

December 1 - December 14, 2023

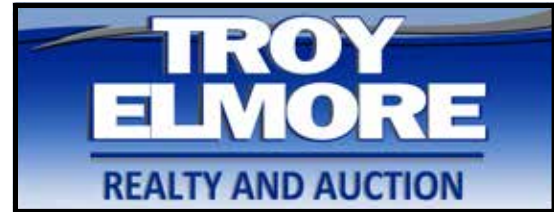
# Athens Now

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## Josh Winn Of Bryant Bank: Unbeatable Service. Legendary Results<sup>SM</sup>

By Ali Elizabeth Turner

Josh Winn, VP of Mortgage at Bryant Bank is an Athens native, an Athens High School as well as Alabama graduate, and is a member of the family that started Catfish Cabin. He grew up working in the iconic restaurant, and told me, "I did it all," which of course means everything involved



Josh Winn of Bryant Bank with his wife, Morgan and son, Cooper

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## The Athens UPS Store: Serving Unstoppably Since 2020

By Ali Elizabeth Turner



Athens UPS Store #7250 crew members from left, Caitlin Moore, Kristine Goodwin and Holly Revlock

Retired U.S. Army veterans Jason and Bridgette Santo could not have picked a tougher time to open a branch of a national franchise. But through grit, in June of 2020, the Athens UPS Store opened and by grace, has been unstoppable ever since. UPS #7250 has helped me ship a gift to a dear friend who lives in New Zea-

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3rd Place Ruger Security .380 (Larry's Pistol and Pawn)



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**Publisher's Point**

*An Uneasy Hanukkah*

In 2006, I had the fascinating and, at times, disturbing experience of spending part of the holidays in Germany, visiting soldiers I had befriended in Iraq. Chaplain Dixey Behnken and his wife, Julie, took me to a celebration of Weihnachtsmarkt in Frankfurt. It is a Christmas street market with all kinds of food and spiced mulled wine, singing and crafts, vendors and dancing. As I was with the Behnkens, I saw something that chilled me to the bone. On a raised dais, with steps leading up to it, was a deranged man cursing Jewish people, and while I only know a smattering of German, it didn't take a linguist to figure out what he was saying. On that trip I also had the

harrowing experience of going to Dachau on the first day of Iran's World Conference on the Holocaust—the purpose of which was to prove that it, meaning the Holocaust, never happened. Members of the KKK participated in the Iranian conference while I stood in front of the ovens and in the "showers" in the concentration camp. Three days later, Hanukkah began, and I was given a treasure. It was a small menorah that had been given to some members of a Protestant convent known as Kanaan by the nation of Israel for their work in helping Jews during and after WWII.

I had to sneak the menorah back into Iraq in my backpack, and I prayed that the Iraqis who were newly in charge of cus-

toms would not search my belongings. They didn't, and I also had to forgo a brief leave without pay (LWOP) to Israel while I was still in country because if there had been an Israeli stamp on my passport, I would not have been allowed back into the country.

I have thought of those times as I consider this Hanukkah season, and I wonder how the Festival of Lights, which begins on December 7, is going to be for Israelis as well Jews all over the world. Antisemitism is rearing its ugly head on several college campuses in America and elsewhere. Ivy League schools and state universities are not immune, and even the UN has refused to acknowledge the sexual crimes committed against women

beginning on October 7 despite the abundant cell phone footage taken by Hamas as well as some of the hostages. Some of the children who were assaulted were done so with such violence that their pelvises broke.

We are at a crossroads, and as is always the case when something this dark tries to snuff out the light, we must shine brighter. One of the saddest stories to me from WWII is the failure of the church to stand up for the Jewish people when they were targeted for extermination. On Sunday mornings, as the trains rumbled by on the way to the death camps, the people attending church that day would just sing the hymns more loudly in order to drown out the screams for help.

We can choose to face down what we thought would never rebound after Auschwitz and make sure that "Never Again" is far more than a slogan, or we can "sing louder" to our own peril. If ever there was a time to do what King David commanded in Psalm 122, and that is, "Pray for the peace of Jerusalem," it is now.

*Ali Elizabeth Turner*

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# Operation Ring The Bell

by Ali Elizabeth Turner



In this nascent Noel season of 2023, a story of a soldier giving back in a powerful way, along with inspiring other fellow service members to do the same, is a tale of inspiration that from my perch is just what the doctor ordered.

Specialist Christian Sutton with the 40th Brigade Engineer Battalion out of Ft. Bliss in El Paso is known on base and beyond as “The Bone Marrow Guy.” He and his band of brothers and sisters have started a movement to make a dent in the need for bone marrow donations, and so far, they are just shy of the 4,000 mark with no end in sight.

Thousands of people each year find themselves in need of a critically important procedure involving bone marrow from a donor. While there are donors through both the National Bone Marrow Registry as well as another program offered through the Department of Defense, this is the only one that has been started and maintained by a soldier, and a specialist at that.

He got the inspiration

for Operation Ring the Bell while attending a concert, and “Ring-ing the Bell” is a part of the celebration process of cancer patients when they complete their treatment. That tradition was started at M.D. Anderson Cancer Center.

Sutton said that while he was at the punk rock concert that he really didn’t want to attend in the first place he “saw a table registering people who are going to the National Bone Marrow Registry,” Sutton told Military Times. “I really liked the idea. If it was simple enough to register drunk people in a mosh pit, it was probably easy enough to do in the Army.”

“Our goal is to create literally every resource, dataset, and proof of concept to give the Army the tools to seize its potential to instantly become the largest source of donors in the U.S.,” Sutton recently wrote on Reddit.

Donation is almost always an anonymous process, and because of the way the process works, the recipients typically don’t get to meet their



*Spc. Christian Sutton has signed up nearly 4,000 soldier bone marrow donors. (Photo courtesy of Christian Sutton)*

donors and vice versa. However, that is not a hard and fast rule.

“Donors usually don’t meet or find out much about their recipient, unless the recipient consents to that...unless they want to meet you,” Sutton said.

It starts with registering and then taking a swab, and your info is placed in the registry. There are subsequent tests taken if you look like a good match for a would-be recipient, and then there is a blood draw. Because the exchange centers on

stem cells, the most discomfort experienced typically is fatigue that lasts for about three days.

Even though there are no medals getting pinned on chests for donating bone marrow, being recognized or known even as the Bone Marrow Guy is not what lights Sutton up; it’s actually serving beyond military service that does it.

“It was pretty eye-opening to be able to find a way of serving that both fit within what I found important, as well as finding that much sup-

port from the leaders that I’ve met while doing this,” he said. “So, I think I think it fits within what the Army does. It’s just a different avenue of service and different idea of service, but it’s all service.”

Specialist Sutton is working to get the donation process streamlined so that more soldiers can give, and more of those in need of a bone marrow donation can receive, and may Operation Ring the Bell continue to make its inspiring “music.”



HAPPY Hanukkah

from all of us at Athens Now

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Carols Sung by  
St. Matthew's Episcopal Choir

December 17, 2023  
3:00 P.M.

St. Timothy's  
207 East Washington Street  
Athens, AL





# 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.

## Athens-Limestone Tourism Hosts

### North Pole Stroll

#### December 1-31

Athens-Limestone Visitors Center, 100 N Beaty St, Athens, AL. Hosted by Athens-Limestone Tourism Association and sponsored by Hughes Properties this year, we will once again light up Athens Big Spring Park with 100 unique and individually sponsored and decorated Christmas Trees. FREE to the public to enjoy the entire month of December. 256.232.5411.

## Coffee Call

### December 2

8:00am - 9:30am. Alabama Veteran's Museum, 100 Pryor St W, Athens, AL. Veterans and their families are invited for breakfast and fellowship from 8:00AM-9:30AM at the Alabama Veterans Museum and Archive. 256-771-7578.

## Holiday Craft Market

### December 2

9am-1pm. Athens-Limestone County Public Library Community Room. 603 S Jefferson Street. Shop crafts from local artisans!

## Reversing diabetes!

### December 2

Come and view those who have done it! The 48 minute film,

## 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](http://www.yesterdayevents.com)

FB: [www.facebook.com/YesterdaysEventCenter](https://www.facebook.com/YesterdaysEventCenter)

PLANTWISE, will be shown at 2:15pm. 1207 E.Pryor St., Athens. 256-658-7477.

## Sippin Cider

### December 9

4 - 8pm. Enjoy an evening of shopping, singing and more while sipping on winter's favorite drink. Participating merchants will prepare and offer complimentary sample tastings of their favorite hot cider recipe. Visitors will vote for their favorite, and the cider receiving the most votes wins the coveted Cider Cup and bragging rights for the year. Guests can tackle their Christmas shopping and find unique holiday decorations. Merchants will serve up plenty of gift ideas and special sales. Additional activities include Christmas carols on the courthouse steps, eating smores on the courthouse lawn, visits with Santa and free carriage rides. Free event hosted by Athens Main Street. For more info check out <https://athensmainstreet.org/sippin-cider/> or contact Tere Richardson at 256.232.9040.

## The Athens Ladies Civitan Club Bells of Christmas Holiday Home Tour

### December 10

1-5pm. Five beautifully decorated homes will be open for viewing. Tickets are \$25 in adv or \$30 at the door. Tickets may be purchased at Pimentos, Willow Cottage Antiques, Kathleen's Korner Salon, or Bean Beans Boutique. Proceeds benefit programs for Limestone County children and adults with intellectual or developmental disabilities, college scholarships for local youth and other worthy community causes. For more info: Carolyn Stair at 256-658-1985 or Dianne Newby at 256-777-2155.

## Lessons And Carols

### December 17

An Advent Service of Lessons and Carols at St. Timothy's Episcopal Church. Carols sung by St. Matthews Episcopal Choir. 3pm December 17th. 207 Eat Washington Street, Athens, AL.

## 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.






## Carissa's Corner

# Divinely Connected

by Carissa Lovvorn



Divine connections occur when God leads us to people that positively alter our lives. Each year television stations, evangelists, nonprofits, podcasters, publishing companies, and authors gather together at the National Religious Broadcasting Convention to raise ministry awareness. Over the summer, I had the privilege of attending this convention with the Christian Indie Publishing Association. There were thousands of people in attendance. As a shy girl from a small town, I was a little overwhelmed at the thought of introducing myself to so many people while explaining to them my ministry goals. However, I pushed through my insecurities and started to meet people.

One of the first booths that I visited was that of the nonprofit Operation Care International (OCI). This Dallas, TX, based ministry hosts multiple events in the Dallas area and organizes international outreach missions to help homeless and destitute children around the world. While I spoke with the (OCI) board chairman, I realized how much their mission aligned with the principles found in my third book, *Stitches for Kindness*. I was more than happy to give him a signed copy. He then asked if I could volunteer for their Christmas Gift event and Evangelistic Celebration on Saturday December 16. I politely had to decline. I was expecting our third child and due to have the baby that week. Nevertheless, I got his card and promised to keep in touch.

Sadly, at my next doctor's appointment, I learned that I had lost the baby. I was devastated and spent the following

months in a state of depression. One afternoon as I was cleaning the house, I came across the chairman's business card. Something urged me to call and see if they still could use some help.

The week of December 16, my family and I will make the 10-hour drive to Dallas. During the ONEDAY Movement we will participate in ministering and washing the feet of thousands of impoverished children. Each child will receive a new pair of shoes along with various other presents. I will host hourly book readings, teach my song, "God's Faithful Servant," and give a book to those in attendance. Later that evening, my family and I will attend the internationally televised evangelistic event that will feature Nick Vujicic, Nicky Cruz, and Dr. Tony Evans.

The next few weeks will look



much different than I had originally planned, but I am very thankful for the divine connection that God placed in my life. Although it will still be a sad time for my family, this opportunity provides us with a way to honor our

heavenly child while serving others. Be open to divine connections in your own life. These blessings may come when you least expect them and when you need them the most. I leave you with the verse that I have rested upon

since May. "The Lord himself goes before you and will be with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged." Deuteronomy 31:8

*Many Blessings,  
Carissa Lovvorn*

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

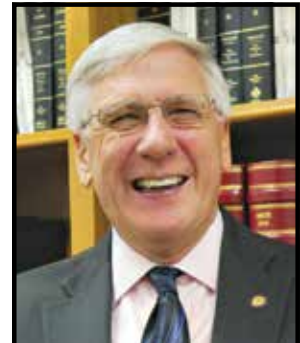
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# Thanksgiving -- More Than A Day

by Ali Elizabeth Turner

Mayor Ronnie came in after an intense and challenging season of medical leave. Surgery, a tough aftermath, and lots and lots of time to reflect on Thanksgiving were the reasons he chose the Lincoln Proclamation on Thanksgiving, which became codified in our culture right in the middle of the war that nearly tore us apart. He was sober-yet-joyful, and joked about wanting to do something to make Thanksgiving a holiday that lasts all week, or maybe the weekend. He asked, "What if we did Black Friday on Wednesday?" I wanted to reply, "What if we skipped Black Friday altogether?" I thought better of it, and he understood. He had me read the document, and especially wanted to emphasize the second paragraph with the understanding that the entire proclamation is something that would be good to remember all year long, not just in November.

Below is the official wording, and it was originally posted with the inclusion of William Seward, Lincoln's Secretary of State.

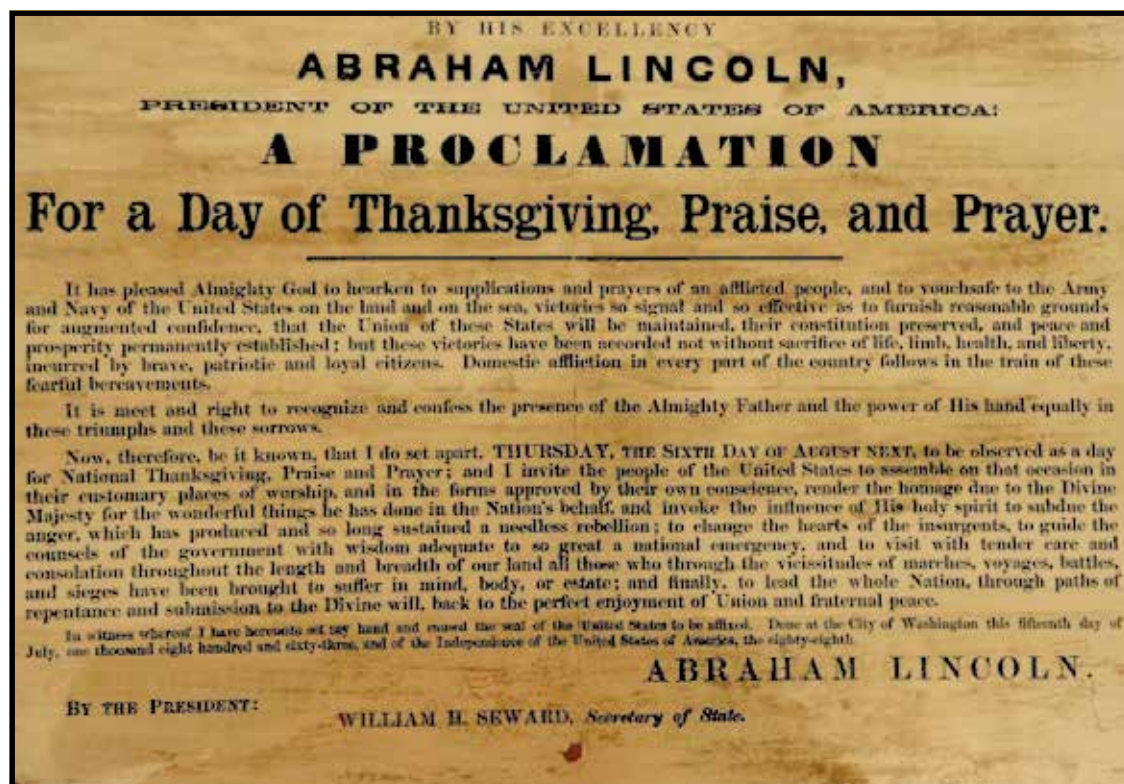
**Proclamation 118—  
Thanksgiving Day, 1864**

October 20, 1864

*By the President of the  
United States of  
America*

**A Proclamation**

*It has pleased Almighty God to prolong our national life another year, defending us with His guardian care against unfriendly designs from abroad and vouchsafing to us in His mercy many and signal victories over the enemy, who is of our own household. It has also pleased our Heavenly Father to favor as well our citizens in their homes as our soldiers in their camps and our sailors on the rivers and seas with unusual health. He has largely augmented our free population*



*by emancipation and by immigration, while He has opened to us new sources of wealth and has crowned the labor of our workmen in every department of industry with abundant rewards. Moreover, He has been pleased to animate and inspire our minds and hearts with fortitude, cour-*

*age, and resolution sufficient for the great trial of civil war into which we have been brought by our adherence as a nation to the cause of freedom and humanity, and to afford to us reasonable hopes of an ultimate and happy deliverance from all our dangers and afflictions:*

***return of the inestimable blessings of peace, union, and harmony throughout the land which it has pleased Him to assign as a dwelling place for ourselves and for our posterity throughout all generations.***

*In testimony whereof I have hereunto set my hand and caused the seal of the United States to be affixed.*

*Done at the city of Washington, this 20th day of October, A.D. 1864, and of the Independence of the United States the eighty-ninth.*

ABRAHAM LINCOLN.

*By the President:  
WILLIAM H. SEWARD,  
Secretary of State.*

We didn't have a great deal of time, but our prayer was fervent and our gratitude fierce that the mayor is on the mend. Then, once again it was time for Ronnie to roll.

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# Tennessee Valley Spotlight



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# Something For Nothing

by Phil Williams



I don't want to brag or anything, but back in the day, I was one smooth operator. On one occasion, I went to a local restaurant for a cup of coffee, dropped a ten-dollar tip and headed for the door. The beautiful waitress actually ran out the door with that ten spot in her hand asking, "What are you doing?" to which I gave a suave and debonair reply: "Leaving a good tip for my favorite waitress," Like I said -- one smooth operator. We have now been married for thirty-seven years.

Generally speaking, tips are important, and designed to do two things: provide a little extra compensation for someone who has done a good job and to bless them by showing appreciation. But there is a strange phenomenon that American culture is experiencing right now. Have you noticed? At every turn we are being asked to give a tip for someone who has done nothing.

One of the hallmarks of the free market is the matching of private sector success with customer satisfaction. In the service-related sector, tips can be an indication that someone appreciates effort to reach their approval. Forced tipping

creates a grudge match between the two.

Recently, my wife and I stopped by a little self-serve yogurt shop. We picked up our cups, served ourselves, and added our own toppings, all while the staff stood behind the counter and watched. As we checked out the very nice lady said, "Please insert your card, and it will ask you a question." The question was whether or not I wanted to leave a tip that amounted to a percentage of the overall sale...um, NO. I literally did all of the work and paid you for it, so why would you ask for a tip?

This new socio-cultural trend is referred to as "guilt tipping" or even "gratuity gouging." The worst cases are those you pay before you get the product, like the barista who charges you first, leaving you with a sudden sense of dread that she just saw that you did not leave a "guilt tip" and now she's reaching for the "special muffin."

Reports indicate consumers are developing "tipping fatigue," a weariness with the new demand that we must give something for nothing. I'm all for doing something to bless others, but sooner or later the market will begin to self-correct, and too

many requests for the guilt tip will result in fewer tips overall. It becomes the retail version of panhandling, no different than the guys who walk up at the red light, spit on your window, rub it with their dirty sleeve and demand payment. It was something you didn't ask for, they asked for payment they didn't earn, and you are expected to comply.

People don't like to be pressured into tipping. In fact, people in a free-market society don't like to be forced into doing anything with their hard-earned dollars that they don't already want to do on their own. That's part of what makes the free market free.

Half of the free market is the producer of goods and services. The long held concept is that building the better mousetrap means that your company will rise to the top in a "survival of the fittest" scenario. But the other half of the free market is the consumer. In a truly free market, consumers want what they want, not what they are told to want. If the product has proven its value, consumers will spend their dollars. It is supply meeting actual demand.

For example, in the early days of cell phones, they were considered novelties. They were nice but cost a lot if you "exceeded your plan." Over time they became affordably convenient, and could even fit in your pocket. Then texting became a thing, they included cameras, and they gained internet access. Now it is inconceivable that someone would be without a smart-

phone and many houses have done away with landlines.

The free market works when the private sector, left alone to do their work, builds successively better mousetraps, and consumers decide that those mousetraps are what they want. Don't tell us to spend something for nothing.

But now we have the guilt tipping of electric vehicles (EVs).

EV manufacturers could easily move through the same stages of market integration and expansion that I just described for the now ubiquitous smartphone. Over time the private sector would invest its own dollars, grow their market share, and prove their worth. But instead, quite the opposite is happening. The fake market is self-correcting as consumers have become fatigued with the EV push.

Government has stepped in and created a false market and pushed a supply-and-demand narrative well ahead of its time. The EV is fast becoming the automotive version of "guilt tipping" -- Something for nothing. A technology which has its merits and many drawbacks. Under normal market conditions some will choose EVs and many will not because we are still accustomed to being in a free market society.

But more and more, the government has decided that they are like the expectant barista who tells you to pay and wait for the card reader to ask you a question about tipping before

you get what you really came there for. They will ask, they will cajole, and they will push their government subsidized not-so-free market product... and you and I will have to make a hard decision - Do we look them in the eye and tell them they haven't proven their worth yet and risk getting the "special muffin?"

Free market economies only work when the consumer is actually free to choose what was actually freely developed and marketed. Otherwise the market will self-correct as consumers get EV guilt tipping fatigue.

Stop asking for something for nothing.

*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](http://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](mailto:Commentary@1819News.com).*

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## Slinkard On Success

# Make Each Day Count

by D. A. Slinkard

*D.A. Slinkard would love your feedback. You can contact him at [da.slinkard@gmail.com](mailto:da.slinkard@gmail.com)*



It is amazing how our lives can change in the blink of an eye, or in some instances, a single beat of our heart. We are just one heartbeat away from death, whether we realize it or not. It saddens me when I open up the obituaries and see how many young people are dying all the time; I wonder if these people had a clue it would be their last day on this earth. Unfortunately, we are all facing a death sentence; the question becomes "What are we doing with the time we have?"

Life is too short to get caught up on its mundane things; yet, if we are not careful, Father Time will pass us by, and we will be left saying, "What could have been?" I am constantly on the hunt for new ways, ideas, and techniques to better enhance my time. I think about my two daughters and how quickly they are growing up before my eyes. It is hard to believe I have a senior in high school this year who will quickly be graduating in May and then heading off to my alma mater, the University of Alabama-Huntsville.

I find myself wondering what kind of example I am setting. Am I the best role model I can be? Am I setting the godly example of how a husband should be to his wife? These are all questions and thoughts that I think about. I referenced the



new ideas and techniques in the paragraph above; I think you might be able to call it a "life hack." I am all about trying new life hacks to be able to squeeze more time in my day than what I should be able to have. The new technique that I have been playing around with is assigning a task for every hour of my day.

We are all busy doing something -- whether it is at work, spending time on our hobby, hanging out with the family -- we are all doing something every day. Yet, we have all these time wasters that grab a hold of us and before we know it, we have wasted three or four hours doing absolutely nothing. Hello! Can you say Facebook, Instagram, Twitter? I finally decided I wanted to maximize my days, and when I looked at my calendar, I had too much

white space going on.


I am all about goal setting and strategic planning, but sometimes we need to be a little more aggressive when it comes to the way we attack our daily routine. I have written before that we must write down our goals if we want to achieve them; and I still believe this. However, my way of thinking has changed -- we must take each day one step at a time. This means that we plan out our days. Instead of just saying, "Tomorrow, I need to pick up dry cleaning, mow the yard, etc.," we need to plan out every single minute of the day. We need to clear up that white space so we can squeeze every second of our day for what it is worth.

When we start maximizing our time to the fullest, when we start planning the work, we will

then be able to work the plan. We must be intentional though. We must write down what our goals are and what we want to achieve, but then we must work these steps into our daily routine. As we progress through the day, we should be able to see what tasks we get


stuck on, and we can use this as a potential way to overcome these roadblocks. We all have 24 hours in a day. We all have 1,440 minutes. But the question is, are we using our time wisely?

The better we use our time, the more we get done; if we fail to use our time wisely, we find ourselves wondering what could have been. Life is all about choices we make daily, and we must look at the day as if it could be our last one here on this earth. The truth is that it just might be. What are you going to do with your time? I ask this question because too many times, we do not even think about this at all. We stop briefly, and then we are busy going to the next thing. If you feel like life is passing you by, this is your chance to slow down and make each day count.

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**The UPS Store** 





## Clean, Green And Beautiful

# You Should Only Leave Footprints

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

One thing I'll never understand is littering and dumping. Why? Why do you think it's okay? Why do you think it's someone else's responsibility to clean up after you? Why not just wait until you get home and throw that takeout bag in the trash can? Why risk fines when you can take things to the transfer station for MINIMAL fees?

On Monday, the sun was shining, and cold days were coming, so my assistant Earl and I decided to strike out. I had seen the dump site over the Thanksgiving weekend, and I was livid. So we drove to the seemingly popular dump site at Piney Creek. This is a spot that is at the very busy intersection of HWY 251 and Holt Road. Right out in the



open for everyone to see. It's also the location that our dedicated volunteers James and Kathleen Cutting had cleaned maybe 2 months prior.

At first glance, we immediately saw a big box with clothes overflowing out of the top, a long box, a strewn about stack of vinyl siding, table pads for a dining room table, and some sort of white boards. When we got close to the stack, we could see there was a diaper cake most likely from a baby shower, and almost new clothes in the box. The table pads would have been in great condition had they not been rained on. These are things that plenty of other people would have loved to have, been proud to have. So again, I ask why?

Earl and I walked about 1/10 of a mile down Holt Road cleaning the trash out of the ditches. We filled SEVEN 35-gallon bags from that short walk. SEVEN! There were endless fast-food bags, empty cans and bottles, and cigarette packs. So I ask, is this what the inside of people's homes look like?



Their yards?

It's not just that spot though. People do this everywhere. Just before Thanksgiving, we had an AMAZING Boy Scout Troop clean litter off of the Robert Martin Trail in Elkmont. This is a well-loved and traveled trail. Why would anyone trash it? I do not understand. Not at all.

While I can't comprehend the train of thought

that leads someone to litter or dump, I also can't thank the wonderful volunteers enough that help us restore the area to a litter-free area! It's amazing how many people don't care, and how many care enough to go behind them at the same time to pick up after them. The struggle is real.



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## Cooking with Anna

# Winter Is Coming

by Anna Hamilton

*Winter can be harsh. Winter is most definitely cold. Winter can feel never-ending. Well, that is at least what people tell me. You see, I am one of those strange people who enjoy the cold. I love snuggling up under a blanket. I love the snow. I love the cold wind that blows. Why would anyone love winter? I will tell you why. Winter is a time to nourish yourself in preparation for the spring.*

*Animals use winter to hibernate in preparation for the spring. The importance of rest is not lost on them.*

*Squirrels use the fall to collect enough food to last them through the snowy months. They work hard to prepare themselves for the snow-covered ground. Trees and plants slow down their internal workings in order to conserve their energy in the winter. God knew that everything needed a time to reflect, rest, and prepare for hot months of summer that would be coming.*

*Isaiah 55:10-11 says, "As the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return to it without*

*continued on page 23*

## Shepherd's Pie Soup

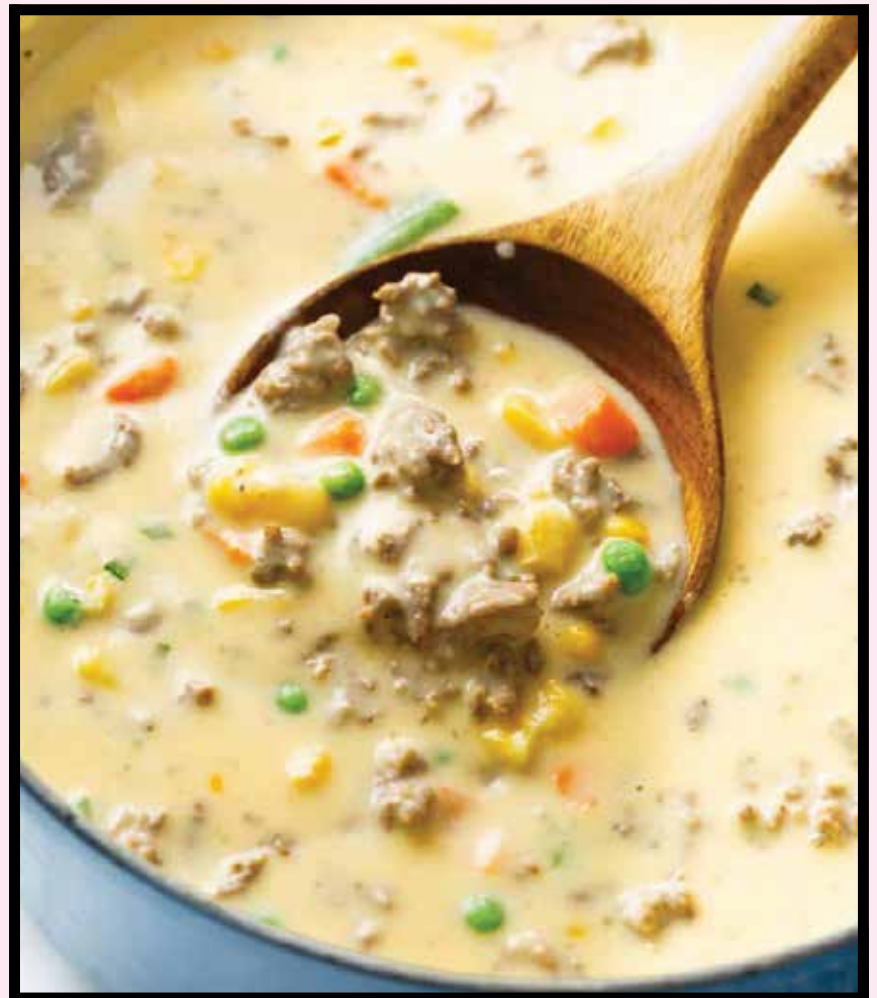
### Ingredients:

*1 ½ lbs. potatoes, peeled and diced  
1 lb. ground beef  
1 cup onion, diced  
1 cup carrots, diced  
2 cloves garlic, chopped  
2 Tbsps. tomato paste  
4 cups chicken broth  
1 ½ lbs. potatoes, peeled and diced  
1 Tbsp. Worcestershire sauce  
1 tsp rosemary  
1 tsp thyme  
2 Tbsps. butter  
1/3 cup sour cream  
1 cup frozen peas  
1 cup frozen corn  
Salt and pepper to taste*

### Directions:

*Place 1 ½ lbs. of potatoes in a pot, cover in water, bring to a boil and cook until tender. Meanwhile, cook the beef, onions, and carrots in a large soup pot over medium heat until the beef is cooked through. Drain off any extra grease.*

*Return beef to soup pot and add the garlic and tomato paste. Cook until fragrant, about a minute. Add half of the broth, remaining potatoes, Worcestershire*



*sauce, rosemary, and thyme to the beef. Bring to a boil. Reduce the heat and simmer until the potatoes are tender, about 15-20 minutes.*

*Once the potatoes in step one are cooked, drain them and mash them along with the sour cream and butter and the remaining broth. Stir into the soup.*

*About 5 minutes before serving, add the frozen peas and frozen corn. Taste for salt and pepper. Enjoy!*



# *The Imperative Of Self-Care: Nurturing The Most Important Relationship You'll Ever Have*

by Nick Niedzwiecki - Owner, CrossFit Athens

In the hustle and bustle of daily life, it's all too easy to neglect the most critical relationship we'll ever cultivate — the one with ourselves. The concept of self-care extends far beyond bubble baths and spa days; it's a holistic commitment to nurturing our physical, mental, and emotional well-being. In this fast-paced world, dedicating time and energy to self-care is not a luxury but a necessity, and here's why.

**Physical Health: The Foundation of Well-Being** - At the core of

self-care lies the recognition that our bodies are the vessels through which we experience life. Taking care of our physical health is not merely about aesthetics but about ensuring we have the vitality and strength to navigate our daily challenges. Regular exercise, a balanced diet, sufficient sleep, and preventive healthcare measures are all integral components of self-care that contribute to longevity and a higher quality of life.

**Mental Clarity and Focus: Sharpening the**

**Mind** - The demands of modern life can leave our minds cluttered and fatigued. Engaging in self-care activities that promote mental well-being such as mindfulness meditation, journaling, or pursuing hobbies, can foster mental clarity and enhance cognitive function. By carving out moments for mental rest, we create space for creativity, problem-solving, and a greater ability to navigate life's complexities.

**Emotional Resilience: Building Inner Strength** - Life is inherently filled with ups and downs, and

emotional resilience is the key to weathering the storms. Self-care involves acknowledging and validating our emotions, allowing us to process and navigate them healthily. Whether through therapy, self-reflection, or seeking support from loved ones, taking care of our emotional well-being equips us to face challenges with greater resilience and a more balanced perspective.

**Enhanced Productivity: Quality Over Quantity** - Contrary to the belief that constant hustle leads to success, the quality of our efforts often outweighs sheer quantity. By taking breaks, prioritizing self-care, and ensuring we are mentally and physically rejuvenated, we can enhance our productivity. Well-rested minds and bodies are more focused, creative, and capable of producing high-quality work.

**Improved Relationships: The Ripple Effect** - The way we treat ourselves often sets the standard for how we allow others to treat us. By prioritizing self-care, we communicate to ourselves and those around us that our well-being matters. This self-respect fosters healthier relationships as we establish boundaries, communicate effectively, and engage with others from a place of emotional abundance rather than depletion.

**Stress Reduction: The Antidote to Burnout** - Chronic stress is a pervasive issue in today's

society and can have detrimental effects on both physical and mental health. Self-care acts as a powerful antidote to stress, helping to regulate cortisol levels, promote relaxation, and prevent burnout. Activities such as deep breathing exercises, yoga, and spending time in nature can be effective tools for stress reduction.

**Increased Self-Compassion: The Heart of Self-Care** - Self-care is an act of self-compassion, a practice of treating ourselves with the same kindness and understanding that we extend to others. Embracing self-compassion involves acknowledging imperfections, learning from mistakes, and letting go of self-judgment. By cultivating a compassionate relationship with ourselves, we build a foundation for a more fulfilling and meaningful life.

In a world that often glorifies busyness and productivity, the importance of self-care cannot be overstated. It is not a selfish indulgence but a fundamental investment in our well-being. When we prioritize self-care, we lay the groundwork for a healthier, more balanced, and more fulfilling life. Remember, you are your longest commitment, and taking care of yourself is not only a gift to your present self but an investment in a resilient, vibrant future.

Come join us at CrossFit Athens to begin your self-care journey!





# Josh Winn Of Bryant Bank: *Unbeatable Service. Legendary Results*<sup>SM</sup>

by Ali Elizabeth Turner

*continued from page 1*

in running the place. Josh was planning on getting his Doctor of Pharmacy (PharmD) degree, and then an accident occurred that changed the direction of his life. Two friends were killed, and he promised one of their families that he would finish his education and make his life count. He chose to get a degree in management/marketing instead of PharmD and graduated in 2006. He found that he loved marketing and numbers, then went to work with Wachovia. He was a credit manager, handled small loans, learned about mortgages, and endured the merger with Wells Fargo in 2008. He eventually became a retail branch manager. Josh then oversaw and managed four PNC Bank branches in Tuscaloosa, and also worked for one of the online mortgage services, but the husband, dad, Athenian, and avid golfer had a longing to be a part of what can only be described as a “hometown bank that

treats you like family.” When Bryant Bank opened up their new branch on the corner of Forrest and Hwy 31 in Athens, and asked him to join them, Josh knew he was *home*. “No other bank in the area has been more involved in our community,” Josh told me, and then added, “I wanted to be a part of that and ‘cement’ myself in Athens.” Josh started working at the Athens branch on October 16, and it is easy to tell he is happy in his work. Bryant Bank began in Tuscaloosa for the purpose of exclusively serving Alabamians, and that is one of the many things Josh loves about his job at the Athens Branch. “I love the people I work with,” he said, and I knew he meant it. Here is a bit of what Bryant Bank has to say about itself as to history, vision, mission, and commitment to customer care: Bryant Bank opened its doors in 2005 under the leadership of Paul W. Bryant, Jr. who founded the bank and is still at the helm. It has branches in Tuscaloosa, Northport, Birmingham,



## *Unbeatable Service. Legendary Results.*<sup>SM</sup>

Mountain Brook, Trussville, Columbiana, Hoover, Foley, Daphne, Huntsville, and Athens. An emphasis on creating a workplace environment that makes going to work a joy, as well as being highly involved and visible in the community through giving back is part of their corporate culture. “Bryant Bankers,” the affectionate as well as professional name for people who work for Bryant Bank are known for how they “get in there and care” for the community in which their respective bank branch operates.

### **BRYANT BANK’S PURPOSE**

*To share our financial knowledge and experience with fellow Alabamians so that families have the opportunity to get ahead, businesses grow, and our community thrives. Simply put, we care because Alabama is our home, too.*

### **BRYANT BANK’S VISION STATEMENT (OUR WHY!)**

*To see every Alabamian experience a financially stable future and live in a thriving community.*

### **BRYANT BANK’S MISSION**

### **STATEMENT (HOW WE DO WHAT WE DO!)**

*We put care into action to help Alabamians invest in their full potential.*

The “care into action” core value is described further in more detail:

Bryant Bankers are real people with real emotions who care deeply for the people we encounter. With every transaction or every interaction, or every phone call answered, we are on a mission to enrich the lives of our customers. To do this, we promise to be present and always accessible, and will offer unbeatable service at all times. We are proud to be Alabama’s bank of the community, for the community, and will do everything with exceptional ethics and integrity in mind. Bryant Bankers will always offer sound advice and honest evaluations and our relationships will be built based on trust and transparent communication. Together, this will allow us to help Alabama build legendary communities.

I asked Josh why Bryant Bank should be my choice, when I have several financial institutions from which to choose in Athens-Limestone County. Here is what he told me: “First of all, we are Alabama. We know our clients, and we pay attention to them. From the first day, I have watched the people I work with go the extra mile. They were welcoming and helpful to me, and are the same for our clients. We want to do business in a fair way and serve our customers.”

If this sounds like that for which you have been searching, especially if you are wanting to finance your home through a proven community bank, than make an appointment today to work with Josh Winn, VP of Mortgage, but more importantly, a true “Bryant Banker.”

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# Once, Twice, Three Times A Ribbon Cutting

by Stephanie Reynolds, Athens-Limestone Tourism Association



Y'ALL! I just got back from the ribbon cutting for the pickleball courts at Big Spring Memorial Park!

Do you know what pickleball is? It's a game kinda like tennis, kinda like badminton, kinda like ping pong. You use a giant paddle, a whiffle-looking ball, and a court with a lower net.

I talked to Teresa Gale from the Athens Alabama Pickleball Association after the ribbon cutting (I have a funny story about that, so keep reading). She was so incredibly nice and enthusiastic about pickleball and gave me some great info on how to get started...

We actually have three places to play here in Athens (look at us being all fancy!): Swan Creek, the Duck Pond, and the Rec Center. Even though they have grown from 30 people to 300 in two years, they are always looking for more (hint hint).

Now, I'm kind of a bro when it comes to exercise (just ate my two protein bars for lunch and feelin' flexy), so I pride myself that I could swing it (get it? SWING it? Like swing a racquet?), but it was possible I was overestimating myself. However, Teresa said actually it's good for all fitness levels. They have people from 16 to 80+.

Teresa emphasized that it's a wonderful sport physically, mentally, and socially. She claims, and I absolutely believe her, that it's fun and easy cardio, and 2-3 hours can pass before you realize it. (Gotta love exercise where you don't spend the whole time going "That HAS to have been 10 minutes...nope, 1 minute and 43 seconds... sigh")

Also, they are trying to get a kids' program developed (at the moment children under 16 aren't allowed to play at the indoor Rec Center courts, but they can come to the

other courts with a parent).

Now, down to brass tacks: How would you actually GO learn to play? Do you need to buy gear? No! In fact, at the Rec Center, they have equipment for you to borrow. And while they do have classes, if you go up to someone and say, "I want to learn," they will probably eagerly set you up. Don't you just love people who are so generous with their passion and time?

And let me tell you about their passion. I work right by the duck pond. Every morning there are folk playing on the courts when I get there. Every evening there are folk playing on the courts, even if I leave at 8 p.m.! I'm not the only one who noticed this; many of us who work here remark about the same thing. These folk hustle, y'all. I kid you not, one morning no one was on the court, and I actually wondered what might be going on.

Did the end of the world happen, and I missed it because I hadn't checked Facebook?

Long story short: Great sport. Great opportunity. Great people. Great sound (I love the thwack of the ball hitting the racquet).

Ok, back to The Best Ribbon Cutting Ever™.

I know, I know. A ribbon cutting sounds sort of like a "shuffle from foot to foot and golf-clap politely on cue" situation, but it really wasn't. Firstly, Pammie (the Emcee Extraordinaire) is fabulous and full of energy. Players were trying to get a few more hits in before clearing the courts for the event. Official folk and media were all getting prepared for the moment. There was just enough chaos to add excitement to the air.

We all assembled on the court, jockeying oh-so-politely for best viewing position whilst simultaneously trying to stay out of the direct line of various cameras. The pickleball players were all gathered to one side, and the rest of us were directed to the other side. Giant scissors were given to a beautiful player who has the most sweetly elegant air, even in gym gear. (Apparently those giant scissors are real and really heavy. I always thought the giant scissors you see in ribbon cuttings were fake cardboard or something). She gave a small speech and Pammie gave a lon-

ger one and then got everyone ready for the big moment...

Ready?

Onnne...

<snip>

Wait, wait, wait! It's supposed to be the count of three!

Ok, let's try again. Just hold the cut parts together and pretend. We're going to START with three and count down, y'all ready?

Threeee...

Tww<snip>

Pammie throws her hands up in adorable mock frustration. The wielder of the scissors insists that the scissors are REALLY HEAVY and promises that it was an accident, and folk are literally doubled over in laughter.

The wielder's scissor privileges have been thoroughly and utterly revoked. A brigade of "hold multiple pieces of cut ribbon together" is enlisted. The picture is staged one more time...

Threeee...

Twwwoooo...

ONE!

<timely snip ensues>

WOOHOOO! Everyone claps with extra enthusiasm. The smiles are wide, the cheers are loud and everyone gathers around the untimely wielder to encourage her. Best ribbon cutting ever.

I love this town.

And I think pickleball people have become my new favorites.





# The Athens UPS Store: *Serving Unstoppably Since 2020*

by Ali Elizabeth Turner

*continued from page 1*

land, has printed business cards, produced replicas of *Athens Now* articles for clients, and when I go there, I am greeted and treated like a welcome relative. The UPS store is known as #7250, and has come through everything from the crunch of start-up to the uncertainties of COVID.

I think that one of the reasons why UPS #7250 has not only survived but has thrived is because Jason and Bridgette know from their years in the Army just how important it is to build a strong team. They are both committed to helping young people gain skills and come into their own, no matter what they choose for a long-term career. The commitment they had to their soldiers while in the military, to their family, and to their employees is something that translates into a much-needed strength in our communities, and I am glad that they chose us.

The Santos are deeply committed to veterans, and understand that sometimes the transition to civilian life can be tough. Both have had experience serving in the Middle East, and while they are officially retired, looking out for service members of

any age or stage will always be part of what makes them tick. They are also involved in benefitting the community, and this year have decided to target their giving to Junior Achievement as well as the Athens-Limestone Public Library. Their giving cycle this year is basically from November through Valentine's Day, not just the holidays.

Jason grew up in a family where hard work and an entrepreneurial spirit were a part of life. His mom invested in real estate and flipped houses, and his dad was a hard, hard worker. When Jason discovered the century-old, now global organization known as Junior Achievement, what impressed him greatly was the fact that they start teaching entrepreneurship in kindergarten and go all the way through the 12th grade. This year #7250 will bless Junior Achievement with \$1700, and teaching kids how to think like business people and live a life of integrity is something that is extremely important to Jason. He told me with conviction, "Entrepreneurship is the most useful way of preserving freedom."

In tandem with giving kids of all ages a chance to learn business and life skills, Jason and Bridgette understand the value of education, especially when it comes to



literacy and reading. They have been involved in the Scholastic Books drive to get books into public libraries, and have provided \$7500 worth of books for kids that can now be checked out from the Athens-Limestone Public Library. The books are well-written as well as illustrated, and will be a blessing for years to come.

The Santos have also decided to build their dream home here in Athens, and will be breaking ground soon in one of the many subdivisions that are causing Athens to be the fastest growing county in the beautiful state of Alabama. They also want to continue to invest in other businesses, their church, their children, and the youth who find their home to be a safe and warm place to gather and grow. In short, they have become Athenians, through and through, and not just Athenians, but grateful Athenians.

"We want to express our gratitude to the city of Athens for all their support, and we

are so glad to be a part of this community," said Jason, and he refers to #7250 as being "his dream." The Santos researched several franchises before they decided on UPS, and one of the major reasons they chose "the Everything Store" is because of the way UPS gives back to the community and encourages the shop owners to do the same.

Jason also had this to say about his wonderful staff -- "Opening this business has taught me that without good, competent, and caring people by your side you will not achieve much. That's why I especially want to thank the staff at UPS #7250 for all their hard work and dedication. I'm sure that people in the community who've had

experience with them will agree."

Jason closed our time by saying that he's excited about what's to come. Stop by and let them show you why UPS #7250 has earned the reputation of being an outstanding place to work as well as being...unstoppable.



**The Athens  
UPS Store  
#7250**

1260 Hwy 72 E, Ste B,  
Athens, AL 35611

Phone: 256-444-4044

FAX: 256-444-5055

Hours: M-F 7:30 a.m.-6  
p.m., Sat 10 a.m.-4 p.m.,  
Sun 11:30 a.m.-4 p.m.



# *The Holidays: A Time For Economic Community Building*

by Eric Betts, Udemy Instructor in Religion, Leadership and Ethics



The concept of buying from local businesses during the holiday season is a significant one, both for community development and leadership promotion. Local businesses form the backbone of many economies, often creating the majority of new jobs and contributing significantly to the local economy. When we choose to shop locally, we're not just making a purchase, we're voting with our wallet for a thriving community.

During the holiday season, when consumer spending is at its peak, this choice can make a substantial difference. It helps sustain local job growth, keeps money within the community, and supports the uniqueness of the area.

As a leader, promoting this concept is important because it encourages sustainable economic growth and fosters a sense of community. By advocating for local businesses, leaders can help create a

virtuous cycle of prosperity that benefits everyone — consumers enjoy quality products and personalized services, businesses thrive, and communities strengthen. Furthermore, it underscores the leader's commitment to their community and reinforces their role as a key stakeholder in its well-being.

However, it's crucial to acknowledge the challenges local businesses face during the holiday season. High demand can often lead to increased pressure on these businesses, especially as many lack the infrastructure and resources that larger enterprises possess. They may struggle with inventory management, lacking the capital to invest in a surplus of products, or the storage space to keep them. Furthermore, the rise of online shopping poses a significant challenge. Many local businesses lack the technology or resources to compete with e-commerce giants, making it difficult to reach customers who favor the convenience of



online shopping. Additionally, local businesses often operate on thinner profit margins, and the increased costs associated with the holiday season — such as extra staffing, extended hours, and festive decor — can eat into these margins. Thus, despite the surge in consumer spending, many local businesses find themselves locked out of profitability during this time.

The term "support local businesses" can sometimes give off an unintended impression of these establishments being charity cases, when in reality, that

is far from the truth. These businesses are vibrant entities that significantly contribute to the economy and the character of our local communities. They aren't merely entities seeking support; instead, they are purveyors of unique products, personalized services, and unparalleled customer understanding.

Local businesses provide a diverse array of goods that are often locally sourced or crafted with a level of love and attention that mass-production simply cannot match. So, when we talk about "supporting local businesses," it's not about charity; it's about mutual benefit. By choosing local businesses, consumers aren't just helping them survive; they're empowering them to thrive and continue being an integral part of the community fabric. In return, consumers receive products and services of excellent quality that meet their needs, contributing to a more vibrant and resilient local economy. Therefore, supporting local businesses is a winning proposition for all involved.

Leaders who espouse this ethic understand that their businesses are not isolated entities; rather, they are integral components of a larger community ecosystem. As such, they recognize the importance of investing in the health and prosperity of this system. So, choosing to support local businesses isn't just a business decision—it's an act of community leadership, cementing a reciprocal bond that nurtures both the community and the businesses within it. When we consider the holiday spirit, it's deeply connected with the idea of giving, sharing, and community building.

Furthermore, local businesses often offer unique, handmade, and personalized items that can add a special touch to holiday gift giving, embodying the holiday spirit of thoughtfulness and care. So, in essence, shopping at local businesses during the holidays isn't just about economic transactions—it's about upholding the holiday spirit of generosity, community, and reciprocity.





# Losing Ovaries And Discovering Hemorrhoids

by Jerry R. Barksdale

[www.jerrybarksdale.com](http://www.jerrybarksdale.com) [fb.com/jerry.barksdale.7](https://fb.com/jerry.barksdale.7)



My good friend, and sometimes redhead, Pat had been dropping hints that we should visit the Virgin Islands in the Caribbean. It would greatly improve my health, wouldn't cost much, and she could shop. A great plan. What could possibly go wrong?

Our friends Jack and Diane (not real names) would travel with us. Like the Washington "Whistleblower," they choose to remain anonymous. I don't blame them.

Jack is ex-military and immediately assumed the planning of our trip like it was the second D-Day landing. I appreciated that since I am unreliable. Several years ago, I was goofing around and had to run to my flight and bang on the door until it was opened.

We flew from Nashville to St Croix. I looked out the window as we made our final approach to Henry E. Rohlsen Airport, named for the St. Croix native and WWII Tuskegee Airman.

Below was a beautiful emerald island set in a sapphire sea. The weather was a hot 95 degrees and breezy. Very relaxing. The locals were friendly and laid back. "No problem." Stress melted away. Jack got behind the wheel of our rented Ford and that's when I saw the window sticker: "Drive on the left side of the road." Oh my! Two things happened simultaneously, my sphincter

tightened, and I tightened my seat belt.

St. Croix (pop. 50,000) is an American territory and the only place in the U.S. where one drives on the left side of the road. The former home of Alexander Hamilton, the island is 22 miles long and 7 miles wide with a tropical forest on the west end and semi-arid climate on the east end. Wealthy folks live on the east end in beautiful hillside mansions overlooking the peons.

The island has attracted tourists ever since Christopher Columbus, that old "white honky" (as some call him), visited in 1493 and was greeted with a hail of arrows and hate speech: "Go back where you come from Yankee dogs!" Well, they could've yelled that. Talk about unfriendly folks! Once considered a hero, Columbus has fallen in disfavor with some and has gotten a bad name.

I bet "waterboarding" would have squeezed the real truth out of him. "Pleeease, don't drown me. I confess, I'm a troglodyte, a homophobic, xenophobic, misogynistic, nationalistic, sexist, Bible-thumping, gun-toting, climate-change-denier, Walmart-shopping, racist... And what's that other crime? Oh yeah, I'm a white male." Bless his heart. He was just visiting.

Malcontents want to tear down Columbus's statues and abolish the National holiday. The 2.1 million Federal employees who stay home, sleep late, and get paid may object.

I suggest that the statues can be saved by papering them over with job applications. Antifa would flee like a vampire before a cross. Columbus has given Italians a bad name. I'm just glad he wasn't from Alabama.

Now back to our less-historic visit...The red-tiled back porch on our two-bedroom condo was located only a few yards from crashing surf and coconut palms. Aaahh... Lady Luck had sent us to paradise. I didn't know it at the time, but she has an evil twin brother--Bad Luck. There was no door on our bathroom located near the dining room. Oh, well, peculiar noise emanating from there would provide interesting breakfast conversation. As the locals say, "No problem."

Each morning while Pat fried bacon, home fries, and eggs, I sat on the back porch sipping Maxwell House, listening to the crashing surf and re-reading a favorite book, *Travels with Charley*. I decided to make contact with the local natives, three young men who were raking up seaweed that had washed ashore.

"What time does the tide come in each day?" I asked.

"Oh, mon, it comes when it wants to." Huh? Irrefutable proof of climate change. Debate over.

Red roosters patrolled the streets of Christiansted crowing and chasing reluctant hens that apparently had headaches. If there isn't a hen "me too" move-

ment, there oughta be one.

The island hasn't recovered from Hurricane Maria which ripped through in 2017. Roads are washed out in places, houses destroyed, buildings abandoned. I was told there are no poisonous snakes on the island, just the pythons that mongoose eat. That's great news. I'd rather be squeezed to death any day. Iguanas are plentiful.

We drove to the rainforest where bushes and tall grass overlapped the road shoulder and potholes large as a wash tub made driving difficult. Pat and Diane were in the backseat bumping up and down. The Ford bucked and jumped like a brahma bull as we slammed across potholes.

"I'm losing my ovaries!" exclaimed Diane.

"Yeah, I'm discovering my hemorrhoids," I replied.

Thursday morning we checked out of the condo before 11 a.m. and decided to tour the island once more before our flight departed late afternoon.

At Sandy Point Wildlife Preserve, I suddenly had to pee. Bad timing. Lasix pills have no social conscience. I frantically began looking for a toilet, tree, bush, power pole. None. "Turn off here," I said to Jack, and we drove down a dirt road on the preserve and stopped near a house. Grandpa Barksdale always said 200 feet is decent, but that was when he was 84 years old and half blind. I was standing at the back of

the car, head back, eyes closed. "Aaahh, yes!" What a beautiful moment. A dog barked. Oh no! A 4-wheeler driven by a woman was coming up fast. When she saw my predicament, she stopped. After the wonderful experience ended, she drove up, and I apologized and explained. "That's okay, I understand. My father is 76," she said. What a lady! If my cardiologist doesn't take me off Lasix, I'm going to end up in jail charged with indecent exposure.

Later, Jack said, "Let's stop at Wendy's and get a burger."

"Let's eat a good meal," I said. Bad suggestion. We stopped at the Buccaneer, a high-dollar hotel/resort and ate. Bad decision. I reached for my credit card and it was missing. Bad luck had made the scene. I called the last place I remembered using it. "Ya, mon. We have it. No problem." We drove to fetch it. That took time. Jack suggested that we fill up the Ford with gas before returning it. We would save a few dollars. Another bad decision.

Finally at the airport we returned in the Ford and lugged our suitcases to American check-in. It was one hour before departing. American had closed shop! No one was present. We couldn't board our flight. The next flight out was 4 days later. Jack called American. We could wait 4 days or

*Continued on page 23*



# Holidays and Travel

by Joel Allen



I hope everyone enjoyed Thanksgiving. Now there is Christmas to plan for, and many of us are planning to travel by car and take their beloved dog with them. How many folks just hook the leash to their dog's collar and place them in the vehicle? Think about what just happened. Basically, if there is an accident and your dog gets thrown, what is that collar and leash going to do? That's right, snap your dog's neck or seriously injure them. I remember when Zues and I would travel up and down the interstate; I always ensured he was seat belted for our safety. There is nothing worse than getting into a car accident and your dog being injured or the weight of their bodies injuring you. Let us all hope we never have to live through any accident, but just in case, let's talk about how to prepare ourselves.

Seat belts for dogs come in many different designs. I would advise shopping around and looking at the harness and its quality. Check for the mobility of the harness in the car, and check the consumer reviews also. In my experience there are some dog harness seat belts that fall apart right after they are used. Always look at the threading and ensure that there is no fraying where it is sewn. Another consideration is how the harness and tether purchased will position your dog in the car. Will it cause your dog to sit sideways in the seat, facing the window? My set up and Zues's size caused him to sit sideways

like this. I always worried that in the event of an accident he could be injured because of how the harness sat on his shoulders and back. Food for thought...

Now, here is another important consideration -- know your dog and what they might do because I had the experience of Zoey not liking the seat belt harness and she chewed the tether in two. I had to teach her not to do that, but it took a lot of patience and for a while she targeted my seat belts. I had to pull over a few times and scold her, but in the end she learned. LOL...I guess she thought that if she chewed up what she did not like then it would not be her problem anymore.

All right, the seat belt harness has been purchased, and we need to get the dog used to riding in it. The first ride should be for five minutes wearing the harness and supervised. If your dog decides they don't like the harness just keep working with them and show them that it will not harm them. Increase the training time as they successfully ride in the vehicle. Use plenty of treats, "lubbins" (love and rubs), and the window as a distraction for rewarding successful training in the art of the seat belt. Keep in mind a dog has to get used to something foreign to them. Once they understand what we desire them to do, the dog will be-

come very compliant and will not need your constant supervision unless, of course, they feel like they are the boss. For that, there needs to be some additional training in who is the leader. It should be noted that no dog should be left tethered in a vehicle by themselves. What I would always do, and will still do, is release them so they are not locked down and defenseless if I go into the store for a minute. And NO, I would not leave them in a hot car with the windows up (In my opinion, if someone does this they are an idiot and should never be allowed to have a dog).

Once your canine family member is trained in

the use of a seat belt and taught that it is the norm, travel in your car will be safer for all. It should also be noted that the use of a seat belt restricts the dog's movement thereby keeping us less distracted while driving.

One last idea for your safety and that of your dog -- there should be an emergency cutting tool on hand to cut seat belts because there have been a few cases where people could not release their seat belt. I keep a lock blade on my person in case of this happening. A knife or cutting tool will do no good if it cannot be accessed; so keeping it on your person, locked down in the driver area, or even having more than one tool placed in different areas would be a good precaution. What would happen if you were to drive your car into the water and sink? Would there be time enough to cut your seat belt and your dog's before being drowned? Or what if you are in an accident and the vehicle caught fire? Just several real scenarios to consider.

Again, have a safe holiday season and Merry Christmas!

***"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**





# Rumination

by Lisa Philippart,  
*Licensed Professional Counselor*



***“Sometimes the only way to get closure is by accepting that you’ll never get it.”***

**- John Mark Green**

Rumination is the mental habit of repetitive overthinking about the past or present. There are three common types of rumination. Depressive rumination involves ruminating about your own mistakes, flaws, or failures, and typically results in excessive shame, guilt, regret, and sadness. Angry rumination involves ruminating about other people’s mistakes, flaws, or failures and usually leads to excessive anger, frustration, and irritability. Jealous rumination involves ruminating about what other people have, what you don’t have, or how unfair things are for you relative to others, and usually leads to excessive jealousy and resentment. Here are some examples of rumination: “I still can’t believe I messed up that relationship. I’ll never find someone like that again,” or, “If I hadn’t been so awkward in our first meeting, she’d trust me with more responsibility. Why can’t I just be normal with people? I’ll never move up in this job.”

Let’s address some problems associated with rumination. Ruminating about your faults and failures is one of the primary drivers of negative self-beliefs of all kinds. It’s one thing to have faults—we all do—it’s another thing to constantly

remind yourself of them. And this type of rumination creates low self-confidence, poor self-esteem, and even depression. Chronic anger is the result of chronic rumination. If you want to feel less angry, stop trying to manage your anger, and learn to manage your angry ruminations. Some ruminators struggle with the inability to forgive or let go. Forgiveness is not a single choice. Rather, it’s the result of habitually refusing to ruminate and being intentional about letting go of unhelpful ways of thinking. Rumination can also cause chronic stress and sleep problems. When you are constantly telling yourself how bad everything is, criticizing, complaining, or judging, it’s natural for your

body to be in a state of constant stress, which is prohibitive for healthy sleep.

Let’s look at some of the possible origins of rumination. Rumination frequently begins in childhood when we imitate ruminations that we hear from our parents or primary caregivers. For others, rumination may originate in ego boosting. While it leads to a lot of negative outcomes in the long-term, in the very short-term, rumination can give a brief boost to our ego. This is especially true for angry or jealous rumination, which is reinforcing and keeps the habit strong. Similarly, rumination often gets maintained as a habit because in the very short-term it provides a relief from the anxiety of

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helplessness or uncertainty. It, in a sense, becomes a coping mechanism...a not very healthy or effective one. And finally, ruminating often becomes a way to rationalize or avoid taking action. Because it feels similar to problem-solving, it’s easy to end up avoiding or procrastinating on taking some sort of assertive action by continuing to think.

In my next article, we will examine key insights about rumination and some tips and tools for dealing with ruminating thoughts.

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







## The Alternative Approach

# The Next Weight Loss Powerhouse

by Roy Williams



Not so long ago, NEWtritional Health Care LLC, came out with a true powerhouse to support those wishing to lose weight called **Dieter's Delight**. It worked so well that the "powers that be" decided to stop the nutritional industry from being allowed to sell it. It took them less than a year to identify the one ingredient in Dieter's Delite that was responsible for helping thousands of people lose more weight in less time than even the pharmaceutical industry had to offer. They forced our industry to stop selling anything that had that ingredient in it.

Of course, you and I know the real reason why they didn't want you to have access to that product. It worked so well that it cut into their bottom line. The same thing has happened to many all-natural, harmless ingredients over the last 60 years. Many of those were very effective supplements that have been banned from use in the U.S., including at least seven that worked on cancer.

Now, for the good news. At NEWtritional Health Care LLC, we have reformulated Dieter's Delite, using a group of all-

natural ingredients that are proving to be just as and, in many cases, even more effective than the original. This new formula does indeed reduce the appetite, making it easier than ever before to eat less, speed up your metabolism so you can burn even more calories, balance blood sugar for craving control, support hormonal balance, and increase energy to support the desire for more activity, while the other ingredients support better blood pressure, healthier digestion, improved moods, and decreased pain.

Here is a list of some of the ingredients and what they have proven to support, some of them going back for centuries because of their proven effectiveness.

**Bladderwrack** - Thyroid and blood sugar support.

**Pelargonium graveolens**

- To reduce inflammation and balance hormones naturally.

**Choline Bitartrate** - Reduce cholesterol, lower stress levels and control mood swings.

**GABA** - Helps with sleep, blood pressure, immune support, reduces free-radical damage and is anticarcinogenic.

**Bitter orange** - Supports natural weight loss, especially when combined with caffeine.

**Caffeine** - The amount in this product has been shown over time to reduce weight by 22%, and reduce body mass index by 17%, without the jitters or shakes.

**Protease enzyme** - Helps with the digestion of protein, which is essential to help maintain muscle mass while losing weight.

That is only a few of the ingredients. All the rest are also supportive of good health for everyone wishing to lose a few pounds or for those wishing to lose weight over a long period of time. Maintaining good health while you lose weight has always been our goal, and this new formula will prove to be one of the most effective ever. Just follow the in-

structions on the bottle, and we believe your results will speak for themselves.

Yes, the new year is coming fast, and if you are wishing to reach your ideal weight or just wanting to maintain your present weight through the rest of the holidays and throughout the rest of the new year, Dieter's Delite may be the support you've been waiting for. To launch the reformulated **Dieter's Delite** we are offering you a special with this article.

**Special Discount**  
(with this article)

**20% off**  
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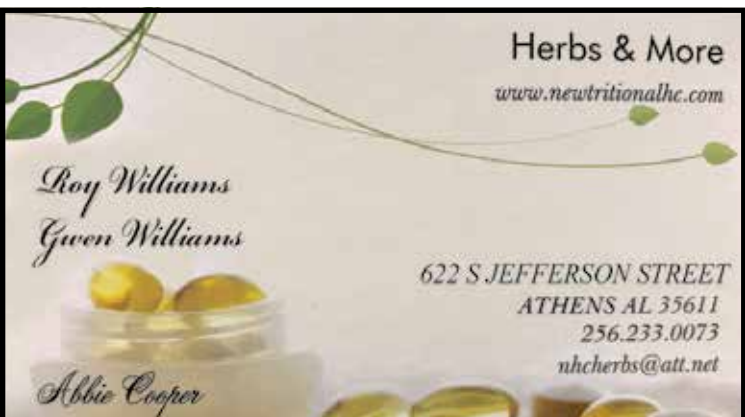
If you are a serious candidate for weight reduction, then please consider Dieter's Delite so you can have the support you need to make that dream come true. Dieter's Delite is an exclusive product formulated

by NEWtritional Health Care LLC. We have been involved in natural-health for over 20 years. With thousands of regular customers, our history of success has spread our name and products all over the U.S. and into over 10 other countries.

Remember, it is the holiday season, and one of the most important gifts you can offer is the gift of health. For this reason, you can come by Herbs & More in Athens or NHC Herb Shop in Killen or call 256-757-5660 and get a gift certificate for anyone wanting to support their health. We also have gift certificates for massage therapy, foot detox, whole body vibration, the BEMER mat, sauna and of course Dieter's Delite.

For those who want to make sure this wonderful product is for you, come by Herbs & More in Athens or NHC Herbs in Killen and pick up a starter pack for only \$5.00. The starter packs are for a limited time only so come on by and get yours while supplies last.

*Your friend in health,*  
*Roy P. Williams*







Cooking with Anna (continued from page 13)

## Winter Is Coming

by Anna Hamilton

*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 sent it.” God gives the earth rain and snow in order to help it flourish. He has sent his word to us in order that we can also flourish.*

*Use winter as a time of reflection and a time for growth. Since sitting outside basking in the sun’s rays is not an option, instead sit in the beauty of God’s word. If you want a better prayer life, why not focus this winter on prayer. If you want to deepen your faith, begin a Bible study on faith. Learn a new skill, take an online course, winter can be a beautiful time of growth and development if you allow it to work.*

*Winter can be harsh and if you aren’t prepared, it will be miserable. We make sure our cars are ready for the cold weather. We insulate our homes. We know to put on a coat and gloves when we go out into the frigid temperatures. I encourage you to spend an equal amount of time “winterizing” your spiritual self. Proverbs 6:6-8 says, “Go to the ant, you sluggard; consider its ways and be wise! It has*

*no commander, no overseer or ruler, yet it stores its provisions in summer and gathers its food at harvest.” This passage in Proverbs encourages us to be proactive in all aspects of life.*

*So, grab those winter coats, make some hot chocolate, and pull out your Bibles. Use these cold months to prepare yourself for the coming spring so that you can bloom and grow just like the world waking up from winter.*

*This week’s recipe is a hearty soup. It is sure to stick to your ribs and keep your family warm and cozy this winter. This recipe features potatoes in two different ways. They will be listed twice in the ingredient list so you can keep them separate. We love it with ground beef, but ground turkey or chicken would also be delicious!*

*“Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, hold and pleasing to God—This is your true and proper worship. Do not conform to the pattern of this world but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—His good, pleasing, and perfect will.” Romans 12:1-2*

Jerry’s Journal (continued)

## Losing Ovaries And Discovering Hemorrhoids

by Jerry R. Barksdale

*continued from page 19*

forfeit our tickets. Jack quickly did a cost analysis between our choices and we decided to re-rent a car, spend the night and purchase tickets on another airline and depart the following day. My share of the extra cost was \$1,276.00.

Pat was upset because she wouldn't be back at her beauty shop - The Total Look - on Friday to transform women into ravishing beauties. One of her life goals is to stamp out ugly in Athens. Women running around town with bad hair could spell trouble. We ate supper at the Buccaneer. Pat is a teeto-

taler, doesn't smoke, and never cusses except when necessary to chase me back in the doghouse.

"What'll you have, lady?" asked the waiter.

"Give me a strawberry daiquiri."

Uh oh! I shut my mouth.

Finally homeward bound,

I looked out the window as our plane made its final approach. I saw no emerald and no sapphire, only a brown, gritty looking old city -- Newark, New Jersey, the most beautiful place I'd ever seen. Then on to Nashville and home.

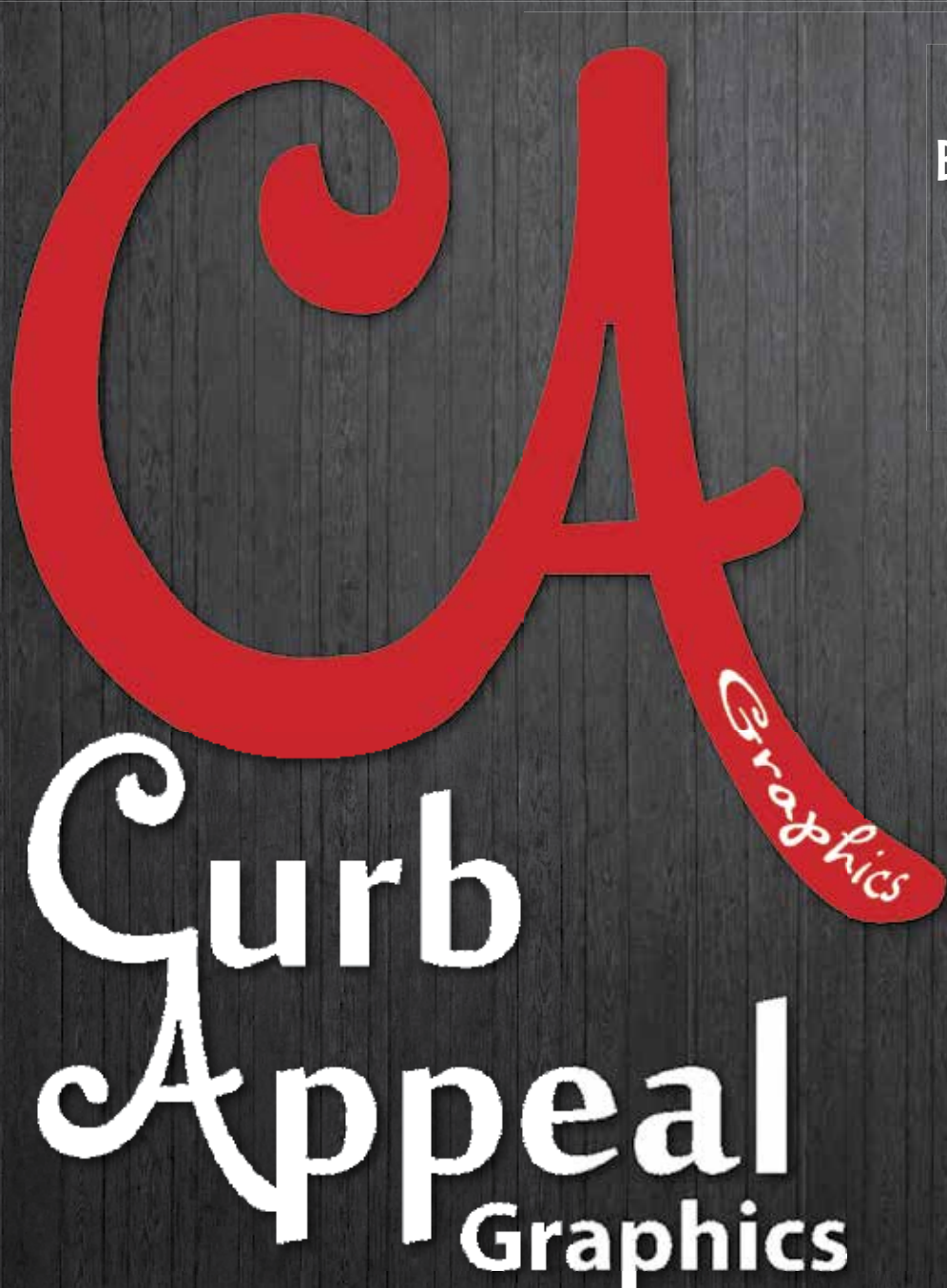
It was a memorable trip. To paraphrase W.C. Field

-- All things considered, I'd rather be in Athens. My credit card is in rehab, Pat's new outfit she purchased disappeared from her suitcase, Jill lost her ovaries, and I got reacquainted with my hemorrhoids, Bad luck is never welcomed, but on the other hand, it's never boring.



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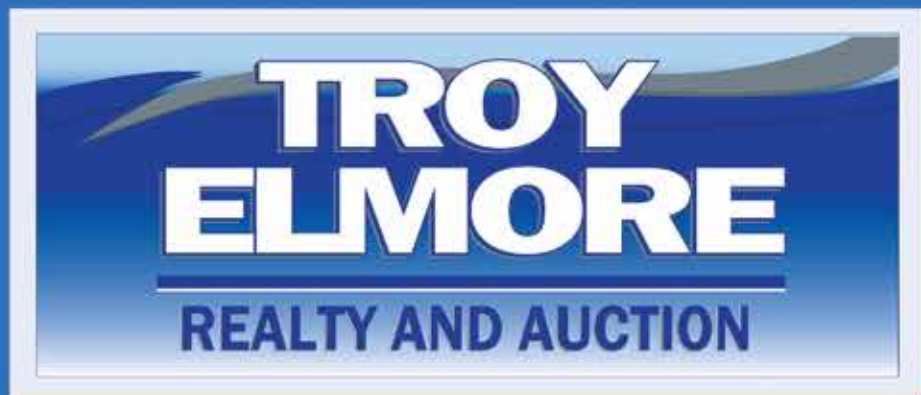


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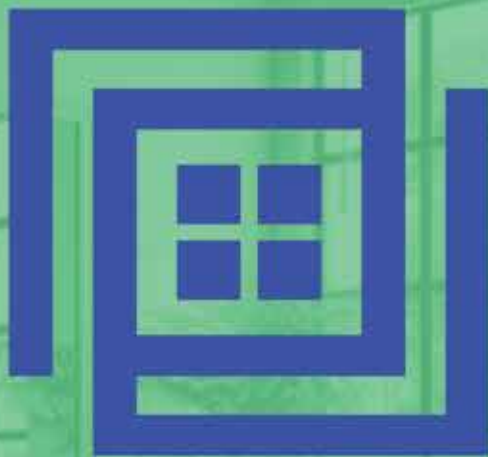
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call a grumpy  
reindeer?

A Rude-olph.

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