

April 5 - April 18, 2024

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See Our Listings Inside this edition...
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Special Feature



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Clean, Green And Beautiful

4,026 Pounds...
An overwhelming 4,026 pounds! That's how much litter Athens-Limestone Beautiful's AMAZING volunteers have removed from Limestone County roadsides and waterways in the past TWO weeks alone...
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Cooking With Anna



CTRL + ALT + DEL...
My poor hubby's computer has been a constant source of frustration for him. He is constantly having to use ctrl, alt, del to close...
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Traces Salon: Where Beauty Builds Community

By Ali Elizabeth Turner

When Tracy Smith was on the girls' softball team at Lexington High in Lauderdale County, one of her "jobs" was to do the hair of the team members before their games. "I got my arms warmed up before the game by braiding everyone's hair," she said. She went on to say, "I

Continued on page 15



Tracy Smith, Owner

St. Paul Catholic School -- New School, Great Teachers



By Janet Kenney

The beginning of the school year is always exciting. What is even more exciting is the beginning of the school year at a new school. St. Paul Catholic School, located at 1900 Highway 72 West in Athens, will have full day Pre-K3, Pre-K4, and kindergarten classes starting in August.

Continued on page 17



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Publisher's Point

There's More To Life Than What You See

It looks like Angel Studios has done it again, and I never get tired of their, pardon the pun, “vision statement,” which is “creating stories that amplify light.” Their latest offering, which is due to come out Memorial Day weekend is called, simply, *Sight*. It is based on the true story of Dr. Ming Wang, a world-renowned physician who literally “restores sight unto the blind.”

Ming grew up in Communist China during the terrorist reign of a man who was formerly known as Mao Tse Tung. During what was referred to as the Cultural Revolution and the Great Leap Forward, millions of Chinese perished, and that was nearly the story of Ming Wang. His story of coming to America, knowing no one, having only 50 dollars in his pocket, and then graduating magna cum laude from Harvard and inventing a contact lens that has an amniotic membrane that helps eyes heal is genuinely the stuff of legends.

Sight “focuses” on the story of a little girl who had been abandoned in Calcutta. Her stepmother poured sulphuric acid in both of her eyes, and she was left to die in a train station. A Christian missionary group rescued her and rushed her to the States where Dr. Wang was able to restore her

sight. Dr. Wang lives in Nashville, and wrote a book about his life entitled, *From Darkness To Sight*, which is the source for the movie.

I belong to an online group that is kept abreast of Angel Studios, their history, adventures, what they do, and perhaps most importantly for the purpose of this column, *how* they do it. First of all, they have what they call an Angel Guild, ordinary folks who invest their money in the studio because they want to see remarkable stories brought to the screen that are outstanding as to their craft as well as their content. If the Angel Guild does not feel that a possible film meets their standards, it's no go in the machine shop. It won't see the light of day, let alone the cutting room floor.

Angel Studios makes it possible for people who may not be able to afford tickets to see their films through a pay-it-forward program. A theatre will hold pre-purchased tickets, and all you need to do is call them and say that you want to redeem a ticket, no questions asked. Angel also has a flexible ticket reservation. Say you purchase a ticket online for a particular showing, and something comes up. As long as you call an hour before the show time, you can



reschedule for another showing rather than lose the use of the ticket.

Another thing that Angel Studios has done to solidify their “David-and-Goliath” image that is giving Hollywood fits is to encourage people to purchase their tickets several weeks before a premiere. That way, theatres have an early peek at the level of popular demand and the film can gain wider distribution. As of this writing, more than 32,000 tickets have been pre-purchased for Memorial Day weekend, which is just unheard of.

It looks entirely possible that *Sight* is going to do this year what *Sound of Freedom* did a year ago: raise awareness and defy the odds. Get your tickets now in order to experience what Ming Wang had to learn through embracing faith: “There's more to life than what you see.”

Ali Elizabeth Turner

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2024 JROTC Military Ball

by Yvonne Dempsey



On Friday night, February 23, the Lawrence County High School JROTC held their annual military ball at the Alabama Veterans Museum. A great time was had by all attendees and chaperones. There were 35-40 cadets and guests who enjoyed the food, music, and fun in the museum's event venue.

I, along with fellow museum volunteer Rick Roberson, opened the museum before the ball to give everyone the opportunity to tour the museum. Some of the cadets had toured the museum on a previous visit while everyone else was there for the first time. They all were impressed by the military artifacts and historical displays, while enjoying the stories and tidbits of information we shared.

The LCHS JROTC is an excellent program led by Senior Army Instructor David Shelly (Lt Col. Ret.) and Instructor Timothy McGillick (MSGT Ret.) The two men are

proud of the cadets and the importance of the JROTC program in developing positive character, leadership, and citizenship attributes in these young men and women.

JROTC Lt. Col. Marlos McCollum is the Cadet Battalion Commander and shares duties with former Battalion Commander Will Sanford. Both are 3-year cadets and have received much from the program. I asked both of them about the impact JROTC has had on their lives.

"JROTC has definitely helped me with my leadership and public speaking skills. I enjoy the teamwork and seeing how everyone can work together to accomplish goals," said Will. When asked about his future, he responded, "I would like to serve in the Army National Guard. I'm leaning toward a future in public safety, maybe with the police or fire department."

When I asked Marlos

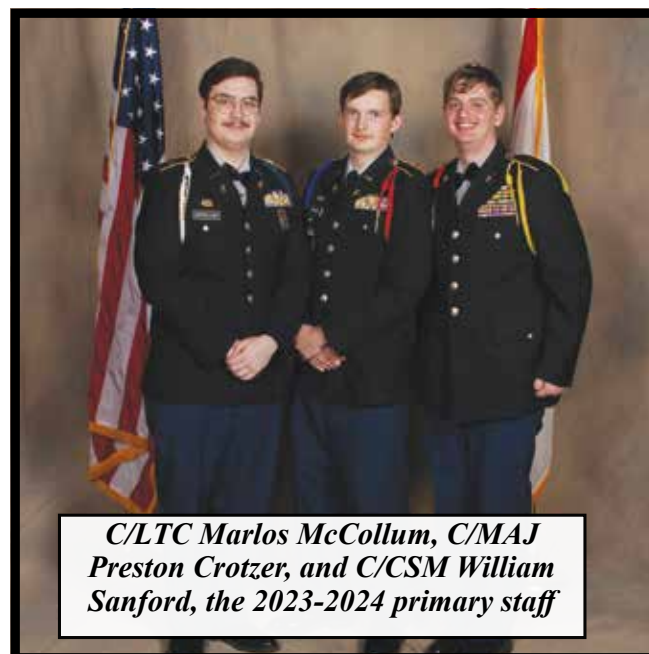


"I've had the privilege of teaching younger cadets, sharing the knowledge and skills I've acquired. Seeing them grow and develop has been one of my greatest rewards. It's a continuous cycle of growth – as they learn from me, I learn from them too."

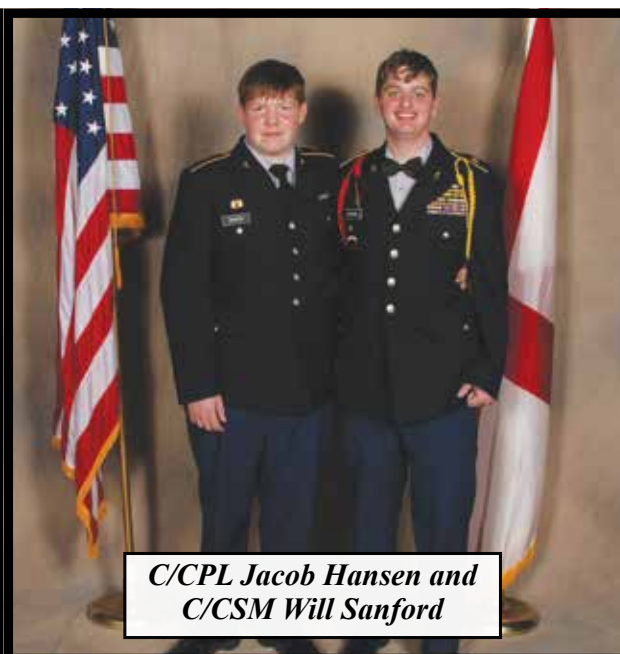
about his experience in JROTC, he responded, "I believe in the core values of JROTC and the importance of teamwork. I've built self-

confidence and leadership abilities through JROTC, which helps me to see everyone's value and to work well with others."

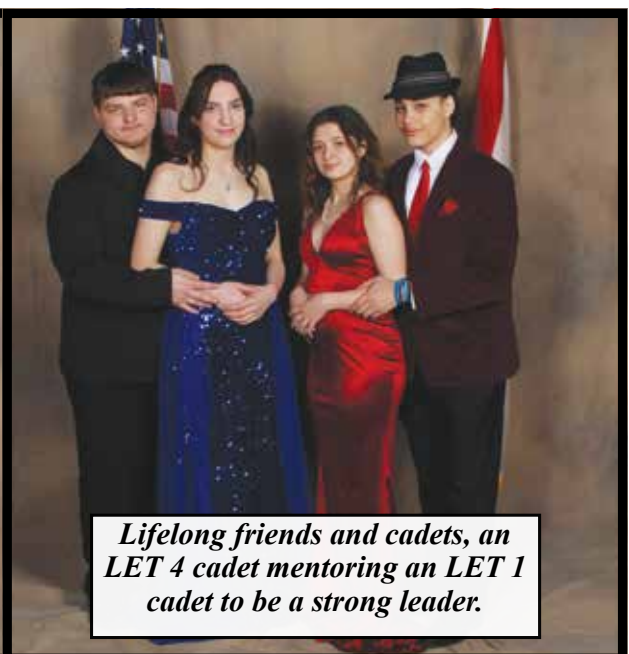
We wish all of these young people success in their lives and thank them for choosing the museum's event venue for their military ball.



C/LTC Marlos McCollum, C/MAJ Preston Crotzer, and C/CSM William Sanford, the 2023-2024 primary staff



C/CPL Jacob Hansen and C/CSM Will Sanford



Lifelong friends and cadets, an LET 4 cadet mentoring an LET 1 cadet to be a strong leader.

I'm Married... Help Me! *Keeping Love Alive*

by Donna Clark



What happens to love after the wedding? If we were in love, why is it that now it seems we've fallen out of love? Does love really stay alive and continue to grow in some marriages? If it doesn't, is that why we have so many divorces, or do couples continue to live with that nagging feeling of emptiness, a marriage void of love. Keeping love alive is crucial for a marriage to be successful, for a marriage to survive. So, how do we do that? Good question. As a matter of fact, it's a very important question and it's one that couples should ask themselves on a regular basis. Marriage is the mix of love and a heartfelt commitment between a man and a woman who promise to stand by each other through the journey of life. A union of hearts that results in a bond that goes beyond friendship making individuals soul partners for life. When a marriage is healthy, each person feels loved and appreciated, then the relationship is strong and prepared to weather the storms of life that come.

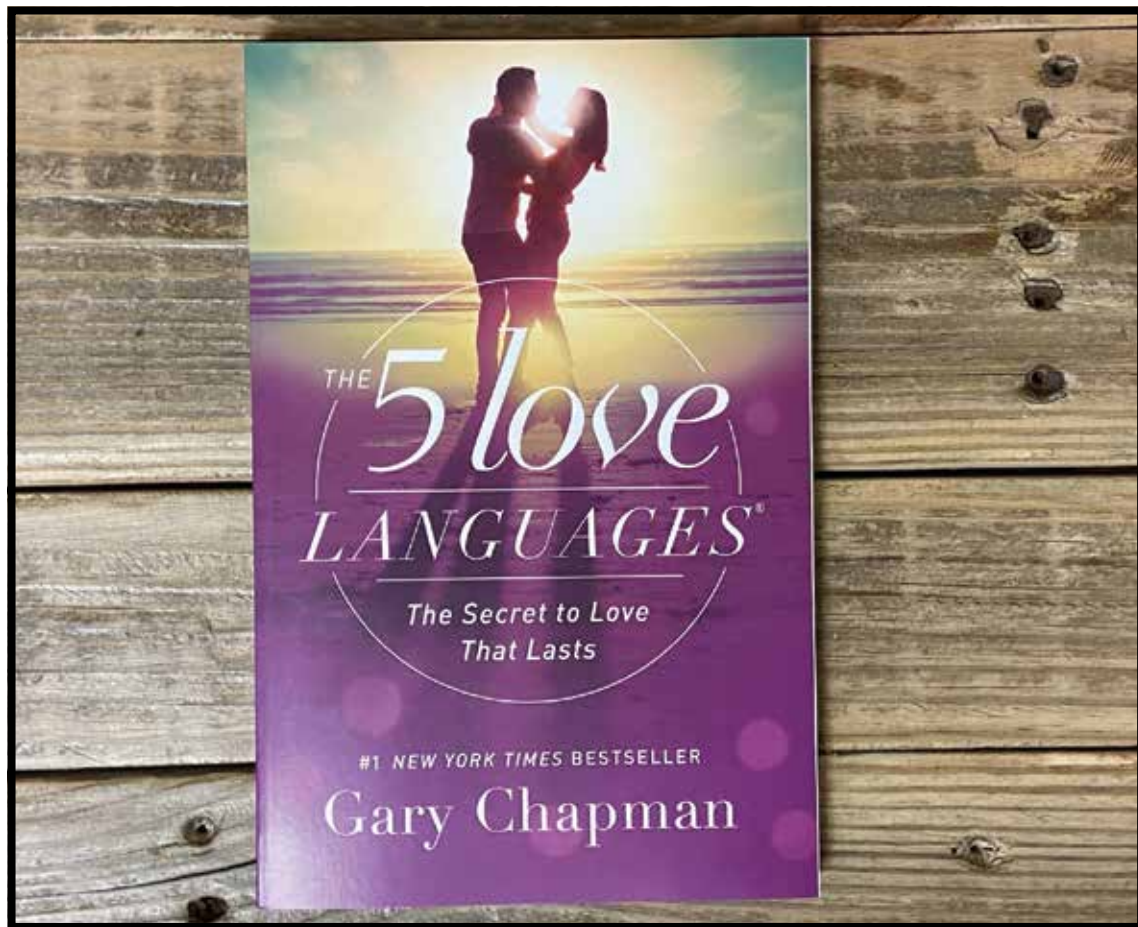
According to Gary Chapman, author of *The 5 Love Languages*, we each have a love tank. For our marriage to not just survive but flourish and be enjoyable, our tanks must stay full. A marriage can't run on an empty love tank any more than your automobile could operate with an empty gas tank. A husband's love tank can only be filled by his wife and the wife only by her husband. Knowing how to show love to your spouse is the key.

On the brink of divorce, a couple sat across from their marriage counselor hoping

to save their marriage. The husband shared how he had worked so hard and had become a very successful businessman. His success had allowed him to give his wife a beautiful new home, new automobile, extravagant gifts, all the finer things of life. He just couldn't understand why she wasn't happy, why she didn't feel loved. The wife then began to express her feelings. Yes, her husband had provided all these things, but that didn't make her feel loved. The material possessions were not what she was needing to keep her tank full. She longed to spend time with him. And since he was driven to have his business succeed and provide monetary gifts, there wasn't much time left to give to her. No doubt this husband was trying to show his wife that he loved her, providing for her all that she needed and many things that he thought she wanted. But his thoughts of showing love were not what his wife understood or received. What spoke love to her was completely different from the ideas that her husband had. Therefore, an empty love tank. And a marriage failing.

All of us have a love language. Dr. Chapman, in his book, has determined that there are five main love languages and that we all have one language that will overpower the others. Knowing the love language of your spouse can't be stressed enough. Love has to be spoken in a way that is understood as showing love.

Quickly, I want to share the five languages with you. If you want your marriage to thrive, I highly encourage you to determine your



spouses love language and your own also. *The 5 Love Languages* is a wonderful tool to help do just that. And once you determine the love language of your spouse, Dr. Chapman gives great examples of how to love through that language.

Words of Affirmation: Solomon wrote, "The tongue has the power of life and death." There is tremendous power in verbally affirming each other. Compliments, words of encouragement, and approval are powerful communicators of love.

Quality Time: Giving your spouse your undivided attention. The cell phone is put down, TV turned off, and giving each other your full attention. Looking at each other, talking to each other are ways of giving life to each other. It's a powerful communicator of love.

Receiving Gifts: For some-

one with this love language, purchasing gifts is one of the best investments you can make. It doesn't have to be extravagant, just a small item given with sincere thought can speak love in a huge way.

Acts of Service: Doing things that you know your spouse would like for you to do, cooking a meal, trimming the shrubs, walking the dog are all acts of service. They require thought, time, and effort and are a great expression of love.

Physical Touch: "Love touches" are the emotional lifeline for the person whose love language is physical touch. Without those touches, a spouse can feel rejected, unwanted, and unloved.

Seldom do we speak the same love language as our spouse. We can become confused or frustrated when we are trying to show

our spouse we love them, through the language we understand, and our spouse doesn't receive it as such. The problem is we've got to speak to our spouse in THEIR language, not ours. Only then will it be heard and received as love. This is a great example of sacrificial love. Learning how to show love to our spouse in a way that's not familiar to us. It requires intention, sacrifice, and time. Once you discover your spouse's language, then you will discover the secret to a loving marriage.

Give the book a read. It will guide you into some eye-opening truths about yourself and your spouse. The outcome, should you choose to follow Dr. Chapman's advice, will be great and you won't regret it.

Making a better marriage

- Donna

Calendar of Events

Silver Sneakers

Every Monday, Wednesday and Friday

Silver Sneaker classes at the Athens Limestone Public Library are now meeting from 1pm to 1:45pm on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday. Classes open to all. Equipment is provided. Donations accepted. More info: 256-614-3530 or jhunt9155@gmail.com.

National Walking Week Through April 7

Athens-Limestone Visitors Center, 100 N Beaty St, Athens, AL 35611. National Walking Week hosted by AVA America's Walking Club is a great time to get out and about on Athens-Limestone's trails, tracks and treks including the AVA Athens Historic Volksmarch to explore and take steps to benefit your heart, mind and spirit. Trail brochures are available at the Athens-Limestone Visitors Center Mon-Fri from 8AM-5PM and a selection of guest favorites are available in the covered boxes year-round.

Gettin' Dirty At The Library April 9

Limestone County Master Gardeners presentation. 11am-12pm. Athens-Limestone Public Library. 603 Jefferson Street, Athens. Free and open to the public. The topic is Pruning for the Homeowner presented by Jayne Luetzow, Regional Extension Agent.

Athens Historic Walking Tours April 13

9:45am - 11:00am. Athens-Limestone Visitors Center, 100 N Beaty St, Athens. Join the Athens-Limestone County Tourism Association

Senior Lunch Matinee Series Third Thursdays Monthly

We are back to full speed with our third Thursday Senior Lunch Matinees and first Saturday Early Dinner Shows, already scheduled through Dec 2023. Public events most often will sell out in advance, welcoming attendees from 17 adjacent counties, and 2 neighboring states. Our Senior Lunch Matinees provide guests with a complete lunch including drink and dessert, and a one hour live show featuring one of our roster of 8 of the best regional oldies groups and performers in rotation throughout the year. E-mail reservations are required in advance for all Lunch Matinees and Early Dinner Shows. web: www.yesterdayevents.com

FB: www.facebook.com/YesterdayEventCenter

at the Athens-Limestone Visitors Center at 9:45AM for check-in and tour selection. Expect a 1-2 hour long tour which begins at 10AM. Comfortable shoes and a light jacket are suggested. Free.

Donation Welcome. For more info: 256-232-5411.

Night at the Derby April 19

6:00pm - 9:00pm. Alabama Veterans Museum and Archives, 100 Pryor St West Athens. Wear your big hats & experience a taste of Kentucky at the inaugural fundraiser benefitting the Athens Boys & Girls Club. Savor Culinary Delights. Enter Best in Hat Contest. Sip Derby Drinks. Trot the Silent Auction. Enjoy Live Entertainment and more. www.bgcna.com/derby

Annual Spring Plant Sale April 20

8am to 4pm. Perennials, annuals, shrubs, and vegetable plants. Silent auction, craft and food vendors, kids table and more. Limestone County Master Gardeners greenhouse behind Athens Middle School, Hwy 31, Athens. More info on Facebook at: Master Gardeners of Limestone County Alabama.

TVA Guided Nature Walk April 20

7:30am. 26979 AL-99, Elkmont, AL. Join TVA's Damien Simbeck to kick off the 2024 Earth Day Expo for a guided nature walk through Marbut's Bend Nature Preserve! Mr. Simbeck is an expert in the native flora and fauna that can be found throughout the trail! Bring your cameras and binoculars, because this trail has it all! Not only is this an easy trail by foot, it is also wheelchair accessible.

2024 North Alabama Canine Expo April 27

11 am-4 pm. Limestone Sheriff's Rodeo Arena. Free! Demonstrations, vendors, food, fun! For info visit daksdogranch.com/North-Alabama-Canine-Expo

Digital Literacy Classes

Athens-Limestone County Public Library will host a series of Digital Literacy Classes in conjunction with Calhoun Community College & Drake State Community & Technical College. Classes will boost your digital confidence & provide you with skills and training needed in today's job market. Courses include: Computer & Internet Basics, Email, Windows OS, & Microsoft Word®. M-W 9:00 – 12:00 or M-W 1:00 – 4:00. Classes start January 24th. Call us at (256) 306-2830 to learn more.

In The Eye Of the Beholder

by Detri McGhee - Certified Life Underwriter, Chartered Financial Counselor



So, my secular topic of choice in recent years is CRITICISM MANAGEMENT. I know... strange "specialty" isn't it! But, it has served me increasingly well through my many years of life in the business/family/Christian aspects and all their various scenarios.

What, you might ask, led me to dig deeply into this topic? Well, take a small-town Southern girl with a naturally amiable-amiable temperament, and toss her into a man's business world of insurance sales, with all the accompanying negative feedback, difficulties of a sales career in general, and add marriage, motherhood,

Christianity, and growing old. Now, you know.

At age 23, I went to work for (admittedly biased view here) THE best insurance company in the world, New York Life. I was, at the time, the only active female agent in our general office. I was so "small-townish" that taking the elevator to the 9th floor was a challenge at first. Pre-employment personality profile tests were required but were not taken into consideration for female applicants because they were recognized as being male-oriented, and thus unreliable when assessing female traits/temperament. Training and even in-office environment for agents were

heavily male-oriented. And, all this while NYL was on the forefront of hiring and adjusting to more female agents!

I began collecting data, words of wisdom, thoughts, coping mechanisms early on, while trying to understand how clients and even other agents and my bosses thought and perceived things. I found Tim LeHaye's work *Spirit-Controlled Temperament* to be invaluable. What began as research just to benefit me has proven to be helpful to others, both male and female. Allow me to share a few thoughts in the hope they will benefit you, too.

I have come to believe that...

Criticism is a lot like BEAUTY... It is in the EYE of the BEHOLDER.

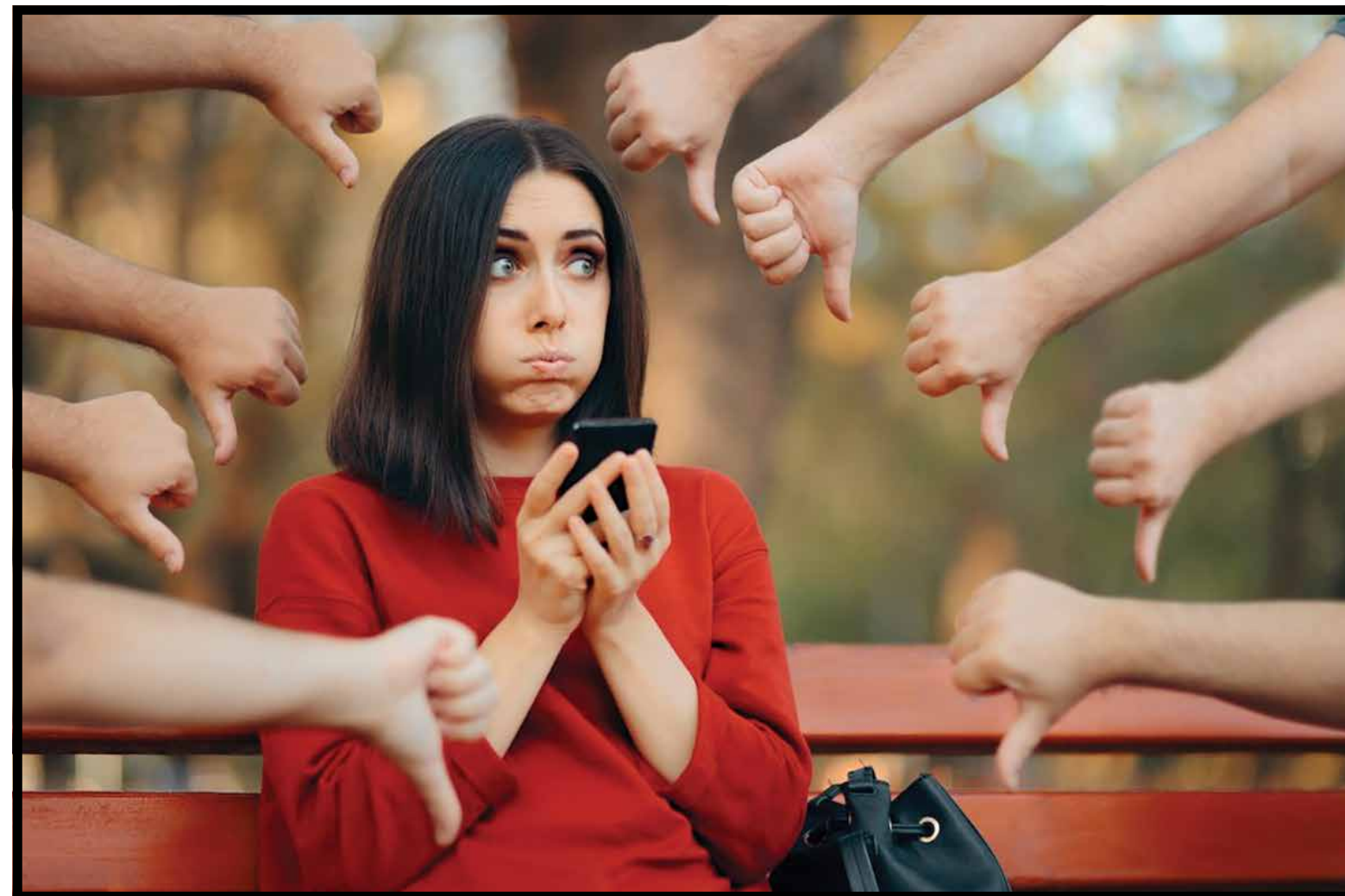
What do I mean? When asked to define *criticism* I get many different answers. But, when diving deeper into what people actually FEEL is criticism, the realm expands vastly. I submit that *criticism* has many - what I call - "relatives." Here are a few: Complaints, correction, envy, instruction, reproof, gripes, withholding praise, negativity, questioning, rebuke, admonishing, bullying, teaching, belittling, peer pressure -- and even simply stating that one prefers a different color, size or place...

To the student, any correction can be felt as a criticism. To a subordinate, any suggestion by the boss can feel harsh and embarrassing. To a spouse, failure to note a new hairdo can feel like rejection. See where I'm heading? It is not always what is said or done that is the problem. Often it is how it *feels* to the recipient. What I began to understand was that if I wanted to handle life's difficulties (criticisms) in a productive manner, it was MY responsibility to react/understand/respond in ways that benefitted me. Finally as the years wore on, and life took more and more turns, I began to take responsibility for my own reactions, and understand that, while I cannot control anyone else, I CAN control my reaction to their actions. There is much help out there for *How to GIVE Constructive Criticism*. And, studying/applying it is very beneficial. My research focuses on the flip side: How to PROFIT from any and all criticism ever received. I believe it can be done. That's what we will explore in our upcoming sessions.

So, here's our PRINCIPLE for TODAY: I am responsible for ME!

Next visit, we will explore how "doses of criticism" are similar to "doses of medicine."

Until then, feel free to contact me on Facebook: **Criticism Management by Detri**



What Makes Ronnie Roll

April, Athens And Autism

by Ali Elizabeth Turner



Mayor Ronnie zipped into the office wearing his autism tie and sporting his autism pin. Nationally April is Autism Awareness month, and in our area two of the people who are the most involved in that effort all year long are Todd Tomerlin and Stacey Givens. Both are parents of autistic kids. Todd was our neighbor in 2007 when I first got home from Iraq, and the person who first taught me about autism. Autism is the third most common developmental disability, and affects approximately 30,000 citizens in Alabama. Stacey has been instrumental in getting funding for sensory rooms to be placed in schools so kids on the spectrum have a place to go to decompress when they are experiencing sensory overload. City Hall had issued a proclamation regarding April being Autism Awareness month that says in part:

Whereas, Autism is a complex disability that require[s] increased research to one day find a cure and prevention; and great recognition

and understanding to ensure that individuals with autism living in our community, our state, and throughout the United States, are accurately diagnosed and appropriately treated throughout their lives. Now, therefore, I William R. Marks, Mayor of the City of Athens, Alabama, do hereby proclaim the month of April 2024 as Autism Awareness Month. In the City of Athens, Alabama and urge all citizens to educate themselves on this disability and to support those organizations striving to help those afflicted with the disorder and to find a cure.

"We are desperate to want better for our families," said Mayor Ronnie, and we talked about several examples of people who have gone to extraordinary lengths to do so. "It is one of the things that makes Athens so special; the way we care for those with special needs," he said. I am not sure if his tie and pin had engendered curiosity on the part of his grandson



Quinton at the breakfast table on this Monday morning, but he mentioned that the mayor and Quinton had quite a discussion on the subject.

Seeing as it was the day after Resurrection Sunday and the day before the first wild storm of April, it only seemed fitting to take a moment to talk about spring, now that it is officially here. "The dogwoods, the redbuds -- spring just brings life," the mayor said.



Of course, every year we have to dedicate at least a portion of a Ronnie to March Madness, and this year is no exception. As of this writing, the Alabama men's team was still a contender, SEC men's and women's teams were doing well, and the ever-formidable U Conn was more than in the running. It had been a great contest so far,

and more than likely will result in a satisfying nail-biting night come Sunday for the women and Monday for the men.

There was only one thing left to do, and that was to pray, so we did. The storm was coming, and as always, we asked that God would protect Athens in April. And then, it was time for Ronnie to roll.

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Carissa's Corner

Against The Current

by Carissa Lovvorn

Over spring break, my husband and I took our girls to the beach for a family vacation. During our last full day, a storm system brought in a cold front with strong winds and perfect boogie-boarding waves. While my husband and I tend to be overzealous and “first ones in the water” people, we are cautious parents and decided to use the opportunity to teach the girls about the beach warning flag system. We explained to them that as the water becomes more dangerous the beach patrol changes the flags from yellow, to red, to double red. Double red flags will close the ocean to beachgoers which is what occurred that afternoon. The strong waves lingered the rest of the day and throughout the night.

The next morning, we woke to a different scene. The once turbulent ocean now appeared calm with only small waves gently breaking against the shore. My daughter, ready to get back in

the water, darted to the balcony to check the flagpole. “It is so much calmer than yesterday. Why is it still double red-flagged?” she asked. I shrugged my shoulders and assumed that the beach patrol had not had the opportunity to change them over yet and set about my business of packing our luggage for the trip home.

After everything was packed, I sat down and stared out of the window, taking in the view from the 9th floor condo. As the small waves crashed against the sand, I noticed a powerful undercurrent pushing the water back out to sea. Ah...a rip current! That was the reason for the double red-flags. According to the National Weather Service Center, “Rip currents can sweep even the best swimmers away from shore into deeper water.”

It reminded me of how spiritual life can be at times. We live in a fallen world. Temptation, disappointments,

and fear are a few of the trials that we face during our time on Earth. Christians, even strong ones, have things threatening to pull them away from the Father. Some days the current is light and goes unnoticed, but other days it is very strong and hard to fight.

Thankfully, God’s perfect knowledge of us took those moments into account during our creation. King David wrote about this constant presence, “If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there Your hand shall lead me, and Your right hand shall hold me.” (Psalm 139:9-10 NKJV) We can rest in the awareness that He is with us always, even when we are swept deeper into spiritual struggles. Just as a lifeguard pulls victims from danger, He will do the same for his



children.

King David concludes this psalm with a plea. “Search me, O God, and know my heart; Try me, and know my anxieties; And see if there is any wicked way in me and lead me in the way

everlasting.” (Psalm 139:23-24)

I hope you find comfort in these words and “Happy Spring!”

*Many Blessings,
Carissa Lovvorn*

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That Time At Summer Camp

by Phil Williams

he felt like it he would shove a kid, call him demeaning names, or rub shaving cream in their face. What do you do when you're just a knot-head eleven-year-old boy and this guy is in charge? Wasn't he supposed to be the boss? Didn't the adults who ran the camp pick him because they thought he was good for us?

Then the older counselors caught wind of it. We all listened wide-eyed as the older counselors wore the bully out in the next room. One of my peers looked around at our shocked faces saying, "I don't feel bad for him. He deserves it."

The bully was gone the next day. Those older guys were our heroes. They could have hung me up by my toes and fed me worms and I would have laughed because they had already proven themselves to us.

The point is this: adults need to be keenly aware of who is working with their kids. We cannot simply take for granted that anyone with the name and title of "camp counselor" is automatically okay. Likewise, those adults who select others to serve as counselors in their organizations bear great responsibility. Anyone who works with children should be required to go through some measure of scrutiny, background checks, and criteria based interviewing.

Anyone in charge of programs that work with minor children should ask themselves: Am I putting people in charge of kids that I wouldn't allow to babysit my own children?

Which brings me to Space Camp, hosted by the US Space & Rocket Center,

(USSRC) and the counselors themselves, or in Space Camp parlance, the Space Camp Trainers.

Space Camp and the USSRC are amazing assets to our state. My own daughter attended Space Camp and I have fond memories of visiting the USSRC myself. Movies have been made about Space Camp and parents spend thousands of dollars to send their kids from all over the world.

The Alabama Space Science Exhibit Commission (ASSEC) oversees the USSRC and Space Camp and lists some amazing people as appointed members. They receive millions in state appropriations and local tax dollars to support Space Camp, and they all have some explaining to do.

Apparently the USSRC now hires those who take their personal agendas into the lives of our kids. It's wrong, and it will not go unspoken. Somehow Space Camp forgot that its mission is its audience.

Word broke recently of one Space Camp Trainer who proudly posted on his social media that he identifies as a "Butch coded space queer" while wearing a rainbow flag on his Space Camp uniform. In a separate post this same individual displayed a "gender is a universe" sticker on his clipboard in hopes that Space Camp attendees would see it. He was not a solo act. Parents now relate their shock at discovering male trainers who "identify" as female sleep on the girl's floor, and walk into the girl's changing areas while they dress.

Parents were not advised that a state-run world-class



facility in good 'ol red state Alabama was of the mind that men can pretend to be women and then work with little girls. This is escalating at an enormous rate with parents expressing their outrage and future attendees already dropping out.

Local, state and federal officials have all engaged, and rightfully so. Constituents need to know their elected leaders are not okay with children being exposed to agendas that put them in awkward and insecure positions. State legislation is being proposed to address the issue.

The pronoun police have also swooped in to denounce anyone who would dare question the well meaning "butch coded space queer". As per usual they made the issue about the adults and their agenda rather than the security of kids and the sanctity of parent's rights.

Parents have every right to speak out, and anyone who tells them to mind their own business and go stand quietly in the corner is simply wrong. This is a parental rights issue, a religious liberty issue, a civil rights issue. No child should be made to feel insecure or threatened just so that an adult with

identity issues can feel better about themselves.

Let's get "camp" back to being about the kids, and not about the adults. Put camp, education, and experiential learning, back to a place where there is a deep and meaningful intent to make kids lives better without trying to foist adult lifestyles on them.

Phil Williams is a former state senator, retired Army colonel and combat veteran, and a practicing attorney. He has served with the leadership of the Alabama Policy Institute and currently hosts the conservative news/talkshow Rightside Radio M-F 2-5 p.m. on multiple channels throughout north Alabama. (WVNN 92.5FM/770AM-Huntsville/Athens; WXJC 101.FM and WYDE 850AM - Birmingham/Cullman) His column appears every Monday in 1819 News. To contact Phil or request him for a speaking engagement go to www.rightsideradio.org. The views and opinions expressed here are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the policy or position of 1819 News. To comment, please send an email with your name and contact information to Commentary@1819News.com.





Slinkard On Success

We Must Keep Going

by D. A. Slinkard

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

We have many people who are tired when it comes to life, and it seems many people are walking around as if they were zombies. They are worn out from the daily grind, and they are ready to give up. These people have become overwhelmed to the point they are ready to give in. These people have become so exhausted they are physically and mentally ready to give out. Does this sound familiar to you? We have a knack for not finishing what we start, and it is time we realize we cannot stop when we are tired. We must keep going. The only time we should stop is when we are done.

Let's just face the reality that we all get tired. We all get worn out, and we all want to give up, give in, and give out; however, if we want success to happen in our life, we cannot accept this approach. We are going to need to look within ourselves to find out how we can achieve success. Too many people want to make excuses as to why it is okay for them to be living a life of mediocrity. Sometimes, we have to do things we do not want to do to set ourselves up for success.

It seems most people expect life to go their way with minimal effort being required, and we need to quash this mindset. There is a daily grind that needs to take place if you want success because you cannot receive a million-dollar paycheck while having a minimum-wage work



ethic. That is part of our problem -- too many people want to do just enough not to get fired and then complain when they do not get promoted or do not receive substantial pay increases. They then blame their company, their co-workers, and their bosses for the failures in their lives.

This is where we need to draw the line in the sand and say, "Enough is enough." We need to be prepared to have tough conversations with ourselves, with our family members, with our children, with those we care about. It is time

we stop sugarcoating situations and be point-blank honest with ourselves. Life is about busting our tails to generate success, and we cannot wait for someone else to do it for us.


We are in control of our attitude. We are in control of our work ethic. We are in control of our mindset. We are in control of our lives, but too many people are allowing others to determine the direction of their lives. It is time to take control of your life and get it headed in the right direction. If you allow others to tell you where, when, and how your

life is going to go, then you need to be prepared for life to be tough. You need to be prepared for life to knock you down. You need to be prepared for life to give you more losses than wins. Hey, somebody needs to tell you the truth -- and it might as well be me.

We cannot stop when we are tired. We stop when we are done, and this is a concept that far too many people cannot wrap their minds around. I believe that denial is the ultimate comfort zone for too many people. Too many people are living their lives in

constant denial that life is not as bad as what they think. They are not that lazy of a worker. They are not that fat. They are not that broke, and again I say -- denial is the ultimate comfort zone. It comes down to our daily living. Our habits determine our future, and we must understand the goal is not to be better than anyone else, but rather to be better than you were yesterday.

You cannot change the past. Let it go. Create the future. Create YOUR future, but you must make the decision right now that you are going to do things differently. You are going to stop giving excuses. You are going to stop giving up when you get tired. You are going to stop procrastinating because you might be having some difficulties. Realize that in this world there is someone out there who would give anything to have what you have. There is someone who would sacrifice greatly to swap places with you. There is always someone out there who would gladly change places with you. Do not give up -- stop when your life mission is completed.



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Clean, Green And Beautiful

4,026 Pounds

by Claire Tribble - Executive Director, Keep Athens-Limestone Beautiful

An overwhelming 4,026 pounds! That's how much litter Athens-Limestone Beautiful's AMAZING volunteers have removed from Limestone County roadsides and waterways in the past TWO weeks alone. That's just over TWO tons in TWO weeks. According to the Environmental Protection Agency, a Toyota Tacoma truck weighs 4,040 pounds. We almost picked up an entire truck!

To kick off this unintentional two-week Trash-A-Thon, the Athens Renaissance Middle School decided to participate in our Adopt-A-Spot program. They worked in 3 different groups to pick up 2 different locations. The first location was Lawson Street, off Forest Street by

the old Athens Middle School track. This stretch was a tree line that was about a block long. This group of eight kids, led by their teacher Joseph Illg, worked extremely hard to fill 14 bags of debris. They also pulled three tires, scrap metal and old toys. These weigh an average of 20 pounds each, making that around a 400-pound cleanup with the tires added in. That was a one block span.

The next cleanup was another group of students from Athens Renaissance School. This group of 7 students was again led by their teacher Joseph Illg. They chose the empty lot at the corner of Lee Street and Marion Street (between Whitt's BBQ and The United Way. This group of kids pulled a LOAD out of the wooded area. They



filled 14 bags, pulled old duct work out, and an old, HEAVY (trust me, I had to load it) conveyor belt. Their haul was quite impressive. Especially for about an hour and a half.

Next up was the Ardmore Spring Clean hosted by United Pest and Turf Control. This annual clean-up is always so well organized and attended. They had over 50 volunteers show up to cover the streets of Ardmore. These wonderful volunteers worked hard in the cold wind to collect 1,380 pounds of litter. They had volunteers of all ages come out and work to keep Ardmore looking its best!

The next week, we had the Mayor's Youth Commission Cleanup. These fantastic kids gathered with Mayor Marks, Holly Hollman, Kim Glaze, Athens City Councilwoman Dana Henry, and more to clean up Stewart Drive behind Roselawn Cemetery. In an hour, they filled 17 bags. These bags were mainly

filled with artificial flowers, mini liquor bottles, and fast-food wrappers. They did this in ONE HOUR!

Then we had the last class from Athens Renaissance School. They were led by their teacher, Jennifer Leake. They also worked on the lot at Lee and Marion Street. They found two more abandoned homeless camps and cleaned them up. They also worked in the grass and gravel to pick up some of the trash that had escaped dumpsters. They filled 13 bags here -- so that's 27 bags (plus the duct work and conveyor belt) from this one lot in the middle of town.

We finished the marathon with the TVA Trash Attack

at the Tennessee River. We focused on the Cowford Campground and Dairy Road. We were a small group, but we picked up 1,400 pounds this year. That is quite an impressive number since we picked up almost 8,000 pounds there last year. District 3 County Commissioner Derrick Gatlin and his crew ran the roads picking up our bags as we filled them, which was a wonderful help to us. It not only made our job easier, but it also kept the trash from being strewn about before Monday.

KEEP ATHENS-LIMESTONE BEAUTIFUL
2024 SPRING EVENTS

ARDMORE UNITED PEST AND TURF CONTROL SPRING CLEAN
 MARCH 16TH 8AM-12PM-VOLUNTEERS MEET IN THE JONES DRUGS PARKING LOT TO SIGN IN, GET BREAKFAST AND SUPPLIES. RAIN DATE-APRIL 6TH

TVA TRASH ATTACK-TENNESSEE RIVER
 MARCH 23RD, 8AM-12PM. MEET AT COWFORD CAMPGROUND FOR BREAKFAST, SUPPLIES AND AREA ASSIGNMENTS!

2024 EARTH DAY
 APRIL 20TH-JOIN TVA'S DAMIEN SIMBECK FOR A GUIDED NATURE WALK AT 7:30AM AT MARBUTT'S BEND.
 APRIL 20TH, 10AM-3PM-COME SEE US AT ATHENS STATE UNIVERSITY FOR AN AMAZING EARTH DAY CELEBRATION!

JOANN CHRISTOPHER MEMORIAL ELK RIVER CLEANUP
 APRIL 27TH, 8AM-12PM-MEET AT THE ELK RIVER (EXACT LOCATION TBD) AND HONOR JOANN CHRISTOPHER AND HER DECADES OF DEDICATION TO KEEPING THE ELK RIVER CLEAN. BREAKFAST AND SUPPLIES WILL BE PROVIDED.

HOUSEHOLD HAZARDOUS WASTE COLLECTION
 MAY 11TH, 8AM-12PM. ATHENS MIDDLE SCHOOL PARKING LOT, 400 HWY 86 WE WILL BE ACCEPTING HOUSEHOLD, AUTOMOTIVE, LAWN CHEMICALS, TV'S, PAINT, ETC THIS IS A FREE DRIVE THRU EVENT.



(256) 233-8000
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Cooking with Anna

CTRL + ALT + DEL

by Anna Hamilton

My poor hubby's computer has been a constant source of frustration for him. He is continually having to use ctrl, alt, del to close down programs. Once he resets his computer, it begins to work smoothly. Do you ever need to ctrl, alt, del your life? I know I do!

CTRL means to Control Yourself! Don't allow minor setbacks or changes in plans to completely make you lose your cool. We have to be able to control our emotions. As Christians, we know that being slow to anger is what is expected of us. We are called to be an example to the world of how to control our emotions in every situation. Proverbs 25:28 says, "A man without self-control is like a city broken into and

left without walls." When you are unable to control yourself, cracks will form, and other things will start taking control of your life. Being an angry person will start to take over every part of your life.

ALT means to Alter Your Thinking! So, you have controlled yourself and kept yourself from saying something you shouldn't, but the negative thoughts flood your mind. Sometimes your thoughts are so loud, you can't function throughout the day. You have to learn to alter your thinking. When your mind is full of negative thoughts and you are overwhelmed with worry, fear, and regret, you will be unable to find

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Chicken, Cheese, and Spinach Manicotti

Ingredients:

- 1 ½ cups finely chopped cooked chicken breast*
- 2 cloves garlic, minced*
- 2 egg whites*
- 1 pkg (10 oz.) frozen chopped spinach, thawed, well drained*
- 1 (16 oz.) container low-fat cottage cheese*
- 1 cup shredded mozzarella cheese, divided*
- 10 manicotti shells, cooked, drained*
- 1 ½ cups spaghetti sauce*
- ¼ cup chopped fresh basil*
- Salt and pepper to taste*
- Parmesan cheese*

Directions:

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Combine chicken and garlic in a large bowl. Add egg whites, spinach, cottage cheese, ¼ cup mozzarella cheese, and salt and pepper. Spoon evenly into manicotti shells. Place stuffed manicotti shells in a 13x9 inch



baking dish. Cover with spaghetti sauce.

Bake 25-30 minutes or until heated through. Top with the remaining ¾ cup mozzarella cheese, bake an additional 5 minutes or until cheese is melted. Sprinkle with basil and Parmesan cheese.

Why Persisting In Crossfit, Or Any Health And Wellness Activity, Is Worth It

by Nick Niedzwiecki - Owner, CrossFit Athens

CrossFit, with its high-intensity workouts and demanding exercises, is undoubtedly tough. It pushes you to your limits, tests your strength, endurance, and mental resilience. In the midst of grueling workouts and muscle soreness, you might find yourself questioning why you should keep going. However, beyond the immediate discomfort lies a myriad of benefits that make persisting in CrossFit well worth it.

Firstly, CrossFit is a catalyst for physical transformation. The varied and intense workouts

engage multiple muscle groups simultaneously, leading to improved strength, endurance, and flexibility. Whether you're lifting weights, sprinting, or performing bodyweight exercises, CrossFit challenges your body in ways that traditional gym routines often can't. Over time, you'll notice changes in your physique, increased muscle tone, and enhanced overall fitness levels.

Moreover, CrossFit fosters a sense of community and camaraderie unlike any other fitness regimen. The shared

experience of pushing through challenging workouts alongside fellow athletes creates a strong bond and support system. In CrossFit boxes (gyms), you'll find a diverse group of individuals cheering each other on, celebrating successes, and offering encouragement during tough moments. This sense of belonging and accountability can be incredibly motivating, keeping you committed to your fitness goals even when the going gets tough.

Additionally, CrossFit cultivates mental toughness and resilience. Ev-



ery Workout of the Day (WOD) presents a new challenge, pushing you to step outside your comfort zone and confront your limitations. As you persevere through difficult workouts, you'll develop mental fortitude, learning to push through discomfort and overcome obstacles both in the gym and in life. The mental strength you gain from CrossFit transcends the walls of the box, empowering you to tackle challenges with confidence and determination.

Furthermore, CrossFit promotes functional fitness, preparing you for the rigors of everyday life. The emphasis on functional movements such as squatting, lifting, pushing, and pulling translates directly to activities outside the gym, whether it's carrying groceries, lifting furniture, or playing sports. By improving your body's ability to perform real-world tasks efficiently and safely, CrossFit enhances your overall quality of life and independence.

Beyond the physical and mental benefits, CrossFit

offers a constant source of motivation and inspiration. The culture of continuous improvement encourages you to set and strive for ambitious goals, whether it's mastering a new skill, achieving a personal best in a workout, or competing in CrossFit competitions. The satisfaction of progress and the pursuit of excellence keep you motivated to show up and give your best effort day in and day out.

In conclusion, while CrossFit may be undeniably hard, the rewards it offers are immeasurable. From physical transformation and community support to mental toughness and functional fitness, persisting in CrossFit yields a multitude of benefits that extends far beyond the gym. So, the next time you find yourself facing a daunting WOD or feeling the burn of sore muscles, remember why you started and embrace the challenge. Your perseverance will not only transform your body but also empower you to live a stronger, healthier, and more fulfilling life.



CROSSFIT
ATHENS

CLASS TIMES:

MONDAY - THURSDAY:

5AM, 630AM, 830AM, 430PM,
6PM

FRIDAY:

5AM, 630AM, 830AM, 430PM

SATURDAY:

830AM



Traces Salon: *Where Beauty Builds Community*

by Ali Elizabeth Turner

continued from page 1

taught myself, and everyone wanted me to do their hair. Sometimes I would have to say, 'I'll be right there; I am almost done!' and then run onto the field at the last minute," she told me with a laugh. The team looked good, and they played well. As unusual as it sounds, one of the things that unified them was their hair. As soon as she graduated high school, Tracy went to beauty school. She attended Ray's University of Beauty in 1990, and she was on her way. For the last 34 years, even when Tracy was in other career fields, she did hair because she loves to.

Tracy has always loved technology, and for a time she was involved in managing three Sprint locations. Later, she went in to banking, dealt with annuities and loans; yet hair always was her first love. By 2019, she had owned two salons, and then weathered the pandemic. It was her husband, Brian, who told her, "You are built for bigger things," and he encouraged

her to open her current place, which is located at 15700 East Limestone Road, right across from East Limestone High School.

Tracy has gone on to get her instructor's certification, and wanted to empower and mentor other women, especially younger ones who have just gotten out of cosmetology school. She has surrounded herself with a great crew, and recently I had the pleasure of hearing their stories one at a time at the shop.

First up was Lori Graham, who is Tracy's personal assistant and is known as the "Shop Saver." Lori helped Tracy open up the East Limestone shop, and has stayed because she loves it. She greets clients, takes payments, makes appointments, and is the all-around "Gal Friday." She is NOT a hairdresser. However, she is a raving fan of Tracy's work, and Tracy has been Lori's hairdresser for a good while. I asked Lori why she enjoys working at Traces Salon, and she said, "I love

being out and about, making connections and relationships." The relationship theme was one that came up often during the course of the rest of the interview with the other stylists, as well as the massage therapist.

Next was Kaitlynn Gooch. Kaitlynn is a newlywed and a former salon owner with eleven years of experience. She started her training during her high school years at the Limestone County Technical Center and graduated at the top of her class. She won gold medals in hair styling competitions, and said with a smile, "Hard work pays off." She went on to tell me, "I love the art of coloring hair. I love color theory, color formula, everything that has to do with it." She also loves working for Tracy, and is quick to say how much laughter ringing through the shop brings relief to everyone.

Hanna Hunter is 23, and has had five years of experience. She said, "We work like family, and it is such a blessing to feel appreciated." Hanna says she feels that "Hair is a mission field. I want to minister and be a shining light." Hanna's favorite things to do are cutting hair and doing highlights. She loves the homey waiting area, which she says feels like her home away from home. And like the others, she is grateful for being greeted warmly when she walks through the door, and having such a strong sense of community with the rest of the staff.

Rounding out our time together was Jennifer Krieger, who is the massage therapist. For many years Jennifer was living in Colorado with her



Lori Graham



Kaitlynn Gooch



Tracy Smith



Hanna Hunter



Jennifer Krieger

husband as he served in the Army with the 10th Mountain Division out of Ft. Carson. When he retired, they came back to Alabama. She came to Traces Salon with Kaitlynn, and told me that she gets a great sense of satisfaction out of "helping people and making them feel better." She does all types of massage, including pre-natal, and has ten years of experience under her belt. She does massage therapy by appointment only, and works Wednesdays through Saturdays.

I watched for a while as Tracy's team took care of clients, and it was a joy to watch people who clearly love their work, know what they are doing, and enjoy the community

they have built at Traces Salon. Come join them, see what they have to offer, and experience how beauty can build strong community.

Traces Salon
15700 East Limestone Road, Athens, AL 35613
Hours:
Tue-Thur 10-7, Fri-Sat 9-3
tracessalon@gmail.com
tracessalon.com



A Field Of Grass

by Stephanie Reynolds, Athens-Limestone Tourism Association



“Oh, there’s a marker for the <insert some Civil War name here> battle,” Mom said urgently to Dad as we drove down the highway. To this day I have no idea which battlefield it was; hence my invitation to you, dear reader, to put whatever name you want on it. I only remembered this specific instance because it was the very first time I realized that adults got excited about things that were utterly unimpressive to a kid. (The second time was when we went to the Grand Canyon, and I realized that it’s just a giant hole in the ground. I didn’t even get to ride the mules.) But at this moment, my concept of the world of adults had not yet been punctured by their fascination with invisible history.

“A battlefield?!” my lit-

tle kid imagination kicks into high gear. While I know the battle is (probably) over, I still expect to see dull metal cannons sunk axle deep in mud and clay, to have swirls of smoke still writhing in eddies in the cool spring air and lingering heavy over the ground. I expect, I dunno, maybe some battle litter strewn about -- old cans or bandages or a hat -- something. Maybe I will be able to squint my eyes and barely see the back of the last soldier melting into the woods, going home. Maybe I can walk out and see the glint of spent bullets and take a few as souvenirs.

Dad pulls into the turn-off, and I eagerly look out the window before Dad puts the car in park. And then I see...grass. Nothing but grass.

Oh, and there was also

a plaque about whatever this battle was (I think it was in Virginia) that my mom read out loud. Her smooth, Southern voice was weighted slightly with the oration and gravitas of an adult’s layered knowledge of what had transpired well over a hundred years ago. Her intonation itself spoke more than the words raised on the metal. It was the slightly pointed inflections that a teacher, a young sage, or an intelligent, slightly political mother uses to push wisdom into a pair of ears on an oblivious child who exclaimed, “It’s just grass!”

It’s funny because my adult, “seen/read/heard enough of war” mind understands the magnitude of a field that is fertilized by familial blood and the heartbreak of a nation. I am old enough,

now, to imagine my son in grey, and my husband with stars. I can look across fallow ground and imagine its state due to the men away at war, not to modern crop rotation planning. I can imagine carefully feeding my chickens like there wasn’t a Dollar General three minutes from my house where I can buy eggs. I look at trails, even on my own land, and think “People walked here. Wagons drove here. Families slogged through swamp and mire. War came through here. The salt in the women’s tears was pure enough and delicate enough not to ruin the soil, though plentiful as they had to have been.”

I KNOW this. And yet that childhood memory has never reframed itself. It stubbornly refuses to give the slightest bit of quarter to wisdom or knowledge or education. I still, to this day, think of that field as nothing but weeds and feel the echo of indignation and boredom I felt then.

And honestly, I think I won’t push too hard to change 8-year-old me’s mind on it. I love that there is still a memory as naive and bright as the blue-sky banner over that demilitarized field of grass. I have enough other memories overlaid with fear and purpose and sacrifice that I think it’s okay to let

“kid-me” just be a kid. I think current grown-up me will just chuckle with my mom back then over the little Steph who pouted and wanted to go sit back in the car and read her Trixie Belden book until the adults were done adulting and we could get back on the road to Grandma’s.

April Happenings:

April is a fabulous month, isn’t it? It is getting warmer, the sky is bluer, the trees are greening up, AND our April Walking Tours will start soon! Every Saturday at 10 a.m., we have a free walking tour to some part of Athens. The walks will be about an hour. Meet at our office at 100 N Beaty Street.

April 6: Houston Library District with Will Weir

April 13: Downtown Athens District with yours truly (who will be sporting a fabulous antebellum dress, complete with fan and hoop skirt. There MIGHT be free candy to anyone who joins me in costume, just FYI)

April 20: ASU District with Jamie Mikell

April 27: Beaty District with Jessie Ziegler

We also have Celebrate Trails day on April 27. Warm up with the Beaty District walk, and do a follow-up on one of our amazing trails!

I hope y’all have an amazing April! Stop by the office and see me soon!

IF YOU'LL SET A FIRM FOUNDATION, she'll build her dreams upon it.

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St. Paul Catholic School -- *New School, Great Teachers*

by Janet Kenney

continued from page 1

St. Paul has had an education building for over 10 years but has not been able to use it fully. Now they can. The school will provide a nurturing environment where students can grow emotionally, academically, and spiritually under the direction of experienced and knowledgeable teachers. Classes will be kept small to allow for individualized instruction.

A school's success is highly dependent on having quality educators; St. Paul's is blessed with amazing instructors. Mrs. Patsy Kobs, the kindergarten teacher, has been teaching for 40 years in both public and Catholic schools. Her last assignment was at St. Ann's in Decatur. Her years of experience include teaching special education, early childhood, elementary, and working as a school psychologist. She is a certified Wilson instructor (dyslexia language program under Orton-Gillingham) and worked for many years teaching adult English Language Learners.

Mrs. Kobs is excited to teach at St. Paul. "I absolutely love kindergarten students. They are eager and ready to learn but are maturing and able to follow directions and concentrate for longer periods of time. Teaching in a Catholic/Christian environment allows me to bring God into all the lessons and helps the young ones understand the connections between all peoples and all of God's creation."

This year, St. Paul had a pi-

lot program with a half-day preschool taught by Dr. Sue Whitcomb. Dr. Whitcomb began teaching at Holy Family School teaching kindergarten, first, and third grade. She never ceased learning new techniques and adding to her teaching repertoire. Her doctorate is in reading from the University of Southern Mississippi, and she has a master's in dyslexia therapy. Dr. Whitcomb will continue to work with curriculum and provide support to all classes as well as substituting when needed. Dr. Whitcomb has chosen to teach in Christian settings, even when teaching future teachers at William Carey University. "I find so much satisfaction in being able to share my faith and love for Christ with my students."

Ms. Dana Wolfe is the Director of St. Paul Catholic School. She has master's degrees in secondary social studies education, liberal arts, and pastoral studies with a certification in Spiritual Direction. Her "day job" is Director of Adult Education for North Alabama. Her love is for "the littles" and she feels more is needed to guide them on a pathway that includes not only academic success but also helps them experience the love of God. She has been shepherding the process of starting the school through all the requirements, both state and Diocese of Birmingham, because she feels so strongly that a Catholic/Christian school is needed in Limestone County. The long-range plan is that each year a new grade will be added so that students can continue their Christian education.

Come meet these amazing ladies, see St. Paul's classrooms, and meet others contributing special lessons to the school on April 9 from 5-7 PM. There will be de-

monstrations and fun activities to help prospective parents see the value of sending their children to St. Paul Catholic School, 1900 US Highway 72 West in Athens.

You can find more information on St. Paul Catholic School's Facebook page, website, or by contacting Dana Wolfe at dana.wolfe@stpaulcatholic.school.



Rewarding Excellence Over Catering To The Weak Links

by Eric Betts, Assistant Professor | Course Developer, Hampton University School of Religion



In the world of leadership, the ability to guide a successful team hinges on motivating members towards collective achievement and individual excellence. Addressing disparities in performance is a quintessential responsibility for any leader. Yet, there is an often-traversed pitfall in leadership approaches—the tendency to impose a uniform set of restrictions catered to the less reliable members of the team, which inadvertently penalizes the most dependable and exceptional ones. Leaders across various sectors, be it in business, non-profit, or worshiping communities, are grappling with this dynamic.

The Counterproductive Nature Of Overregulation

Consider a common

scenario in the workplace—members of the team taking unscheduled absences. A leader recognizes a pattern of absenteeism and responds with a stringent policy requiring doctor's notes or other forms of substantiation. While seemingly a fix, the policy overlooks those with a stellar attendance record, burdening them with red tape when they face legitimate emergencies. Similarly, there are instances where excessive regulation stems from minor issues, such as employees returning from breaks just a minute late. Instituting a rigid monitoring system for such minor infractions indicates a lack of trust, which can diminish morale and stifle the sense of autonomy of high performers. Restricting resources due to their misuse is an

other example. When a few are guilty of squandering supplies or company time, instead of addressing these individuals, blanket restrictions ensue. This means that those who utilized resources responsibly now bear the consequences, impacting their productivity and creativity. Each of these examples illustrates the repercussions of enforcing broad-brush rules—the best members of the team inevitably face constraints, which can be demoralizing and hamper their performance and loyalty.

Celebrating Excellence And Fostering An Environment Of Trust

Leaders need to rethink their strategy and instead contemplate how they can uplift and empower their most responsible and excellent team members. This

does not only involve recognition and rewards but also creates a culture where excellence becomes the norm.

Implementing specific, targeted interventions for those who struggle while framing policies that recognize and incentivize exceptional performance is the best practice. For example, introducing a rewards program that acknowledges perfect attendance, or stellar performance encourages others to strive for similar recognition without unnecessary constraints.

Creating room for professional development and growth for high achievers, offering challenging projects, autonomy in decision-making, and opportunities to influence team dynamics, all contribute to an environment that naturally attracts and retains talent.

Beyond Business - A Universal Approach

This philosophy extends beyond the corporate sphere—nonprofits benefit from an enthusiastic, mission-driven staff that reach new innovative heights when they feel valued and supported. Worship communities thrive when active, dedicated members are encouraged and given opportunities to lead, rather than being bogged down by rules that cater to the lowest common denominator. Notice the following

methodology.

3 Ways To Shift Towards Excellence

Adopt a targeted approach: Rather than instituting broad and restrictive rules, deal directly with the individuals who need guidance, allowing freedom and flexibility for those who consistently excel.

Incentivize high performance: Create reward systems and opportunities that recognize individuals who go above and beyond, which can stimulate others to improve.

Provide growth opportunities: Offer advancement paths and developmental options for top achievers, aiding their growth and setting a benchmark within the team.

In conclusion, while it is necessary to have rules in place that maintain certainty and order within an organization, it is imperative that leaders strike a balance. This balance is weighted in favor of rewarding excellence and diligence, rather than stifling it under regulations that target the lowest-performing members. Ultimately, this approach can lead to a virtuous cycle where excellence begets excellence, attracting and developing a team of high performers who are not only the backbone of the organization but also its future leaders.



Tennessee Valley Spotlight



Mondays at 10am

1080 AM WKAC

Visiting A Church With A Service Dog

by Joel Allen



Hello, folks! I hope everyone had a great Easter. Well, as all can see, we are going to address a subject I hold dear. Now, those who read this need to understand the law pertaining to service animals. In plain speak, churches do not have to allow your service animal into the church. That being said, I have copied and pasted what the ADA has to say from their website, www.ada.gov:

Q34. Are churches, temples, synagogues, mosques, and other places of worship required to allow individuals to bring their service animals into the facility?

A. No. Religious institutions and organizations are specifically exempt from the ADA. However, there may be state laws that apply to religious organizations.

A couple of Sundays ago, I took Houston to the Madison Church of the Highlands. We had been there before and were never questioned by anyone. I had heard there was church security, and I had seen them but I was never approached by them until this day I visited. After my wife and I had taken our seats, I needed to go back outside the chapel; so I got Houston and we walked out. As we were

exiting, one of the security officers approached us and asked if Houston was a “registered service dog.” I’ll admit I bristled a little at that question but caught myself. I get sick and tired of all the “fake service dogs” with ID cards and papers with a vest. I replied and the ADA is clear about this, “No, there is no legitimate registration.” The security officer replied that there was. I informed him that most supposed registrations were scams and that someone paid for an identity card, vest, and a certificate. He explained that he was asking if Houston was trained and not looking

for papers. I replied he was and explained to the security officer that service animals could be refused access to churches according to the ADA, and I offered to leave if he told me to because the ADA is very clear on this, as stated earlier. But as I always say, do your homework and see the words for yourself. The security at the Highlands was very courteous and said that we could stay. Folks, I am a big advocate for being diplomatic during times like this. It’s like borrowing your neighbor’s tools and returning them in pristine shape. Well, because they let us stay for worship, I was

going to be as accommodating as I could.

The pastor of the church came and welcomed us and stated he understood. I even shared with the security officer why I had Houston. I know, I know, “Don’t do that or they will ask others their maladies.” But see, folks, they did not have to let me have my SD. They were only being courteous and kind. So, everyone remember this when bringing your SD to church. I will put it even plainer for those who don’t understand this, “Separation of Church and State.” Easy enough.

So, service went off without a hitch and we got to stay. The moral of this story? Don’t go getting yourself worked into a “tizzy” because you were turned away from a church for bringing an SD. They do not have to allow the SD in. Besides that, if a church refuses me access due to my SD, I will kindly go elsewhere.

All right everyone, I hope and pray this article finds you all well. God bless you all!

“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



Space For What Matters: *Garage Organizing Tips From A Pro*

by Sonya Fehér

'Tis the season to organize your garage. Before it gets hotter out. Before the humidity has you dripping with sweat. Before the mosquitoes decide you make a delicious snack. When deciding what to organize next, using the season to influence your choice is a winning strategy.

The many potential items stored in a garage can make going through it overwhelming. If you have helpers to go through the garage with you, you could block out an entire day or weekend. You can pull everything out of the garage into the driveway and group it by category. Tools go in one area, garden supplies in another. Holiday decorations get piled together, as do sports and outdoor recreation gear.

This approach helps you see how much you have of each category so that you can decide how much storage space it needs and what kind of storage would work best. You might be tempted to shop for bins, shelves, pegboards, cabinets, or wall-mounted hangers for tools and brooms. Until you know how much to store and where you want it, shopping is a waste of time and money. Go through your garage instead.

Even if you don't go through the entire garage at once, you will eventually want categories gathered together so you know

how much room to give them and how to store them. To get there, you can go through one bin or one area at a time. Anytime you're sorting items, decide whether to keep it or put it into trash, recycling, hazardous waste, or giveaway.

When deciding what to keep or get rid of, the first priority is to let go of things you don't want or need and items that are broken. Then look for multiples of items, what condition things are in, and how long it's been since you've used the item. Garages often house things that people think they'll use someday or that they're storing for someone else to have someday. Consider how much space you're spending to keep these things and what you can't store or do in the

garage if you're giving space to them.

If you're unsure whether or not to keep something, you have two choices. Put it with the other items of that category or put it into a limbo bin instead of donations. If you're still thinking about it the next day, put it with other like items. At the end of the week (or month) go through your limbo bin and donate anything you haven't pulled out yet.

Decluttering and categorizing your items is a great start. The goal is to get things sorted and grouped together in the area close to where they'll be stored. To decide where to store things, think about where you'll use them. If you're taking items out to the yard or out-

side of your home, put them by the garage door. Think pool equipment, sports gear, or gardening supplies. If you'll use items in the house, then get them closer to the door into the house. This might include kitchen appliances or roasting pans that aren't often used, seasonal décor, or memorabilia. If you've got tools or workout equipment in the garage which you only use in the garage, you'll want to create a space to use them.

An organized garage makes the room more functional and saves you time and frustration when you need to find something or work on a project. Whether you tackle your garage organization all at once or bit by bit, the goal is to create a space that

works for you. So, roll up your sleeves, declutter, and transform your garage into a functional and organized space that you can enjoy all year round. Maybe you'll even be able to park in there.

If you'd like my list of garage zones and the storage solutions I recommend, email me at sonya@spacewiseorganizing.com and I'll send them your way. And, if you'd like advice about organizing a particular area of your home or life, email me for a chance to have it featured in a future column. I'd love to help!

Sonya Fehér

*Organizer, Coach,
Author, & Speaker*

<https://spacewiseorganizing.com>



The Alternative Approach

Natural Antibiotics That Work

by Roy Williams



On September 26, 2023, *The Wall Street Journal* published an article that has been all but overlooked or ignored. It says, “The push for antibiotics to fight fast-evolving superbugs is snagging on a broken business model. Six startups have won Food and Drug Administration approval for new antibiotics since 2017. All have filled bankruptcy, been acquired, or are shutting down. About 80% of the 300 scientists who worked at the companies have abandoned antibiotic development, according to Kevin Outerson, executive director of CARB-X, a government-funded group promoting research in the field.”

Kent State University writes, “Antibiotics are becoming obsolete. A recent United Nations report on drug resistance predicted that antibiotics could be useless within 30 years. If so, 10 million people could die each year due to simple bacterial infections.” That is 10 million who will die because of the abomination that modern medicine has become. That is because modern civilization has bought into

pharmaceutical madness, or what I call pharmaceutical terrorism.

It goes on to say, “It is because the pharmaceutical paradigm hates natural medicine, even though emergency room and ICU doctors use natural medicines routinely to save lives every day. The emergence of antibiotic resistance in bacteria is slowly dismantling our ability to treat infections, alleviate human suffering, and save lives. The future of antibiotics requires that modern medicine humble itself and that politicians admit that they have passed laws that harm the public that make sure that the best natural or semi-natural antibiotics are not used, not even thought of, to treat infections and everything else.

Iodine: With that knowledge, allow me to go over some really effective and safe natural-antibiotics. The first one has been used as the go to by the medical profession for numerous conditions up until our modern day, FDA controlled cartel took over. The element iodine was discovered in 1811, which soon led to the trial of iodides in treating many disorders. The variety of



diseases for which iodine was prescribed in the early years is astonishing -- paralysis, chorea, scrofula, lacrimal fistula, deafness, distortions of the spine, hip-joint disease, syphilis, acute inflammation, gout, gangrene, dropsy, carbuncles, burns, scalds, lupus, croup, asthma, ulcers and bronchitis.

One of the tactics used by the pharmaceutical industry was to scare people claiming it is toxic and can be dangerous when used incorrectly. Dr. Cousens explains, “In 1950, the Japanese had 100 times more iodine in their diet than Americans. In 2001, they had 202 times more iodine than Americans and used up to 13.8 milligrams daily instead of the average U.S. intake of 425 micrograms. Remember, no one has ever died from iodine overdose or allergic reactions.”

According to recent estimates, in 2019, 1.27 million deaths were directly attributed to drug-resistant infections globally. It is a severe mental disease that does not care about any of this and will not be open to alternatives that

already exist. Iodine can be used against all bacteria, viruses and fungi. Pathogens do not become resistant to iodine.

Chlorine Dioxide: Chlorine dioxide is a powerful antimicrobial compound with a long history of use – mostly known for its ability to sanitize drinking water (the last 60 years as the primary chemical used in municipal water supplies). Even though governments everywhere made it illegal to treat disease with it does not change the fact that it is effective against pathogens and can be used much more safely than antibiotics.

In 1998, NASA declared chlorine dioxide, a universal antidote, saying it was able to destroy mold and fungus, as well as bacteria and viruses, with minimal harm to humans, animals, or plants. It is the most extensively tested disinfectant in history. It works so well that pharmaceutical companies had to convince governments worldwide to make it illegal to swallow because it would put them out of business. It has no cytotoxic effects

when taken as suggested and more importantly, bacteria and viruses cannot develop resistance to it.

Magnesium Chloride: We have been selling magnesium chloride through our stores for over 20 years because it is so effective for those suffering from magnesium deficiencies. It supports those who have muscle cramps, muscle spasms, restless leg, twitching, and irregular heart rhythm, according to Dr. Raul Vergini and his work in Italy using magnesium chloride. He reminds us that magnesium chloride is an essential and powerful agent in fighting infectious diseases. He wrote, “Magnesium chloride has a unique healing power on acute viral and bacterial diseases.” It cured polio and diphtheria, which was the main subject of his book.

As you have now become aware, it is not if but when the dreaded antibiotic resistant bug will appear. Will we ignore this powerful information or will we be ready and prepare ourselves by having these safe and effective all-natural or semi-natural solutions ready to protect us against the super bugs that are sure to come? To learn more, go by Herbs & More in Athens or NHC Herb Shop in Killen or call us at 256-757-0660.

*Your Friend in Health,
Roy P Williams*





Cooking with Anna (continued from page 13)

CTRL + ALT + DEL

by Anna Hamilton

joy. It states in 1 Peter 5:7-8, "Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you. Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour." God tells us to place all of our negative thoughts on him. He is big enough to take all of our negative thoughts. He tells us to do this so that we will be of sound mind when the devil tries to attack us. When your mind is consumed with worry and negativity, you are not able to be at your best.

DEL means to Delete Negativity. Once you have controlled yourself and have altered your thinking, you must delete the negative. Just like the computer, the last step is to delete all the junk that is slowing you down. In 2 Timothy 1:7 it states, "For God gave us a spirit not of fear but power and love and self-control." As Christians, we have nothing to fear because we have God in our lives. The world around us tells us to dwell on the negative. They want us to let it stew and fester in our minds until we eventually become a bitter, sad person. The Bible

tells us exactly what to think on during the day in order to keep our minds from being weighed down with the negative. "Finally brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things." Philippians 4:8

Once you are able to master the Ctrl+Alt+Del of your mind, the peace of God will take over your life. I know this is easier said than done. It is something that we have to stay on top of constantly. We always have to stay in control of our minds so that we keep the negative out.

This week's recipe is a yummy and quick dish for those busy weeknights. It is a delicious but healthy version of a pasta favorite! My family loves it and I'm sure it will be a hit in your house too!

"Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful." Colossians 3:15

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Mental Health Wearables

by Lisa Philippart,
Licensed Professional Counselor



“Technology is a useful servant but a dangerous master.”

- Christian Lous Lange

Wearables have made the transition from technical innovations to fitness trackers within the past few years. So it seems that the most likely next step would be wearables that address the unseen level of well-being known as mental health. Many fitness trackers already monitor blood pressure, heart rate, breathing, and skin temperature. Most trackers can collect data in real time, and over a period of time, to then be used to offer behavioral interventions. For example, when you breathe in a rapid, shallow manner, that is often a sign of anxiety. As this information is collected, your wearable could offer breathing exercises, guided meditations, or even just a nudge. The very act of checking your breathing patterns can help you lower your heart rate and reduce tension.

I would like to share with you some brief descriptions of a few wearables on the market that are designed specifically to help you become more mindful of your mental and emotional states. As with any product, you will need to do your research to determine which would work best

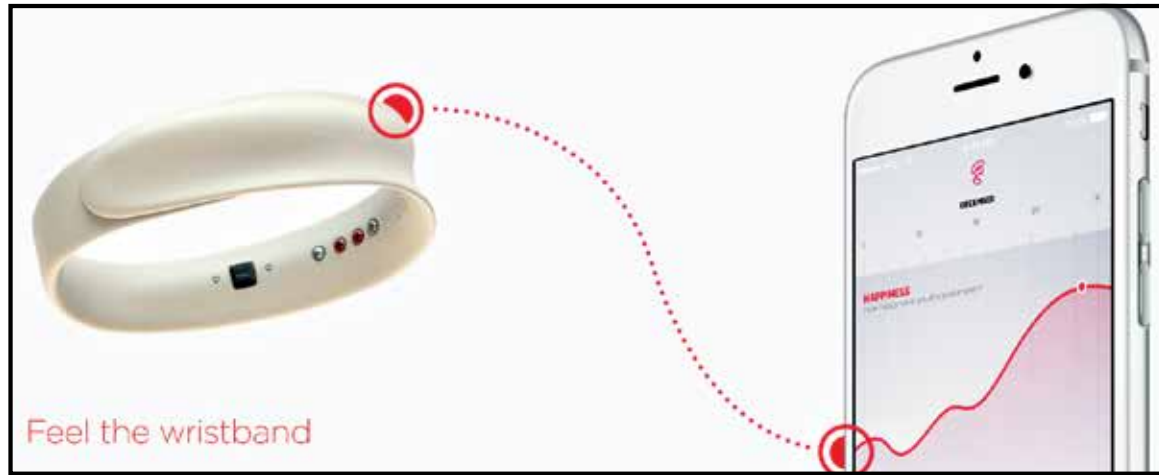
for you.

Spire Stone

The Spire Stone continuously monitors breathing, and can remind you to relax through alerts from a connected app. The Spire website states that Stanford researchers who tested LinkedIn employees wearing Spire, reported 37% greater daily calm, 27% fewer anxious days, and 25% more time spent physiologically focused. The Stone clips to your clothing and measures your breath via the expansion and contraction of your torso. The information is sent to your app where it is categorized as calm, tense, or focused. A notification on your phone and to the Stone alerts you to changes, so you can be more mindful of your breathing. (Cost is about \$130.)

Feel Wristband

The Feel Wristband has multiple bio-sensors that monitor physiological signals, such as electrical energy, skin temperature, and heart rate. This information is transmitted to an app, which assesses your mental state through recognition of emotional patterns. The app then provides real-time CBT (cognitive behavior therapy) coaching techniques. The Feel Wristband website purports to help you become more aware of your emotions, which can lead to



a deeper understanding of your internal and external triggers. The Feel app combines the information collected from the wristband with your input to provide guidance on how to better regulate and improve your emotional responses throughout the day. (Cost is about \$150.)

Leaf Nature

Leaf Nature is a health tracker specifically designed for women, to be worn on your waist band or as a bracelet or necklace. Leaf turns breathing data into real-time advice for meditation exercises or guided breath work. The synchronized app is called Bellabeat, and it provides a simple, visual snapshot of your daily activity levels, sleep patterns, and meditative vs. stress periods. Information provided is designed to inspire and remind you of your daily goals and to motivate you to track your improvement over time. The Leaf Nature runs 24 hours a day on a battery that lasts up to six months. You can also

set inactivity alerts and be notified of important events through a vibration in the Leaf. (Cost is about \$140.)

WellBe

WellBe proclaims to be the world’s first stress-balancing bracelet. The WellBe bracelet monitors your heart rate and uses that information to determine your stress and calmness levels, based on the time of day, your location, and the people with whom you have scheduled appointments. Over time, the app recognizes stress-producing events/people in your calendar and will provide guided meditations, focused breathing, and even personalized playlists to help you de-stress. The WellBe also records the

changes in your stress/calmness levels while using the various stress-release exercises, allowing you to see the before and after effects of each program you practice. The bracelet is made of cork, which is both a strong, durable material and feels soothing to the skin. (Cost is about \$120.)

These devices all have the potential to ease common mental health problems and maybe even change the stigma surrounding mental health in the process.

Until next time...Lisa

Lisa Philippart is a Licensed Professional Counselor whose practice is in Madison, Alabama

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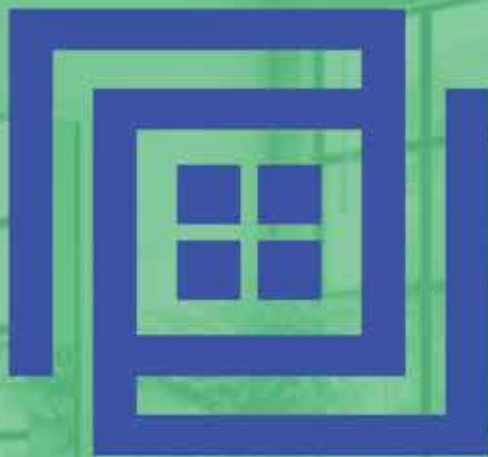
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~ Zig Ziglar

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