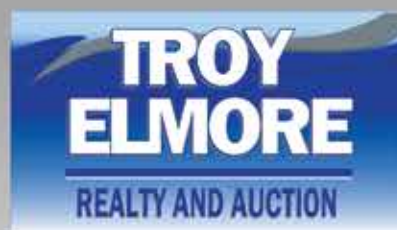


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