

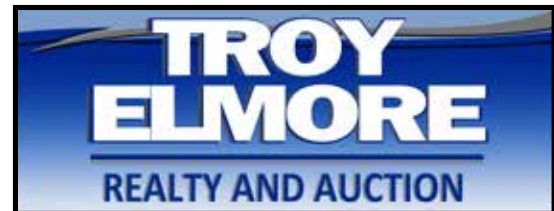
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See Our Listings Inside this edition...
Pages 25 - 32

Special Feature

Designs By Essence: Balloons As An Art Form...

When Essence Nesbit's daughter Patience was about six or seven years old, Essence was working to give Patience the perfect birthday party complete with...

Page 5

Carissa's Corner

Hearts Not Frozen...

For the Lovvorn family, the "Snowpocalypse" of 2024 was a time of giggling, layered outfits, and good old-fashioned fun...

Page 7

Clean, Green And Beautiful



Get Your Calendars Out!...

Now that we have thawed out, Keep Athens-Limestone Beautiful is planning for a busy spring!...

Page 12



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Southeast Quality HVAC Wants To Help You To Get "Inverterized"

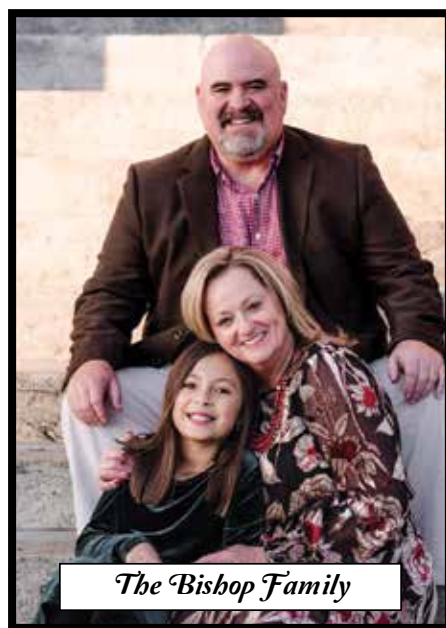
By Ali Elizabeth Turner

For more than 25 years, Southeast Quality HVAC has been helping the people of North Alabama and Southern Tennessee stay warm or cool, depending on the weather and the season. And, they have been committed to helping their customers slash their heating and cooling costs through various programs offered by TVA. For the sake of this article, Southeast

Continued on page 15



Chambers Ricketts (l) and Randy Ricketts (r) of Southeast Quality HVAC



The Bishop Family

Vote for Margie Bishop, Limestone County Circuit Court Clerk

By Ali Elizabeth Turner

Margie Bishop grew up on a small family farm where she was the 11th of 12 children. She learned the value of hard work and the importance of family waking up early mornings to milk the cow and tend to the vegetable garden. Her family was known in her rural community for growing sugar cane and selling jars of sorghum

Continued on page 17



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HERBARIUM

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Contents

- Publisher's Point 3**
- All Things Soldier 4**
- Special Feature 5**
- Calendar Of Events 6**
- Carissa's Corner 7**
- What Makes Ronnie Roll . . . 8**
- Special Feature 9**
- Rightside Way 10**
- Slinkard on Success 11**
- Clean Green And Beautiful . . 12**
- Cooking With Anna 13**
- Health & Fitness 14**
- Cover Stories 15 & 17**
- From The Tourism Office . . . 16**
- Learning As A Lifestyle . . 18**
- Jerry's Journals 19**
- Dog Barker 20**
- spaceWise 21**
- Alternative Approach 22**
- Mental Health Minute 24**



Publisher's Point

Staying Sharp

On Wednesday mornings, I have the great privilege of gathering with a group of women from all over America via Zoom and learn life skills from every possible arena, have wonderful fellowship, encourage and challenge each other, and give and absorb as much as I can. Quite frankly, seeing as Wednesday is often referred to as "Hump Day," meaning it's all downhill from here to get to Friday and the weekend, I feel like I am just getting started, and no way am I over the hump. Sometimes I feel like I am crawling to get there, but I have found over the years that it is worth every bit of time and money that I have invested to be a part of this group.

The women range from being counselors, foster moms, budding authors, coaches, healthcare professionals, entrepreneurs, and more, and as I watch them grapple with life and move forward courageously, my desire is that I'll get to hang with these gals until I draw my last breath.

What makes this group so special to me is that everyone is a supporter of an organization called Pure Hope Foundation, which restores women who have been trafficked, while strengthening families. Several of us are ambassadors for Pure Hope, and I have written both the organization and the ranch where the young women are restored several times over the years. Their passion

to see women recover and thrive after being subjected to the unthinkable warms and strengthens me, and I don't know what I would do without them.

In this era of instant everything, there is one thing that cannot be rushed, and that is building relationships, and "staying sharp." I noticed that someone who is normally beaming with inner and outer beauty today looked a bit down, so I texted her. Come to find out, she had gone on a memorable vacation to Aruba, and when she came home, she learned that a 13-year-old neighbor had taken his life. She was understandably devastated.

How do you deal with something like that? If you are a person of faith, there

is certainly the comfort of the Holy Spirit, scriptures, and community. And, there are things you can do in the realm of self-care that are not selfish at all. They simply make getting through and staying sharp much more possible. Things like going outside at night time and looking up at the stars. What a reminder of how small we are and how great Creation is. Music and movement. Eating whole food. Reaching out to others, both when you are in need, or when they are. Smiling at strangers, reading good books, seeing good movies, breathing, taking cold plunges, and searching for things about which to be grateful, and then writing them down.

Abraham Lincoln once made the comment, "Give me six hours to chop down a tree, and I will spend the first 4 hours sharpening the ax." Stephen Covey called it "sharpening your saw," and it was the seventh habit about which he taught extensively. We are alive in highly unstable times, and I know that for me, that is all the more reason to stay sharp. I want to get the job done until my part is done. How about you?

Ali Elizabeth Turner

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“G.I. Jaw” Is For Real

by Ali Elizabeth Turner



“Well don’t that take all,” as the saying goes. Just when you think things could not get stranger, there is a plastic surgery procedure that is becoming popular among men that is called “G.I. Jaw,” and its creator, Dr. Philip Miller says that “G.I. Jaw is a classic look that is considered one of the hallmarks of masculinity. It’s called the ‘G.I. Jaw’ because the appearance is associated with tough, brave soldiers.”

Ummm, I have several questions, but here is one if you are active duty. If you go under the knife in order to look more like you could put the enemy under the knife, and war breaks out, you have a responsibility to meet the requirements for readiness. So, if you are still beat up after allowing a doctor to beat up your face and put things under your skin so that you look like you

could beat anybody up, could you be court martialed if you are still recovering from your elective surgery and can’t report to the front? Apparently, it costs between \$6,500 and \$56,000 to get a G.I. Jaw, and insurance doesn’t cover it; so you are on your own.

Dr. Miller says further, “Traditionally and biologically, a strong jawline has always been advantageous in attracting members of the opposite sex for mating purposes,” the description continues. “Men with this type of look typically have higher levels of testosterone.”

At the risk of sounding completely self-centered, if I am in a position that demands that I be protected by a soldier or soldiers, I don’t want him to **look** like he has



photo credit: G.I. Joe/Cornia

a high level of testosterone, I want him to **have** enough testosterone to get the job done, whatever that may be.

What if you were born female, joined the Army as a woman, decided to undergo gender reassignment surgery and “become” a man while you are in the service and feel the need to look like you are G.I. Joe. Could

it be argued that it would be necessary to have the G.I. Jaw tossed in as part of package in order for the whole procedure be more affirming? I am jesting...sort of... but these days, sadly, I could see it happening.

Oddly, one of the things that has increased the number of plastic surgery procedures in our culture was the COVID-19 pandemic. Members of Gen-Z, who seem to get their self-worth from TikTok (which, it has been strongly alleged, was developed by our enemies, the Chinese to do a number on our minds) have said that they would go under the knife for all manner

of reasons. According to *Military Times*, 37% say that they would have an elective procedure because of their social media popularity.

This makes me mad, it makes me sad, and it makes me laugh in horror. I don’t care what your jaw looks like if you are going to go into harm’s way to keep me safe; I will give you the honor you deserve. And, if you want to pay for it yourself, whatever floats your boat. Just don’t expect me to believe that implants make you indomitable on the battlefield. That quality, soldier, only comes from within, and you can’t have it installed.

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Designs By Essence: *Balloons As An Art Form*

by Ali Elizabeth Turner

When Essence Nesbit's daughter Patience was about six or seven years old, Essence was working to give Patience the perfect birthday party complete with balloon art, and just let's say it did not go well. She was still trying to "get it together" while the guests were arriving, and this was not at all what she had imagined for her daughter's special day. The worst part was that there were almost no pictures from that day, and it was not something that Essence ever wanted to repeat.

However, that moment of great discomfort actually served to birth what is now known as Designs By Essence, an accomplished balloon services resource for building arches, columns, balloon drops, and more. Essence told me, "I wanted to be the person who helped so that moms don't lose the chance to take pictures. She added, "We set up and you have fun became our goal, and that's how we got started." Before we go any further, it needs to be understood that Essence is not going to come to your child's party to make the kinds of balloon dogs and balloon crowns that are often thought of as being part of the routine of a kid's party entertainer. Her creations are *not* what you would describe as being those of a "twister." As you can see

from the pictures, they are true works of art -- balloon art.

Prior to what started as a "creative escape," Essence spent 15 years working on Redstone Arsenal, mostly in the Emergency Services Directorate, and knew that there was not a great deal of upward mobility in her position. Deep inside she had an entrepreneurial spirit, and after she got her 15-year pin at Redstone, she went full-time with Designs By Essence.

To first learn and then hone her craft, Essence practiced, watched online demonstrations and trainings, and went to a week-long conference in Tennessee, and then one in Orlando. "At first, we inflated the balloons with a hand pump, which took too long. Then we got a machine that would fill them faster, which saved a lot of time. We don't use helium because it's too expensive, and we don't want to pass that cost on to the client," she said. Here is a bit more of what Essence says about her services:

Designs by Essence is located in Huntsville, Alabama. We offer full-event design services for weddings and social and corporate events. Additionally, we specialize in custom-made balloon decor. We offer a variety of balloon pieces that are guaranteed to add the "WOW" factor to



The Big Balloon Build, London, England, 2023

your next event. Our goal is to take the burden of decorating off your plate so you can just show up and have a great time! Our balloon services range from columns to balloon drops, and everything in between.

Designs By Essence recently added floral design for weddings along with luxury picnics, which she discusses further below:

Our services include, but are not limited to, vendor coordination, balloon styling, floral design, draping, etc. Whether you need just one aspect or all of them, we are here to help!

Event services include weddings, receptions, and social events such as anniversaries, corporate celebrations, birthdays, engagements, showers and more.

During the later stages of Covid, outdoor events grew in popularity. As we are getting back to having events and being together indoors and out, Designs by Essence is proud to debut our Luxury Picnic Experience!

Clients have the option to book a 2-hour picnic for indoors or outdoors with as many add-ons as you would like. Options include a couple's massage,



Essence and Patience Nesbit of Designs By Essence

outdoor tents, charcuterie boards, and other treats.

During the holidays, Essence had the chance to go to London to what is known as the Big Balloon Build, where about 60 people came from all over Europe and America to build a spectacular project for charity. They raised around 10,000 pounds sterling, which in American dollars converts to about \$12,700. They worked for four days. In 2022, she participated in a similar event held in Vincennes, IN, and there they raised \$130K as well as 14,000 lbs. of food for United Way.

Daughter Patience has now joined her mom in this lovely venture, and they make a terrific team. I asked Essence why I should pick her for my event, whether it is large or small, and she

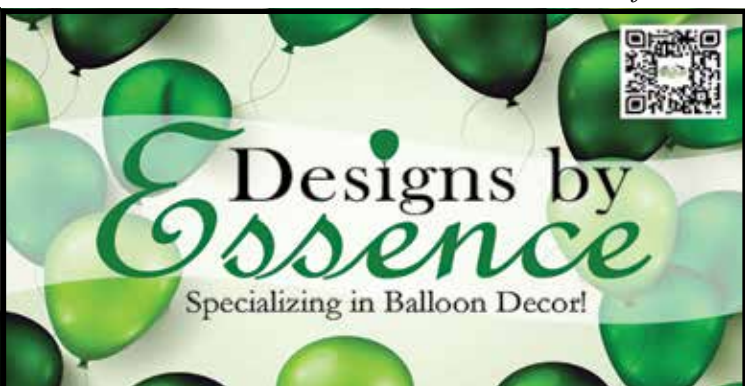
said, "We provide what I like to call 'professional attentiveness.' I understand what the customer wants, and I help guide them to it."

If this kind of care and creative excellence is what you are desiring to experience for your next event, then give Essence Nesbit, of Designs By Essence a call at 256-542-1011. Or, you can go online at www.designsbyessence.net and book an appointment. Enjoy Essence's artistry and the beauty she creates with balloons and much more!

**Designs
By Essence**
256-542-1011

Office Hours: Mon-Fri 9-3

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Calendar of Events

Silver Sneakers

Every Monday, Wednesday and Friday

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

Coffee Call

February 3

Featuring Rightside Radio's Phil Williams

8:00am - 9:30am. Alabama Veteran's Museum, 100 Pryor St W, Athens, AL 35611. Coffee Call Veterans and their families are invited for breakfast and fellowship from 8:00AM-9:30AM at the Alabama Veterans Museum and Archive (100 West Pryor Street in Athens). 256-771-7578.

Play Outside Day

February 3

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

VVA Monthly Meeting

February 5

The VVA Chapter 511 monthly meeting will be on Monday, Feb. 5 at the AL Veterans Museum, 114 W. Pryor St. in Athens.

Food served at 5:30pm followed by business meeting at 6.

Senior Lunch Matinee Series Third Thursdays Monthly

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

FB: www.facebook.com/YesterdayEventCenter

Gettin' Dirty At The Library: Herbariums

February 13

11:00am - 12:00pm. Public Library, 603 S Jefferson St, Athens, AL 35611. Limestone County Master Gardeners Association Lecture Series "Gettin' Dirty At The Library" Presents: "Herbariums" presented by Lynne Weninegar. Free and open to the public!

Gettin' Dirty At The Library:

Pollinator Gardens

March 12

11:00am - 12:00pm. Athens Limestone County Public Library, 603 S Jefferson St. Limestone County Master Gardeners Association Lecture Series "Gettin' Dirty At The Library" Presents: "Pollinator Gardens at Land Trust North Alabama Trailheads" by Hallie Porter. Free and open to the public!

National Walking Week

April 1 - 7

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

Athens Historic Walking Tours

April 13

9:45am - 11:00am. Athens-Limestone Visitors Center, 100 N Beaty St, Athens. Join the Athens-Limestone County Tourism Association at the Athens-Limestone Visitors Center at 9:45AM for check-in and tour selection. Expect a 1-2 hour long tour which begins at 10AM. Comfortable shoes and a light jacket are suggested. Free.

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

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

Hearts Not Frozen

by Carissa Lovvorn

For the Lovvorn family, the “Snowpocalypse” of 2024 was a time of giggling, layered outfits, and good old-fashioned fun. Like many residents in the South, we were not able to move our vehicles out of the driveway. So, we made the best of the situation in our little cul-de-sac in the Rural Village. We shared meals with our neighbors and spent hours with our girls and their friends sledding on anything we could find. We made a lot of good memories.

Throughout the week, I was able to connect to the “outside world” through various avenues like the news, social media, and phone calls. In all of

those outlets, I noticed a reoccurring theme that warmed my heart. People went out of their way to help others.

Abnormal and emergency situations tend to bring out altruistic behavior. On our street, our neighbors checked on each other, shared food when needed, and allowed children to use their back yard for sledding because they had the best hill. Strain on the power grid prompted our entire neighborhood to band together by lowering their power usage so that we would all be able to maintain electricity. People who had ATVs offered to pick up groceries for those who were not able to make it to the store while other neigh-

bors loaned recreational equipment to those with children.

Throughout our county, there were reports of individuals picking up stranded strangers and delivering them home safely, people helping others walk across icy streets, rescue squads helping medical professionals get to work, and store managers and employees opening despite the conditions so others could get needed supplies. There were groups who opened their churches as warming shelters. I saw hundreds of positive comments on Facebook thanking our county and city leaders even when their initial efforts to clear the roads failed. Having

worked in a position that dealt directly with municipalities, I can tell you firsthand that they have a hard job, and I applaud each one of them for their efforts.

These scenarios were not unique to our area. News stations across the South reported similar situations during this freezing weather event. God asks us to not only exhibit selflessness and compassion to others during extreme situations but in normal everyday life as well. In Paul’s letter to the Romans, he calls Christians to “Share with the Lord’s people who are in need. Practice hospitality” (Romans 12:13 NIV). In his letter to the Galatians, he encouraged

them to “Carry each other’s burdens, and in this way, you will fulfill the law of Christ” (Galatians 6:2). God is pleased when we do things for others. Take this scripture in Hebrews for example. “And do not forget to do good and to share with others, for with such sacrifices God is pleased” (Hebrews 13:16).

As the snow and ice thawed, I could not help but hope that we will extend our compassion beyond the snow week vacation. Let’s keep our hearts thawed and open to helping others.

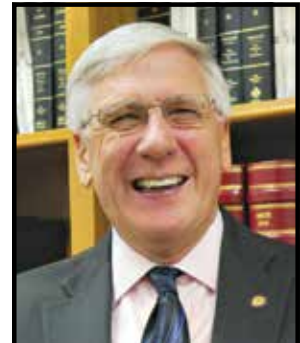
*Many Blessings,
Carissa Lovvorn*



What Makes Ronnie Roll

Be A Change Agent

by Ali Elizabeth Turner



It was a pedal-to-the-metal Monday, because Mayor Ronnie and a group of local leaders were getting ready to leave the next day for Washington D.C. They were going to meet with Congressman Dale Strong of the U.S. House of Representatives regarding various infra-structure needs in our area and how to meet them. It would be a quick trip; leaving Tuesday and being back on Wednesday, and everything from proclamations to food truck permits had to be signed. The ninth annual Chocolate Walk is going to be this Saturday, and while the tickets sold out in near record time, even if you don't have a ticket that will give you your chocolate fix, you can still go in to the shops to receive discounts on purchases, and there will be extended shopping hours.

We talked about the fact that we have been designed to do hard things, and the topic of being a change agent came up. One of our favorite change agents in Athens is Laverne Gilbert, who after retiring, became so dismayed about how people were littering that she decided to do something about it. It started a movement in our town. "Being a change agent can be something as simple as picking up trash," said the mayor, and then asked the question, "What are you willing to do to make a difference?"

As I dug around a bit, I discovered that the concept of being a "change agent" began to appear in our culture in the 1950s, and the term was coined by two economists, Wendell French



and Cecil Bell. While the idea oftentimes is attached to organizational development in business, there is a real way that it can apply to a town. Anyone can be one, which was the point of our conversation, and what the mayor was encouraging us to become. Mayor Ronnie had been thinking about gifts as

discussed in the Book of Romans—spiritual gifts, "people gifts," things that set folks in Athens apart. "We have so many gifted people of every age," he said and then went on to talk about Youth Commission members Avery Paysinger, who is headed to the University of Alabama to study law, and Katrina Williams,

who is going to be attending Howard University. The two had spoken at Rotary on Friday, and to Mayor Ronnie it was one of those times that you feel like we are going to be okay if we have young people like these two who will someday be in charge.

We moved our discussion to the topic of what is going on in Texas at the border, as well as the fact that three soldiers had died in Jordan. "I don't think people realize how it would take almost nothing to trigger WWII," he said. I agreed. We also discussed the fact that as believers we need to settle it in our hearts that if we live, we are the Lord's, and if we die, we are the Lord's. In other words, if we are alive and kicking, we still have a job to do. Being resolute really does bring peace.

There was only one thing left to do, and that was to pray. And then, once again, it was time for Ronnie to roll.

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The WRC, Monica Williams, And The Healthy Boundaries Program: *Let Them Help!*

by Ali Elizabeth Turner

For more than 35 years, the Women’s Resource Center (WRC) has been operating in Athens and providing ways to first make life-affirming choices, and then supporting and empowering young women and men to successfully walk out those choices. This help has included everything from parenting classes, adoption options, baby formula, diapers, clothes, and life-changing educational opportunities.

Recently, Monica Williams, who has served at the WRC for several years as a volunteer client advocate, was hired for the specific role of teaching the Healthy Boundaries curriculum at the Center. In addition, the hope is that Monica will be able to get this excellent, free curriculum into our schools, both public and private. Healthy Boundaries was developed by a group in Tennessee called Decisions, Choices, and Options (DCO), and has a version that is designed for public schools, one that is faith-based, and one for parents. They are making tremendous headway with it in Tennessee, and prayerfully, that will be the case here in Alabama.

Healthy Boundaries is about far more than touch, intimacy, and unplanned pregnancy. It is essentially a personal, emotional self-defense course that has never been more important, especially for middle-

school aged kids that get ferociously targeted by predators and each other. It includes dealing with texting, sexting, bullying, cyber-bullying, trafficking, substances, toxic relationships, suicide prevention, and more. It is highly practical, and teaches kids and parents how to protect the people they love and others, at school or in life, who are vulnerable.

Here is some of what Decisions, Choices, and Options has to say about the Healthy Boundaries curriculum for public and private schools, which Monica is certified to present:

DCO provides medically and scientifically factual sexual risk avoidance education programs for public middle and high school students with in classroom delivered curriculum and instruction. All of DCO’s public education resources are aligned to state educational standards for the respective content area classroom instruction. DCO educators are trained and certified by ASCEND, the nation’s top SRAE source for credentialed training programs and resources. DCO has nearly two decades of serving in the public education classroom.

DCO provides faith-based communities with biblically aligned, medically accurate sex education curricula with this goal of presenting a biblical worldview and scriptural

truth in this vital area of youth development. Aligning the concepts of spiritual values of sexual integrity, personal worth and respect for others with optimal health, life success, and relational wholeness is the focus of other classroom delivered educational instruction for Christian schools as well as our latest downloadable curriculum, “Life Choices” online sex education program for youth and student ministry.



Monica Williams of the Athens Women's Resource Center

If you are an educator, public or private, you owe it to your students to get this into your school. There is absolutely no cost to the school, school district, or a teacher, and Monica stands ready to be the one to have the “tough

conversations” that have been proven to work and that get results. Give the Women’s Resource Center a call today at 256-233-5775 to set up an appointment, or send an email to educator@wrcathens.org and *let them help!*

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Texas: A Constitutional Crisis Or A Recipe Against Tyranny And Invasion

by Phil Williams



Keep your eyes on Texas. What we are seeing play out in the fight to defend our southern border is a constitutional crisis of the highest order. It is also the recipe by which our founders sought to protect against tyranny and invasion.

The Founding Fathers knew their business. They were operating on an inspired level when they drafted the US Constitution and its first ten amendments, commonly referred to as the Bill of Rights. Not without some fuss mind you. Debate over the final drafts was heated at times, but in the end certain inalienable rights were adopted, duly passed, ratified by the Colonies, and enshrined as examples of what can and should be for people to live free.

I should stress here that we are talking about “rights” -- not permissions, not opportunities, not allowances, but rights! Rights are imperatives. They are deemed absolute in nature. Rights are defensible, and they are designed as barriers to tyranny.

Discussion centers most often on the First, Second, and Fourth Amendments. Freedoms of speech, religion, assembly, bearing arms, and to be free from unreasonable search and seizure.

But this past week, the governor of Texas gave

us a heaping helping of the Tenth Amendment, the sovereign right of an individual state to preserve the interests of its own citizenry. Governor Greg Abbott has taken a constitutional stand unlike what we’ve seen in living memory by telling the federal government that if it will not defend the Texas border, he will do so himself under the authority given to him by the Constitution of the United States.

The Tenth Amendment to the US Constitution states: The powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the states, are reserved to the states respectively, or to the people. But why would the founders spend so much blood and treasure seceding from a monarchical form of government only to pass an amendment designed to give away part of their new powers of governance? It’s a worthy question.

It comes down to the fact that we are a republic, founded upon the concept of federalism. A nation in which the people have their say through elected representation and yet designed not to be one central form of government which holds all power and authority. Power is decentralized and shared with the states. The Tenth Amendment is one of our walls against tyranny. In the case of Texas, it is a defense against the

tyranny of inactivity that has resulted in invasion.

Relying upon his sovereign right under the Tenth Amendment, Governor Abbott has demanded that the federal government first exercise its own duty under Article IV of the Constitution to defend the borders. But in the absence of meaningful action by the Biden administration, Abbott had no choice but to look to see what options “were not prohibited by it to the states.” In doing so he found Article I, Section 10, Clause 3 of the Constitution that specifically empowers states to take action when “actually invaded, or in such imminent danger as will not admit of delay.”

Governor Abbott officially declared a state of emergency on the basis of an invasion on the Texas border. Ensuing now is the largest and most consequential constitutional crisis our nation has faced in living memory.

When the American colonies declared their independence from the British crown, they declared their desire to live freely. Prior to the American Revolution, the colonies had lived at the discretion of the king. When all power and decision-making authority is vested in one place, one branch, or one office, the temptation to do all that comes to that person’s mind can prove to be alarmingly over-

whelming and create horrific consequences.

A centralized government, with no fetters or restraints, is the base ingredient for tyranny which the Founding Fathers well knew when they built the framework for the United States. The creation of checks and balances were designed so that ultimate power would not wind up vesting itself so deeply in one single form of governance. But they also saw a need to make sure that a federal government sitting from afar in our nation’s capital could not act, or omit to act, in a way that harmed the outlying states. We cannot have an unrestrained federal government that focuses all of its power in one direction to the detriment of all else and all others.

Every state has its own governance and its own sovereign right to make determinations as to what constitutes the necessary protections, health, wellbeing, and legal standards by which their respective state shall abide. States also have a sovereign duty to protect and defend the interests of their citizens against encroachments.

When you hear that one state’s legislature is passing laws that differ from other states, or a state attorney general is taking legal action against the federal government, or that the Governor of Texas is pushing back on federal

inability to defend his border, that stance is predicated upon the fact that the Tenth Amendment gives those state officials the actual right to do so.

The Founding Fathers knew what they were doing. They had lived through the results of an unchecked imbalance of power and they knew that devolving power outside of central government was key. A republic, coupled with federalism, mixed with the Tenth Amendment, and clothed in constitutional authority – that is the recipe for building a wall against tyranny and invasion.

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

Beginning With The End In Mind

by D. A. Slinkard

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



If you want success in 2024, you cannot keep putting off decisions you know you need to have already made. A big factor that prevents many people from rising to success is their inability to overcome their fear. Will my new business adventure be a success? Will it be a failure? Will I be able to provide for myself? We come up with all of these “What if” scenarios and many times these scenarios cause us to get the cart in front of the horse. We spend too much time planning and not enough time doing whatever it is we need to do.

Instead of playing the “What if” scenario, it is time to begin with the end in mind. We need to take a few minutes and realize what the end result we are hoping to accomplish is. Once we have this answer, then it simply comes down to just working our way backwards. It seems human nature causes us to plan, plan, plan until we have it right, but too many people never get out of the planning phase.

It is 2024, what are you waiting for when it comes to your life? People are reading this article who had hopes and dreams in 2020 that are still just hopes and dreams four years later. When are we going to say, “Enough is enough,” and it is time to get serious about

achieving our goals? Is this you? Are you lacking a little motivation in your life to help get you over the hump?

Think about what you want to accomplish, and then get busy working from the final result to the beginning result. This process is going to take time, and this is not something you are going to be able to sit down in thirty minutes and have it all worked out. I firmly believe many businesses and people fail in life because they fail to plan for the ebb and flow of life. Too many times we plan only for the “best case” scenario and that rarely happens. When the unexpected hits us, it ends up hitting us harder than we were expecting. Why? We did not think what happened to us would happen and we were not prepared.

Sometimes with the proper vision in mind, we can head off potential problems before they even have a chance to hinder us. This approach is called “proactive leadership” versus how many of us are when we practice “reactive leadership.” When



we are reactive to the events occurring in our lives, we are going to get beat more times than we can succeed. Why? Too many times it feels like all we are fighting is an uphill battle and because life is not easy peasy for everyone, many times people get tired of always being behind the eight ball, and they simply choose to give up.

They choose to give up on their dreams. They choose to give up on their hopes. They choose to give up and just throw it all away. I wonder how many people gave up on their dreams, goals, and hopes when in real-

ity they were almost at the breakthrough point of achieving everything they ever wanted. We cannot always see the big picture, and it comes down to not beginning with the end in mind.

What success do you want or is even lacking in your life? You need to be as specific as possible because failure to do so ultimately ends up heading you for yet another failure. When you know what you


want to do, where you want to go with your life, and how you are going to get there, this makes the planning and preparation phase so much easier. Instead of guessing what needs to be done, you already know what needs to be done. Sure, there will be some things you are going to have to figure out along the way, but that is going to be life in general. When you keep reevaluating where you are versus where you want to go, this is going to help you have the “proactive leadership” or vision that too many people fail to have.

Your achieving success in life is going to come down to how badly you want it. If you want it as bad as your next breath of air, I believe you will do what others are not willing to do. Begin with the end in mind.

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Clean, Green And Beautiful

Get Your Calendars Out!

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

Now that we have thawed out, Keep Athens-Limestone Beautiful is planning for a busy spring! Not only are we ready for warmer weather, but we are also ready to get to work! We will have plenty of volunteer opportunities beginning in March. There is more than enough work to be done all throughout Athens and Limestone County, and we hope that we can count on you!

Kicking off our spring crusade is the 6th Annual United Pest & Turf Control Spring Clean on March 16, 2024, in Ardmore. This is a citywide clean up that is organized beautifully by United Pest & Turf Control. Keep Athens-Limestone Beautiful supports this event every year by providing supplies. United Pest & Turf Control provides breakfast for the amazing volunteers that work hard to keep their town looking great. Last year, volunteers collected over



1,000 pounds of litter from roadways, so this is a BIG event! If you want more information on this cleanup, you can call United Pest & Turf Control (256)423-7378. This cleanup is always a lot of fun to join!

The very next weekend, March 23, 2024, will be the TVA Trash Attack at the Tennessee River. We will be based at Cowford Campground again this year. Our focus will be the Cowford Campground, Hatchett Ridge Road, and Dairy Road. Last year, volunteers collected 7,820 pounds of trash from those

three roads! Thanks to TVA funding, we will be providing breakfast and a "Thank You" gift to all volunteers. TVA will even be bringing a boat to help remove trash from the water. County Commissioner Derrick Gatlin and his crew will be there to pick up bags and larger pieces as we work! We can't thank TVA and Commissioner Gatlin enough for their support!

Next up is our FAVORITE event of the year -- the Earth Day Expo on April 20, 2024. TVA expert Damien Simbeck will kick off the morning with a guid-

ed nature walk at Marbut's Bend. This is an amazing opportunity to learn more about native flora and fauna! It is always a fun and beautiful walk! We will be partnering with Athens State University again to bring Limestone County an even bigger event than before! Thanks to the Limestone County Water and Sewer Authority, we already have Steve Trash -- Rockin' Eco Hero booked. We also received a grant from the DEKKO Foundation to bring a Soap Bubble Circus to Earth Day! We are excited to have even more vendors this year and exhibits! As always, admission is free, and we will have lots of free crafts and giveaways! We can't wait to see you there!

er Cleanup on March 23, 2024! This cleanup will be focused on the Elk River, where Joann led cleanups for decades. This is also a TVA sponsored event, so there will be breakfast and a "Thank You" gift for each volunteer. We are still determining the exact locations we will be focusing on for this cleanup, but we will announce as soon as we can.

We will be having a Household Hazardous Waste Collection in May. We have not set a date for the event, but like always, it will be a drive-thru event. So go ahead and start a pile as you begin spring cleaning! We will announce this date as soon as we set it.

We will have the Joann Christopher Memorial Riv-



Become a Fan



(256) 233-8000

KALBCares@gmail.com

www.KALBCares.com



Cooking with Anna

Joy Down In My Heart

by Anna Hamilton

As a child, attending Vacation Bible School was a highlight of my summer. I loved the arts and crafts, playing with the Bible characters on the felt board, the lessons, and of course, all the fun songs. One of my favorite songs from VBS is “Joy in My Heart.” You know the one, “I’ve got the joy, joy, joy, joy down in my heart...” The song is a light-hearted and fun reminder that you should always have joy in your heart.

But what does it mean to have true joy? Joy is gladness not based on circumstance. If you are placing your happiness, your joy, on what is happening to you or around you, you will never truly be joyful. 1 Peter 1:8-9 says, “Though you

have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy, for you are receiving the end result of your faith, the salvation of your souls.”

Having and placing our full faith in Christ will bring true joy. Happiness is a choice. Joy in a choice. Not allowing the small inconveniences of life to make you upset is a testament of faith. When the car in front of you takes 3 million years to make a right turn or when the person behind you in line at the grocery store stands too close, you don’t get upset, you remain calm and joyous.

continued on page 23

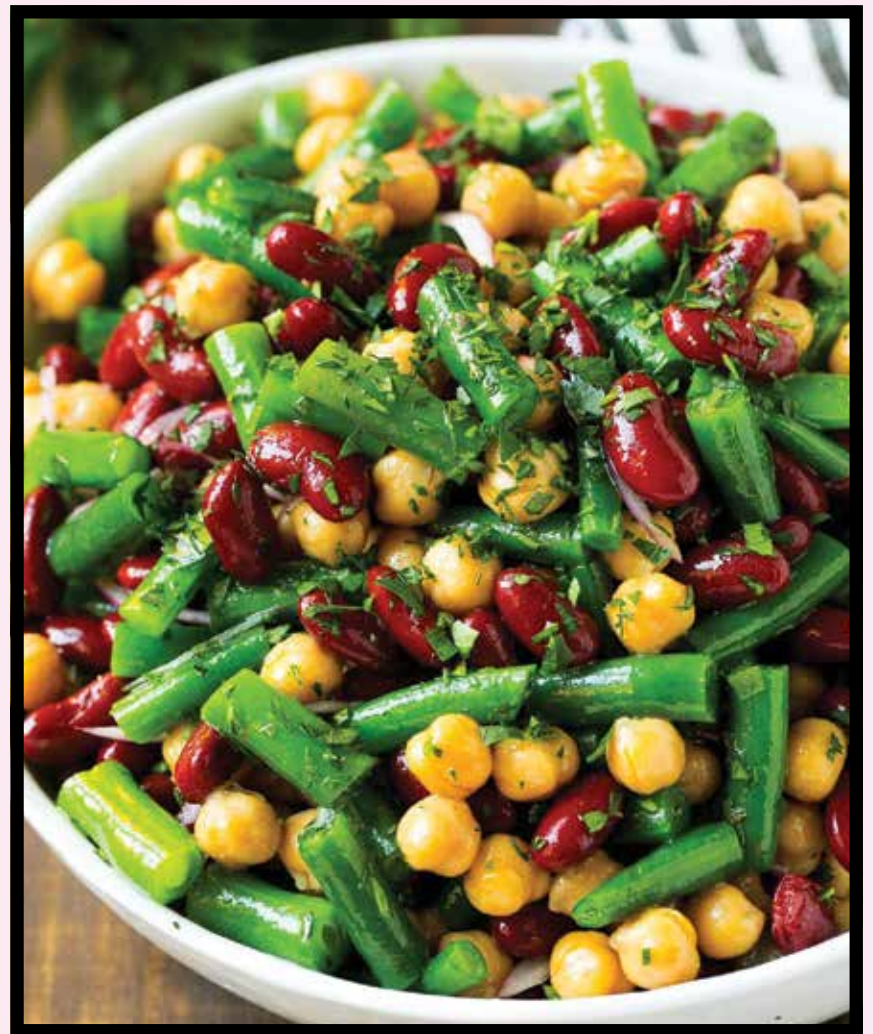
Three Bean Salad

Ingredients:

- 1 can green beans, drained*
- 1 can wax beans, drained*
- 1 can kidney beans, drained*
- 1 cup green bell pepper, chopped*
- 2/3 cup green onions, chopped*
- 2/3 cup apple juice*
- 1/3 cup apple cider vinegar*
- 2 tsp honey*
- 1/4 tsp dry mustard*
- 1/4 tsp paprika*
- 1/8 tsp oregano*
- Salt and pepper to taste*

Directions:

Combine green beans, wax beans, kidney beans, bell pepper, and green onions in a large bowl and toss



gently. Combine apple juice, vinegar, honey, and spices and whisk until completely combined. Pour vinaigrette over bean salad and toss to coat. Cover and chill for at least two hours before serving.

The Stories Project: You, Dear Reader

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

Athens, Alabama, is a special place and we have special people. If you were to do a search online for “famous people from Athens, Alabama,” you’d find a list of folks from Athens that have made a name for themselves. Most recently, perhaps, is Athens’ own Philip Rivers. In case you don’t know about Philip Rivers, he is a retired NFL quarterback, and one of the best. People like Rivers make a name for Athens. We cannot all be on TV each Sunday throwing a football, and likely many of us don’t want to be anyway. Yet we are all important to Athens. Some of us are university students, some are retirees, some Athenians are descended from enslaved Americans in this country, and some are new immigrants who are still learning English. There are sharecroppers and welders, veterans and missionaries, retired teachers who have taught many of the residents of this town, and students who only arrived a few months ago. There are single mothers and grandmothers, people of color and people of no color. Men, women, rocket scientists, and high school dropouts. Roofers and professors. Democrats and Republicans. People of all religious and ethnic backgrounds.

I am a history education professor at Athens State University and each semester in the classes I teach, students are asked to give a brief introduction of themselves. I am always surprised at how in-

teresting everyone’s lives are. Even for my students who are generally younger demographic, I am amazed and humbled at what they have accomplished, or have suffered through, or the talents they have, and it often makes me want to take up a new hobby, in their footsteps. You have these same experiences. And more.

Several years ago I started a project at the university to preserve the stories of local residents. This is called The Stories Project. And The Stories Project wants you! We want you to tell us your life stories. We want those stories preserved for future generations. And these are not just your stories, these are collectively the story of Athens, Alabama. These are your stories, but they are also what makes this town

special.

I frequently meet people whose stories I want to tell. Almost always these are old-timers who have been around a while. When asked if they would be willing to do an oral history, the most common response I hear – which may be what you are thinking at this very moment – is “I don’t have anything interesting to talk about.” I promise you, you do have interesting things to talk about. Not only are they interesting, but the younger generations need to hear about them.

The Stories Project has two objectives. The first is what I’ve explained above – to preserve the stories of this great little town and the surrounding area. This is not limited only to those who live inside the city limits, we want to preserve the sto-

ries of anyone in Athens, Limestone County, and North Alabama. How do we preserve your story? We sit down with you for an interview, record the conversation, and then upload it to our online archive and make it available for anyone in the world to find and listen to.

For the second objective, I need the help of my students at Athens State University. All future high school history and social science teachers that graduate from the university must take a teaching methods course. Basically, how to teach history to high school students. In this course, students must do an oral history interview. Our Athens State students are the ones recording and preserving all of the Athens, Alabama, stories. My hope is that these future history teach-

ers will someday go into their own classrooms and ask their students to do the same kind of oral history. Perhaps high school students will only interview their grandparents, but what an opportunity for the elder statesmen and stateswomen of this region to pass along their stories and life lessons to the next generations. When students read about history in a textbook, they are generally not engaged with the material. Think about your days studying history in high school. I doubt you found your textbook interesting either. But when you have someone telling you their stories, like it was yesterday, and it is so alive, that history is both engaging and so very meaningful.

You, dear reader, are so important to this town. You do have a story to tell. Please reach out me at the email address below so we can preserve your story. Forever. Each month we will spotlight one of the oral histories we record here in this column.

The Stories Project, a project developed by Dr. Kris Erskine for his students, future history and social science teachers in and around Athens. The Stories Project seeks to preserve the stories of average folks in and around the Athens area. If you’d like to be interviewed and have your story preserved and available on the Athens State University digital archive, please go to AthensStateStory.com and make a request through our online contact form. We would love to hear from you.



NFL great and Decatur native, Philip Rivers

Southeast Quality HVAC Wants To Help You To Get “Inverterized”

by Ali Elizabeth Turner

continued from page 1

is spotlighting an Amana product that has been called the “Inverterizer,” and it was a joy to see Randy Ricketts be so enthusiastic and confident about how he and his crew can meet heating and cooling needs at a whole new level. “This thing is selling like hotcakes,” said Randy.

What is this “thing”? It is a unit that can actually be hung vertically on an outside wall, and is part of Amana’s S-series. Randy particularly likes what is called the 17 SEER 2 for a number of reasons. The first is the quality of the product. About 8 ½ years ago he purchased the “grandfather” of this unit in order to meet two needs: the first is that he needed to replace the unit at his own home, and the second was that he wanted to see how well it worked so he could speak to potential customers from the standpoint of experience. He was in a position to swap out the HVAC unit if it didn’t meet his standards, and the Amana is pretty much the only one he recommends. “It has been wonderful, and the only thing I have had to do is clean it,” said Randy. He added, “It pretty much sells itself.”

TVA likes it as well, and has brought back their swap out and new construction rebates. “There are lots of finance options,” Randy said, and right now one of the perks of getting the “Inverterizer” is that they are offering a free “smart” thermostat, which is valued at over six hundred dollars. Randy showed it to me, and it looks like an iPhone. TVA has 10-year finance



plans, and the rebates go up to \$1,000. They also have a 10-year warranty plan that can be added to a unit purchase. Recently Greenbrier restaurant participated in the “swap-out” program, and Southeast did the installation. “I could hardly believe the difference in the way the restaurant felt, and you could smell the food all through the place, which is how it should be,” Randy said.

When Southeast Quality HVAC does an installation, TVA has an independent inspector come and sign off on the work. “We have been Quality Contractors with TVA’s Energy Right program for 20 years, and we have to perform above industry standards in order to keep that title,” Randy said. He also mentioned that with the recent ice and snow that had us locked down for nearly a week, the Amana S-Series inverter units that have been sold and installed

by Southeast Quality “went right on through,” and added, “They’ll do what you want.” Another aspect of getting through weather challenges is having properly installed insulation, particularly spray foam installation. Spray foam insulation helps keep your home warm in the winter and cool in the summer. When installed correctly, spray foam insulation can deliver comfort and energy savings especially during the hottest and coldest months of the year. Sealing leaks and spray foam insulation can improve the overall comfort of your home and fix many of the common issues:

- Reduce noise from outside the home
- Less pollen, dust, and insects (pests) entering the home
- Better humidity control
- More even temperature distribution throughout the home, reduced hot and cold rooms



- Reduces large temperature changes inside home due to hot summer days (>93°F) and very cold winter days (<10°F)
- Spray foam has flame suppression added to help promote fire safety
- Spray foam will not shrink or settle
- Can be applied to wood surface as open-cell or metal surface as closed-cell spray foam

If you want to live in a very energy efficient home, let Southeast Quality and TVA help you get “inverterized” by Amana. Then make sure your home is insulated and air sealed with spray polyurethane foam. The cost to apply the foam is minimal compared to the energy efficiency improvement of

the home, and the average return on investment is 8 to 10 years.

Call Southeast Quality HVAC today at 245-232-2077 to get a free quote. “We will also design and install your heating and cooling system, ductwork, and gas service to your home, and remember, we are long-standing Quality Contractors in the TVA Energy Right Program!”

Southeast Quality HVAC

Hours:

8-5, Monday-Friday

**713 South Clinton Street,
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Phone: 245-232-2077

Web: www.southeastqualityhvac.com

'Cations Launch

by Stephanie Reynolds, Athens-Limestone Tourism Association



*All across the nation
We are running
out of patience
Stress is high
Days go by
We all need a vacation!*

*Doesn't need to be
a week-long
A little peace can
never go wrong
Deep breath in
Let's begin-
Within our day to
get our rest on.*

*Plans for you or
out-of-town guests
Finding time to learn, play,
and rest
Calm your heart
Wake your mind
Our life is not just
one big, huge test.*

*So let's all stop to
make some spaces
Relax our shoulders, slow
our races
Your 'Cation guide
Is here inside
Let's get some smiles
on our faces!*

IT'S HERE! Finally our 'Cation Campaign is launching! And it is launching for YOU! This is for YOU!

Why? Because we all need rest. And fun is not just for two weeks out of the year. Because rest doesn't just happen. It isn't a crumb that maybe we get to lick off the plate after we have served everyone else. It's a thing we need to seek out.

Because life is hard but a gift. Because even in hard times, there can be peace. We all have to work, we all have troubles, but merely having

work or trouble doesn't mean we can't also laugh and relax. Anxiety is like rocking really fast in a rocking chair—we feel like we are doing something, but it gets us nowhere and doesn't change anything. So let's replace stress with rests (Get it? The same letters just rearranged? We can do the same thing with our lives!)

Because we all need ideas for date nights and girls/guys night out. Because sometimes the kids are out of school. Because if you are new or just visiting Limestone County, you may not know what fabulous things we have to offer! These are excellent mini-plans that you can use to make your days, weeks, and months just...more!

Let's take a tour of a 'Cation Mini-Plan:

Theme: Often built on an event like the Christmas Parade or Sheriff's Rodeo or a local class. There are a ton of themes we'll be doing from arts to sports.

Playlist: List of theme-related songs from various genre—everything from Charlie Daniels to K-pop (You gotta hear some of the Canadian hockey songs—what a trip!)

What to eat: Suggestions for local foods, stores, or restaurants (Our folk sure know how to keep our tummies full!)

What to wear: Theme related clothing ideas that you can put together at home or support local. Dress to impress, my peeps!

What to do: Theme related activities including everything from visiting local sites to journaling.

We are going to release 1-4 'Cations per week. Check our Facebook page (Athens-

Limestone County Tourism Association) or our Instagram (@athenslimestone tourism), email us, or visit the office to find out what each theme entails.

Here are the guides for the 'Cations Mini-Plans:

1. They are for YOU, so do whatever parts you want to. You don't have to do the whole thing, but we suggest you try—the more you do, the more fun it is!

2. If you are into social media, take a photo of yourself doing any part of any of the 'Cation plan, tag **us** in it, tag the **store or locale or restaurant** you are at, and tag any **top sponsor**. If you tag all three, you get a point!

3. At the end of the campaign, we will figure out who had the most points and who had the best presentation and give prizes! (Local influencers, this is your time to shine!)

4. You can do ANY part of ANY released 'Cation throughout the campaign. So for example, if you couldn't

make it to a restaurant that we named on this week's 'Cations, you can go some other time and it still counts as long as you tag us, the restaurant, and the top sponsor (if there is one). The campaign should last about a year, so you have plenty of time. But don't put off the fabulousness too long, we have a year of fun planned!

Are you ready?

AWESOME!

Our first 3 themes are:

(Drumroll please...)

1. Powerplay-cation! (Hockey! For our "Life is a full-contact sport" folk!)

2. Payday-cation! (For all you entrepreneurs! Time to get your hustle on!)

3. Everyday-cation! (For our "Trying to be everybody's everything" folk! Starting every day on the right foot, learning to find the moments in your day to be calm, restful, thankful!)

Come get the details on our Facebook page, Instagram page, or office! Check back

often.

"Sounds GREAT! I want my business to participate. Are there still spaces left?"

Hon, we're Southern; there's always room for one more at our table! Simply contact me and let me know what your business is. If you are a merchant, locale, activity, or food service, let's see how we can make you part of a 'Cation Mini-Plan. Even if you are a home-based business, we should be able to get something cool going.

If you are not really a "vacation" type business (insurance, roofing, accountants, etc), you can be a Top Sponsor! Contact me at the Athens-Limestone County Tourism Association for more details.

So now you know what all is in store

To make an awesome 2-0-2-4

The time is right

Let's start tonight

There's no better time for us to wait for!



Vote for Margie Bishop, Limestone County Circuit Court Clerk

by Ali Elizabeth Turner

continued from page 1

molasses along the roadside. After high school, Margie worked at International Paper and got married to Aaron Bishop of the Clements community. She later became a legal assistant at a law office in downtown Athens and worked on matters involving criminal defense, estate planning, divorce, and child support. When a position opened in the Circuit Clerk's Office 7 1/2 years ago, Margie submitted her application and was hired.

Margie began working at the front counter in the clerk's office where customer service was her top priority. Since then, she has worn several hats and is currently employed as a court specialist IV for Juvenile Court and is the Warrant Magistrate. As a court specialist IV, Margie serves as the intake officer for petitions involving juvenile dependency and juvenile delinquency. As the Warrant Magistrate, she handles warrants for felonies and misdemeanors and has a strong working relationship with members of law enforcement. "I enjoy the interaction with the public as well as law enforcement," she said. When asked if there was a case that really stood out in her mind as one where she made a big difference, she replied, "People have stopped by to say thank you after getting custody of their grandkids and to let me know that I helped get the ball rolling."

One of Margie's most important jobs is to work with absentee ballots in the election season. She was quick to point out, however, that

because this year she is on the ballot, she is not allowed to work in that capacity. I asked her about election security in Limestone County, and she told me that the system has been redone and has been made more secure. "No dead people have had the chance to vote in Limestone County," she told me with a smile. (And, let's be clear that no dead people have voted in Limestone County, period.) Election integrity is very important to Margie, and she firmly told me that she does not ever want to see anything in our country that begins to resemble the debacle of the 2020 federal election season.

Here is Margie's official statement regarding her qualifications for the job:

Margie Bishop is currently

employed by the Limestone County Clerk's Office as a Warrant Magistrate and Juvenile Court Specialist IV. She has been employed by the Clerk's Office for over 7 years and is familiar with all its operations including absentee voting. Margie has the knowledge and experience to step into the role of Circuit Court Clerk and will make sure the job gets done.

If elected, Margie will make customer service the top priority of the Clerk's Office and will make sure that all services are made more accessible for the citizens of Limestone County. Margie will also do everything possible to keep our courts running smoothly, efficiently, and without interruption.

I asked her myself, "I have

choices, why should I vote for you?" Here is what she told me: "I have the knowledge and experience and would need very little additional training to do the job. I have healthy relationships with law enforcement as well as the District Attorney's office, the judges, and my co-workers," she said. "You also have to have discernment when it comes issuing warrants, to determine if there is probable cause--if there is even the smallest possibility of having a case. You also have to be willing to tell people "no" when no probable cause exists. Oftentimes, that is not pleasant, but it has to be done if justice is going to be served."

There are a lot of different situations that come into the clerk's office and we are

here to listen, help and serve. I have over 13 years of experience in the legal and judicial system, making me the most recent and relevant candidate running for Circuit Court Clerk.

If these are the qualifications you are looking for as a Limestone County Circuit Court Clerk, then vote for Margie Bishop on March 5th.

Vote for Margie Bishop

Phone: 256-565-6056

margiebishop48@yahoo.com

Facebook campaign page: Margie Bishop for Circuit Court Clerk

Facebook: Margie S. Bishop



VOTE FOR MARGIE BISHOP
CIRCUIT COURT CLERK

LIMESTONE COUNTY
MARCH 5TH

- ✓ Relevant
- ✓ Experienced
- ✓ Qualified



Stop Power Trippin'

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



Pulling rank is often seen as a sign of strength, but it can actually be a sign of weakness. When people feel the need to assert their authority over others, it can be a sign that they are insecure, "losing their grip," or lack confidence in their own abilities. This is not how you want to be thought of as a leader. In my work as a clergy person, it reminds me of those men who feel the need to quote Paul's words in Ephesians about submission, to twist the arms of their wives into obedience. I have always said, "If you must quote it, you have already lost your power."

The sign of real strength is the power of influence apart from one's title, credentials, or work experience. It may be the case that one can be perceived as power tripping when this is not actually the case; the person may simply be stating the reason why they are giving the instruction. However, it is the motivation behind feeling the need to remind team members of one's credentials, title, or positional authority. Most people know the difference. This too often creates toxic emotions in the workplace, which demoralizes the team. One particular field of service where rank is understood and valued is the military. Yet, there are even leaders in the military who make the case that pulling rank is a bad idea.

Steve Leonard is a former senior military strategist

who writes for *Clearance-Jobs*, an online magazine. He says: *If you're in a position of authority, that speaks for itself. You don't have to browbeat others or resort to feats of strength to prove your worth. Do you feel threatened by other opinions that are different from yours? Does someone junior to you with more experience in an area cause you to question your value? Maybe it's you and not them...If you feel compelled to remind everyone in the room that you're in charge, then you're really not. The "just do what you're told" approach doesn't sell well to others. Nor do other phrases that seek to establish your dominance over the group.*

The value of the leader's work, her results, consistency, and respect for others is what makes one persuasive and not necessarily the title or position. Oftentimes it can come across as belittling and putting down others, as if their lack of rank or positional authority makes their opinions invalid.

"Pulling rank," according to Merriam-Webster, is a term used to describe the act of using one's position or authority to gain an advantage over others. While it may seem like an effective way to get things done, it can often lead to negative consequences such as resentment, mistrust, and a lack of cooperation from others. Some of the problems, identified in *wikiHow*, associated with pulling rank include the following:

- A hostile work environment where people feel undervalued and disrespected.
- A lack of trust between colleagues, which can make it difficult to work together effectively.
- An environment of resentment and anger among those who feel that they are being unfairly treated.
- A lack of cooperation and communication, which can hinder productivity and progress.

Merriam-Webster adds that pulling rank can be considered manipulative. It is a way of using one's high position in a society, organization, group, etc. to order someone to do something or to get special treatment or privileges. According to *wikiHow*, it is a form of manipulation or one-upmanship to get what you want without being considerate of the other person's feelings, experience, or knowledge and without being concerned at how arrogant or single-minded you're coming across. It is important to avoid pulling rank as it can lead to negative consequences in personal and professional relationships. If you find yourself doing it often, consider seeking collaborative, negotiated, or compromised approaches to your relationships with others.

Power tripping is a common phenomenon that can occur in any setting where there is a power dynamic at play. In today's fast-paced world, it's easy to get caught up in the power

struggle and lose sight of what's really important. Avoiding power tripping is essential to maintaining healthy relationships and achieving success in both personal and professional life.

Moreover, *wikiHow* provides several alternatives to pulling rank that can help you achieve your goals without resorting to manipulative tactics with the following suggestions, which I find valuable:

- **Collaboration:** Work with others to achieve common goals. This can help build trust and respect among colleagues and can lead to more effective outcomes.
- **Empathy:** Try to understand the perspectives and needs of others. This can help you build stronger relationships and create a more positive work environment.
- **Active listening:** Listen carefully to what others must say and try to understand their point of view. This can help you build stronger relationships and create a more positive work environment.
- **Compromise:** Be willing to compromise and find common ground with others. This can help you build stronger relationships and create a more positive work environment.
- **Persuasion:** Use persuasion to convince others to see things from your point of view. This can be more effective than using your position or authority to get what

you want.


- **Lead by example:** Set a good example for others by treating them with respect and empathy. This can help create a positive and productive work environment.

By using these alternatives, you can build stronger relationships with your colleagues, create a more positive work environment, and achieve your goals in a more effective and ethical way. Building relationships and setting the right example is a much better approach than power tripping and pulling rank. It helps to create a positive environment where everyone feels valued and respected. It also promotes a higher level of teamwork, togetherness, and mutual understanding, which are essential for achieving success in both personal and professional life. Remember, true power comes from leading by example and inspiring others to do the same. By building relationships and "walking the walk," your words will have much more weight and credibility within the team. It is a much better approach than power tripping and pulling rank. This creates a culture of teamwork, collaboration, and mutual understanding, which are essential for achieving success in both personal and professional life. An expression that aligns with this concept is the "we are all in this together" mindset, rather than the "big I and little you" attitude.

Losing Ovaries And Discovering Hemorrhoids

by Jerry R. Barksdale

www.jerrybarksdale.com 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. "Pleeeaaase, 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" movement, 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 forfeit our tickets. Jack quickly did a cost analysis between our choices and we decided to 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 teetotaler, 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.

Power Vacuum

by Joel Allen



Hello, folks! Years ago, when Zues walked the Earth with me, he would always be in charge at home with my pack when he was not working as my service dog. He always tried to bully other dogs in our home with getting his way. Alphas do that when they think they are in charge. With dogs, they have a pack mentality that needs and craves structured leadership. If a dog senses a lack of leadership in their “hooman” then it becomes a serious problem, or they think they can take charge from their hooman they will. Zues would try but I always managed to get control of the situation. Hey, I provide the food and shelter so, “Yeah! I’m in charge!”

Recently, I spoke with a friend that was having a problem much like I did. She told me when her Alpha passed that her pack

went into turmoil and seemed to be acting out on each other. I listened and wished I had thought of what I am about to share with everyone. Now, my disclaimer is that these methods and ideas I am about to share have worked, but they do not work with all dogs. Sometimes, troubleshooting and brainstorming has better results.

Okay, let us say that we have a death in our pack, and it is the leader. Well, naturally the whole pack loses direction and the natural process of selecting a new leader falls to the pack hierarchy. There is almost always a “power vacuum” and in most cases, not all, there will be infighting amongst the pack until there is an undisputed winner. To avoid all this trouble, we have to interject ourselves in the pack leader role.

So, what does a person do to make sure the hooman is in charge like it is supposed to be? I watch for the one instigating the situation. I then look at my feeding times and watch the behaviors of the rest of the pack. If they seem to defer to the canine in charge or the one that has taken charge, then I work on the pack leader to take back my command or leadership and let the others see it. How I do this is I take the “leader” and move him/her to the back of the feeding line. I make them wait to eat. Like I have shared before, if the hierarchy is disrupted and the food is controlled, that puts the hooman back in charge. So, we make the leader eat last and take his position back for ourselves. The whole pack sees that the leader is the provider of their needs and now that has become me.

So, we are now making everyone sit and wait for their meals. We are in control of who eats, when, and where.

A common mistake many folks make with their canines is “free feeding.” It is important to not allow free feeding -- leaving food out all the time. This will make the dog(s) think that you are their servant. Do not do this! It also encourages food aggression and resource guarding. To quell the infighting, we as pack leaders have to watch for triggering moments and redirect the attention of the dog instigating the fight. I have found that when there are two or more dogs that are fighting and jockeying for control of the pack, a good walk with them all helps redirect their attention and places leadership back on your shoulders. Dogs need to have

structured leadership, and if they can’t get it, they will make it happen for themselves.

So, let’s recap a moment. We stop the fighting by placing ourselves back in leadership and by removing triggers or temptations and holding our pack accountable. The tools and methods I have spoken of have worked for me. Control the food and when it is given. Control the order the food is given, and do not allow the canine who is trying to lead bully any of the other canines. No free feeding, even though it might be convenient to do so. I should also add that while walking the dogs together, with help from other folks if needed, ensure the pack leader wannabe walks with you, and ensure they do not get to walk in front of the other dogs or yourself. They should not pull but walk with your body, side by side, as a teammate.

Folks, I hope this is helpful. I hope everyone has a great Valentine’s Day. Any “Prayer Warriors” out there please lift me and my family up in prayer. Lord knows we need it. Thanks, y’all!

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

Joel Allen
256-651-2211



Space For What Matters: *Just Start With One*

by Sonya Fehér



I was in a meeting recently with people talking about being lost in their 10,000 things, feeling overwhelmed by what they wanted to get rid of, being afraid to pick things up because then they wouldn't be able to let them go. It wasn't an organizing call, so I didn't jump in with all the tips I wanted to give about how to decide what to keep and let go. But here we are, in a space you've come to for decluttering and organizing tips, so here's my first one.

The way to deal with those 10,000 things is one at a time. Just start with one.

If you're afraid that touching things will make it harder to let them go, enlist a buddy to hold them up for you. You might ask a series of questions including:

- Do I like it?
- Does it make me feel lighter or heavier? (If you love it, but it reminds you of someone

you lost, a chapter of your life that's over, or anything else that feels like pushing on a bruise, that's likely one to get rid of.)

- When was the last time I used it?
- Do I need it?

Just one item at a time. Do I like it? Do I use it? Do I need it?

Maybe you'll find some things to get rid of because they're not in good condition, things you actually need. Make a shopping list of what to replace.

Remember that everything you keep will need to be stored somewhere and dusted or otherwise attended to. All those things you're keeping are taking up space that something you really love, need, and use could live. Or nothing could live there. Not the piles, the mess, the chaos.

Back to just looking at one thing at a time. Maybe you put

those things into a category so you can see how many others like it you own. Maybe you don't need all (or any of) the shampoo bottles you brought back from hotels.

Start with the easy stuff, that's not so sentimental. The functional stuff that maybe doesn't function for you now – whether it doesn't fit, work, or serve you – let it go.

What about those "special" things? The memories, milestones, and maybe the old news.

If something is special, figure out how to treat it as such. Make a placemat out of your kid's art. Use the champagne flutes from your wedding to drink orange juice each morning. Having your most precious memorabilia in boxes at the top of closets or out in the garage doesn't honor them, doesn't prompt you to remember. Make a box of letters or photos, those special memo-

ries and go through it every year, on your birthday or January 1, or another important time for you.

Another tip: You can keep the memory without keeping the thing. If it is that important to you, you're not forgetting it. Alternately, you could take a picture of things and keep them in an "It's Special" folder on your computer or make a photobook of them.

So, let's get back to what you're keeping. Because having those 10,000 things is likely weighing you down, not lifting you up. You don't have to go through a whole room at a time, or even a whole cabinet. Just do a drawer. Or pick a category. Get all the pens scattered around your home and test them while you watch TV. Or just the handful of writing implements in your junk drawer.

One item, one drawer, one category. Just start with one. One

plus one eventually equals 10,000.

While you're deciding what to let go, think about what you're giving yourself – breathing room, a space with things you love instead of things to step over or clean up, and the ability to go into the closet and only find clothes that fit and that you will actually wear. It's an amazing gift.

Decluttering first means you're making space for what's important. Pick a thing, just one, and begin.

Sonya Fehér

Organizer, Coach, Author, & Speaker

<https://spacewiseorganizing.com>

You can submit your questions for decluttering and organizing your space, time or life to sonya@spacewiseorganizing.com

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The Alternative Approach

Thankful And Appreciative

by Roy Williams



We run into so many business friends today who are expressing their inability to find good help. Every now and then, someone will come in and apply for a job, but when the employer explains what will be expected of them, most never show up. Some will get started and work for a week or two then simply never show up again, except for their paycheck for the work they had done. Then there are those who either don't show up on time or who always has an excuse to need time off.

Needless to say, our society has changed tremendously over the last couple of decades concerning work ethic and responsibility. Maybe it is because many people have a negative outlook on the future of this great nation. The expectations of most people who are looking for work and how much they should be paid is changing as well.

With that said, my wife, Gwen, and I wish to express just how thankful we are for the employees we have. We are so blessed to have not only

dedicated people who believe in the concept of helping our customers live longer healthier lives, they are dependable. We know they are going to respect every person that comes into our stores, help them move toward their health care goals, and are highly educated in the field of proper nutrition.

So, if you are wishing to learn more about supporting your health naturally, avoiding the pharmaceutical industry and medical profession, allow me to recommend Herbs & More in Athens or NHC Herb Shop in Killen or going to our website at www.nhcherbs.com to learn more. We believe that God made each of us with a natural ability to heal as long as we supply our bodies with the raw materials that are necessary for cellular replication and repair.

With thousands of satisfied customers all over the United States and 11 other countries and thousands of medical reports proving the results of nutritional support, you can have faith in what we offer and the information we share. Considering that our staff has over



70 years of experience in this industry and that we have developed over 40 exclusive supplements, you should feel good about our reputation and our success.

Gwen and I wish to let everyone know just how proud we are of our physical expert, our son Seth Williams. He has done well over a thousand videos about body structure, getting in shape, and a healthy lifestyle; has helped develop many body building and body support products; and is to some degree a physical training expert.

Next in line is the manager of our Killen store and supply chain and inventory expert, Casey Carnes. Casey exemplifies dedication and dependability. After almost 20 years with our company, Casey is involved in almost every aspect of this industry. We truly depend on Casey for inventory, shipping and han-

dling, marketing ideas, and customer service, while running our website and all that it entails. We simply can't imagine how hard things would be without him.

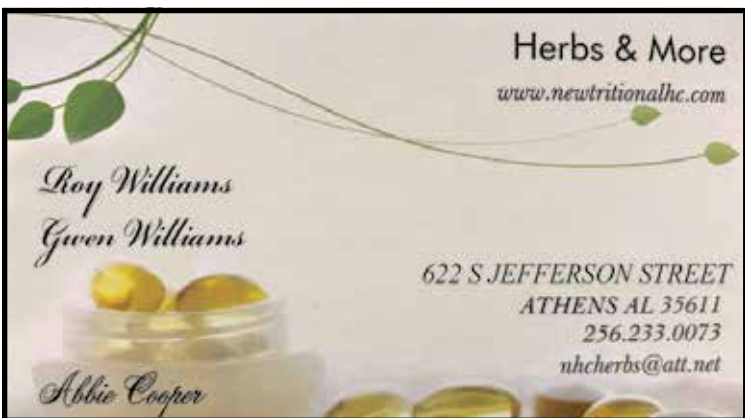
The same amount of dedication and dependability applies to our store manager in Athens, Alabama. Abby Cooper is a truly responsible person with a wonderful personality, customer appreciation, and very knowledgeable about every thing we do at Herbs & More. We depend on her for everything from inventory to logistics. Talk about customer relations, Abby's skills with everyone who walks in the store is what every store owner desires in an employee. Always friendly, always helpful, and always ready to serve. She is a prize.

Shea, our youngest employee, has proven herself from the beginning of her employment over a year ago. Her ability to

learn about the products we carry and what they are designed to support in the human body is mind boggling. Shea is courteous and she loves to work with the customer, and we know this because our customers express to us just how good she is.

With that said, let me say to everyone, you are always welcome at any of our locations and you can rest assured that we are here to help you live to your genetic potential without disease. And if you already have developed some disorders, then we hope you will consider checking us out. Please feel free to come by one of our locations and learn for yourself just how much we care. Our goal is and has always been to, "Make America Healthy One Person At A Time."

*Your friend in health,
Roy P. Williams*





Cooking with Anna (continued from page 13)

Joy Down In My Heart

by Anna Hamilton

When you are able to be joyous in the small problems, the big problems will be easier. Your faith will just become stronger and stronger.

The link between deep faith and joy is one that goes hand in hand. Most of us want a deeper faith in Christ but don't always realize that choosing joy in all circumstances will cultivate a life full of faith. Your life will become a testimony of faith and will help bring others to Christ. When you find joy in all, does this mean that everything in life will become easy? Of course not, but it does mean that the hard times will be easier.

Joy is rooted in who God truly is. The world places happiness/joy in possessions, accomplishments, people in our lives, job, and status. But the Bible teaches us that the source of all joy is Jesus. "May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope." Romans 15:13

North Alabama has just thawed out from the deep freeze we were in a few weeks ago, and I think I speak for most of us in saying that we all got tired of cooking! This week's recipe is a fantastic side dish that pairs well with all proteins, can be eaten for an afternoon snack, and itself is loaded with protein. Bonus points, it keeps for days in the refrigerator! Make it one morning and enjoy it all week! We love it and I hope you do as well.

"Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who endured such opposition from sinners, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart." Hebrews 12:1-3

Tennessee Valley Spotlight

**Mondays at 10am
1080 AM WKAC**

E Is For Essential Oils

by Lisa Philippart,
Licensed Professional Counselor



“We all have the ability to heal ourselves; I know, I have done so...”

- Lisa Bellini

Several years ago, I had no clue about essential oils. When a friend introduced them to me, I will admit that I was a scoffer... until I noticed some changes. So let me share with you some basic information about essential oils and how they can be effective in addressing a variety of mental health issues. Essential oils are natural extracts from the seeds, stems, roots, flowers, bark, and other parts of plants. When you smell a rose or a freshly peeled orange, you are experiencing the aromatic qualities of essential oils. As we inhale aromatic compounds from the EOs, they travel to the olfactory bulb or the emotional part of our brains. The odor triggers a series of brain chemicals. For example, the scent of lavender triggers serotonin, which has a relaxing effect on the mind as well as the

body. The olfactory bulb is the only place in our bodies where the central nervous system is directly exposed to the environment. So this makes perfect “scents” (sorry!) that the brain is designed to use aroma to soothe and protect itself.

When I started with EOs, I was concerned with how to use them. The three most common ways to use oils are aromatically, topically, and internally. Aromatically means that a diffuser is used to spread the EO particles into the air; or one or two drops can be placed on the palms and inhaled. For example, I diffuse peppermint in the mornings as an energy booster and to help clear my mind in preparation for the day. I may use orange in the afternoon to give me an energy boost. And at night, I diffuse lavender to help me to relax and wind down from the day so I can sleep more soundly. Topical application involves applying a few drops of oil directly on the skin, rubbing it in to



quickly absorb into the body. My daughter puts a drop of eucalyptus, diluted with fractionated coconut oil, on the bottoms of her daughter’s feet for respiratory support. I love the smell of melaleuca, so I place a few drops on my pulse points.

You can also place one or two drops of certain EOs under your tongue or in an empty capsule and swallow just like any other pill. Taking oils internally can support the digestive system and boost immunity. For example, I like to add a couple of drops of lemon oil to my water to freshen my drink, or a drop of peppermint on my tongue can give me a lift in the afternoon or help if I have an upset stomach. I have found that adding 2-5 drops

of oils to my shower or bath can have a powerful effect, depending on the time of day. If you shower or bathe at night, eucalyptus, lavender, or frankincense can be relaxing. If you are a morning bather, peppermint, orange, grapefruit, or lemon can be invigorating and elevating.

As a mental health professional, I am often asked about which oils to use for specific moods to help manage symptoms. For example, lavender can ease sadness, calm anxiousness, and decrease stress. In my office, I often diffuse rosemary because it can relieve fatigue, comfort sadness, and promote concentration. Vetiver can relax nervous energy, reduce anger, and soothe anxiousness. Frankincense,

while expensive, is a wonderful all-around oil often used to lessen mental fatigue, provide grounding, and improve mood. Essential oils have so many applications, I encourage you to explore which ones work best for you. When purchasing EOs make sure you research the oils’ sources, purity, and therapeutic grade, as all oils are not created equal. So next time you feel down, take a whiff of lemon and see what happens!

Until next time...Lisa

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

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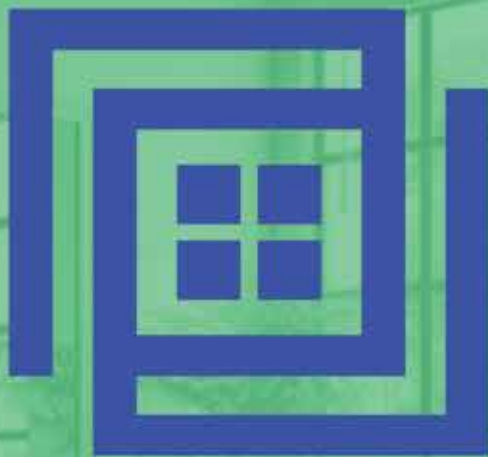
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