

May 19 - June 01, 2023

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See Our Listings Inside this edition...
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From The Vets' Museum



Memorial Day Program To Be Held On May 29, 2023!...
Memorial Day, formerly known as Decoration Day was started to honor Union soldiers who had died during the American Civil War...
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David and Leisha Russell, of family-owned Athens Muffler Center

Athens Muffler Center: The Exhaust Specialists Since 1974

By Ali Elizabeth Turner

When David Russell was 15 years old, he started working at Athens Muffler Center and married when he was 19. He and his wife, Leisha, had the first of their three children at the tender age of 22 and bought the business soon after their first child was born. The Athens

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Clean, Green And Beautiful

Congratulations Are In Order!...
The KALB Commission is very proud to announce that our office manager, Claire Tribble, has been promoted to the position of ...
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Sparkle On, Judy Girl!

By Ali Elizabeth Turner

I had to say "bye for now" last week to someone I had come to treasure over the last two decades. Her name was Judy Gilbert, and she breathed her last on "this side" on Friday, May 12. She died at home, surrounded by love, and I can say that in the brief time I was there on Thursday afternoon the 11th, you could feel

Continued on page 5



Judy Gilbert, a much-loved "Alabama Sparkler"

The Alternative Approach

Autism Awareness...
In 1970, the Autism Society launched the first National Autistic Children's Week which later evolved into Autism Awareness Month...
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Publisher / Editor
Ali Turner

Copy Editor
Yvonne Dempsey

Graphic Design
Jonathan Hamilton

Web Design
Teddy Wolcott

Contributing Writers

- D. A. Slinkard
- Lisa Philippart
- Anna Hamilton
- Lynne Hart
- Sandra Thompson
- Eric Betts
- Deb Kitchenmaster
- Phil Williams
- Gwen Williams
- Tim Lambert
- Mae Lewis
- Jackie Warner

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

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Publisher's Point

Spreading The Sound Of Freedom

Ten years ago, Homeland Security Special Agent Tim Ballard left his job in order to form a private foundation that was dedicated to rescuing children from sex trafficking, and to breaking up the operational rings of their traffickers. Several agents left their jobs to join Ballard in the battle, and on July 4, 2023, Ballard's story is going to be told on the big screen by none other than actor Jim Caviezel, the man who played the part of Jesus in Mel Gibson's iconic 2004 film, *The Passion of the Christ*.

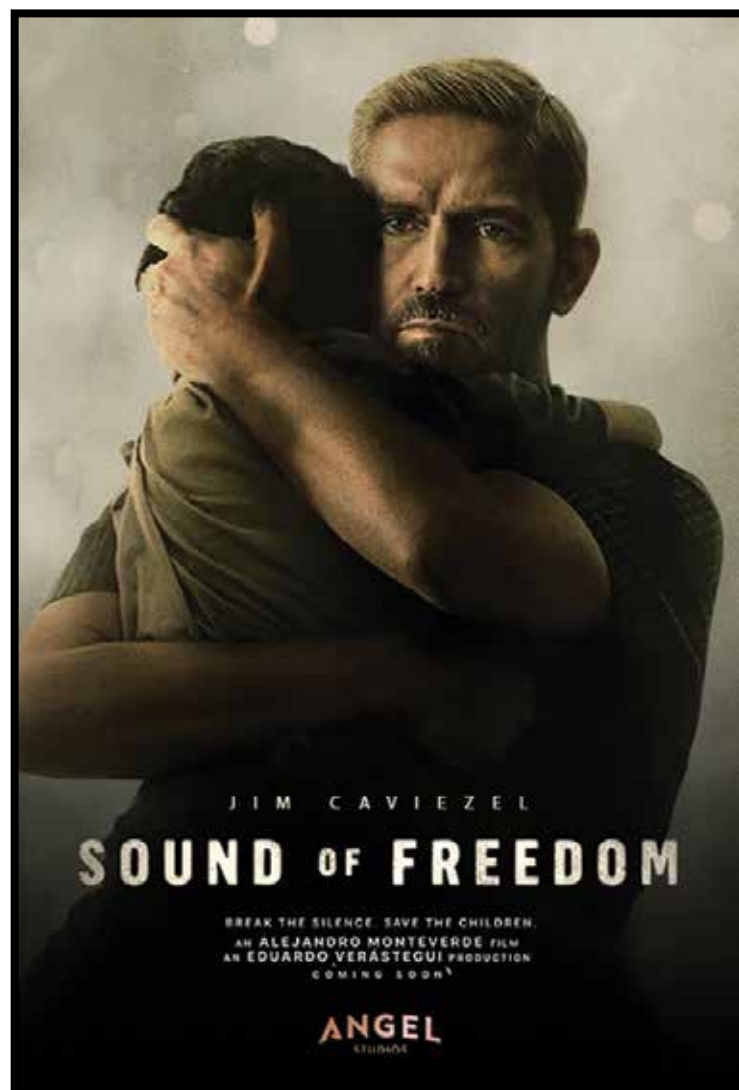
Tim, whose not-for-profit organization is called Operation Underground Railroad in honor of the abolitionists of the 19th century and their tireless efforts to destroy slavery, always knew that Caviezel was the only one he would feel comfortable with playing the leading role. He says that Jim's portrayal of Christ affected him deeply. On Jim Caviezel's part, he feels that the lead in this film, which is called *Sound of Freedom*, is the second most important role of his acting career.

To prepare for the role, Caviezel shadowed Ballard, took extensive firearms and tactical training and also observed an actual rescue operation in Latin America. When you see the film's trailer, I think it's safe to

assume that Jim's tears with regard to the horrors of trafficking are not made up. Before reading the script, Caviezel said he'd never heard of Operation Underground Railroad. But as a husband and father of three, he can appreciate the organization's mission and sees playing Ballard as more than just an acting job. "If you are going to look into the face of evil and go after these sex traffickers, you better have a strong heart," Caviezel said. He further stated, "It's hard for people to deal with this subject but it has to be dealt with. It's a growing empire, three times bigger than the NFL...It's happening in every country," Caviezel said. "It has to be attacked. The screenplay is there, the director is there, the actor is there and we have a really great cast, with actors from different nations that will obviously need help on this."

Tim Ballard's desires for the selection of Jim Caviezel for the lead, as well as film's impact are stated as follows:

"It was important to us that whoever played this role had to be someone that willfully did it with God and knew that that light has to come out because we don't want this to just be a movie, we want this to be a movement. We want this to be something that



saves kids ... and warns would-be traffickers and pedophiles that we're coming."

This is where you can get involved, if you wish, and help "spread" the *Sound of Freedom*. Angel Studios, who are the ones who brought you the hit series, *The Chosen*, picked up the distribution rights. *Sound of Freedom* is finished, and is due to be released to theatres on July 4, 2023. If you want to help get the message out, get the film into more the-

atres in more cities to be shown at more times, then you can become an anti-slavery activist by joining the thousands that are crowdsourcing through Angel Studios. For more information, go to <https://invest.angel.com/freedom>.

Ali Elizabeth Turner

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



Honorable, Responsive Marine Or Harmful, Racist Menace?

by Ali Elizabeth Turner



The purpose of this Soldier column more than anything is to ask a bunch of questions that are hopefully well-reasoned, and with the result being to inspire discussions that possibly lead us to think deeply about drugs, mental illness, and the role of bystanders when it comes to protecting people. There must be a call for systemic changes that begin with a cry for a just and fair outcome in the case of *The People of New York City v. Daniel Penny* that have a ripple effect across the nation. While that goal may sound lofty, it is the responsibility of every freedom-loving American, whether or not military service has been a part of their life, to ask questions and seek out answers when an incident

occurs that threatens to divide us further. It is the only way we will remain free. And, it is crucial that we let the story be the story, no matter how good, bad or ugly the facts of the case end up being.

So, let's get started. A broken and harmful mentally ill man with an extensive criminal record is dead after being restrained by three passengers, including a Marine, in a NYC subway because he was threatening those on board. He was a dangerous man, having been arrested 42 times for things like attempting to kidnap a 7-year-old girl, striking a 67-year-old woman so hard that he broke her nose and her eye socket, assaulting an elderly man, and a laundry list

of drug-related offenses. He was so well-known by the NYPD that he was on a list of fifty such people who are on the streets of NYC. To put things into perspective, he served a total of *four months* on the greatly reduced "endangering the welfare of a child" charge. The man's name was Jordan Neely, and when he wasn't getting arrested, he did Michael Jackson impersonations, busking on the subway platforms. I am wondering, would Neely be alive today if justice had been served in what should have been a kidnapping charge, seeing as he was observed dragging the little girl down the street? Would Neely be alive if long ago he had been locked up and gotten treatment while he was

serving time?

I am not a doc, but if even the Mayo Clinic talks about the fact that Ketamine, which is used in surgery to cause someone to lose consciousness, and Neely's family admits that he was "self-medicating" with it, could that have been a factor in his death?

Enter Daniel Penny, who served honorably in the United States Marine Corps, who is the only one being charged in the chokehold death of Jordan Neely. He allegedly believed that he and the other passengers on the subway were in danger to the point that he intervened and put Neely in a chokehold while two other passengers restrained him as well. At first, in fact for

five days, there was no indication that he was going to be criminally charged for what happened. Five days later, Daniel Penny was charged with second degree manslaughter. So, what changed? A protest that tried to portray Neely as a martyr and a victim of racism.

Of course, the politics that have entered the case have become predictably epic. But here is where we need to cling to the rule of law and let the facts of the incident speak for themselves. Was Neely a victim? Was Penny a protector or a perpetrator? May God have mercy on our souls and help us to get to the truth of this tragedy. And truth, when it is "true truth," promises to set us, all of us free.



Sparkle On, Judy Girl!

by Ali Elizabeth Turner

continued from page 1

the” peace that passes all understanding” throughout the house.

We were, in the parlance of network marketing, known as “side-line buddies” working for a global health food company that found a way to put powdered fruits and vegetables in a capsule a little over 30 years ago. We shared adventures, heartbreak, triumph, and laughter together, and she was a fierce warrior for the total health of others.

Our extended team had a nickname for Judy and her sister, the late Sue Edgemon, and it was the “Alabama Sparklers.” When we would go to national conferences and other events, it was always a joy to be around “the Sparklers.” The name came about because these gals always looked gorgeous, and sported just the right amount of glam. And far more importantly, they were (and are) gorgeous on the inside. They were true Southern ladies, lovely within and without.

Thursday last, Judy’s and my sponsor, Carrie Radnov, who lives in St. Louis got a hold of me and said, “We need to get flowers to Judy today.” Carrie just “knew.” I offered to go to Dugger’s Florist, put in the order, pick it up, and deliver it...whatever it took to get something custom-made to Judy in the middle

of Mother’s Day Week. Carrie sent the picture of what she had in mind, and we were in business. A huge thank you to Melinda for moving so quickly on it when I know she was already way passed pooped out.

Another thank you goes to Amy Fiscus, who had volunteered to go help Melinda that day. Melinda had to wait all day for the arrival of some Gerbera daisies to complete the arrangement. She slipped them in moments

before I arrived, and off I went to Judy’s house.

Judy’s daughter, Julie Shields, met me at the door. Her face lit up when she saw me, and especially when she saw the flowers. “Oh, those are just perfect,” she

said with her trademark gentleness that I have savored for the last two decades. We then had such deep fellowship in the kitchen, and talked about all the things that had transpired in Judy’s health in the last year. Above all, Julie conveyed the fact that she knew she had been promised by our Savior that her mom “would be made whole.”

Then Julie asked me if she could share a vision she had had pertaining to heaven and Judy’s family waiting for her there. The family was preparing a table for Judy, and they were all waiting with big smiles on their faces. Aunt Sue was carefully setting the table with gorgeous china, silver, and linens. Sue was also putting the finishing touches on the floral centerpiece, placing the last two blooms in place. “Everything needs to be just right for Judy,” Aunt Sue said in the vision.

Now, here is the “chill bumps” part of the story. Julie looked at me and said, while pointing to the arrangement I had delivered that was now sitting on the counter, “That is the arrangement that I saw in the vision.” Tears came, and tears are coming as I finish this piece. I hope my tears serve to “sparkle for the Sparkler.” Sparkle on, Judy girl, and we shall see you soon. And, we shall finish what you started, dear one.



Calendar of Events

Merchants Alley Happy Hour Music Series Fridays Thru June

5:30pm - 7:00pm. Free to the public. Merchants Alley 107 N. Jefferson St. Athens, AL 35611. Athens Main Street recently renovated a blighted alley in the center of downtown Athens. From pop to country to soul to classical, there is something for everyone and our patron demographic reflects the inclusion we hoped to achieve. We engaged 27 diverse local musical acts in 2022. From individual musicians up to 10-person bands, these acts included guitars, banjos, keyboards, violins, drums, dulcimers, even a harpist. We are looking forward to 2023 and bringing more talented local artists to Merchants Alley. For more information on AMS, visit their website at www.AthensMainStreet.org.

1818 Farms Fresh Flower Friday May 19

9am - 12pm. Your favorite Spring Blooms are ready for harvest! Our campanula, larkspur, snapdragons, delphinium, bachelor buttons, statice, scabiosa, and baptisia are blooming beautifully. We hope that you will visit us and see these farm blooms during our new "Fresh Flower Fridays." These unique flower varieties were planted in October and overwintered. Their bloom season is typically finished by the end of May. Their season is short but spectacular. Our gift shop will be open as well. It's a magical time at the farm and we hope to see you there. 1818 Farms is located at 24889 Lauderdale Street, Mooresville, AL 35649.

Household Hazardous Waste Collection May 20

8am - Noon. Limestone County residents may bring household hazardous waste items, fluorescent tube lights, television sets (no other electronics), and medications in pill form to the Athens Middle School parking lot (next to the stadium) for proper disposal

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

FB: www.facebook.com/YesterdaysEventCenter

free of charge. Proof of residency may be required. Volunteers will unload your vehicles for you. For questions, please call KALB at 256-233-8000 or email KALBCares@gmail.com.

Walking Club - Walk & Lunch May 20

9:30am - 1:00pm. Meet at the Athens-Limestone Visitors Center at 100 N. Beatty St. and walk with the Capital City Wanderers Walking Club. We will go to Ro's Grille on Hobbs Street afterwards for lunch. For more info call: 256.656.4335.

Blood Drive - Vietnam Veterans Of America May 26

10:30am - 4:30pm. Disabled American Veterans Building. 25396 Airport Road. Athens 35614.

Preschool Storytime May 31

9:30am - 11:30am. 603 S Jefferson St. Athens Library every Wednesday at 9:30 or 10:30 for ages 3-5.

Inaugural North Alabama Airfest June 10 - 11

Pryor Field Regional Airport (DCU) in Tanner, Ala., is one of the busiest general aviation airports in Alabama. The North Alabama Airfest will celebrate the aviation industry in Alabama with more than two hours of flying activities for the whole family to enjoy. It serves the needs of national, corporate, and private aircraft. Tickets are \$10 per person, children under 5 are free. To purchase tickets, visit flydcu.com/airfest. Contact Adam Fox at afox@flydcu.com for more info.

Silver Sneaker Flex™ Classes

Every Monday, Wednesday & Friday

Silver Sneaker classes available at Athens Limestone Public Library on every Monday, Wednesday and Friday at 9:30 a.m. Class is open to all. Donations accepted. For info: 256-614-3530 or jhunt9155@gmail.com

Digital Literacy Classes

Athens-Limestone County Public Library will host a series of Digital Literacy Classes in conjunction with Calhoun Community College & Drake State Community & Technical College. Classes will boost your digital confidence & provide you with skills and training needed in today's job market. Courses include: Computer & Internet Basics, Email, Windows OS, & Microsoft Word®. M-W 9:00 – 12:00 or M-W 1:00 – 4:00. Classes start January 24th. Call us at (256) 306-2830 to learn more.



From the Alabama Veterans' Museum

Memorial Day Program To Be Held On May 29, 2023!

by Sandra Thompson, Director, Alabama Veterans' Museum

Memorial Day, formerly known as Decoration Day was started to honor Union soldiers who had died during the American Civil War. It was a day of remembrance marked by the tradition of decorating veterans' graves with flowers, wreaths, and flags. After World War I, it was extended to include all men and women who died in any war or military action. In 1971, Memorial Day became a federal holiday and was placed on the last Monday in May. Today, numerous Memorial Day ceremonies take place throughout our country and various U.S. military cemeteries abroad.

Each year, the Alabama Veterans Museum holds a ceremony to remember our fallen brothers and sisters in the year since the last Memorial Day. This year is no exception; please join us on Monday, May 29 at 11 a.m. for a very special program.

I am happy to announce our special guest speaker will be LTG Daniel L. Karbler, Commanding General USASMDC. Lieutenant General Daniel L. Karbler assumed command of the U.S. Army Space and Missile Defense Command and Joint Functional Component Command for Integrated Missile Defense on Dec. 6, 2019.

LTG Karbler most recently served as the chief of staff, U.S. Strategic Command, Offutt Air

Force Base, Nebraska. He was the principal adviser to the USSTRATCOM commander and deputy commander, and directed the activities of the command staff by developing and implementing policies and procedures in support of the command's missions. He chaired numerous boards, oversaw the command's corporate process, and served as the director of the commander's staff.

LTG Karbler also served as the commanding general of the U.S. Army Test and Evaluation Command. Prior to that, he served as the director, Joint and Integration, Army G-8 at the Pentagon. LTG Karbler has held multiple leadership positions, from platoon leader to installation chief of staff and school commandant. He has commanded both B Battery and D Battery in the 5th Battalion, 7th Air

Defense Artillery Regiment, 32nd Army Air and Missile Defense Command while assigned to U.S. Army Europe. He also commanded 3rd Battalion, 43rd Air Defense Artillery Regiment, 32nd AAMDC at Fort Bliss, Texas; the 31st Air Defense Artillery Brigade, 32nd AAMDC at Fort Sill, Oklahoma; and the 94th

AAMDC at Fort Shafter, Hawaii.

LTG Karbler earned his Bachelor of Science in 1987 from the United

States Military Academy at West Point where he was commissioned as a second lieutenant in the Air Defense Artillery branch. He also holds a Master of Business Arts from Benedictine College in Atchison, Kansas, and a Master of Arts in strategic studies from the National War College. His military education includes the Air Defense Artillery Officer Basic and Advanced Courses, the Command and General Staff College, and the National War College. His awards include the Distinguished Service Medal, Defense Superior Service Medal, Legion of Merit, Bronze Star, Defense Meritorious Service Medal, and the Israeli Air Force Combat Operations Badge.

We are also pleased to



announce that we will enjoy music provided by the Limestone Winds. So join us on Memorial Day for our program and refreshments immedi-

ately following. For further information please contact the Alabama Veterans Museum & Archives at 256-771-7578.

Alabama Veterans Museum
 Memorial Day Observance
 Honor & Remember



Monday, May 29 | 1100
 114 W. Pryor St.
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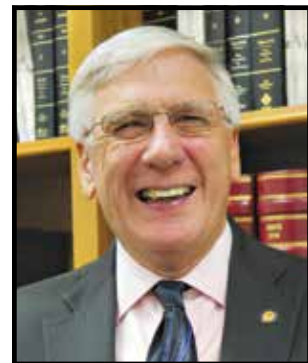
Keynote Speaker:
 LTG Daniel L. Karbler,
 Commanding General
 UNITED STATES ARMY SPACE AND MISSILE DEFENSE COMMAND
 Redstone Arsenal, Huntsville, AL

For information call 256-771-7578

What Makes Ronnie Roll

A Wild And Wonderful Week

by Ali Elizabeth Turner



First of all, the wildest part. For those of you who may not know, Mayor Ronnie is sporting a stylish cast and sling on his right arm these days. He was pitching baseballs to some kids, including his grandson Quinton, and took a line drive to his right radius. He is right-handed, so you can imagine how much fun that has been. At first, he did not know that it was broken; it just hurt like crazy. It had bled more than a bit, so he wrapped it in some towels to stop the bleeding, took the boys to Chick-fil-A to get something in their stomachs, took them home, and then accidentally moved his arm in such a way that there was nothing else to say to Sandra other than, "We need to go to the hospital." The jury is still out as to whether or

not he will need surgery, and all in all, he is getting by "with a little help from his friends." Still, this has been no fun.

The upside of "wild" is Rodeo Week, which began on Tuesday. Though the weather looked threatening, the annual Street Dance was held on the east side of the courthouse. Throughout the week there will be the slack competition, the special needs rodeo, the rodeo queen competition, and the two main events on Friday and Saturday.

The "wonderful" part of the week is that it is full of graduation ceremonies, and as much as Mayor Ronnie looks forward to it, graduation is always a bittersweet time. "It goes so fast, and seems like it's just going faster," said the mayor.

I nodded in agreement. The students of the Mayor's Youth Commission had their last project to complete, and that was the ceremony that awarded the \$3,000 donated by DEKKO and the City of Athens for the MYC students to dispense to worthy non-profit organizations. This year

there are 16 seniors who are a part of the MYC, and they hail from Athens High School, Lindsay Lane Academy, and Athens Bible School. All year long, the commission kids learn about a number of worthy causes and organizations in our community, and then they decide how they are going to give -- who gets what, and how much. One of the projects from the past was allocating funds to the APD so that officers on patrol could give out Frisbees and footballs that they kept in the trunk. "We let them make the decisions," the mayor told me. "At first, they would look at us and say, 'What do you want us to do with this?' and we would always say, 'That's up to y'all.'"

So, here is what they decided, after some lively debate and a pretty stringent selection process:

- Athens Arts League - \$275
- Athens-Limestone Beautification Board - \$300
- Athens-Limestone Community Association - \$275

tion - \$275

- Athens-Limestone Hospital Foundation - \$500
- Athens-Limestone County Library Foundation - \$200
- Camp Hope for Hospice of Limestone County - \$350
- Keep Athens-Limestone Beautiful - \$300

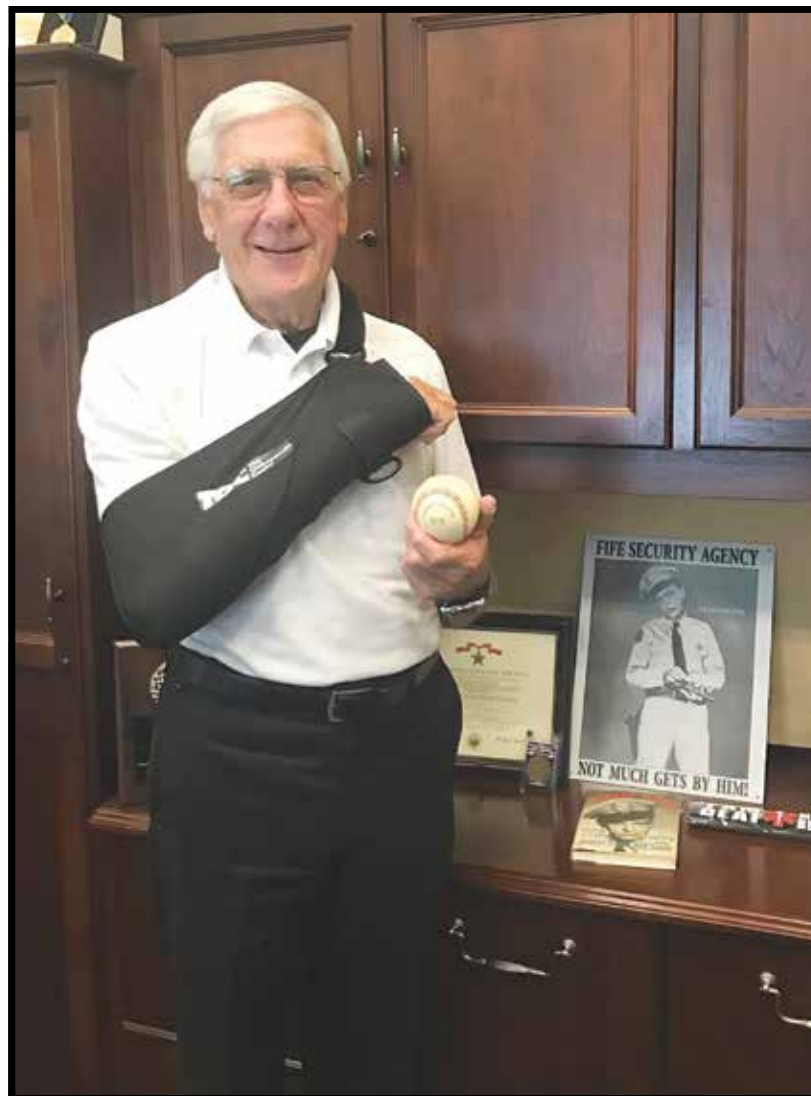
• Make a Way Foundation - \$300

The Mayor was pleased to announce that through the fishing tournament, the Celebrity Waiter's Night at Applebee's, and the classic Relay-for-Life events, that some-

where between \$15,000-\$20,000 was raised this year, and they'll have the final count soon.

The annual Law Enforcement Memorial Ceremony, also known as "End of Watch," was held Tuesday on the west courthouse lawn, and was very brief due to bad weather coming in. This ceremony dates back to 1918, and specifically honors who died while in the line of duty. It is part of National Police Week.

We clearly had much about which to pray, starting with the mayor's arm, and so we did. And then, it was time for Ronnie to roll.



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Protect This House

by Phil Williams



I want to paint you a mental picture. Just imagine this scenario with me. Let's say that you worked hard, saved money, and did all that you could to establish good credit. The day comes after many years for you to build your dream home. It's a beautiful house on a little patch of land near the water, surrounded by other beautiful homes. You come in from a day's work and enjoy just sitting and watching the sun go down on your house.

You realize that you have been given so much. You extend hospitality to guests, host missionaries for stays, friends come over to grill on the deck. You're proud to share. You are generous because you remember where you came from.

Every detail is something that you planned for, worked for, and helped to design. This is your castle. You feel safe there. You are comfortable. You feel blessed by it.

Next, imagine that you come home from work one day and notice that lights are on inside. The back door is standing open and you can see movement through the windows. Something is not right, and cautiously you walk in the door to find strangers sitting on your couch, watching your TV, their feet on your coffee table. Someone you don't know is in

the kitchen fixing themselves a meal from your pantry. Who are these people?!

You can hear someone in your bathroom running the shower. A young man you've never seen before comes down the stairs wearing your favorite shirt. The strangers acknowledge you with blank stares but act as though they are entitled to your house like it's their own.

Out the kitchen window you see tents being set up in your back yard, your flower beds are being trampled, and folks are picking the tomatoes you have been growing in your garden. All that you have tended meticulously is now being destroyed by a hundred people you've never seen before.

A rising panic in you asks, "What in God's name is happening?!"

One of the interlopers finally says, in broken English, "We came from somewhere else. We will just be here a little while," and then he stares at you like that should say it all.

You call the police but they tell you that they are overwhelmed with similar calls and you're just going to have to entertain your new "guests" as best you can. Guests? Guests is a word that means they were invited.

As you hear the sounds of a dish breaking in your kitchen, someone else's kids running through your house, and strang-

ers arguing over your TV remote, you realize that you no longer feel peaceful in your own home and you question whether life will ever be the same.

Let the feelings of that drama sink in. That surreal storyline seems like one of those weird disjointed dreams that leaves you unsettled even after you wake up. How would you feel? What would you do?

Because what I just described for you is a micro-version of life at our southern border right now.

What if the "house" represented a whole community, or a state? What if the house in my story was an analogy for our country? That open back door? Well, that's our southern border. Uninvited strangers making use of our home, wearing our clothes, and eating our food? That's the analogous portrayal of what is happening to American resources as mass migration takes on a new and dangerous level.

Just in the last few days, new records were set by the US Customs and Border Patrol (CBP). Several days of over 10,000 illegal migrants crossing into the U.S. culminated in over 82,000 illegal crossings in one week. The CBP's latest statistics show that in the month of February alone 10,870 unaccompanied minors were encountered at the southern border. The city of El Paso

recently reported that it had spent over \$20 million just in general aid, representing a massive increase in currently unreimbursed spending for that one city. CBP drug interdictions last week alone seized 179 pounds of methamphetamine, 56 pounds of fentanyl, and 34 pounds of cocaine. Multiple sex offenders, gang members, and convicted felons were taken into custody as they crossed the border. With the cessation of Title 42, every statistic I just named is expected to get worse.

Our house is in disarray. But recall another part of the story that I just told. In the storyline I narrated, the character was a generous homeowner who shared his home with others, fed his guests, and opened his doors to those whom he could serve. That generous spirit is another micro-analogy of the United States.

On the world stage we have built our home and have never been exclusive of others. This is the most generous country in all of world history. We provide massive aid, we host so many, we bring them in to our hospitality, and we have always done so willingly because that is a part of who we are. American generosity is something to be proud of.

But our generosity is being abused. In the story I just told you, the homeowner's generosity was

no longer able to be extended to others as a result of being abusively consumed by those who snatched it.

This is our house, and we must protect it. We must restore order so that we can continue to be a blessing to others. We must do so that we can know the peace that comes from having a home. A home we have worked hard for. A home from which we can provide so much for others. But not a home that can be stolen from us.

We must protect this house.

Phil Williams is a former state senator, retired Army colonel and combat veteran, and a practicing attorney. He has served with the leadership of the Alabama Policy Institute and currently hosts the conservative news/talkshow Rightside Radio M-F 2-5 p.m. on multiple channels throughout north Alabama. (WVNN 92.5FM/770AM-Huntsville/Athens; WXJC 101.FM and WYDE 850AM - Birmingham/Cullman) His column appears every Monday in 1819 News. To contact Phil or request him for a speaking engagement go to www.rightsideradio.org. The views and opinions expressed here are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the policy or position of 1819 News. To comment, please send an email with your name and contact information to Commentary@1819News.com.




Slinkard On Success

Plan The Work, Work The Plan

by D. A. Slinkard

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



Seeing is believing. I had this conversation recently with an individual about how sometimes we have to see things before we believe them. Nothing's wrong with this approach because, honestly, we live in the world of outrageous claims leaving most people saying, "Yeah, right!" I am from the "Show Me State" of Missouri; so, I understand a thing or two when it comes to not always believing something right away.

This got me thinking and wondering how many times we go about with the improper thought process and say a half-hearted prayer to God about something we do not even mean, and furthermore, we do not expect God's blessing to happen. Our thinking needs to be that we expect the right things to happen. Our thinking needs to be in such a manner we expect the desired outcome. However, many times we do not properly believe the way we should because we do not think it will happen anyway.

I want you to think about a time in your life when you knew something was going to happen. This occurrence is something that you knew beyond a shadow of a doubt was going to come to fruition. I played collegiate baseball, and there were times I knew I was going to get a hit off a certain pitcher. Lo and behold I was right. There were other times I questioned whether I could get the barrel

on the ball; even worse, I could not even get the bat off my shoulder. Why? I was expecting the wrong thing to happen, and it did.

When we expect the wrong things to happen in our lives, we will never achieve the right things. When we focus on the negative, we are going to get negative results. I firmly believe we, as a society, can do much better when it comes to the goals we have in life. We tend to be too broad, or at least I know I am. Yet, the times I am more specific about how I will achieve my goals, the better my chances increase of actually hitting my desired outcome.

If my goal is to increase business sales, this sounds great, but what am I go-

ing after? What will I be targeting? This is why specifics are important. This may seem like an elementary thought for some people; but I assure you, we have inadequate knowledge when it comes to goal setting. Do you not believe me? Next time you go into a bookstore, check out the goal-setting and self-improvement section, and then tell me I am wrong.

How one becomes good at goal setting is a common question I am asked, and I believe in Stephen Covey's thought process of "beginning with the end in mind." I correlate this to planning a family trip. I live in Athens, Alabama, and if I want to take the family to St. Louis, Missouri, I already know what

my destination is going to be. If I end up anywhere other than St. Louis, Missouri, then I have missed the boat. Just like anyone who plans a trip knows, there are designated stops and routes along the way. Can you imagine trying to go to St. Louis with no game plan in mind? This is a horrible idea, but this is how we go about our goals in our everyday life. We just take life as it comes at us, and we become reactive instead of proactive. Anytime I plan a trip I typically have two to three alternative routes ready to go in case an unforeseen event happens. Your goal planning should be no different.

So, what specifics are you missing in your life? If you quickly answer this

question, you may say, "I don't know." But if you take the time to map out your journey and begin with the end in mind, you will have better chances of having success. The easy thought process is to realize what you want to achieve and then work your way backward, in reverse order. Take the time to map out each step of the way in achieving your goals, but take the time to fully see yourself hitting the mark. You would not plan a vacation without the proper game plan, and your life goals should be no different. It is time to get specific with your life; you need to decide what your outcome is going to be and work backward to get there. Believe in yourself.



Clean, Green And Beautiful

Congratulations Are In Order!

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



Claire Tribble Promoted

The KALB Commission is very proud to announce that our office manager, Claire Tribble, has been promoted to the position of executive director.

Claire has been with us for 5 months and has successfully navigated a very busy spring season. Claire has organized and promoted a highly successful Tennessee River Cleanup, a wonderful and well-attended Earth Day EXPO, an exciting One-Bag Challenge, and is in the midst of preparing for the upcoming Household Hazardous Waste Collection on Saturday, May 20. KALB Commission

members have been very pleased with Claire's dedication, skill level, and enthusiasm and are very pleased to have her lead this organization into many years of continued success!

CONGRATULATIONS, CLAIRE!

One-Bag Challenge Winners

Several individuals and groups took part in the One-Bag Challenge, which offered prizes valued at a total of \$1,000! Each 13-gallon or larger trash bag filled with litter picked up within Limestone County earned the participant one entry into the drawing for cash prizes.

A total of 78 bags of trash and 10 tires were removed from Limestone County roadsides and public lands during the month-long event.

There were many families, individuals, and groups participating and, because of them, Limestone County residents are the true winners! It was so good to see families and youth organizations out picking up trash. What a great lesson for our children to get down and dirty in the roadside trash. One young man told us that after seeing the disgusting stuff in the ditches, he will never litter!

So, CONGRATULATIONS to the winners of our One-Bag Challenge and THANK YOU to all who participated. A special thank you to Bank Independent for sponsoring the \$500 Grand Prize!

Stay Informed

There is always something going on here at KALB. We offer several ways to stay informed so you won't miss a single thing!

- **Facebook:** The Keep Athens-Limestone Beautiful Facebook page is continually updated with information on current and upcoming events. Be sure to LIKE our page so you'll see content on your feed.
- **Athens Now:** KALB has articles in the *Athens Now* paper twice a month with timely event information and interesting content.

• **eNewsletters:** KALB emails a monthly newsletter that is full of information on upcoming events, recycling updates, and other pertinent community information. We never spam and we never share or sell email addresses.

You are safe with us! Just provide your name and email address to us at KALBCares@gmail.com or call 256-233-8000.



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Claire Tribble promoted to Executive Director



Cooking with Anna

Wallpaper In The Hallway

by Anna Hamilton

We live in a small house built in the early 1940s. Two bedrooms, one bath, and one tiny hallway. The hallway is almost a tiny square room itself; it almost doesn't even count as a true hallway. I have been trying to convince my husband to let me hang some really funky wallpaper in this tiny space -- something with character, interesting, unique.... this idea has gone over like a lead balloon.

To my husband's defense, why would you spend money to decorate a hallway? Why spend money on a space in your home where you do not spend your time? These are both very valid points. I do not regularly sit in my hallway and ponder the great

questions of life. I've never been to someone's home and left thinking, "Man, that hallway was amazing!"

Sometimes in life however, we find ourselves stuck in the hallway waiting for God to open a door. We are lost, confused, and stuck not knowing what our next move should be. Just an endless row of doors, locked, not opening for us.

There have been times in my life that I felt as if I lived in the hallway. I mean, I had a full house in this hallway. Just stuck there admiring all the doors that were closed in front of me. Nothing seemed to be happening in my life. My friends were opening the doors to marriage, children, exciting careers... and here I was, stuck in the hallway.

continued on page 23

Blueberry Crumble

Ingredients:

- ¾ cup old-fashioned oats*
- ¼ cup whole-wheat flour*
- 1 tsp ground cinnamon*
- 2 Tbsp pure maple syrup*
- 1 ½ Tbsp butter, melted*
- 6 cups blueberries*
- 3 Tbsp cornstarch*

Directions:

Preheat the oven to 350°F and coat an 8"-square pan with nonstick cooking spray.

To prepare the topping, whisk together the oats, flour, and cinnamon in a small bowl. Make a well in the center. Pour in the maple syrup and melted butter. Stir until fully incorporated.

To prepare the filling, toss the blueberries with the cornstarch in a large bowl until completely coated.

Transfer the filling to the prepared pan, and sprinkle evenly with the topping. (The topping tends to clump,



so break it into small pieces.)

Bake at 350°F for 45-55 minutes or until the juice is bubbling at the sides of the pan. Cool completely to room temperature; then refrigerate for at least 3 hours before serving to allow the juices to fully thicken.



March/April Update Part 2

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



We move forward this month with a continuation of our previous article. We'll catch up next time on the end of spring sports, including state tournament results.

Soccer

Ardmore VG 1, Tanner 0
 Ardmore VB 3, Clements 2
 Ardmore VB 5, New Hope 1
 Athens VB 2, Cullman 2
 Athens VB 4, Columbia 2
 Athens VG 10, Columbia 0
 Athens VG 2, Hazel Green 1
 Clements VG 10, Hamilton 0
 Clements VG 11, West Point 1
 Clements VG 3, Tanner 1
 Clements VG 4, Madison Academy 0
 Clements VG 9, Tanner 0
 Clements VB 2, Hamilton 1
 Clements VG 6, Whitesburg Christian 0
 Clements VG 10, Alabama CTE 0
 Clements VG 7, Tanner 1
 East Limestone VG 3, Athens 0
 East Limestone VG 4,

Hartselle 3
 East Limestone VG 9, Russellville 1
 East Limestone VG 9, Elkmont 0
 East Limestone VB 2, Ardmore 2
 East Limestone VG 6, Ardmore 0
 East Limestone VG 9, West Point 0
 East Limestone VB 3, Clements 1
 East Limestone VG 4, Clements 2
 East Limestone VG 3, West Point 0
 East Limestone VG 10, Brewer 0
 East Limestone VG 9, Lawrence County 1
 Elkmont VB 3, Muscle Shoals 1
 Elkmont VG 4, West Point 1
 Elkmont VB 5, West Limestone 1
 Elkmont VG 1, Whitesburg Christian 0
 Elkmont VG 3, West Limestone 1
 Elkmont VB 6, East Limestone 1

Elkmont VB 5, Lee 0
 Elkmont VG 4, Lee 1
 Elkmont VG 3, Ardmore 0
 Elkmont VG 6, Alabama CTE 3
 Elkmont VB 5, West Limestone 2
 Elkmont VG 1, West Limestone 0
 James Clemens VG 3, Florence 1
 James Clemens VG 2, Huntsville 1
 James Clemens VG 10, Austin 0
 James Clemens VB 3, Austin 1
 James Clemens VB 1, Florence 0
 James Clemens VG 1, Grissom 1
 James Clemens VB 1, Westminster 0
 James Clemens VG 3, Westminster 1
 James Clemens VB 3, Austin 2
 Tanner VB 10, Ardmore 0
 Tanner VG 2, Ardmore 1
 Tanner VB 10, Ardmore 0
 Tanner VB 11, Clements 1

Tanner VB 2, Mars Hill 1
 Tanner VB 5, Tharptown 1
 Tanner VB 4, Elkmont 0
 Tanner VG 2, Elkmont 1
 Tanner VB 10, Clemens 0
 West Limestone VB 3, Fairview 2
 West Limestone VG 7, Fairview 1
 West Limestone VB 8, Hamilton 0
 West Limestone VG 6, Hamilton 0;
Golf
 Clements VG 185, Elkmont 216
 Elkmont VB 229, Clements 274

The Athens High boys won their own Golden Eagle Invitational at Canebrake. Athens Bible School's Luke Davis was low medalist with a 70; the Lady Golden Eagles' Adalyn Pike was girls' low medalist with a 68.

Track and field

At the Cullman Classic, James Clemens' Ben Thomason was first in the 110m hurdles and long jump, Dylan

Horton came in first in the triple jump, Zaria Parker won the girls' 100 and 200m dash. Top finishers at the Florence Invitational included Athens High's Catherine Johnstone in the 800m and 1600m; Malea Wiggins in the long jump and shot put; Jayshon Ridgley in the 100m, 110m, and 300m hurdles and long jump; Asa Savoie in the 3200m, the boys' 4x100 and 4x400m relay teams as well as both 4x800m relay teams.

Athens Bible School's Jack Bradford won the 800m at the Falkville Invitational.

At the North Alabama Junior High Gold Circuit track meet at James Clemens, Athens Bible School's Meredith Romans won the discus.

James Clemens' Cole Robinson won the boys' 1600m at the Bob Jones Invitational. Ezion Rolingson was first in the 300m hurdles, Austin Abney came in first in the pole vault, Jaylen Drake won the shot put.

At the Sparkman Senator Classic, Athens High's Catherine Johnstone won the girls' 800 meters, Malea Wiggins claimed the shot put, Jayshon Ridgley was first in the 100m and 110m hurdles, the girls' 4x800m relay team was first, Elkmont's Alex Kuntz was the top finisher in the 1600.

Tennis

ABS VG 7, St. Bernard 0
 James Clemens VG 9, Albertville 0
 James Clemens VG 9, Sparkman 0
 James Clemens VB/VG 9/9, Grissom 0/0
 James Clemens VG 8, Florence 1



Clements' Brady Moore signs with Troy University football



James Clemens' Camden Wells signs with Mount St. Joseph University

Clements High School

Athens Muffler Center: *The Exhaust Specialists Since 1974*



by Ali Elizabeth Turner

continued from page 1

Muffler Center story, along with the story of the Russells themselves, is a wonderful reminder that the strength of America is in its families and its small businesses. And David, when you talk to him about it, has absolutely no problem giving all the glory to God.

Recently, I had the privilege of attending the official Athens Muffler Center grand opening and ribbon cutting sponsored by the Chamber of Commerce, and their new facility is beautiful. It is located at 26977 US Hwy 72 in Athens, right next door to the new Sides Auto Body shop. You do not have the feeling that you are in a muffler repair shop at all. The lobby is pleasant and airy, as is the comfortable waiting room, and the repair bays are immaculate.

Clay Russell, David and Leisha's son, "has really picked up on the business, especially with social media," his dad told me. Clay will most likely take over the business one day. David's wife, Leisha, has been an educator in Athens for 23 years, and is the media specialist (librarian) at Athens Elementary. She helps out with the business as well, and is so proud of their family. They have three children and three grandchildren. On the day of the ribbon cutting, not only was Leisha hosting the event, but also was preparing for daughter Ashlyn to receive her degree from UNA with a bachelor's in communication the very next day. It has been a busy, happy time for the Russells, and the beautiful new facility is a dream come true.

I asked David why, when I have choices, should I come to Athens Muffler Center.



He replied, "We have a combined almost 40 years of experience." He then added, "The pricing is better than a lot of shops because of little overhead." Because Athens Muffler is not a franchise and has no franchise fees to pay, he can pass savings on to the customer. "I am a hometown guy, and not a 'big box,'" he said. They are also now able to offer auto mechanic services at the new site.



But don't take my word for why using Athens Muffler Center is a great idea. People drive from Tusculumbia all the way across North Alabama to Huntsville to get the service and outstanding customer care that is the "standard of care" at Athens Muffler Center. Here are some of the things they have had to say:

"Thank goodness someone recommended this place. I drove 30 minutes and was so glad I did. The scope of the work was a full down pipe and out complete exhaust rebuild on a Jeep CJ7. I arrived 40 minutes early and was car number 2 in line. Clay arrived 15 minutes early, welcomed me and asked about my needs. He

was courteous and happy." "David (the owner) also made his rounds at the opening. He introduced himself to all the customers and looked over my vehicle to discuss needs and details. My vehicle was in and out in good time. Mike, Clay, and David worked as a team and knocked out the job. Several times, David pulled me in to show me what he was doing to make sure I was satisfied. They are professional and didn't swear."

"Price was great. I'll always drive over as these guys will be my "go-to" for all things exhaust. I wish everyone operated like this. I wish good things for these guys."



Another said:
"Definitely recommend! He fixed our truck in a timely manner, explained everything to us and took awesome care of us. Will be back for our future needs for sure. Thank you so much for your service. We drove an hour and it was beyond worth it!"

A third remarked:
"Came in today to fix an exhaust pipe that had

broken, they brought me back, were extremely friendly, let me watch them work, and had me in and out in 15 minutes. It was absolutely unbelievable service at a great price."

If you are in need of a new muffler, come to Athens Muffler Center, the Exhaust Specialists, and let the Russell family get you happily back on the road.

Athens Muffler Center


26997 US Hwy 72, Athens, AL, 35613
Hours: Mon-Fri 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Sat 8 a.m. to noon
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Tennessee Valley Spotlight



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Courageous Leadership Lessons From Harriet Tubman

by Eric Betts

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



Leadership expert, author, and trainer John Maxwell, highlighted the life of Harriet Tubman as an example of unmistakably natural and unrivaled dynamic leadership ability in his book *21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership*. Harriet Tubman was born into slavery in Maryland, and escaped in 1849 by using disguises, sailing on different boats, and riding on various trains until arriving in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, where she could live in freedom. She was not content with obtaining her own individual freedom but was burning with the inner desire to set other captives free. Tubman could have remained at peace and simply enjoyed her new life in freedom. But could she? Believing that she had a higher calling to help others also escape to freedom, she resolved to dedicate her life to the cause of abolition.

Between 1850 and 1860, Tubman led hundreds of enslaved persons from captivity in America. Traveling back across the Mason-Dixon Line after escaping slavery might have been thought of as foolhardy by some, but she had faith that her mission would succeed. Such a mission was extremely dangerous and life-threatening. Tubman could have been shot, tortured, or lynched. Bounty hunters and hounds were constantly on her trail, yet she never relented in her quest to free others.

One of the major qualities that great and exceptional leaders possess is that they are widely respected, and Maxwell states that Tubman demanded and received it throughout her life's journey. Maxwell refers to "The Law of Respect" in his volume and utilizes Harriet Tubman's experience as an example of how respect is gained

by great leaders. Natural leaders who are respected by their followers project a strength of character that draws respect through their influence. What is remarkable about Harriet Tubman, as Maxwell sees it, is that her outward appearance did not in any way suggest that she even had the potential to command others. She had an unimpressive stature at little over 5 feet tall, couldn't read or write, and wore dusty and worn clothing. Unable to read or write, due to the fact that she was born into slavery, yet she was able to command hundreds. Who would ever imagine that one who suffered from often blanking out, due to an affliction from being stricken in the head as a child, could command the respect of statesmen and politicians? Not only was her race held against her, but the fact that she was a woman made her even more vulnerable.

Harriet Tubman would appear to be an unlikely candidate for leadership because the deck was certainly stacked against her. Despite her circumstances, she became an incredible leader. Her origins, stature, and lack of formal education remind many churchgoers of the ancient words of Scripture which say, "Man looks at the outward appearance, but God looks at the heart." How could a woman of such a humble station command such respect? If Harriet Tubman was in the employment pool for great leaders, it is unlikely that she would have been respected enough to be selected. Maxwell pinpoints six qualities that natural leaders possess which almost always commands respect:

Five ways leaders gain respect:

1. Natural leadership ability -- Harriet Tubman was one

of those rare gems in history, a person who is born to lead; this is why she was not satisfied with remaining in Philadelphia while so many were left in chains. This also speaks to the many creative and instinctively demanding reactions to those who were afraid and sought to turn back. "You will go on or die" was her motto. She would not endanger the lives of her followers due to the timidity of some. Some people are born with greater skills and ability to lead than others. Because of the natural strength she projected, her followers had the sense that they were in good hands.

2. Respect for others -- Autocratic leaders rely on violence and intimidation to get people to do what they want, but good leaders rely on respect. They understand that all leadership is voluntary. Harriet Tubman was respected because it was understood by her followers that she was sacrificing herself for their freedom. This is usually not the case for autocratic leaders; they usually want others to sacrifice themselves for the leader. However, Tubman was forced to use intimidation in those life-or-death situations, but always in the mode of acting as a protector and with love for others. Her journeys were quite similar to secret military operations, where intimidation was called for. This was only a "military style tactic," and was not the basis for her leadership. They followed her because of her love and strength of character. The difference with Tubman is that it was apparent she was willing lay down her life to rescue those she loved. Under normal circumstances when there are no life-or-de-

ath situations, intimidation as a tactic will only yield the temporary pretense of respect by followers.

3. Courage -- One thing that caused everyone to respect Harriet Tubman so much was her tremendous courage. She was determined that she was going to succeed or die trying. She didn't care about the risk or danger and put her life on the line. Her mission was clear, and she was absolutely fearless. This fearlessness possessed by Harriet had a contagious effect which freed others to become hopeful. Those who followed her saw her courage and were inspired. Her motto was, "If you hear the dogs, keep going. If you see the torches in the woods, keep going. If there's shouting after you, keep going. Don't ever stop. Keep going. If you want a taste of freedom, keep going." It was this attitude of fearlessness that led them so many times across the line and into "freedom land." This was perhaps her strongest of the six leadership traits that demand respect.

4. Success -- It is attractive. Maxwell says, "People are naturally drawn to it. It is important when it applies to the people who lead us. No one can argue with a good track record." Harriet Tubman was not bashful about her track record. She once said, "I am a conductor on the underground railroad. I have never lost a passenger and never ran the train off its tracks." This record of success attracted thousands from different backgrounds and stations in life.

5. Loyalty -- Maxwell says loyalty "is when leaders stick with the team until the job is done, remaining loyal to the organization when the go-

ing gets tough." Those who followed Tubman knew that they could trust her and that she would never abandon them.

6. Value added to others -- Maxwell says, "The greatest source of respect for a leader comes from his or her dedication to adding value to others. Their respect for them carries on long after the relationship has ended." How did Harriet "add value"? What greater value can there be than to go from living in captivity to a position and place of freedom? In Pennsylvania, there was a greater sense of self-determination to become whatever one's inner spirit said they should or could be, and to go wherever that inner spirit drives one to go. Those who followed her imagined what they could become if they only followed her.

The fact that Harriet Tubman was on the Most Wanted List in America showed that even those who saw her as a threat respected her. When people see that you care about their future and are willing to take risks to get them there, the respect they will give will be undeniable. They will charge a hill on your behalf. She was a great leader not only because of the strength she projected but also because she earned it through hard work and a track record of successful missions that was impossible to deny. Abolitionist John Brown referred to her as "General Harriet Tubman," because her successful missions and leadership abilities were on par with military leaders. Harriet Tubman did not have an official position as a leader, which shows us that sometimes leadership isn't about positions but character and qualities that command respect.

Chapters Are Still Being Written...

by Jackie Warner

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



Shhh... you don't have to speak loudly, you don't have to step too high... You don't even have to shine your light...It's about reclaiming your lost self inwardly. I was thinking about my chapter 50 and all the written pages up to this point. I almost claimed it as being finished without even writing anything on the blank pages still available. It was like this chapter is done and we can just let it ride its way out. It's a total wrap!!!

No...No...NO! -- Jackie Warner, get up and get yourself to restoration and newfound life in those blank pages. I know I am sharing myself and really that could be enough, but as I am writing, I am also seeking to give hope to those who are leaving those blank pages in the chapters of their lives. NO...NO...don't do it! Use your God-given time and space for what awaits you. Why would we leave those pages of our life blank when John 10:10 says: *I am come that they may have life and may have it more abundantly.* I want to embrace life more abundantly!!! It is there for the taking -- so no blank pages are allowed.

Some days it does get tough, difficult, and downright hard to see



beyond the emptiness of life, but rest assured the abundance is there. Make no mistake, we have just covered it up. Having blank pages in your chapters is not a part of the plan. So, regardless, if we use pencils, crayons, watercolors, or written words, the chapter pages will not be blank. Don't you want to look back and see that you made every effort to be thankful for another day, another page within your chapters bringing life to life?

Christian-based author and retirement specialist Bruce Bruinsma reminds us to think: "When we end our life in God's earthly kingdom and move on to the heavenly one, we will leave behind a book. Will it be filled with life-giving

experiences and impact? Living a life of blank pages without meaning or purpose are just that, blank. When God's word is blank nothing happens. When it is fully

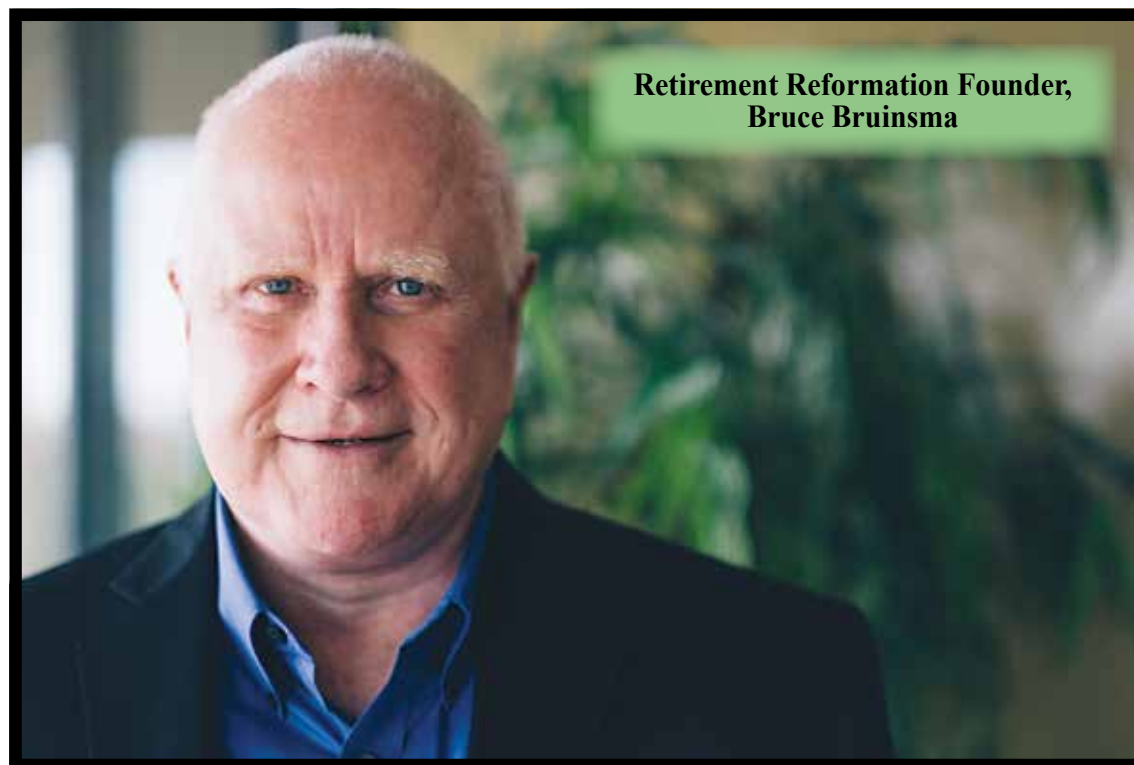
present, amazing things happen. We choose. Choose wisely."

Until Next Time, Be Sincere, Kind and Intentional

Jackie Warner, Community Outreach Specialist

Email: thebridge.us@gmail.com

Check out upcoming events: <http://thebridge-us.yolasite.com/>



Retirement Reformation Founder, Bruce Bruinsma

Overcoming Long Odds

by Deb Kitchenmaster



The “birthing” of the Breeder’s Cup race was welcomed in 1984, where the world’s best thoroughbreds have since competed. A little over two decades later a baby boy named Cody Dorman was welcomed by his mother and daddy. Cody was released from the hospital on oxygen, with the understanding that he suffered from a rare genetic disorder known as ‘Wolf-Hirschhorn’ syndrome that affects many parts of the body. Doctors told the family that Cody’s life span would be only a couple of years. Cody is now a teenager. What are the odds?

Cody communicates with his parents through a technology that supports him in his wheelchair environment. His heart’s desire, as he expressed it, was that he wanted to meet a racehorse. With the help of Make-A-Wish Foundation, Cody, his parents,

and sister went to Godolphin’s Gainsborough farm in Kentucky. The year was 2018.

Arrangements were made and the scheduled day was in motion. The farm had 40 weanlings at that time, and the stud manager was to select ONE. What are the odds? Upon arrival Cody was introduced to a ‘mild-mannered’ six-month weanling. The unexplainable beauty unfolded right before their eyes! “The foal just came up and laid his head down on Cody’s lap and just spent some quiet time there with Cody.” In that moment a human and a horse connected.

Cody’s next two years continued to present challenges to overcoming long odds. Shortly after his visit to the farm, Cody nearly died when a blood vessel burst in his stomach. Then COVID hit. Cody had around 40 to 50 medical procedures, and though that



Photo: Kelly Dorman

held numerous struggles, the struggle with severe depression was beyond measure for his concerned parents. In the midst of this struggle, an idea came: “Take Cody back and visit ‘that’ horse he had met 2 years ago.”

A request was made, despite the fact that the colt was now fully grown, testy, and unpredictable. No one had any idea what to expect. Hoping to rescue Cody from this dark depression, the family arrived at the farm. The same stud manager

brought out the 2-year-old thoroughbred. The colt kept pulling until again, he was right in front of Cody, where Cody could stroke him! “It was like the horse knew who was there to see him,” the awestruck manager stated. Someone asked Cody why he has such a special connection with this horse. “Because he found me and he hasn’t forgotten me. He has always looked for me, and we have the same heart and drive. We never give up.” Belly laughs came forth bursting through the darkness of depression and bringing encouragement and refreshing all. They were witnessing a miracle with their own eyes.

The horse was given the name Cody’s Wish. After the horse had lost his first three races, Cody had an idea. “Cody’s Wish will not win unless we’re there.” November, 2022, at the Westchester Stakes held at Belmont Park, Cody was there and guess what? Cody’s Wish won that race and the next two stakes with Cody present. What a

winning streak. The Breeder’s Cup followed. Yep, he placed first.

To date, Cody’s Wish continues to be one of the best horses in the world. Making his 5-year debut, he marked his fifth straight victory (Grade 1 Churchill Downs Stake). The jockey said the horse “showed another gear he hadn’t noticed before.”

Cody expressed what it was like for him to be with Cody’s Wish. “Cody’s Wish always makes me smile. I love when we just get to hang out together...thank you Cody’s Wish...you are a very special horse and a very special friend.”

Cody’s dad, when responding to reporters, said, “We have prayed to God to hold Cody in the palm of His hands and His hands are big enough to hold the horse, too.”

Idea #1: Human needs horse. Take Cody back and visit that horse he had met two years ago... Action -- they returned to the farm.

Idea #2: Horse needs human. Cody’s Wish will not win unless we’re there...Action -- they showed up.

Yes, we need each other in a healthy, supportive way. After all, we are in this race TOGETHER.

Run your race.

*Your NEIGHbor,
Deb Kitchenmaster*

256-426-7947

horsinaround188@gmail.com



Photo: Andrew P. Scott / USA Today

Mental Health Minute

Staying Calm During Difficult Conversations

by Lisa Philippart,
Licensed Professional Counselor



“One good conversation can shift the direction of change forever.”

- Linda Lambert

Difficult conversations are an unavoidable part of life. And usually what makes those conversations so challenging are all the strong emotions that come with them. For example, the anxiety and fear you feel before confronting your best friend about his/her drinking problem makes it hard to be articulate and clearly express your concerns. This conversation would be a lot less difficult if you were calm and in control of your emotions. The following suggestions will hopefully help you to get started:

Let's begin with being strategic about time and place. Which would be better: Having a difficult conversation with your

spouse in bed at 10:30 p.m. after a long and stressful day, or on Sunday morning at 9 a.m. after a good night's sleep and nice breakfast? Too often we end up falling into difficult conversations when we are not at our best...stressed, tired, distracted, etc. I encourage you to be thoughtful and strategic about when and where you have that tough discussion. I also recommend that if possible, have that conversation outside while walking. A little movement and a bit of sunshine can do wonders for almost everyone when it comes to managing distressing emotions.

Difficult emotions are uncomfortable, but they aren't dangerous. Feeling ashamed can't hurt you. But because these emotions can be painful, our tendency is to treat them like problems to be solved. For example, your spouse describes

how anxious they have been at work lately, and you react by asking if he/she has tried reading that book about stress reduction you recommended! Instead, take a moment to validate emotions—to remind yourself or your spouse that it's okay to feel whatever emotions are present. It's like a pressure release valve that takes the edge off the emotional intensity everyone is feeling.

I have noticed that a tendency during those difficult conversations is for people to criticize character, rather than behavior. When you generalize about people's character or personality as a whole, it feels like an attack. This leads others to get defensive and for you to get even more frustrated and upset. For example, rather than, “Chris is always late to meetings,” try, “Last week, Chris was 15 minutes late to our meeting.

Lisa Philippart LPC LLC
NCC, BCPCC, BC-TMH
Licensed Professional Counselor
Living Life Counseling Center

44 Hughes Rd, Suite 1050
Madison, AL 35758
256.326.0909 cell
256.631.7898 office
256.542.3366 fax

urlifematters@hotmail.com or
Lisa.P@livinglifecounselingctr.com
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And the week before, he rescheduled it twice at the last minute.” When you need to be critical, focus on the specific behaviors rather than traits, character, or personality. Address the action, not the person.

Everybody gets defensive sometimes, and it's especially common in difficult conversations. As you have probably noticed, your reaction to feeling defensive is to start acting defensive, which intensifies emotions and makes it harder to stay calm and have a productive conversation. Knowing this, you can anticipate defensiveness. For example, if you need to deliver some negative feedback to a close family member, you might spend 5 minutes ahead of time imagining what topics in particular will lead that person (or you) to feel defensive. For example, “I know she works really hard on throwing great parties, so my criticism about the way she handled the incident at the birthday party is likely to trigger some defensiveness in her.” The key here is that imagining defensiveness

ahead of time, gives you time to prepare for it.

This brings me to the topic of weaponizing ancient history. In high-conflict conversations, it can be SO tempting to cherry pick some event from the past and use it to “prove” your point. “Well, you're no saint! Remember that time when things got out of control at the birthday party?” Bringing up the past as a weapon further escalates the conflict and essentially gives your counterpart permission to do the same. Of course, facts from the past can be useful in conversations, but check your motivation. Are you using this information dispassionately as a way to achieve your goals in conversation? Or are you weaponizing them and using them as a way to make yourself feel better?

We will continue this “difficult conversation” in my next article!

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



Autism Awareness

by Gwen Williams

In 1970, the Autism Society launched the first National Autistic Children's Week which later evolved into Autism Awareness Month. In 2007, the United Nations General Assembly established World Autism Awareness Day as April 2. As for Limestone County, every day is Autism Awareness Day thanks to Sheriff Josh McLaughlin.

The second week of January, Sheriff McLaughlin contacted me about an idea that came to him in March of 2022 to have one of the Limestone County vehicles custom designed for Autism Awareness. Over the last year, he had consulted with some of trustees that possess the talents to pull this off. All they needed were the funds, and that is where Herbs & More, Athens Alabama Pickleball Association (AAPA), O'Reilly Auto Parts, and private donors came into play.

The sheriff had the idea, his trustees had the talent, and the fundraiser was born. The first person I contacted was Jennifer Bridges, Vice President of AAPA. With her expertise in organizing



fundraisers and love of pickleball, we were going to rise to the challenge! The work began, and over the next few months, Chase Spitzer put together the pickleball tournament that took place in April 21-22 at Athens Recreation Center. Billie Fry created Autism Awareness tee shirts. Behind the scenes, David Chasteen (AAPA president), Teresa Gale (AAPA treasurer),

and Rhonda Weatherford (AAPA board member) were busy too. It takes a village, and we have a great one!

The crew that was responsible for the custom detailing of the Tahoe resides at the Limestone County Jail. Sheriff McLaughlin used the resources he had in-house, the talents of trustees. The crew did the design and airbrushed all the art by hand. You would never think this job was done at the jail in a make-shift plastic hung-on-the-walls paint booth. The finished Tahoe is perfection. Please go by the Limestone County Jail at 101 W Elm Street and see for yourself. To say the fundraiser was a success is an understatement. Not only were the

funds for the design of the Tahoe raised, but on May 8, Jennifer Bridges presented Stacey Givens, Make a Way Foundation, with a check in the amount of \$1419.

As many as 1 in 40 children in the U.S. have been diagnosed with autism, according to a new report from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and the Center of Disease Control and Prevention. In collaboration with researchers from Drexel University, Harvard Medical School, and George Washington University, 1 in 27 boys identified with autism and 1 in 116 girls identified with autism.

On an average, autism cost an estimated \$60K a year through childhood,

with the bulk of the cost in special services and lost wages related to increased demands on one or both parents. Over the next decade, an estimated 707,000 to 1,116,000 will enter adulthood and age out of school-based autism services.

Once again, the people of Limestone County come together to support those in need. When you see the Autism Awareness Tahoe around the county, you will be reminded of the dedication Sheriff McLaughlin has for others and how he is helping those under his watch to rise above their present circumstances to serve others.

*Your friend in health,
Gwen Williams*

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Cooking with Anna (continued from page 13)

Wallpaper In The Hallway

by Anna Hamilton

I could have just stayed in the hallway forever, sulking, asking why nothing was happening for me. I could have ripped doors open that weren't meant for me and ended up miserable and more lost than before. Or, I could have decided to thank God for the hallway and know that when I was ready, He would open the right door for me. I decided to wait, and God has opened the most wonderful doors. More wonderful than I could have ever imagined for myself.

There is a quote by Nicky Gumbel that fits this perfectly, "Until God opens the next door, praise Him in the hallway." How wonderful! Praise Him while you wait. If you are praising God while you wait, you will learn to love the hallway. It is a

place that God uses to prepare you for great things. Love your hallway, put the funky wallpaper up if you want! Praise Him and get ready for your next great door to open. He is working on something great for your life.

This week's recipe is a bit different. I don't normally do a lot of dessert recipes, but this one seems to be perfect for this time of year. My parent's have blueberry bushes, and they are always the best in the world! This recipe is an easy, sweet dessert featuring blueberries. I hope you enjoy it!

"But those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint." Isaiah 40:31

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The Road Not Taken

by Mae Lewis

Regret can be poisonous.

We have all experienced regret...the choice not taken, the road not walked.

Regret is a very real -- and powerful -- emotion. If left unchecked, it can overwhelm us. Much like unforgiveness, it acts like a poison, creating feelings of depression, anxiety or a sense of "stuckness."

Regret can happen for two reasons: choices we made, and choices we didn't make. In the latter, we experience regret for things we didn't do -- the road not taken, or things that happened to us -- when we were helpless to prevent a tragedy, or when we were a victim of unfortunate circumstance.

So, how do we deal with regret? The general consensus of the internet is to "accept, acknowledge, and forgive yourself." Mindfulness, self-compassion, and even therapy are offered as suggestions.

These are good and helpful tools, but it is important to remember that you are the author of your own life. How you tell your story matters.

You have the ability to write your own history. How do you tell your story? Do you tell your story from regret and blame? Or from ownership and gratitude?

The future in front of us is made up of a web of infinite choices...so many "yellow woods" diverging into multiple futures. Yet we can only travel one.

But your story is what you make it...so when you look at the past...at the path you DID walk... you have multiple ways to choose to look at it.

In Jesse Browner's memoir *How Did I Get Here?: Making Peace With The Road Not Taken*, he says, "When we accept that our future is not ever what we envisioned it to be, but what we make of it upon arrival, we allow ourselves to move forward and accept that there is not one true future ahead of us, but multiple futures, just as there is not one past but multiple pasts behind us."

Reframe your past, and tell your story from a grateful point of view. Find the "gift" in the path that you did walk. In essence, we need to practice gratitude for the road we DID take.

I spent several years in a terrible marriage, and

just as many years regretting the fact that I had made a bad choice. But then I realized that I could be grateful instead of regretful.

I started to practice gratitude for "all the lost years/opportunities/joys." I began to be grateful for the lessons learned, the wisdom gained, and the experiences that made me stronger, smarter, and ultimately healthier. A friend said, "Now, you are unmessable with. That's priceless!"

I choose to recognize the priceless gift that I gained as a result of the path that I did walk.

A man I knew was offered a job with a major movie studio, but because of a problem with the mail, he didn't receive the offer until it was too late. He spent years regretting the fact that he had missed his "big break." Instead of

the Hollywood life he had dreamed of, he lived a different life: became a teacher, raised a family, and just bought a ranch in Wyoming with his wife of 50 years. He has lived a happy life full of joy, love, and peace. He has received so many "life gifts" along the way that he might not have had otherwise. He chooses to focus on the gifts, not the losses.

I would offer that this extends even to choices that we make that are hurtful to others. Sometimes we make choices that are selfish -- that end a relationship or harm someone. Regret in those instances can be healthy because they teach us to change and help us to grow. The gift in these situations might be that we have learned a lesson, realized our limitations, or revealed our weaknesses. Maybe we have realized too late

how valuable a relationship was to us. In those instances, the gift may seem smaller than the pain...but it is so important to practice gratitude for the pain, even if it doesn't make sense. Gratitude will heal your mind and your spirit. Regret will destroy it.

We are not a product of our circumstances. Circumstances do not make you. They reveal you to yourself. We are who we choose to be after the circumstances.

The man who can look at his face in the mirror and learn from the road that he has walked down is a very wise man.

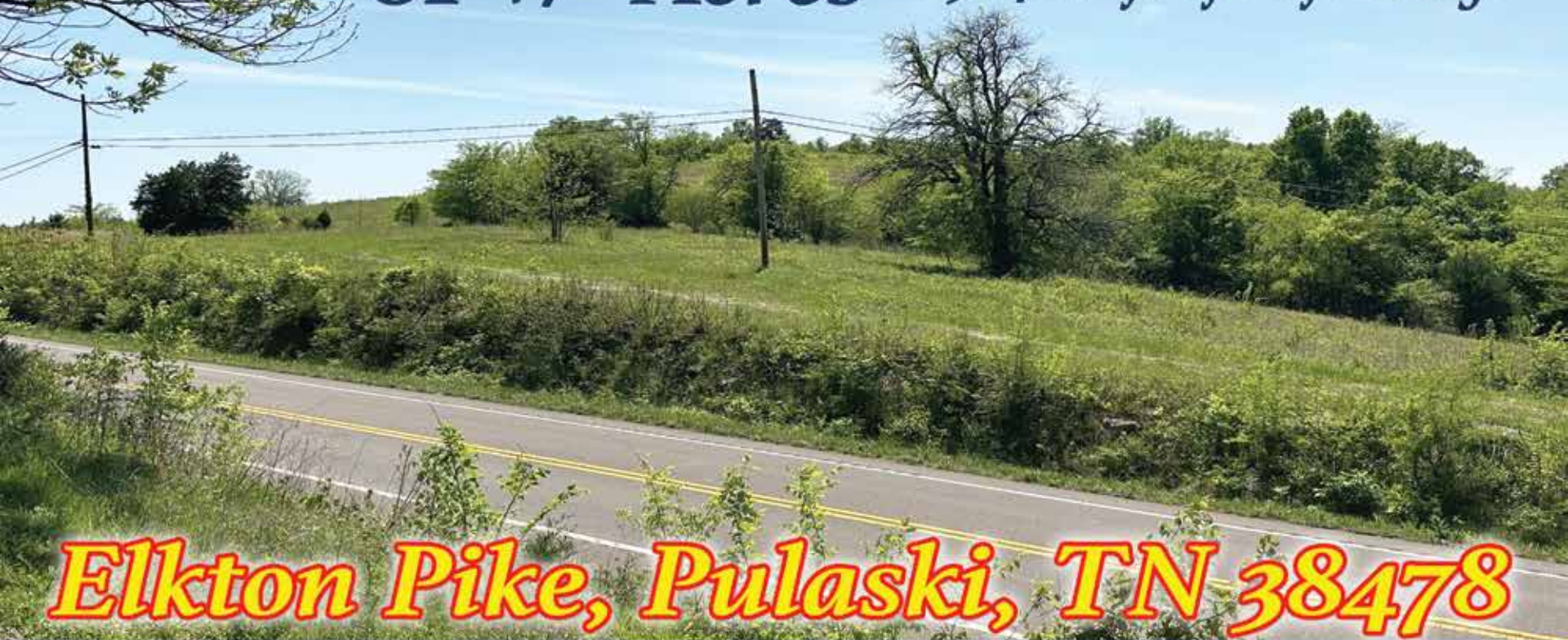
Wisdom and maturity come from facing pain and learning from it...

Immature people... don't have the willingness to experience the pain that leads to authentic wisdom. — Pia Mellody



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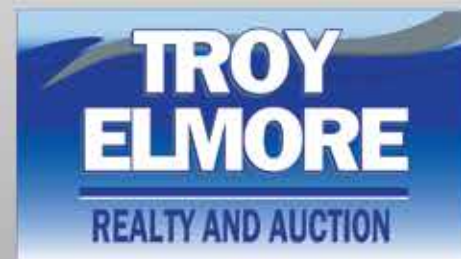
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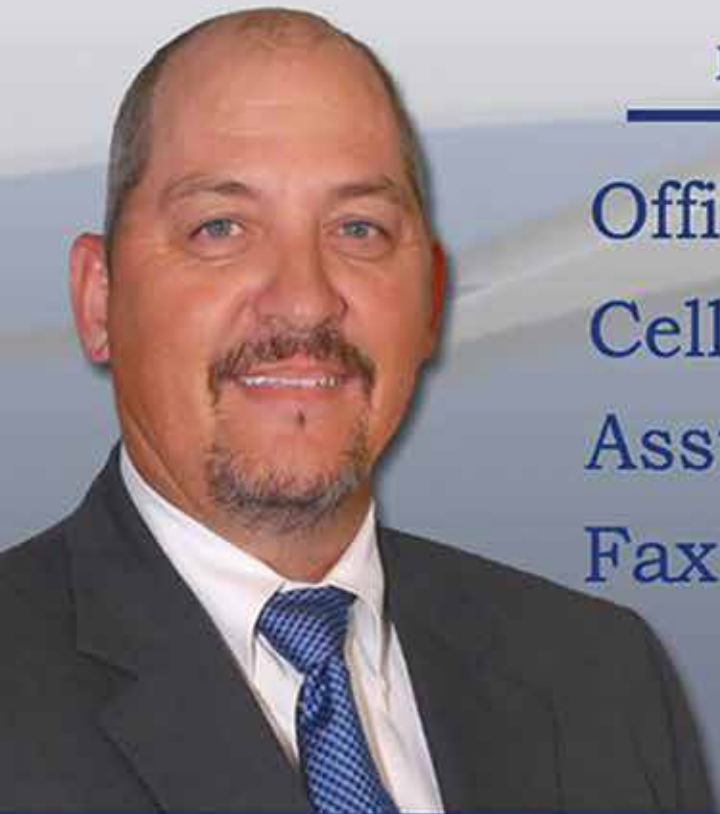
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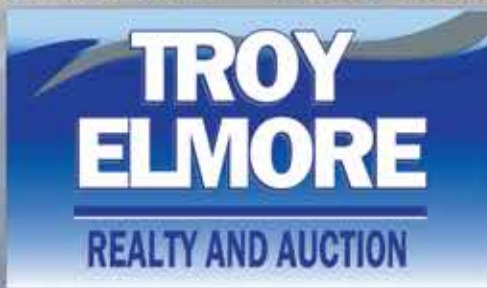
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It always seems impossible until it's done.

~ Nelson Mandela



ANSWER KEY:

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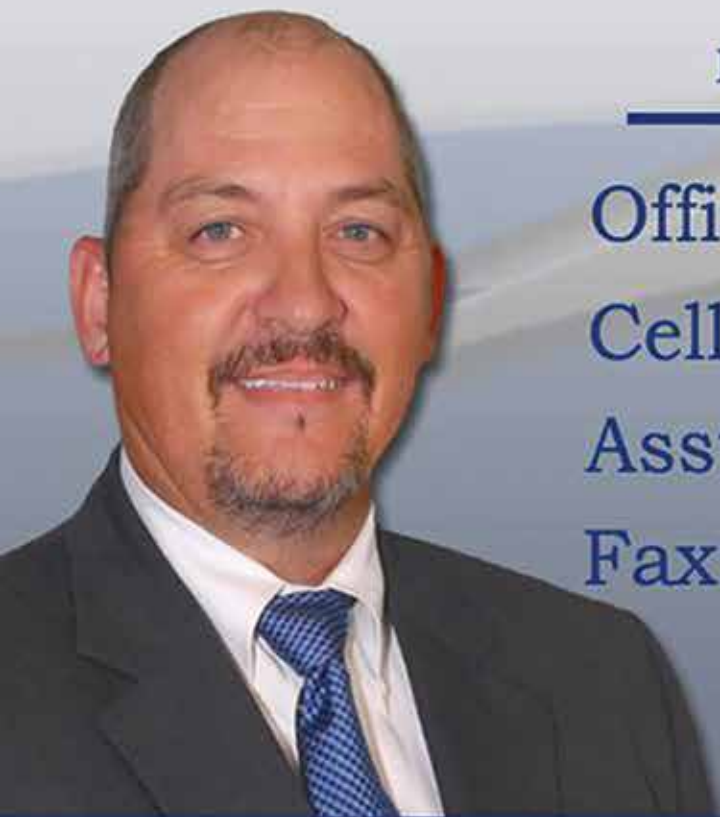
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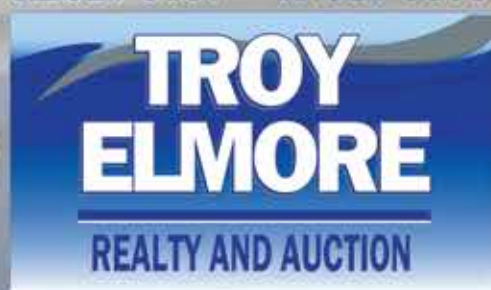
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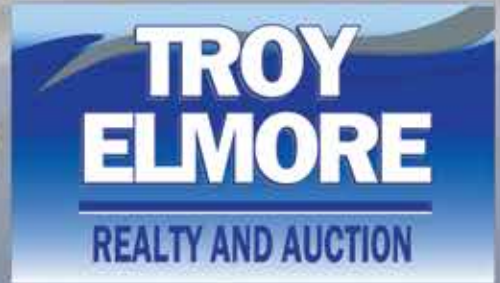
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