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Special Feature

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The Latest Inspirational Short Stories From Pastor/Coach Tee Jackson

By Ali Elizabeth Turner

In September of 2021, Athens Now was pleased to showcase a collection of short stories written by pastor and coach, Tee Jackson. And now, he has several more that are varied as to topic, and all of them are easy to understand. The three latest are entitled *When Our Time Comes*, *Access To Holy God*, and *Legacies Do Matter!*

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What Makes Ronnie Roll

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By Randy Ricketts

There have been and will be a lot of discussions this year, 2023, about the electrification goals and the implementation of the Inflation

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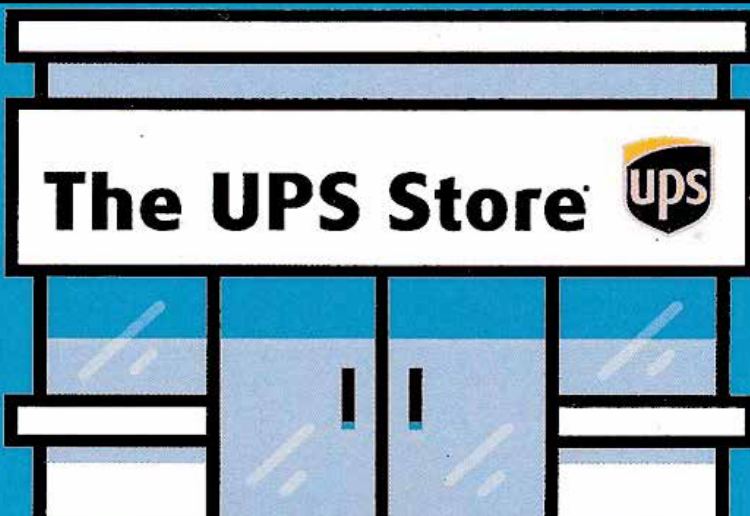
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Publisher's Point

Sticking With Love

On Monday, we had the annual march and celebration of the life of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., and it was held once again on the Limestone County Courthouse Square. The weather was much more pleasant than in past years, and this year Athens Limestone NAACP President Wilbur Woodruff read one of my favorite quotes of Dr. King; the one about “sticking with love.”

Below is the context of the statement, and the scripture to which it refers, I Jn 4

And I say to you, I have also decided to stick with love, for I know that love is ultimately the only answer to humankind's problems. And I'm going to talk about it everywhere I go. I know it isn't popular to talk about it in some circles today. And I'm not talking about emotional bosh when I talk about love; I'm talking about a

strong, demanding love. For I have seen too much hate. [...] and I say to myself that hate is too great a burden to bear. I have decided to love. If you are seeking the highest good, I think you can find it through love. And the beautiful thing is that we aren't moving wrong when we do it, because John was right, God is love. He who hates does not know God, but he who loves has the key that unlocks the door to the meaning of ultimate reality.

I am not sure I understand the “aren't moving wrong” phrase, but this I know, hate is indeed too great a burden to bear. When I was a flaming feminist and screechy socialist, many many moons ago, I allowed myself for a brief time to get caught up in hate. It did not manifest itself in violence, but the violence was definitely in my heart. In 1969 I saw

a movie called *Easy Rider* that had Jack Nicholson, Dennis Hopper and Peter Fonda in it. That movie enraged me, and I stayed enraged until Jesus began to peel off the hard stuff and show me that He loved everyone, not just druggies; He loved shotgun wielding Louisianans.

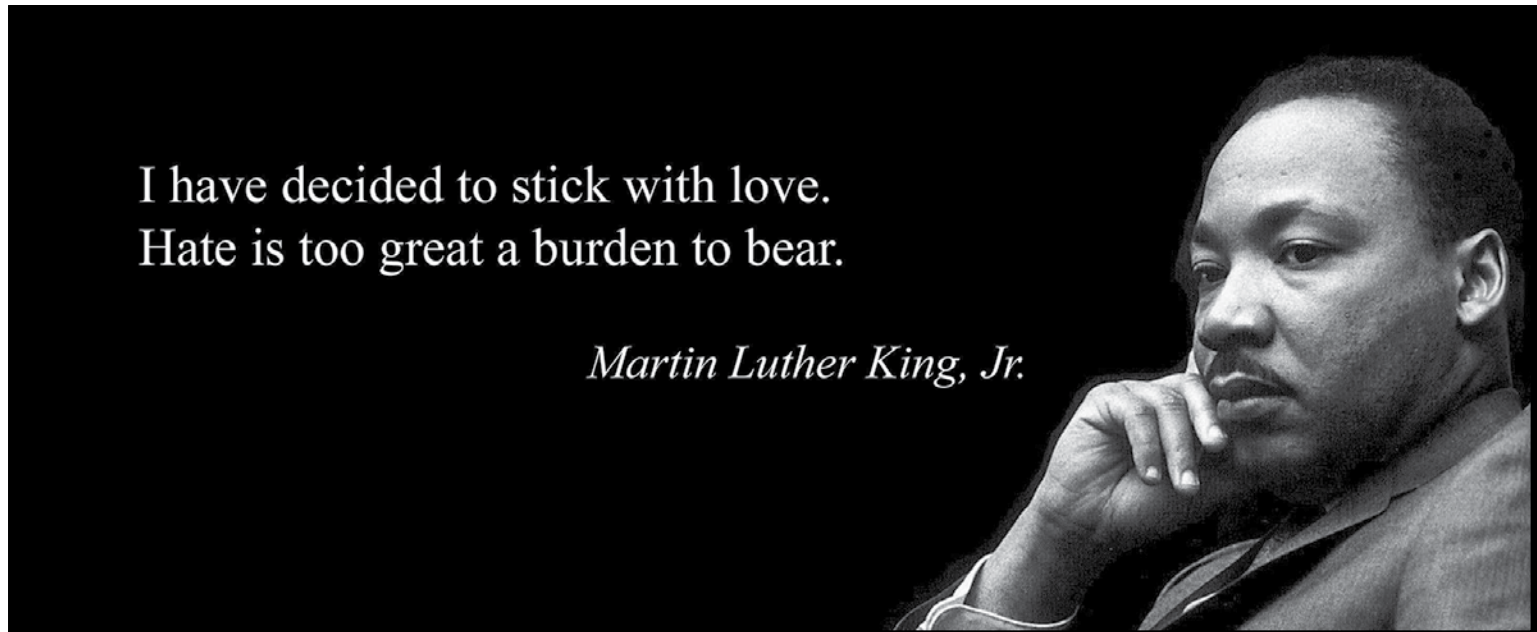
The movie tried to shamelessly promote the rebellious American youth counter-culture, the value of taking drugs, throwing morals to the wolves, and above all, disrespecting authority. And then, boom! Jesus People hit like a freight train at my high school, and I was forever changed. But the hate didn't go away right away. It was something that I had to throw into God's Heavenly In-box, and that began a lifelong adventure of learning to love the unlovable -- myself (and I can be unlovable) -- and anyone who crosses my

path. And I wouldn't trade that journey for the world.

Do I think that it's possible MLK had moments when he felt hate, even after saying that he had decided to stick with love? Most likely. He was a human under enormous pressure from within his own ranks and without. But the whole point and power of the speech is that he decided to stick with love, which to me means that if he strayed, he knew there was only one place that was safe, and he had to get back there, pronto! Let's make a commitment in 2023 to stick with love because hate is indeed too heavy a burden to bear.

Ali Elizabeth Turner

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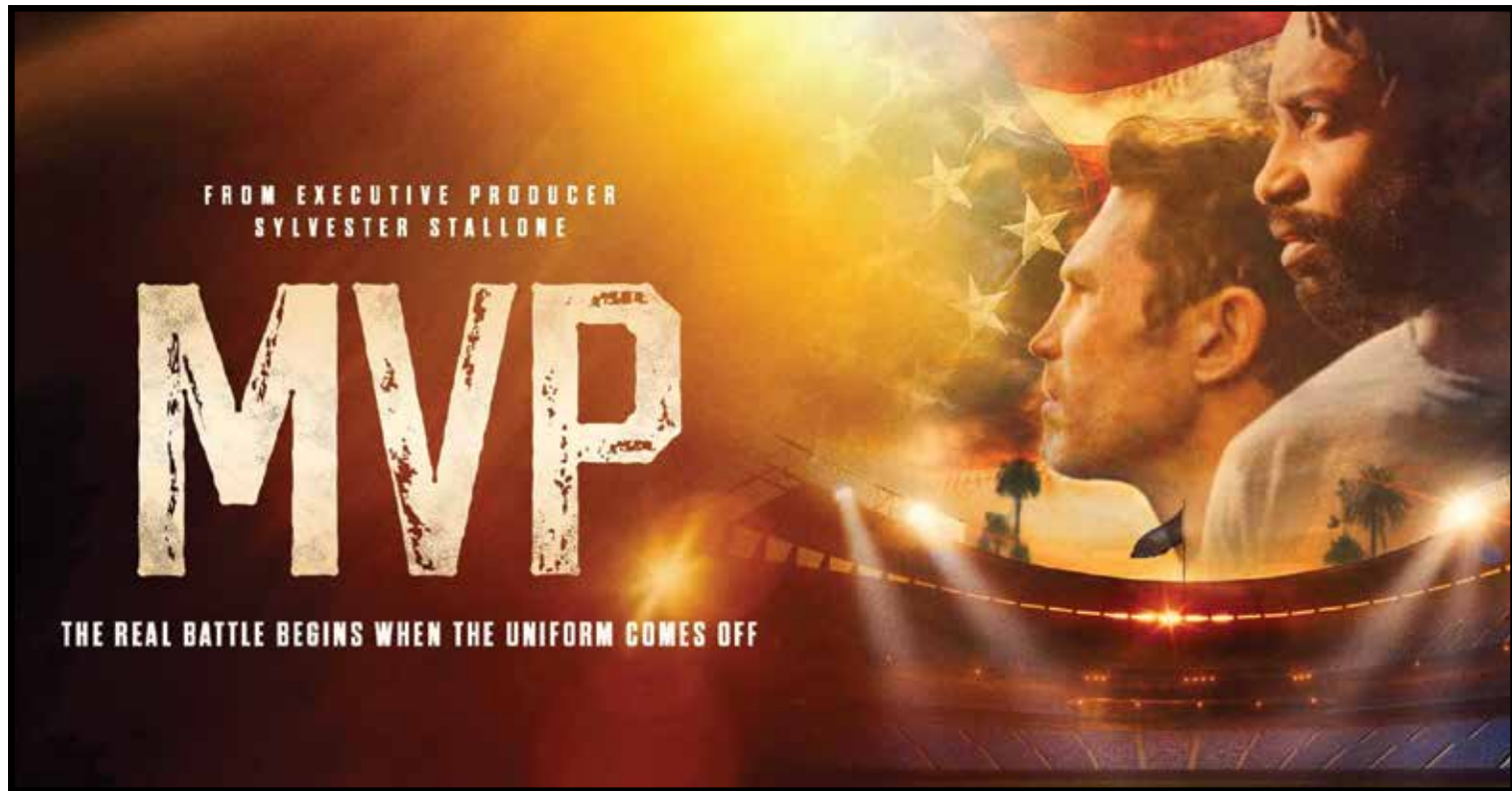
MVP -- Working Out And Working Through

by Ali Elizabeth Turner



A film that has Sylvester Stallone as its executive producer came out in September, and asked the most interesting question of two disparate people groups—retired professional athletes and veterans. The question is this: Who are you when the uniform comes off?

At the outset, it needs to be made clear that no one is trying to make what professional athletes go through on the field of play equal to what veterans go through on the field of battle. As Nate Boyer says, “On paper, no one would think there was a connection between them.” However, it has been discovered that the great grief in no longer having a uniform, a team, a purpose, a mission, an enemy and your battle buddies is one of the things that contributes so much to the difficult transition for



both groups into “normal life.”

The film is based on a compilation of true stories that were lived and collected by a man who has experienced both types of loss, coming home from battle in Iraq, leaving the military, and then being cut by the Seattle Seahawks football team. And, both losses occurred in the same year, 2015. The man’s name is Nate Boyer. He found himself really struggling, and with co-founder Jay Glazer, started

an organization that now has gone national, entitled MVP, which stands for Merging Vets and Players. MVP gets ex-military and professional athletes together at a gym and first has them work out hard for 45 minutes. That’s where the blood and sweat come forth handily. Then, they huddle up for the next 45 minutes and the tears, rage, doubts, questions, and then insistence on taking their next right step gets lovingly pounded into them by each other.

The process has saved lives. You have black dudes

and white dudes coming together for each other. You have females of all colors helping each other. You have NFL ex-players that have it all -- the Hummer, the wife, the kids, the house, and at the end of the day feel completely empty. You have homeless guys that have nothing, and feel the same way. Together they explore the concept of “survivors’ responsibility,” and forge a new life, new brotherhood, new locker room, new field of play, and battle together.

“Survivors’ guilt” is something that has been widely discussed in books, film, and culture and was brought to our collective attention by Holocaust survivors. The question of “Why was I spared and so-an-so wasn’t” can drive people nuts if it is not poured into the concept of “survivor’s responsibility.”

While it applies more to troops than players, the answer to the question may not come on this side of eternity, but the responsibility to come alive and live to the full is something everyone must embrace.

The film features several well-known names from the sports, radio, and film world: Howey Long, Tom Arnold, Randy Couture, Michael Strahan, Rich Eisen, Christina Ochoa, Tony Gonzales, Talia Jackson, Jarrod Bunch, Jay Glazer and Nate Boyer. There is also a host of people that no one has ever heard of that are crucial to the success of the film.

MVP is raw, real, and hopeful, and I hope someone in the Tennessee Valley will start a chapter. It is possible to be a member virtually as well. The film can be seen now on Amazon Prime, Roku, Hulu, Apple TV, YouTube, and can be purchased on DVD.

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McCurry Van And Car Rental: Raving Fan Customers And "Ten-Star" Reviews

by Ali Elizabeth Turner

For decades, McCurry Motors has been a well-known name in the Tennessee Valley, and it was "taking a risk and meeting a need" that launched the newest branch of the business: car and van rentals. Gary Stewart, who does outside sales and marketing for McCurry for all four of their North Alabama locations, told me the story that changed the trajectory of the business. "We were, at that time, a 'buy-here-pay-here' lot, and we had a van on the lot for sale. A family that was here for their vacation had a national chain not honor their reservation, which really messed things up for them. They saw the van for sale, came in, and asked if we would consider renting the van to them so they could actually go on their vacation. My boss, Wes McCurry, said yes, took a risk with them, and now we have more than 700 units available," he said.

Gary is in Limestone Leaders, our local Business Network International (BNI) group, and we are both members of the Limestone Chamber of Commerce. I am so glad that our paths have crossed, and one of the things that has spoken to me is Gary's loyalty to his boss, Wes, and the company itself. "Wes changed my life," he said on Monday when I interviewed him on the Tennessee Valley Spotlight Radio show. It is refreshing to find someone who after several years is still so happy in his work!

Gary went on to talk about how the business grew quickly due to word-of-mouth advertising as well as online reviews, and what might on the surface appear to be only a local rental company has taken care of everyone from the White House to the Memphis Grizzlies NBA team. "White House?!" I exclaimed. "Yep. I was at work, answered the phone, and the



McCurry takes care of everyone from the Memphis Grizzlies to local construction sites.



voice on the other end sounded very serious. They claimed to be the White House, and I thought we were being punked. I put the call on hold, Wes then took the call, and at first, he thought the same thing. Then I saw his whole demeanor change, and something convinced him it really was the White House calling. Turns out Mike Pence, the vice-president was in town for a speaking engagement. He needed transportation for his staff, and we fixed them up with a Mercedes-Benz Sprinter van," he said.

McCurry helps out Fed Ex, UPS, churches, sports teams, Toyota, and even other national car rental chains when they need it, and "the rental business, especially vans and fleets, have become our 'bread and butter,'" Gary told me. What sets them apart, and what has generated such a positive response from their customers, is that they don't require a credit card. You do need a debit card, but it as long as you have a valid license as well as proof of insurance, you are ready to go. There is no deposit required. They also don't overbook. If you have a reservation, it will be honored, period.

Another thing (besides keeping the fleets and cars in superb working order) that McCurry does to protect their customers while on the road is make sure they know that Pep Boys

nationwide will help them out if the car or van breaks down, or a new tire is needed.

The commitment to superb customer service has paid off, and McCurry will soon be able to break ground on a state-of-the-art facility that will still be located on Hwy 72 between Mooresville Rd and E. Limestone Rd. Gary is excited, and said, "Go with us on this new journey, and we will serve you even better!"

Here is what McCurry says about their products and services:

"McCurry Van & Car Rentals offers easy and affordable vans, cars, and trucks for rentals in Athens, AL, Madison, and the surrounding areas. Being a locally operated business, we strive to exceed expectations, provide excellent customer service, and offer a large variety of vehicles. Athens is our 1st location and one of four locations serving N AL, along with Cullman, Muscle Shoals, and Huntsville. We carry many vans, trucks, and cars to fit your needs. We also have parcel delivery vans, contractor, and job site vans. We rent short term as well as long term. Visit us at www.carrentalathensal.com, call, or go by one of our locations! Our team will do our best to ensure you have a pleasant experience! Rent local. Rent McCurry Van & Car Rental."



Gary Stewart, Marketing / Sales Manager

More importantly, here is what customers have said about them:

"I needed a rental to drive to a birthday party 2 hrs. away at the last minute, and McCurry Rental was right on time. Leah and John were so professional, courteous, and quick. I was in and out within 20 mins. I have found my new place to rent future vehicles from. If I could give them a 10-star I definitely would. Thank you, Leah and John. I look forward to doing business with you all again." --Tara

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Calendar of Events

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

Houston Memorial Library and Museum Book Sale February 4

10:00am - 4:00pm. The Houston Memorial Library and Museum, 101 North Houston Street in Athens, hosts a book sale daily. The book sale, museum and library are open Monday-Friday and the first Saturday of the month from 10am-4pm.

Silver Sneaker Flex™ Classes

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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.

Chocolate Walk February 4

1:00pm - 6:00pm. Do you love all things chocolate? Do you love great places to shop and dine? If so, you will not want to miss Athens Main Street's popular Chocolate Walk. The self-guided event will start at the Athens Main Street office (107 N Jefferson St), where walkers will pick up their pre-paid ticket(s), a map to participating businesses, and their bag to collect their chocolate goodies. Visit all the businesses and be entered to win \$25 "Love Bucks" that can be redeemed at any of the downtown businesses. Participating businesses will also have special sweet deals on the day of the event. Only 300 tickets will be sold for this popular event. Tickets will go on sale Wednesday, January 18, 2023, at Noon. They can ONLY be purchased online through Eventbrite. Tickets are \$8 (plus processing fee)—limit 5 tickets per purchase. Last year, tickets sold out within 48 hours of release. Get yours early!

Amvets Monthly Breakfast - Free For Veterans February 11

7am - 9:30am. Every month on the 2nd Saturday at 7am, go to the Alabama Amvets Post 21 at 22769 Black Road for a delicious breakfast open to the public. Only \$6 and Veterans eat FREE.

Rooted in Grace February 12

Berea Baptist Church will host Rooted in Grace (local Pulaski TN gospel bluegrass group) on Sunday night, February 12 at 6PM. Free admission. Location - 16779 Lucas Ferry Rd, Athens, AL 35611. Contact Gary Wilson 256-497-9763.

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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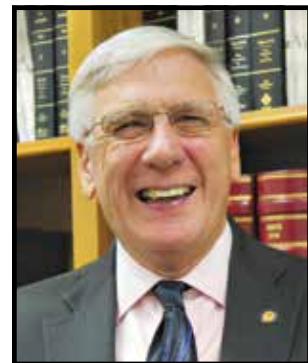
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What Makes Ronnie Roll

Scout And Birdie, Symbols Of Athens

by Ali Elizabeth Turner



Mayor Ronnie and I were still solidly in “New Year’s mode,” with much discussion of what happened in 2022, what is going on now, and dreams for the future. Somehow, we found a way to laugh about drooping eyelids and root canals, and the laughter was much needed.

Monday had been the MLK Day march on the courthouse square and celebration of the life of

Dr. King, as well as getting a chance to view and hear the winners in the MLK essay and art contest. Wilbur Woodruff, president of the Athens chapter of the NAACP, set the tone before we marched by quoting one of my favorite quotes of Dr. King: “I have decided to stick to love...Hate is too great a burden to bear.” The mayor added, “They have a great vision. The MLK contest has definitely opened

ways for kids to express themselves.”

The first thing we talked about was the fact that Scout Music House is coming around the bend and heading toward the finish line. If you are new to the area, the Scout House, which is located on the corner of East Street and Washington Street, is right next to the cemetery that is the resting place of the original settlers of Athens. It was built in 1938 during the Depression by the WPA. It has been many things, including the place where the Scouts met, the admin building for Athens City Schools, and as some old-timers have said, where they got their first kiss. Ronnie told a story that may be a legend, and he could not confirm it. “Supposedly on the stones of the fireplace there was Jackie loves Helen,” which, if true, probably refers to Jackie and Helen Greenhaw, who are now sadly both gone. The stones of the fireplace have been cleaned, and the conversion of Scout House into Scout Music House, a place where youth and others are going to be able to make some serious music is nearly finished.

After a two-year, COVID-induced hiatus, the Mayor’s Youth Commission had a chance to go back to the Birdie Thornton



Mayor Ronnie, members of the Mayor's Youth Commission and folks from Birdie Thornton enjoying their recent reunion.

Center on Wednesday. “It is one of the kids’ favorite things to do,” said the mayor, and added, “I am so glad we are able to go back. Everyone always has a great time.” The Birdie Thornton Center is another symbol of Athens because it demonstrates our commitment to protect and empower those who are developmentally challenged. It is a place of joy for all.

As a result of quite a search and selection process, it has been decided that the park on Pryor Street is going to be officially called Sunrise Park. Over the years it has been referred to as everything from Chicken Park (a reference to the old Pilgrim’s Pride chicken processing plant), Pilgrim’s Park, Pilgrim’s Pride Park, Pryor Park, and it was decided that Sunrise is kind of quirky and symbolizes a new day in Athens. There will be an

amphitheater built there that no doubt will hear the creations that come out of the Scout Music House. “It will provide opportunities for generations,” said the mayor.

“Nixle is going to be phased out,” said the mayor. It has been our way of communicating urgent weather situations, road closures, and more for the last several years, and is going to be changed to a platform called “Civic Ready.” “It is just a better product all the way around,” said Ronnie.

We moved to dreams. “I REALLY want to do a Miracle Park for kids,” said Mayor Ronnie, “something to provide for special needs kids. So, there was only one thing left to do, and that was pray about it all: people who are in tragedy, people who are in triumph, dreams for our town, and then it was time for Ronnie to roll.



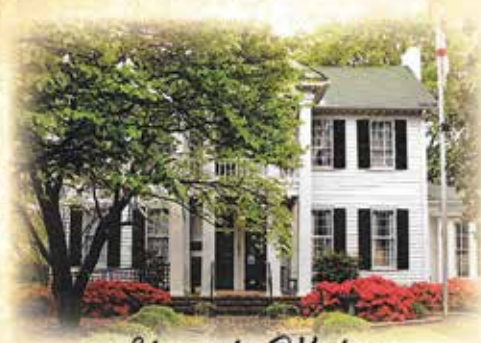
The restored fireplace at Scout Music House



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Tennessee Valley Spotlight



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Slinkard On Success

Keep Your Heart With All Diligence

by D. A. Slinkard

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



As I sit down to write this article, I think about all of the issues in life that seem to be popping up throughout the world. We live in some very dangerous times and some odd times. As I was thinking about the issues that impact the lives of people throughout the world, I started thinking about where the problems start. Proverbs 4:23 came to mind which states, “Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life.” Such wise words that we could use in a time like this.

We live in a time in which we are surrounded by fake things. I am not talking about fake news, but I am talking about the explosion of social media platforms and the videos being viewed – we need to be careful what we allow our eyes to see. When I speak to groups of peo-

ple, whether it be young or old, I want to remind them that many videos we see on the Internet are made for entertainment purposes only. We need to be mindful of what we watch, whether it be streaming on the Internet or watching television shows, because it directly impacts our heart. The images and sights go through our eyes down to our heart.

We also need to be careful of the music and the lyrics we listen to. Music is a very powerful tool to help influence the moods, desires, and motivations of many people. We need to be mindful of the lyrics that we listen to; just because we like the sound of the beat we are hearing, we need to be mindful of the words that coming into our ears. What we listen to goes through our ears down to our heart.

We also need to be care-

ful of the thoughts we entertain in our own minds. Our thoughts can be a very dangerous, especially the more we begin to dwell on certain things. I am a firm believer that if we think negatively, then more negative things will happen, and if we think positive, we will be able to get positive results. We need to be mindful of our thought process because what we think in our mind goes down to our heart.

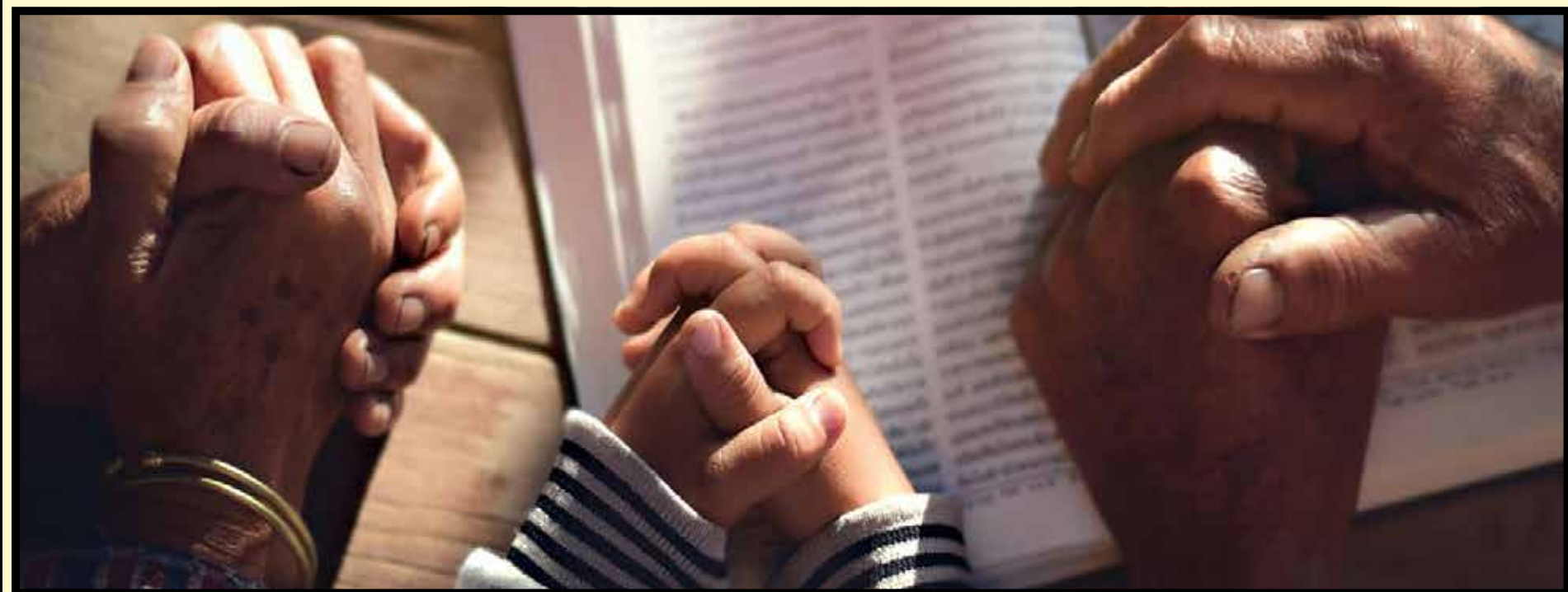
When we take the time to realize how important these three things are when it comes to impacting our heart and the world around us, it should force us to change some things. We need to be more observant to what negativity we are allowing into our heart. Everything that comes in through our eyes, our ears, our thoughts, has an impact on our heart. In our heart

is where love lives, and it is also a place where hate harbors. What does your heart say about you?

We need to protect our hearts with diligence and with extreme care. If we do not protect it, we will lose it, and we will grow cold towards others and towards the things that matter. When we look at the issues of life, we see these issues have come about because our hearts have grown colder to how things used to be. We have a society that is more interested in not hurting someone else’s feelings as opposed to being honest and truthful with the person. We are okay with lying to people and denying the truth for the sake of not offending someone else. It is high time we woke up and realized the idiocracy we are living in. If we did more to protect our hearts with diligence, we would see it is

not okay to lie to other people and tell them they can pretend they are something they are not. P.S. – a man cannot become pregnant. I cannot change my gender just like I cannot change my age. Sure, I could tell you I was younger or older, and it may make me feel good, but we must realize a lie is still a lie.

We need to focus on having the heart to show people the truth of how things are. We live in a day when evil is called good and good is called evil. If only we could get our hearts right, we would see the change we need and could bring it back our nation. Otherwise, we are going to continue to spiral out of control, basing truth on the feelings of others and bringing on more issues in life. We must keep our hearts with all diligence.





Clean, Green And Beautiful

An Introduction ... And Upcoming Community Events

by Lynne Hart - KALB Commission Member, Keep Athens-Limestone Beautiful

Let's start with introduction!

We at Keep Athens-Limestone Beautiful are so happy to introduce Claire Tribble as our newest addition to the office. Claire is the new office manager and will be the voice you will hear when you call the KALB office, or the face you will see when you visit.

Claire was born and raised in Athens and graduated from Athens High School. She then moved to Memphis to attend the Memphis College of Arts and received a degree in photography. Claire moved back to Athens in 2009 and has been here since.

When Claire was asked what she has discovered about KALB in her two weeks on the job, she said she has found that there is much more to this organization than she realized. "KALB of-

fers so much more to the community than I knew, and that most people probably realize," she said. "My first priority is working on the preparations for Earth Day coming up on April 15, which is a very big project – and this is just the tip of the iceberg!"

The KALB Commission is very pleased to have Claire join our team! She has already made a huge impact on the work to be done and we look forward to working with her.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Spring is a very busy time for KALB. We have multiple events that we are working on, and we'd like to give everyone a heads up so you can plan to participate.

River Cleanup

KALB's annual River Cleanup is scheduled for Saturday, March 25. The cleanup will take place from 8 a.m. until noon,

with breakfast provided to all volunteers. Supplies will be provided including trash bags, buckets, litter grabbers, and safety vests. The Tennessee Valley Authority is sponsoring this river cleanup, making it all possible.

If you are interested in volunteering for this event, please email KALBCares@gmail.com or call the KALB office at 256-233-8000 so we may plan appropriately. More information will be included in our monthly eNewsletter and on our Facebook page. Watch for more details.

Household Hazardous Waste Collection

Thanks to support from the Limestone County Commission, KALB will offer the Athens-Limestone County community the opportunity to properly dispose of many products that should not be placed in household trash. This will be a drop-off event, so residents will not have to exit their vehicles. A date and location will be announced soon.

Earth Day & Outdoor EXPO

Mark your calendars for this great family-friendly event! Earth Day will be held at Athens State University on Saturday, April 15 from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. As always, admission to the event is free and includes special entertainment. There will be interesting exhibitors, activities for the kids, food



Claire Tribble

trucks, a petting zoo, and more! We are very grateful to Athens State University and the Limestone County Water & Sewer Authority for their continuing support of this event.

Individual Cleanups

KALB welcomes our community to organize individual cleanups. If

you know of an area that is in need of litter and debris removal and would like to form a group to tackle the task, contact us. We would be happy to provide litter grabbers, safety vests, buckets, and trash bags. We want to help you help our community!



(256) 233-8000
KALBCares@gmail.com
www.KALBCares.com



Cooking with Anna

Rain, Rain Stay Today

by Anna Hamilton

So far this winter, Alabama has been a soggy, rainy mess. It has felt more like spring than winter, for sure. The gloomy weather can have a negative effect on your mood if you let it, but the rain is good for the earth and it can be good for you too. I read a quote this week that beautifully compared rain to our faith. "An umbrella cannot stop the rain but it allows us to stand in the rain. Faith in God may not remove our trials, but it gives us strength to overcome them."

Rain can cause massive destruction if the area where it is raining is not prepared properly. Sin in our lives and a lack of faith will wreak havoc on us if we aren't properly prepared for it. When we become Christians, we aren't guaranteed a life free of trials, free of rain, but we are guaranteed that God

will protect us and see us through to the end of whatever is raining on us. In Hosea 10:12, we are told to "Sow righteousness for yourselves, reap the fruit of unfailing love and break up your unplowed ground; for it is time to seek the Lord until he comes and showers his righteousness on you." We must stay in constant preparation for the rain to come. Staying diligent will strengthen our faith when the rain pours down upon us.

There are also times in our lives where we feel as if the rain will never come. Our faith is dry, we are weak, our heart has been hardened by the world we live in. We are desperate for rain to pour down in our lives and it just isn't coming. I have lived through periods of drought in my life. I have begged for rain and had to wait for it to come, but it did

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Rotisserie Chicken Market Salad

Ingredients:

Salad Ingredients:

- ¼ cup chopped walnuts (or nut of your choice)*
- 2 cups shredded rotisserie chicken*
- 1 avocado, diced*
- 1 apple, diced*
- 1 cup cherry tomatoes, sliced*
- 1 stalk celery, thinly sliced*
- 1 cucumber, thinly sliced*
- Mixed greens*

Dressing Ingredients:

- 3 Tbsp avocado oil*
- 2 Tbsp apple cider vinegar*
- 1 Tbsp spicy brown mustard*
- 1 Tbsp lemon juice*
- 1 tsp minced garlic*
- Salt and pepper to taste*



Directions:

Toss together walnuts, chicken, celery, and cucumber. Arrange over mixed greens. Mix the dressing by combining all ingredients. Drizzle over salad. Enjoy.

2023 Calendar of Events

by Tina Morrison, Tourism Athens



Every January, when I get a new calendar, all the crisp white blank pages remind me that each new year, new month, and even each new day is a chance for a clean slate. As I thumb through the empty unfilled days, I am grateful for all the new possibilities that lay before me and grateful for the fun events that will soon be added. I take the time to sit down and look through my previous year's calendar before it is archived, and I safely transplant important birthdates and anniversary dates to their annual spot on the brand-new calendar's pages. I reflect on how those prior year's events were celebrated, and I ponder briefly what in the world will be different when it's time to move this year's calendar in the archives.

The fact that I get so much joy from filling the pages of my new calendar is one of the reasons I love tourism so much. A very important part of any town's tourism plan is events. Whether we are planning and hosting the events ourselves or marketing and promoting others' events, a major portion of our job in tourism is managing a full, trustworthy, and up-to-date Calendar of Events.

Sure, on the surface, events seem like fun for your tourists, residents, and clients. But let's take a moment to look a little deeper into what those fun events actually do and why your business should include events.

1. Build brand recognition. Increase the hype around your business. Hosting events promotes your name and helps people connect with your brand. In addition, people generally travel with others in tow, so your reach will extend as event attendees bring their friends.

2. Showcase your venue. Planning your own events to showcase the beauty, utility, and overall serenity of your business brings people into the space and gets their minds working. Pictures of your venue just never do it justice. Let's bring people in!

3. Make face-to-face connections. Really connecting with your customers on a personal level has a big impact on their engagement. These important face-to-face connections are rare in the virtual world and can really solidify someone's interest in your company.

4. Strengthen your community. In addition to developing a connection with your business, people attending your

events can build relationships with each other and strengthen the community. There's power in attending an event and seeing other people who support the same cause. Meeting like-minded individuals in person will also encourage more active engagement online!

5. Build trust. This is an often overlooked benefit, but hosting events shows that you're the real deal. Not only do you exist, but you have the means to throw events! It doesn't matter how big or small the event is. All that matters is that folks are able to connect with your brand and your mission and see that you are here to stay.

6. Generate revenue. Hosting quality events generates revenue from vendors and sponsors and admission to your events. Gearing events towards tangible things that attendees can purchase also increases the event's bottom line. Offering the option for visitors to buy tickets online helps visitors be converted to paying attendees in no time.

7. Fundraise. Nonprofits know how to throw great fundraising events, but businesses can also join in and organize an event to fundraise for a charity. Giving back to the community is a great way to raise awareness about an important cause, and gain some recognition for your business too!

8. Establish thought leadership. Holding a seminar or teambuilding workshop for industry leaders establishes you as a driver of new ideas and collaboration. This provides value to your community and helps to establish your business as a valued resource.

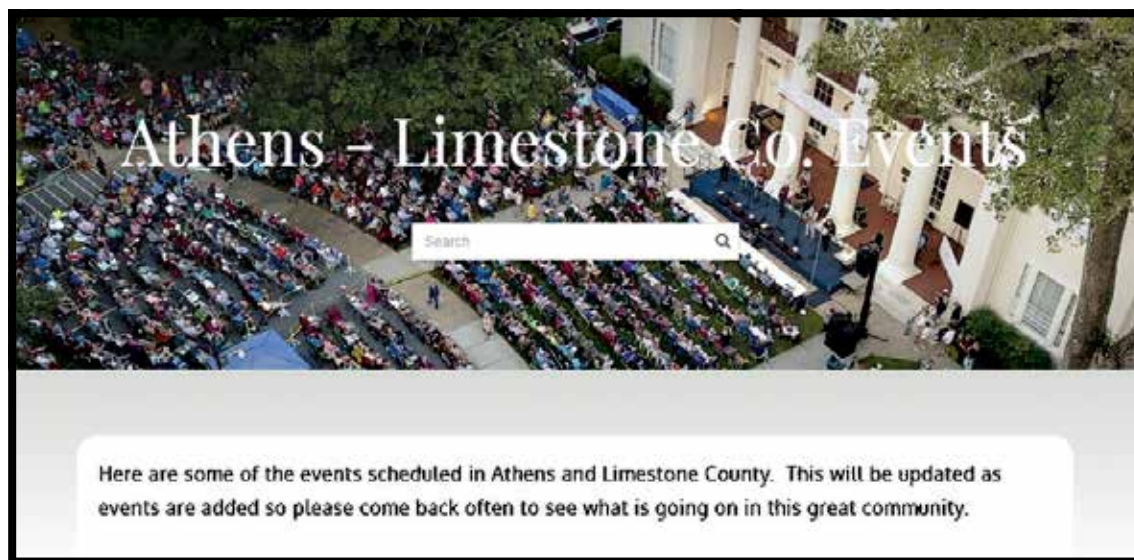
9. Have fun. What could be better than seeing everyone have a great time in a beautiful environment that you are excited to share? Even your staff, neighbors, and regular customers will be excited to have something out of the norm going on, and that excitement is contagious. When people enjoy themselves at your events, they'll be back for more.

Calendar submissions are flowing into our office right now as everyone is busy planning their 2023 Calendar of Events. Athens-Limestone Tourism Association takes the responsibility as keeper of the Official Calendar of Events for Athens and Limestone County very seriously. We know that businesses, residents, and visitors can count on us to be the trusted source for all the area events both large and small. Whether it is an event that is turning 56 years old this year like the Tennessee Old Time Fiddlers Convention or a brand new pickleball tournament, we are constantly working to keep all the events in the Athens and Limestone County area on your radar and in front of those planning their 2023 vacation with us.

Let's work together! Please help us by a) submitting all your events large or small to us to be included; b) saving the link to the Calendar of Events so you can check available dates before planning your next event; and c) sharing it with others throughout the year so they can enjoy the many wonderful events Limestone County businesses work so hard to host: www.VisitAthensAL.com Here's to a fun, prosperous, and eventful 2023!

*Tina Morrison,
Event Coordinator
Extraordinaire*

*Athens-Limestone Tourism
Tina@VisitAthensAL.com
www.VisitAthensAL.com*



The Latest Inspirational Short Stories From Pastor/Coach Tee Jackson

by Ali Elizabeth Turner

continued from page 1

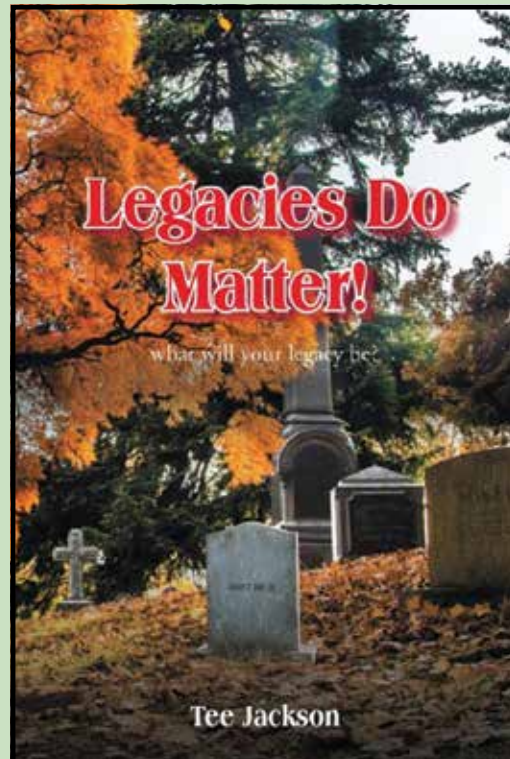
Tee has three loves: the King, the Kingdom, and the SEC, in that order. Of course, right in there with King and Kingdom is his family, and he will tell you he is a blessed man. Tee has taught and coached all over the Southeast, and has pastored there as well. He and Jackie also served as part of the patient support and visitation team at Athens Health and Rehabilitation, and Tee also pastored at Shanghai Baptist Church.

He has taught history, and has much to say about the power of mentoring and the influence we can have on generations to come. Tee has often expressed his gratitude for two people in his life who had a powerful, positive influence on him. One was a fellow who used to come to all of his Little League games when he was a boy, and was his most ardent cheerleader. The other was his fifth-grade teacher, Liza Lou Barnes, and she inspired him to become an educator as well as a coach.

Here is what Tee has to say about his latest volumes:

Access To Holy God

The book can be used to help anyone both find God and develop a better and more consistent relation-



ship with the Creator of the Universe. When you have a relationship with God, your access can be constant and instant. Tee has walked with God for almost all his life, and says with gratitude, “I cannot remember a time in my life when I did not have access to Holy God! Being a Christian is not a religion, it is a relationship. It is a daily walk. We are God’s children, and he wants to commune with us.”

When Our Time Comes

This book can be used as a guide, as a resource and as inspiration for those who are dealing with serious personal illness, dealing with the passing of a friend, a relative, or maybe just facing an uncertain future. The scripture references refer to everyone, though specifically refer to those who know

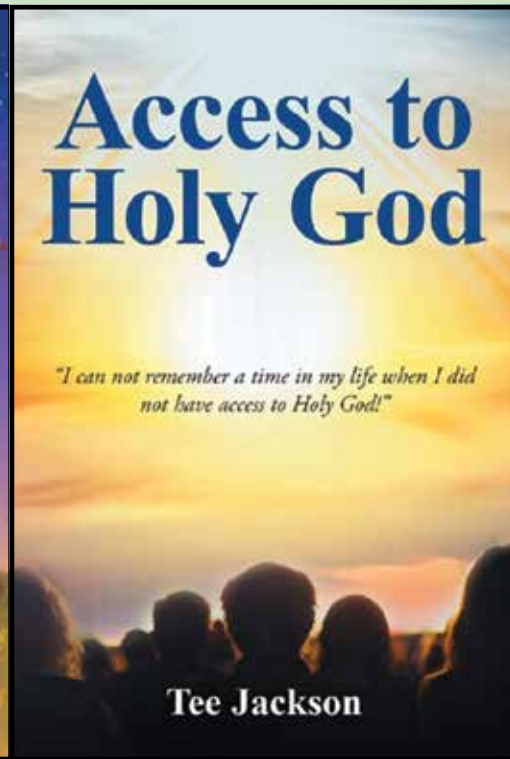


Christ as their personal savior.

Legacies Do Matter! What Will Your Legacy Be?

Legacies Do Matter! is an inspiring book that shows how God is still at work in the lives of His people. The message is ideal for all ages and makes an affordable gift for anyone on any occasion. The book is an excellent resource to use for individual or group devotionals or studies. Each chapter of each book by this author will stir your mind and challenge your heart to grow closer in your walk with the Lord. It is the author’s desire that you, the reader, will be both challenged and encouraged to grow closer to the Lord and experience His goodness.

One of the recurring



themes in Tee’s books is the need for, as well as the power of, perseverance. It is one of the greatest lacks in our culture as well as the church, and these volumes challenge gently to go the extra mile with others and yourself.

Each book is an expression of gratitude to God for the blessings in Tee’s life, although he, like all other human beings, has had his share of hard times. He says that at the age of 72, as he has just finished his latest set of books, he can still feel the power and effect of his mother’s prayers.

Jackie had grandparents who married at the age of 17 and were married for 81 years. When they had been married for 65 years, then 70, then 75, and then 80 years, they received official letters from the President of

the United States that was in office at the time on White House stationery, and Grannie and Pawpaw lived to be close to 100. Tee says that one of their special gifts was to make every grandchild feel like “the favorite,” and to this day, this loving couple is setting an example leaving a legacy. This is just a sample of the stories you will find in Tee’s books, and you can find them online at Amazon and Christian Faith Publishing. They make great gifts, and are reasonably priced. Business owners and bosses may want to buy them for their employees to encourage them. No matter who you are, you are going to want to get several for yourself and others, and prepare to be edified!



PlayAction Sports

2023 Begins With Honors, Signings And Milestones

by Tim Lambert

Tune in for the PlayAction Sports Update, three times each weekday on 1080 AM WKAC. Visit us online at www.pasnetwork.net! email: playactionsports@hotmail.com



All-state football teams were announced that included James Clemens' Gio Lopez (Class 7A first team) and teammates Jamal Mayers and Ty Doughty (second team). Clements' Jayden Gilbert made 3A second team.

Congratulations to James Clemens' Emma Plummer for her soccer scholarship to Auburn-Montgomery and Hunter Harris on his commitment to Columbia State Community College baseball. Athens Bible School's Hannah Britnell signed a cross-country scholarship with Southern Union. East Limestone's Raegan Kelley made a soccer commitment to East Central Community College. Ardmore softball's Ella Singletary and Addison Kilgore inked with UT-Southern and Andrew College respectively.

Three local basketball players recently hit the 1,000-point mark: Congratulations to Athens Bible School's Brayden Suggs, Elkmont's Tylee Thomas and Tanner's Skylar Townsend.

Basketball highlights:

- Calhoun M 83, Huntingdon JV 71
- Calhoun W 79, Huntingdon JV 28
- Calhoun M 60, Beville State 58
- Calhoun W 56, Southern Union 53
- Calhoun M 92, Tennessee Valley Prep 78
- Calhoun M 92, Marion Military Institute 88
- ABS VB 67, J.B. Pennington 40
- ABS VB 59, Alabama School of Cybertech 42
- ABS VG 52, Alabama School of Cybertech 14
- ABS VB 65, Valley Head 49
- ABS VB 56, East Lawrence 54
- ABS VG 35, Cullman Christian 18

- ABS VB 46, Cullman Christian 9
- Ardmore VG 72, Columbia 48
- Ardmore VG 50, Brewer 35
- Ardmore VG 50, Addison 46
- Ardmore VG 53, Danville 33
- Ardmore VG 63, Elkmont 60
- Ardmore VG 58, West Morgan 44
- Athens VG def. Giles County
- Athens VB 75, Kate Smith DAR 51
- Athens VB 51, Hillcrest-Tuscaloosa 39
- Athens VG 73, Brooks 16
- Athens VB 69, Marshall County (TN) 62
- Athens VG 40, Austin 32
- Athens VB 49, Tullahoma 46
- Athens VB 49, Madison Academy 47
- Athens VG 55, Madison Academy 46
- Athens VB 60, Winfield 41
- Athens VG 62, Columbia 37
- Athens VB 61, Columbia 58

- Clements VG 42, Rogers 34
- Clements VG 63, West Limestone 39
- Clements VG 60, Brooks 27
- Clements VB 64, Giles County 46
- Clements VG 60, Midfield 47
- Clements VG 82, Sumter Central 29
- Clements VG 70, Marion County 27
- Clements VB 50, Elkmont 47
- Clements VG 67, Elkmont 38
- Clements VG 81, Tanner 11
- East Limestone VB 45, Tanner 44
- East Limestone VG 75, Tanner 37
- East Limestone VG 59, Mae Jemison 36
- East Limestone VB 62, Moore County (TN) 58
- East Limestone VG 44, Rogers (OH) 40
- East Limestone VB 62, Marshall County (TN) 54
- East Limestone VB 66, Ard-

- more 39
- East Limestone VG 56, Ardmore 39
- Elkmont VB 60, Brewer 57
- Elkmont VG 54, Ardmore 38
- Elkmont VB 60, Rogers 54
- James Clemens VB 73, Scottsboro 53
- James Clemens VG 42, Scottsboro 35
- James Clemens VB 58, Tullahoma 45
- James Clemens VG 66, Fairview 64
- James Clemens VG 71, Austin 34
- James Clemens VB 66, Florence 44
- James Clemens VG 52, Florence 37
- Lindsay Lane VB 61, Elkmont 42
- Lindsay Lane VG 41, Tanner 38
- Lindsay Lane VB 49, Falkville 33
- Lindsay Lane VG 62, Falkville

- 59
- Lindsay Lane VG 53, Whitesburg Christian 30
- Tanner VB 48, West Limestone 44
- Tanner VB 54, Sylvania 53
- Tanner VB 66, Alabama School of Cybertech 43
- Tanner VG 61, Alabama School of Cybertech 9
- Tanner VB 70, Lindsay Lane 50
- Tanner VB 62, Whitesburg Christian 53
- Tanner VG 51, Whitesburg Christian 41
- Tanner VB 70, Clements 43
- West Limestone VG 57, Tanner 23
- West Limestone VB 61, Ardmore 21
- West Limestone VG 62, Ardmore 50
- West Limestone VG 41, Phil Campbell 37
- West Limestone VG 51, Westminster 43

Indoor Track:

At the Icebreaker meet, James Clemens' boys' 4x800-meter relay team won their event, the boys' and girls' 4x400 teams were second and third and the Jets' Benjamin Thomason was third in the long jump. At the JV Meet #2, James Clemens' Lucas Downing won the high jump with Lindsay Lane's Kade Kirkpatrick as runner-up. Athens High's Jayshon Ridgle won the boys' 60-meter hurdles at the Martin Luther King Indoor Classic #1; Malea Wiggins finished second in the girls' shotput. At the #2 meet, James Clemens' boys' and girls' 4x800-meter relay teams finished second; the boys' 4x400-meter team was third. Tramani Osley was also third in the girls' triple jump.



Ardmore softball players Ella Singletary and Addison Kilgore signed scholarships with UT-Southern and Andrew College (courtesy photo).

Southeast Quality Heating And Air Conditioning: 25 Years As An Alabama Contractor

by Randy Ricketts

continued from page 1

Reduction Act. This bill that was approved in 2022, will provide everyone with some type of energy rebate or tax credit for implementing electrification energy reduction measures. These can be in the form of:

- Energy Star Heat Pump - heating and air conditioning
- Energy Star cook tops
- Heat pump water heaters
- Energy Star doors and windows
- Air seal and insulation
- We provide 100% financing on qualifying HVAC replacement systems

We have already seen a period of cold weather with temperatures lower than normal for our area. This has resulted in utility bills being 20% higher than normal for most customers. The recent extended cold weather period with temperatures dipping below 23°F resulted in a lot of frozen water pipes. This and the rolling blackouts caused the inside home temperatures to decrease to upper 50s and lower

60s. This was a direct result of air sealing and inadequate insulation. Air sealing prevents or reduces air infiltration into the home and insulation maintains the internal temperatures.

Air sealing is an activity that is implemented to reduce the amount of outside air that leaks into the building or home. This infiltration must be conditioned (heated, cooled, filtered, and dehumidified) so that the comfort levels inside the home are maintained. The greater the difference between the inside temperature and the outside temperature, the greater the energy usage will be to maintain the home.

The best improvement to reduce energy usage is to limit the infiltration into the home. This is done by applying spray polyurethane foam directly onto the walls and roof deck of the new home or onto the roof deck of an existing home. This will provide air sealing into the ceiling and air penetrations in the attic and provide additional insulation there as well. By closing off the

soffit vents and preventing air from entering the attic, the attic will now stay <10°F difference from the adjoining floor temperature. If the HVAC ductwork is in the attic, it is now inside a conditioned space and the heat gain factor is reduced.

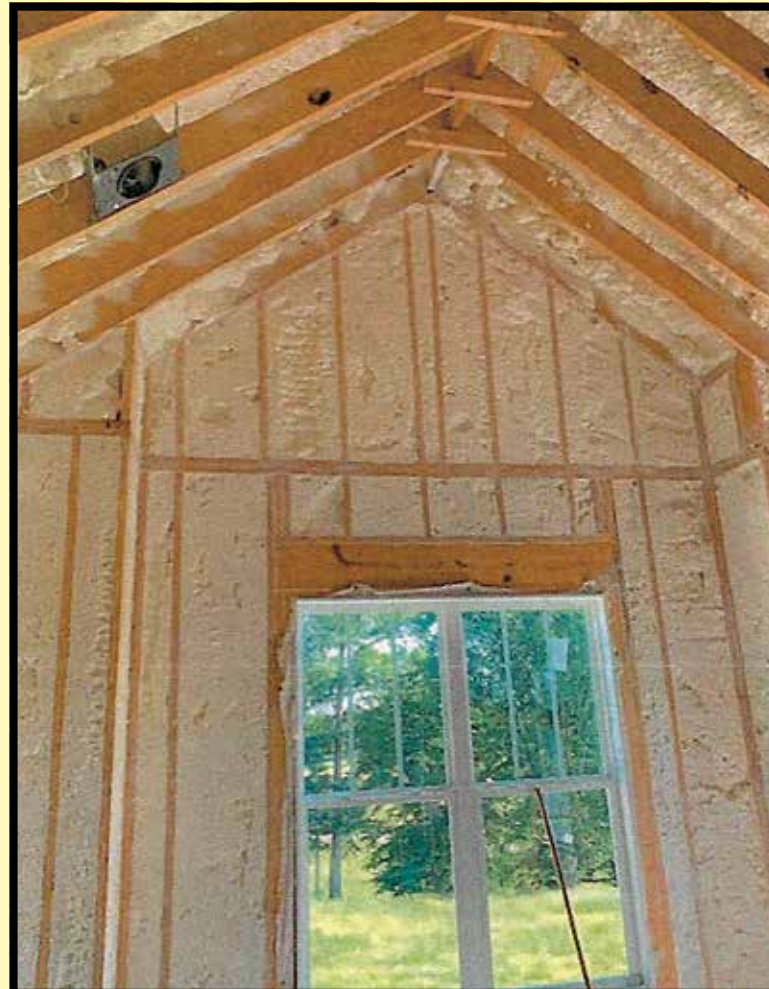
The EPA (Environmental Protection Agency) estimates that homeowners can save an average of 15% on heating and cooling costs by air sealing and insulating. Some examples of air sealing are:

- Caulking or foam around doors and windows
- Sealing leaks into the attic
- Sealing leaks into the foundation

In new construction, air sealing can reduce air changes per day from 8 to 11 down to 2 to 5 ACD. This reduction in infiltration will reduce the amount of energy required to heat or cool the home. This reduces wasted energy and results in lower and more stable heating and cooling costs.

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, make sure it is insulated and air sealed with spray polyurethane foam. If you want to make sure it is done correctly then make sure it is done by Southeast Quality HVAC! 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. We are currently hiring HVAC installers and spray foam technicians. Call to set up an interview at our office, which is located at 713 South Clinton Street in Athens.

Check us out on www.Energyright.com or our website www.SoutheastQualityHVAC.com



Familyhood And Interdependence

by Eric Betts

Assistant Director, Curtis Coleman Center for Religion Leadership and Culture at Athens State University



This Monday past, our nation set aside a moment in our calendar to reflect upon the lessons and legacy of the late minister and leader of the modern freedom struggle of the 1960s, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. The content of this article comes from my book, *Reconciliation, Geopolitical Perspectives of a Black Theologian*. The book addresses the concept of harmonious existence as taught by Dr. King. King often advocated the idea of "brotherhood." The term familyhood is an African concept identical to King's philosophy of brotherhood which emphasizes the connectedness and common humanity of all. King taught that the nations of the world, instead of diminishing and marginalizing sets of people in order to prop up themselves, must recognize that humanity is an interconnected family, and each part of the family is important for the race's survival. The concept of familyhood or the more gender-exclusive term "brotherhood" gives the idea that as human beings we are all interrelated. We bleed the same blood and are created by the same God. It means that the entire human race is interrelated, interconnected, and interdependent. For the blessings of familyhood to be realized, there must be a willingness to look beyond self-interest and self-preservation and recognize that familyhood is in all conflicting parties' interests.

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. emphasized the need for a "kind of positive revolution" of peace and familyhood over war. He called for world leaders to rearrange their priorities for the good of humanity. Additionally, King appealed to American leaders to humanize and appreciate the dignity of the poor and those serving in "low wage" occupations, by allowing them to have a voice that is respected in our society. This, according to King, requires a revolution of values that prioritizes a person-oriented society rather than a materialistic thing-oriented society.

Dehumanization through stereotypes or prejudices destroys the natural flow of human existence. The problem of dehumanizing others due to racial differences or economic classism is harmful to both the victims and perpetrators. It is damaging to a nation's ability to grow and flourish, and perhaps even survive, because we will not learn nor benefit from one another's background, cultural perspectives, and contributions. Those who are most negatively impacted by racism through psychological trauma often fall short of fulfilling their potential contributions to the larger society. Those who are marginalized due to race or class are not able to make those contributions to their society that will benefit the whole. Racism and classism may cause a society to overlook the potential

and expertise of individuals within the oppressed race to the detriment of all.

Dr. King addressed this concept in his book, *Where Do We Go From Here*, where he uses the term "interdependent" which describes the unique visible or invisible relationships each community holds with each other. Interdependence is the twin of familyhood. He says, "All men are interdependent." This interdependence is not dependency but is descriptive of the natural connections humans have or should have with each other. In other words, we all need each other in order to advance towards a more ideal and harmonious existence. He further expounds and states, "Every nation is an heir of a vast treasury of ideas and labor to which both the living and the dead of all nations have contributed." Such potential and expertise undiscovered may possibly be needed at any critical moment for the survival of the entire nation. The failure to recognize human interdependence is detrimental to the human family.

The source of hardline animosity between nations grows more out of fear than hatred. It is true that hatred is real; but hatred is the fruit rather than the root of the problem. If fear can be lessened, the cause of hatred diminishes. Fear can make its object unnecessarily larger than

life and more threatening to the beholder. When the fear is gone, the opposing party is no longer viewed as a threat to one's pride or their existence. The walls of fear that have taken many years to build do not fall overnight. It takes time, effort, and patience.

The alternative for making such an effort to understand the humanity of a perceived enemy is better than the risk of avoiding communication and contact. The more that someone comes into face-to-face contact with an enemy, it can help them see more of the human qualities of that enemy and less of the perceptions that rhetoric has created. It is easier to be disrespectful when one is oceans apart than when sitting around a table together. The more opposing parties sit together, the more they can build mutual understanding and trust between each other. It is better to spend time getting to know each other than to begin immediately to deal with the perplexing issues that divide the parties. The fears must first be dealt with. The ego of each party must be appreciated and protected by the other, and after the time for friendship and understanding has passed, the effort to protect the ego of the other becomes much easier. Too often, competing parties have exaggerated fears based on their wrong perceptions, which leads to the misinterpretation of words and intentions. This fear

which creates such suspicion must be overcome if King's vision of familyhood is to be achieved.

Moreover, preserving and defending the dignity of human neighbors is paramount. When understanding the familyhood of all peoples, and learning how to defend the dignity even of our enemies, we are respecting our own dignity. What is often overlooked is that we are all one gigantic human family with the same desires for dignity and significance in the world. Humanity is one family, and none are complete until all are complete. When one part of the family is hurting, the entire family suffers. The human family rises and falls together. It is this idea that the talented and iconic author Alex Walker advanced. She said: "We do, in fact, belong here, and have a right to be here, unmolested and protected in our homes, churches, mosques, and schools. We are designed, I believe, as human beings, to instinctively wish to protect and cherish each other. We must be taught—those who are not born sociopathic—how to be stonily merciful."

When this concept of familyhood is embraced by nations, it will usher in an era of a more natural, harmonious, joyful, and loving co-existence for the entire race where all populations may together function in their God-given dignity which the creator intended.



The View From The Bridge

Show Up And Stay A Little While -- With YOU!

by Jackie Warner

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

I was listening to an interview the other day and one of the things that stayed with me was a statement Tabitha Brown shared: "Show up for yourself first!" In life we show up for everyone and everything but tend to forget about showing up for self.

In 2023, I challenge each of us to set boundaries and establish more balance in our lives spiritually, mentally and physically!

- Laugh, cry...smile. Be present
- Commit time for yourself.
- Do a self-audit of your time, money and energy—where is it going?

- Rest. Have fun, exercise, travel -- do something that is just for you, not for work, not for school or for your family and friends. Just for you.

- Acknowledge your emotions: Let yourself feel it. It is okay to be in your moments!

- Forgive yourself!
- Move and nourish your whole body.

- * Our body does so much for us. It is our temple. Add water, rest, and goodness...

- Stop worrying over the things and people you cannot control

* Pray and release it to God!
Showing up for yourself is not a destination. It's a determined journey to choose yourself.

It is the foundation of self-love.
"Be yourself; everyone else is already taken." – Oscar Wilde

Until Next Time, Be Sincere, Kind and Intentional

Jackie Warner, Community Outreach Specialist


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My Tribute To TRIUMPHANT SUNG'S PRAISE

by Deb Kitchenmaster



Evening chores revealed that our mare, Arianna, had entered into labor. She would turn her head and look at her barrel, her mid-section where she was carrying her foal. What in the world was going on inside her? This was her first and our first Morgan foal. The birthing stall was all set up with fresh straw after removing all shavings. She left her hay and took off bucking. She then came to the birthing stall I was working on with a puzzled look on her face, "Like, what is happening?" No bucking, running, tail swooshing, or pawing would remove those new, uncomfortable moments she was in. The pain was inside her for her to work through to bring forth life.

Her water broke at 1:45 a.m. and at 2 a.m. a Morgan bay filly found her legs shortly after. Arianna blew out a big snort as if to ask, "Where did she come from?" It's kind of like when we have a transformation in our lives! We didn't know we had this life in us.

My intension was to name the filly some name with the meaning of fire or wind. I was redirected to name this horse after my daughter's friend by the name of Sung. As an infant, Sung was rescued by a passerby who found her in a landfill located in South Korea. She was turned over to the officials where they placed her up for adoption. A family from Oregon had the honor of adopting her. My

daughter was enrolled in college at Christ for the Nations in Dallas, Texas where they met and built a friendship. The naming of this filly was to make a statement and to decree truth over a person's life. Where the liar would hurl at her that she had no value, the Word of God said something different over her life, not because of her obedience, but because of Christ's obedience. As she became rooted and grounded in truth, she was made free inside. The last conversation I had with Sung, she was a drummer and working in the medical field on Mercy Ships, a missionary organization that travels the globe freely giving out medical and spiritual care. Yes! Sung 's praise reveals the triumphant cries of an or-

phan into the celebration of adoption whereas, we cry "Abba, Father," the Spirit bearing witness we are the sons/daughters of God. Not someone's choice or someone's opinion.

We had a little over 28 and a half years with this mare. She offered me and others many life lessons. Here's a couple. A gal had come out for a session. She chose Praise. During groundwork, Praise began to limp. She gave me the eye. I knew she was not structurally off; we were in a healing moment. I asked the gal to tell me about her left side. When she was a little girl she was involved in a car accident where her left hip was crushed. She had come through that ordeal without a limp or re-

striction physically, however, Praise was aware of trauma locked up from that accident in her left hip area. Trauma was released.

A caregiver to precious elderly people for over two decades engaged with Praise during a round-pen moment. Praise taught life lessons about resistance in a liberating, free, shameless way. Praise has indeed left her hoof prints on this gal's soul. There was a love bond between this human and the horse, Praise. It was real!

Praise hated bugs. She had an allergic reaction to them. Her sire (dad) passed this trait to her. He was a liver bay Morgan stallion from Wisconsin. She was foaled in Minnesota. Mosquitoes! One day she was protesting them flying around her, stomping her feet. Her front left hoof landed on my right foot. No bones were broken but I was on crutches for a while. That is when two young gals from Tokyo, Japan, came to stay with us for a month learning about human and horse interactions. They were with me when I returned the crutches and a life lesson surfaced about Christianity -- a crutch or a relationship.

Praise. Thank you. My perceptions have been enlarged because of you. I am so grateful I have spent these years with you.

*Your NEIGHbor,
Deb Kitchenmaster*

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Relationship Conflict Part 2

by Lisa Philippart,
Licensed Professional Counselor



“Never let a problem to be solved become more important than a person to be loved.”
- Leo F. Buscaglia

In my previous article, we addressed three reasons you may be experiencing relationship conflicts. These reasons were: trying to “fix” your partner’s feelings, not listening, and unwillingness to talk about how you feel. Now let’s take a look at some other causes of relationship challenges.

Resentment is a powerful source of interpersonal conflict. And it’s especially powerful when you insist on being quiet about your resentments and never acknowledging them. But here’s the deal...your resentments

will come out one way or the other. And if you deny your resentments on top of feeling resentful, it’s very hard to overcome them. I know there is a ton of pressure to make relationships work. Or at least to make it seem like they are working. Unfortunately, insisting that an unhealthy relationship looks healthy all the time is a great way to only make it worse. It’s hard enough to work through resentments with each other, but it’s nearly impossible if you’re not honest with yourself about them first.

Gaslighting is when you imply that someone is crazy for thinking or feeling what they do. And while gaslighting often takes extreme forms...manipulating someone into thinking they are literally losing touch with real-

ity...it’s far more common in milder but not necessarily less toxic forms. Here is an example: Each time your spouse brings up feeling anxious about her boss at work, you roll your eyes. Or, when your partner talks about feeling angry, you list four reasons why it doesn’t make sense for him to feel angry. When we gaslight our partner, we contribute to them feeling insecure. And when people feel insecure, they get defensive. And defensiveness only leads to more conflict. So the next time they say something about how they feel that seems irrational or absurd, try this instead: “I can see why you’d feel that way.” Just because they feel bad doesn’t make them crazy!

When you first fall in

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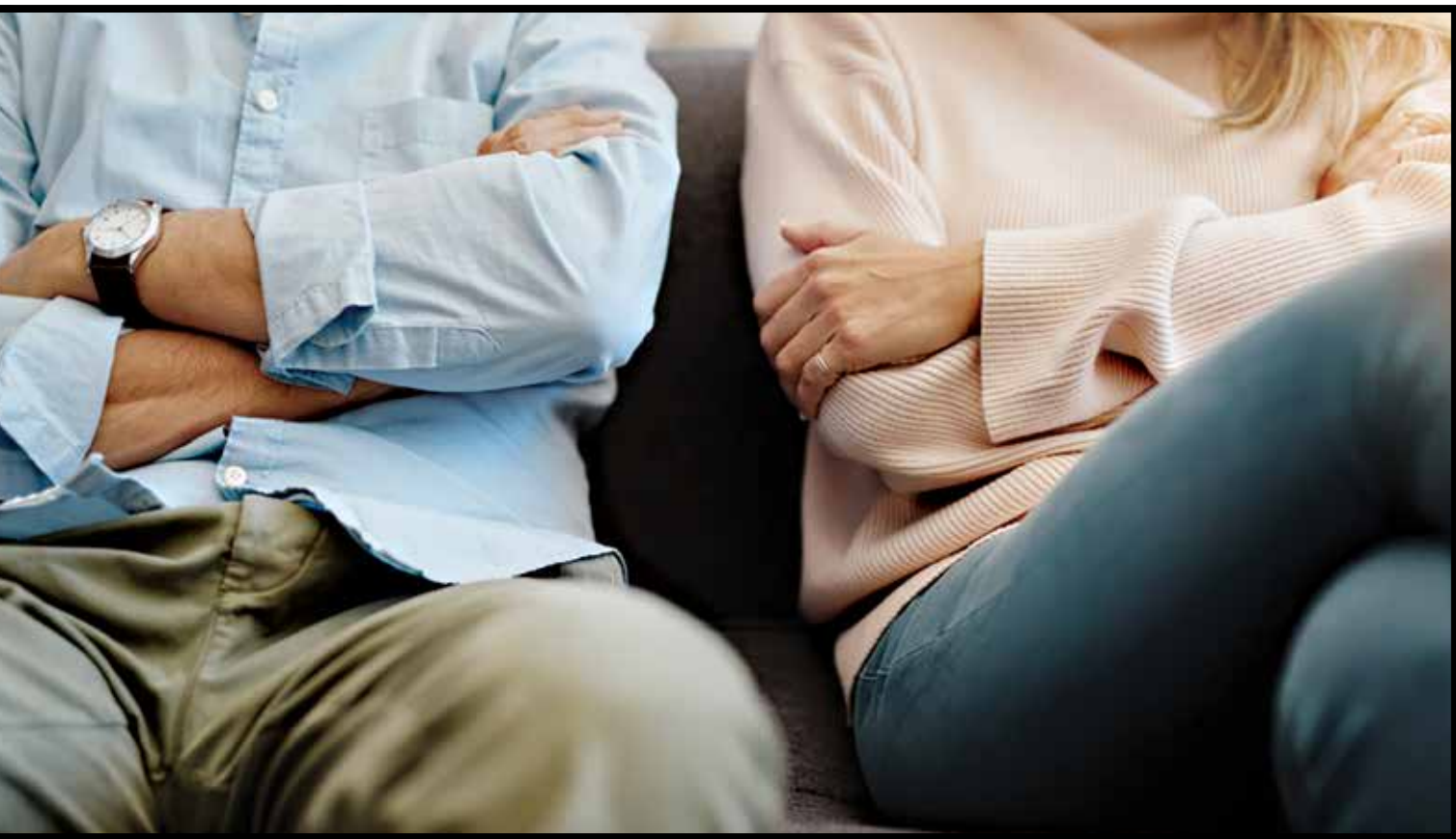
love, it feels like you and your partner are on the same page with everything. But as we all know, those early feelings can be deceptive. And years into a serious relationship, couples find themselves on very different pages about the biggest things: political views, parenting, religious preferences, etc. When you have major disagreements on values, conflict is likely to occur. Different values don’t have to be a deal breaker,

but you’ll never know if you can’t admit to them. There are plenty of examples of happy couples out there who have extremely different values in certain areas. The difference is, they’re usually incredibly transparent about those differences.

The challenge I have seen with couples is that they are afraid or unwilling to be open about what they value. I believe that you will only be able to navigate major value differences if you have empathy and understanding for your partner’s beliefs and worldviews. Have the courage to be open about your values. Because ultimately, it’s only when you are honest that real understanding and connection can happen.

I hope that I have given you insights into relationship conflicts and ways to recognize and address them. Ultimately, the key is the desire to work on your relationship.

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



The Alternative Approach

Osteoporosis - What I Would Do

by Roy Williams



Osteoporosis or bone loss is affecting more people today than ever before in history. Not because the ability to diagnose is better, but because the Standard American Diet (SAD) is lacking the minerals necessary to maintain healthy bones.

When diagnosis of bone loss began years ago, predominately women over the age of 70 had any bone loss. Today the average woman will have the beginning stages of bone loss by age 36 and full-blown osteoporosis by 48. Men now diagnosed with osteoporosis is at an all-time high.

What has changed over the last few decades? In 1931, the U.S. Senate had the farm lands tested and proved that the soils were over 80% depleted of the minerals that were necessary to maintain good health. The scientists warned us then that if we didn't figure out a way to replenish the soils, we would see degenerative disease increase to epidemic proportions.

We did not replenish the soils; instead, we began using fertilizer, which is only 3 of the 79 minerals needed. The results are degenerative diseases, such as

heart disease, type II diabetes, cancer, stroke, arthritis, bone loss and many more that are all tied directly to mineral deficiencies. Over time, your body becomes more and more acidic.

Acid is the enemy of your bones, teeth, and most major organs of the human body. Americans drink too little water and too many liquids that are acidic. We drink coffee, which has up to 208 forms of acid in the coffee bean itself; tea, especially black tea which is acidic; and alcohol, which turns to acid in the body. But the worst of all liquids Americans consume are soft drinks.

Most soft drinks fall in a range of 2.3 to 2.4 on the pH scale. When you understand that 7.00, on the pH scale, is neutral and everything below that number becomes more acidic, you begin to understand just how dangerous soft drinks can be to your bones and overall health.

It is estimated that it would take 32 eight-ounce glasses of water with 12 pH alkalizing drops in each glass to overcome the acid in just one 10-ounce soft drink. Remember, cancer loves acid.

Your blood must maintain a pH of 7.3 or you will



die very quickly. In order to maintain a blood pH of 7.3, your body will pull alkalizing minerals from your bones and use them to maintain 7.3. Over time, your bones and other organs become weak. Osteoporosis is simply weak bones which are lacking minerals. Remember, most diseases are deficiency disorders.

What I Would Do

Now that you know what causes osteoporosis, let's cover what I would do if I were diagnosed with it. The first thing that I would do is stop consuming coffee, black tea, alcohol, and most important of all, stop all soft drinks. I would also take the following products:

Ultra Bone Health: To balance my pH I would replenish the minerals that make up bone density with **Ultra Bone Health**. As the name implies **Ultra Bone Health** contains all the most impor-

tant minerals that your body needs to grow strong bones.

Humic Minerals: To make sure my body has every mineral I may choose to take **Hu-Minerals**, either in liquid form or capsule. This will assure me that I am getting all 79 minerals and trace elements that are necessary for overall health. It will also help me maintain alkalinity and at the same time support my organs, hair, skin and nails.

HGH Liquid Spray or Cream: For those who wish to go the extra mile, research has shown that the human body will build stronger bones and reverse many symptoms of aging when you increase your human growth hormone levels.

Here are just a few of the benefits of using this incredible product: an 8.8% increase in muscle, after six months, without exercise;

14.4% loss of fat without dieting; higher energy level; enhanced sexual performance; greater cardiac output; improved immune function; stronger bones; and mood elevation.

Remember, it takes 2 years to grow healthy bones. Be patient and follow these instructions for best results. God designed your body to maintain strong bones throughout your life provided it has the raw materials that are necessary to do so. These products will most-definitely support bone health and help maintain a healthier pH.

For more information go by Herbs & More in Athens or call 800-745-4408 or go to www.newtritionalhc.com.

*Your friend in health,
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Cooking with Anna (continued from page 13)

Rain, Rain Stay Today

by Anna Hamilton

continued from page 13

come. Sometimes in the heat of summer, the dry ground seems desperate for the rain to come. When we are waiting for God, we must focus on prayer and lean harder into our faith. "Be patient, therefore brothers, until the coming of the Lord. See how the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, being patient about it, until it receives the early and the late rains. You also, be patient. Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand." James 5:7-8

When the rain begins to pour down on our lives, when the blessings of God are raining down upon us, we must not forget where we have been. We must be thankful for the blessings we are receiving. Everything in our lives has a time and a purpose. Without a strong faith, we will feel as if our rainy season will never come. I have lived in the drought, and I have lived in the flood. "I will send you rain in its season, and the ground will yield its crops and the trees their fruit." Leviticus 26:4 When the timing

is perfect in our lives, the Lord will send exactly what we need. God knows us better than we know ourselves. What peace it brings to know that we will be taken care of, that the Lord will send us plenty of rain when the time is right in our lives.

This week's recipe is a delicious chicken salad, but not your normal chicken salad heavy with mayonnaise. This chicken salad has a light and tangy dressing making it perfect for a yummy lunch or quick weeknight meal. And the best part of this salad is that uses those wonderful rotisserie chickens that are ready-to-go at your local grocery store. It will save so much time! Serve this over a bed of greens and with a piece of whole grain bread. This is sure to be a crowd pleaser!

"But blessed is the one who trusts in the Lord, whose confidence is in him. They will be like a tree planted by the water that sends out its roots by the stream. It does not fear when heat comes; its leaves are always green. It has no worries in a year of drought and never fails to bear fruit." Jeremiah 17:7-8

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How To Be More Creative

by Mae Lewis

In today's culture, creativity is highly prized. Many people think, "Well, I'm just not that creative. Some people are born more creative than others." The truth is that all of us are wired for creativity. Creativity is like a muscle -- the more you exercise it, the stronger it gets.

Creativity is the ability to allow your mind to go to new places and then see those things into existence. All of us are made to create. Remember the story of how God created man? God CREATED man. And He made man in "his own image." We were created to create.

People often tell me, "You are so creative! I could never think that way." Everyone has the ability to be more creative. Creativity is the ability to allow your mind to go new places -- to create something beautiful, to solve a problem, to begin a new venture. Creativity creates something new that hasn't been seen before.

Creativity doesn't mean just letting your mind wander willy-nilly (although that can sometimes play a part!). Creativity often happens when there are parameters. The tighter the parameters, the more creativity is required.

Know the rules. Creativity itself doesn't have rules, but to BE creative, you have to know the rules for your given situation.

Music is a great example. Music operates according to certain mathematical rules. Jazz music is a highly creative musical style, and it relies com-

pletely on breaking the rules. The thing is that you can't break the rules unless you know what the rules are.

The helicopter is another example. The helicopter defies the laws of physics. But the machines and engines needed to operate the helicopter have to first abide by the rules of physics, so that they can break them. Make sense?

Expand your imagination. Albert Einstein famously said: "Imagination is more important than knowledge. For knowledge is limited, whereas imagination encircles the world."

Expand your imagination by letting your brain work in new ways. Try new things. Try new food. Try new tastes. Be curious. Be questioning. Make your brain do things it hasn't done before.

Leonardo Da Vinci was always trying to get his brain to do new things. One of the things he did was to write backwards. Try this: pick up a pencil and write your name backwards. Hold it up to a mirror to see how you did. Keep practicing this.

By allowing your brain/body connection to do this exercise, you are firing neurons in your brain that haven't been fired before! Think of it! Something new is happening in your brain. This is the first step towards increasing your creativity.

Maybe you listen to music. You don't have to like the music. Just listen to it. Listen to a classical piece. Listen to some rap. Listen to something you don't usually listen to. This is going to create new pathways in your brain, and begin to expand your con-

sciousness.

Open the doors. Each of us has a river of creativity running through us, by our very nature. The human soul is fluid. Think of your brain like a hallway with many doors. Each of those doors leads into more hallways -- eventually creating a vast maze. This is your brain...a virtual maze. But unless those doors are open, the water will only flow where you let it. The task of being more creative is to get those doors open so that the water can flow to those new areas.

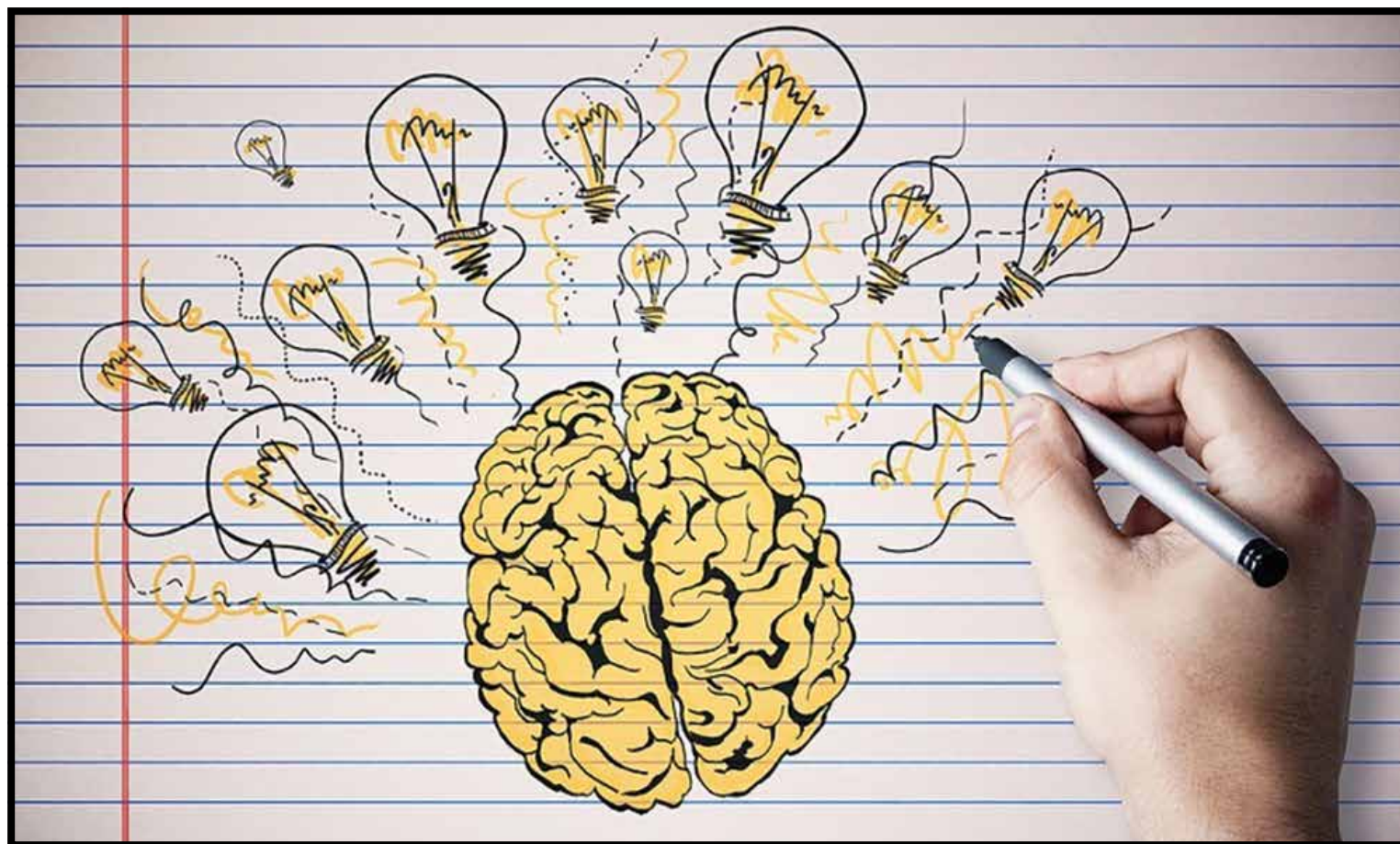
Creativity is like water. It is a literal spring that comes from inside of you. It is connected to your heart, and spirit, and body. It is a God-given gift to each of us, but it is often walled up with shame, pain, legalism. If you find that you are be-

ing hindered in your creativity, seek healing.

Creativity has to be given expression. So many of us have walled off our creativity and allowed the creativity to sit still within us. We believe that we are not creative, and that the work should be left to others.

This is not true. What IS true is that not everyone is gifted in the area of technical expertise. Not everyone can know what it takes to write a piece of music from your head to the paper...but that doesn't mean you can't write a song...and sing it for someone who can. Not everyone can sculpt a statue...but that doesn't mean that you should avoid playing with clay.

Your creative spirit is the greatest gift you have. Don't keep it hidden.





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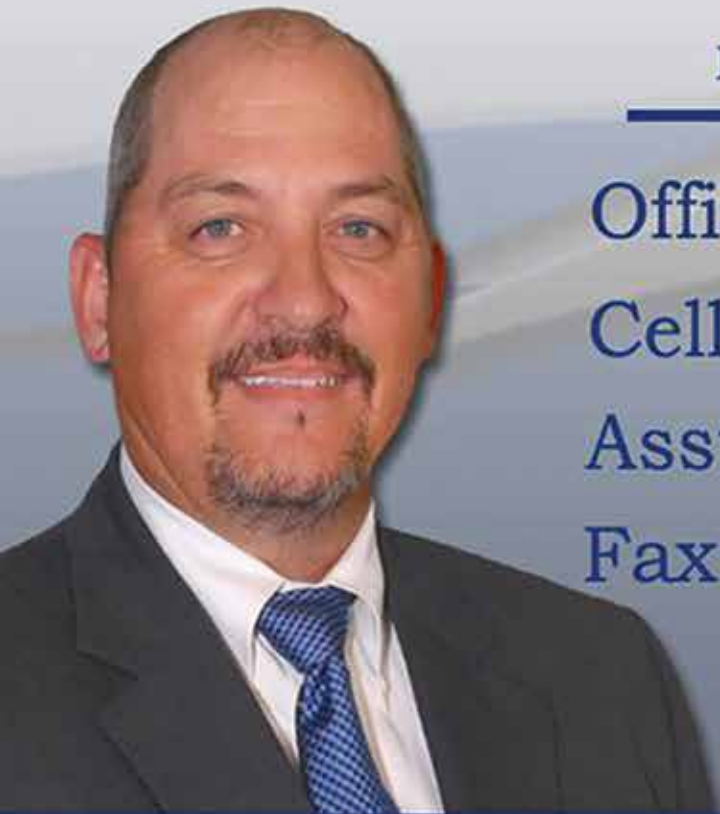
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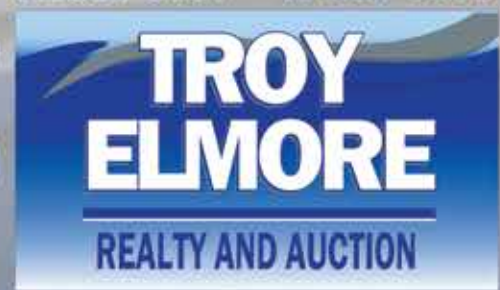
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“When things go wrong, don’t go with them.”
~ Elvis Presley



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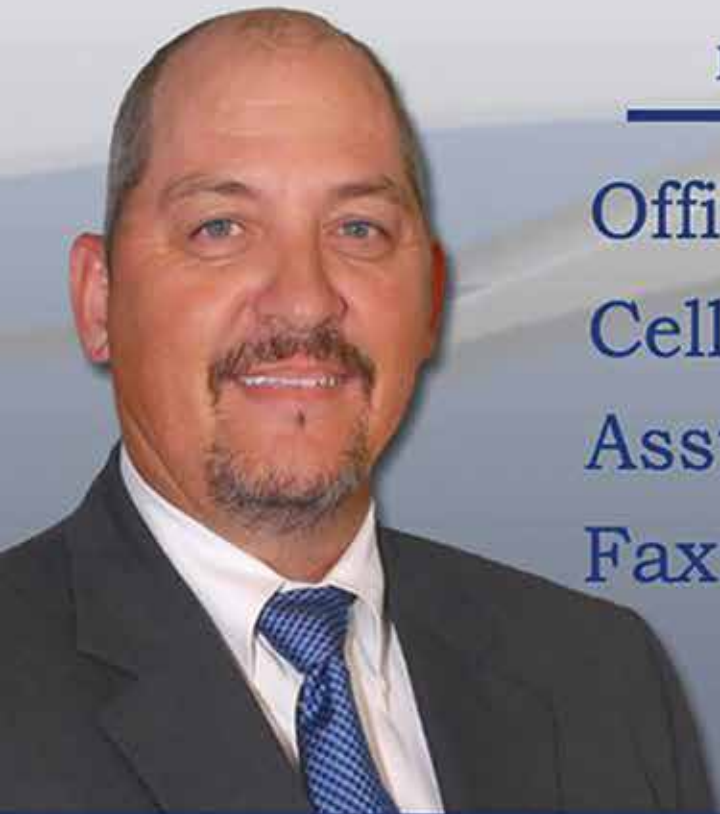
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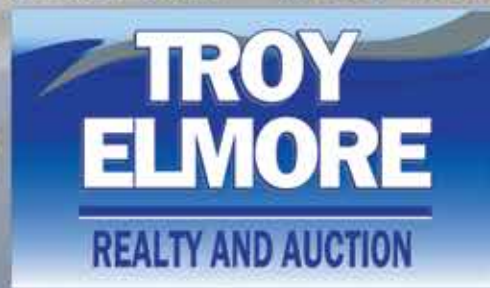
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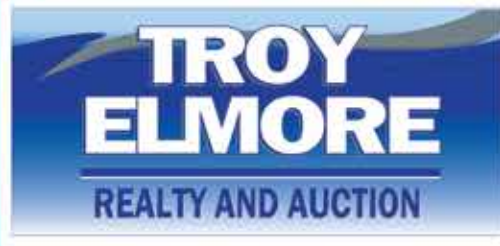


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