

January 6 - January 19, 2023

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Clean, Green & Beautiful

To A Beautiful New Year...

On behalf of Keep Athens-Limestone Beautiful, allow us to express our gratitude for all the well wishes and gestures of love and kindness that have...
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Herbs & More: Healthy As You Can Be In 2023!

By Ali Elizabeth Turner

For more than 25 years, Roy and Gwen Williams have served the people of Alabama and beyond by making wholeness possible through supplements, education, cutting-edge services, and exceptional customer care. And for several years, it has been the pleasure of *Athens Now* to start off each new year by telling you how they can help you be your "best you." They have two stores, one in Athens at 622 S Jefferson St., and the NEWtritional Health Care Store located at 1861 US-72 in Killen. In short, they love us and it shows.

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Continued on pages 16-17



Shay Frost (l) and Abbie Cooper (r) of the Athens store

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Publisher / Editor
Ali Turner

Copy Editor
Yvonne Dempsey

Graphic Design
Jonathan Hamilton

Web Design
Teddy Wolcott

Contributing Writers

D. A. Slinkard
Lisa Philippart
Anna Hamilton
Tina Cook
Joel Allen
Dixie Bell
Phil Williams
Benjamin Bradley
Jerry Barksdale
Tina Morrison

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Send Inquiries to P.O. Box 428, Athens, AL 35612, or call (256) 468-9425. Emails are preferred, send email to info@athensnowal.com

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Publisher's Point

Redemptive Resiliency

In the nearly 12 years that we have owned *Athens Now*, I have marveled several times at how without conferring with each other, the writers for this paper are guided by what I believe to be an unseen hand or pen (maybe the term these days should be keyboard) and they end up preparing a feast for us that has a theme. I express my gratitude to them often, and wish to do so here in this format that through the miracle of technology will not only be read in the Tennessee Valley but in more than 80 countries around the world. I have been blessed with a terrific crew, from penning to production, and as you read this first edition of 2023, I think you'll see that the theme is not the usual "beat-myself-up-after-the-holidays-I-must-do-better" approach, but rather it is far more about what I call "redemptive resiliency."

The difference, to me at least, is that the latter is an invitation rather than a condemnation. What does that mean? That our desire to be new, whether it is during the New Year holiday, all year, or just because humans are divinely hardwired to desire to reset, rebuild, rebound, recreate and redeem runs deep, and these guys, these quietly-remarkable-regular-Joe-and-Jane writers have taken a risk with us as they share their hearts and their hopes for growth and peace. I salute them.



As for me, my longing for, and personal definition of "redemptive resiliency" has to do with inspired and informed focus, first up and then across, that results in tangible progress. It also has to do with believing that grit and resiliency are not things with which you are born, they are things that anyone can learn if they are willing. I recently read an article about a woman by the name of Anne Grady, who has made a career out of the crazy comeback, and helps individuals, communities, and organizations learn resilience.

Anne did not set out to be someone who gives TED talks or speak before thousands, or be a best-selling author, she learned what she has to offer by navigating epic, uncontrollable personal storms. She gave birth to a son who cried for 20 hours a day, who at the age of three tried to kill her

with scissors, and who had to be put in a psychiatric facility at the age of 7. In addition, her husband left her, she fell down a flight of stairs, broke her foot in four places, had a temporarily paralyzing facial tumor and got some dust on her cornea, which created a set of problems all on its own.

When I read stuff like this, my immediate response is, "Ali Turner, pipe down, you don't have a care in the world!" As appropriate as that might seem, it doesn't do anything to equip me to either become better within and without, nor put me in a position to where I can be of service to anyone else, God or people.

Anne threw herself into the study of the brain out of her desperation to help her son, who is now 19 and is doing much better. Anyone who knows me knows that I am continually tout-

ing the power of our brains from the premise that we are not the result of primordial ooze, rather, we are fearfully and wonderfully made, and it is from that standpoint that resiliency becomes redemptive. Do people recover from all manner of things and never acknowledge the Almighty? All the time. But I think these pages will demonstrate that it is ultimately far more satisfying to seek, in 2023, the One who gave His life in order for you to earn the right to say, "All things are possible," and then walk it out in a whole new way. Welcome to the new year, and may true triumph be your portion.

Ali Elizabeth Turner

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



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The Indestructible Jack Lucas

by Ali Elizabeth Turner



Jack Lucas was born in 1928, and when he was fourteen, he forged his mother's signature so he could join the Marines. The Marines eventually discovered the truth and sent him to Hawaii to drive a truck. While truck driving is an absolutely essential role in war, Jack was not content to sit out the rest of the war. So, he stowed away on the *USS Deuel*, which was on its way to Iwo Jima. He was eventually discovered by the Marines, who allowed him to join them as a fellow Leatherneck on a journey that would eventually send 7,000 Marines to their deaths. One of them that "should" have died was Jack Lucas, who defied death after throwing himself on one grenade which threw him into the air, and when he landed on his back, he saw another one, rolled over, and pushed it as far as he could into the sand. It went off, too, and everyone thought

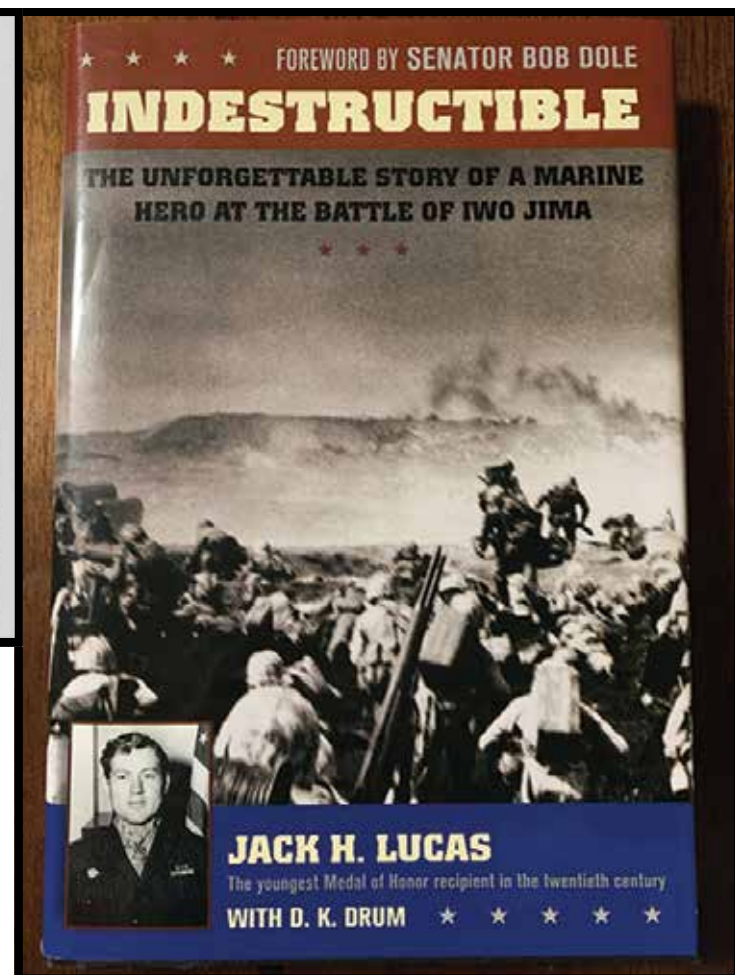


he was dead. Jack had turned 17 six days before, and he saved several lives that day.

A Marine happened to notice that, amazingly, Jack was alive, and not only was he alive, throughout the whole ordeal he never lost consciousness. He could breathe but he couldn't speak. A Navy medical corpsman did what he could for him in

the field and after being evacuated, Jack underwent 26 surgeries to remove approximately 250 pieces of shrapnel from his body. One would think that Jack's military career would have once again either been over or at least greatly re-directed, but that is not what happened. He underwent eight months of rehab and worked tirelessly to regain the use of his arm, and experienced more miracles later in his life that were of the same caliber as what occurred on Iwo Jima. Those we'll talk about that in a moment.

On October 5, 1945, President Harry Truman awarded Jack the Congressional Medal of Honor for his unmatched bravery. In doing so, Jack became the youngest person during WWII to receive the highest and rarest military award possible in America. Throughout American military history, there have been about 3500 medals awarded, and in the aftermath of Iwo Jima, there were 27 Marines who received it.



After the war, Jack was involved in business for a while and in 1961, joined the Army at the age of 33. He began training as a paratrooper. This time, on a training jump, BOTH of his chutes malfunctioned and he literally fell out of the plane and plummeted to the earth. To say that this was a miracle is not an overstatement. Personally, I would have preferred that Jack had given God the glory for his survival, but I am not judging the man for saying that it was his decision to roll hard when he landed along with being stocky that saved his life. I wasn't there, and perhaps the last two major adventures of his life served to help him fix his gaze upward.

The next episode in the life of Mr. Indestructible was surviving a house fire,

and then his wife tried to have him murdered. I have no idea what the particulars were with regard to the contract that had been taken out on him, nor how he escaped either time. I don't think it was his stocky build that saved him from the attempt on his life, but one way or another, I believe that now Jack has the full story. He passed away in Hattiesburg, Mississippi, in 2008, and while I hope that he got both his vertical and horizontal relationships squared away before he died, I would be remiss if I did not point out that few people deserve the designation of being honored as members of the Greatest Generation more than Jack Lucas.

His memoir is entitled *Indestructible*, and can be purchased on Amazon.





Tina's Tales

It's A Wonderful Life!

by Tina Cook

Director, Athens-Limestone County Family Resource Center

If I told you that 2022 was fabulous with no mishaps or issues, I would be lying! It may have been the toughest one yet in my 11 years of sobriety. When my mind first 'landed' on that realization, I almost swatted it away. How could this year be so difficult when God has been so lavishly kind to me...how could I even fathom that thought when I am ever so aware and grateful for all He has done for me? So, I began to ponder the answer to that...

The conclusion I have come to is because the root of anything is the hardest to remove! The previous 10 years, I have been dealing with more outward issues and symptoms. But 2022 has had me dealing directly with MYSELF... my deeply seated ideas, thoughts, beliefs, and automatic behaviors that no longer work on the path of who I am becoming. So, in the light of that revelation as well as the fact that I am ending the year still sober and determined to remain that way, it has been another fantastic year to be alive...to be useful...to be present in each moment that I have had.

The past year has held many wonderful occurrences. Taylor and Hayden, my girls (nieces), have both married wonderful men who I now get to call my nephews. I walked my sister, Angie, down the aisle

at both events representing family members who could not be present... especially Mama and Dad. I know they were in that stadium full of witnesses who are constantly cheering us toward the finish line God has set for us. My Baylee (another niece) has settled in Birmingham on a different journey of self-discovery and service through her passion for nursing. My brother Doug's life continues to unfold into a beautiful mosaic that warms my heart. Each battle he overcomes, I give praise and thanks that he, like myself, has made it to the other side of a difficulty that most do not win. Angie and I have entered a new level in our relationship as sisters. She has been my constant throughout life and the only person who is the same as all that I am. This new territory we are traveling has anchored itself deeply and I have fully embraced that knowledge that she is who God gave me to walk through life with from beginning to end. I am so thankful to finally be at a place where she can lean into me and know nothing...NOTHING except death will separate us ever again! (Ruth 1:16-18)

I feel closer to others in my life as well. The pandemic has enhanced the relationship between my stepmother of 50 years, Roanna, and me. I am getting to know my brother Clay and his children, Hugh and Belle, better.

Other family relationships have grown close again. Cousins that I lost touch with have begun re-entering my life and our bonds are being renewed. I have friends that I love like family who are always ready to encourage, love, and even remind me to chill or get over myself! And then there are my TRIBES that keep me centered by keeping me focused on my relationship with God: Alcoholics Anonymous, New Covenant Emmaus Community, and Friendship Church.

I'll mention the BIG ONES now...my doggie daughter Chloe and my job! Perhaps THOSE have been the biggest life-rafts that God allowed to rescue me. Both have grown me up in ways I didn't even know existed! Chloe is 14 years old now. I don't believe

she has many great days anymore. But together we are enjoying the days that she does have, and I am enjoying each moment that I have left with her knowing they grow fewer and fewer as I watch her movements decline. She truly is the dog who saved me. I recall those days in April 2013, at home across the river after Mama died. I was alone there with no job, no money, and little dignity left because I had squandered it away along with everything else. I wanted so badly to stay in bed and not face the day...to face LIFE at all. But Chloe needed to be let out and to eat, so I got up for her. Both she and my job have helped me realize that even though I was never blessed to have children of my own, that I could have been a good moth-

er. I believe God gave me Chloe and my position at the Athens Limestone Co. Family Resource Center to bless me and to pour His love into places in my life that were empty. Hence the significance of the Christmas pictures that may have made some of you wonder, "Who are those children with Tina?" They are just a few of the many children God has allowed me to love, spoil, and shop for at Christmas year after year after year after year, like actual mothers get to do.

I am a woman truly blessed...lavishly loved...extremely grateful...and exceedingly strengthened by the JOY of the Lord!!

Happy New Year to you all!

Tina (and Chloe too!)



Calendar of Events

Coffee Call January 7

8:00am - 9:30am. Alabama Veteran's Museum, 100 Pryor St W, Athens, AL 35611. Veterans of all wars and their families are invited for breakfast and fellowship from 8:00AM-9:30AM at the Alabama Veterans Museum and Archive. 256-771-7578.

Berea Baptist To Host Bradley Walker January 8

Berea Baptist Church will host Bradley Walker for a singing on Sunday night, Jan 8 at 6PM. Free admission, love offering will be received. The church is located at 16779 Lucas Ferry Rd, Athens, 35611. Contact; Gary Wilson, 256-497-9763 or gwilson2052@charter.net

The Festival of the Cranes - Decatur January 13 - 15

The Festival of the Cranes is an annual three-day event that takes place in January at Wheeler National Wildlife Refuge in Decatur to celebrate the winter migration of over 14,000 Sandhill cranes, as well as endangered Whooping cranes. The festival offers many activities for experienced birders as well as for those who would like to learn more about these elegant cranes, including storytelling, photography workshops, music, live raptors, children's activities and films, in addition to thousands of Sandhill cranes and the endangered Whooping cranes, along with ducks, geese, bald eagles, and so much more.

Silver Sneaker Flex™ Classes Every Tuesday and Thursday

Strength and Balance classes meet every Tuesday and Thursday at 9:00 a.m. beginning 12/7/21. Classes are open to all. No signup needed. Classes will meet in the Lighthouse Building behind Emmanuel Baptist Church at 1719 Hwy 72W. All equipment will be provided. Donations accepted. For information: jhunt9155@gmail.com or 256-614-3530.

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.

Grow with Google January 17

Athens-Limestone County Public Library has partnered with Grow with Google to provide digital skills training and resources to their local community. ALCPL is proud to announce that we have joined Grow with Google as a member of their Partner Program. This opportunity will provide us with tools and resources to bring digital skills to Athens and Limestone County. ALCPL will offer Grow with Google courses to the public at no cost January 17 - March 28. To learn more about the courses offered or to register, visit www.alcpl.org or call the library at (256) 232-1233. To learn more about Grow with Google partners and the available tools and resources, visit google.com/grow

Russell Moore and IIIrd Tyme Out with special guest, the Becky Buller Band! January 26

7pm - 9pm. Join us as the 2023 Fiddlers Concert Series continues with a performance by Russell Moore and IIIrd Tyme Out with special guest, the Becky Buller Band! Opening act Becky Buller is a multi-instrumentalist, singer, and songwriter from St. James, Minnesota who has traversed the globe performing bluegrass music to underwrite her insatiable songwriting habit. For over 30 years, Russell Moore & IIIrd Tyme Out have been touring and releasing great, original bluegrass music. After spending a handful of formative years as a member of Doyle Lawson & Quicksilver, Russell Moore formed IIIrd Tyme Out in 1991, and bluegrass music hasn't been the same since.

Ribbon Cutting January 26

Northrop Grumman STEM Learning Lab. McCain Hall at Athens State University. 2pm

Senior Lunch Matinee Series Third Thursdays Monthly

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

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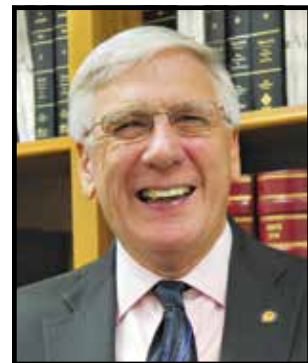
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What Makes Ronnie Roll

Meet Erik Waddell, One Of The Busiest Men In Athens

by Ali Elizabeth Turner



Mayor Ronnie was going to be out of the office, and it seemed like a good time in this new year for Athens-Limestone County to get to know one of its busiest men, Erik Waddell. Erik is the building inspector, and not only that, he retired from the U.S. Army as a captain. We were in

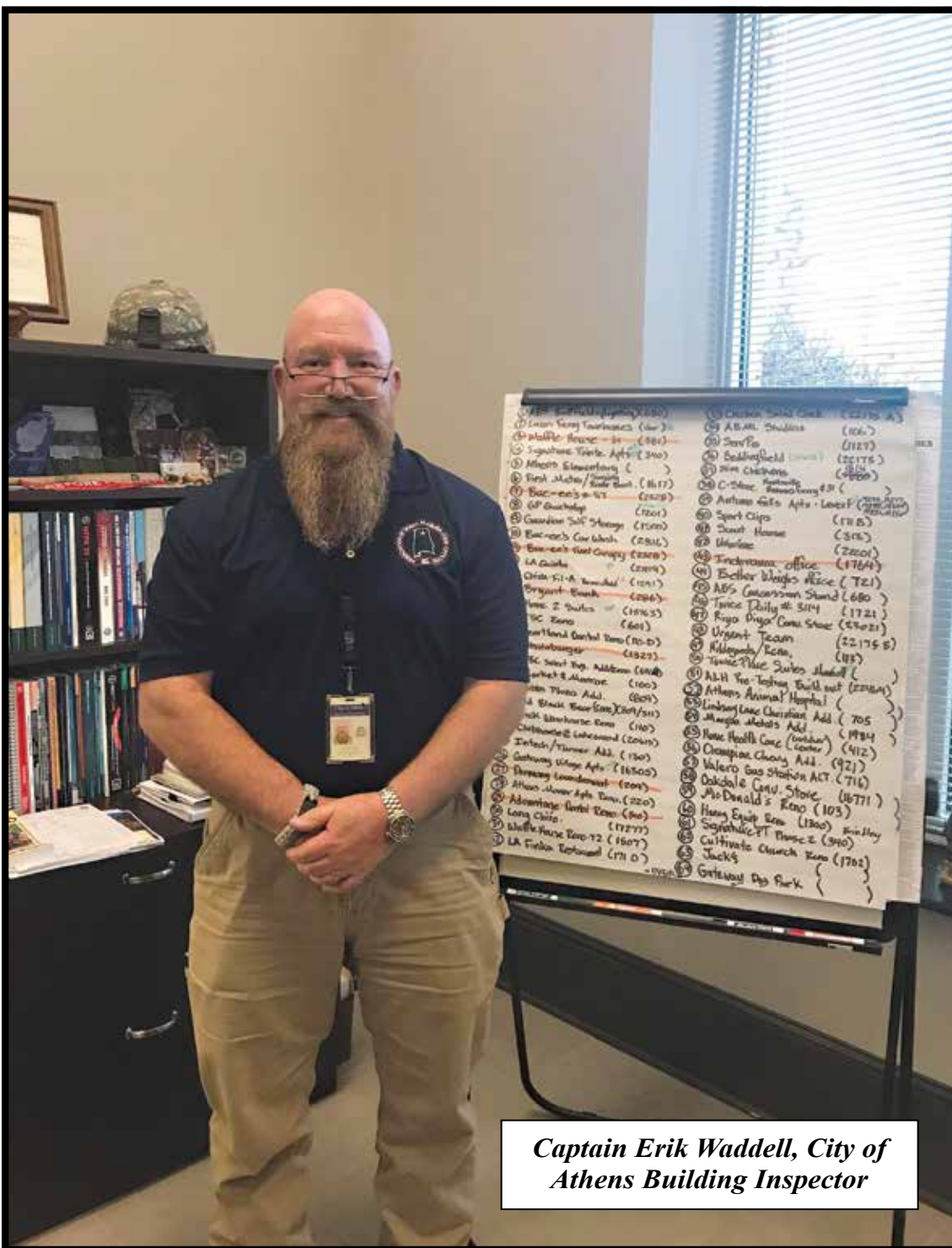
some of the same places in Iraq, and it is always a great joy for me to swap stories with him. In 2003 during the assault phase of Operation Iraqi Freedom, Erik actually heard Iraqis cheer when it was announced that Saddam Hussein's evil sons, Uday and Qusay, were killed. While

Erik was on Camp Victory, he was the guy that got building supplies and barrier walls to everyone in Baghdad. As someone who more than once experienced the benefits of working and sleeping behind well-placed barrier walls, I can heartily say, "Thank you for your service!"

So, why is Erik so busy? Well, just with the recent Buc-ee's project, there were 180 inspections necessary for what he calls "cradle-to-grave," the breaking of ground to the opening ceremony. Buc-ee's has been Erik's favorite project so far, and certainly is the biggest. He feels that it will bring great benefit to our city and county. Everyone knows that Athens-Limestone County is hopping with growth, and the commitment to "grow well" by seeing to it that only quality buildings are built and projects completed runs deep with Mayor Ronnie, Erik, and the City Hall staff.

Erik is from the Shoals and went to Auburn. He loves Athens, and his enthusiasm for all the possibilities for our town is infectious. When you walk into his office, in front of the window is an easel holding all of the current building projects neatly written out with a code he developed while in the Army for quick reference as to their progress. He has never had to have so many pages on his flip chart! He gave me an idea of just how quickly we are growing by comparing the charting of requests for building permits. "Four years ago, we had about 2,000 permit applications. This year we had 3,735, almost twice as many," he said. He did mention that with the current in-

terest rates, residential building had slowed to a rate that he describes as being "more manageable," but definitely still brisk. In 2022, there were 478 permits compared with 200 in 2018. We talked about commercial projects that are either already in the works or are about to be. There are 58 active commercial projects in Athens-Limestone County. Behind Starbucks on Hwy 72 there will be a 101-room Home2 Suites by Hilton, and Waddell said, "This is will be the largest hotel in Athens, and we need it." He has looked at plans for a LaQuinta, and is excited about the Gateway Apartment complex being built behind IHOP on the north side of 72. Erik's smile is just as genuine when it comes to the development and preservation of the Courthouse square and old Athens. "There's lots of activity, and people are fixing, restoring, and using buildings that ten years ago I would have had to condemn." He thinks the chances are good that many of the lofts in that area will go residential, and that there will be townhouses built that fit in aesthetically. Erik is looking forward to seeing how the Athens 2040 plan turns out, as well as being a part of it. Thank you, Captain Waddell for looking out for us, both here and in the Great Sandbox!



Captain Erik Waddell, City of Athens Building Inspector

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Where Merit Goes To Die

by Phil Williams



A friend of mine sent me a message the other day letting me know that I needed to read something. I'm glad I followed up on it because it was a direct tie-in to a story that I had just been covering out of Virginia.

You may recall hearing about the Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Mathematics in Fairfax County, Virginia. TJHS is one of the most renowned high schools in the nation. The aforementioned story covered the fact that the administration at the school has established equitable grading guidelines that have allegedly resulted in the school withholding information from students who became National Merit Scholars.

Imagine what it would be like to know that your child, after long years and grueling hours of study, earned the right to be named as a National Merit Finalist or Semi-Finalist only to have the school deliberately refuse to make the fact known. A fact, by the way, that could have made all the difference in the competitive world of college admissions.

What we are learning now, and the school is attempting to explain away, is that the non-disclosure occurred because to do so would clash with the new Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Mathematics equitable grading standards. Basically, the pinheads in charge of TJHS were concerned that if one student excelled, the other students would feel badly about themselves so in their narrow and woke-minded view they just chose to dumb everyone down instead of allowing excellence to rise to the top.

After hearing me discuss the TJHS grading issue, my friend texted me and said, "You've got to read 'Harrison Bergeron' by Kurt Vonnegut." I was already familiar with Kurt Vonnegut, a famous American writer known for books like *Slaughterhouse-Five* among others, but I had never heard of his short story entitled "Harrison Bergeron." Written in 1961 and covering close to six pages, it is one of those extremely prescient writings that seemed farfetched at the time it was authored but now appears to be right on point.

"Harrison Bergeron" opens with lines that could literally be peeled from today's diversity, equity, and inclusion headlines: THE YEAR WAS 2081, and everybody was finally equal. They weren't only equal before God and the law. They were equal every which way. Nobody was smarter than anybody else. Nobody was better looking than anybody else. Nobody was stronger or quicker than anybody else. All this equality was due to the 211th, 212th, and 213th Amendments to the Constitution, and to the unceasing vigilance of agents of the United States Handicapper General.

The story goes on to describe the deliberately average lives of George and Hazel Bergeron. Hazel was said to be of average intelligence but George was deemed to be extremely intelligent. So the government Office of the Handicapper General made him wear a device that blasted erratic noises in his ears every few minutes to keep him from having clear and cogent thoughts that might exceed those of others, therefore keeping George and others like him from "taking unfair advantage of their brains."

George and Hazel sat watching a ballet on TV but each of the dancers, based upon their individual skills, were saddled

with bags of birdshot to weigh them down so that no one could dance better than another. Each of the dancers also wore masks so that no one could be perceived as more beautiful than the other. The titular character, Harrison Bergeron, was the son of George and Hazel, but the Office of the Handicapper General had removed him from their home when he was 14 because he was too perfect, too attractive, too athletic, too smart, and no one should have a child that much better than someone else.

I won't spoil it for you by recounting what happened next, but suffice to say, I couldn't help but think that my friend was spot on. The story of Harrison Bergeron by Kurt Vonnegut sounds creepy and yet you can compare the same attitude to what we see in the ridiculous decisions made by the people in charge of the Thomas Jefferson School for Science and Mathematics and similar offices across the nation.

When those in charge become determined to suppress excellence in favor of equity then failure becomes the norm and success becomes a crime. DEI, known fully as "Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion," is just the name-brand for refusing to allow one person's merit to be the guide to their ability to serve or succeed.

The world is tired of hearing about "diversity, equity, and inclusion." Make no mistake, I'm not for discrimination or trying to keep someone down because of their race, sex, religion, or pregnancy. But the race to DEI is not that.

One can merely look at the current state of public service and know that DEI has become a tool that is no different than making everyone wear bags of birdshot and masks and putting sounds in their ears to prevent clear thought. It is farcical to think for a second that good

will ever come of giving someone a job, or a title, or a security clearance, or some power over others, merely because they checked a DEI box and not because they were the best candidate for the job.

Case in point, Samuel Brinton, the cross-dressing non-binary radical-kink fetish lecturer with a penchant for stealing women's luggage should have never been given a top-secret clearance and access to sensitive government information. It was wrong, but it checked a box, and it failed.

Justice Ketanji Brown Jackson, an extremely accomplished jurist with a sound legal mind, should never have been put in the position of having an asterisk by her appointment to the Supreme Court of the United States. She is a solid candidate but weighed down by the pronouncement that what was more important than her legal acumen was that she was a black woman. President Biden tainted her appointment by announcing that DEI was his first motive thereby removing her nomination from the historically competitive realm that it should have remained in.

Republican George Anthony Santos should never have been elected to Congress from the State of New York. By his own admission, Santos habitually lied about his own resume in an effort to be something he is not. But Santos is a product of a society that believes that no one is okay the way God made them. People like Santos believe that a person must be "adjusted" to achieve an equitable outcome. There is no telling where else in life he has lied to get ahead, but I suspect that we will be finding out in the not-so-distant future.

There was also the recent story of a school board in Pennsylvania where one of the members openly stated that she could not support one individual for

the position of President of the Board. Her decision was based upon her expressed view that he was a "cis White male" and that even though she acknowledged that he would likely do a good job, she thought that it would send the wrong message. She was compelled to resign days later.

DEI is where merit goes to die. When we allow ourselves to believe for a minute that no one is allowed to be the person that God intended them to be, or to exercise their own gifts, talents, and personal disciplines in such a way as to actually earn a position, then we have become nothing more than a society filled with empty average characters like George and Hazel Bergeron, saddled with bags of birdshot and noise makers so that no one person can rise to their personal best.

DEI is where merit goes to die, where failure becomes an acceptable norm, and success becomes a crime. We must return to being a merit-based society.


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

“Y” Is For Yesterday, “Z” Is For Zeal

by D. A. Slinkard

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



The first article of 2023 is here, and it seems that 2022 was merely a blur passing by in a matter of seconds. Of course, it seems many things have been a blur since the turmoil we faced as a world in 2020, and a person must question whether or not things will ever go back to the way they used to be. I do not believe the world will ever be the same, and it just shows me how quickly people are willing to give up their freedoms without much pushback. My wife asked me what my first article of the new year would be, and it is simple to answer. I want to finish what I started in 2022, and we are going to start this year by completing the ABCs of *Slinkard on Success*. In fact, this article is going to cover the final 2 letters in the alphabet.

Our words are “yesterday” and “zeal” which I believe are two words crucial for success, especially if we are going to make an impact in 2023. I believe these words are so important that we can learn a lot by focusing on these words each day of the new year. We really should focus on what success we are personally having and what impact is being made on the lives of others. We can look back at yesterday and see what worked for us and what did not then make necessary adjustments.

Too often we repeat mistakes from yesterday, and if we would take the

time to learn from the past, surely we would not make the same mistakes twice, three times, or even forty times over. The definition of insanity is doing the same thing over again expecting a different result. If we were to reflect on yesterday, what could we learn? What worked for us and what did not. What we need to do more of and what things we need to stop doing. This sounds easy enough, but it is much more difficult than it seems. We tend to be too lenient when it comes to knuckling down on ourselves. We lie to ourselves and say the situation is not as bad as what it is. Often it is

not as bad as we think, in fact, in most cases it is worse than we could imagine.

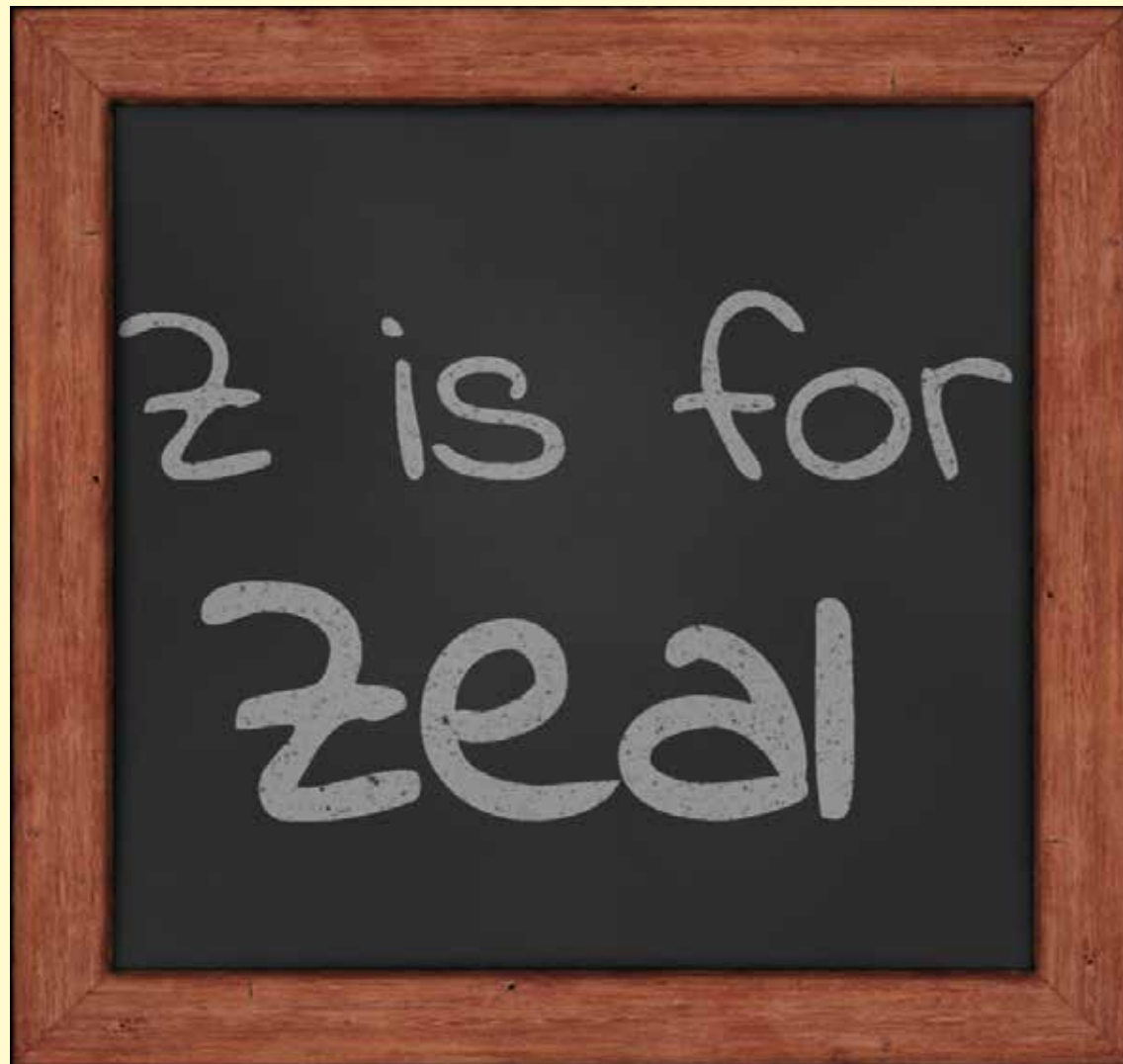
We need to take the time at the end of every day to jot down notes on our successes, our failures, and our indifferences. We need to do so while it is fresh in our minds so there is no discrepancy to the impact the day’s events had on our lives. We need to attempt to learn from the events as they occur so we can impact the outcome we have on a daily basis for 2023. Will this be easy? Not at all. Will it take work? Yes, it will. If the process was easy, then everyone would be doing

it. More people fail in life at the things they “want to achieve” because they are not willing to put forth the necessary efforts in order to capture success.

Which brings us to the last word on our journey, and it is “zeal.” Too many people are missing zeal in their life. They are missing zeal in their relationships. They are missing zeal in their professions. They are missing zeal in their purpose of life, and this missing ingredient impacts the successes and failures of a society more than we realize. There was a time our society had a zeal

for God, and this mindset helped the United States of America become the greatest country known to man. The lack of zeal for God is helping the United States of America lose its foothold on being a world power. I wish our country could have a zeal for God again because I know our lives would be different.

In 2023, if you want to have success during this year, you will want to set some priorities in your life. Learn from each day, and then pursue your goals and dreams with the zeal that is lacking in so many. Show me someone who lives each day with zeal for life, and I will show you someone who is making an impact on themselves and on those around them. Now, it is your turn. Will you learn from yesterday and approach tomorrow with zeal? Or will 2023 be a carbon copy of 2022 for you?



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Clean, Green And Beautiful

To A Beautiful New Year

by Benjamin Lawrence Bradley - Executive Director, Keep Athens-Limestone Beautiful



the cleanliness of our county and city. I think we can pull together as a community in a bigger way and partake in the goodness of being worthy custodians of our little corner of Earth.

We invite you all to take a look around your world at work and at home. What trash do you see going from here to there? What can each of us do to fix it? As now is the time for resolutions, let us all resolve to simply clean along our way. Let us resolve to get more in-



involved by organizing cleanups and volunteering at events. We should resolve to go all in to join the push for a clean and beautiful 2023. We will be happy to have you.

Here is what you can do. Find some areas in need and find a few other people. We will suit you up and y'all go knock it out. Nice and simple. If you have some folks together who want to clean up but don't know where to go, we can point you in the right direction. More of a scout? Let us know where the worst spots are and then take the next step to scout out some volunteers. Don't just report, organize!

Sponsor us. Play a big part in carrying our mission forward. Place your logo next to ours in solidarity with the issue at hand. If you can't sponsor, then donate or become a member. Donations help keep the work moving along. If donating doesn't make sense for you, volunteer. Better yet, volunteer to be an organizer of volunteers. We all have a part to play to push this priority through. There are many ways to be part of KALB. Decide how big of a part you want



to play in 2023. We are a nonprofit that relies on its volunteers to step up to the plate. We are very excited to begin a whole new year working alongside so many caring and passionate environmental crusaders.

Take our good friends at Shape Corp, for instance. They have a tradition of putting a cleaning crew together every year to clean along the Tennessee River. Thank you Andrew Hopper and the Shape Corp crew for cleaning along Lucy's Branch Marina. They removed a couple dozen bags of trash and even dragged an old mattress out of the woods. These guys disposed of the

garbage and dropped the supplies off at the office. Organized and efficient. I couldn't ask for a better example of how to get it done.

I invite everyone to adopt this idea for a regular team-building exercise. The responsibility for our surroundings is not something that anyone can rightly count themselves out of. Pick up what you see wherever you are. We can group together in common purpose to ensure that the world we see is clean and beautiful, and we can do it as a team. This is how we keep America beautiful.



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Cooking with Anna

Never-ending Christmas

by Anna Hamilton

As I sit down to write this article, it is technically already late and my halls are still decked with all the Christmas you could possibly stand. My husband and I still have a Christmas party to attend on January 14. Don't get me wrong, I love Christmas, but this year has felt like a never-ending carousel of "holiday fun." I have felt the pressure to be everywhere and every thing others may need during the holidays this year and it has taken a toll. I am tired, my brain is mush, and I am all merried out.

My concentration is hanging on by a thread and my anxiety is ramping up. I am blessed to have a husband who has forced me to rest. Even if I have fought against the suggestion of rest, my body has forced me to take a step back and try to allow my body to recuperate.

There are times in our lives when we may be forced to be still. For most of us, that is a hard reality to have to face. Standing still is hard. God offers numerous Scriptures to remind us that it is good for us to rest and be still. Let's take a look at a couple of Scriptures to help us learn how to be still.

"Be still and know that I am God." Psalm 46:10. Such a simple verse, but one that is full of power. Resting in the fact that we know God is so comforting! God knows everything about us and about our lives. Knowing God should give us a peace and a feeling of hope in times when we are fighting to just be still.

Many times fear of the unknown creeps in, and we can become so panicked thinking about what may happen that we can't see straight. God tells us in 1 Samuel 12:16, "Now then, stand

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Super Crunch Salad

Ingredients:

Salad Ingredients:

- 1 head cauliflower, chopped into 1-inch pieces*
- 3 cups small broccoli florets*
- 2 cups sharp cheddar cheese, grated*
- ½ cup red onion, finely chopped*
- 1 cup celery, finely chopped*
- ½ cup sunflower seeds*

Dressing Ingredients:

- 1 cup mayo or 1 cup non-fat Greek yogurt*
- ½ cup Parmesan cheese*
- ¼ cup sugar or honey*
- 2 Tbsp pickle relish*
- 2 Tbsp Dijon mustard*
- 1 tsp paprika*
- Salt and pepper to taste*

Directions:

Place all salad ingredients in a large mixing bowl. Gently toss to evenly combine.

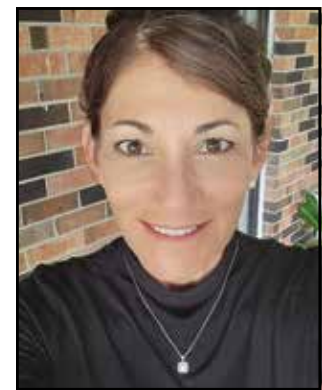
Mix all dressing ingredients in a medium mixing bowl. Whisk until smooth. Pour over salad and toss to combine. Cover salad and refrigerate until ready to serve.

Once ready to serve, wash and chop desired amount of romaine lettuce (or your favorite green) into bite sized pieces. Toss lettuce with the rest of the salad and enjoy!



Tourism News

by Tina Morrison, Tourism Athens



Did you know that the Athens-Limestone Visitors Center is located in the Beaty Historic District and housed in a beautiful brick building that was the original Athens Utilities building back in 1906? The building was also home to the Athens-Limestone Chamber of Commerce for many years. In 2010, the building was renovated and restored to its current beautiful state, with much of the original brick still exposed on the inside. The top level, accessible from a handicapped-accessible ramp off Beaty Street, has offices for the two tourism employees, plenty of room for informational brochures and rack cards, a mini-museum of Delmore Brothers information, restroom facilities, and storage space.

The ground floor level, accessible from the Visitors Center or from the Market Street entrance, is known simply as The Meeting Room. At one time this room was affectionately called The Domino Room by those who gathered here to play dominos for many years. The Athens-Limestone Tourism Association

manages the rental of the facility, and it was rented over 40 times last year. Residents and tourists used our meeting room for many personal events like bridal showers, baby showers, celebrations of life, family holiday gatherings, gender reveals, and birthday parties. Companies have used it as a convenient place for meetings, blood drives, and job fairs. It was even used once last year for movie auditions.

As we start 2023, we want to let everyone know about the slight increase in The Meeting Room rental rates. A four (4) hour rental is now \$170 (formerly \$150) and the eight (8) hour rental is now \$200 (formerly \$180). The room is approximately 24' X 24', has a capacity of approximately 75 people and plenty of well-lit parking. It has a small catering kitchen with a sink, microwave, and full-size refrigerator and freezer. Other amenities included men's and ladies' restrooms, smart TV, central heat and a/c, and free Wi-Fi. Included with the rental is the use of folding tables and chairs at no extra cost. A



\$50 cleaning fee is refunded when the room is returned to its original cleaned condition. Wood floors and trim, cathedral ceiling, and spectacular views of Big Spring Memorial Park are waiting

to serve as the backdrop for your special event. The meeting room is rented on a first-come, first-served basis and must be booked in person at The Athens-Limestone Visitors Center

open Monday-Friday 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m. For more information or to check date availability, call (256) 232-5411 or go to <https://www.visitathens-sal.com/visitor-center-meeting-room.html>

5 Ways To Refresh Your Routine For The New Year

courtesy BrandPoint content

(BPT) - With the start of a new year, it's the perfect time to have a refreshed perspective on our health and well-being so we can continue to improve ourselves day by day. The new year brings new possibilities when it comes to our wellness routines, but sometimes it's hard to know where to begin. If you're feeling unsure how to get started or which goals to set for the year, registered dietitian Maggie Michalcyk is sharing five expert tips on how to have a refreshed routine for the year that focuses on nutrition and health while incorporating her favorite snack, almonds.

Maggie Michalcyk believes that wellness starts from within, including fueling her body with the proper nutrition that makes her feel good. Maggie shares how to refresh your wellness routine while keeping nutrition top of mind for the new year, allowing you to live your best life.

1. Keep it simple

It's easier said than done, but keep it simple! Eating healthy can feel daunting - do you change everything that you're eating, do you follow the latest trends? One simple and realistic strategy I recommend is to start by adding more nutrition to the meals and snacks you're already eating. Here are a few examples: top yogurt and oatmeal bowls with almonds, add a handful of greens to things like smooth-

ies, stir fries and omelets, or add a side salad to go with any main dish.

2. Snack on healthy whole foods

There are so many options for snacks these days, but not all are created equal. Snacks that contain protein, fiber and healthy fat, and are low in sugar, will keep you satisfied and energized throughout the day. Almonds contain 6 grams of protein and 4 grams of fiber along with 13 grams of "good" unsaturated fat and 1 gram of saturated fat per serving, making them a great well-rounded snack, plus there are many ways to enjoy them to keep things fun.

3. Nourish your skin from within

With so much emphasis on the perfect skincare routine, one thing often overlooked is supporting our skin from within with foods that contain essential skin-benefiting nutrients like almonds. A handful of almonds provides 50% of your recommended daily value of vitamin E in one serving, which helps protect skin cells from damaging effects of free radicals caused by pollution, UV rays, cigarette smoke and other factors.

4. Prioritize your magnesium intake

Most of us are not meeting the daily recommended amount of magnesium in our diets. The good news is almonds can help. Almonds are an excellent source of magnesium,

which aids in the production of energy in the body as well as supports a healthy immune system. I add almond butter to my breakfast toast, topping my salad with almonds, or simply snack on them throughout the day to reap the benefits.

5. Challenge yourself

Pick up a plant food (think fruit, vegetables or nuts like almonds) at the grocery store or farmers market that you've never tried before and challenge yourself to try it. Not only does this help keep things fun and fresh in the kitchen, it also adds more nutrition to your diet, helps to improve gut health and can help improve your relationship with food.

"It's so important to me to start off every new year feeling refreshed and energized. For me, I like to look at how my snacks are benefiting my overall health. I'm all about keeping it simple, which is why one of my go-to snacks is almonds. They are the perfect snack to take while on-the-go, given their mix of protein, fiber and fat, keeping me energized throughout the day," says Maggie.

Are you ready to upgrade your wellness routine in the new year? As Maggie states above, it's all about starting small and knowing what you put in your body. Visit [almonds.com](https://www.almonds.com) for more information and follow [@californiaalmonds](https://www.instagram.com/californiaalmonds) for inspiration on how to nourish your well-being in 2023!



Herbs & More: Healthy As You Can Be In 2023!

by Ali Elizabeth Turner

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all of the patented supplements offered at both stores as well as online that have been developed through painstaking research and formulation. Roy has always had a heart to educate, and can be heard on WKAC 1080 AM as well as his own podcast. The radio show is broadcast on WKAC from 9 to 9:30 a.m., Monday through Friday, and the name of the show is *Today's Health Update*. Roy's show is also carried by WBTG AM and FM in Sheffield. The podcast is available on Podbean at NHC 19. In addition, they can be heard on the Facebook page, which is *Herbs & More Athens*.

We are going to start off by talking about supplements, then services, then the Herbs & More/NHC staff. I can speak from experience that all three categories are top notch, and am un-

apologetically a raving fan. The NEWtritional line features supplements that can help with everything from inflammation to your immune system. They have been developed over the last two-plus decades, and their online reviews are enthusiastic and touching. Both stores work tirelessly to live by the following premise:

NEWtritional Healthcare recognized our over-dependence on an understaffed and misguided health economy. Many times, people are given medicine to maintain rather than improve their quality of life. NHC strives to change this mindset. Better health is achievable and much of it grows naturally. We pride ourselves in a product that is far purer and more organic than many of our competitors. We don't strive to be the cheapest; we want to be the best. Thousands of



our customers, from all ages and walks of life, benefit from our line of supplements that improve health from head to toe.

Herbs & More also carries an extensive selection of NOW products, from supplements to essential oils. The NOW line is a classic and can be found in most health food

and even some big box stores. It was founded in 1968 with the mission statement and commitment "to meet consumer need for health foods by offering affordable, high





berries have the highest naturally occurring Bovis points at 26,500. Remember, when we consume any food or drink that is below 6,500 our energy levels are quickly depleted, which may explain why low energy is the number one complaint received in the medical profession.

During the past 71 years, Positive Power Nutritionals has provided products to the public; they have been able to formulate many that are now recognized as the highest on the Bovis Subtle Energy scale. Their highest ranked is their High Energy C-Complex 1250, which comes in at 115 million on the Bovis scale. It is now recognized as the highest of any supplement on planet earth.

Their Anti-Stress B-Complex Power 90 comes in at 4 million, the highest B-Complex on the market. Cell Power is at 13 million and Super Sicilia at 6 million. As you can see, Positive Power Nutritionals is one of the most successful supplement companies in America, and now you know why.

Herbs & More offers several alternative and complementary services. They include the use of an infra-red sauna, a BEAMER energy mat, foot detoxes, the Whole Body Vibration machine (which was developed to help astronauts who returned from floating around in the Internation-



Dixie Bell of the Killen store

al Space Station regain their bone density,) and several types of massage (including deep tissue) by therapist Stacy Litchford. Stacy has had a highly successful practice in Decatur, and has moved her practice here. Two people in the store told me that the massage she gave them was the best they had ever had, and Roy de-

scribed her as -- "Stacy is the one with the giving touch."

New to the Herbs & More lineup is the Prife Itera therapy wand, which combines heat with tera hertz frequencies. It empowers the body to detox, regenerate cells, increase blood flow, and reduce heal-

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quality natural products."

Roy speaks at length below about a product line that has become a best-seller because of its ability to harness what is known as *subtle energy*, which is an actual term used by the National Institutes of Health. Here is what he told me:

Over the last 3 years, Herbs & More and NHC Herb Shop decided to carry a new line of outstanding supplements by Positive Power Nutritionals. After being introduced to these products, I got to know the owner, Burt Golding and he agreed to start doing radio shows with me about their product line.

Talk about an impressive man with credentials of over 30 years in his field! Burt explained what has made his supplements some of the highest rated in the world. It is the first line that even comes close to our own line, NEWtritional Health Care. He teaches about how energizing his product line is because of the "subtle energy" frequencies

they release in the body.

Subtle energy is what your body can use at a cellular level. This energy can be absorbed by living cells. Burt describes it as a friendly or healthful frequency that raises the electrical flow, allowing your body to maintain balance and gives your body the energy it needs to heal. For instance, their oldest and best-selling product, called Cell Power, delivers 13 million on the Bovis energy scale. In comparison, reverse osmosis water comes in at 6,500. Anything less than 6,500 actually depletes your energy levels dramatically.

Some good examples to help you understand -- natural vitamin C comes in from 7 to 10 thousand Bovis energy points. Fresh-picked ripe rasp-

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Herbs & More: Healthy As You Can Be In 2023!

by Ali Elizabeth Turner

continued from page 1

ing times. It sounds and feels like a blow dryer for your hair, and I can attest that it works.

None of the supplements or services would be able to do the job fully without a caring and experienced staff. Abbie Cooper and Shay Frost are on deck at the Athens store, and they go the extra mile to take care of everyone who comes in. "Casey Carnes has managed NHC HERB SHOP in Killen for 15 years. He is very knowledgeable about the NHC product line. Casey makes SURE NHC products are in stock! He's the silent one that holds us together," said Gwen. Dixie Bell also works at NHC, and she does emotional coding work. Gwen says, "This is a gift that Dixie has which enables her to get to the root of some ail-

ments." Dixie also writes articles for *Athens Now* along with Roy, and you can read her *Alternative Approach* article in this edition. Gwen finished by saying, "Our services are important; they get people in the store. Product can be ordered online from anyone, but services have to be in person."

I would add that it is the "in-person experience" that has made such a difference for me. I go to the Athens store sometimes six days a week, and each time I walk in the door, I am treated like a family member by people with combined decades of nutritional experience. Over the years they have proven that they want nothing but the best for the whole of me. But don't take my word for it; read this common type of review about the Herbs & More staff, service, and supplements:

I can't say enough about



these kind folks that own and operate Herbs and More. They are friendly and extremely knowledgeable about their products, and the human body. They sell quality products that are worth every penny. To name some items I would buy 100 times

over: MSM+C, Floradix iron and herbs, and Feminine Factors; this last one literally saved my life and my marriage. Thank you, Roy and Seth for taking the time to talk to me.

To learn more about their products or any other supplemental program,

come by Herbs & More in Athens or NHC Herb Shop in Killen or call 256-757-0660. You can also check them out by going to www.nhcherbs.com, or listen to Today's Health Update on WKAC 1080 AM in Athens or WBTG AM and FM in Sheffield.



Pork'n'Beans Saved Me From Skinwalkers

by Jerry R. Barksdale

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



The summer of 1989 I read *Skinwalkers* by New Mexico author, Tony Hillerman. In Navajo culture, a skinwalker is a harmful witch that can turn into, possess, or disguise themselves as a coyote or dog. I wanted to meet a skinwalker. It was on my bucket list. I was 47 years old and recently married to "Arkansas Pat" (not to be confused with my good friend and sometimes red-head, "Tanner Pat"). This was long before Arkansas Pat would declare me *persona non grata* (that's Latin – and sock me with alimony).

I engaged Largo (not real name), a Navajo guide in Chinle, Arizona, to take us down into Canyon de Chelly (pronounced da shay) by horseback. I reserved a rental car for later, and we flew to Albuquerque. It was a pleasant flight with wine to soothe the nerves and lift the spirits.

Pat waited outside the terminal perched atop our two duffel bags of camping gear, smoking Virginia Slims, while I headed off to pick up our rental car. "I'll be back in two shakes of a gnat's tail," I said, confident we'd be in Chinle by nightfall. I marched up to the front desk and gave my name. "Yes sir, Mr. Barksdale we have

your car reserved. May I see your driver's license and credit card?"

"I don't have a credit card – don't need one," I said proudly and produced a small wad of cash.

"Sir, we can't rent you a car without a credit card."

"What'de ya mean?" I whipped out a twenty. "See here, it says 'legal tender for all debts.' Have you ever seen that written on plastic?"

"Sorry, sir," she said.

"I'll take my business elsewhere," I said and stormed out. I received the same treatment at other rental agencies. An hour later, I was at Rent-a-Wreck begging. "Please mister, my wife will think I've abandoned her." After calling his home office and conducting a credit check, I was finally given a car.

Pat was still sitting on our duffel bags, pumping her foot, twisting long tendrils of her black hair, and hot-boxing a Virginia Slim. A pile of cigarette butts lay at her feet. She was nerved up.

That night we stayed at the El Rancho Hotel on Route 66 in Gallup. It's where John Wayne and the Hollywood crowd use to stay while filming westerns in the area. The next morning, we headed across the Navajo Reservation to

Chinle, Arizona. Largo and his younger brother, Juan, met us with horses, and we packed down into Canyon de Chelly, a 38,000-square-mile hole in the ground. Finally, the hunt for skinwalkers was on.

We rode past ancient Anasazi ruins and cliff dwellings and saw what appeared to be bear tracks in the dust. The horses were skittish. Could they be skinwalker tracks? I wondered. Juan never spoke a word unless spoken to.

That evening when the sun dropped behind the canyon wall, the horses were hobbled and a fire was stoked. Largo's wife drove up in a pick-up and started supper. She squatted near the fire and boiled lard in a black kettle, then dropped flat patty cakes of white dough into the sizzling grease. Ahh, yes fry bread—the Navajo version of cornbread. Inside the fold of bread, she stuffed fried mutton, onion, etc., called Navajo tacos. Bad for the heart, but pleasing to the pallet.

"Ever see any skinwalkers?" I casually asked Largo.

"Last week on canyon ledge," he said, and pointed above us. The hair on my neck stiffened. Later, I left Pat and Juan sitting in front of our tent, her sipping red wine and burning Virginia Slims, while I

burrowed deep inside my sleeping bag. The next morning I crawled out and saw Juan flat on his back and sound asleep, right where he sat when I went to bed. He obviously passed out and fell backward.

"How much did he drink? I asked Pat.

"Half a cup."

No doubt, Juan would require a lot of practice before becoming a seasoned drinker.

On our ride to Spider Rock, an 800-foot sandstone spiral and home of Spider Woman, who possesses supernatural power, I asked Juan about skinwalker sightings.

"Grandfather saw one," he said. "He was walking in canyon when an old man offered him a piece of fry bread. If grandfather had eaten it, he would've turned into a skinwalker, may become a dog."

"How does one know if a person is a skinwalker?" I asked.

"Don't."

I pondered that and thought about Largo's

wife giving me fry bread. "I'm not eating anymore fry bread," I announced to Pat. "From here on out, it's pork'n'beans and crackers for me."

The thought of becoming a skinwalker and turning into a dog gave me the creeps. Imagine, chasing cats, cars, and fetching sticks, not to mention scratching fleas and licking myself. Ugh! On the other hand, there are benefits from living a dog's life. They don't pay alimony, child support, college tuition, or income taxes; make mortgage payments; tithe to the church; or worry about going to hell since, for some unexplained reason, sin doesn't apply to them. As an added benefit, they can chase female dogs and fornicate with impunity, take naps when they want to, fart in public, and ride around in air-conditioned cars with their heads poked out the window. Hmmm, a dog's life isn't all that bad.

On second thought, pass the fry bread, please.

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A Dog's New Year's Resolution For 2023

by Joel Allen



Happy New Year! Well, 2022 has been a year to remember for me. I continued blaming the cat for everything, and it worked most of the time except when my hair would be found at the cat-did-it-I-swear site. I am still a “chunky monkey” but we will call me “fluffy” not fat. So, my dear readers, what can my “hoomans” expect of me this year for 2023?! Here is my list:

1. Chasing the cat everywhere is still my goal. It seems here lately the cat has figured out that getting on the shelf and knocking things down on top of me is fun. Oh, the look of innocence as he paws an item off the shelf and looks the other way! *Grrrr...*infuriating! So, this year my plan is to trick my *hoomans* into placing the furniture where I might be able to reach said cat.

2. Stalking the mailman will always be on my list. My *hoomans* have cut eye holes in my fence for me to see out, and what is cool is how the mailman freaks out when he sees I am watching him, LOL! Before he noticed me watching him, he would look around cautiously for me. My barking always echoed, so he never knew where I might be until he saw my eyes and muzzle through the special place in the fence. I am going to request my *hoomans* get me a brother from the shelter to assist in watching this mailman dude.

3. UPS, FedEx or Amazon delivery guys are still sneaking onto my porch with packages. So, this year, since the window is right next to the walkway, I will jump and make lots of noise and slobber all over the window like I am going to eat them.

This all has helped with my weight loss this last year. But this year we are changing tactics because the delivery guys are used to my methods.

4. Still helping my *hooman* with walks are another priority. I have come to the conclusion my *hooman* has no sense of direction. I spent all year trying to teach him where to go with me, and yet I'm the one still leading us around. He just holds the leash and follows my lead while staring into his phone like a zombie. This last year he has started a disgusting habit though. I was pooping one day and suddenly my *hooman* walks up to my steaming pile of, not going to say it, but he pulls out this plastic bag and scoops it up! That was disgusting! I gave him the look of “Have you lost your mind?!” So, here we are

walking around with a bag of my smelly poop. That just sounds wrong and he has done this ever since! Maybe he has misunderstood me trying to show him a sense of direction. I will have to think on this.

5. I will keep chasing squirrels!!!

6. I will always terrorize the cat when no one is looking! That resolution will never change.

7. Steal the cat's toys.

8. Steal food off the table and leave evidence it was the cat who did it.

9. Chase more squirrels!!!

10. Ride in the car to town and while in the parking lot sit like an angel until someone gets too close. Then it's, “Surprise!” and bark with slobber flying to make people run past my vehicle faster and honk the horn if my *hooman* leaves me too long in the

car.

So, there it is, another New Year's set of resolutions. I hope everyone has a safe and happy new year. Happy new year to all!

PSA: Do not forget that fireworks will upset many dogs. If yours comes up missing due to a freak out and cannot be found, be sure to check the local shelters to see if they were found and turned in. This would and should always be a time to remember to microchip or ID tag your pets.

“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



Relationship Conflict Part 1

by Lisa Philippart,
Licensed Professional Counselor



“Conflict is inevitable, but combat is optional.”
- Max Lucado

more satisfying and intimate relationship by learning to see and confront the real causes of conflict.

One reason you may experience relationship conflict is that you are trying to fix your partner's feelings. No matter how painful, emotions like sadness or anxiety are not problems. When you treat someone's feelings like problems, it's invalidating. It makes them feel bad for feeling bad. Of course, how your partner feels is ultimately his/her responsibility, not yours. But you can be most helpful by letting your partner know that it's okay to feel whatever they are feeling, instead

of trying to fix it. Painful feelings are experiences to be validated. I know this is difficult because most of us grew up learning that it's not okay to feel bad...that if we feel bad, we are bad. So, get in the habit of reminding your partner that it's okay to feel whatever they are feeling.

Another reason you may have conflict in your relationship is that you have a hard time just listening. Stop talking when the other person is talking. For example, when your spouse is criticizing you for something, you instantly get defensive and start listing all the reasons why you are right and they are wrong. I do

Lisa Philippart LPC LLC
NCC, BCPCC, BC-TMH
 Licensed Professional Counselor
 Living Life Counseling Center
 44 Hughes Rd, Suite 1050
 Madison, AL 35758
 256.326.0909 cell
 256.631.7898 office
 256.542.3366 fax
 urlifematters@hotmail.com or
 Lisa.P@livinglifecounselingctr.com
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acknowledge that it takes a lot of humility and patience, but you could simply listen and try to see if there's any truth in what they are saying. Or your partner is describing how bad they feel, and you pepper them with advice and suggestions for what they need to start doing differently to feel better. People who are suffering often want connections more than solutions.

Please don't assume that more information is always the solution.

I know it is difficult to talk about how you really feel, especially if the feeling is painful or embarrassing. And it's even harder to talk about how you feel if you have a history of being shamed or attacked for talking about how you feel. But neither of those changes the fact that you can't build more intimacy and trust in your relationship without being willing to talk about how you feel. If you really believe that it is, and always will be, unsafe to express your feelings, maybe you shouldn't be in that relationship at all. But if there is at least a chance of things getting better, both partners have to start trusting each other with their feelings. Sit down and talk about it plainly...making a commitment to respect each other's feelings whenever they are expressed.

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





The Alternative Approach

After The Holiday Eating And Gay Happy Meetings

by Dixie Bell

Holidays are for the food, right? Pies, cookies, fudge, ham, rolls, and the list goes on. There's nothing like good food to bring family and friends together! However, this good food can make you feel sluggish, dehydrated, weighed down, and bloated. I am guilty of eating too much, especially during the holidays. Who can seriously pass up licking the bowl when candies, cake, and pie are on the menu? This can be such a problem, that's why I'm excited to share with you some of my favorite hacks for after-holiday tummy woes.

The holidays are over, and you are feeling extra weighed down and bloated. What now?

#1. Don't feel guilty or cut carbs.

Even if you start feeling guilty for overeating, DO NOT drastically cut your calories and carbs. This can be devastating in the long run.

If you start restricting your carbs and calories to counteract the overeating, it will most likely lead to binge eating later on. You can, however, start incorporating healthy whole foods into

your diet. This is the best way to being a healthy lifestyle that won't spiral into a binge episode. Slowly over time, your body will balance. You will lose weight and actually crave more whole foods. This isn't a quick fix. It's a lifestyle change. Restricting too many calories is just going to lead to short-term burnout. Maybe, first cut out soft drinks, then add a couple of servings of greens into your daily diet, and then maybe switch from coffee to herbal teas. This needs to be a gradual shift in your mindset and lifestyle. This is a foolproof way to begin a healthy lifestyle for the New Year. Guilt is not. Be assured that there is hope. It just takes some patience, conviction, and consistency.

#2. Get the colon squeaky clean.

We can hold up to 25 lbs. of fecal matter in the colon. When the digestive system is slow this buildup can ferment and cause bloating, gas, constipation, and diarrhea. It is vitally important to



keep this detox pathway cleaned out for optimal digestion, weight loss, gut health, etc. After all of that holiday food, it's a pretty good idea to clean out the digestive tract. If you are not eliminating regularly, think about all of the food in your gut that is just rotting and fermenting. It is quite literally toxic to have in your body. If this sounds like you, I have good news. There are ways to get it cleaned out. Achieving regular bowel movements can promote weight loss and will help you feel less bloated and weighed down.

My all-time favorite supplements for cleaning out the digestive

system are Regular and Moving Experience.

Regular: Detoxifies and cleanses the colon while replenishing the good bacteria in the gut.

Moving Experience: Encourages bowel movements, helps reduce the inflammation that occurs when there is a toxic buildup in the colon, and works with the good bacteria in your gut instead of against it.

It's highly recommended to take these two supplements together. They are extremely cost-effective, completely natural and they WORK oh so well. These supplements will help support your digestive system in detoxing and moving

out the fecal matter (you could also possibly lose a pound or two as well, just from cleaning out the gut).

Many people report more energy and less moodiness while on these products. These are the kind of "side effects" that I want!

#3. Stay hydrated.

The body is made of mostly water. Taking supplements is a wonderful thing, but they aren't going

to do you much good if you are dehydrated, especially when it comes to the digestive system. Staying hydrated is going to help cleanse the colon. Most of the water you drink is absorbed through the intestinal walls. Your body is using the water you drink for hydration and then there is nothing left to soften the stool and help it pass with ease. Drink your water PLEASE, especially while on these colon-cleansing supplements. I want you to get the most out of them and get the desired results.

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Cooking with Anna (continued from page 13)

Never-ending Christmas

by Anna Hamilton

continued from page 13

still and see this great thing the Lord is about to do before your eyes.” When we are running around like chickens, we can’t see the good things coming our way. We are so focused on juggling the things around us while worrying about what may come, that we are unable to see the blessings coming down the pipeline for us. God tells us to be still so that we can see the work He is doing in our lives.

As humans, we were designed by God to rest in order to renew not only our physical bodies, but also our spiritual bodies. Isaiah 40:31 so beautifully says, “They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength.” Waiting for the Lord to work in our lives implies that we do just that, we wait. It doesn’t say, those that run around making sure everything is just so will renew their strength. So we, I, must learn to rest in the Lord.

I desperately need to take my own advice on the matter of rest. I have never been a good sleeper. My mother said that even as a baby, I did not sleep. Now at 42, I find myself constantly exhausted but unable to get any rest. I am the

reason for not being able to rest. Instead of allowing God to bring peace to my mind, I let my thoughts run rampant. My thoughts are like a flea circus, thoughts hopping from one subject to another, from fears of the unknown future to replaying past events that I will never be able to change. I have a feeling that most of you are like me. We must learn to rest, to be still, and to let God work in our lives.

Hopefully, as 2023 kicks off, I will learn to rest this year. I will learn to be still and to let God work. That is going to be my goal for 2023...Learn how to rest!

This week’s recipe is a salad. I know, I know, it’s January so that’s why the recipe is a salad. Well while we should always focus on healthier options, this salad is a winner no matter when you decide to make it this year. You combine all of the ingredients for the salad together, including the dressing. When you are ready to eat, just add your favorite lettuce and protein. It is really that simple and a healthy recipe that is sure to please even the pickiest eater!

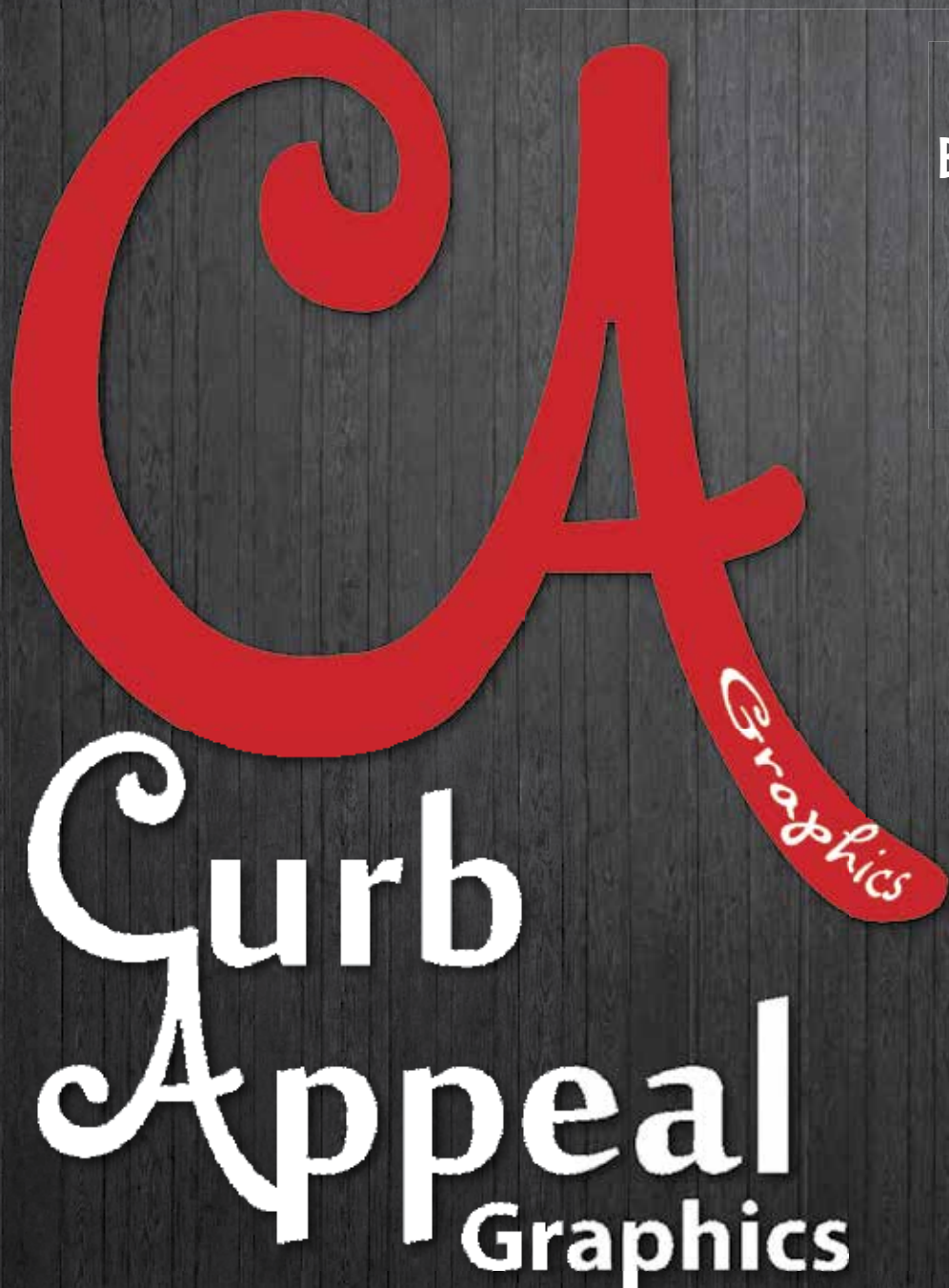
“Be still in the presence of the Lord, and patiently wait for him to act.” Psalm 37:7

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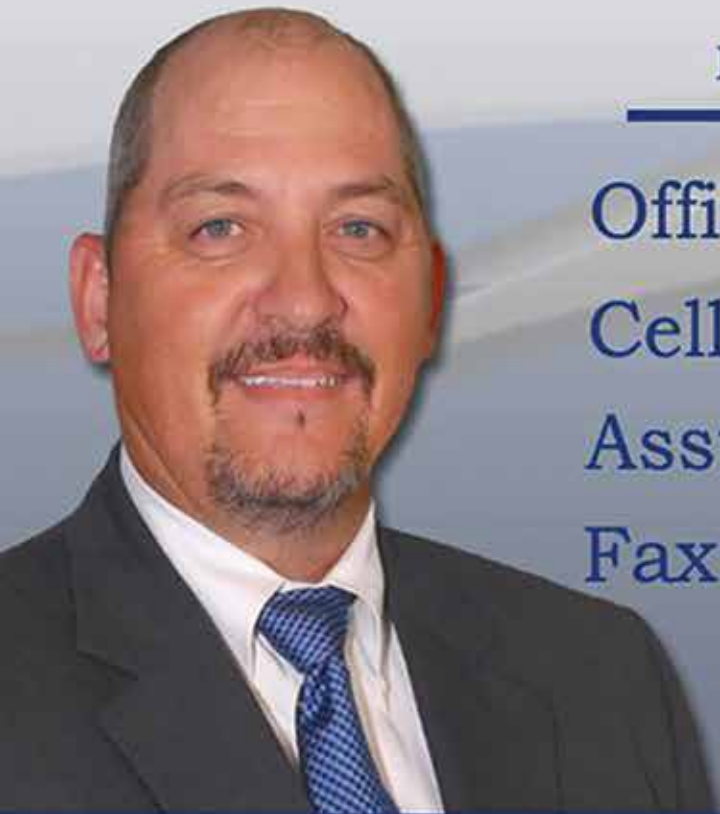
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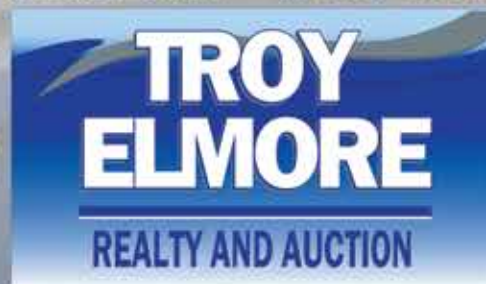
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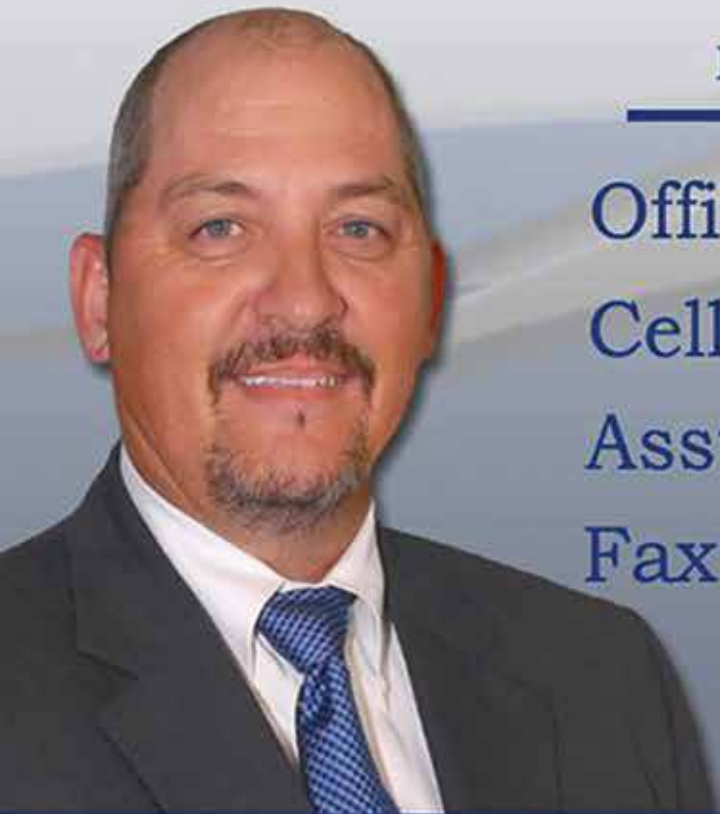
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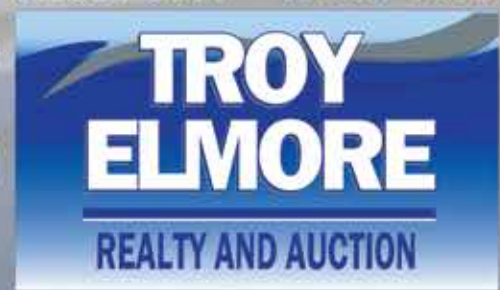
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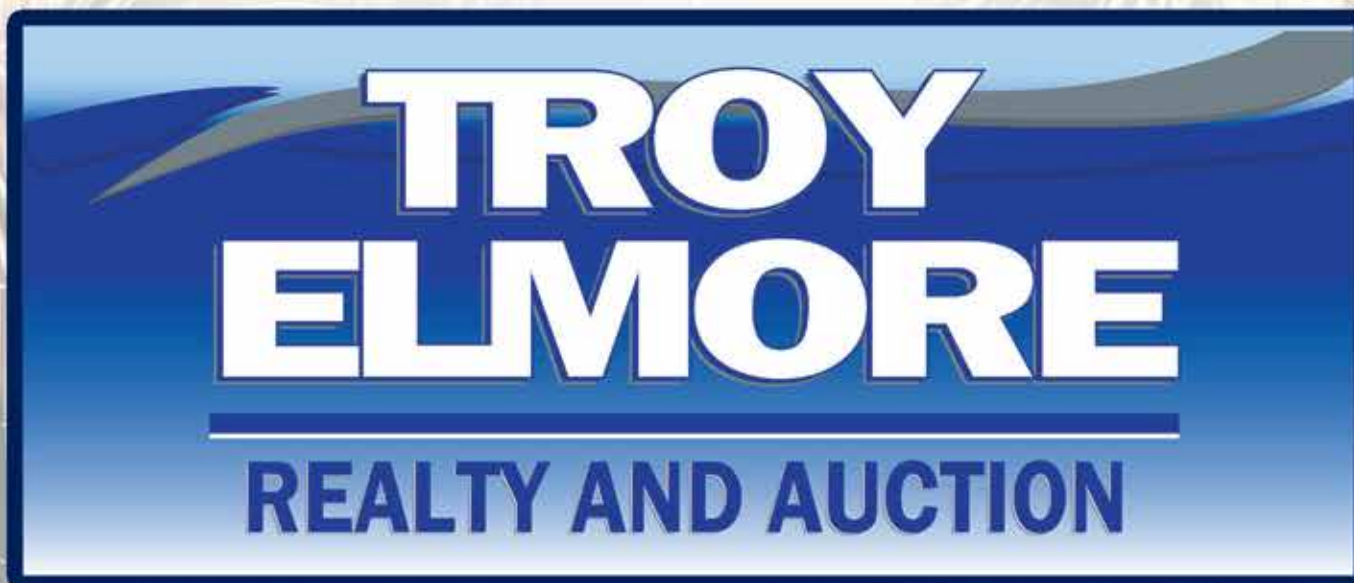
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