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information & inspiration

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The Osborne's Jewelers Athens Lagos Event: *Just In Time For Mother's Day*

By Ali Elizabeth Turner

For decades, Osborne's Jewelers has been a "jewel" of a company in North Alabama. It is known throughout the region for its generosity, exceptional customer care, shopping experience, and quality products in many price ranges. Started by Everett and

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Staton House Boutique: *For The Working Mom...And Everyone*

By Ali Elizabeth Turner

Ever since Kristen Beucher was a young girl, she had the dream of owning her own fashion boutique. Kristen grew up in West Limestone, attended West Limestone High, and graduated from Kingdom Christian Academy. As a 16-year-old she began to build a successful modeling career. Her agent

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Publisher / Editor
Ali Turner

Copy Editor
Yvonne Dempsey

Graphic Design
Jonathan Hamilton

Web Design
Teddy Wolcott

Contributing Writers

- D. A. Slinkard
- Anna Hamilton
- Phil Williams
- Claire Tribble
- Stephanie Reynolds
- Deb Kitchenmaster
- Roy Williams
- Eric Betts
- Nick Niedzwiecki
- Detri McGhee
- Kris Erskine
- Jackie Warner

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Publisher's Point

Thank God For The Dead Sea

I have had the adventure of floating in the Dead Sea on the shores of two countries, Jordan and Israel. The first time was in 2006, and the second in 2014. The first time, in Jordan, I was by myself. The second time, in Israel, I was with a group of pilgrims who were making what is known as Aliyah, the Hebrew name for "going up to Jerusalem." Being in the Dead Sea was indeed an odd experience, and when I say it is impossible to do anything but float, I am completely serious.

My reason for introducing this *Point* with a description of a most memorable experience is to set up a simple expression of praise to the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob for the Dead

Sea, because its level of salinity and a long range missile defense system ended up saving countless Israeli lives. You see, what happened just a few days ago is that Iran launched a series of offensives against Israel in retaliation for the killing of two Iranian officers in Damascus.

Largely the Iron Dome, Israel's defense system against all manner of airborne attacks held. In addition, a coalition of nations that don't want to destroy Israel assisted in its defense. It is estimated that Iran's promised retaliation was comprised of approximately 120 missiles. However, there was one in particular that would be downright funny if it didn't represent such determined, irrational ha-

tred against the people of the Book and the intention to wipe Israel off the face of the earth.

I am describing an Emad missile that is 3.5 stories tall with a 1,000 lb. warhead that landed in the Dead Sea after it had been intercepted and, yes, all it could do was float. The reactions have been interesting. Even an IDF officer thought at first that it was a fake.

"When I first saw images on Sunday circulating on social media, I thought they were fake. There is nothing fake about this, or the threat it posed," said IDF Lt. Col. Peter Lerner, who serves as an IDF spokesman in the reserves.

On Tuesday, April 16, the Israel Defense Forces showed members of

the media the remains of the missile that was intercepted over Israel in the Iranian attack on the country early Sunday. The only thing that had been recovered was the fuel tank, as the warhead and engine were destroyed by the Arrow system used for the interception. The missile's remains comprise only 70 percent of the entire bomb.

It had been launched from Iran, flew around 1500 kilometers, and was able to get to Israel in about 12 minutes. In a word, it failed to accomplish its mission because it was destroyed, and just like everything that makes contact with the Dead Sea, all it could do was float.

Here's what we know. The damage that would have been caused would have been brutal, and the damage to the Iranian military ego has been commensurately brutal. And so, we return to praying for the peace of Jerusalem and all that live there, Jews and Arabs, and we thank God for the Dead Sea.

Ali Elizabeth Turner

Ali Elizabeth Turner
Athens Now
Information & Inspiration
256-468-9425
ali@athensnowal.com
Website:
www.athensnowal.com



A Perfectly Remarkable Paralympian

by Ali Elizabeth Turner



Military Times has chosen its 2024 Soldier of the Year, and her name is Sgt. 1st Class Elizabeth Marks. She grew up in a military community, and her father was a Marine and a Vietnam vet. When she was a kid, Elizabeth was known simply as Ellie, and she had no idea she would one day become a role model by pressing through pain, and finding her purpose.

Elizabeth enlisted in the Army in 2008, and served as a medic in Iraq. Two years later she found herself recovering from injuries suffered in theatre, and recovered in Ft. Sam Houston's Army Medical Center. Part of her recovery involved being back in the pool. At first it was miserable, and she said that most of what she accomplished was managing not to drown.

But then, "a very nice master sergeant and a very nice spouse" showed her "how to swim the right way."

"During that process — and their kindness — I found so much more than swimming," says Elizabeth. "It was the first time that I felt purpose and quiet. And it was extremely painful, but it was the first time in months where I got to dictate my own pain and push as hard as I wanted."

Elizabeth had several goals, including being able to return to her career as a soldier, and do

all she could to help her fellow soldiers. She also joined swimming events that are referred to as "adaptive," and first competed in the Warrior Games before she started to enter paralympic competitions. She added, "The only reason I became or have stayed a swimmer or stayed in the military wasn't because of medals and accolades. It was because of my brothers and sisters in the military and my hope that they could be afforded opportunity and support."

In 2012, Elizabeth was declared fit for duty, and became involved in swimming full time for the Army. In 2014, while

she was on her way to London to compete in the inaugural Invictus Games, her lungs failed and she spent a month in a medically induced coma. She was also kept alive by a machine that filtered her blood and oxygenated it while she was in the coma.

When Elizabeth came out of the coma, she was determined to get back to competing, and in 2016 went to the Paralympic Games in Rio, and came home with a gold medal. A year later, complications from her injuries necessitated her leg being am-



putated. She knew she wasn't done, and in the 2020 Tokyo Olympics, she medaled again.

When Elizabeth compet-

ed in Tokyo, she won gold in the 100-meter backstroke, silver in the 50-meter freestyle, and bronze in the 50-meter butterfly. I cannot imagine how it would be possible to do the butterfly stroke with only one leg, but clearly, this is one remarkable soldier.

In a few months, Elizabeth will be heading to Paris to compete again, and once again she will make us proud, whether or not she places. And, I have a feeling she'll be tougher and stronger than ever because of the choices she has made.



Vibrant Vines Collective: *Home Of The “Plant Therapist”*

by Ali Elizabeth Turner

When Sara Allen was a student at UNA, she had a spider plant that she successfully killed. The Grissom High School grad loved plants, especially exotic indoor plants, but had zero confidence that she would ever have a green thumb. Fast forward a few years, and Sara married Clements High School grad Matt, gave birth to two beautiful sons, enjoyed being a stay-at-home mom, and also wanted to have a business that would be compatible with her family’s needs as well as her dreams. So, she did a deep “Google/YouTube dive” into “all-things-indoor-plant,” and was able to put the pieces together as to how to successfully cause indoor plants to propagate and flourish. She essentially became a self-educated subject expert, was now a product of her own product, and ironically, it was spider plants that needed a home that “forced” her next step. Sara went from being a “plant killer” to a “crazy plant lady.”

First Sara learned that spider plants need purified water, and probably what had killed her UNA spider plant was tap water, and way too much of it. The irony is that the very type of plant about which she had no confidence turned out to be the litmus test of her expertise!

She told me while laughing that they were drowning in super healthy spider plants that she had propagated, and Matt said, “We need to downsize.” So, last year when the Farmer’s Market was finally back in full swing, they sold indoor plants out of the back of the “Fam-mobile” on summer Saturday mornings in Athens. The business was called “The Jungle Booth,” (and I love the play on Rudyard Kipling’s *The Jungle Book*). The endeavor did well, and raving fan customers wanted a place where they could come year-round.

After the Farmer’s Market season was over, Sara looked diligently for shop space, and about ten months ago put out her Vibrant Vines Collective shingle at 616 Hwy 31, S Suite D in Athens, right across from Athens Athletics. The place has taken off like her spider plants, and I love going in there. By the way, Sara is going to have a booth at Earth Day in ASU’s Carter Gym on Saturday, April 20 and will have some demonstrations for people who are in desperate need of “plant therapy.”

No story about Vibrant Vines would be complete without a discussion of a philodendron by the name of Biggy. “He” is the show plant of the shop,

and I love to go stand under his branches. Biggy makes me feel for a moment like I am on vacation in the jungle, and dispenses his unique type of “plant therapy” to the part of me that was originally made to live in the Garden of Eden. Sara found Biggy at a shop in Huntsville, and cringed when she saw that he was in a 10-inch pot. “I asked if he was for sale, and we were not even sure if we could successfully get him back to the shop, let alone re-pot him without killing him. But we knew he needed to be rescued and come live with us, so we took the risk. I put him in a 20- inch pot, and he rewarded me with quickly growing not only one, but two leaves, which is exceedingly rare for a philodendron to do.”

There are all kinds of plants in Vibrant Vines that actually thrive on neglect. There is a snake plant that only needs to be watered two times a year, literally. Many more are anywhere from once a week to once a month. Sara also loves to bring plants back to life. To date, five clients have brought their “lost causes” into Sara to be resurrected, and so far, three are now flourishing, and sadly, two were too far gone. The good news is that the bereaved owners know what they did, and have been given




Sara Allen
OWNER

vibrantvinescollective@gmail.com
256-541-3537
@vibrantvinescollective
@Vibrant Vines Collective
616 HWY 31 Suite D
Athens AL 35611

a “second chance.” Sara loves to build confidence in people who self-identify as plant killers, and to that end, will be offering several workshops this spring that are as follows -- each workshop will be from 6:30 – 8 p.m. on their given day.

Tuesday, April 30: Repotting -- cost is \$25, which includes session and a plant put in an appropriately sized pot

Friday, May 3: Terrariums -- cost is \$40, which includes session and all supplies

Friday, May 10: Moss Poles -- cost is \$40, which includes session and all supplies

Friday, May 17: Propagation -- cost is \$25, which includes session and a propagated plant

Come by Vibrant Vines Collective either at the shop or at Earth Day, and let Sara Allen restore your “broken link” to the (indoor) Garden! The lushness of Creation is awaiting you, and behold, it is “very good.”

Vibrant Vines

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Monday thru Friday
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Saturday 9 a.m. - 6 p.m.
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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.

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

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

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.

Athens Historic Walking Tours

Apr 20 & 27

9:45am - 11:00am. Athens-Limestone Visitors Center, 100 N Beaty St, Athens. Each Saturday in April. Join the Athens-Limestone County Tourism Association 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 10:00AM. Comfortable shoes and a light jacket are suggested. Free. Donation Welcome. For more information: 256-232-5411.

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

Play Outside Day

May 4th

Families everywhere are encouraged to get outside the first Saturday of every month and play in public parks, enjoy trails, hit the waterways, explore greenspaces and just play! Limestone County offers over 20 trails to explore including walking, cycling, horseback riding and kayaking – perfect for all ages. For more information: 256-232-5411

42 Annual Limestone Sheriff's Rodeo

May 17th and 18

8pm. Limestone County Sheriff's Rodeo Arena. The 42nd Annual Limestone Sheriff's Rodeo – Greatest Show on Dirt East of the Mississippi – is scheduled for May 17 and 18, 2024 at 8 p.m.

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.

How “Doses Of Criticism” Are Like “Doses Of Medicines” Or... The Power Of Analogies

by Detri McGhee - Certified Life Underwriter, Chartered Financial Counselor



I like analogies. Taking something I understand well, and showing how it compares to something that may be less understood seems to open my eyes in new ways. When we are trying to make someone understand us, how often do we say, “Well, it’s a little like this...”? The doctor says, “How would you describe the pain?” We may say, “Like a hot poker running through my toe!” Or, “Like an elephant sitting on my chest.”

Well, friends, when I started analyzing criticism, I noticed a lot of ways that criticisms are similar to medications. Can you think of any before I start? Take a moment. Think. How is getting criticized similar to getting medication? I wish you would send me your ideas!

OK. My turn now.

1. The dosage must be administered properly to avoid serious side-effects. (Think Phenergan!)
2. Criticism, like drugs, can be life-giving or life-altering or even life-taking. Like drugs, criticism can be helpful or harmful.
3. Either can be administered by those seeking to help us or those seeking to harm us. They can be administered by friend or foe, or a complete stranger.
4. The wrong dosage can be destructive, no matter how well intended.
5. Just because a drug (criticism) worked well

for me doesn’t mean I should give it to you.

It pays to consider the purpose, the abuses, and the potential results of each.

6. Just because someone prescribes it for you doesn’t mean you have to take it. Learn to think for yourself.

7. Even if everyone else seems to be taking that particular dosage, that doesn’t guarantee that joining them will make you a better, healthier person.

Now since we don’t have unlimited time here, I will comment on one, and next time we are together, perhaps we will explore a few others in depth.

#1. The dosage should be administered properly

to avoid serious side-effects. (Think Phenergan!) Not only is it crucial that the right amount be given, but it must be taken the right way for maximum benefit. Suppose you have severe upset stomach. Your doctor prescribes Phenergan. You don’t know what a suppository is, and how to administer it....THAT can be a “tough pill to swallow”! Likewise, if we are never taught how to handle criticisms, how to use them for our benefit, when to discard them without letting them enter us in error, then we are likely to allow them to harm us in ways we are not even equipped to realize. When we are young and under the control of others, we tend to do what they say without question. When we

are “young” in criticism management wisdom, we may well do the same. We may get criticism and let it incapacitate us, change our resolve, re-define our goals or completely derail our path because we take to heart criticism that we should deal with in other ways.

For example: When I was in my late 20s I became aware of how public speaking could be a fascinating and lucrative profession. I mentioned it to my husband. He immediately objected. Ridiculous idea! I listened to him. A few years later, the school had a motivational speaker who impressed him (she was young and cute, I later discovered). He found out they had paid her thousands of dollars for

that 2-hour workshop and announced to me: “You could do that even better than her! Why haven’t you ever considered that?” I had let his casual criticism of my idea let me dismiss it as a possibility. I so wish I had known then what I know now!

This incident proves I was, at least back then, a woman in great control of body and tongue. I did NOT hit or yell. Yea, ME! I will confess, just between us, that even now I don’t do quite as well with my *inner* thoughts because I still want to hit and yell when I think about it. Send me your thoughts! detrimghee@gmail.com Facebook: Criticism Management by Detri.



What Makes Ronnie Roll

Just Fishin'

by Ali Elizabeth Turner

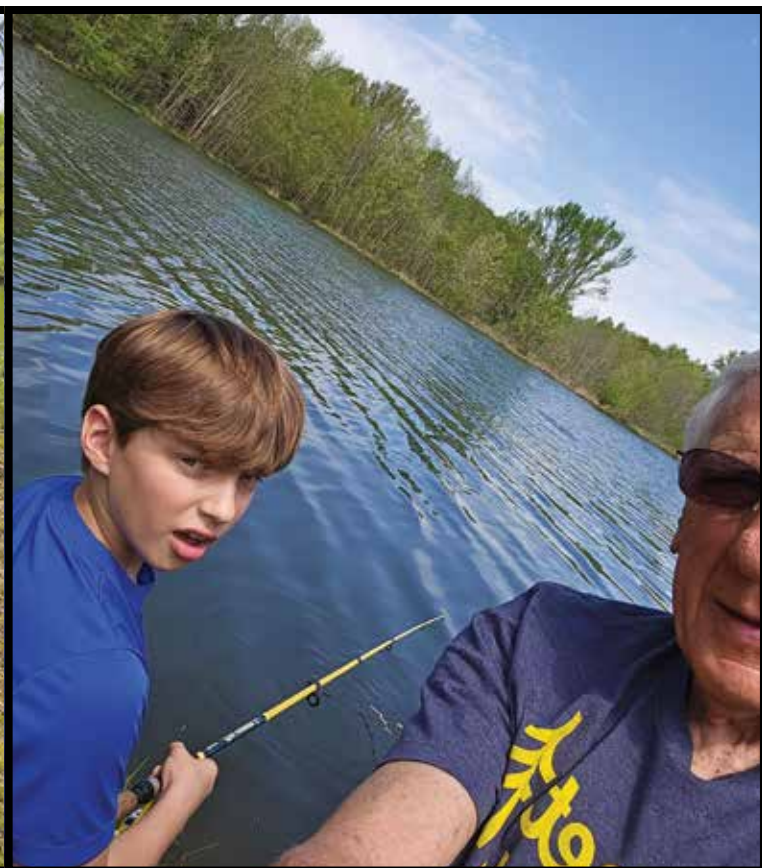
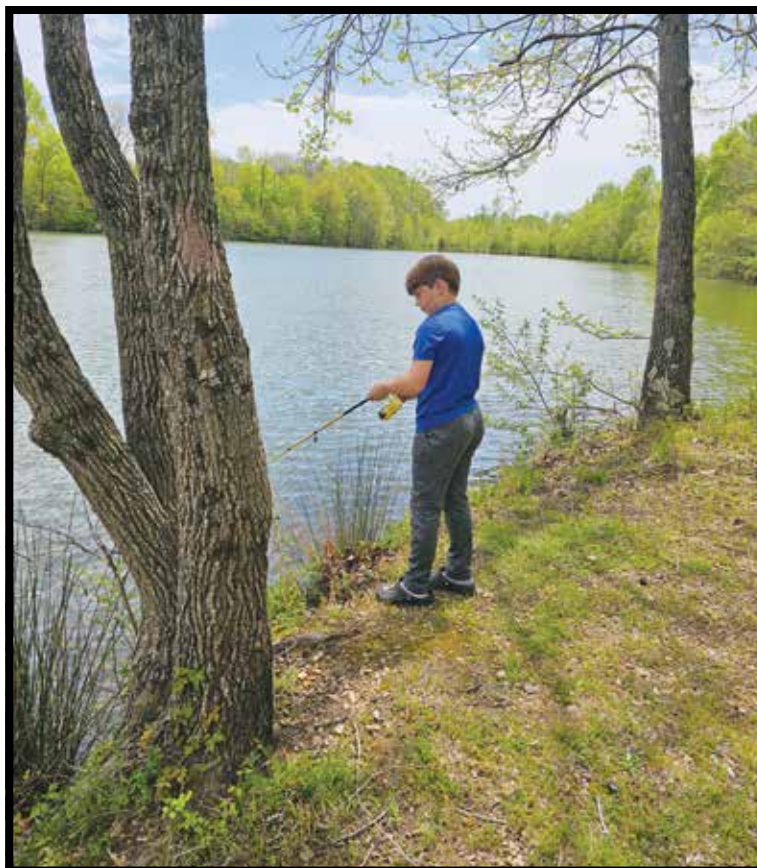


It was one of those Monday mornings when all was right with the world...even though there was much about which to be concerned, such as Mayor Ronnie's pet peeve, TRASH! That being said, he told me that there is an account by which things such as the One Bag (trash) Challenge can be supported. "We are going to be able to do the One Bag Challenge," he said with genuine glee. The One Bag Challenge is an incentive whereby if you collect a bag of trash and register it with Keep Athens-Limestone Beautiful, you are entered into a contest wherein you can earn some cash for trash. The City of Athens is now in a position to reward a total of \$500 to "passionate trashers," and this is something that is super important to the mayor.

The Annual Plant Sale is going to be on April 20 at Athens Middle School, and the mayor told me that the kids do the lion's share of the work that "makes it work."

There had been a Senior Buddy day at the Senior Center, and it had been a roaring success. There were members of the Mayor's Youth Commission who had paired up with seniors who attend the Center, and they had played dominoes, cards, and had what he described as food, fellowship, and fun

Our Earth Day celebration



is tomorrow, Saturday, April 20, from 9-3 at the Athens State University Gym, and Mayor Ronnie was genuinely sad that he couldn't be two places at once. Earth Day is one of his favorites, and he will be at a baseball event with grandson Quinton. Speaking of Quinton, Mayor Ronnie then showed me a pic of a fishing trip with him, and said, "This is just like that Trace Adkins song, 'Just Fishin',' except it's him, meaning Quinton. Do you know the song?" I had to admit that I didn't, but I love Trace Adkins, and the mayor played the song/video for me. It generated more than

a lump in my throat. Here are the lyrics, and I hope you find them as moving as I did:

I'm lost in her there holdin' that pink rod and reel

She's doin' almost everything but sittin' still

Talkin' 'bout her ballet shoes and training wheels

And her kittens

And she thinks we're just fishin'

I say, "Daddy loves you, baby" one more time

She says, "I know, I think I've got a bite"

And all this laughin', cryin', smilin', dyin' here inside's

What I call, livin'

And she thinks we're just fishin' on the riverside

Throwin' back what we could fry

Drownin' worms and killin' time

Nothin' too ambitious

She ain't even thinkin' 'bout What's really goin' on right now

But I guarantee this memory's a big'in

And she thinks we're just fishin'

She's already pretty, like her mama is

Gonna drive the boys all crazy

Give her daddy fits

And I better do this every chance I get

'Cause time is tickin'

(Yeah it is)

And she thinks we're just fishin' on the riverside

Throwin' back what we could fry

Drownin' worms and killin' time

Nothin' too ambitious

She ain't even thinkin' 'bout What's really goin' on right now

But I guarantee this memory's a big'in And she thinks we're just fishin'

She ain't even thinkin' 'bout What's really goin' on right now

But I guarantee this memory's a big'in

And she thinks we're just fishin'

Yeah, aw, she thinks we're just fishin'

We ain't only fishin' (This ain't about fishin')

"Just Fishin'" - Song written by Casey Beathard, Monty Criswell and Ed Hill. Performed by Trace Adkins. Produced by Michael Knox. Show Dog - Universal Music. Released 2011

"People need to go fishin'," said Mayor Ronnie thoughtfully. By that I knew he meant taking the time to build relationships with kids, which also builds communities. It was time to pray, and we did, and then it was time once again for Ronnie to roll.



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Dr. JOHN BOYLE

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Hazel Green, AL 35750

Tel: (256) 828-4288
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Joe Camel And The Drag Queens

by Phil Williams

the ladies, and drove the best cars. He was James Bond, the Marlboro Man and Audie Murphy all rolled into one. His name was simply “Joe Camel.”

Joe Camel was the branding mascot for Camel cigarettes made by R.J. Reynolds Tobacco Company (RJR). He burst onto the U.S. advertising scene in 1988 and immediately became one of the most recognized advertising images in modern history. But he fell afoul of society when the *Journal of the American Medical Association* conducted a study which found that Joe Camel was instantly recognizable by 91% of children, who also associated him with cigarettes. Old Joe’s image was on par with Mickey Mouse in its appeal. Another study concluded that Camel’s underage smokers had grown in number exponentially as a result of the Joe Camel campaign.

In 1992, a San Francisco Attorney filed suit against RJR alleging Joe Camel was intentionally targeting minors, and that RJR profits from underage smokers had grown from \$6 million to over \$476 million in just 4 years. At the behest of Congressman Henry Waxman (D-CA) the Federal Trade Commission investigated and issued a finding that RJR had unreasonably and knowingly targeted minors.

Then came the smoking gun. A 1974 RJR internal memo emerged with evidence that RJR was indeed targeting young smokers aged 14 and up. The memo spoke of a

direct ad campaign for young smokers, saying that “These are the smokers of tomorrow.” The jig was up. In 1997, RJR retired Joe Camel.

Joe Camel had outraged the authorities. His likeable cartoonish face was deemed to be dangerous, and intentionally designed to cultivate a strong first and early impression for children, aka the smokers of tomorrow.

There’s no excusing RJR’s targeting of kids, but don’t you wish the worst thing upon us these days was a cartoon camel encouraging kids to smoke?

In my lifetime the powers that be saw fit to lead a charge against a major corporate entity because the corporation was believed to be enticing kids into an unhealthy lifestyle. Adults were literally grooming kids to be the next generation of smokers.

Yet now we have drag queens performing at so-called family-friendly events. We’re told that questioning this behavior is tantamount to domestic terrorism and somehow homophobic. Parents and concerned citizens are berated for daring to question, complain, or protest the idea of children being exposed to men cross-dressing in hypersexualized women’s clothing with exaggerated female characteristics. Men, who quite literally lampoon and objectify women while dancing provocatively and making lewd remarks. Opposing this distorted behavior is screeched as a gross af-

front to the rights of the gay community.

It actually requires little effort to mentally assent that parents should always be wary of men who dress as women and cavort in front of children. There’s nothing normal or comfortable about any of it. The history of drag is a full buffet of madness. Yet they come, often by invitation, to schools, libraries, and community centers to host Drag Queen Story Hours.

Why the makeup if all they wish to do is read stories? Because it’s not really about reading and everyone knows it. This is about the clearly stated purpose of grooming the next generation. By cartooning women in front of children they are attempting to normalize abnormal and unhealthy behavior.

How do I know this? Because they say so themselves. It’s no secret. You can read it yourself on the organizational website of Drag Story Hour:

Storytellers using the art of drag to read books to kids in libraries, schools, and bookstores. DSH captures the imagination and play of the gender fluidity of childhood and gives kids glamorous, positive, and unabashedly queer role models.

In spaces like this, kids are able to see people who defy rigid gender restrictions and imagine a world where everyone can be their authentic selves!

A role model? Being a

“role model” means to encourage others to emulate behavior. A role model sets the example for followers. In short, the leadership of Drag Story Hour admits that their sole purpose is to create the next generation of drag queens.

How is this any different than Joe Camel? Short answer: it’s not.

Have we as a nation gone so far down the path of depravity and indifference that we don’t see the irony in knowing that Joe Camel is considered bad for kids, but men dressed as women performing provocatively in front of children is not?

Joe Camel’s got nothin’ on these drag queens.

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

A Strong Work Ethic Is Important

by D. A. Slinkard

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



We all understand that our society has been different since COVID hit just over four years ago. The workforce has been impacted as seemingly overnight companies were left scrambling to try to fill positions because no one wanted to work. I know people who received more money sitting at home drawing a check from the government than they had when they were going to work at their retail job. It seems the one thing that is missing in so many people today is a strong work ethic. A strong work ethic is vital for a person to have success in their life including professional, academic, and personal pursuits they want to go after.

For myself, my work ethic is fueled by the achievement of goals. I love writing down a goal and then exceeding my own expectations. It has been found that individuals who have a strong work ethic are more likely to set and achieve their goals because they understand the importance of hard work, persistence, and the dedication required in reaching their goal. I still believe too many people are going about life without a clue as to what they want to achieve nor even an understanding of how they are going to achieve it. Any success these kinds of people have is what I call, “accidental success” -- being that they just got lucky. You

must live your life daily and live it on purpose to achieve results.

A person who has a strong work ethic is also someone who you can describe as reliable. I was recently shopping at a local discount store and one of the employees was aggravated because people were not showing up for their scheduled shifts. These people would be considered unreliable workers, and I have never met a person with a strong work ethic who is unreliable. It seems being reliable and having a strong work ethic go hand-in-hand because these people also seem to have the ability to achieve personal fulfillment. Reliable people show up when they are supposed to, meet deadlines, and fulfill their commitments. This leads to a personal sense

of satisfaction, especially in knowing you have given your best efforts to accomplish the task.

It is important to build a strong work ethic simply because these people are the ones who can have a positive influence on other workers. These individuals often serve as role models for others and their dedication, discipline, and determination inspire those around them to strive for excellence. To be honest, that word excellence is something missing in so many companies and organizations today because the workforce has gotten lazy. People are looking for the easy way out or what corners to cut to allow for the path of least resistance. I am all for making life easier, but we need not learn bad habits that lead to bad

employees.

Ultimately, I believe when we have a strong work ethic, we are able to have long-term success in our life and fulfillment in our professional and personal endeavors we set out to achieve. This provides a foundation built upon growth, achievement, and satisfaction over the course of our lifetime. We must understand this is not easy, and not everyone will understand the mode of thinking in trying to be the best that we can be. We have one chance at life, and we need to make sure we are doing the best we can to be the best version of who we are.

I cannot tell you the number of times I have had employers tell me they would love to clone my attitude, my desire for success, and my energy level.

Personally, I do not think it is as hard as what we think it is to have a great attitude. I do not believe it is very hard to achieve success or have high energy levels, but quite often we want to give up too early the moment something gets hard. Do I always have the best attitude? Not 100 percent of the time – but I do not think you will find someone else who is as positive as I am. I have learned we must overcome the obstacles that pop up in our lives. The very first way we achieve success is by the way we approach each day, and it comes down to the work ethic we display daily. To achieve this, focus on having the highest level of work ethic of anyone around you and watch your life change.





Clean, Green And Beautiful

Decades Of Dedication

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

On April 27, we will be hosting the Joann Christopher Memorial Elk River Cleanup, which is being funded by TVA. We will be based at Sportsman's Park on Elk River Mills Road. This cleanup is a tribute to the many, many decades of hard work and dedication that Joann Christopher gave to Keep Athens-Limestone Beautiful and Limestone County. This cleanup will be a continuation of Joann's years of blood, sweat, and tears. As a community, we owe her a BIG thank you!

Let me tell you about Mrs. Joann Christopher. She became a part of Keep Athens-Limestone Beautiful when it was



still known as Athens Clean Community. In the 1970s, she lived on the Elk River, and she began to clean up spots when she found them littered. She soon started a newsletter that went out to her friends and neighbors who also lived on the Elk River, and shortly she had a group that shared her passion -- keeping their environment clean. She was active in these cleanups until

her retirement in 1999. Not only was she active with Athens Clean Community, but she was also integral in the development of the recycling program in Athens. This all started in the late 1970s. Mr. Guy McClure's Science Club at Athens High School started a newspaper recycling project. It was going so well, that they added aluminum cans to the project. When the project grew too large for the school to handle, the club moved their project to the original Recycling Center behind Roselawn Cemetery. By this time, Athens Clean Community had become Keep Athens-Limestone Beautiful (KALB). Joann helped us gain the non-

profit status in 1979. She not only helped develop the Athens-Limestone Recycling Center, but she is the reason that we have a curbside pickup service in Athens.

We at KALB, along with Joann's family, ask you to come out on Saturday, April 27, and volunteer to help us clean up the Elk River. With TVA's sponsorship, we will be able to

provide volunteers with breakfast, all supplies, and a free "thank you" gift. We will be meeting at Sportsman's Park at 8 a.m. for registration, breakfast, instructions, and supplies. We will disperse from there and put in some of our own blood, sweat, and tears to honor the decades of dedication that Joann gave to Limestone County.



Become a Fan



KEEP AMERICA BEAUTIFUL AFFILIATE

(256) 233-8000

KALBCares@gmail.com

www.KALBCares.com



JOANN CHRISTOPHER MEMORIAL ELK RIVER CLEANUP

APRIL 27, 2024
8AM-12PM

JOIN US TO HONOR THE LEGACY THAT JOANN CHRISTOPHER LEFT WITH HER DECADES OF HARD WORK AND DEDICATION TO KEEPING THE ELK RIVER CLEAN! SPONSORED BY TVA, ALL SUPPLIES ARE PROVIDED, AS WELL AS BREAKFAST AND A "THANK YOU" GIFT! WE WILL MEET AT SPORTSMAN'S PARK (ENTRANCE AT VICTORY FUEL) AT 8AM TO CHECK IN, HAVE BREAKFAST AND RECEIVE SUPPLIES!

11155 ELK RIVER MILLS RD, ATHENS, AL 35614



DISTRICT 4 COMMISSIONER
LADON TOWNSEND



Cooking with Anna

An Umbrella Cannot Stop The Rain

by Anna Hamilton

We have all heard the old saying, “April showers bring May flowers.” April has truly shown out so far this year. We have had more rain than I can remember in recent years. Our yard looks like we are digging a pond. Our little papillon is going through withdraws from not being able to play outside. We know eventually the rain will end and the glorious sunshine of summer will be beaming down upon us.

An umbrella cannot stop the rain, but it allows us to stand in the rain. Much like that umbrella, our faith in God may not remove the trials of our lives but it gives us strength to overcome them. When we become a Christian, we are not suddenly blessed with a life free of pain and trials. In fact,

the opposite is sometimes true. It came seem at times that the devil is coming at us from every side; the trials seem to just keep piling up, much like the puddles in my yard.

So far this month, the rain in my life has been pouring. About two weeks ago, I noticed some strange vision in my right eye. It was if I was looking out of a window covered in a foggy film. I could not see, with or without my glasses or contacts. I went to the eye doctor and was immediately sent to a retina specialist. Turns out, I have a condition called central retinal vein occlusion (CRVO). Basically, a vein behind my eye decided to close and the blood now has no way of leaving my eye. Believe it or not, it is a common occurrence and

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Sunshine Cake

Ingredients:

Cake Ingredients:

- 1 box yellow cake mix*
- ¼ cup unsweetened applesauce*
- 4 eggs*
- 1 (11 oz.) can mandarin oranges, drained*

Frosting Ingredients:

- 1 (8 oz.) Cool Whip Lite, defrosted*
- 1 (1 oz.) box fat-free instant vanilla pudding*
- 1 (15 ½ oz.) can crushed pineapple in juice*

Directions:

Preheat oven to 350 degrees.

Spray a 9x13 pan with cooking spray. Mix together ingredients for cake by hand until well combined. Pour batter into pan. Bake for 30 to 40 minutes or until cake is cooked through.



Let cake cool on the counter while you make the frosting.

Mix together Cool Whip, pudding, and pineapple. Once cake is cool, spread frosting on top. Refrigerate until ready to serve.

Unlock Your Potential: *Why You Should Give The Zone Diet A Try*

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 experi-

ence 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. Every 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 fit-

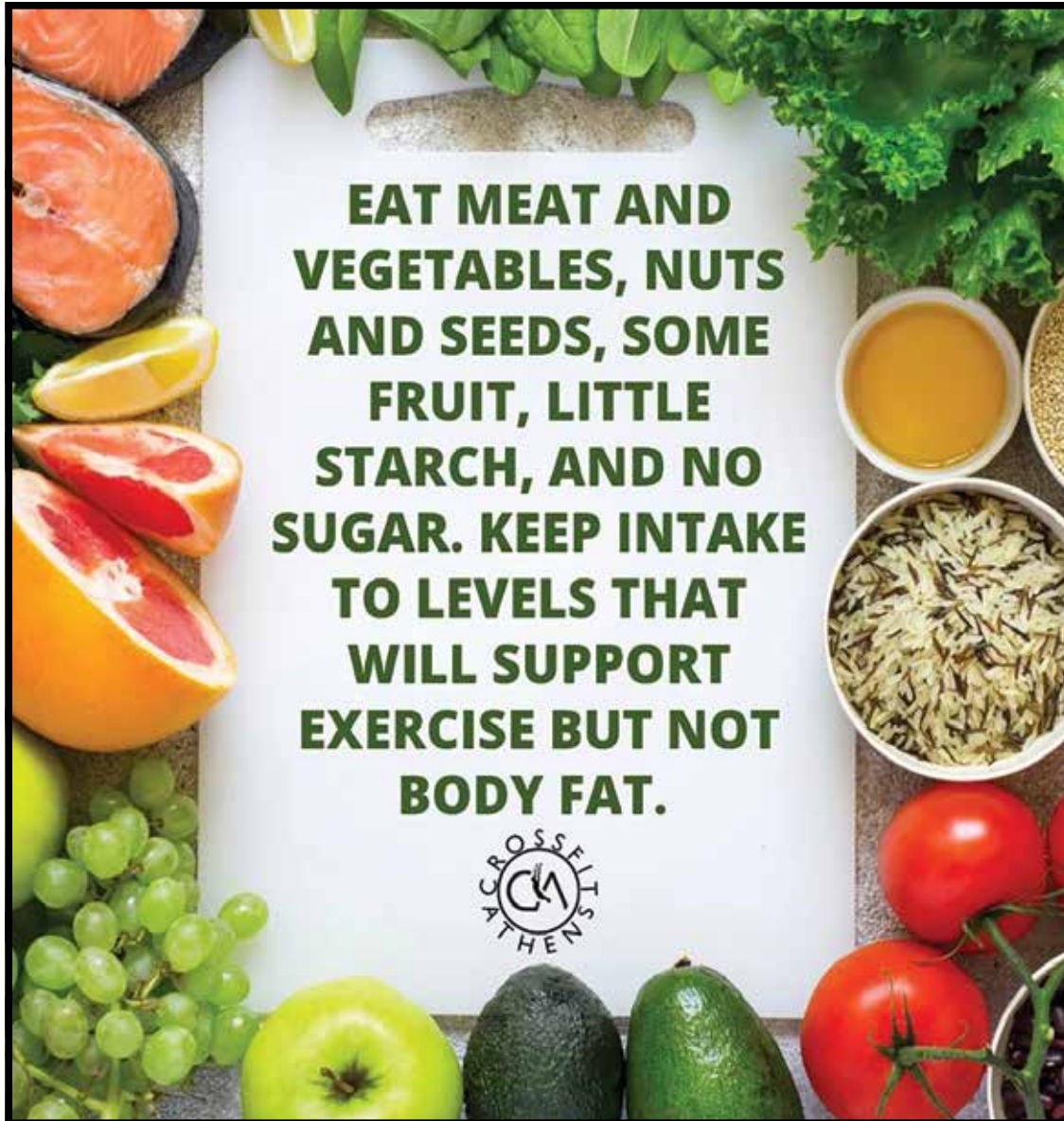
ness, preparing you for the rigors of everyday life. The emphasis on functional movements such as squatting, lifting, pushing, and pulling translates directly to activities outside the gym, whether it's carrying groceries, lifting furniture, or playing sports. By improving your body's ability to perform 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.



EAT MEAT AND VEGETABLES, NUTS AND SEEDS, SOME FRUIT, LITTLE STARCH, AND NO SUGAR. KEEP INTAKE TO LEVELS THAT WILL SUPPORT EXERCISE BUT NOT BODY FAT.



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The Osborne's Jewelers Athens Lagos Event: *Just In Time For Mother's Day*

by Ali Elizabeth Turner

continued from page 1

Jerri Osborne, the company describes itself as "Investing In Love Since 1979," and they are indeed well-loved by our community.

In 2006, Tiffany Shireman became a part of the Osborne "family," and was carefully schooled in the art and science of jewels, as well as design, quality, service, and the necessity of maintaining impeccable ethical standards. The Osbornes taught her well, and in 2015 she became a partner in the firm. In 2019 she bought the Athens store, kept the original name to honor her mentors, and they kept the Huntsville store. This one is always referred to as Osborne's Jewelers Athens.

The store, which is located in the Publix Shopping Center on Hwy 72 and Lindsay Lane, is breath-taking in every regard. First of all, it is gorgeous. The displays, the craftsmanship of the cases, the lighting, and the jewelry itself are all stunning. There is praise and worship music

softly playing in the store, which deeply stirred my soul. But here is what captured my heart: It was the way I was treated the moment I walked in the door. Now, mind you, it was a Saturday morning, I was dressed in *Athens Now* delivery garb, and there was ink on my hands. Let's just say I did not exactly look like a VIP customer, and I quickly washed off my inky hands in the lovely ladies' room. When I came out, I was offered all manner of soft beverages, and it was readily apparent that everyone on staff both loved each other as well as what they do for a living and a calling.

Tiffany and I talked about how God made jewels, loves jewels, uses them to describe his children, and that Heaven will be full of them, starting with the gates of pearl. She understands that in a way, jewels can minister to people, and it is not at all rare for someone to come in to get a special gift for themselves or someone else in a time of triumph. Then, of course there is everyone's favorite: engaged couples, who are treated like royalty as well.

Tiffany slipped an eye-popping 10 carat VVS1 diamond solitaire ring on my finger that is worth over a million dollars. With a mischievous grin she said, "Every woman needs to feel like a million dollars once

in a while." I couldn't help but chuckle.

I asked Tiffany about the sourcing of their jewels, and she taught me about what is known as the Kimberly Process, which is a stringent set of trade protocols and certifications that prevent jewelers from inadvertently trading in "blood diamonds," sometimes known as "conflict diamonds" which are used to fund terrorism. She also told me that she has made sure that any of their internationally acquired custom pieces from Southeast Asia are produced in a fair trade and production context. No one is enslaved, and everyone is paid fairly. Most of the diamonds come from Antwerp and Israel, and Osborne's relationship with their suppliers is open, authentic, and vibrant.

The main focus of this particular article is the upcoming Lagos jewelry event, which is going to be held at the Athens store on April 26 and 27. Lagos hails out of Philadelphia and was started by Steven Lagos in 1977 when he was only 19 years old. It is known for what is called the Caviar Collection, which has an elaborate, signature beading appearance in sterling silver and 18K gold. It is worn by tennis great Serena Williams as well as everyday people,



Tiffany Shireman, owner of Osborne's Jewelers, Athens

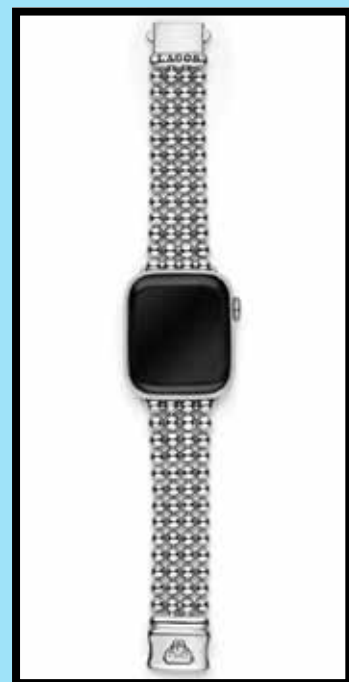
and has a widely varying price range. Lagos is one of Tiffany's favorites, and about this jewelry line she said to me, "These are heirloom pieces -- classics. They will never go out of style. You can dress them up or down, and you will never be overdressed with them. They are perfect for Mother's Day or graduation." I was thinking that the interlocking bracelet would be especially meaningful for some of the ones who come into Osborne's who have gone through difficult times, because it shows how a support system of a "threefold (and greater) cord is not easily broken."

I asked Tiffany why, when I have choices, should I come to Osborne's. She said, "It is about service above self, making people feel welcome, and giving them a special experience."

Come to Osborne's for the Lagos event, if you are in love and are getting married, if you want to purchase a Louis Vuitton handbag or an estate piece. I know you will leave, as Tiffany says, as though you have been seen, heard, and valued. It's just the Osborne way.



Osborne's Jewelers Athens
22099 Hwy 72, Suite D
Athens, AL 35613
256-232-4333
Hours M-F 10-6 Sat 10-5
osbornesjewelers
athens.com



Travel Tips Part 2

by Stephanie Reynolds, Athens-Limestone Tourism Association



Hello my amazing, fabulous folk! A few weeks ago I posted part one of my favorite travel tips. With the summer coming closer, let's dive into a few more travel tips today! Some of these are my own, but some were suggestions from other wonderful travelers.

1. Always have one complete change of clothing, including drawers, in your carry-on. If your luggage gets lost, you have something good to change into until you can get to the store.
2. If you are changing time zones, especially if you are landing somewhere behind your zone, go to bed no earlier than 9p.m. local, even if it's hard. It sets you up for a good adjustment to your new area.
3. Let folks back home know your itinerary. Check in with someone *every day*, especially if

you are traveling by yourself. Give that person a local contact (police, hotel, etc.) as soon as you get to your destination.

4. Order plane tickets in the language of the airline, if you can. That can save you money. Use Google Translate.
5. When you are looking for plane tickets, use an incognito page that does not keep track of your search.
6. Roll your clothing in a suitcase, don't fold. This saves space and makes it easier to see at a glance what you have to wear.
7. Want to know the best place to eat? Watch the locals. Don't ask the hotel which might be getting compensated for their suggestions.
8. Know your routes before you get a taxi or Uber. Know how to get from your hotel to the airport and pay attention to the path, not your phone. This can save you a few dollars

if the driver realizes you know the area. I would utilize Google Street View to "walk" your destination city before you go. Ask them, "Who are you here to pick up?" and verify their car and ID.

9. Call your bank in advance to enable international purchases. Your card won't work if you don't.
10. Learn basic phrases in the local language, including "doctor," "police," "thank you," "please," and "help."
11. Don't convert your cash to local currency before you go. Just use your card at an ATM when you get there.
12. Don't assume there will be food available if your flight takes off or has a layover in the middle of the night. Many airport concessions close down for the night. Bring your own snacks.
13. If your flight is canceled, call the airline or



use the app.

14. If you are going to fly, make your luggage easily identifiable. So much luggage right now is black, soft sided, and looks like every other piece of luggage. Tie a ribbon, write on it with fabric paint, get a very identifiable luggage tag so you can see yours (and so others don't accidentally grab yours). Even if your luggage is a brightly colored, you are not the only person who bought from that line, so tie something on the handle to ensure it's yours.
15. While it might be nice to have a glass of wine on the plane, don't overdo it. Excess alcohol mixed with the dryness of the air and the altitude is a recipe for disaster. You won't be able to tolerate as much as you think you can.
16. If you are going overseas, consider booking with that country's airline, even if it is a little bit pricier. Your vacation then starts on the plane, not when you land. You can start experiencing the culture en route to your destination.
17. Pack a plastic trash bag in your suitcase to put your dirty clothing

in. That makes it easier to just dump it in the laundry when you get home and keeps your clean clothes from smelling like your dirty clothes.

18. Never accept unsolicited rides.
19. Take everything out of your pockets and put it in your bag BEFORE you get to security. This will save time and things possibly getting left behind or dropped.
20. Just assume that nothing is going to go perfectly and that you are more than ready to handle whatever might happen. An unintended 12-hour layover becomes a chance to relax and enjoy airport ambiance and try some of the amenities. A rained-out beach trip doesn't mean you can't enjoy the water (rainwater isn't wetter than beach water, but make sure you get indoors if it thunders!). Lost luggage means an opportunity to buy local outfits, supporting their livelihood and culture. It's often these hiccups that make a great story. As long as everyone is safe and relatively healthy, the trip can be wonderfully memorable, something you'll laugh about for years to come.

Staton House Boutique: *For The Working Mom... And Everyone*

by Ali Elizabeth Turner

continued from page 1

wanted her to move to New York City, but that was not the place Kristen wanted to be. She is a Southern girl through and through.

Another thing Kristen used to do when she was quite young was to cut the hair of her Barbie dolls, and there aren't exactly second chances when it comes doll hair—once it's gone, it's gone. It seemed hair, as well as fashion, were in her DNA, and after high school, Kristen attended cosmetology school. She has been a hairdresser since 2008.

Kristen married Will, who is in the aerospace industry. They have two boys, and in 2014, Kristen opened Salon Blu on Jefferson. The "Blu" in Salon Blu is for their eldest son; it's his middle name. During COVID, Salon Blu was shut down, and the opportunity that presented itself during the pandemic was to move north to a different location on Jefferson. They were able to remodel the new place completely before the COVID restrictions were lifted. So, one dream was fulfilled, with one to go.

When the place next door to Salon Blu became available, Kristen was hoping that she would be able to get it for the location of her boutique, and that wish has come true. Staton House is named after her second son, and both boys think it's pretty cool to have businesses named after them. The remodel job has made Staton House "pop," and already people are coming from places such as Decatur because of the choices,

the prices, and the service. Kristen's target market is the working mom who is "meeting herself coming and going." Picture this as a possible scenario: It's late Wednesday afternoon, and a single mom just dropped her kids at their dad's and realized to her horror that she has forgotten she has an important event that night. She doesn't have time to go home, let alone have the right outfit for it. That's where Staton House comes in. "We have something for the working mom...and everyone," said Kristen. Remember, Staton House is not just a location, it is the name for Kristen's line of clothing. And, Kristen is expecting to do a brisk online business soon.

Here's another scenario: a woman has just gotten her hair done at Salon Blu, and isn't necessarily "under the gun" as far as being crunched for time. Yet, all she has to do is go next door, and she'll get the kind of care that you would expect at a high-end shop on Rodeo Drive.

We laughed about how the fashion industry has revived what was popular in my youth fifty years ago down to the Tee. I asked her, "Why did I get rid of my original stuff?" Then I added, "That stuff today would be worth a chunk of change." After agreeing with me, Kristen showed some casual pieces that genuinely would work for someone who is 15, or for that matter, 50. "Like I said, something for



everyone," rejoined Kristen. We also established the fact that our faves for just about any occasion are maxi dresses, and we are glad they are back in style.

Staton House carries pieces from small to 2X, and everything in the middle. "We have something for a BBQ, a wedding, a funeral, or a casual event," said Kristen. She is also gearing up for

Mother's Day, and is looking forward to helping the moms of Athens feel special on "their day."

Staton House carries reasonably priced accessory jewelry, and kicky custom-made earrings that are actually made of clay and baked to a surprising hardness and strength. They have pleather pants that make you look like a rock star, and shorts for summer. However, what seriously "grabbed" me were a pair of running shoes that are hands down the cutest things with laces I have ever seen -- all kinds of prints and colors, not too

crazy, and might just be what the doctor ordered for the Chick-fil-A 5K in May. I certainly hope so. Maybe they could help me "place in the race!"

Staton House is open Tuesday through Saturday from 10 a.m.-4 p.m., and is waiting to show you that they love working moms....and everyone else!

Staton House
803 S. Jefferson St,
Athens, AL, 35611
Hours: Tue-Sat, 10-4
Web, FB, IG and TikTok
are statonhouse.net
statonhouseboutique@gmail.com

Faithful Leadership: *Believing In Your Divine Placement And Capability*

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



Leadership, a solemn charge, demands not only the marshaling of those we are charged to lead but also an inner conviction that defies the corrosive seeds of self-doubt. It is an echoing truth that the mightiest leaders are not those unblemished by flaws or untouched by failure. However, amid trials and tribulations, their unwavering belief that they are precisely where they are meant to be and endowed with the necessary tools for success is what forges their path to greatness.

Moses, a paragon of leadership, exemplifies this truth. Even with his initial hesitation and perceived inadequacies in speech, he rose to liberate a nation. It is through divine assurance he embraced the belief in his role, as decreed, "Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or terrified because of them, for the LORD your God goes with you; He will never leave you nor forsake you" (Deuteronomy 31:6). Moses's narrative serves not merely as a historical account but as an enduring beacon, illuminating the path for today's leaders.

In his footsteps, we are reminded of the humility that must accompany our authority -- an acknowledgement that though we bear the mantle, it is not by our might nor by our power, but by a higher spirit that we fulfill our purpose. "Faith can move mountains" (Matthew 17:20), and so it is with conviction, which allows leaders to scale the insurmount-

able and view every stumbling block as a stepping-stone toward their destiny.

Leaders of faith recognize their shortcomings, not as definitive of their capabilities, but as areas primed for growth and divine strength. They know well the profound adage, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness" (2 Corinthians 12:9), and in this, there is liberation from the fear of imperfection.

President Abraham Lincoln, whose legacy is a testament to resilience and be-

lief in one's purpose, is an undeniable model of leading with faith and purpose. In the midst of profound personal loss and political defeat, Lincoln persevered, guided by a conviction in his role within a larger narrative. He famously stated, "I am a slow walker, but I never walk back." This remark encapsulates the essence of persistence in the face of adversity. Lincoln's own odyssey from humble beginnings to the presidency embodies the principle that doubts and setbacks are not final verdicts, but rather,

challenges to be met with steadfast resolve. His life and leadership underscore the belief that enduring greatness emerges not in the absence of uncertainty, but through the courage to confront and move beyond it.

The true essence of faithful leadership lies not in impenetrable armor but in the courageous display of vulnerability and reliance on a higher wisdom. The words, "Let your light shine before others" (Matthew 5:16), call forth a leadership style that is authentic and transpar-

ent, inspiring others not merely by acts of prowess but through the integrity of one's earnest endeavor.

In conclusion, we affirm that the courage to persist, the wisdom to recognize divine guidance, and the humility to grow are the hallmarks of a faithful leader. Such a leader sees beyond the hazy veil of doubts and missteps, with eyes fixed on the higher calling to which they have been summoned, thus leading with both the authority of position and the reverence of sacred service.



The View From The Bridge

A Wall Of Water On Both Sides... When The Only Way Out Is Through

by Jackie Warner

Career Development Facilitator
"Impact, Engage, Grow" Community Matters



The Promise: "And also that nation, whom they shall serve, will I judge: and afterward they shall come out with great substance." **Genesis 15:14 KJV**

The waters were a wall unto them on their right hand, and on their left. Some of you know or have heard of how the Israelites were pursued by Pharaoh, and God provided a way of deliverance **parting** the Red Sea for them to escape.

"And Moses stretched out his hand over the sea; and the LORD caused the sea to go back by a strong east wind all that night, and made the sea dry land, and the waters were divided. And the children of Israel went into the midst of the sea upon the dry ground: and **the waters were a wall unto them on their right hand, and on their left.** And the Egyptians pursued and went in after them to the midst of the sea, even all Pharaoh's horses, his chariots, and his horsemen. And it came to pass, that in the morning watch the LORD looked unto the host of the Egyptians through the pillar of fire and of the cloud, and troubled the host of the Egyptians, And took off their chariot wheels, that they drave them heav-

ily: so that the Egyptians said, Let us flee from the face of Israel; for **the LORD fighteth for them** against the Egyptians. And the LORD said unto Moses, Stretch out thine hand over the sea, that the waters may come again upon the Egyptians, upon their chariots, and upon their horsemen. And Moses stretched forth his hand over the sea, and the sea returned to his strength when the morning appeared; and the Egyptians fled against it; and the LORD overthrew the Egyptians in the midst of the sea. And the waters returned, and covered the chariots, and the horsemen, and all the host of Pharaoh that

came into the sea after them; there remained not so much as one of them. But the children of Israel walked upon dry land in the midst of the sea; and the waters were a wall unto them on their right hand, and on their left. Thus the LORD saved Israel that day out of the hand of the Egyptians; and Israel saw the Egyptians dead upon the sea shore." Exodus 14:21-30, KJV

Let's pause for a moment and understand that God didn't remove the Red Sea. He parted it. He provided a way through in the mist of all they were facing with Pharaoh's army closing in. God

doesn't always remove our problems or circumstances, but He will always make a way through.

As you read through the Bible, you will see how this act of deliverance is referenced throughout the Bible and is a comfort for us today knowing that He provides, and His mercy endures forever. "In my distress I called upon the Lord, and cried out to my God; He heard my voice from His temple, And my cry came before Him, even to His ears." Psalms 18:6

"By **faith** they passed through the Red Sea as by dry land: which the Egyptians assaying to

do were drowned."

Hebrews 11:29, KJV

"To him which divided the Red Sea into parts: for his mercy endureth for ever: And made Israel to pass through the midst of it: for his mercy endureth for ever: But overthrew Pharaoh and his host in the Red sea: for his mercy endureth for ever." Psalms 136:13-15, KJV

*Until Next Time, Be
Sincere, Kind and
Intentional*

*Jackie Warner, Community
Outreach Specialist*

*Email:
thebridge.us@gmail.com*

*Check out upcoming events:
http://thebridge-us.yolasite.
com/*



Saddle Up

by Deb Kitchenmaster



In the album, *THE GREAT ADVENTURE*, Steven Curtis Chapman sings the following words:

Saddle up your horses

Started out this morning in the usual way

Chasing thoughts inside my head

I thought I had to do today

Another time around the circle

Try to make it better than the last

I opened up the Bible

And I read about me

Said I'd been a prisoner

And God's Grace had set me free

And somewhere between the pages

It hit me like a lightning bolt

I saw a big frontier in front of me

And I heard somebody say "Let's go!"

Saddle up your horses

We've got a trail to blaze

*Through the yonder of God's Amazing grace
Let's follow our leader into the Glorious unknown*

This is the life like no other whoa whoa

This is the Great Adventure

Yeah...

Come on, get ready for the ride of your life

Gonna leave long faced religion

*In a cloud of dust behind
And discover all the new horizons*

Just waiting to be explored

This is what we were created for, yeah

Saddle up your horses

We've got a trail to blaze

Through the yonder of God's Amazing Grace

Let's follow our leader into the Glorious unknown

This is the life like no other whoa whoa

This is the Great Adventure



We'll travel on, over mountains so high

We'll go through valleys below

Still through it all we'll find that

This is the greatest journey

That the human heart will ever see

The love of God will take us far

Beyond our wildest dreams

Yeah, oh saddle up your horses

Come on get ready to ride

Saddle up your horses

We've got a trail to blaze

Through the yonder of

God's Amazing Grace

Let's follow our leader into the Glorious unknown

This is the life like no other whoa whoa

This is the Great Adventure

"The Great Adventure" - Song written by Steven Curtis Chapman and Geoff Moore. Performed by Chapman. Produced by Phil Naish. Sparrow Records. Released 1992

Adventure is described as an unusual and exciting, typically hazardous experience or activity. Adventure is to engage in hazardous and exciting activity, especially the exploration of unknown territory. Let's put the riding helmet of salvation on and let the love of God take us far.

The number one reason riders use saddles is that saddles provide an anchor point for the stirrups. The stirrups make it easier to balance, to stay on a horse that changes direction rapidly, and to get the rider up and out of the way when racing or jumping.

Horses that are 3 to 4 years old are at the prime time to start riding. However, there is no perfect age. It depends on the horse.

When saddling a horse, the first thing to do is to put the saddle blanket or pad on the horse's back. Lift the saddle up and over the horse's

back just in front of the withers. The saddle should sit just behind the horse's shoulder, over the withers, and no further back than its last rib. Before lifting the saddle on the horse's back, it's good to have the stirrup over the horn of the saddle and the girth (cinch) over the seat of the saddle. Release your girth under the barrel of your horse and cinch up. If the saddle has a back cinch, make that connection. You want your back cinch to be loose but not loose enough for it to make it to the flank area. You want the saddle secure enough on the horse's back that it will not slide under the barrel of the horse, but you do not want it tight at this point. Bring your horse to a place where your horse can make a circle around you while you're standing on the ground. Ask the horse to move one or two circles around you at a gentle trot. Stop the horse and tighten up the cinch. That movement from the horse allows the horse to position the saddle in a place that is comfortable for the horse. Remember, simply tighten the girth, but not too tight. Next, ask the horse to circle around you a couple of times in the opposite direction and stop your horse to tighten the cinch one more time. You are allowing your horse to position the saddle on its back, through movement, by taking the time to cinch up little by little instead all at one time.

**Your NEIGHbor,
Deb Kitchenmaster**

256-426-7947

horsinaround188@gmail.com



The Stories Project: *Pastor Jeff Abrams*

by Kris Erskine, Assistant Professor of Secondary History / Social Studies Education
Athens State University



(Interviewed by Shelton Moomaw)

Born in Brewton, Alabama, in 1963, Jeff Abrams, was fueled by a childhood dream to preach overseas. Abrams grew up during the era of Civil Defense drills, where students in schools across the country practiced hiding from an atomic blast under their desks. Abrams, now a pastor, recalls that he “always wanted to preach, and grew up praying and dreaming for the day he could go overseas and preach Jesus.” But this isn’t a story just about preaching, it is a story of humanity and compassion.

In early February 1991, while attending a Bible lectureship at Freed-Hardeman University, Abrams was listening to a lecture and began to overhear a speaker in another room. The other speaker was a missionary to India and had such “great passion,” Abrams says. This speaker was “really pounding the point that we need to be going overseas with the gospel of Jesus.” He said “brother, if you aren’t going to India because you are afraid of the taste of the food, then your soul is going ‘the wrong way.’ That hit home,” Abrams says.

This message that “hit home,” was timely; several months lat-

er, on the day after Christmas, 1991, the Soviet Union collapsed. In 1993, less than two years later, Abrams found himself stepping foot on Ukrainian soil. In this, his first trip outside the United States, Abrams remembers being anxious and tired, and feeling alone. But he remembers “seeing a Coke sign in a remote area of Eastern Ukraine,” and adds that at that moment, “I knew I’d be all right.” It is the small comforts of familiar things that seem to assuage the worries of weary travelers far from home. This was Abram’s first of more than one hundred trips to Ukraine.

Over the years, mission work in Ukraine has changed. Ukraine has become more Westernized, materialism has taken hold. As the Ukrainian perspective of the West subsequently shifted, missionaries have adapted their approach. Abrams’s ministry began organizing Camp Amerikraïne, a ministry for Ukrainian families. Abrams also began offering English-language classes while using the Bible as the course textbook.

After spring of 2022, Abrams’s visits were marked by navigating a war-torn landscape. Despite the risks posed by the ongoing conflict, the ministry continued. In fact, Abrams increased the number of trips he

made each year. Much of his ministry was in Russian-speaking parts of Eastern Ukraine, particularly in the town of Kramatorsk, in the Donetsk region, a town that today has been shelled by Russian forces but has not yet been subject to the same kind of fierce battles that have been seen in Kharkiv and Mariupol.

The outbreak of war in 2022 brought yet another shift in methods. Abrams’s ministry, Rescue Ukraine, rented buses to evacuate families -- buses filled primarily with the elderly, and women and children, who said goodbye to their fathers, sons, brothers, and husbands. Abrams’s ministry now also provides food to Ukrainian refugees in Poland. But all of his church family that desired to leave their war-torn nation have been able to leave. Some did not leave because they refused to abandon their beloved family pets.

From coordinating evacuations to delivering groceries, Abrams’s commitment to Ukraine remains. Yet throughout The Stories Project interview he insists, “I promise I’m not noble..., I don’t have a death wish and didn’t do anything overtly foolish,” but, “I felt guilty to be safe and here while my friends were in shelters and scared, and cold. I

couldn’t have lived with myself if I didn’t go.”

The resilience and courage of the Ukrainian people has left an indelible mark on Abrams, deepening his sense of compassion. He says he is blessed to witness their “ridiculous courage.” There has also been a surge of baptisms since the war began in 2022. The influx of hundreds of thousands of refugees presented new challenges, but also opportunities for spiritual growth. In the face of uncertainty, hope abounds. Abrams adds, “War causes a lot of people to reassess their lives, make sure they are ready for that appointment [with death].”

But the war has also removed barriers, and there has been more inter-faith cooperation. In war, Abrams notes, people are “less concerned with which part of the Bible you believe or don’t believe,” adding, “You realize that you could die today. This changes your perspective. You hear air raid sirens. And it’s very real.”

As Abrams prepares for his next trip to Ukraine, scheduled for this June, his resolve remains unshaken. On the humanitarian tragedy unfolding in real-time, Abrams reflects that there are, “so many mass graves, and children

[being killed]. It is unspeakable, what’s happened. We can’t look away. We cannot get bored by this story. We have politics. We have football season. We have our own family issues. I get that. But... we cannot rest until this is better.”

Jeff Abrams has been making annual trips to Ukraine since 1993. He is pastor of Tusculumbia Church of Christ and was interviewed by Shelton Moomaw. You can learn more about Pr. Abrams’ ministry at RescueUkraine.com.

This profile was taken from an oral history conducted as part of The Stories Project, a project developed by Dr. Kris Erskine for his students, future history and social science teachers in and around Athens and North Alabama. To listen to the full oral history, you can go to StoriesProject.org. The Stories Project seeks to preserve the stories of average folks and not-so-average folks in and around the Athens area. If you’d like to be interviewed and have your story preserved and available on the Athens State University digital archive, please go to the website above and make a request through our online contact form. We would love to hear from you.



The Alternative Approach

Why Are You Sick And I Am Not?

by Roy Williams



As many of you know, I do five radio shows about natural health each week on seven radio stations. As a result, many people say, "I have noticed that you are almost never sick." The fact is that when I was 59, we decided that I should increase my life insurance so if I were killed in a car wreck or some other disaster, the business would be covered. So, we decided to apply for the coverage needed.

The insurance company sent a nurse to draw blood, get a urine sample, and ask the usual questions of which one was, "Who is your family doctor?" I will never forget the look on her face when I told her, "I do not have a family doctor." She stated, "You are 59 years old and you don't go to the doctor?" My answer was, "Why would I go to a doctor if I am not sick?"

The truth was that, at that time, I had not even seen a doctor for any reason since a her-

nia surgery I had when I was 26, and I couldn't remember the name of the doctor that did it. "You have not been sick in over 33 years, she asked?" "No," I replied.

Since then, at age 69, I have only been to a doctor's office for two reasons. One was an abscessed tooth and the other was a detached retina. Please understand, we *develop* disorders because we are out of balance due to malnutrition (nutritional deficiencies) or a weakened immune system. Otherwise, our normal state is health.

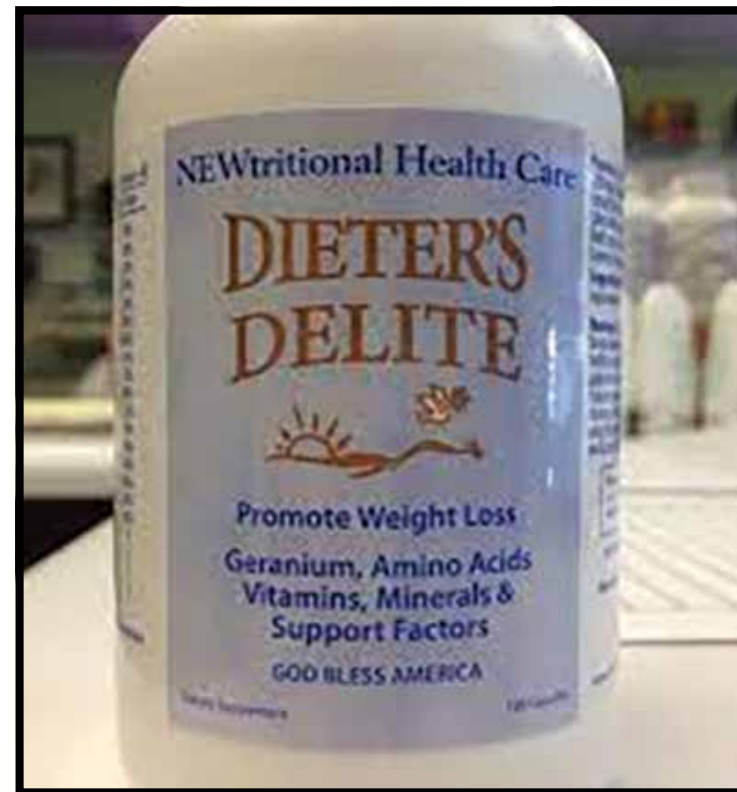
There are many reasons the human body can become imbalanced, but one of the most obvious signs is too much body weight. Of course, there are several imbalances that cause us to gain too much weight. The number one cause of weight gain is overeating. When you take in more calories than you are burning you will gain weight. Eat the same number of calories that you burn and you will maintain weight. Eat fewer calories than

you burn and you will lose weight.

That is precisely why we at NEWtritional Health Care spent over 10 years formulating the product called **Dieter's DeLite**. This product covers the main issues that most people need help with when wishing to lose weight. **Dieter's DeLite** decreases your appetite making it easier to eat less. **Dieter's DeLite** increases energy to help you move more and actually fires up your metabolism, both of which helps you burn more calories. It also supports thyroid function and helps with moods.

The original **Dieter's DeLite** was a huge success with hundreds so satisfied with their results that they were willing to make TV commercials, showing before and after pictures, proving their results. As success grew, the powers that be decided to make one of the ingredients illegal for human consumption. That was done even though no one had reported any negative effects or had any health issues resulting from the use of it.

Of course, we abided by the law and stopped production of the original. It has taken us a few years to replicate the product without that ingredient, but late in 2023 we nailed it. Since then, we have many people telling us that it is equal to or maybe



even better than the original, expressing huge reductions in appetite. A few of our customers telling us that they have to remind themselves to eat. Others say that they love it because it helps them to eat less and their junk food cravings have disappeared.

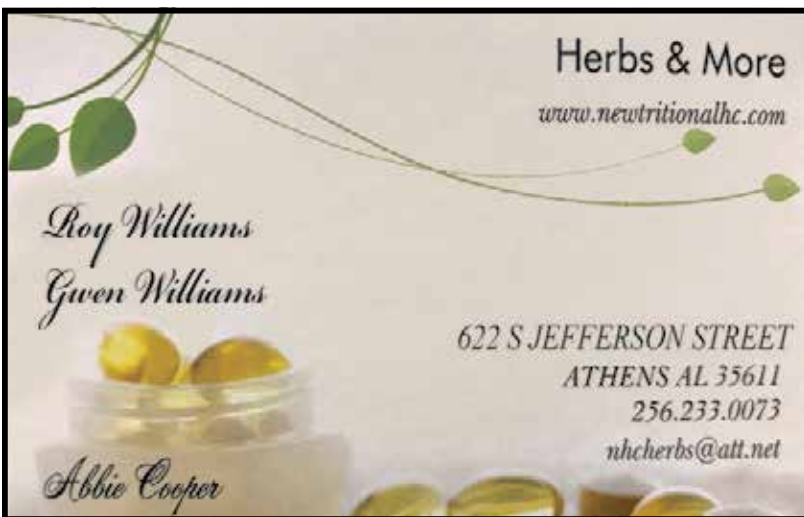
All that and more helps us believe that the new **Dieter's DeLite** will surpass the original. The all-natural ingredients support normal blood sugar, fires up the metabolism, gives you good clean energy without the jitters or the shakes, and supports balanced thyroid function. When you combine that with the appetite reduction, it is sure to be a homerun for the weight lose industry.

To make it even better for you to prove to yourself just how effective **Dieter's DeLite** is,

you can go by Herbs & More in Athens or NHC Herb Shop in Killen and pick up a 3-day supply for just \$5. Almost everyone who tries the sample pack comes back for a full bottle. Please accept my invitation to grab a sample pack today and try it for yourself.

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Your Friend in Health,
Roy P Williams





Cooking with Anna (continued from page 13)

An Umbrella Cannot Stop The Rain

by Anna Hamilton

is treatable. The treatment isn't pleasant, but sometimes to achieve what we want, we have to endure unpleasant things.

For the next year, I will get to see my new best friend, my retina doctor, and with a little treatment and a lot of prayers, we are hoping for my vision to return. I am holding on to my umbrella super tight and have faith that this trial will pass much like the rain in April.

To add insult to injury this morning, as I am writing this, my left toenail came off my big toe. At this point, the devil is just getting on my last nerve. Everyone that knows me knows that I love to wear flipflops and keep my toes painted for spring and summer. Now, I have a big toe missing a toenail. Little does the devil know that I am just going to paint my nail-less toenail and wear the cute sandals and flipflops anyway.

My toenail will grow back. My vision may or

may not return to its former place. But I still know that God is good. These setbacks that I am currently enduring will not break my faith and trust in the Lord. I will continue to hold my head up and keep that umbrella held high.

I hope that you and your family are making it through these rainy times without getting too wet. This week's recipe is for a yummy cake, appropriately named, Sunshine Cake. The oil in the cake is replaced with applesauce making it a guilt free way to enjoy a sweet treat. We love it in our house, and I know you will love it too.

"As the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return to it without watering the earth and making it bud and flourish, so that it yields seed for the sower and bread for the eater, so is my word that goes out from my mouth; It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I set it." Isaiah 55:10-11

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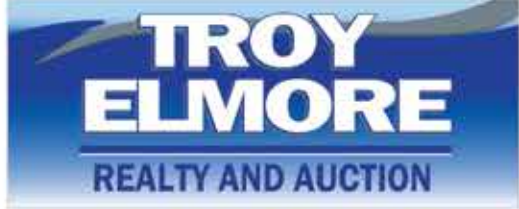


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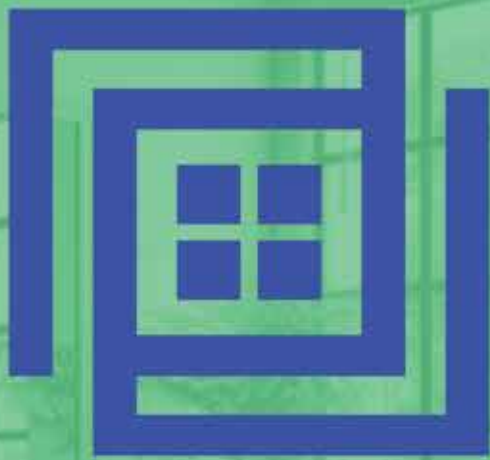
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"'Fries or salad?'
sums up every
adult decision
you have to make."
- Aparna Nancherla



ANSWER KEY:

3	1	9	6	7	2	7	8	5
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8	3	7	2	6	7	1	5	9
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1	5	7	3	7	6	9	2	8
2	6	8	7	5	9	3	7	1
4	9	3	6	7	8	5	2	1



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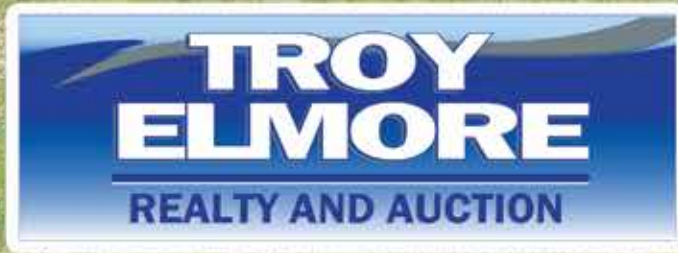
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