

July 2 - July 15, 2021

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REALTY AND AUCTION

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Clean, Green & Beautiful

2021 Beautification Award Winners!...

The Athens-Limestone Beautification Board, which falls under the KALB organization umbrella, annually recognizes...

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The Limestone Leaders BNI Chapter: *Visible, Credible, Profitable, And Fun!*

By Ali Elizabeth Turner

Every Tuesday morning, I happily roll out of bed and prepare for one of the best mornings of my week. This is because of my 7:30 a.m. BNI meeting which is held at our newly re-opened Veterans Museum at 114 Pryor Street in Athens. BNI stands for Business Networking International, and it is a global business build-

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Publisher's Point

A Tale Of Two Olympians

Recently, two African-American female Olympic athletes made the national news for two completely different reasons. Those reasons, as wildly disparate as they are, prove once again that America is the most wonderful place on earth. America is a place where dreams really come true and freedom rings more clearly than ever. It even rings for those who despise it.

Simone Biles is the most decorated gymnast ever with over 30 World/Olympic medals, and at 24 is defying everything about the sport. She has gotten better, if that's possible, when most gymnasts retire. She is doing harder moves, and is a fierce encourager of her fellow teammates, irrespective of their color. She is considered a GOAT, which stands for Greatest Of All Time. Her story is that she was born to a woman compromised by drugs and was adopted by her grandparents. She competed on *Dancing With The Stars*. And who could forget her heartfelt dance to Matt Redman's *You're A Good, Good Father* when she ran into the arms of her grandfather, Ron as the song and dance routine concluded?

After the 2016 Olympic Games in Rio, Simone co-wrote an autobiography with Michelle Burford. It was entitled *Courage to Soar: A Body in Motion, A Life in Balance*. Biles said,



"I want people to reach for their dreams and there are so many people who have inspired me with their love and encouragement along the way -- and I want to pass on that inspiration to readers." It became a New York Times best seller on the Young Adult list, and was also made into a movie.

By contrast, you have Gwen Berry, who just qualified for the 2021 Olympic team in a sport that I had never heard of, the hammer toss. Just because I haven't heard of it doesn't mean that it doesn't matter, but I don't think that the same level of commitment or training is demanded as is the case with women's gymnastics. And as far as functioning as a team member, I doubt that the other women on the podium, who had their hands



over their hearts while the national anthem was playing felt that they were on the same page, er podium as was Gwen. You see, Gwen has such an objection to the American national anthem that the sound of it apparently seems like a personal auditory torture session. She said, "I feel like they did that on purpose, and I was p*ssed, to be honest. I was thinking about what should I do. Eventually, I just stayed there and just

swayed. I put my shirt over my head. It was real disrespectful. I know they did that on purpose, but it'll be all right. I see what's up," she said. Later she added, "...I really don't want to talk about the anthem because that's not important. The anthem don't speak for me. It never has."

Okay, I am now officially confused. Gwen, are you saying that what *you* did was real disrespectful, or the fact that *they* did what is always done at the Olympics, i.e. play the national anthem of the winner(s) as they stand on the podium is "real disrespectful?" Either way, I'd like to give you the gift my dad gave me during my Idiot Era when I thought America was the most horrible place on earth. He said this to me: "I may not agree with you, but I will fight like h-e-*. for your right to believe what you want to believe." I just hope you one day fall in love with America, even with all of her problems. Maybe you'll even choose to be part of the solution, instead of part of the problem. I am not without hope on that score...

Ali Elizabeth Turner

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The VA Should Consider Hyperbaric Oxygen As A Worthwhile Treatment For Vets



by Senator Tommy Tuberville

The COVID-19 pandemic dominated the healthcare-related headlines this past year, and rightfully so. While the world focused its attention on the pandemic, other health crises continued in the shadows. So as we begin to put the pandemic in the rearview mirror, it's time to shine a light on the health crises that have been simmering just beneath the surface. Chief among these is the alarmingly high rate of suicide among U.S. veterans.

Tragically, the rate of veteran suicide is only increasing, not decreasing in our country. The most recent reports from the VA estimate approximately 18 veterans take their own life every day, though this number is likely higher when taking into account the accuracy of reporting from states on total death data.

Our veterans gave everything for this great country — often serving in far-off corners of the world and returning with scars, not all of which are visible. It is our responsibility — our duty — as Members of Congress to prioritize the care of the brave men and women who risked their lives to protect their fellow Americans. This is especially true for those veterans suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and mental illnesses that often lead to suicide. Why shouldn't we go the distance to make any treatment available that will help address this

epidemic among our veterans?

Serving on the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee, I've heard from veterans and veterans service organizations — such as Patriot Angels, Military Veterans Advocacy Inc., Fleet Reserve Association, and others — who point to Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy (HBOT) as a treatment that has produced positive results for individuals suffering from severe head and brain injuries. Through HBOT, patients breathe pure oxygen in a pressurized environment — giving their lungs access to more oxygen than they would normally get. The goal is to fill the blood with enough oxygen to repair tissues and restore normal body function. Many veterans say HBOT helps treat their traumatic brain injuries (TBI) and

PTSD — ailments that can lead to suicide. But perhaps most importantly, HBOT is a holistic treatment. Instead of loading up on prescribed medications, this treatment involves no drugs, no endless trips to the pharmacy, and no medicine schedules to keep up with.

HBOT is approved by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) as a treatment option for more than a dozen different conditions, including severe burns, infections, and decompression sickness. In fact, there are many former professional athletes, including football players, who have found success with this treatment for different injuries, including severe head injuries. But the FDA does not recognize HBOT as an approved treatment option for TBI and PTSD, meaning vet-

erans can't receive this care at VA facilities and must pay for it out of their own pockets. It's time that changed.

I introduced the Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapies (HBOT) Access Act to permit HBOT as a treatment option for those veterans who have tried other evidence-based treatment options for TBI and PTSD but have not seen substantial improvements. There is no reason we shouldn't be granting access to every available treatment for our veterans when they've already exhausted other options. This bill follows the Right to Try law, passed in 2018, that allows individuals suffering from prolonged illnesses to receive treatment options not yet approved by the FDA. Congress rightly recognized that patients desperate for a treatment that works for

them shouldn't be denied the chance to find a solution that would work and ultimately save their life. We should apply that same common-sense solution to our veterans.

Taking care of our veterans is personal to me. My father served in World War II and died on active duty after the war. There are 400,000 veterans who call Alabama home. Since September 11, 2001 alone, nearly 2.8 million Americans have served in the Armed Forces. Each one of them deserves the assurance that their elected official is fighting for better access to care. The HBOT Access Act helps us explore every option available to Congress to help those who defended our country.

If veterans are saying they have improved after using HBOT, and if veterans services organizations have seen similar success, I say we listen to them. We should not leave quality options on the table while the veteran suicide crisis worsens.

Our veterans risked everything to keep us safe when they wore the uniform. We must show that same commitment and effort to help them when they take the uniform off.

Tommy Tuberville represents Alabama in the United States Senate, where he serves on the Veterans' Affairs; Armed Services; Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry; and Health, Education, Labor and Pensions



Army Capt. Kyle Salik is the first patient to receive oxygen therapy at the new Undersea & Hyperbaric Medicine Clinic at Brooke Army Medical Center June 20, 2017. (Robert Shields/Army)

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Calendar of Events

Red, White & Boom: Drive-In Edition Athens Fireworks Show

July 4

At the Athens Stadium. 100 U.S. Highway 31N in Athens. No stadium seating. Viewable from adjacent properties including Central Church of Christ, Athens Shopping Center, Athens High School. Please respect private property and traffic right of ways. Please remain in your vehicles and enjoy the firework show after dark provided by Athens-Limestone County Tourism, City of Athens and Limestone County Commission. Tune into Outlaw 105.1 for the music.

6th Annual Bay Village Firework Show July 3

Viewable at Lucy's BARge at Lucy's Branch Marina (6049 Bay Village Drive in Athens) or from your boat at Tennessee River Mile Marker 287 at sunset. Amateur show hosted from a floating barge just offshore of Bay Hill/Lucy's Branch hosted by local families, weather permitting, donations welcome from 8:30PM-9:00PM. A GoFundMe has been set up to help fund this privately sponsored show.

Athens Lions Club Kiddie Carnival July 8 - 10

309 East Forrest Street (at the corner of Beaty and Forrest Street across from Athens Middle School) in Athens from 6:30-9:30PM. Tickets are \$0.50 each, 1 ticket for each ride.

Veterans Post Free Veterans' Breakfast July 10

At the Amvets Post 21. 22769 Black Road in Athens. Pancake or egg breakfast with the trimmings from 7:00AM-9:30AM. Non-Veterans \$6.00. All are welcome. For more information: 256-444-2793 or www.AmVetsAL21.com

Athens Saturday Market July 10

State-certified farmers market. Enjoy fresh produce, baked goods, music with Dr. Mary, art, and crafts at the Green Street pavilion from 8:00AM to 12:00PM with free Tomato Sandwiches while they last. athensmainstreet.org

Shady Lady Trail Run July 10

Joe Wheeler State Park. 4403 McLean Drive in Rogersville. Featuring a 5K and 10K run starting at 8AM. Day of onsite registration starts at 6:30AM. 5K is \$25; 10K is \$35. Age groups: 0-9, 10-15, 16-19, 20-24, 25-29, 30-34, 35-39, 40-44, 45-49, 50-54, 55-59, 60-64, 65-69, 70 and up. Awards to top three overall finishers and top three in each age group. For more info: shadyladytrailrun.itsyourrace.com//event.aspx?id=14212

July Cruise In on the Square July 10

At the Limestone County Courthouse Square, 123 South Jefferson Street in Athens. 6PM. No judging, no trophies - just show and shine and enjoy the rides, shops, and restaurants.

Summer Music Series: High Cotton Arts July 10

103 West Washington Street in Athens from 6:00PM-9:00PM. Join Athens Arts League for a Summer Music Series performance featuring Tres Locos, psychedelic jam rock band. Bring your lawn chair.

Teen & Adult Rooster Painting Class July 12


At the Ardmore Public Library, 25836 Main Street in Ardmore, TN. 10:00AM-12:00PM with Creator Corner's Marion Ibsen. \$25.00 per person to cover cost of supplies. Registration Deadline: July 7. To sign up, call: 931-427-4883.

16th Annual Boys & Girls Club Ardmore Sonic Cruise-In July 15

26909 Main Street in Ardmore, TN. 6:00PM-9:00PM. Bring your unique collectible car or truck and share the nostalgia. No entry fee. No judging. Donations appreciated - monies go to benefit Ardmore Boys & Girls Club.

2021 Summer Concert Series: Singing on the Square July 16

Limestone County Courthouse Eastside Steps, 150 South Marion Street in Athens. 7:00PM-9:00PM. Grab some takeout, nestle in with your camp chair, and enjoy the music with Athens-Limestone Tourism as they present Trippin' Dixie. Free and open to the public; donation welcome. Marion Street will be closed off starting at 5:30PM to allow for setup. Rain location: Vietnam Veterans of America Building (17915 West Elm Street in Athens). For more information: VisitAthensAL.com/singing-on-the-square or 256-232-5411



For the health and safety of our volunteers and the public, we regret that the VVA Spaghetti Day has been canceled until further notice. Thank you for your support and understanding.



Special Feature

Information from the City of Athens regarding Fourth of July

by Holly Hollman - City of Athens Communications Specialist

Athens-Limestone Tourism will host the annual fireworks show on Sunday, July 4, at dusk from the AHS Stadium on U.S. 31. Spectators can park around the AHS Stadium, Athens Middle, Swan Creek Park, Sportsplex, etc., to view the show. Because of its close proximity to the fireworks, the stadium is not open for seating during the show. After the show, Athens Police will limit cross traffic on U.S. 31 and work the U.S. 31 and Forrest Street intersection, and U.S. 31 and Elm Street, if staff is available. "If we have to respond to calls, we may not be able to work the intersections, but if staffing is available, we plan to assist traffic at those intersections. I ask people to be patient and for motorists to please watch for pedestrians." As a reminder, Alabama 251 is closed at Lindsay Lane for ALDOT's roundabout project.

City ordinance prohibits selling and shooting fireworks in the city limits. Only authorized public fireworks shows are allowed in the city.

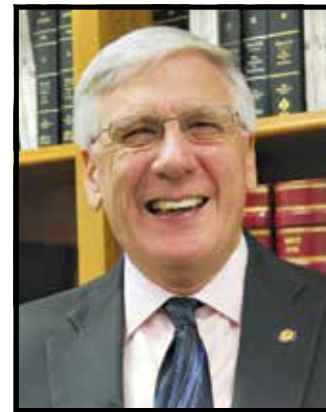
City offices will be closed on Monday, July 5. This will not impact sanitation services for that week.



What Makes Ronnie Roll

This Is Small Town America

by Ali Elizabeth Turner



Mayor Ronnie had an early morning breakfast meeting with AL State Senator Sam Givhan, and arrived for our Monday appointment thoroughly encouraged and energized. We quickly moved to the topic of what a wonderful weekend we as Athenians had experienced, and with a full heart Mayor Ronnie said, "This is small town America." That said it all, so the rest of this *Ronnie* is going to be spent illustrating his point.

We both celebrated the fact that close to 700 people attended Singing On The Square with music being provided by "hometown-boy-made-good" Matt Prater. "It felt so good to get back to being normal" was our consensus. Food trucks were there with things as diverse as hot dogs and sushi being sold from the same venue, and the food trucks sold out. "People stood in line everywhere for the food truck and

the restaurants," said the mayor. And, we agreed that no one seemed to mind. We talked about the simple pleasure of watching kids roll down the slight slope of the courthouse lawn. "The County had the chains that had lined the edge removed, and now the kids can have more fun," said Mayor Ronnie. There was a half-century Athens High School reunion held just off the Square, and folks strolled about and frequented shops that had stayed open for the Main Street Friday After Five event.

We also talked about the fact that while public safety is always going to be the most important priority for a mayor or anyone who has responsibility to watch over a city, it is also quality of life that ranks right up there as well. You can keep a city super-safe, but if the quality of life is low, safety won't be the end all and be all. "We need both," said the



Quinton Marks learning an old-school skill and making new friends

mayor.

The next thing on the agenda was the grand opening of the Veterans Museum complete with the visit of Governor Kay Ivey. A crew had worked for months to move the contents from the old museum across to the remodeled Limestone County Event Center, getting them cleaned, restored, reframed, and rearranged. The City of Athens was able to present a check for \$100,000 to the museum. "We were able to do it, the timing was everything,

and I was glad that the council decided to go with this now," said the mayor. He then added, "The museum board had a long-term vision and pushed forward with their hopes. The result is amazing." "It really is," I replied.

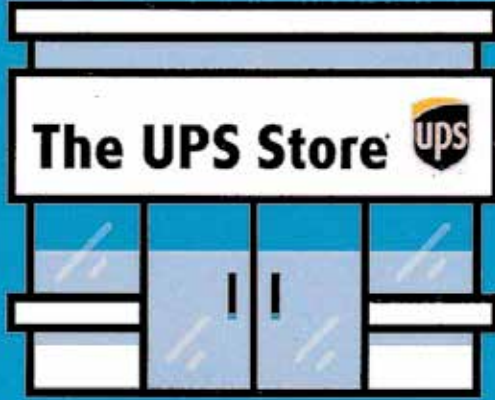
On Saturday, Mayor Ronnie and his grandson Quinton went to the Field Day event held in Swan Creek sponsored by the Amateur Radio Operators. Quinton didn't know much about how ham operators work, and at the begin-

ning wasn't very interested. "But it didn't take long before he was learning call signs and people were gathering around to watch," said the mayor. Quinton spoke with an operator in North Florida and South Texas. "Whiskey Zulu Oscar 4 5 Alpha Alabama," he said, and he got a response. Apparently the kid is a natural, and Quinton has found a new hobby. We thanked God for our wonderful town and all the good that is going on, and then it was time for Ronnie to roll.



Photo credit: Michelle Williamson





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Tourism

Red, White & Boom Fireworks, Just Part Of July's Charm

by Cayce Lee

Social Media Specialist, Athens-Limestone County Tourism Association



Summer is here! July is upon us, and the patriotism is bursting at the seams in Athens-Limestone. People are putting up patriotic displays, hanging their bunting, raising their flags, and thanking the military and veterans for their service.

There will be quite a lot of activities the week of July 4, so hopefully there is something for everyone. But the fun doesn't stop there! Celebrity Waiter Night, cruise-ins, Kiddie Carnival, Mud Volleyball, and more fill the calendar of July.

Find more ideas for live music, kid-friendly fun, and other events at VisitAthensAL.com/events... plus all the details you need for the featured events here.

Let Freedom Ring...

Athens-Limestone Tourism, Limestone County Commission, and Athens Gas Department -- An 811-Call-Before-You-Dig Partner are happy to present Red, White & Boom: Let Freedom Ring Edition on July 4 at the

Athens Football Stadium after dark. Central Church of Christ invites you to join them during the Red, White & Boom Fireworks. Cultivate Church Athens in Athens Plaza is firing up the grill and inviting you to join them as well during the Red, White & Boom Fireworks.

4th Fun...

July 1 sees the grand opening and ribbon cutting of the Alabama Veterans Museum and Archives in their new home (the former Limestone County Event Center.) July 3 sees the 6th Annual Born Free Bash 2021 Boat-Only Party on the Elk River's western shore rockin' the waves as well as the 15th Annual Elk River Boat-Only Party on Anderson Creek. Join the families at Bay Village for their 6th Annual Bay Village Firework Show on July 3 as well. The 11th has Sardis Springs Baptist Church hosting an Independence Day Celebration. July 17 has J.J. Brindley's 9th Annual Rock the Dock Boat-Only Party in the cove past the Elk River.

Family-Friendly Fun...

The beloved seasonal attraction, Athens Lions Club Kiddie Carnival, continues its 2021 season each Thursday, Friday, and Saturday through the end of July. Athens Saturday Market continues its activities for the family amid the live music, fresh produce, and artisan goods. July 10 has the Cruise-In rolling onto the Square. July 15 has the Ardmore Boys and Girls Club Sonic Cruise-In. Explore Growing Up Wild: Wildlife Water Safari with the Forest School at Joe Wheeler State Park on the 29th.

For A Cause...

Join the City of Athens Relay-for-Life Team for Celebrity Waiter Night at Applebee's on July 1 to see who will raise the most tips and earn bragging rights. Then sling a little mud or just come watch it fly as the County for the Cure Team host their annual Mud Volleyball Tournament on July 17. Play a round a golf in honor of Bama Zack on July 22 and help fulfill a young Athens-Limestone athlete's dreams with monies going to a scholarship. Lace up your shoes for the Will Haney Foundation Race of Champions 5K - Night Edition on July 30 in person or virtually to help raise funds to support patients and their families as they face cancer.

Toe-Tappin' Time...

July 16 sees Athens Main Street's Friday After Five and Athens-Limestone Tourism's Singing on the

The Elk River is already welcoming paddlers in 2021 with help from local outfitter Elk River Adventures



Square bring the fun and music from local favorite Trippin' Dixie to the Athens Square. Head up to Minor Hill, TN, to Ronnie's on the 17th and celebrate 45 Year with owner Mama Patsy as she passes the keys to the new owner.

There are even more chances to hear music; check the event calendar at VisitAthensAL.com as weekly announcements of performing artists are added from area venues.

Dates you'll want to know...

Jul 15 - 18: Alabama Back-to-School Sales Tax Holiday

Jul 30 - Aug 1: Tennessee Back-to-School Sales Tax Holiday

Restaurant News....

Coming soon!

Ramona J's at 22728 Pepper Road in Athens

Inez's at 616 U.S. Highway 31 in Athens

Attraction News...

The Alabama Veterans Museum & Archives will open in its new home at 114 West Pryor Street in Athens beginning in July. Hours of

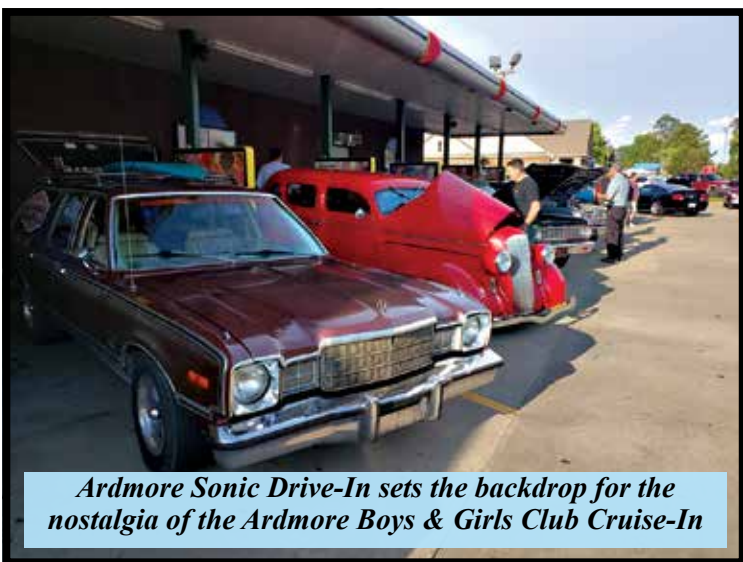
operation are 9 a.m.-3 p.m., Monday-Saturday.

The Donnell House has received a \$15,000 Preservation Grant that will allow them to continue to save the beautiful home for generations to come. Some renovation activities may prevent tour bookings. Please call ahead for availability, 239-249-2211

The George S. Houston Library & Museum has reopened with Monday, Wednesday-Friday open 10 a.m.-4 p.m.; Tuesday 10 a.m.-7 p.m. and first Saturday 10 a.m.-4 p.m. For more information, 256-233-8770.

Belle Chevre Creamery Tours are open by appointment. Please call 256-732-4801 for information or leave a comment about your group in the request form.

Elk River Adventures is booking floats on the Elk River for individuals, families and groups. Explore their website for float options, equipment rentals, pickup-drop off options, and more: elkrivadventure.com



Ardmore Sonic Drive-In sets the backdrop for the nostalgia of the Ardmore Boys & Girls Club Cruise-In

Slinkard On Success

I Am So Thankful For...

by D. A. Slinkard

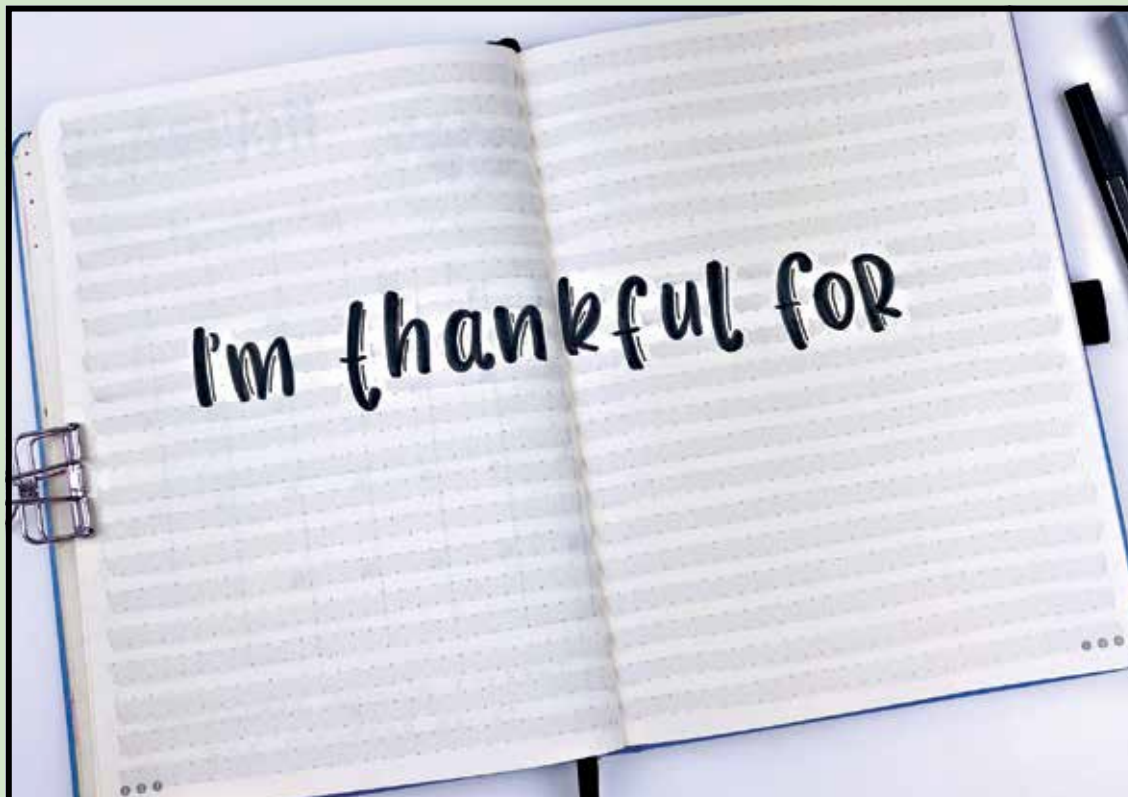
D.A. Slinkard would love your feedback. You can contact him at da.slinkard@gmail.com



Sometimes life will get you down and it will feel like the entire world is against you. Even the most positive person you know will eventually become a little negative. The only people who do not have problems are found in the local cemeteries. Recently, I have been struggling being the positive influence that I take pride in being, and even I needed to hit the reset button. It seemed as if it did not matter what I tried, I just could not get my positive juices flowing. Have you ever been there?

I must admit I was in uncharted waters because it was a tough pill to swallow. Each week I give advice on how to be positive, how to have the right attitude, how to take the right approach. There I was and no matter what I did, no matter what I tried, I just could not get out of my own way. I felt as if my head was under water, and I was drowning. Was I ever going to break out of this funk I found myself in, and when would it end?

As I began reflecting on the events happening in my life, I began to realize I had a lot to be thankful for. There was just one area in my life that was clouding my perspective, but it seemed as if this area was the only thing I was focusing on. So many positive aspects in my life, but my mind and my brain were choosing to focus on the negative. Does this sound familiar



to you? Too many people choose to focus on the negative aspects instead of looking at the positive things happening in their life.

It was at this time I realized I needed to do something different, and I had to take actions. I found myself a clean notebook, turned to the first page, and started writing. Each sentence started out with, "I am so thankful for..." and then I listed a reason as to why I was thankful. The creative juices began to flow quickly as my list started out as follows: "I am so thank-

ful for my Saviour, Jesus Christ. I am so thankful for my beautiful wife, Mindy. I am so thankful for my beautiful daughters."

As I began to write each reason as to why I was so thankful, I noticed something was happening. My attitude and my mood were suddenly beginning to shift, and the pendulum was beginning to gain momentum towards the positive vibes. Before I knew it, I had completed a major overhaul when it came to my attitude, and I could tell that I was back to being me. Praise God be-

cause I hated feeling the way I had felt! It did not take me long and this list was growing and growing. I looked at the piece of paper and I was amazed I could have even had one ounce of negative thought.

I had easily filled an entire notebook paper of reasons I was so thankful, and I felt silly I would have even been flirting with a negative attitude. I learned more about myself during this trying period because I was forced to dig a little deeper concerning my attitude. I can confidently say if you are struggling

maintaining a positive approach in your life, I want you to do the exact exercise I did that helped break my funk. Simply take out a piece of paper and start writing out the sentence, "I am so thankful for..."

I believe whole-heartedly you will be pleasantly surprised at how many positive things are going on in your life that you did not realize. After you make this list, my next suggestion is to make sure you read this list daily, if not multiple times throughout the day. One approach you could take would be to read this list in the morning, at lunch, and at night. If you focus in on the positive, you are going to get positive results back, and this list is going to be key in realizing how much good you have going on.

There will be times we will all face having a negative attitude, but the question becomes -- "How will you respond?" Our response will determine everything in our approach. If your response is to focus solely on the negative, then expect to get more negative. However, my question to you is -- "What are some things you are so thankful for in your life?"

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Clean, Green And Beautiful

2021 Beautification Award Winners!

by Leigh Patterson - Executive Director - Keep Athens-Limestone Beautiful

The Athens-Limestone Beautification Board, which falls under the KALB organization umbrella, annually recognizes businesses, churches, and public buildings where care-takers go the extra mile to create beautiful landscaping. Green space and attractive landscaping are so important to the appearance of our community, and the Beautification Board believes that the people who work so hard to provide that beauty should be rewarded. Recognizing well-landscaped properties here in Athens and Limestone County is the Beautification Board's way of saying "thank you" to those who add a beautiful touch to our community.

There were thirty property nominations this year. We are grateful to the public for participating by reaching out to us with new nominations.



1st place winner: Calhoun Community College



2nd place winner: First Presbyterian Church

Several of the businesses that had received awards previously requested to be entered into the judging this year as well.

The judging was completed in May. The board members take this judging very seriously, and are stringent with the judging criteria. Properties that received a score of 90 or above will receive a Beautification Award sign that they may display for the next year. Properties were judged by the following criteria:

- Overall Design
- Construction (walls, walks, and pavement)
- Planting (condition of plants, color, texture)
- Maintenance (proper trimming, edging, and pruning, lack of weeds, neat)
- Litter Control (no visible litter, trash containers available and in good condition)

The Athens-Limestone Beautification Board is



3rd place winner: Athens Police Department

proud to present Beautification Award Signs to the following locations. Congratulations to these businesses for their efforts to maintain beautiful, well-manicured, and litter free properties!

Top Three

The following properties received top honors by scoring 98 or above out of 100 points:

- Calhoun Community College – 99.5 pts.
- First Presbyterian Church – 98.78 pts.

- Chick-fil-A
- Steelcase Inc.

Additional Award Recipients:

- Athens Eye Clinic
- Town of Mooresville Bicentennial Garden

- Athens Eye Care Center
- American Leakless Company
- Clayton Homes
- Traditions Senior Living
- Limestone Health Facility
- Athens State University
- Athens Limestone Hospital
- First National Bank
- Bojangles

Thank you to all of businesses who participated in this year's judging.

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Cooking with Anna

Worry Is A Cartoon Snowball

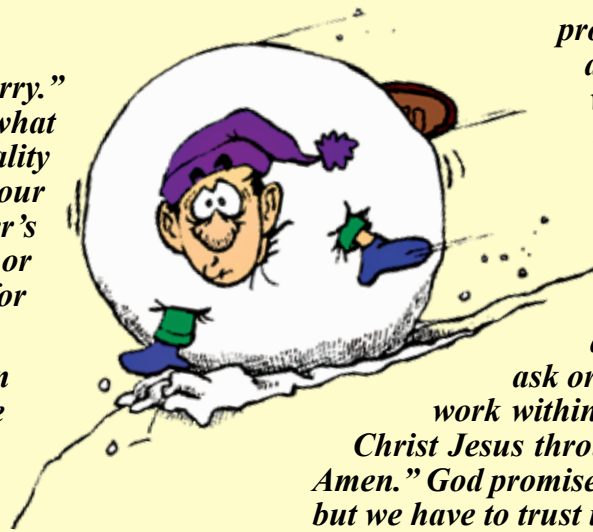
by Anna Hamilton

We are a society that lives and breathes “worry.” We worry about the weather, we worry about what contestant will be chosen on this week’s reality dating show, we worry about how we will pay our mortgage, we worry about everything. Webster’s Dictionary defines worry as “mental distress or agitation resulting from concern usually for something impending or anticipated.”

We all are guilty of worrying at some point in our lives. Some of us are able to handle the worry better than others. I know that when I begin to worry about a part of my life, it has a snowball effect. You start worrying about one tiny thing and boom, before you know it you are in full blown snowball mood! You know what I mean, your emotions and worries start to look like one of those cartoon characters that roll down a hill of snow and literally become entwined in the snowball. You are an absolute mess.

If you have spent any time in church, I know you have heard many sermons on worry and why as Christians we should not waste our time on worry. I think that most of us don’t understand just how much we are compromising our faith by wasting time on worry. I read a quote this week from minister Bill Johnson that hit me square in the chest. I felt as if the wind had been kicked out of me, and I felt ashamed for ever worrying about anything. “Worry slanders every promise of God.” Wowzers! Every moment we waste worrying about anything is slanderous to God. It shows a lack of faith, and it proves to every unbeliever that we truly don’t believe in all God has promised us.

Worry is one of the most damaging things you can do to your faith. I am so guilty of worry and am striving to do better. God



promises us that He will take care of us. He doesn’t promise that we will get everything we ask Him for, but He will take care of us. The Bible is full of examples and verses that prove God will take care of us when we put our trust and belief in him. All we have to do is pray and have faith. One of my favorite promises is in Ephesians 3:20-21, we are told “Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations forever and every! Amen.” God promises to give us more that we can ever imagine, but we have to trust in him and not worry and fret.

So today, stop your worrying and put all that energy into your faith. Let the world see your faith and trust in God. To some people we meet, we will be the only Bible they ever read and the only opportunity to see Christ. It is our duties as Christians to show Christ to the world. By being bold in our faith and beliefs, it sets us apart and others will be drawn to you. Use that confidence in Christ to share the gospel that has and will continue to change your life.

This week’s recipe is a simple and easy weeknight meal -- a delicious avocado chicken salad. Even if you don’t think you like avocados, you will love this recipe. It’s great on its own or enjoyed on top of a green salad or spread on a tortilla.

“Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.” Philippians 4:6-7

Avocado Chicken Salad

Ingredients:

- | | |
|---|---------------------------------------|
| <i>2 cups shredded chicken</i> | <i>2 Tbsp. tomato, finely chopped</i> |
| <i>1 avocado, mashed</i> | <i>1 Tbsp. fresh cilantro, minced</i> |
| <i>1 avocado, sliced into ½ inch chunks</i> | <i>2 tsp. lime juice</i> |
| <i>2 Tbsp. onion, finely chopped</i> | <i>Salt and pepper to taste</i> |

Directions:

- In a large bowl combine chicken with the mashed avocado, mix until chicken is coated.*
- Add the diced avocado, onion, tomato, cilantro, lime juice, salt, and pepper. Fold until everything is blended.*
- Feel free to add roasted corn, jalapeno, black beans, and cheese to this wonderful salad.*



Steve's Corner

Let It Go

by Steve Leland

"Let go and let God" is a phrase from my past. It's catchy, simplistic, and really hard to do when you have options. It is a lot easier when you are out of options, because at that point you don't have anything that you can do.

Where the rubber met the road for us on this one was when we found that MANY things from our yard and shop had grown legs and walked away. One person was the sole perpetrator. At first there had been reasons given for things that had obviously been "borrowed." But the excuses grew as to why they didn't come back. Then suddenly all the tools disappeared. And I mean ALL! To top it off, there was a vehicle that

had been lent and was being kept from us.

I am leaving many details out, but a man's life and family were on the verge of being destroyed. I wouldn't have given a plugged nickel for the value of his soul at that point. It appeared that he had already given it over to the dark side.

So we prayed. It was a sobering decision that had to be made. Let him walk all over us, or unleash the dogs of the law and watch him get taken down. There didn't seem to be any middle ground.

In prayer, there came a Word from Yah: "Forgive, and let go." Now, I have come to a point in my life where forgiveness isn't that hard. It's just one decision away.

A simple choice. But letting go, that's a horse of a different color. These are a man's tools that we are talking about here. Did I let go adequately? Only Yah can judge that, but I know in my heart that I didn't do it as cleanly as I could have.

Now here is the amazing part. The feller realized the error of his ways and has repented. The tools have been returning, albeit not as fast as I would like. The enemy hasn't given up and the fight over his soul continues, but the Kingdom of Heaven now has a fighting chance.

Believe me, I'm not a man that gives up on his rights readily. But when Yah illuminates a specific path, it's best to embrace it.

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Mindset Matters – When The Funk Hits

by Nick Thomas, owner of Prime Performance Training, and Certified Sports Nutritionist

Ever gotten the “just-do-it-anyway” advice?

That can be great and all but sometimes it is just deeper than that. Occasionally there is just a funk that slips in for no real apparent reason. A feeling so intense that it is hard to shake. It sets in and takes control sucking all the energy out of the body and leaving the mind in a deep, dark place. All motivation is gone and life seems to have lost its meaning.

Embrace these feelings, deal with what is going on. Suppressing the emotions will help nothing. Sometimes the body is saying it needs rest; however, a lot of times it is actually craving active change. Change is hard on any level, but mostly it is just plain difficult to put it in motion when it is needed most.

The mind is far more powerful than we can even begin to imagine. The body can be pushed beyond what seems possible if the mind is focused. There is truth found in one’s activity level which will be what determines both mental and physical health. The natural chemicals in the body

which release during a workout or other physical activity are positive mentally. So do not stop moving in some way!

It takes immeasurable strength to do the following but it will cultivate undeniable resilience. When the funk has hit, take a day and sort it out, make sure health wise that everything is good. Take time to rest and replenish the body and mind a bit. Do the things that bring a smile, a little “selfcare” as pop culture says. Do not neglect good, all-natural nutrition during

this time. By day two or three, if things are not bouncing back, it is time to set the wheels of motion in the right direction. The tough part.

First, it must be stated that EVERYONE has this happen, even the ones you think never struggle. The difference is how it is handled. It is all about keeping the right people and habits in life. The whole idea behind getting through the tough days when it comes to health and fitness is discipline, and not just when life is tough. It is the consis-

tency in which life is led every single day that makes the difference.

Discipline and consistency are pretty easy when the mind is clear and everything is going well, so make sure it is kept. It is when the little bumps in the road happen that the struggle begins. The key is to remember that no matter what happens always go back to what is proven, back to the basics of fitness and nutrition. This will not only create the true habits that become routine, it develops the resilience which leads

to triumph when the funk creeps in, and will actually help keep it to a minimum. The body craves routine. When things get tough, it usually leads to simply going through the motions of life; if the motions are positive overall, the fight through the funk will be much easier, and should ultimately last for a shorter time.

The really hard part is evaluating in the midst of the funk. The funk itself probably means it is time to change up the routine a bit. Maybe it is a change in nutrition or in workout style or location. It could be more sleep is needed OR maybe the grind has been a little too intense and it is time to back off a bit. Yes, there is such a thing as over training.

Have someone in your life that understands you, your lifestyle, and your goals...someone who is positive and is only a phone call away. When it is time for this evaluation, they are the trusted one called on to help make the final decisions, hold you accountable, and push you through to the next level.



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The Limestone Leaders BNI Chapter: *Visible, Credible, Profitable, And Fun!*

by Ali Elizabeth Turner

continued from page 1

ing organization that has been around since 1986. It was started by Dr. Ivan Misner as a way of increasing revenue for his consulting firm through personal referrals, and last year, even with COVID wreaking havoc on the economy, the amount of business that was generated by BNI chapters around the globe reached 16.3 billion dollars. Yep, that is billion with a “B.” And, during COVID, our tiny band was blessed to produce almost 1.5 million dollars of business for each other. That’s million with a M.

Dr. Misner is quite transparent about the fact that one of the things that inspired him to design the format that now has 10,000 chapters and 275,000 members was his own distaste for having to do “cold calls.” You can hear him exclaim on any number of BNI podcasts, “I HATED DOING COLD CALLS! That’s why I started BNI!” To that outburst I can only say, “Amen!”

I was first invited to a Limestone Leaders BNI meeting in the dead of winter 2019 by my friend, *Athens Now* front cover bottom banner client Tracie Spain of Frame Gallery Off The Square. I was skeptical and largely went

in order to be polite and keep our relationship strong. But here’s the point: I trust Tracie, have done so for years, and I knew her to have integrity as well as a lot of business acumen.

It took me a few visits before I took the plunge and applied, and even though it was in the lean post-holiday season that hits every year on January 2, I tell everyone that it was one of the best personal, business, and personal development decisions that I have ever made. BNI is built on the universal principle of “Givers Gain,” which in our culture is most often recognized as “give and it shall be given unto you; pressed down, shaken together, and running over.” It is important to realize that members understand that the only way that “Givers Gain” actually works is if you give without an agenda; if you give without trying to get something back, the results end up being quite remarkable. It can take a while, but once you have built relationships that are built on trust that are the result of your steadfast performance, your business will grow. As with almost all human organizations, you get out of BNI what you put in to it.

One of the unique features of the BNI organizational framework is

that if you are, for example, a cabinet maker, then you alone hold that seat or chair. Anyone else who is in the same trade would need to join another chapter in the region or start their own. This ensures that the person holding that seat becomes the “I-have-a-guy/gal” person for that specific type of business, and it is not at all uncommon for people who get too much business to refer out to fellow BNI members that are technically competitors in other chapters. One other thing: BNI members have come to understand that being in BNI is a privilege. Potential members who wish to join are vetted as to their reputation in the community.

Now I am going to talk about our members so you can get to know them and their businesses, and I am also going to invite you to come check us out. We at Limestone Leaders have been described by the regional BNI leadership as being “small but mighty,” and we are both looking to grow as well as help Limestone County entrepreneurs prosper in every regard.

Amy Fiscus, *Vollara*

Amy is a highly successful network marketer and holds the health and wellness chair in our chapter.



Ali Turner



Amy Fiscus



Caleb Lawler



Darla Bunker



Leigh Patterson



Melinda Dugger



Robin Gerrish



Teresa Hagood

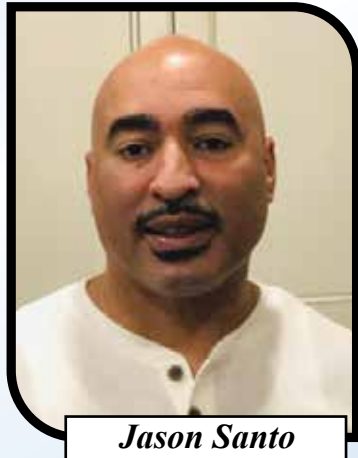
BNI



Bella LaFontaine



Brody Jackson



Jason Santo



Jim Farej



Michael Muse



Randy McKinney



Tracie Spain

tion systems, along with nutritional supplements, and Amy is passionate about protecting people's health.

Bella LaFontaine,
Crown Service of Alabama Pest Control

Bella is the youngest member of our BNI group, and she is wise beyond her years. It is so important to her that Crown Service's customers know that they are not just "a number" dealing with a big box outfit that she gives them her cell phone contact info. She is not happy until the job is done and done right by the techs, and her customers love her. So do we!

Brody Jackson,
State Farm Insurance (Property and Casualty seat)

Brody very nearly died in an auto accident that was caused by "the other guy." More to the point, Brody's demolished truck exploded seconds after he was helped out of it, and it was his dreadful experience with his insurance company that inspired him to make sure no one was ever treated as poorly as he was. We transferred all of our insurance accounts to him, and are forever glad we did. Brody also is our chapter's vice-president.

Caleb Lawler,
Financial Advisor with Edward Jones

Caleb is our chapter president, and prior to joining Edward Jones he spent his career in IT and developing software programs. His passion is to help people develop a financial plan that will serve them through every season of life, and I

am astounded at his ability to make complex financial terms and concepts understandable for people such as I who have no experience in that realm. The education he has given me has been invaluable, and he never makes me feel anything other than utterly respected.

Darla Bunker,
Real Estate and Property Management, Crye-Leike

Darla is our secretary/treasurer and mentor coordinator. In addition to that, she fills a need that doesn't often get met in the real estate world, and that is looking out for the needs of renters and property investors. She brings to the business over 40 years of construction project management admin experience. She is one of those people that is a straight shooter and she knows her stuff. I have watched how other people both in the real estate and construction business trust her, and I do, too.

Jason Santo,
Athens UPS Store

US Army 1st Sgt (Ret) Jason Santo spent his first career serving and protecting our country and our soldiers when they were wounded. When he retired after 20 years, he and his wife, Bridgette, wanted to purchase a franchise, and they chose UPS. He has printed things for our chapter, has shipped things for me to friends in New Zealand, and does it with professionalism, speed, and humor. He has a great crew to help him, and if I go to the shop and Jason isn't there, I am always treated like a family member.

Jim Farej,
Property Inspections, National Property Inspections

Jim spent over 25 years with his brothers in the construction business, and was also in Walgreens management for just about that same amount of time. He has been on both sides of the inspection process when it comes to construction and homes. He doesn't want anyone to find themselves facing a situation like a contract that binds them to a "money pit," and goes the extra mile to help his clients, whether they are buyers or sellers.

Leigh Patterson,
Non-Profit, Keep Athens-Limestone Beautiful

Leigh brings nearly a decade of experience working in a non-profit, meeting with officials, dealing with grants, volunteers and staff, and organizing events such as the Duck and Run 5K, the Wacky Quacky Ducky Derby, Earth Day, Trash Attacks, and Hazardous Waste Collection events. She also has spent countless hours in the classrooms of our local schools to teach them how to be good stewards of Alabama the Beautiful.

Melinda Dugger,
Dugger's Florist And Gifts

Melinda has been a florist for over ten years, and I have called upon her many times for arrangements large and small. Often my need for a bouquet has

continued on page 18

The Limestone Leaders BNI...

continued from page 1

emerged at the last minute, and she has always stepped up and made it happen. Melinda chuckles when she talks about doing “doghouse flowers.” Those are what someone brings with them when they want to apologize for messing something up. Several of our chapter members are grateful for her ability to create arrangements that can smooth ruffled feathers, do so beautifully, and shorten their doghouse visit.

Michael Muse,
River City Roofing Solutions

Michael and his brother Chris continually manifest a commitment to give the customer a roof that is going to last a long time and at a fair price. In particular, they are skilled in dealing with insurance companies, and they love to educate their clients. They use cutting edge computer technology that helps them more accurately estimate costs, and drones to give them a true bird’s-eye view of the roof and problems that may have been more difficult to identify previously. River City’s warranties are the best in the region and they stand by their work.

Randy McKinney,
Athens Athletics

Randy has owned his business for nearly 18 years, and if it can be silk-screened, sublimated, embroidered, engraved, or

in any other way customized, he will do it. He has on more than one occasion done a fast turn on T-shirts, and many of our BNI members use Athens Athletics for their uniform embroidery needs. He also rents U-Haul trucks. One of the things for which Randy is most thankful when it comes to BNI is the chance to get better at public speaking by giving small weekly presentations. He is also quick to say that Limestone Leaders are like a family, and we all agree.

Robin Gerrish, Real Estate, Crye-Leike

Robin has been a high level producer and is largely involved in executive housing. That being said, she is just as committed to helping buyers and sellers whose budget is more moderate. Robin has a passion to help our first responders, women who are facing an unplanned pregnancy, and women who have been the victims of human trafficking. Robin also particularly loves helping our service men and women find the perfect home.

Teresa Hagood,
Residential Mortgage, Iberia Bank

Teresa is one of the first people I met when Steve and I moved here 21 years ago, and her knowledge of mortgages astounds me. Somehow she manages to stay abreast of all the lending programs, traps to avoid, how to qualify for a loan, and how to get the best rates. She is another one who loves to look out for both buyers and sellers, and I have seen



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her work miracles. Our first responders and military are safe in her care.

Tracie Spain,
Custom Framing, Frame Gallery Off The Square

Tracie is the one who made the way for my business life to completely change by in-


roducing me to Limestone Leaders, and I am forever grateful. She is a careful and creative artisan whose work is all over my home, office, and has been given away as well-loved gifts. She is also a supporter of local artists and authors and has showcased their work in her shop. If you are looking for a

proven way to build your business, build your community, find friends, make money, and have fun while you are doing it, then click on the QR code today and apply. You may have just found who and what for which you have been looking, and you’ll be welcomed all over the globe.

Ma And Pa Take Taos: Part 2

by Jerry Barksdale

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



The “Runt” (Mitsubishi Mirage) was straining all three cylinders as it putt-putt-putted up the steep mountain road and out of the Rio Grande Canyon. “Do you want me to get out and push?” asked my good friend (and sometimes red-head) Pat. Finally, we crested the mountain and the view that lay before us was breathtaking. Taos (elev. 7000), nestled against the towering Sangre de Cristo Mountains, sparkled in the afternoon sun. Across the valley, the Rio Grande River sliced 565 feet deep into the earth. Below us pearl gray smoke curled from squat, brown adobe houses. We followed a dirt road lined with ancient cottonwood trees and past a Hindu Ashram to our destination – a one bedroom casita. Our landlords, Tara and Jean (French for John) - greeted us. Like most everyone in Taos, Jean has an interesting story. Later, while tending his winter garden, he told me he was from Paris; that his father fought for the Loyalists in the Spanish Civil War in the late 1930’s and afterwards, was a member of the French Resistance and fought Germans.

Shortly, my daughter, Shannon, arrived rubbing her ear and complaining that she couldn’t hear. She had come to Taos 17 years earlier driving a pickup with a dog and no job. She has prospered.

Now she has two dogs, a cat and a dusty Subaru, a good job at the Bavarian in the Ski Valley and many fans of her band, Shannon and the Southern Souls. She was nearly deaf. “We’re going to a doc-in-a-box,” I said. She made excuses and promised she would stop by on the way home. Pat, who raised a daughter, has a nose for deceit. “I’m going with you, NOW!” she said. Shannon turned pale. She hasn’t changed one bit since childhood when I had to hold her down while her mother gave her medicine. A glob of wax was removed and amoxicillin prescribed. Problem solved.

Next morning, I rose at daybreak and looked out the window. Snow was accumulating on mountain peaks. I made strong coffee, sat near the stove and worked on a Christmas story set in Athens during the Civil War. It was very cold outside and the wind howled, and in my story it was cold and snowy and the wind howled between the chinks of the log house. I sipped coffee and was warm and well into the story, but getting tired when Pat got up and prepared a big country breakfast of eggs, biscuits, jam, gravy, bacon and brewed more coffee. Shannon joined us. In my story, the family had squirrel dumplings and cornbread for Christmas. Pat cooked chicken and dumplings for lunch and made johnny cakes. I was greatly restored.

The Taos News carried

sad tidings for many locals. Trump won! He received only 17.92% of the vote in Taos County. “It’s a nightmare made real,” said a Democrat. “The sun still came up. My dogs were still glad to see me.” I figure her dogs were Trump supporters. It reminded me of my reaction to Goldwater’s landslide loss for the presidency in 1964, when I was an idealistic 23 year old university student. I wept that night. The world was doomed. But it never occurred to me to seek counseling, throw a temper tantrum and block a highway. I moved forward and made a noble contribution to mankind. I became a lawyer. Youthful idealism has long since vanished. The way I see it we have two gangs of thugs in Washington called Democrats and Republicans. They remind me of Al Capone and Bugs Moran’s Northside gang, each vying to control the rackets. They swap power, scratch each other’s back, and feed out of the same trough. Their major goal is to remain in power and live country club lives on the taxpayer’s largesse.

We drove the Runt down into the Rio Grande gorge to hike. Getting there proved to be dangerous on a narrow gravel road with no guard rails. A large Rocky Mountain ram stared at the Runt and shook his head. Uh oh! In a head butting contest, the Runt would lose. Finally, he wandered off to join his harem.

On the hike down, we kept a watchful eye for rattlers, saw numerous sheep clinging to the rocky walls, and inspected an ancient Indian Petroglyph - perhaps their version of men writing on a bathroom wall today. I was gasping for air and my tooth ached as we hiked out. I needed a slab of fat back bacon to tie to my jaw. The three cylinders of the Runt strained mightily as we climbed up the gravel road. Near the summit it choked down. I pressed the accelerator. “Come on little feller.” I remembered the Thrifty rental clerk telling me it wasn’t designed for mountain driving. Finally, we putt – putt – putted out.

Shannon and the Southern Souls were playing at the Tap Room of Taos Mesa Brewing and invited us to attend. We were running late. I missed the turn off, but being sharp of mind, saw a solution. I turned in at a nearby McDonalds with the intention of circling back. “I wouldn’t do that,” Pat said. I fell behind a long line of cars going through the drive-thru and was blocked. “I told you,” she said. *Grrr. One of these days Alice. POW! Right in the kiss-er.* Many of Shannon’s friends were present and greeted us with hugs. I was especially glad to see Brendan, who is a long-haired, head slinging, guitar playing rocker. He made a special visit to greet us. I won’t relate his history, but his life is now exemplary. Cleaner

than a hound’s tooth, as we say down South. He was recently married, has a new baby, and doesn’t touch alcohol. “I’m proud of you Brendan,” I said.

The band is all acoustic. Dave Kinney, originally from Chicago plays anything that makes a sound. Willie Hunton plays Dobro and mandolin. Shannon sings mostly soul and blues with a little Hank and Patsy Cline thrown in to make it real music. Jamie, who Shannon calls “my sister,” arrived. She is Northern Cheyenne born and raised on the Lame Deer reservation 42 miles east of Custer Battlefield where her ancestors defeated Custer in 1776. When Shannon is down, Jamie is always there to lift her up. One evening while enjoying wine, Shannon decided to seal their friendship. They would become blood sisters. Jamie watched in amazement as Shannon sliced their palms with a butcher knife and then pressed them together to mix their blood. Jamie was puzzled. “I saw it in the movie,” Shannon said. Jamie had never heard of such a practice.

Next day, Pat and I went to Walmart and purchased diapers, baby clothes, and a Huggy Bear for Brendan’s new baby. Pat and Shannon delivered them, along with left over chicken and dumplings. Now, the kid is prepared to face life head on.

Coyotes

by Joel Allen



Hello, folks! On 25 June 2021, I had a visit from my neighbors. They were looking for their dog. They gave me the description of the dog and asked if I had seen her. She had been missing since the previous evening about an hour before sundown. Unfortunately, I had not seen her but I promised to keep a wary eye out for the poor little dog, and an awful fear crept into my mind as I was talking with them. That thought was “coyotes” and how they will prey on our pets and livestock if left unchecked. Well, my thoughts and worries were unfounded because their dog was found and will be reunited with them as of the date of this article’s print.

Coyotes -- have they ever attacked a child? According to Wikipedia there has only been one recorded fatal attack on a child, in Los Angeles. The Kelly Keen coyote attack is how it is listed. Could it happen again? In my opinion -- Absolutely!

In Alabama, you can hunt

coyotes year round according to aonmag.com/hunting/dealing-with-alabama-coyotes. And according to the same website, one can attain a special permit to hunt the coyote at night from the ADCNR.

The coyote is very adaptable to its environment and should never be underestimated when it comes to a food source. They have been known to live off garbage and produce out of gardens. I have personally seen a coyote snatch up a cat and carry it away by the neck. It was so quick that if I had not seen it happen I would never have known about it.

Now don’t misunderstand me, coyotes are God’s creatures and everyone needs to remember that they are only doing what is natural for them. There is nothing personal about the way they live. That being said, as stated above, they can be hunted on your property and on other private lands with written permission from



the owner, and I would only encourage moderate population control to protect our pets. I don’t like killing anything unless it is necessary, but I will.

Another adversary of the coyote is the donkey. If a donkey senses a coyote, it will chase after it and in many cases kill the coyote. I have seen images of a donkey carrying a dead coyote by its neck. I have even heard them bray at a distance when there are coyotes around and give chase. Coyotes usually try and get away from them.

Coyotes are also pack animals just like their cousin the wolf; they will hunt in this way. So, be careful when hunting these creatures. If there is livestock on your property invest in a donkey.

There is one more rival to the coyote, and it usually ends worse for the coyote when they meet a Great Pyrenees guarding its flock. Now that is a real brawl, and once it happens, there are usually body parts of the coyote everywhere. I have personally seen this and “Good dog” is all I can say to the Pyrenees.

As the year progresses on, I can’t help but notice, especially at night, that there seems to be more coyotes, and they can be heard yipping in the distance. They usually stop yipping when there is a response of a bray from a donkey. Sometimes it is a large group of them. So, be very aware of where your pets are in the evenings, and watch out for your children. Vaccinate your pets

against rabies because we never know when or where that disease will rear its ugly head.

Also, I would like to add that if anyone has a dog door as I do, be sure to lock it at night. I have not heard it happening yet, but what if a coyote were to find its way into your home through your dog’s dog door? I’ve had one feral cat do this. And when it saw my huge dogs, it was terrified, but my dogs never even tried to hurt it. They were looking at the cat like, “I think you came into the wrong door.” LOL! Food for thought...

In parting, I hope everyone has a safe 4th of July. Until next month!

“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



Coping After Infidelity

by Lisa Philippart,
Licensed Professional Counselor



“One of the hardest parts of life is deciding whether to walk away or to try harder.”

- Unknown

In my last article, I identified and addressed some of the signs of infidelity. In this article, I am following up with some strategies for coping after you have discovered that your partner has been unfaithful. Discovering that your partner has cheated on you can hit you like a ton of bricks. Your marriage/commitment has been thrown into a state of crisis that may destroy it. In my experiences, the betrayed partner wants to know why the cheating occurred. But there is rarely a simple answer as to why someone becomes unfaithful. It could be a symptom of other problems in the marriage. It could relate to something or someone from your partner's past. Or it could be totally unrelated to you or to your marriage. No matter the reason or the cause, you will experience many complicated feelings to sort through, and a lot to think about as you decide to move forward. Let us look at some ways to help you cope with the aftermath of betrayal.

I believe it is important to begin by accepting your feelings. Shock, anger, resentment, fear, sadness, confusion, and

agitation are all normal reactions. You may feel like you are on an emotional roller coaster for a while. I often tell clients that the feelings are similar to going through the grief process. You are experiencing the loss of the relationship you thought you had. It takes a long time to process the pain of having an unfaithful mate. Don't expect the mixture of feelings and the mistrust to go away even if you are trying to forgive your partner and repair the damage done to your marriage. Your marriage is forever changed, and it is natural to grieve the relationship you once had. During this time, it is important to avoid the blame game. Blaming yourself, your partner, or the third party won't change anything, and it's just wasted energy. Try not to play the victim either, if you can help it. Wallowing in self-pity will only make you feel more helpless and bad about yourself.

Being betrayed by your partner can induce extreme anger. In your furious state, your first instinct may be to punish your mate by trash talking to friends (or worse, on social media), or think about having an affair yourself to get even. You may get a temporary sense of satisfaction from these sorts of actions, but ultimately,



ly, they can work against you...keeping you in a state of anger instead of focusing on healing and moving on, alone or together. Think before you tell your family too. They will most likely have strong opinions about what you should do, but nobody really understands what goes on in another person's marriage. Additionally, this situation should not involve your children. Even if you have decided to end your marriage, sharing details about an affair will only put your kids in an indefensible position, causing them anxiety, making them feel stuck in the middle, and forcing them to take sides.

You may have some physical reactions due to stress such as nausea, diarrhea, sleep problems

(too much or too little), shakiness, difficulty concentrating, and under or overeating. Once the initial shock has passed, try to eat healthy foods, stay on a schedule/routine, sleep regular hours, get some exercise, and even have some fun. If you suspect that the affair will most likely lead to the end of your marriage, give some thought to practical matters, such as where you will live, financial issues, and if you have kids, the type of custody arrangements you want. You may also want to consider asking your partner to be tested for STDs, and to get yourself tested as well. Ultimately, don't try to get through coping with unfaithfulness alone. Before you make any decisions about whether or not to end your marriage, it can be help-

ful to talk to a couple's counselor. My job as a marital therapist is to remain neutral and help you gain insights into exactly what happened. The safe space of a counseling office allows you to ask your partner questions and share your feelings without losing your cool. I try to help couples to communicate better and process their feelings of guilt, shame, hurt, etc. So, if you decide to end the marriage, you will know that you tried your best to make it work.

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

The Alternative Approach

Don't Stay Trapped Inside Your Head

by Lana E. Woody



Everyone has had experience with the effects of stress and anxiety on their minds and bodies. It is the one pain that is so hard to deal with because it is elusive. It isn't enough that we have so much to do and not enough time to get it all done, but then it actually can cause physical pain with long term repercussions. We worry about what hasn't happened yet and about what has already happened. It keeps us awake at night from time to time. It actually causes our body to produce more hormones, our adrenaline starts to kick in, and then we feel worse later for having been put in a stressful situation. Our brains respond to toxic levels of stress in a similar fashion, but some people become more affected than others. Trauma-induced stress has even been detected in infants, and the good news is, total recovery is possible!

It has been said that the brain is, in fact, like a record and has "tracks." That is why some people say they only have a one-track mind! There are pathways built in the brain that respond to certain stimuli the same way every time, until the person consciously makes the decision to think about something else. Our brain actually gets stuck on that train

of thought. This is the reason we manifest what we think about, because we focus on what we don't want, then we create it, and the cycle repeats. We can learn to pick up the record needle and skip that track.

Some people never learn this stress-relief technique. Many become chemically dependent in search of relief from their mental anguish caused by reliving the stress-induced trauma. People turn to psychiatrists and look for people to talk to, which at times can be counterproductive. Talking and reliving the trauma extensively can cause someone to stay stuck on that track. They may feel an immediate release, but they can't figure out why they don't feel better in the long run.

Some people are better than others at hiding stress and anxiety, and they usually are the most "put-together people," at least on the outside. You never know the battle people are fighting in their lives and what their triggers are, so be mindful of other people's feelings. What seems normal and natural to you might be the very thing that triggers someone else.

There are ways to help heal our lives from stress that are more effective on some



people than prescription medicine and therapy. The problem with the way doctors prescribe medications is that they are only treating the symptoms. This can be absolutely necessary for some because of mental health conditions but less effective in most cases.

Remember a few important keys while dealing with normal amounts of stress. Always try to get your harmful thoughts outside of your head in some way, or they will find a way out on their own. You really don't want your thoughts to get a mind of their own and then have them "derail your train." Finding a creative outlet to deal with your anxiety and frustrations

is a healthier way than dwelling on it and popping a pill. On the other hand, repressing your feelings causes them to create pathways and scenarios that are not optimal for the health of your brain or your body.

Try taking deep breaths and thinking about something else that is pleasant. If it is a confrontational situation, change the subject or offer a distraction if necessary. Discuss it calmly with someone who is neutral if you have to, go for a walk, watch a funny show, or laugh about something. Learn to get over yourself and other people a little bit. Don't take yourself and everything so seriously. Listen to music, watch a good sermon, pray, or

meditate. Focus on anything that has a positive, calming effect. Mindfully choose peace over stress when you can. Here at Herbs and More we believe in alternative methods to stress and anxiety when other methods have failed. We carry many natural stress-relief products that can help with your cortisol levels (that can have many harmful effects on your body) and help improve your wellbeing. Lying on the BEMER energy mat can support the immediate relief of your stress and anxiety levels. There is a solution perfect for you if you allow it to work. We are committed to finding healthy alternatives to your health afflictions, including just plain stress and anxiety.

This message is brought to you by the gurus of good health and supplementation at Herbs and More in Athens, NHC in Killen, and Reflections in Lawrenceburg!

Your Friend in Health,
Lana Woody

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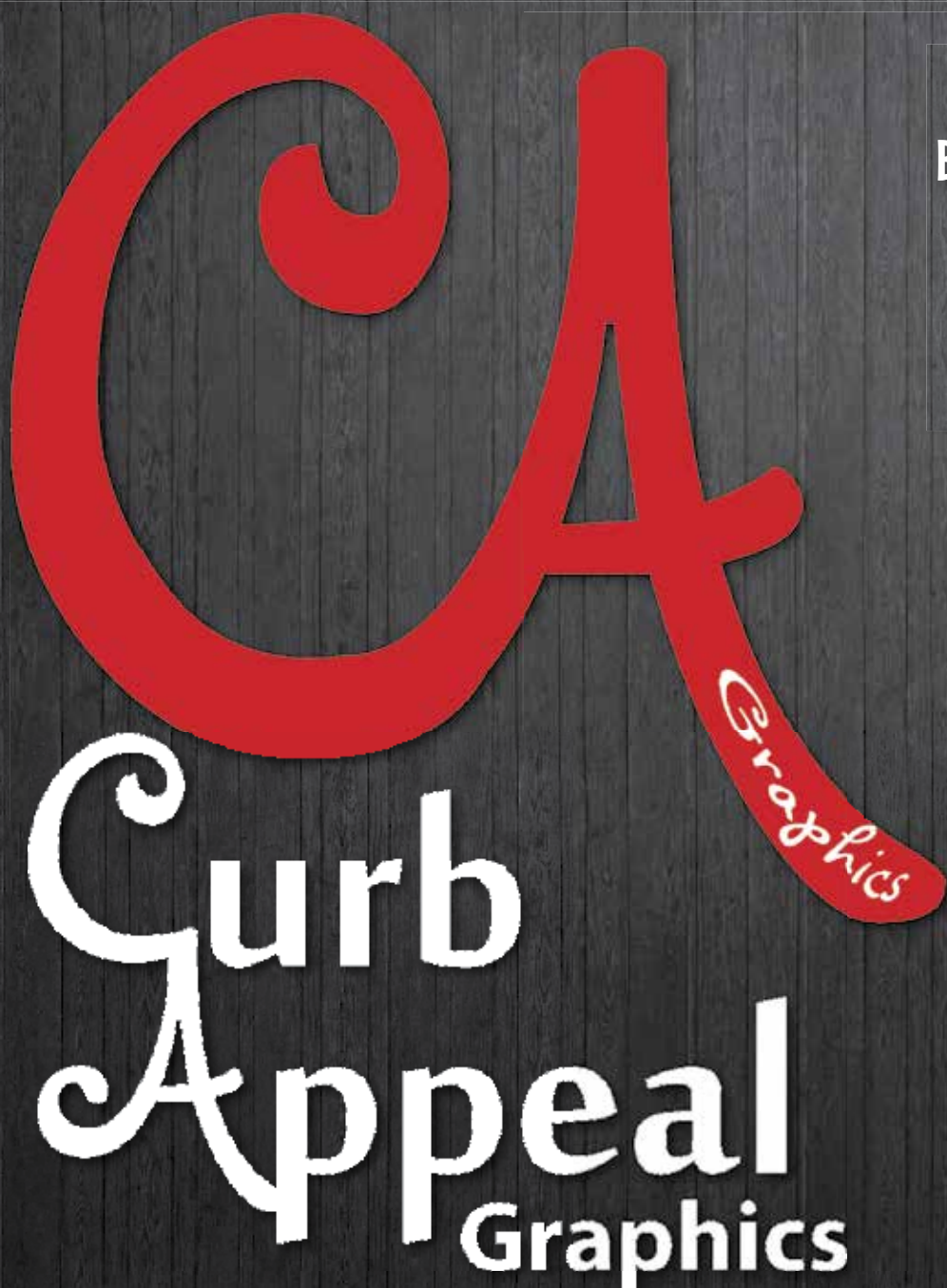
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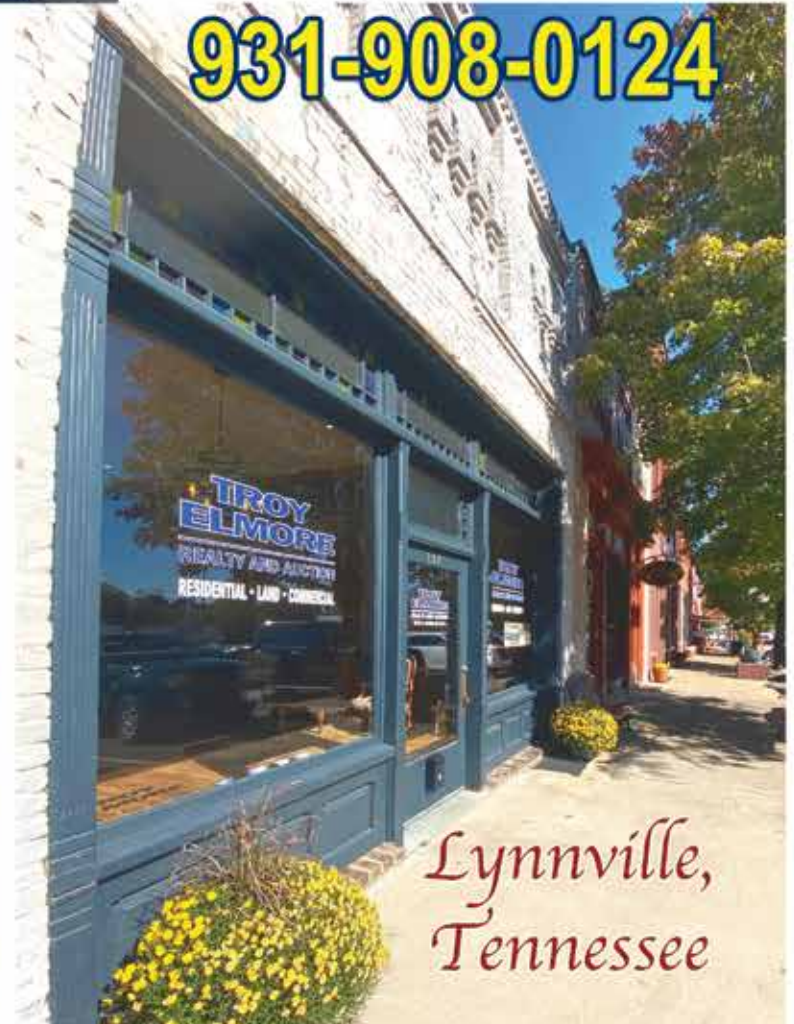
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 ~ Connor Franta



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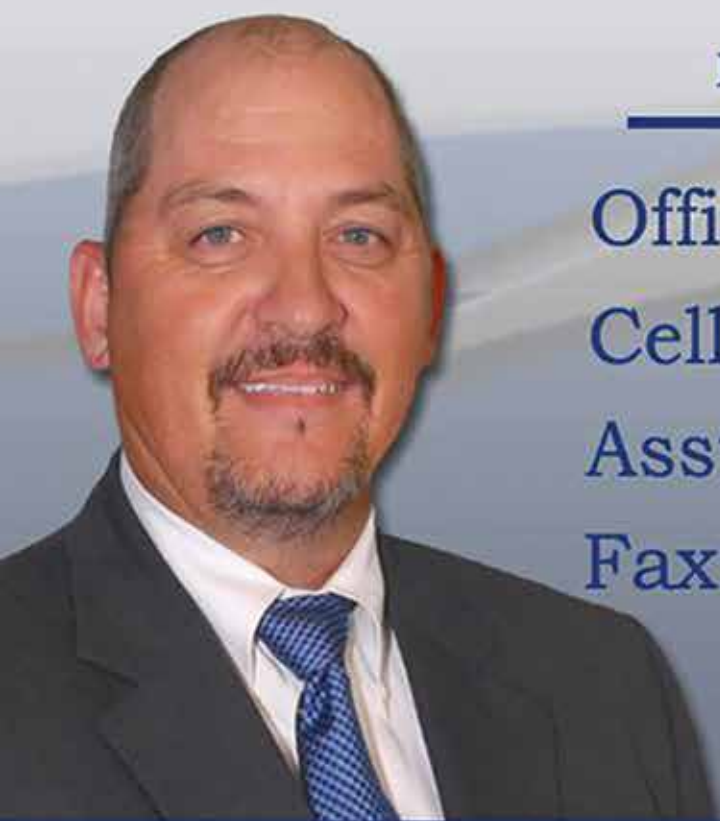
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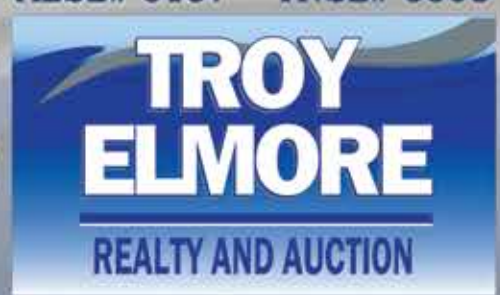
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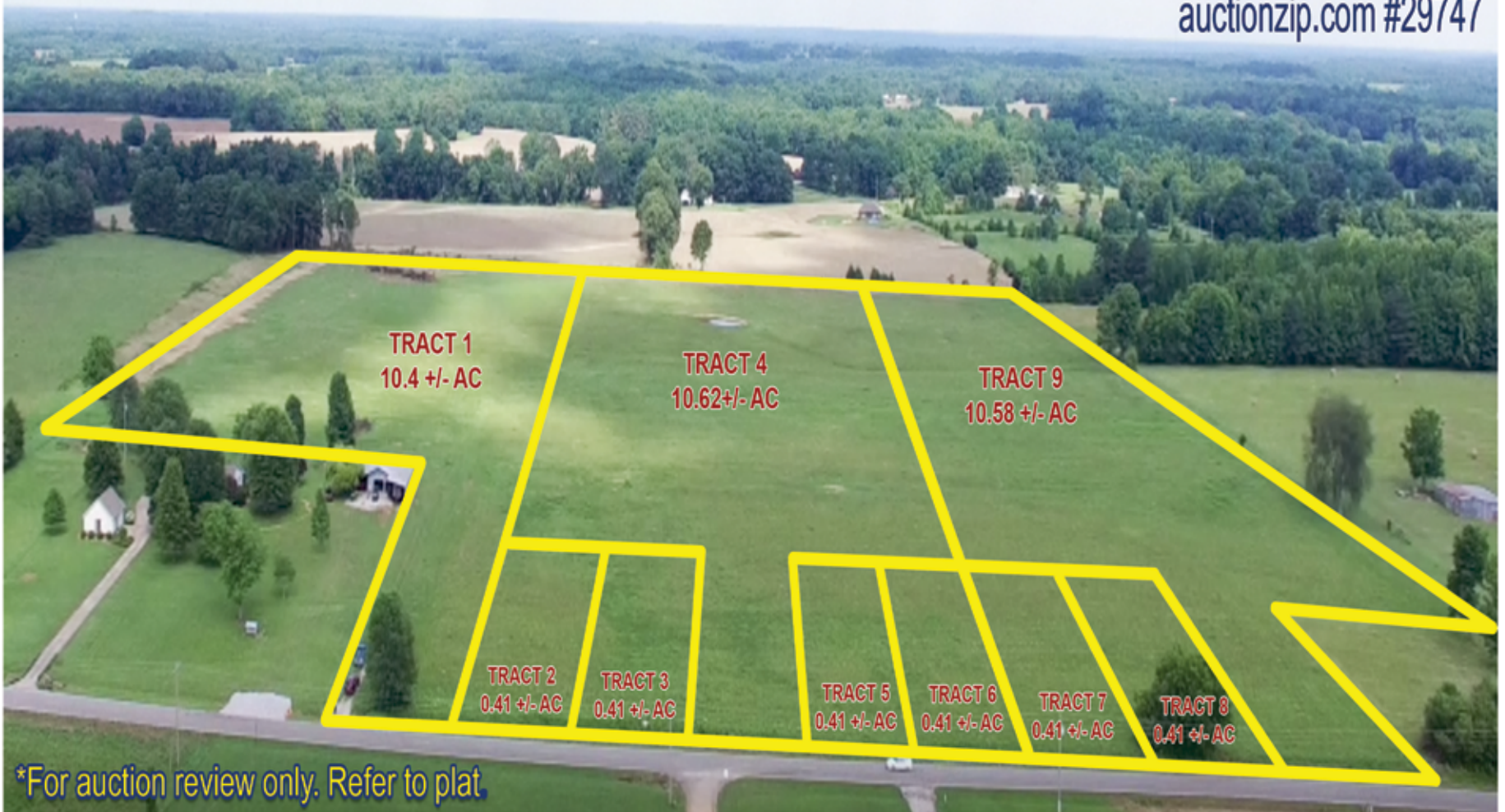
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