

August 04 - August 17, 2023

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See Our Listings Inside this edition...
Pages 25 - 32

Special Feature



"Everyone Has A Story!"...
"Everyone has a story!" says Darlene Hartman to the local writers' group bi-weekly meeting at the historic Houston Memorial Library...
Page 5

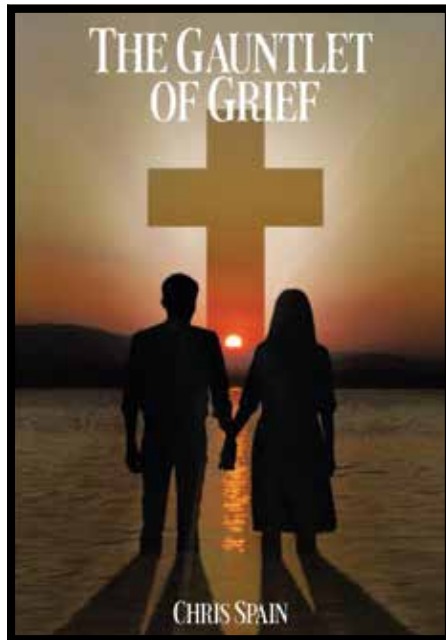


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Gauntlet of Grief: Heartbreak Mixed With Hope

By Ali Elizabeth Turner

In April of 2015, just a day after we celebrated the Resurrection, Chris Spain lost his two kids in a car wreck. His daughter, Erin, died at the scene, and his son, Peyton, was transported to UAB where he died the next day. The kids were students at Hueytown High School near Birmingham, and were on their way home from soccer practice. Thus began what Chris calls

Continued on page 15

All Things Soldier

The Re-up Of The Soldier...
History was made about a week ago when a 59-year-old country music star re-enlisted or "re-upped" on the stage of the Grand Ole Opry...
Page 4



What Makes Ronnie Roll



Don't Overlook The Little Things...
Mayor Ronnie and I were marveling at how quickly the summer had flown and that going-back-to-school was upon us once again...
Page 8

Learn To Read Council Of Athens-Limestone County: *Students Welcome, Tutors Wanted*

By Ali Elizabeth Turner

In 1987, a handful of people in our community saw a need for people of every type, color, education level, and age to be able to read competently. Mabel Prince was the visionary, and Jim and Ruth Mobley began tutoring

Continued on page 17



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11:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

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Contents

Publisher's Point 3
All Things Soldier 4
Special Feature 5
Calendar Of Events 6
What Makes Ronnie Roll . . . 8
Rightside Way 10
Slinkard on Success 11
Clean Green And Beautiful . . 12
Cooking With Anna 13
Tourism 14
Cover Stories 15 & 17
Learning As A Lifestyle 18
Jerry's Journal 19
Dog Barker 20
Mental Health Minute 21
Alternative Approach 22



Publisher's Point

The Secret Weapon Of Squaring One's Shoulders

Over the years, I have written many times about a wonderful place called Pure Hope Ranch. It is located in Texas, and it has two purposes: to strengthen families and to restore those who have been rescued or have escaped from being trafficked. They have Hope Home, where the women live, learn, and rebuild their lives, and the Pure Hope Inn, where all manner of retreats are held. I have been to both places, and it changed my life. God willing, I'll be able to go back many times.

This past Tuesday, my friend, mentor, and Pure Hope co-founder Kathrine Lee gave a live Zoom presentation on the grim statistics that currently face us as they pertain to the link between pornography and human trafficking. More importantly, she enlightened people as to how we can be more aware, observant, and become able to help those that are so vulnerable, and possibly prevent them from being ensnared in one of the fastest growing crimes of all time.

About ten years ago, by what some would perhaps call divine "serendesty," Kathrine sat next to a man on a plane on her way home from a Juice Plus speaking event. It would alter the direction of her family's life, and facilitated the birth of Pure Hope. After con-

versing with the man for about an hour, she finally asked him what he did for a living. Without missing a beat, he told her that he owned the second largest pornography-producing company on the planet. His expectation was that she would recoil, and while inside she was stunned and perplexed, she managed to pray, calm herself down, lean forward, and say, "Really? Tell me more about that." Not sure what had just happened, he proceeded to give her the full download as to how the business works, as well as how they find the girls.

"Oh, that's easy," the man said. "We go to malls and look for girls with daddy issues. We compliment them, and if they square their shoulders, say thank you, and walk on, we know that they are not a likely candidate. If they stop, hunch forward, and don't receive the compli-

ment, we know that they are vulnerable," he added. She was able to show him that his own daughter was at risk due to the fact that he was divorced and she was out from his protection as a father. He literally gasped at the realization, and he gave Kathrine his business card, telling her that perhaps one day the women in his life just might need her. All the ways that she ministers to the people who come across her path have indeed been called upon, and God had been preparing Kathrine for this role all her life.

When Kathrine got home, she told her husband, Michael, what had happened. Long story short, they sold everything, moved to Texas, started Pure Hope, and to date have helped restore more than 100 young women. In addition, they have hosted innumerable retreats for all kinds of people.

As many times as I have heard this story, I determined afresh that I would "square my shoulders" if someone gave me a compliment. As I listened to Kathrine talk about what signaled to predators the likelihood of a young woman being susceptible to the wrong kind of attention, I determined to do my best to teach the young people in my life how to stay safe, physically and digitally.

Pure Hope Foundation has just received a massive shot in the arm through the generosity of a donor who has agreed to match funds of donations up to \$250K. They need to build another Hope Home, and have the land to do it. There is also a movie that will soon be in the works, and the idea of the Pure Hope story being available on film absolutely thrills me. I invite you to join us in being a part of a true "field of dreams." Indeed, if we build it, even more will come, and many will be able to live an abundant life at last. For more information, please go to www.purehopefoundation.org.

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The Re-up Of The Soldier

by Ali Elizabeth Turner



History was made about a week ago when a 59-year-old country music star re-enlisted or “re-upped” on the stage of the Grand Ole Opry in Nashville, TN. Craig Morgan, who served in the Army for 17 years, became the oldest person to “get back in,” and he did so unapologetically.

Craig has had some serious music hits, two of which are “Redneck Yacht Club,” and “That’s What I Love About Sunday.” He had no reason to do what he did, other than the fact that he cannot stand what has happened to the United States Army: for the first time the recruitment numbers are currently 10,000 below what they need to be in order to maintain a level of readiness “in the

event of an event.”

There is a myriad of reasons as to why we are in this kind of trouble, but that is not the focus of this particular *Soldier*. Instead, we are going to both scratch our heads and celebrate the fact that the Army’s all-time oldest candidate returning to full-time service put his life on hold for us when he didn’t have to. He will function as a recruiter, and a celebrity one at that, and he will be stationed on our very own Redstone Arsenal.

“I love being an artist, but I consider it a true privilege and honor to work with what I believe are the greatest of Americans, my fellow soldiers,” said after his on-stage swearing-in. *“God Bless America, go Army.”*

Tennessee Republican U.S. Senator Marsha Blackburn, who is on the Senate Veterans’ Affairs Committee, worked behind the scenes in order to make this unusual move possible, and said the following to the *Military Times*:

“This is going to draw attention to the fact that the military’s numbers are down, and people need to think about service to their country. Having Craig out there, helping deliver that message, talking about how blessed he’s been with his career, and then still wanting to enlist again, I think it’s fantastic.”

Lest you think Craig never had to “drop and do 20,” the guy was trained to jump out of perfectly



good airplanes, kill people, and break things. He served with both the 82nd and the 101st Airborne Divisions of the United States Army, and got out the first time as a staff sergeant. While he is at Redstone as a reservist, he will continue to do tours for his musical ca-

reer, along with performing shows for the military. Please understand, that if we go to war, he will have to be available for a deployment. Ain’t no free lunch here, and PT is still a requirement.

At the Grand Ole Opry’s show, after having been sworn in by Army Forces Command General Andrew Poppas, Morgan performed his song “Soldier.” Here is the chorus, and it looks like he means every word of it:

*I'll get it, if you need it
I'll search, if you don't see it
If you're thirsty,
I'll be rain
If you get hurt,
I'll take your pain
I know you don't believe it
But I said it and I still mean it
When you heard what I told you
When you get worried,
I'll be your soldier*

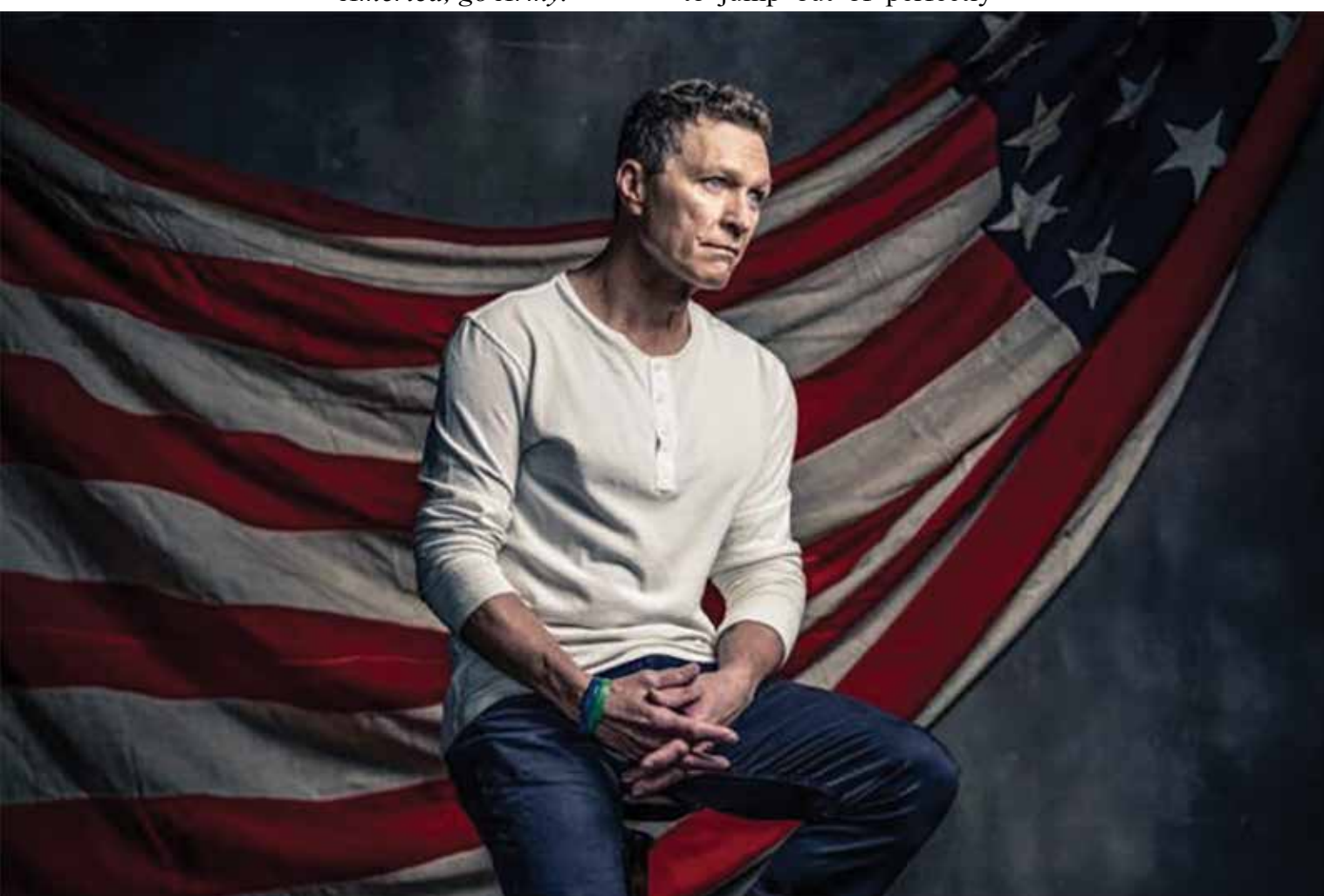


Photo credit: NATE GRIFFIN

Thank God for Staff Sgt. Morgan, and may he be kept safe, as he is “our soldier.”

“Everyone Has A Story!”

by Steven Bates and Sandra Erickson

“Everyone has a story!” says Darlene Hartman to the local writers’ group bi-weekly meeting at the historic Houston Memorial Library. Darlene, also known by her pen name Simon Lang, is a prolific writer who loves sharing her knowledge, creativity, and guidance to nurture talents of other aspiring writers in the community.

Darlene, 88-years young, has her own amazing story. As a young girl, Darlene didn’t let early onset juvenile arthritis or her wheelchair use slow her down. Darlene and her husband not only had 6 children of their own, but adopted a total of 14 more! Even with her love and time invested in 20 children, 42 grandchildren and 20 little ‘angels,’ Darlene has written novels, essays, articles, and much more. She has traveled around the country as a motivational speaker on subjects such as “Raising Handicapped Children,” “Fun with Sign Language,” and “Teaching the Unborn.” She was an artist-in-residence at a magnet school in Orlando, Florida. By her own words, she is a “Eucharistic Minister, a gourmet cook, Master Gardener, artist, non-stop talker, and award-winning writer” but “does not do

floors or windows.”

In the comfort of the historic Houston Memorial Library, Darlene guides writers of various ages, backgrounds, and genres to share their experiences and exchange ideas as writers. Darlene, with the help of her daughter, facilitates the sessions, ensuring everyone has an opportunity to participate and feel welcomed. This group meets bi-weekly, giving members ample time to write and revise their pieces before sharing them with the group. “God doesn’t give two people the same story to write,” said Darlene.

Darlene’s dedication to nurturing the next generation of storytellers and fostering our writing community is already leaving a lasting impact on the members. Perhaps this new group of budding writers will produce the next Hemingway, Steinbeck, or perhaps even another Simon Lang! Any aspiring writers interested in joining the group are welcome. Meetings are every other Thursday night at 6 p.m. at the Houston Memorial Library, 101 N Houston St, Athens. The next meeting will be on August 10, 2023.



Author and mother extraordinaire, Darlene Hartman



Calendar of Events

Athens Limestone County Library Events

Lunch & Learn: Social Media Tips:

August 8

Enhance your social media skills with Lottie Partridge, LP Marketing Solutions. 12pm, Community Room. 603 S Jefferson Street, Athens.

Medicare Series:

August 10 and 12

Medicare Series with the Medicare Chick - Lauri King. Learn About enrollment and new changes to Medicare! August 10 (Community Room) and August 12 (Steelcase Board Room)

An Evening With Local Authors:

August 17

Presenting A.E. Chewing and James C Chewing.
Community Room

Author Visit- An Evening with Georgina Cross:

August 24

6pm. Community Room

Free Autism & Sensory Sensitivity Awareness Training:

August 31

Presented by Tourism ALL-a-Bama. Free statewide trainings encouraging hospitality industry professionals to become more aware. 6pm. Leslie Walker, 256-859-4900. Community Room.

Silver Sneaker Flex™ Classes

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Silver Sneaker classes available at Athens Limestone Public Library on every Monday, Wednesday and Friday at 9:30 a.m. Class is open to all. Donations accepted. For info: 256-614-3530 or jhunt9155@gmail.com

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.yesterdaysevents.com

FB: www.facebook.com/YesterdaysEventCenter

Rocket City Trash Pandas

Calhoun Community College Alumni Night

August 12

5:30pm. Rocket City Trash Pandas. Calhoun Community College Alumni Night. 256-325-1403

Golf Tournament Hosted By Athens Limestone Family Resource Center

August 14

Join us August 14 for a fun day of golf at Burningtrees Country Club! Enjoy this rare opportunity to play a beautiful private course while raising money for Limestone County families in need. Interested in playing or sponsoring? Contact us at director@alcfamilyresourcecenter.org or 256-230-0880.

God Encounters Tent Revival

Hosted by Freedom House Ministries, Int'l

August 17-21

7:30pm. 19837 Myers Road Athens, AL 35614. Come experience Jesus, divine healing, salvation, deliverance and miracles.

Greater Ardmore Chamber Crape Myrtle Festival

August 19

9:00am - 4:00pm. John Barnes Park, 30515 Ardmore Ridge Rd, Ardmore, TN 38449. John Barnes Park – 30515 Ardmore Ridge Road, Ardmore, TN. greaterardmorechamber.com/crape-myrtle-festival/

Gold City Quartet

August 24

Berea Baptist Church will host Gold City Quartet on Thur, Aug 24 @ 7PM. Attendance is free, a love offering will be received. 16779 Lucas Ferry, Athens, AL 35611. CONTACT is Gary Wilson at 256-497-9763.

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.



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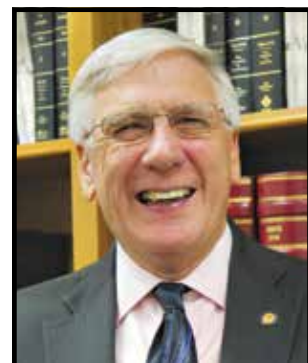


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Don't Overlook The Little Things

by Ali Elizabeth Turner



Mayor Ronnie and I were marveling at how quickly the summer had flown and that going-back-to-school was upon us once again. "Where did the summer go?" was the question of the hour. Having been in the classroom himself at the high school level, and that seemingly centuries ago, Mayor Ronnie wanted to be sure we prayed for teachers -- that's not all, of course -- teachers, students, parents, guardians, anyone, and everyone who is affected by school heading toward a brand-new year. The Mayor's Youth Commission will be starting up again later in the fall, and that is something he looks forward to every year. He mentioned that traffic was going to be heavy on "opening day," of school and said, "Please, everybody, slow down."

about how tough it is financially for so many parents, especially single parents, and is glad that there have been efforts made to get school supplies, as well as meals, to kids in need. There is a display out in the lobby of City Hall that has supplies and information on getting help. LCCI, the Family Resource Center, and Bank Independent are just a few of the organizations in our town that understand the need for kids to be well equipped at the start of the new school year. In addition, Learn to Read Council, which is on the front cover of this edition, will be offering tutoring for kids age 6-15. "We need to grow our kids," the mayor said, and added, "We need to be doers of the Word, and not overlook the little things." By little things, he means the



Richard Long takes his new scooter out for a spin

became aware of the need of a man by the name of Richard Long who had lost his foot to diabetes. Richard had always been an avid bicyclist, and now he could no longer use his bike. So, Miss Laverne got the word out, the people responded and raised money, and Mr. Richard was given a motorized scooter chair that will do the trick nicely. We celebrated at Lincoln-Bridgeforth Park, and there was music, praise, prayer, and thanks. More than anything, there was love with wheels on, and it made everyone's day.

In other news, that being the "home-town-boy-makes-good" department, on Sunday, Ardmore native and resident Lee Hodges won the 3M Open PGA Tournament. Lee and his wife, Savannah, chose to return to Ardmore in order to be closer to family. Lee graduated from Alabama and is probably the only professional athlete to call Ardmore home. Lee's caddie is long-time friend Andrew Medley, who played golf at Auburn, and the two have "made us proud."

And so we celebrated things great and small, all the blessings and challenges of our city and county as we prayed and asked for wisdom, and then it was time once again for Ronnie to roll.

things that can make a good town a great town, and we celebrated something that had just happened, in part because of Miss Laverne Gilbert.

known in our community for her passion and commitment to keep Athens-Limestone beautiful by organizing trash pick-ups. Through that labor of love, she

Miss Laverne is well-

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Censoring The Censored About Censorship

by Phil Williams



Something new and different happened in a recent congressional hearing that turned an otherwise mundane committee meeting into a total goat rodeo.

The purpose of the hearing was to receive testimony on the U.S. government's collaborative effort with Big Tech to censor people who dared to speak against "approved narratives." Intended as a hearing on censorship, several witnesses were sworn in to testify, all of whom had been censored themselves. Democratic committee members did not want the testimony heard, so a motion was made by Democratic Congresswoman Debbie Wasserman-Schultz to move into executive session in order to keep the hearing out of the public eye.

Did you catch that? In a hearing about censorship Democrats tried to censor the censored about their views on censorship. You can't make this stuff up. The effort failed, but the point remains that when government is allowed to control the public discourse, the path inevitably leads to tyranny.

But what liberal Democrats did not see coming in the recent hearing was that one of their own was going to hand them a heaping ration of pain and discomfort. One of those witnesses was none other than Robert F. Kennedy Jr., son of

the late Bobby Kennedy, nephew of President John F. Kennedy, and a current Democratic candidate for president.

They tried to quash his comments. They tried to cut him off. They tried to defame his character and misrepresent his prior comments, and he was having none of it.

With his opening comments, RFK Jr. addressed the fact that 102 Democratic lawmakers had signed a letter calling on the Speaker of the House to disinvite him to speak. Holding up a copy of the letter RFK Jr. said, "My fellow Democrats, I've spent my life in this party. I've devoted my life to the values of this party. This itself is evidence of the problem that this hearing was convened to address. This is an attempt to censor a censorship meeting." He went on to say, "Censorship is anathema to our party. It was appalling to my father, to my uncle, to FDR, to Harry Truman, to Thomas Jefferson...it is the basis for democracy...the first amendment was not written for easy speech. It was written for the speech that no one likes you for."

Congressional Democrats should take note of British scholar and author Salman Rushdie. In 1988, Rushdie wrote a novel called *The Satanic Verses*. Deemed an affront to the Muslim faith for its alleged portrayal of the Islamic prophet Mohammed, the

outrage from the Islamic world was significant. The book was banned in several Islamic nations and considered off limits by Muslim clerics. But in 1989, things ramped up to a new and very dangerous level when Iranian Supreme Leader Ayatollah Khomeini issued a fatwa calling for Rushdie's execution and putting a \$3million worldwide bounty on his life. The leader of a sovereign nation had called for Muslims everywhere to kill a man for daring to write a book. It was government action at its worst.

Bookstores were bombed, Rushdie had to hire private security, and he was placed on Al-Qaeda's hit list. But for the last 35 years, Rushdie has refused to remain silent, at great risk to his own life. More than once he had to cancel events because of threats. In 2022, Rushdie was just beginning a lecture in Chautauqua, New York, when a Lebanese immigrant named Hadi Matar ran onto the stage and stabbed Rushdie repeatedly in the neck and abdomen. Rushdie was saved after major surgery, but he has lost the permanent use of one hand and an eye.

A government decree against a private citizen in another country was issued without due process just to silence words that the leader did not like. That decree lingered for over three

decades resulting in violence against the speaker. This is censorship at its most extreme level. Not just the suppression of the voice, but the actual attempt to kill the person whose voice was considered objectionable.

Some may say that there is no direct comparison between the fatwa on Rushdie and the hearing that was held in the U.S. Congress. Or is there?

The attempt to censor that congressional hearing was something that if not prevented at its current level, would only grow and fester. You see, the fatwa issued by the ayatollah was not something that happened overnight. It was something that developed over time as barriers to decency and common sense were slowly eroded. There was a gradual degradation of the value of freedom and liberty, with a belief that the words of the one must be kept from the many because of the fear of the few.

Keep in mind that Rushdie was not stabbed in Iran. He was stabbed in the U.S. Evil has a way of spilling across borders. Too often the left doesn't care about your views. They only care that they have a view and would prefer that you be silenced to avoid your view blocking their own.

RFK Jr. was right. We cannot be a free nation if the very first of our civil liberties, the freedom of speech, can be so easily abridged. What good

is freedom without expression? Are you really free if government is able to decide that your views don't count and stifles your ability to talk, write, give speeches, or to have an opinion?

The Iranian ayatollah called for Muslims around the world to kill a man who said something that he found objectionable. Democrats in Congress chose to try to defame and stifle a man for having opinions they found objectionable. How different are those two things? I submit that one is just a more advanced version of the other.

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

Learn How To Add Value Every Day Of Your Life

by D. A. Slinkard

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

We are beginning the month of August, and I want to start this article with a question – How is your year going thus far? Hopefully, everyone reading this is generating the kind of success imagined at the end of last year. If you are not as successful as you hoped for or have not even begun to concentrate on what you want to accomplish in 2023, it is time to build momentum at this time of the year. Too many people derail their weeks, their months, their years, and their lives all because they fail to concern themselves with the right mindset. It is not too late for 2023, but we also must be preparing for 2024.

I want you to think about everything you want to accomplish this year and make a list of these items. I want you to list these items in the order of importance to you as a necessity for making 2023 a success for you. When you make this list, I want you to envision these items as if you will not fail in your endeavors. Too often we limit our thinking and our lives because we have the fear of failure instead of approaching it with the mindset of “I will not fail.”

This needs to be the year we no longer take the haphazard approach of the “what if.” How many times have you heard someone empathetically ask, “What

else can go wrong?” and behold something else adds to the negativity. Asking questions with negative connotations adds no value to our lives or what we want to accomplish.

To build momentum in 2023 and beyond, your focus needs to be on activities that help you reach your desired results. As you look at your list and the actions needed to achieve success, if you find an item that moves you further away from your goal or is not producing positive results, then you need to purge that item now. How many times do we quash our own dreams by wasting our time and efforts on things that bring absolutely no fruit to our lives? We need to add value to every day we live.

Maybe that should be our goal – not to waste our time or efforts on meaningless things. Seriously think about how “busy” we Americans are with our lives and the distractions we have. We wonder why we struggle to find the elusive work-life balance, but is it really any wonder with the emergence of technology? I remember the days when the only way to talk to someone on the phone was to call their home number, and if the person was not home, then you would not be talking to them.

Technology has made us readily available through our computers, tablets, phones, and even those Dick Tracy smartwatches. Although we are available for communication, is this killing our momentum for suc-

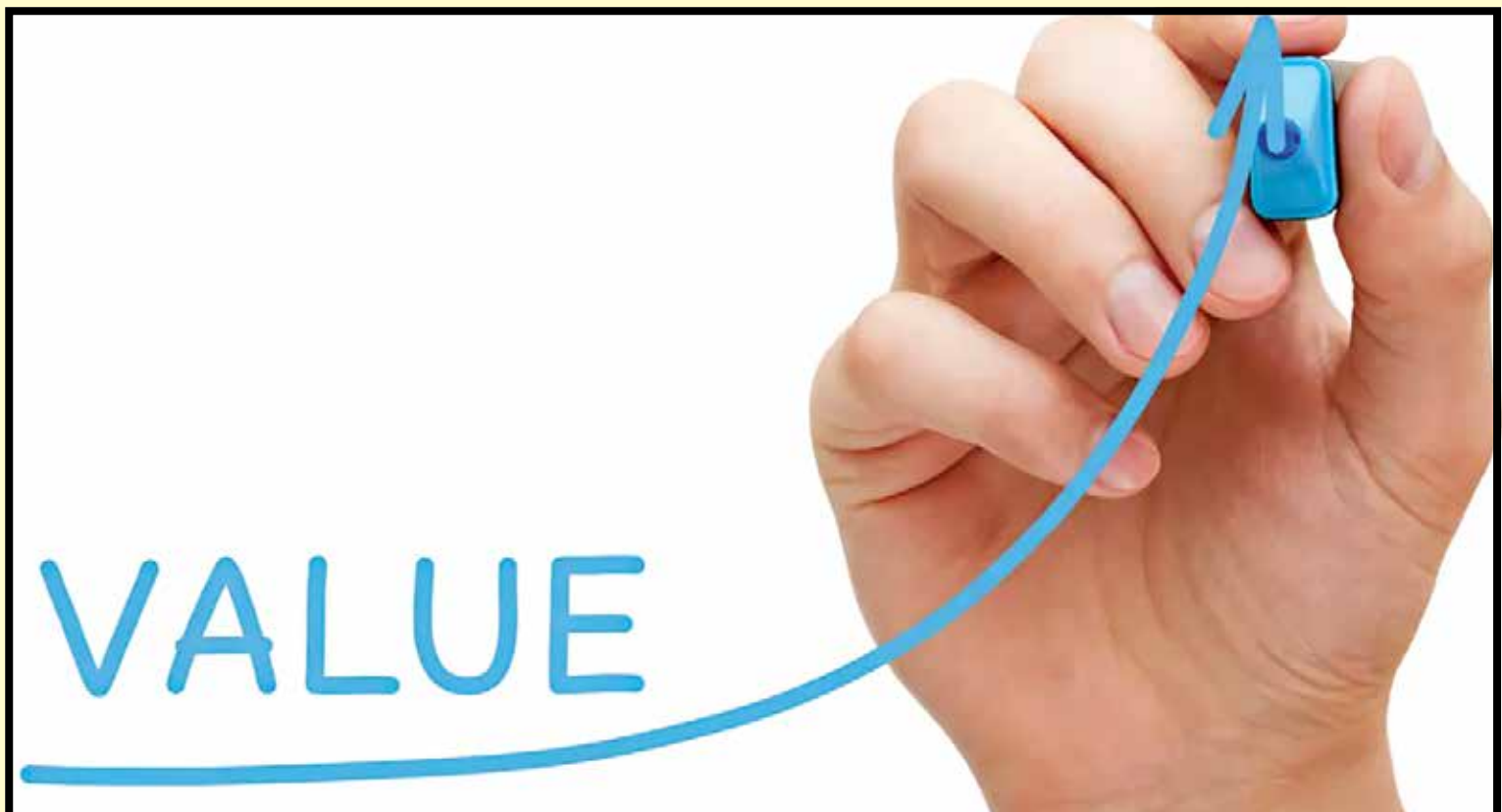
cess? I am going to tell you that it is. How much more successful could we be as a society if we were able to “de-technologize” ourselves from our electronic devices?

As I write this article, my phone keeps dinging, and what do I do? I stop writing to check my phone notifications, and before I realize it, I am lost ruffling through email after email, text message after text message. This is the same old story for numerous people, and what little motivation there was, has been lost because of distractions we must fight against.

With your list in hand, I urge you to make it a priority to “de-technologize” yourself so you can have the success in the upcoming year that you desire, and just maybe you will be able to cut

out some of life’s distractions. This may be easier said than done, but until you try it, you have no idea what will and will not work for you. If you were able to eliminate just a fraction of the distractions in your life, what kind of improvements could this make for you and your family?

How much more productive could you be in your entire work-life balance if you were able to focus just a little bit more attention on what is going to bring you success in 2023 and years beyond? This is what our resolve must be for the upcoming year; we must look at life as “I will not fail.” The time to build momentum starts now by looking at your list, knowing you will achieve success, and taking action today.



Clean, Green And Beautiful

Recycle Responsibly

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



Beautiful is very excited for a recycling program to be back in Limestone County! We have become strong partners with the Limestone County Commission to help them further this program and make it as successful as it can be. The KALB Board made the decision to donate all the equipment from the previous recycling center to the Limestone County Commission. We are to get back at it by offering more educational programs in the schools and community. We are making BIG plans to help Keri and the Limestone County Commission make their new program a HUGE success.

So, just a little information on the Limestone County Recycling Program. It is located at 1301 North Jefferson Street in Athens (the old L&S shopping center). It is open Monday-Thursday from 7 a.m.-3 p.m. They accept aluminum cans, steel cans, plastic containers #1



& #2, cardboard, and paper. You will need to place each type of recyclable in the proper trailer, but don't worry, Keri has them very clearly marked. She even has trash cans beside each trailer for you to throw out any trash that gets mixed in. Keri thought of everything to make it as easy as she could for people to recycle, and we owe her a great thank you!

This brings me to the next point...when unaccepted items are dumped. We understand 'wish-cycling.' We wish we could recycle everything, too! At this time, Keri CAN NOT accept glass, plastic bags, and any plastic not marked a #1 or #2. Having said this, these trailers are also not for dumping other things such as trash, clothing, and all the other random things she has come across. When she has to stop and sort through trailers to rid

them of trash, it quite literally slows the entire program down. Since the Limestone County Recycling Program is just getting started, Keri is a one-woman show for the time being. She works extremely hard to keep all the wheels turning, so let's all do what we can to make it run smoothly. If you have any questions about items that are accepted, you can call Keri at 256-871-0674.

Again, thanks to a grant from ADEM, Limestone County residents are also able to recycle automobile tires. You can take

them to any one of the County Commissioner's sheds (the addresses can be found on their website www.limestonecounty-al.gov) any weekday to be recycled. So, there is no reason to dump your old tires anywhere! And just to be clear, this is a service for individuals, not tire dealers.

Let's all come together and RECYCLE RESPONSIBLY! We can't have nice things unless we all work together and put in a little effort!

KALB UPCOMING EVENTS

September 9

Superhero Day in Big Spring Park

September 16

The Duck & Run 5k

September 30

Shred Day sponsored by the North Alabama BBB

October 7

The Wacky Quacky Ducky Derby



Become a Fan



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Cooking with Anna

Waiting For Our Ship To Come In

by Anna Hamilton

In January, my husband and I will celebrate our 10th wedding anniversary. We have decided to celebrate our 10 years of wedded bliss by going on a cruise at the first of February. In case you are wondering, that's 6 months away. I feel like a kid waiting for Christmas to come. I have been on a cruise, but it was 13 years ago. My husband has never been on a cruise or out of the United States. We are both about to explode with excitement!

You may remember from my last two articles,

I have talked about going to the gym in order to be stronger. We are also going to the gym to get cruise ready. At the time of the cruise, I will be 43 and the term "beach body" at 43 means something completely different than it did when I was 23. Honestly, at this point, I just want my knees strong enough to walk the cruise ship.

Learning to wait is a skill that we all need to work on, no matter what our age may be.

continued on page 23

Mediterranean Cauliflower Salad

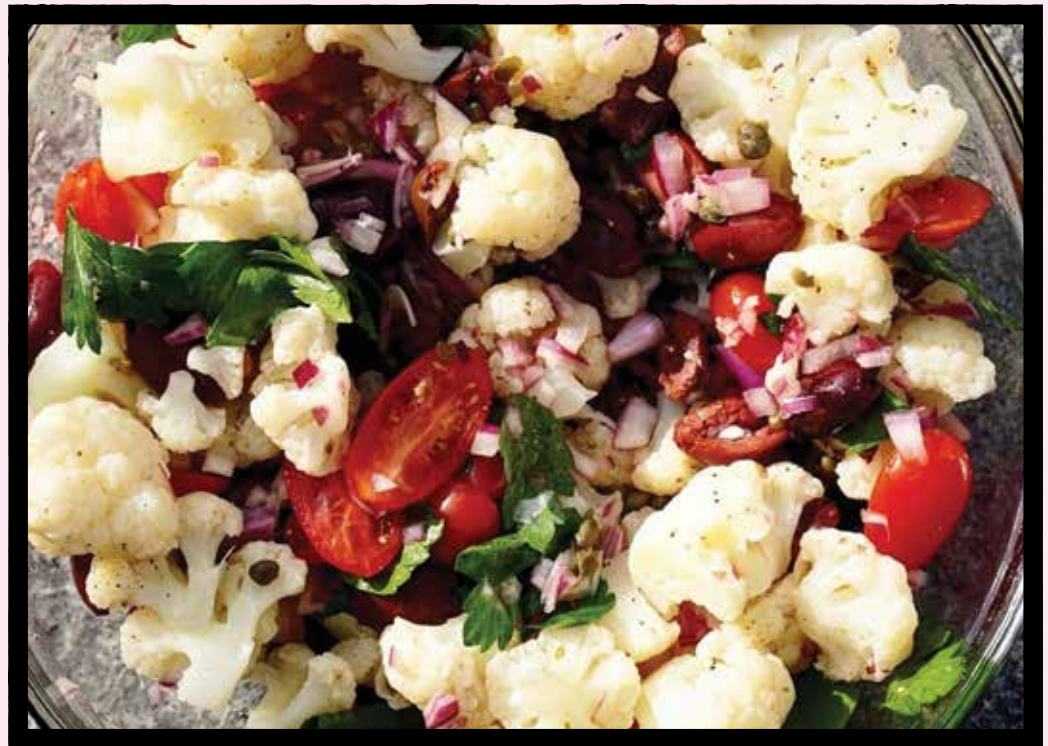
Ingredients:

For the cauliflower:

- 1 head cauliflower, roughly chopped*
- Drizzle of extra virgin olive oil*
- Salt and pepper*

For the Salad:

- 1 cup grape tomatoes, quartered*
- 4 mini cucumbers, roughly chopped*
- ½ cup artichokes, roughly chopped*
- 12 green olives, halved and sliced*
- 2 Tbsp. capers, roughly chopped*
- 3 garlic cloves, finely diced*
- ¼ red onion, sliced*
- ¼ tsp chili flakes*
- ¼ cup fresh parsley, roughly chopped*
- Drizzle of extra virgin olive oil*
- 1 lemon, juiced*
- Salt and pepper to taste*



Directions:

Preheat oven to 425 degrees.

Prepare cauliflower: Place chopped cauliflower on a parchment-lined baking sheet and drizzle with olive oil. Season with salt and pepper. Roast in the oven for 30 minutes, stirring the cauliflower halfway through cooking.

Place cucumbers, tomatoes, red onions, garlic, olives, artichokes, parsley, and capers into a large bowl. Sprinkle with chili flakes.

As soon as the cauliflower is done, add it to the bowl and toss with the other vegetables. Add the olive oil, salt, pepper, and lemon juice. Toss again and serve.

Volunteers Are Superheroes!

by Tina Morrison, Tourism Athens



A volunteer is defined in the dictionary as “vol-un-ter (noun) - a person who freely offers to take part in an enterprise or undertake a task. Wikipedia says: “Volunteering is a voluntary act of an individual or group freely giving time and labor for community service. Many volunteers are specifically trained in the areas they work in, such as medicine, education, or emergency rescue. Others serve on an as-needed basis, such as in response to a natural disaster.” What comes to mind when you think of “volunteering”? It is synonymous with these words: step forward, speak up, enlist, and offer services.

To offer your services to someone in need without expecting anything in return is the true meaning of a gift and also the truest form of volunteerism, which brings me to this conclusion: Volunteers are Superheroes! The annual SUPERHERO DAY held on the 2nd Saturday of September has grown from a private party for the late Eli Williams to a full-blown community event that draws visitors from the Southeast region. This amazing day, Saturday, September 9, 2023, hosted this year by Athens-Limestone County Tourism Association is carefully sculpted just for kids and could not exist with-

out the help of many, many volunteers.

The day begins with a Parade of Superheroes from Athens State University at 10 a.m. Parade drivers volunteer to put the top down on their Jeeps or convertibles and escort the volunteer superheroes and Cancer Kids to the SUPERHERO DAY event site at Athens Big Spring Memorial Park between Beaty and East St. in Athens, Alabama.

Next, around 10:30 a.m., the community heroes volunteer to participate in the Community Heroes Walking Parade around the Duck Pond in Athens Big Spring Memorial Park.

For the remainder of the event, until it ends at 2 p.m., the attendees have a lot of activities, games, rides, bouncy castles, etc. to enjoy -- not to mention, mixing and mingling with their favorite superheroes, while our DJ spins fun songs! There will be photo ops with the superheroes on a stage in front of giant lighted SUPERHERO letters, a golden pinwheel garden, and many other opportunities to donate to childhood cancer, while having fun. There will be carnival rides like swings and teacups and a giant inflatable slide and bouncy house, which are all FREE this year. We will also have plenty of food, drinks, dessert vendors, face painters selling their items, and an

ATM on site. Volunteer crews throughout the day will help to keep the kids safe and the park clean, making sure everyone has a safe and fun day.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank our very generous sponsors, who have donated cold hard cash; without them, we could not produce this incredible SUPERHERO event. They are The Dekko Foundation in Indiana; WestRock in Athens, Alabama; two Alabama Tourism grants from both Senator Tim Melson and Representative Ben Harrison; and Toyna Carter with our local First National Bank.

Thank you to Athens City Parks and Recreation for donating the use of Athens Big Spring Memorial Park. Athens State University for donating the stage and tent and the use of their parking lots. Trader Joe's for donating bags to hold the day's prizes, Texas Roadhouse for donating lunch for the volunteers, and Grayson Carter and Son Contracting for donating cases of bottled water for volunteers. *Note: We still need breakfast for volunteers donated, please. The Grand Prize Giveaway includes a complimentary hotel stay donated by Bob Kumar of The Omega Hotel Group, a complimentary meal donated by Matt and Rhonda Fisher of Wildwood Deli, and a complimentary carriage ride donated by Stan Smith of Wild Hearts Cowboy Carriage Rides. The Athens Lions Club is donating the use of their train, and we have over 25 local businesses who are volunteering their services to set up vendor booths and provide fun free games for the kids, including a petting zoo by Limestone Pediatric Dentistry and the Boyd Family.

Lastly, we would like to thank our volunteer coordinators, who are volunteers themselves: Jasmine Sanderfer has stepped up to coordinate



09-09-23

SUPERHERO DAY

TINA MORRISON EVENT LEAD	JASMINE SANDERFER VOLUNTEER LEAD	KARLEE MORSE SUPERHERO LEAD	KRISTIE WILLIAMS CANCER KIDS LEAD
Tina@VisitAthensAL.com	JasmineSanderfer@GMAIL.COM	KarleeMorse4@GMAIL.COM	ElisBlockParty@GMAIL.COM

facebook.com/events/263852972865733 www.VisitAthensAL.com/superhero

all the volunteer crew. Karlee Morse has stepped up to coordinate all the volunteer superheroes and Kristie Williams has stepped up to coordinate the Cancer Kids. Tina Morrison is coordinating the parade driver volunteers. We need volunteers of all ages and we really hope to include you as part of our amazing volunteer super crew this year! Can you help us by volunteering for this event?

- Do you have an inner superhero waiting to come out and delight hundreds of kids?
- Do you have a black suit that you can wear and volunteer as one of the Shield Superheroes?
- Do you have a Jeep or convertible that you can volunteer as a parade driver?
- Do you need volunteer hours for school or scholarships?
- Can you spare a few hours to be a volunteer crew member? We have tasks that need filling like:
 - o Help inside the air-con-

ditioned green room with breakfast and lunch for volunteers

- o Help with parking and traffic safety
- o Help superheroes with costumes and accessories
- o Help with parade lineup
- o Pick up donated lunch in Madison and deliver it to the event
- o Assist vendors with loading and unloading
- o Help setting up and taking down 10x10 tents
- o Monitor bouncy castles to maintain kids' safety and equipment integrity
- o Help with clean-up during and after the event
- o Help with Childhood Cancer Donation stations
- o Help with Raffle Ticket Donations
- o Help with Pinwheel Garden Donations

Please see below for all of our contact information and please feel free to reach out to any of us with any questions.

Gauntlet of Grief: Heartbreak Mixed With Hope

by Ali Elizabeth Turner

continued from page 1

"*The Gauntlet of Grief*," which is also the title of his book that has just been released. *Gauntlet* is now available at Frame Gallery of Athens as well as on Amazon. It is raw and conversational. It is real, challenging, and has surprise touches of humor. When you read it you feel like you are sitting across the table from Chris, and it's a conversation that will deepen your faith or perhaps give it a swift kick-start to rev it afresh. By way of back story, Chris was a single dad, and had had sole custody of the kids since they were little. Next to God, they were his whole life, and in a moment, they were gone. The book is the blow-by-blow account of Chris's wrestling match with everyone from God on down during the first two years after he lost the kids, and has been described by one reader as "heartbreaking but

inspirational."

Chris Spain is now married to his former high-school sweetheart, Tracie. They had just re-connected via Facebook after many years. Both were single parents, they had dreams of building a blended family, and those dreams were shattered in a moment. Recently, when I had Chris on my radio show, I asked him a question to which I already knew the answer: "Would you have made it through without Tracie?" He slowly shook his head and said, "No, probably not." Tracie was not the only one who pulled Chris through the unthinkable, and she continues to support him as he still "walks the gauntlet."

It's time to introduce "the Hedge," the term of honor and affection that Chris gives a group of five that surrounded him like the Secret Service around any American president moving through life and needing protection. They were comprised of family

and childhood friends. They never left his side, and in addition to Jesus and Tracie, they gave him what he needed to survive, stay sane, and deepen his walk of faith when the Valley of Death was more than a shadow.

A tragedy like this is mind-blowing, heart-blowing, spirit-blowing, and soul-blowing. What made it even more intense was that it also became a media event, and there was nothing Chris could do about that. There were media crews at the hospital, at the funeral, at the high school, and it was the Hedge that was there as well.

In the blur of that time, Chris found strength from on high to comfort the kids' friends, speak at the high school, speak to the soccer team, and painstakingly, when it was time, give away some of their trinkets and treasures to friends who would appreciate them. Chris also got to experience actual life in the midst of devastating death.

Peyton was an organ donor, and later Chris got to meet the young man who now lives because Peyton died. He not only met him, but his family and his church family as well. They worshipped together, cried, prayed, and laughed together. Chris and Jamal know in an uncommon way that we are all of the same blood, and Chris knows that if he ever needs prayer or needs anything, for that matter, they are an extension of the Hedge.

In the years since the death of the kids, Chris and Tracie married and purchased Frame Gallery of Athens. On Sunday, August 13 at 3 p.m., they are hosting a book signing at the shop, which is located at 125 S Marion Street in Athens, just off the Square, and you can get a chance to experience the good that has ultimately come forth from the unthinkable.

What is some of that good? First of all, Chris passed a fierce test of obedience. He knew he was supposed

to write a book, and it was the last thing he wanted to do, but he did it. He already has fruit from that decision, with more to come. He has been referred by other counselors to people who are going through their own "gauntlet," and he has been able to be a part of their "Hedge." What's ahead? Chris told me recently, "God has been sending a lot of people to us that have lost their children. We want them to know they are not alone. I don't know if He is after me next to start a support group, but it looks like He's sending me down that road." I know this because I know Chris -- "What the enemy meant for evil, God meant for good." And, that good is just getting started. Buy *Gauntlet of Grief*. Read it, soak it up, and give away what you experience and maybe buy it for someone else. The Spain kids and all of Heaven will thank you for it.



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Learn To Read Council Of Athens-Limestone County: *Students Welcome, Tutors Wanted*

by Ali Elizabeth Turner

continued from page 1

with her, along with Linda Gay. Later they were joined by Pat Waybright and Sue Vice. They started exclusively with adults, and then developed a service called Learn to Read Council of Athens-Limestone that is now under the umbrella of the United Way organization. Now, Learn to Read is reaching people from the age of 6 on up. They are located at 410 S. Jefferson in Athens, right next to Dub's and the Family Resource Center, and they are ready to help any and all who need it.

There are six basic programs:

- Basic Literacy for ages 16 and over
- ESL- English as a second language
- Computer Assisted Learning Lab
- After School Tutoring Program for ages 6-15
- Summer Youth Literacy Program
- Conversational Spanish

Learn-to-Read is also all

about training tutors for an experience that I can say deeply affected me when I was a young teenager. I became a tutor for one hour a week in a community center located in West Seattle. I will attest to the fact that there is just nothing like helping someone (especially a child) have a breakthrough and watching that person realize they can read, they can learn, they can succeed!

So, what are the nuts and bolts of this organization? How does it work, and how can you get involved? Learn to Read uses a process of teaching reading that was developed by an organization called Pro Literacy, and they do in-house training to certify you as a tutor. It's important that you understand that you do NOT need to have an education background or to have spent time in the classroom, even though many of the volunteers are former teachers and educators. What you DO need is a vision for some of the ways that you will be able to help, complete the training, and then show up when scheduled. Learn

to Read has even had people who could not read, successfully complete the literacy program, and then become tutors themselves. They have experienced the liberation of literacy, and want to give someone else the gift that was so freely given to them.

Here are some stories about people who have been helped by this program:

There was a grandmother who desperately wanted to be able to read to her grandchild, and now she can.

There have been people who have wanted to partake of the American Dream by becoming citizens of the United States. Learn to Read has empowered them to be able to read and understand the questions on the citizenship test and pass it equitably.

One person wanted to get Advanced Placement in order to get a cyber-security clearance, and another wanted to be able to read well enough to take and pass a driver's license test. One wanted to improve her calculus in order to get into nursing school, and another wanted to join the military.

Another important part of the Learn to Read services is English as a Second Language,



ge, or ESL. The curriculum is picture based, has proven results, and you do NOT have to speak a second language in order to be an ESL tutor. The function and vision of the ESL program is to "help non-English speaking adults gain language, reading, and writing skills needed to function in our culture."

There are conversational Spanish classes for those who are wanting to experience the joy of being able to communicate in a beautiful language, learn about a lovely culture, and are taught by Mrs. Maria Taylor. Maria has instructed the Athens Police Department, and spent her career traveling the globe working for the U.S. government. She is patient, kind, and has a charming sense of humor.

Finally, let's close this story with a few lines that demonstrate the heart of the staff, and give you an opportunity to build a life and strengthen our community:

Would you like to help someone, but have limited time and funds? Would you like to meet new people?

Do you enjoy working with adults or children? If your answer is "Yes," Learn to Read Council may be just the place for you. We offer free tutoring services for youth from kindergarten to age 15, for adults wanting to improve their reading skills, as well as adults needing to become more proficient with the English language.

If you will commit to one to two hours a week, Learn to Read will find a place for you to make a difference in someone's life.

Call or stop by today and start the process, whether you want to read or you want to help. You will never regret walking through the doors of Learn to Read Council of Athens-Limestone County, a United Way agency.

Learn to Read Council

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256-230-3050**



Rest Is Not Inactivity

by Eric Betts

Udemy Instructor in Religion, Leadership and Ethics



American culture has a long history of celebrating and honoring the value of hard work. In fact, many who are viewed as workaholics wear the label as a badge of honor. Resting or taking breaks can sometimes be seen as laziness and irresponsible behavior. The person who claims to work long hours or three jobs can often be seen as a superhero. However, recent studies are beginning to show that this can be counterproductive and harmful. To sit and do nothing is almost unethical in the psychology of the culture, but this must change. I have even heard some brag about never taking their vacation days. Now with more extensive research, we are finding that overwork, while it may be considered honorable, may well be self-defeating.

The phrase "work ethic" needs to be reconstructed and redefined along with creating a new dimensional "rest ethic." Even the Hebrew Bible represents God as establishing a rest ethic at the conclusion of the creation narrative (Genesis 2:2-3 KJV). Throughout the Old Testament, we find the ethic of rest as a requirement for the nation of Israel. Avoiding overwork is a part of taking care of our physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual well-being. Overwork means not valuing ourselves nor others as we should. Because we live in a 24-

hour world of business, there are higher expectations and more demands on our time. Additionally, we make demands upon ourselves because of the competitive nature of the tech age. The idea that is uppermost in the minds of many is that if rest is taken, someone else will get ahead.

Because resting is undervalued and hard work is overemphasized, some realize that they should rest but feel guilty doing so. The first step to embracing the ethic of rest is eliminating the guilt and shame of such a practice. Instead, one should feel guilty if they are not functioning at the highest level because they fail to gain the proper rest. Be-

cause so many do not understand what it means to rest, their fatigued minds and bodies feel normal to them. Consequently, they do not know how to rest, even when they are "resting." In actuality, they are attempting to rest, while thinking about what needs to be done. Leadership expert and writer John Maxwell heard one team member state, "I just feel like, when I'm resting, that there's something else I should be doing...I feel like my time would be more productive if I were reading, or making something, or working towards a specific goal."

Oftentimes when a leader is a workaholic, they become clueless of what

a normal work/rest balance looks like. Most leaders expect from others what they expect of themselves. If they are workaholics, they will unintentionally expect the same as others. This lack of work/rest balance that should be built into the team culture becomes a blind spot for them. Maxwell eloquently advises, "A burned-out leader reproduces burned-out people because we reproduce what we are, not what we want. Learning to rest is one of the best investments a leader can make."

Neglecting rest can unwittingly sabotage success without realizing what is occurring. Joel Hoomans is Assistant


Professor of Management and Leadership Studies at Roberts Wesleyan College and has studied the impact of overworking by analyzing the most recent research in this area. He teaches how inadequate rest diminishes creativity, imagination, problem solving, relationship connections, awareness, and smart decision making. The reason why so many overwork is that they do not actually feel tired. It is true that their bodies and minds are exhausted, but their adrenaline levels tell them differently. Professor Hoomans adds, "When neglecting our need for rest, we may be able to fool ourselves, however, in the end this need will not be cheated, and the resulting fallout will humble even the most gifted of leaders." Those who recognize the need for rest and simply can't shake the psychological shame associated with it, should consider that "Rest is not inactivity." These are the words of Professor Hoomans. Rest is about refueling the body, mind, and spirit to meet the demands that are certain to present themselves in our journey. It is time to stop running on empty and commit to regularly refueling through time off, vacations, and sabbaticals. It is only after this becomes a part of your life's rhythm that you will maximize your potential and productivity.



Reversing My Bucket List

by Jerry R. Barksdale

www.jerrybarksdale.com fb.com/jerry.barksdale.7



Why do men make a “bucket list”? It’s *mostly* a male disorder. Sky diving and running with the bulls in Spain top the list. Why does a man want to jump from an airplane and break his leg? Why does he want to try outrunning a bull? It can’t be done.

The idea was popularized in the 2006 movie, *The Bucket List* starring Jack Nicholson and Morgan Freeman, one rich the other poor. Both were terminal and in same hospital room. They decided to make a bucket list of things to do before they kicked the bucket. Women snicker at such foolishness. You never hear about a woman who wants to wrestle an alligator or go over Niagara Falls in a barrel. No sir! Women aren’t that dumb. They dream of owning 100 pair of shoes with matching leather purses, sleeping late, Bloody Mary’s with breakfast in bed, weekly massages, hairdos, pedicures, shopping seven days a week, and driving an SUV with a butt warmer. Very sensible things indeed.

The male disorder begins at about age 16. All he thinks about is dating a cheerleader, playing football, wearing Izod shirts and Nike shoes, driving fast, and playing in a rock band. It makes him feel manly. He finally snares a cheerleader, marries her, and they have three ugly

kids with buck teeth and big ears. He maxes out his credit cards paying for braces. Unfortunately nothing can be done about the car-door ears. The kids have an average of three car wrecks each, too many speeding tickets to count, at least one DUI each, and spend a couple of nights in jail. A king’s ransom is paid for their college tuition, but they flunk out. The daughter gets a booger catcher through her nose, tattoos on her ankle, and marries a dude she met at rehab, who is unemployed. The boys live in the basement, won’t work and won’t leave home. Thank God they are

all normal kids. Is it any wonder that a man wants to outrun a bull? Just for distraction, if nothing else. One morning the man looks in the mirror and his teeth aren’t his, he’s balding, has a double chin and a turkey neck, his prostate is enlarged, and he has ED. He takes action. He begins wearing \$150.00 Ray-Ban sunglasses. No help. He’s still bald. He grows whiskers, shaves his head, buys running shoes at Walmart, and takes up jogging. Pretty soon his knees and hips are killing him from pounding the ground. He has knee and hip replacement for which the insurance company refuses to pay.

Meanwhile, his once beautiful cheerleader has gotten fat. She takes action too. She goes on

the latest starvation diet, gets a \$50,000 bondo body job, along with new bumper gadgets, dresses fashionably, and wears red high heels that match her red toenails. She frets over whether her new dress matches her underwear. Younger men begin paying attention to her. She buys a new SUV with a butt warmer. She purchases more shoes on QVC. Then she gets a tattoo of a feather on her ankle. Running with the bulls is the farthest thing from her mind.

Husband panics. He doesn’t feel manly anymore. He begins consuming mega doses of ginseng. He has more hair growing out his ears than on his chest, and it takes him 30 minutes to pee. Life is fleeting. That’s when he decides to make his bucket list. One would think he has grown wiser with age. Nope! Dumber. He buys a \$100,000 bass boat. His little Ford pickup won’t pull it so he spends another \$65,000 on one that is larger than a house trailer with 4-wheel drive. Now, life is really exciting. The bank calls every day demanding payment, he considers suicide. Too chicken. He vows to play every Robert Trent Jones Golf Course in Alabama. It gives him no satisfaction.

He needs to live closer to the edge. He considers making a pass at a check-out lady at Walmart, but thinks better of it. Her boyfriend is a for-

mer Green Beret and a bouncer at a strip club. Maybe that’s living too close to the edge. Life is passing him by. It’s time for a real bucket list.

I’ve made my list. It’s not what I want to do in the future, it’s what I don’t ever want to repeat.

1. Never pee on an electric fence. Electricity isn’t racist, sexist, homophobic, liberal or conservative. It doesn’t care. It will burn your butt to a cinder. I won’t do that again.
2. Never challenge a yellow jacket family and say such things as “Come out an’ fight like a man.” You can’t outrun a bull and you sure can’t outrun yellow jackets. I won’t do that again.
3. Never mess with a married woman. Some are married to men who have never attended anger-management class, are jealous and unchristian-like and won’t turn the other cheek. I won’t do that again.
4. Never become delinquent with the IRS. They’ll slap you with a 10% penalty and charge you 12% interest. They will file a lien against your home and levy your bank account. They are the most uncaring, insensitive bunch of non-Christian bureaucrats in our government. You can’t beat the IRS. I won’t do that again.
5. Never play Tarzan by swinging on a fuzzy

muscadine vine in the woods. Muscadine vines aren’t fuzzy, poison ivy is. It will cause your hands, arms and face to swell with itchy blisters and send you to see a physician who practices euthanasia. I won’t do that again.

6. Don’t ever purchase a parachute by mail order and pack it yourself. No matter how carefully you read the written instructions you can make a mistake and the chute won’t open. Having a properly packed reserve chute packed by a certified rigger is essential and will prevent you from splattering on the ground. It’s good to have that when you are falling at 120 mph and your main chute won’t open. I won’t do that again.

Nowadays, I get my kicks from riding my zero-turn lawnmower. It makes me feel manly. I feel like Attila the Hun leading a marauding Army across the plains of Eastern Europe as I fly across my pasture slinging grass clippings, pine cones, and fire ants. Now that’s living!

Afterwards, I lay back in my Lazy Boy knock-off and daydream about my favorite high school cheerleader from 50 years ago when I was single. Ah, yes! Then, I am rudely jerked from my daydream.

“Will you please get off your lazy ass and take out the garbage?”

A New Addition To The Family

by Joel Allen



Hello, folks! Well it seems like this month has been nothing but new additions here and there for families. I mean for the “hoomans” too...LOL. Just the other day, I was at a friend’s house assisting in the introduction of a Great Dane puppy named Annie to her new family and their canine family member. It went off without a hitch, as they would say.

Now to those out there who are thinking about getting a new addition to their family pack, let me impart a little advice. Whether it is a puppy or full adult dog and the family getting the dog already has one or more dogs, I always suggest a meet-and-greet between the dogs. And I always suggest neutral territory. Neutral territory is any area that neither dog has ever claimed domain over. This makes them focus better on each other and reduces the stress on

the new dog.

All right, we’re in neutral territory and both parties are getting ready to do the meet-and-greet, what’s the first thing we all do before bringing the dogs out to meet? I like to think that everyone has already discussed the “what ifs” and prepared a game plan should anything go wrong.

Now we bring the dogs to one another to meet. Sometimes when we are doing this, I will change the dynamics by switching the people bringing the dogs out to someone the dogs know but are not used to having hold their leashes, and I let them take this in. It’s a diversion tactic I have used and found to be effective because now both dogs are like, “Wait a minute, that’s not my favorite hooman holding my leash.” It is a Jedi trick that proves to work at times. So, let’s say this meet-and-greet goes well

for the first initial meet. We then move into familiar territory of one or the other dog’s original place. Here we are looking and seeing what body language might take place. After we, the hoomans, have watched and discussed different subjects as we allow the pups a chance to get to know each other, we send the new addition to the family home.

What if there are several dogs needing to be introduced to the new addition? Here is my recommendation. First, we start with the pack leader in the dog world. Then after that, and there are no issues, we move to the second in command of the dogs. We go down the line until they all have been introduced. Once the leader accepts, most of the time the others will fall in line.

Have I seen things go south quickly between two dogs with one reject-

ing the other? Yes, in fact it happened not too long ago when we were trying to introduce a Great Dane puppy to an adult Great Dane, and the big boy tried to eat the puppy. We tried to introduce them again thinking it was a misunderstanding, but the big boy was not having it. Sometimes these things don’t work out because some dogs just will not share their family.

In these cases where there might be trouble, I always tell the parties involved that we cannot have anxiety, or the dogs might get nervous because they feel our energy. I recommend that all dogs are leashed, and the body language I watch for during the meet-and-greet are how the dogs look at one another, if their tails are wagging, what position are their tails in, whether their ears are forward or backwards, if their chest is poked out, if their hackles are up, and what stance their entire body holds at the time of their initial meeting. If either dog shows any signs of aggression and we cannot get them to accept the other dog, we end the session and move on.

As I have said before, the hoomans need to be relaxed as much as possible. Try not to worry about the “what ifs” because if the thought is there your dog could pick up on that and make them nervous. Your body language and position are keys to success or failure also. If your dog is obsessed with their hooman and they will not share, then that is going to be a

problem. When conducting a meet-and-greet, try to never allow your dog to stand between you and the new family member. This can become a defense posture. So we want to encourage your dog to be by your side, if anywhere. If your dog pulls forward toward the dog though, just take it easy and hold on to the leash. Watch and listen because sometimes there is a warning growl or that calm-before-the-storm feeling right before the stuffing hits the fan. If that feeling is there, immediately remove the dogs to safety. Then attempt the meet-and-greet again at a later time. Sometimes, walking the dogs together de-escalates the entire situation.

Lastly, I would recommend having muzzles on hand if things seem really rough at first. And remember, sometimes your dogs will say “NO,” no matter how you slice it. I hope August is wonderful to everyone. Also, I am still working on that Program of Instruction (POI) for the free dog training for the Kids with Cancer. I am really going to push to get in with St Jude’s, if the Lord is willing.

“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**



Habits Of Highly Insecure People

by Lisa Philippart,
Licensed Professional Counselor



**“Confidence is silent.
Insecurities are loud.”**
- Anonymous

Many people think of emotional insecurity as a personality trait, something you are born with that makes you anxious and creates low self-esteem. And while it can certainly feel that way to people who have been insecure most of their lives, the real reason we often feel constantly insecure is more subtle. Whatever caused your insecurity initially, it's your habits that keep you feeling insecure. So, if you can identify the habits that are maintaining your insecurity, you might be able to escape this cycle. Let's examine some of these common chronic, un-

healthy, and self-doubting habits.

The capacity to be critical is not always a bad thing. After all, to navigate life successfully we have to be able to discriminate and analyze the people, problems, and situations in our lives so that we can make good decisions. However, this important life skill can be taken too far. Insecure people often use criticism of others as a way to feel better about themselves. Those who are insecure often don't know how to feel better about themselves in a healthy or productive way. In the short term, being critical makes you feel better by comparison. For example, when you think to yourself how dumb someone's comment

was during a meeting, what you're implying is that you are smart. And that feels good. Helpful criticism is about making the world a better place. Unhelpful criticism is about making yourself feel better. If you want to be less insecure, stop using criticism to artificially inflate your sense of self.

A lot of people convince themselves that their chronic worry is inevitable or even necessary. But worry is fundamentally different than effective planning and problem-solving. By definition, worry is unhelpful thinking about negatives in the future. Planning and problem-solving can be difficult, but they lead to results... they're productive and generative. The only

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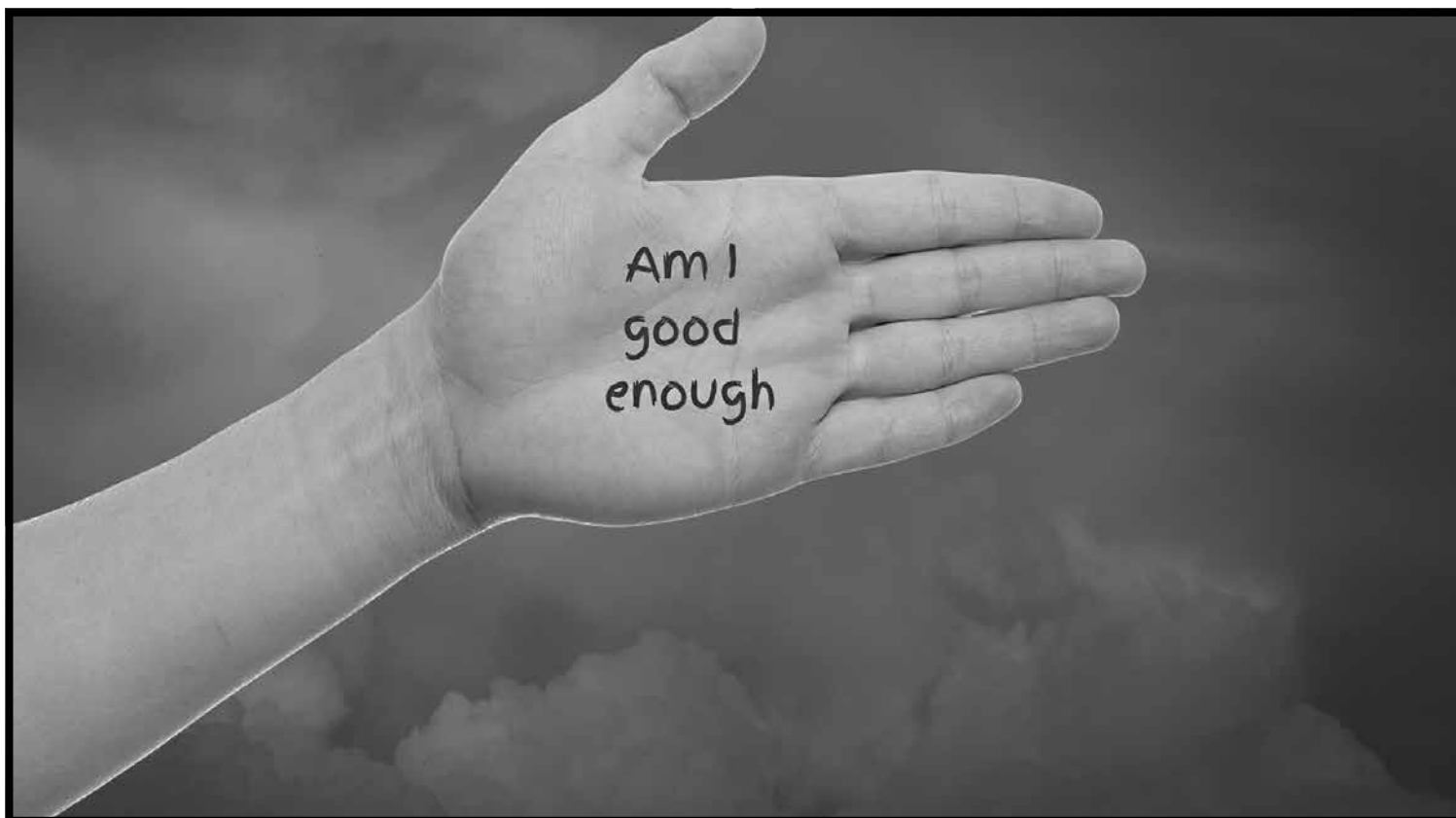
thing worry leads to is stress and anxiety in the moment and low self-confidence and insecurity in the long term. So why do we do it? Because worry does something for us...it gives the illusion of control. Unfortunately, you can't control nearly as much as you'd like. Better to face up to the reality than continue to live in constant worry and all the insecurity it produces.

I have found that one of

the biggest reasons insecure people stay that way is because they are afraid to say no to people. For example, your mother-in-law asks you if she can drop by and hang out with the kids. You're having a rough day and really don't need the added stress of hosting her. But because you're afraid she'll think badly of you, you say yes anyway. The problem with never saying no is that you end up living other people's lives instead of your own. And if you go for days, months, or years not living your own life, how could you hope to feel confident and secure in yourself? If you want to feel more secure, you must learn to stand up for yourself and your own wants and needs. Your wants and needs are just as valid as anyone else's.

We will continue this conversation on insecurity in my next article.

Lisa Philippart is a Licensed Professional Counselor, providing mental health services through her own private practice in Madison, Alabama.



The Alternative Approach

Change Is Blowing In The Wind

by Roy Williams



For anyone paying attention to the political scene today, you can see and sense change. Our political climate is heating up with the upcoming presidential election and so much at stake. The after shock of a stolen election can prove to be catastrophic.

It is becoming more evident with each week that passes that the last presidential and governmental elections were indeed skewed. The mail-in votes, computerized voting systems, and foreign interference have proven to be easily manipulated, and in most cases disasters.

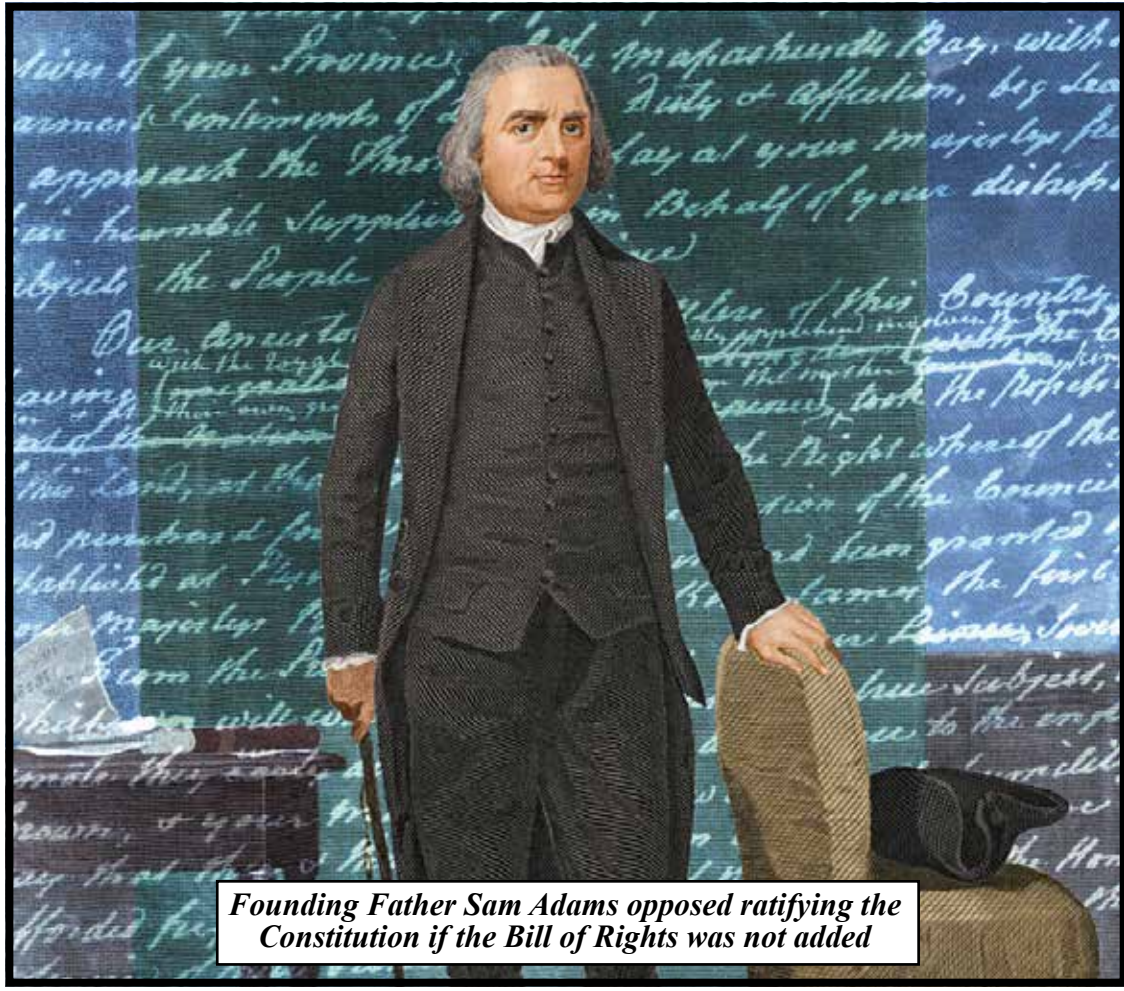
As a result of that and many other governmental overreaches, we have come to a turning point in our representative republic. In other words, there is a great awakening happening right before the eyes of those who choose to see. Our elected officials have not only let "we the people" down, they have deliberately gone against their sworn duty to uphold the Constitution.

Over 20 years ago, a movement called "State Nationals" started that allows a citizen (municipal servant) to move away from the slave system, back to the original freedoms guar-

anteed by the Constitution. Once you follow the guidelines, you are no longer considered a municipal servant but instead are a free human being with many of our original rights restored. At the time of this printing over 30 million Americans have become "State Nationals."

To learn more, we encourage those who recognize that they are no longer under the original Constitution to come to Herbs & More in Athens the last Monday of each month at 5:30 p.m. These are simply educational gatherings that will allow you to understand the benefits of State Nationalism, of which there are many.

At the meeting you will learn that all municipalities such as the police department, library, post office, animal control, child protective services, DHR, Central Intelligence Agency, Federal Bureau of Investigation, and, yes, even the courthouse are private for-profit organizations. They are not governmental but owned by private individuals using them for personal profit. It is easy to prove this by simply going to Dun and Bradstreet to see their incorporation numbers, which means they are under the fraudulent organization, owned by powerful international bankers, now called the United States



Founding Father Sam Adams opposed ratifying the Constitution if the Bill of Rights was not added

of America Incorporated. I'm sure this comes as a shocker for those who have been taught to believe that we are under the original United States of America and the Constitution. It is simply not true. We have been deceived and then taught by the governmental educational system that is in control of all the education in America that we are still under the Constitution and what it was originally set up to do.

The reason it is important that you understand that we are under an incorporation is because the law states that a human can only go under contract with another human, and only an incorporation can contract with another incorporation. The only way for the incorporation to hold power over a

human is to reduce the human to an employee of the incorporation, which happened when we self-determine to be citizens of the U.S. A. Incorporated.

The day you were born, your parents, without knowing it, made you a ward of the state. As soon as you check any box stating that you are a citizen, you give away your rights as a free-human and, without knowing any better, become a municipal servant, giving the incorporation the right to tax you, license you, give you mandates, make ordinances, and set thousands of boundaries to control you, none of which were lawful under the original Constitution.

Now, you may be more aware of how over the last century our elected officials

have deceived us, taking away our God-given rights and made us slaves to the state. We were taught by our government controlled educational system that the 13th Amendment freed the slaves. What you haven't been taught is that, the 14th Amendment made slaves of everyone.

If you would like to become a part of this "Great Awakening," plan to attend our free educational gatherings at Herbs & More in Athens on the last Monday of each month at 5:30 p.m. Trust me, you will be blown away when you learn the truth, and remember "Only The Truth Will Set You Free."

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Cooking with Anna (continued from page 13)

Waiting For Our Ship To Come In

by Anna Hamilton

While waiting, you can choose to sit back, do nothing, and just let it come to you -- or you can actively wait. Active waiting is good for your mind, body, and soul. There are numerous examples in the Bible of people who actively waited for events to happen in their lives.

In 1 Samuel 1:1-20, we learn the story of Hannah. Hannah desperately wanted a child. She prayed and pleaded with God to give her a child. She promised God in her prayer that if given a son, she would dedicate her son to a life of service to God. God heard Hannah's plea and gave her a son; she named her son Samuel, which means, "Because I asked the Lord for him." Hannah kept her promise to God, and once her child was old enough, she gave him back to the Lord so he could live a life of service. Samuel went on to be a great leader for Israel.

Job waited patiently for the Lord in spite of horrible pain and suffering. Job was tested far beyond what most of us can even imagine. He lost his wealth, family, health, and friends. But despite all of this, he never gave up on his faith or lost hope in God. Because of Job's great faith, God gave him more fortune than he had before he lost everything.

Another beautiful example of waiting graciously comes to us from Esther. Esther was put in an impossible situation when she was forced to go to the king's palace, along with all the other young women, to be put through tests to see who would become the new queen. Esther won the favor of the king and was chosen to be queen. She risked her life by approaching the king, when God made the time right, to ask for him to save the Jewish people. One of my favorite

verses comes from the book of Esther and speaks to knowing when to wait and then act at the right time. "For if you remain silent at this time, relief and deliverance for the Jews will arise from another place, but you and your father's family will perish. And who knows but that you have come to your royal position for such a time as this?" Esther 4:14

Waiting can be a beautiful thing if you allow it to be. Learn to wait actively. Learn to listen to the Lord's guidance as you wait. He will guide you down the correct path, and the wait will be totally worth it.

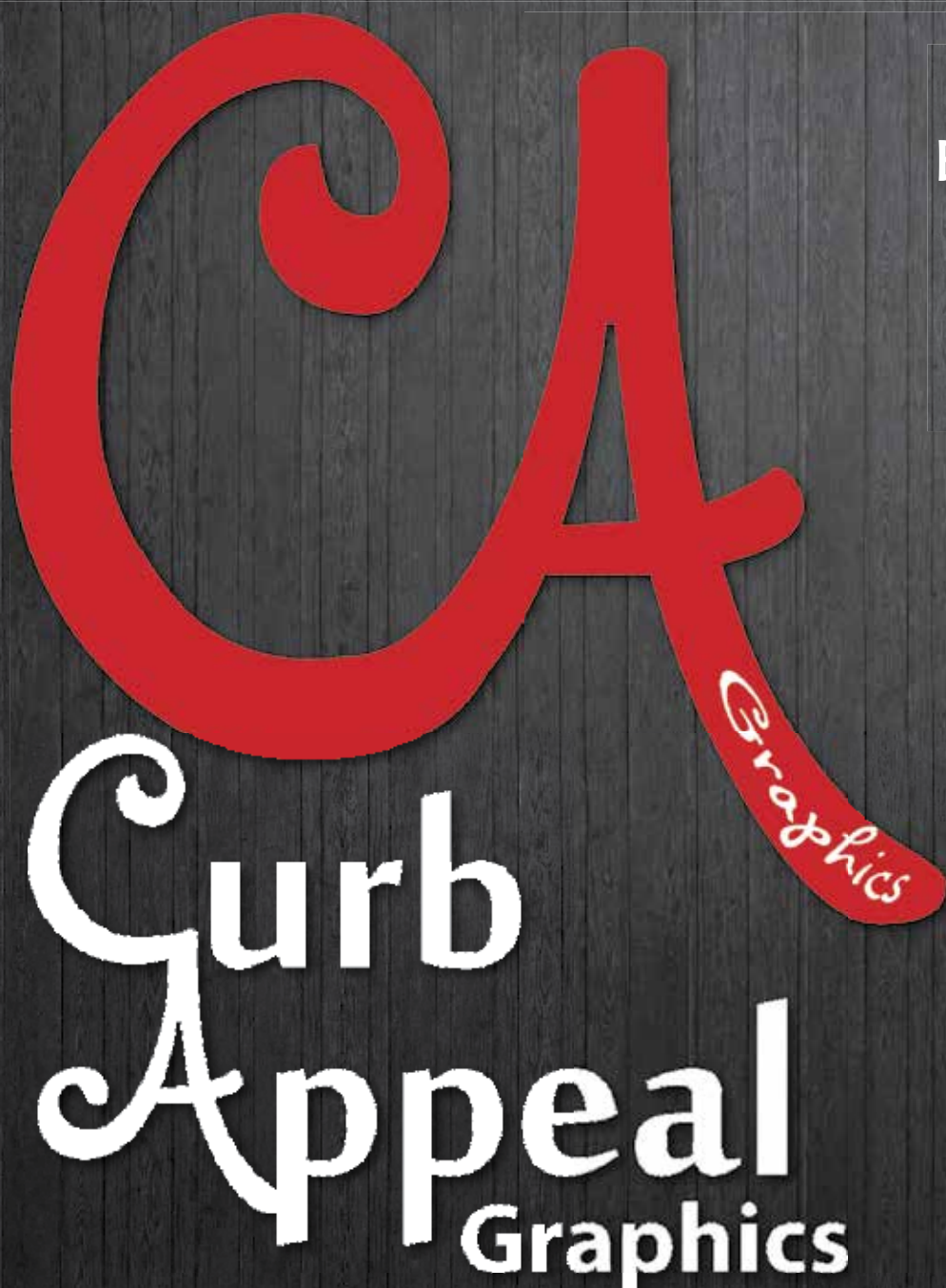
This week's recipe is a super yummy cauliflower salad that pairs perfectly with chicken, salmon, or steak. It is great for the end of the summer BBQs and for a quick side dish for those back-to-school nights. I hope you enjoy it as much as my family does.

"Therefore, the Lord waits to be gracious to you, and therefore He exalts Himself to show mercy to you. For the Lord is a God of justice; blessed are all those who wait for him." Isaiah 30:18



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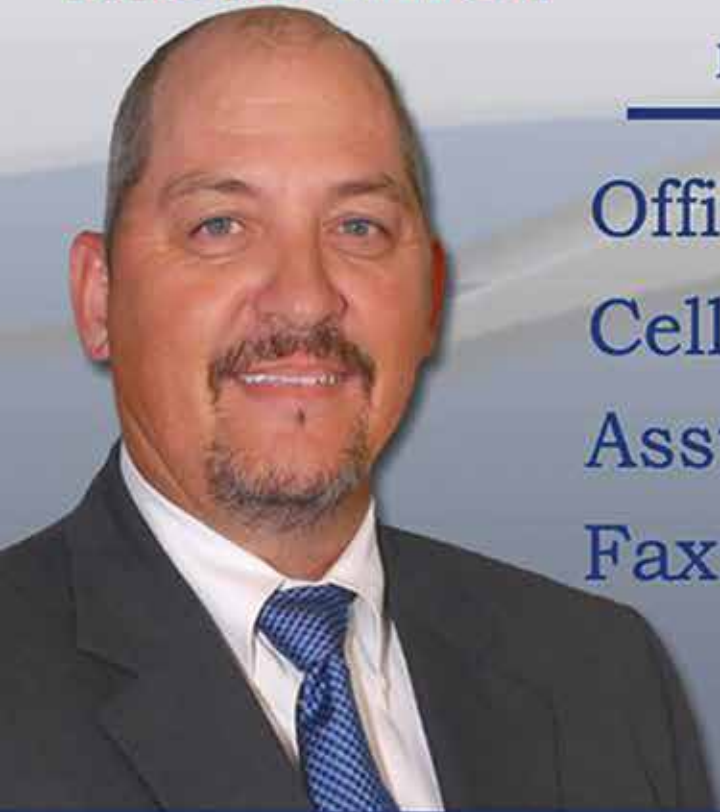
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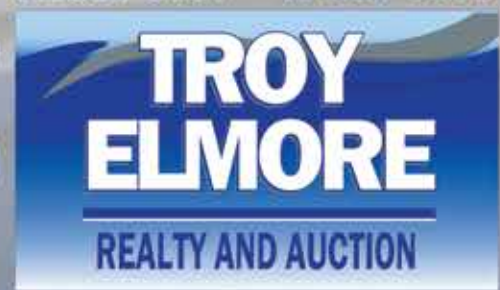
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"Your passion is waiting for your courage to catch up."
~ Isabelle Lafleche



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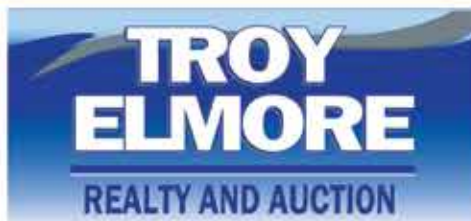
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