

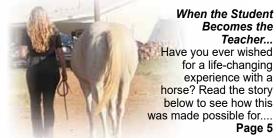
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From The Vets' Museum



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The Pillow Peddler On North Jefferson:

Handsomely Designed, Handmade Décor

By Ali Elizabeth Turner

For 20 years, Anniston, Alabama, native Clyde Gregg lived in Alaska where she braved the cold and raised her two daughters. Her career field included spending 40 years as an orthopedic trauma nurse, which was both fulfilling and frustrating. However, Clyde has loved searching all

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Just Around The Corner: The 2023 Athens-Limestone Christmas Open House



By Ali Elizabeth Turner

For the past 37 years, Athens-Limestone County has had a community-wide Christmas Open House that kicks off the holiday season with pure joy and pizzazz. From the decorated shop windows to the skating rink, to the music, carriage rides, food trucks, vendors and happy hustle

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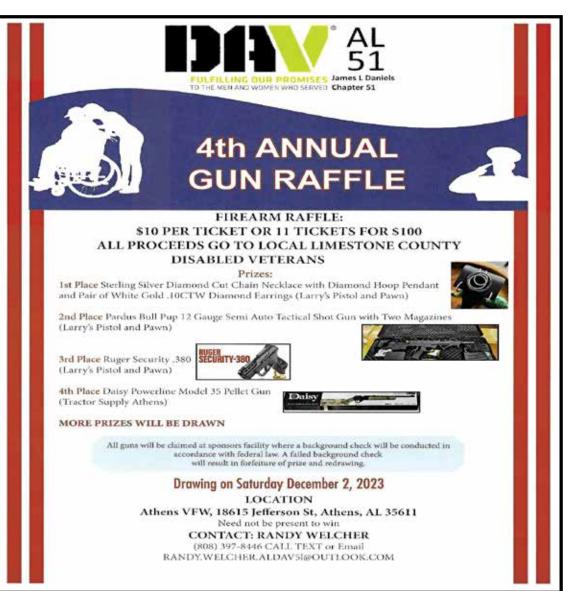
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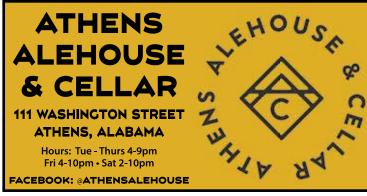
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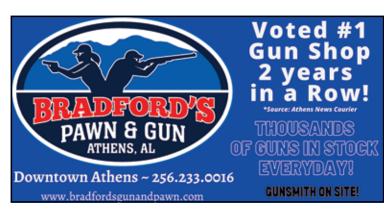


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Publisher's Point

The Rise Of Winter



A few days ago, I turned 70. I had a splendid day, not because there were fireworks over Athens High School Stadium to commemorate what King David called "threescore and ten," however. I must say there were loving greetings flowing my way all day long, an original song as well as a movie produced just for the occasion. It was a grand context in which to do what I was born to do, and that is serve Athens, Alabama, by cranking out Athens Now two times a month. And, I will let you in on a little secret: in some ways I am STILL trying to figure out who I am going to be when I grow up! And that, dear readers, leads me to the point of the *Point*.

There is a way in which beautiful more-thanbirthday gift was given to me on October 27 while at a Juice Plus conference that was held in Charlotte. The conference was mindbogglingly marvelous, and I am still processing all the info and much needed hugs that came my way in my ongoing pursuit of personal growth. The "gift" came in the form of some stolen moments on Friday and Saturday with a remarkable Olympic athlete by the name of Winter Vinecki.

I first heard Winter speak from the main stage to several thousand people when she was the ripe old age of 12, and it was also at a Juice Plus conference. I looked in awe at my sponsor, Carrie Radnov after Winter finished her presentation and said to Carrie, "Now THAT was worth the price of admission all by itself." Carrie wholeheartedly agreed. Winter had lost her father two years earlier to prostate cancer, and she and her mother were underscoring the need for excellent nutrition and self-care by raising funds and awareness to fight the damnable disease that robbed them of the most important man in their lives. Winter also has three brothers who have been her biggest supporters as she and her mother proceeded to run a marathon on all seven continents, (including Antarctica) beginning when she was 14. Did I say I want to be like Winter when I grow up?

I had followed her Olympic ski career and watched her compete in Beijing. She has had her fair share of obstacles, including a serious ALC injury and getting COVID in China in the middle of the com-

petition. She did not place, and for the life of me I don't know why. To me, her aerial stunts were stunning. I am pleased to announce that she is going to compete again in the next Olympic Games, and, did I happen to mention that she is also in law school?

Winter Vinecki

So, here is what happened. I was zipping down the convention center concourse to go look at the Tower Gardens that were on display. I came skidding to a stop when I saw Winter, because I did not know she was going to be at the conference. I silently mouthed the word, "Winter." She looked at me, providentially right when I looked at her, and she mo-

tioned me over. I told her the story I just described above, and her genuine affection toward me was undoing. The next day I went back and purchased her book, which she autographed. It is called, Winter's Rise: An Olympian's Journey of Love, Loss, Grit and Glory. In it, she said, "To Ali - Dream big, and never give in. Winter." I don't care if you have never been on a pair of skis or that you hate snow, you need to read this book. And, I want to add, America is safe in the hands of young people like Winter Vinecki. Miss Winter, thank you for kicking off a most memorable birthday, and we will cheer you on in all your adventures that are ahead.

ali Elizabeth Jurner

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All Things Soldier

PFC Jessica Lynch, 20 Years Later

by Ali Elizabeth Turner



As we get closer to commemorating the sacrifices of veterans next week, I was reminded of the fact that it was over 20 years ago that Jessica Lynch became a household name due to her capture, injuries, and daring rescue by a successful Special Forces operation as they freed the malnourished private and got her to safety.

When I was in Iraq nearly 20 years ago, we took training on how to survive a hostage situation psychologically. One of the things we were taught were ways to identify ourselves as Americans, so it meant a great deal to me that when Jessica was rescued, a soldier took his Velcro-backed can flag off his uniform and put it in her hand. Soldiers also gave her a folded full-sized American flag to cling to as they put her on a gurney and into an ambulance.

Her account of that moment is as follows:

It makes me very emotional, but he handed me an American flag off his uniform and said, "We're Americans. We're here to take you home." And I remember replying with, "Yeah, I'm an American soldier, too." And they were able to quickly whisk me out of there.

There is an account of the daring WWII rescue at Cabanatuan, which was in the Philippines and also known simply as The Great Raid. It was the most successful rescue ever in any American war, yet one of the challenges of the rescuers was to convince the American POWs that they were indeed being rescued by Americans. How glad I am that in Jessica's case there was now Velcro, she could hang on to two



flags, and the long haul toward healing could begin nearly instantly as her (and their) identity as Americans began the process.

Enter Fisher House, a facility that is designed

to house the families of veterans that are undergoing recovery from injury and trauma. It's kind of like the Ronald McDonald Houses that care for families while their children are undergoing treatment for lifethreatening diseases. Once Jessica was rescued, her parents were able to go to Landstuhl, Germany, while she recovered before being transferred to Walter Reed Medical Center for the rest of her treatment. Her parents had forgotten that it was colder in Germany, packed quickly to get to their daughter, and needed coats. Coats were provided, and they were cared for down to the tiniest detail so that they could care for their daughter.

It has been quite the

journey for Jessica Lynch, and I am sure there will be ways that it takes the rest of her life to heal up. That being said, what is remarkable is what she has become in spite of, and maybe even because of, what she experienced. She has become a teacher. She also has been an actress and is a public speaker. She is a mom, an honorably discharged soldier that has been deservedly decorated. More than anything, Jessica Lynch is an American. She doesn't want to be known as a hero, and is death on some of the made-up stuff about her time in captivity. May God bless Jessica this Veterans Day, and bless her rescuers, her family, and her supporters. She and they have done us proud.



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When the Student Becomes the Teacher...

by Ryan Morris, Executive Director, Pure Hope Foundation

Have you ever wished for a life-changing experience with a horse? Read the story below to see how this was made possible for the young women of Hope Home and how you have the opportunity to experience this for yourself!

I'm so excited to share the sequel to the equine therapy story we shared earlier this summer. As you may remember, Pure Hope Foundation recently received a grant from our dear friends at the Sahm Family Foundation to provide training and certification for our team in GESTALT EQUINE THERAPY. The outcomes have been remarkable, and the follow up story is something only God could create.

As our team has begun practicing the techniques they learned through the Gestalt Training Seminar, the young women (or "Interns") of Hope Home and our staff have experienced truly profound growth, healing and revelation, which has been life changing. In response, several of our staff members and one of our Interns has decided to take steps to pursue further training and certification in this method in order to begin providing these experiences for the future interns who come to find healing at Pure Hope Foundation.

The training they are receiving is incredibly robust and goes beyond "equine therapy" for those who have survived trauma. It also includes training exercises which draw upon the horses' amazing intuition to help with ordinary challenges of life, such as

navigating a complex life choice. The experiences could also include working with the horses and trainers to demonstrate techniques for learning to trust more, to be more mindful, to use the senses to be more present or become internally centered. They are learning to facilitate interaction between horses and guests to teach strategies focused on working well within a diverse team. Other experiences may focus on healing within relationships or helping parents and children connect with each other. Individuals and teams will also have opportunities through these equine experiences to help enhance leadership and decision making skills.

The incredible part of this opportunity we are excited to announce is that YOU will soon be able to visit Pure Hope Ranch and have a truly unique and

profound experience with our Hope Horses and trainers. Specifically, the young woman who has had such a remarkable experience here with Gestalt Training has decided she wants part of her restoration story to include becoming a trainer herself and using what she is learning to facilitate equine experiences for our retreat guests. She is learning the philosophies, methodology and techniques to provide a world class experience as you enjoy the beauty and abundance waiting for you at the ranch. Click the button below to explore Pure Hope Ranch and learn about our retreats. We're filling up 2024 quickly so consider booking your retreat soon.

We thought you might be touched by this offering from the Hope Home Intern who is pursuing the certification in Gestalt Training about what it means to her:

"Having a background of trauma, I've often closed myself off from feeling anything. Having the opportunity to be a part of an equine facilitating experience not only opened my heart to being part of the rest of the world, but it also opened the door to an unexpected purpose that has changed my life forever. GOD and His blessings come in different ways, and equine facilitating happens to be one of mine."

So many of our generous friends have asked "how can I help?" In response to that beautiful question, we have decided to add a Wish List to the end of our newsletters with opportunities to get involved in this story. Below are a couple of needs, both big and small, which would greatly bless our Hope

Home family.

- * Horse Trailer: To transport our awesome stable of Hope Horses as needed. Please contact our Executive Director, Ryan Morris, about any opportunities here. Ryan@purehopefoundation.com
- * Horse Feed: We would love to have 12 friends giving \$50/month to feed our horses. These magnificent animals provide such a critical service to the young women of Hope Home. Click below to become one our our 12 " Hope Horse Heroes."

On the giving page, choose \$50 and select the "monthly" option under the "donation frequency" tab. Then scroll down to "Additional instructions about my donation" and write in "Hope Horse Heroes" for your gift to be applied to feed each month. Thank you so much!



Calendar of Events

Silver Sneakers Every Monday, Wednesday and Friday

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

Free Breakfast for Veterans and First Responders November 11

AL AMVETS Post 21. 22769 Black Road, Athens. 7:00am - 9:30am. Public Welcome. \$8 for guests.

Southern Gospel Singing - McBride Family November 12

Berea Baptist Church in Athens AL will host the McBride Family for a southern gospel singing on Sun, Nov 12 at 6PM. The church is located at 16779 Lucas Ferry Rd, Athens, 35611. Free admission, love offering will be received. Contact is Gary Wilson, 256-497-9763.

Servsafe Training For Hospitality Staff November 13

At Athens State Center for Lifelong Learning. 121 S. Marion St. Athens. Courses include study guide, instructions and exam. Sign up today. Athens. EDU/CLL or 256.233.8260.

Yesterdays Event Center Senior Lunch Matinees November 16

Yesterdays Senior Center. Lunch and show \$20, Doors open 10:30am, program and lunch 11am, showtime noon, 1 hr show. Glenn Hall, Director info@yesterdaysevents.com 15631 Brownsferry Rd Athens. 256-232-2506.

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.







Small Business Saturday -Local Author Event November 25

9am-2pm. Athens-Limestone County Public Library, 121 S Marion Street, Athens. Support local authors this Small Business Saturday at Athens State University LAUNCHBOX. Shop books and small Business!

Athens-Limestone Tourism Hosts North Pole Stroll December 1-31

Athens-Limestone Visitors Center, 100 N Beaty St, Athens, AL. Athens-Limestone Tourism Association once again hosts the every popular holiday event - The North Pole Stroll. Sponsored by Hughes Properties this year, we will once again light up Athens Big Spring Park with 100 unique and individually sponsored and decorated Christmas Trees. Tree sponsorships will be \$125 each and the event is FREE to the public to enjoy the entire month of December. Check back later for more details or call 256.232.5411.

Holiday Craft Market December 2

9am-1pm. Athens-Limestone County Public Library Community Room. 603 S Jefferson Street, Athens. Shop crafts from local artisans.!

Reversing diabetes! December 2

Come and view those who have done it! The 48 minute film, PLANTWISE, will be shown on December 2 at 2:15p.m. 1207 E.Pryor St., Athens. 256-658-7477.

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



Editors Note: Athens Now is so pleased to welcome speaker and children's author Carissa Lovvorn to our writing staff. Enjoy!

For thousands of years, people have used music to teach, encourage, and inspire. One can find deep meaning woven into complicated arrangements written by composers such as Beethoven, Bach, and Mozart. Symbolism and analogies are even found in simplistic nursery rhymes and children's songs.

"This Little Light of Mine" is a popular African American spiritual from the 1920s whose exact origins are unknown. The song was originally published and used as a children's song. During the 1950s and 1960s, human rights activists transformed it into an official song of the Civil Rights Movement. In more recent years, children's ministries have taught the song to young children with the addition of coordinating hand movements. The present lyrics include: "This little light of mine, I'm going to let it shine... All around the neighborhood, I'm going to let it shine... Hide it under a bushel? No! I'm going to let it shine... Don't let Satan blow it out! I'm going to let it shine... Let it shine, all the time, let it

Carissa's Corner

Let Your Light Shine

by Carissa Lovvorn

Such a simple song, yet what an impact it has made over the last 100 years! Even through various lyric alterations and additions over the years, it has maintained its original message -- to let your spiritual light shine before everyone. Scholars suggest that verses from the book of Matthew, are the inspiration behind the song.

"14. You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. 15. Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. 16. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in Heaven." (Matthew 5:14-16 NKJV)

"This Little Light of Mine" serves as a sweet, melodic reminder of our call to action when faced with adversity. Between the illnesses, wars, and political turmoil that have occurred over the past few years, it seems that most people, at one point or an-



other, have exhibited some form of emotional depletion. I know that I have struggled in this area at times. I remember thinking, "Why do I keep pushing for good when I am bombarded by bad at every turn." But we can find encouragement through the knowledge that God will provide strength even in

the midst of trials. Take this verse in John for example, "I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world." (John 16:33)

The past few years have been difficult and future troubles are unknown. Nevertheless, I am determined to rest in the knowledge that God has overcome the world, and I will continue to shine a light from my little corner. I invite everyone to look beyond the negativity, hum this well-known tune, and shine along with me.

Many Blessings, Carissa Lovvorn





shine."

Firehouses, Fellowship, And Fun

by Ali Elizabeth Turner

Monday, October 30, was a "pedal to the metal" type day, with Mayor Ronnie getting ready to go drop in for the party at the Athens Activity Center, then to West Virginia for the League of Municipalities Conference, and points in between. He gathered up his dapper blue hat and some beads for his costume, and we discussed the fact that he would be the first speaker at the League meeting. He mentioned that his favorite part of these conferences is getting a chance to hear how other leaders are tackling the problems they are encountering in their towns and cities. That and the fellowship with "fellow travelers." It has been at the League conferences that he has also had a chance to coach other mayors on how to start their own Mayor's Youth

Commissions, and several have taken him up on it.

For my part, I had just come back from Charlotte and a wonderfully intense conference wherein I had the privilege of meeting U.S. Olympian Winter Vinecki, (see Publisher's Point, page 3) who not only is training for the next Winter Olympics on the Women's Aerial Ski Team, but is also in law school. I did not have to convince Mayor Ronnie of how refreshing it is to meet young people who are going places and doing things—he gets to be around them all year as they bloom and come into their own through the Mayor's Youth Commission. "Please mention Winter in this column," he said, and added, "It is to give hope about future leaders that is one of the reasons why we started the MYC." He was glad that I had been so touched by this young woman's life.

We moved on to more good news, and that is that a new and much needed fire station is in the works. The mayor showed me the Google aerial map of the plot of land that is between the Athens Public Schools Admin building on Hwy 31 and Athens High School. "We are getting ready to start work with the architect," Mayor Ronnie said, and then looked straight at me and asked, "Do you have any idea how much a firetruck costs?" I hazarded a guess based on the fact that I knew a garbage truck cost \$300K, and then figured that I was coming up short, and I was, by a lot. He said, "1.2 million." That is the cost of a fully-equipped



truck that has a lift for rescues from buildings several stories high.

The mayor also mentioned the fact that with the way our county is growing, there are going to have to be some extension facilities located at Tanner crossroads. The Huntsville Hospital System is planning on building a new facility there, and there will need to

be another fire station as well as a police station to meet the needs of the growing population between Hwy 31 and I-65 at Huntsville/Brownsferry Road.

We then did what we always do, and that was to pray, for America, for Israel, and for Athens. And then it was time for Ronnie to roll.







From the Alabama Veterans' Museum

Colonel Eldridge "Raj" Singleton To Speak At Veterans Day Program

by Sandra Thompson, Director, Alabama Veterans' Museum

Due to unforeseen circumstances, Brigadier General Jason B. Nicholson will not be able to join us for our Veterans Day Program. Thankfully, Colonel Eldridge "Raj" Singleton has agreed to be our speaker.

In his own words, Colonel Singleton says: I am the proud father of three daughters and a loving husband who has been fortunate to share invaluable world experiences with my family while serving abroad. I am enthusiastic about mentorship and cherish opportunities to exchange experiences between generations of military leaders and academics

I am currently the Director for EUCOM/AFRI-COM Regional Operations at the U.S. Army Security Assistance Command on Redstone Arsenal, Alabama. From 2003 to 2004, I proudly served as both an Infantryman and a Field Ordering Officer during Operation Iraqi Freedom, government managing funds to stimulate the local economy in a combat zone. There, I gained cultural and linguistic expertise while performing financial activities and segued into a career as a Special Forces Officer during three combat tours from 2006 to 2009 to leverage millions of dollars from different funding sources to produce a strategic national defense result. Seeing the key role government played in economic development, I transitioned to a career as a multilingual U.S. Army

My recent assignments as

Foreign Area Officer.

a U.S. Army Colonel serving as the U.S. Army Attaché to the Philippines, a U.S. Army War College National Security Affairs Fellow at the Hoover Institution on Stanford University, and my service as the Senior Defense Official and Defense Attaché to Belize fostered my appreciation for the complex nexus of economics and international relations. I was introduced to this connection while living overseas as a foreign military instructor in Peru, managing humanitarian assistance in Haiti, and liaising with the hostile government in Bolivia. My routine exposure to the United Nations, Department of State, U.S. Agency for International Development, and other organizations opened my eyes to the challenges of balancing U.S. foreign policy with the national economic capacity of foreign countries.

Both the Departments of State and Defense have recognized my work in combat and foreign relations. These include four Bronze Star Medals for heroic service in combat, a Defense Meritorious Service Medal for interagency service overseas, an Army Commendation Medal with "V" device for valor in combat, and the Department of State's Meritorious Honor Award.

My mother, an immigrant and career educator, alongside my late father, a factory worker turned entrepreneur, both exemplified how global and domestic perspectives transform education into knowledge. Serving as a guest lec-

turer at San Diego State University, the University of Michigan, and Peru's 4th International Infantry Seminar have been the truly gratifying experiences that culminate two decades of academic pursuits resulting in my Bachelor of Science and military commission from West Point, Master of Arts from San Diego State University, and Associate of Arts in Brazilian Portuguese from the Defense Language In-

Sharing my real-world experiences to support academic concepts is a rewarding personal milestone in a lifelong pursuit of knowledge and understanding.

This is a free event, however, because lunch will be served, you must have a ticket to attend. The event is on Friday, November



10 at 11 a.m. in the Alabama Veterans Museum event venue. There are a limited number of tickets for the event. Tickets are

available at https://www.eventbrite.com/e/athens-veterans-day-program-tickets-741734857927? aff=ebdssbeac, or call 256-771-7578.





Sunday November 12 • 1:30 to 4:30

Tanner High Gymnasium

\$5 per person • Bring finger food

More information: Call Vicki 256-232-4350 or Wilbur 256-227-8489

Rightside Way



Moral Outrage

by Phil Williams

My wife is so sharp. Recently, we were discussing world events and the tepid response of the administration. Biden Watching this administration dither, equivocating on this, apologizing for that, inclusive here, exclusive there. She said that a pundit had asked in regard to Biden, "Where is the moral outrage?" My wife's response was epic, saying, "Well, you've got to have morals before you can have moral outrage." Nailed it!

There is not a sense of morality coming from the White House right now. I'm not talking about so-called "inclusivity." I'm not talking about earnest beliefs. I'm talking about morality. The actual ability to differentiate between right and wrong. To know that some decisions or actions, regardless of your personal desires, may be immoral if pursued incorrectly.

I can decide that something is worth doing, yet still be immoral if I steal your money to get it done. I can decide that I think something is important yet still be immoral if I force you against your will to take part in it. I can decide that I think that kids should know things, but I am immoral if I force those beliefs over the wishes of the parents. Yet this is where we are. And the case in point is the Biden administration's recent surreptitious effort to engage kids in transgender ideology. Posing as one thing, the

government became another.

Do you remember the classic 1968 movie Chitty Chitty Bang Bang? As a kid, I loved that movie except for one character that really creeped me out. He was simply known as the "child catcher." He wore a long, colorful coat and a crumpled, black top hat. With stringy hair and a long pointed nose, he skipped and skulked with hands full of candy, ringing a little bell and calling for children. He promised delightful treats, if they would just step into his wagon. He was a full-on child trafficker with hands full of sweets, and, yes, he was creepy.

But the child catcher became creepier when you realized that his deception was sponsored by the government. The king himself employed the child catcher, and he took pride in stealing people's children. So let me tell you of a subtle child catcher of today.

In 1992, Congress enacted the Synar Amendment requiring states to pass legislation to prohibit the sale of tobacco to minors. Over time, all states enacted their own youth-tobacco laws, but in a never-ending effort to prove its selfworth, the federal government decided it must further regulate the matter.

The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) began conducting the annual National Youth Tobacco Survey (NYTS) with the target audiences being middle school and high school students, ostensibly to gauge effectiveness. No problem. Just about kids views on smoking, right?

In recent years, activists masquerading as government bureaucrats realized they had a golden opportunity. Why not use that existing survey as a vehicle to get to kids on other things as well? It's for the greater good, right? Except that they lacked the moral foundation to do so.

Government sponsored activists then co-opted the NYTS and began using it to give instructive descriptions with follow-on questions about transgenderism among minors.

This deception begins with Form 0920-0621 (the actual designation of the NYTS) which starts with the disclaimer: "This survey is about tobacco. We would like to know about you and things you do that may affect your health. Your answers will be used for programs for young people like yourself." Sounds innocent enough.

But according to an article from Just the News, the CDC made a recent "Non-substantive change request" to update existing questions on a variety of topics including "questions/answer choices on sexual orientation and gender identity (including non-binary)."

Changes then made to the 2023 version of the survey for middle and high schoolers ask students about their thoughts on transgenderism and their own sexual identity. The new survey reads, "Some

people describe themselves as transgender and/ or nonbinary when the way they think or feel about their gender is different from their sex assigned at birth," followed by "Do you identify as transgender and/or nonbinary?"

It gets worse with the next question, which is also NOT about tobacco. "Sexual orientation is a person's emotional, romantic, and/or sexual attraction to another person, there are many ways a person can describe their sexual orientation and many labels a person can use. Which of these options best describes your sexual orientation?" at that point it then asks 6th graders if they are "straight or heterosexual," "gay or lesbian," "bisexual, pansexual, or queer" or "asexual."

We have hit the next level in first-world madness. Using one pretext (that of tobacco use) the government has allowed transgender activism to deceive its way into an otherwise innocuous survey given to kids. If you have to lie to get in the door, then you don't have a moral position to begin with. This is the creepy child catcher in another form.

Pretending to be virtuous, even Congressionally mandated, the NYTS morphs quickly into something far more sinister as it not only pries into the inner thoughts of confused kids but first instructs them (perhaps even confuses them) and all with an air of government backed authority.

"It's okay, many people believe thus and so, and so can you, you can believe that way, we're from the government and we're here to help." It is the manifestation of the creepy child catcher; that immoral deceiver and prideful kidnapper doing what his government sent him to do.

So back to the question of moral outrage. My wife was right; you have to have actual morals before you can have moral outrage, and what I see from this current administration tells me that they don't qualify.

The moral outrage should be on our end.

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.



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Slinkard On Success



Hero Or Zero -- It's Your Choice

by D. A. Slinkard

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

Stop feeling sorry for yourself. Seriously, stop it! Now, I want you to tell your family to stop feeling sorry for you and stop with the excuses they keep making for you. We have too many people running around with the victim mentality, blaming others for their own life failures — excuse after excuse, when the truth points to the person staring back in the mirror. The place where you are right now in your life is because of life choices you have made, but this is a reality for too many people who are afraid to admit it.

When I look at the world, I notice our society is teaching our men to be more feminine and our women to be more masculine. Values we once treasured are but a distant memory of the way things used to be when our men were men and our women wanted a hero, not a zero. To get back the mentality that made America great, we are going to have to change the way we think. Honestly, the only feminine thing about me is my wife. Sadly, though, we have role reversals throughout society in which moms are having to be dads and dads are having to be moms. If only we could keep the core nucleus of the family together, and we do that by making better choices.

Life is all about choices, and if you make a bad decision, then you are going to get bad results. If you make good decisions, then you are going to have positive results. I believe the two most important decisions any person will ever make are 1) Accepting Jesus Christ as their Savior and 2) Whom they marry.

How different would our society be if parents stayed married, and when they said, "I do," they actually meant until death do us part? If you do not believe that divorce affects a family, go ahead and ask the child who has been impacted by divorce. I believe every child is impacted by divorce.

There is a misconception that somehow people wake up one day and they are in a bad situation. This is not how life works. The person who is down and out is at this point in their life because of a culmination of decisions they have made over the course of time, yet the same can be said for the person who is thriving in life. We all want to find success in life, and we all have different definitions of success. The question becomes are we going to make good decisions or bad decisions?

We need to pay attention to the decisions we make every day because the results of today are directly related to the choices we made yesterday. There are too many people out there looking back on their lives wishing they had done more with their lives, and taken advantage of the opportunities they had. These are noth-



ing more than the choices they made. When you hear someone say they regret the things they did not do, they are saying they regret the choices they made.

Start today with the mindset of being intentional. I wonder how different my life would be if someone had told me twenty years ago to be intentional in my decisions because, no matter what, I would eventually have to live with them. Good or bad choices – we reap what we sow, and some of us like what we are getting while the majority of people go through life with dread and wondering, "What

Do not let this be you. Decide now that you are going to do something with yourself and the choices you make. Most notably, though, is getting past feeling sorry for yourself. Everyone on the planet has had something horrible happen in their life,

and just because something bad happened to you, it does not make you special. It was a tough reality that was hard for me to understand, but I eventually got it through my head that someone else had it rougher than me. I no longer played the victim and decided I would do something different.

I think about who I am today versus who I was as a teenager, and I cannot begin to tell you the difference. Youth is wasted on the young because of the stupid decisions they make; but you can decide now whether you are going to be the hero or the zero. The decision is always yours.



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The UPS Store



Clean, Green And Beautiful

Don't Drain, Contain

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

Did you know that we have a FREE program in Athens to recycle used fats, oils, and grease for Limestone County residents? It's called F.O.G. This program was started by the Athens Wastewater Department and Keep Athens-Limestone Beautiful in 2012. All residents are encouraged to participate and help the City of Athens and Limestone County as well as the environment!

What are the purposes of this program you ask? The main purpose of this program is to reduce the number of clogs in our water pipes. Whether your residential pipes or city pipes get clogged, it becomes a very expensive problem very fast! Even pouring small amounts of grease, fats, and oils down the drain

causes problems -- that little bit will only move so far down the pipe before it hardens and sticks to a pipe. The next time you pour your grease down the drain, it may attach to that build up, or even start a new one. Then those little bits of food that make their way down the drain start to stick to that grease. Before you know it, you have a clog, and that's where it gets expensive!

Another benefit of recycling fats, oils, and grease is they are processed into a variety of products! The most popular biproduct of the recycled oils is biodiesel fuel. Using the recycled oil to produce this fuel helps drive down the cost of fuel. Another major use of the recycled products is animal feed. The most common feed brands use fats, oils, and grease in their feeds, so



having a recycled source also helps drive down costs.

Everyone can participate! There are white cages in front of the Keep Athens-Limestone Beautiful office and the

Wilkerson Street which contain empty one-gallon jugs for you to take home and fill up. When the jug is full, simply bring it back and place it on the bottom shelf of the cage and get an empty jug. You can even use old containers from home (if they aren't contaminated with chemicals, of course). We even have some food trucks that bring BIG containers of their used oils, and we love that!

Saving your used cooking oils for recycling is an easy way to help everyone, especially yourself! No one wants water backing up in their home because of a clog. And there definitely isn't anyone who wants to pay the bill that will come along with that clog! So run by our office or the Athens Utilities office and grab a white jug and start collecting today!







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

Cooking with Anna

What Small Thing Lives In Your Heart?

by Anna Hamilton

I love Winnie the Pooh. He is kind, sweet, caring, thoughtful, and oh so wise. Watching him as a child, you sometimes miss the wisdom that can be gathered by one little yellow bear. There are many life lessons you can learn and many beautiful quotes, but one of my favorites is "Sometimes the smallest things take up the most room in your heart."

Oh, Pooh, how true! What you choose to think about and where you choose to spend your time will become a part of you. When speaking to the Pharisees in Matthew 15:18, Jesus explains that "But the things that come out of a person's mouth come from the heart." The small things that occupy your mind (your heart) will start to take up room. They will unpack their suitcases and kick off their shoes. Are you allowing the wrong things to

Ground Chicken and Cabbage Skillet

Ingredients:

3 cups shredded green cabbage

8 oz ground chicken

1 small yellow onion, diced

1 Tbsp olive oil

½ cup carrot, grated

1 tsp sweet paprika

1 Tbsp tomato paste

1 cup chicken broth

½ cup to 1 cup cooked brown rice or cauliflower rice

Salt and pepper to taste

Directions:

Heat olive oil in a medium skillet over medium high heat. Once the oil is hot, sauté the chicken until cooked through. Season with salt and pepper and set aside.

In the same skillet, add a little more oil, and sauté the onion until soft. Follow with cabbage and carrots. Season with paprika and more salt

take up residence in your heart?

You are the landlord of your heart. You decide who and what gets to live there. You can let good things unpack or you can let bad things. The Bible tells us who we should give space to in our hearts. We are to focus on good and holy things. Philippians 4:8 says "Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things."

Most of us are very familiar with this verse. We continued on page 23



and pepper if needed. Add tomato paste and stir to combine. Pour in chicken stock. Cover with a lid and simmer the cabbage for 20-25 minutes until softened. Return chicken to pan and add the rice. Stir to combine and simmer for another 5 minutes. Garnish with parsley and a dollop of sour cream if desired.

Health and Fitness



You Vs You

by Nick Niedzwiecki - Owner, CrossFit Athens

You have dreams. You have goals you want to accomplish in life, maybe places you want to see. What's holding you back from doing that thing that you've always wanted to do? Is it just not the right time yet? Will it ever be the right time? When is the right time? The only reason, truly deep down, that we have not accomplished what we want to in life is because we don't allow ourselves to accomplish them. We make excuses for why we can't do "it" right now and at the end of the day it boils down

We'll look at the health

to just that, an excuse.

and wellness side of these goals. You want to get in better shape BUT now is not the right time. You have work, school, kids have sports, and your sister's boyfriend is having people over to watch football this weekend...so you can't stick to your diet plan... so you're better off just not starting at all. These are all the excuses we allow ourselves to believe as the reason why we can't start something new right now or we'll start when the time is right. News flash! -- The time will never be right; we have to win the battle between our ears. It's

always only YOU VS YOU.

You have to make the decision to rearrange your schedule to make health and fitness a priority in your life. You have to communicate with your spouse to let them know that you want to start on a new journey and would like their support. You have to show your children that taking care of yourself is the first step in being able to properly take care of others. You have to be the example at work, show your coworkers that bringing a healthy lunch from home is possible, and you don't have to eat the

doughnuts in the breakroom every single day.

Once you learn the power of YOU, your world will completely change. You will stop making excuses for why you can't reach the goals you've set for yourself, you will actually start to achieve them. After you achieve one goal, the next becomes a little easier. You've now established a routine of success and you are unstoppable.

Then you fall back into some old habits because you've gotten comfortable; maybe this is where you are now and you're feeling like you can never get back on track. Go back to the basics -- YOU can do anything you set your mind to. Start small. Tomorrow you will not grab that doughnut in the breakroom, simple as that. Making the tough decision is hard in the moment, but just a couple of hard decisions can lead to a lifetime of happiness.

Just remember, next time you get in a little funk or feel like you're not working towards the goals you have set for yourself, YOU CAN DO IT! And YOU are the only reason IT has not been accomplished yet



Cover Story

The Pillow Peddler On North Jefferson: Handsomely Designed, Handmade Décor

by Ali Elizabeth Turner

continued from page 1

her life for fabrics, antiques, and thrift store finds that just about defy one's sensibilities as to their quality and value. For example, on the east wall of the Pillow Peddler, which is located at 607 ½ North Jefferson in Athens, is a cobalt blue multi-beveled framed piece of glass that sends light and color dancing all over the front of the shop. She told me that she found it in a thrift shop, and as someone who worked in an antique shop around 40 years ago, I have great admiration for this woman's ability to go on what antique lovers call "the hunt" and come back home triumphant. With regard to the building itself, Clyde told me that it was actually picked up and moved there to its present location decades ago, and the small size of the lot is why it has 607 ½ for its address. In its "former life," the shotgun house had been quarters for workers on Wheeler Dam when it was being constructed from 1933-1936. Clyde moved to Athens from Albertville 17 years ago, and owned and lived in the pink house that is located right

next to what is now Revive Café on North Clinton Street. That location had wonderful antiques, as does her current shop on North Jefferson. However, the "pink house" did not have the focus of Clyde's life-long love: fabrics. This place, which is also pink and is also considered to be a historical building, is filled with pillows, all of which have been sewn by Clyde herself. It also has antiques of all kinds, and everything is for sale, everything however, except for the iron bed that sits squarely in the living room, and is the first thing you see when you walk in. The ornate bed is on loan from a friend, and is a perfect way to display the pillows.

In the 1970s, Clyde went on a fabric-finding junket to Europe and especially Germany, with the intent of purchasing inventory that would serve to supply her "someday shop." The quality of German fabric is quite remarkable, and she came home with wools, tapestries, antique linens with tatting, whimsical patterns of cats and other animals, and more. She collected but never sewed them into anything until one day someone came into the shop on North Clinton and

made what she said was "an offer I just couldn't refuse," to buy her pink house.

The sale of the shop on North Clinton freed up Clyde to begin designing and sewing her creations. Clyde's plan had been to open her shop far sooner than this past summer, but COVID and other family health adventures put a crank in the works for a bit, however, she prevailed. To date there are more than 100 pillows from which to choose at the Pillow Peddler, and Clyde is just getting started. Some of the pillows are simple, some have ornate fringe, some are large, and others are dainty. Each is one of a kind, and carefully made. Many are reversible and can signal the change of the seasons. Clyde describes her style as "Boho eclectic," and I think that is an apt description.

For those of you who sew, you will know what I am talking about when I say that the seams that you will never see because they are located on the interior of the pillow have all been ironed flat after sewing them so that the edge is completely smooth. This attention to craftsmanship and detail is not something you see anymore, and was a joy to



both behold and discuss with someone who could have been an "A" student in my mom's Home Economics class.

Clyde has survived COVID twice, and her husband has had his own health challenges. However, her creative and entrepreneurial spirit have emerged undaunted, and she loves the opportunity to do what she describes as "looking at something, and not seeing what is, but rather what could be." You can most definitely

see that in her creations, which also include taking things like curtains and completely deconstructing them and using every bit of fabric to make a masterpiece of a pillow.

The Pillow Peddler is open Thursday, Friday, and Saturday each week from 10 a.m.-5 p.m. There is a pleasant sitting area and all kinds of nooks and crannies to explore, and Clyde will be happy to tell you her story, and listen to yours. Stop by today and see what she has carefully created, and then be sure to take something home with you, because the chances are high that you won't get another chance to purchase that particular pillow at The Pillow Peddler!





The Pillow Peddler

607 ½ North Jefferson Street, Athens 256-738-0558 Hours: Thursday-Saturday, 10 am to 5 pm thepillowpeddler83@ gmail.com

News From The Tourism Office

The Power Of The Storyteller

by Stephanie Reynolds, Athens-Limestone Tourism Association

Someone come, tell me a story About the past all filled with glory Bold young bucks and bolder lasses Inspiring

the timid masses

Spin for me a clever yarn In colored threads to keep me warm -In heart and mind, when I remember, Every word

a glowing ember.

Build for us somewhere to rest

worded nest.

With tranquil tidings
tuck us in

In a feather-

'Til we can face the world again.

Carry me
along your path;
Make me cry,
then make me laugh.
Then make me do
them both again
With merry eyes
and quiv'ring chin.

We forget our history,
So bind to us the mystery
Of cruel humanity,
and love,
The worm below,
the Lord above

Let's not foolishly dismiss
Such a vital role as this Evincing in
the fable dweller
The power of
the storyteller.

"Third-graders an ARMY!" Bil **ALIEN** Lepp's awed voice rang over the tent of fascinated school children. I, having just slipped in the back late in the story, wonder what I missed. I mean, as a mom of two grown children, 3rd graders being aliens isn't exactly news to me, so I felt he must have been making another point.

He was: How to best the teacher's pet by throwing rocks into the woods to prove that your teacher is really Wonder Woman in disguise. You'll need helium, purple chalk, lungs, and the horror flick *The Blob*.

Ah, got it. Check.

I am on special assignment. A special, OFFICIAL assignment given to me by a REAL LIVE editor to cover a BREAKING EVENT like an actual SEASONED JOURNALIST (not like a newbie tourism assistant who needs to submit an article by Friday).

I think I played it pretty cool, though, as I walked up to the tent and introduced myself with a purposefully level gaze to the security guard. "I'm Stephanie Reynolds. I was asked to cover this by my editor Ali Turner for the *Athens Now* newspaper. I'll only

be a few minutes." Brisk. Professional. Nailed it. I wished I had a badge to oh-so-casually flash, but I think pushing my sleeves up to my elbows made me look journalist-y enough. In any case, he laughed and waved me in.

It had been a minute since I had spent an afternoon with grade-schoolers. To be honest, I thought it would be more chaotic and jaded. We get the impression that kids nowadays are even more disaffected than GenX, and as someone who was dark and brooding at 17; wearing black, stonewashed jeans; and listening to The Cure, that's saying something.

But let me tell you what made my heart grow two sizes this afternoon. The second storyteller, Josh Goforth, regaled us with a tale about the Irish potato famine, a stag who grants wishes, and a poor farmer. The farmer asked his father what he should ask the stag for, and the father said, "GOLD! You must ask for piles of gold!" Then the farmer went to his blind mother who said, "My sight! If I could see the green hills of Ireland again, the blue sky, and your smiling face, that's all I could wish for!"

Then the storyteller asks (rhetorically, in the voice of the farmer), "Should I do what my father wants and ask for gold or what my mother wants and ask for her sight?"

Y'all, I didn't hear one child say the gold. I heard many insistently holler that he should ask for sight for his mother.

<Insert jaw drop here>

It occurs to me that, being half-blind myself, I might be just a leeeetle close to this. But as the OFFICIAL-LY ASSIGNED JOURNAL-IST that I am (...pretending to be today), I can keep my objectivity, as is fitting for one with newly-discovered Pulitzer aspirations. Plus, I often forget I can't see till I run into something on my left.

So, much like the obvious aim of the Fiddler's Convention was "excellent music" but the heart of it was how jam sessions made pockets of safe spaces for people to try regardless of skill level, the Storytelling Festival also has its own much deeper subtext: getting people to think and feel. Gently and disarmingly ducking around preconceived notions and stony walls to help the listener be inherently more than they were that morning.

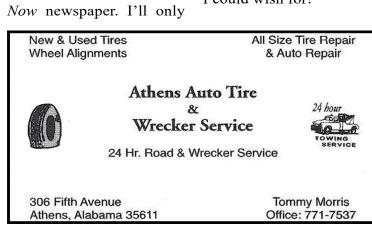
I mean, think about it—there probably were children who said "GOLD!" when the farmer was deciding his wish. But they heard other children mention the mother's sight. That had to make them pause, putting themselves in the position of a child of blind mother, or perhaps the mother herself.

And even better, the wish the farmer eventually told the stag was clever and crafted. The story not only reminded the children they have a heart, but it also helped for an actual new thinking pattern in the brain.

To hear the children literally gasp in an "OH! RIGHT!" moment when Bil Lepp mentioned that Wonder Woman would park her invisible jet on the roof, not the woods or parking lot, was delightful. At that moment, they GOT IT. They now know to "Think up," to look around, to deduce. That little moment is a synapseseed that will bloom into new intelligence.

On a mild fall afternoon, between aliens and a round of "Turkey In The Straw," children were strengthened in both heart and mind.

That is the power of a storyteller.





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Just Around The Corner: The 2023 Athens-Limestone Christmas Open House

by Ali Elizabeth Turner

continued from page 1

and bustle, it is a welcome time of celebration, especially now. This year's theme is "Bright Lights and Christmas Delights," and that seems to be an especially fitting focus for our whole area.

I spoke with Pammie Jimmar, who heads up our Chamber of Commerce, and she is one of a few people in my life that goes happily "Nuts about Noelle." It is hands down her favorite time of year! Pammie is not shy about her love for the season and the reason for the season, and her enthusiasm during our chat was energizing.

The traditions that have been associated with the Christmas Open House have stood the test of time, and there are always a few new things to enjoy. Now that we are past the pandemic, there will be plenty of pics to be taken of the festivities either in groups or as selfies, and no need to distance oneself from any of it! The 2023 Christmas Open House is hosted by our Chamber of Commerce and Athens Main Street. Dream Key Real Estate is the Presenting Sponsor this year. Here is a description of the doins' happening November 17-

Skating On The Square

Friday: 4 - 8 p.m. Saturday & Sunday: Noon - 4 p.m. Marion Street, Downtown Athens. Skating Shack Sponsors are AllStar Pro Services, Inc. & Morell Engineering, Inc.

Merchants Alley Christmas Tree Lighting Friday: 5 p.m. at Merchants Alley on Jefferson Street. Sponsored by Alabama Real Estate Solutions Performance by Athens High School Chorus.

Christmas Photos

Friday: 6 - 8 p.m. (No Santa) Saturday & Sunday: 1 - 3 p.m. (Santa Photos) Sponsored by Fly Leaf Photography Studio located at 106 N. Jefferson Street. Santa's Carriage Sponsor is Parallel 36 at Liberty. Photo prices are \$25 each.

There will be a photo booth available in front of the beautiful Glow Lights sponsored by Yellowhammer Roofing on Friday and Saturday, which is back by popular demand. It will be located on the east side of the Courthouse. This is the perfect opportunity for a Christmas Card photo op!

Merry Market on Marion

Friday: 4 - 8 p.m. Saturday: 11 a.m. - 4 p.m. Sunday: Noon - 4 p.m. Sponsored by Athens-Limestone Hospital and The Broken Brush Art Studio.

This is the location of all manner of wares available for sale at booths located along the curb on Marion Street, right across from the Courthouse on the east side. Following is a list of vendors who will represent this year's Merry Market:

G & K Gourmet
Kreations, LLC
Sparkle & Shimmer
Dat Sugar Shack
Greene Books
Lit Wicks and More
Bonny's Beautiful Bling
Camille's
Color Me Pink



Ignite Laser
Engraving and Gifts
Tree Top Terrariums
London Bridges Stitchery
Red Wolf Soaps
Holly's Craft Corner
No Mo Cakes Mama, LLC
Granny B Sweet Treats
Sydney & Andrew
Designs
Connie's Candy Co., LLC
High Cotton Arts

The Edison Candle Company Rad Rags

Moon & Stars Honey

Yard Card Queen Athens S + J Creations

Rocket City Popperz Driftwood Dragonfly

Everyday Collective Co.

"All of the Merry Market spaces are taken, and there is a waiting list," Pammie told me, and added, "It really sold out quickly this year." One of the most popular features of the annual Christmas Open House is the opportunity to take a carriage ride in an old-fashioned, horse-drawn carriage. Stan Smith and his crew from Wild Hearts Cowboy Carriage Rides will no doubt

be busy all weekend, and Wild Hearts will also be responsible for transporting Santa into town for the Santa photo op.

There will be live music all three days, beginning on Friday night with the Athens High School Chorus performing at the tree lighting ceremony followed by another performance on the courthouse steps beginning at 6:30 p.m. The

Drew Clemons performance will be on Marion Street at noon on Saturday, and Matt Prater will be performing on Saturday at 2 p.m. On Sunday, the Athens State University Choir will be singing at noon, the Oasis worship team will be singing at 1 p.m., and Southern Splendor will perform at 2:30 p.m. The concerts are sponsored by Zach Conlon Insurance, Engel & Völkers, Antiques on Jefferson and Listerhill Credit Union. Finally, Yellowhammer Roofing will be "lighting the way" by sponsoring the Glow Lights.

Come and connect with your tribe and your town on November 17, 18, and 19, and let love light your heart again. We have so much to celebrate!



Learning As A Lifestyle



Are You Emotionally Present?

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

care, for instance, doc-

Living in the present is a mindful practice that opens the door to a fuller appreciation of the here and now. This concept, often espoused by philosophers and mental health professionals alike, encourages us to let go of past regrets and future anxieties to wholeheartedly embrace the current moment. By doing so, we can find deeper joy, gratitude, and a greater sense of connection with the world around us. This state of being present allows us to fully engage with each experience, further enriching our understanding and appreciation of life.

Drawing from the insights of Dominic Barton, global managing director of McKinsey and Company, Rasmus Hougaard and Jacqueline Carter published in Harvard Business Review a unique perspective on leadership and present-mindedness. They point to the ways in which Dominic Barton emphasizes the importance of living in the present moment, particularly in the context of leadership and manorganizational agement. Even with a daily itinerary packed with crucial meetings, each demanding attention and decision-making, Barton recognizes that being present is not just a choice, but a necessity. "When I'm with people during the

day, I'm doing my best to be focused, I'm present with them," Barton shares. He attributes his presence not just to his own energy drawn from social interactions, but also to the motivational impact his undivided attention can have on others. In his perspective, absence of presence can be discouraging for those involved in the conversation, even rendering the meeting pointless.

The individuals we interact with may not be cognizant of what transpired in our lives just moments prior to the meeting, and it is not their responsibility to know. It is our duty, as leaders, to show up fully prepared and present, making the most of the finite time we have with each individual. According to Barton, being mindfully present is a disciplined skill. It demands selfcontrol to remain taskoriented, undeterred by potential distractions or lingering issues. It also needs the mental acuity to maintain a laserlike focus. Barton finds deep gratification in being present throughout his day, considering it the cornerstone in maximizing every moment spent with each individual.

Being present is a critical skill set that extends beyond the realm of leadership and organizational management, permeating various career paths. In healthtors and nurses who are in the moment can provide comprehensive, empathetic care, enhancing patient comfort and trust. In education, teachers who are fully engaged with their students facilitate an open, dynamic learning environment, fostering intellectual growth and creativity. Similarly, in the world of performing arts, a present actor or musician can deliver a captivating, emotionally resonant performance that deeply engages the audience. Even in the tech industry, programmers and designers fully engrossed in their work can innovate and create products that redefine the boundaries of what's possible. Thus, across professions, being present enhances performance, contributes to job satisfaction, and yields meaningful, impactful results.

In stark contrast, when leaders are not emotionally present, repercussions can be detrimental to both the individual and the organization. Absence of emotional presence often manifests as selfabsorption or distraction, creating a chasm between the leader and their team. This can lead to a breakdown in communication, impeding information flow and diluting the clarity of organizational objectives. Moreover, an emotionally

absent leader may fail to empathize effectively with their team, resulting in decreased morale, lower job satisfaction, and high turnover rates. In extreme cases, such leadership can engender a toxic work environment, breeding mistrust and promoting disengagement. Therefore, emotional presence is not just a virtue but a necessity for effective leadership.

absence

Emotional

in leadership is often invisible and unintentional, yet it has palpable effects. Leaders may unknowingly exhibit signs of emotional disconnection, tied up in a whirlwind of responsibilities, targets, and deadlines, which makes the neglect of emotional presence an easy oversight. disconnection This might manifest subtly through overlooked body language or unobserved tones of conversation. Over time, these seemingly negligible nuances compile into significant communication gaps, fostering an atmosphere of indifference or worse, hostility. While the leader may not directly intend this outcome, their obliviousness to their emotional presence-or lack thereof—creates a very real, harmful impact on the team's morale and productivity. Therefore, it's crucial for leaders to cultivate self-awareness emotional intelligence,

not only to detect these unintentional lapses but also to address them effectively.

As leaders and seekers of purpose, let us value the present moment. It is in the 'now' that we truly connect, communicate, and lead. Remember, your emotional presence today lays the foundation for successful leadership and purposeful living tomorrow. To those who appreciate the 46th Psalm, you may be reminded that the Divine is depicted as "a very present help in trouble." If we are to reflect this type of grace, we too should learn how to be "very present."

Additionally, world where we're always chasing the future, we often forget to appreciate the beauty of the present moment. We're constantly rushing through life, focusing on what's ahead, and missing out on the wonderful blessings right in front of us. The present is like a peaceful symphony that brings clarity to those striving for success, brings calm to the stressed, and reminds us to be fully present in our busy lives. It's a gentle reminder to slow down, enjoy the moment, and cherish life's simple joys. Let's take a moment to celebrate today, be grateful for what we have now, and truly live in the present.

Special Feature

Students Create Artwork To Share Hope With Those Battling Cancer

by Holly Hollman

A budding tree. A dove flying in the sunlight. A pair of hands holding an origami swallow.

These are expressions of hope students from local schools created to encourage those battling cancer and to encourage their caregivers.

The Athens Mayor's Youth Commission recently accepted art entries based on the theme "Sharing HOPE" for its fall/winter art contest for the City Hall Art Corner. The Youth Commission is composed of students in grades 10-12 from Athens High, Athens Bible, Lindsay Lane Christian and homeschools in Athens. Students learn about civic responsibility and community service.

The first-place winner in the elementary division was Jareth Paz Perez, a third grader from Athens Elementary who submitted the dove piece. The first-place winner in the 6-12 grade division was Isabella Adams, age 16, from Elkmont High School. She created a budding, hopeful tree wrapped in a cancer awareness ribbon. Jareth and Isabella will each receive \$15 from the Youth Commission.

Cherry Hammonds, Senior Development Manager II with the American Cancer Society, works with the Relay for Life Teams in Limestone County. She said the artwork and messages from the students highlight the caring they have for those battling cancer and their loved ones.

"Their caring knows no boundaries," Hammonds said. "The gift of hope and kindness is evident in the incredible artwork submitted by these students. I'm thankful for their spirt and energy, and I know they are just beginning to make a difference."

In addition to the first-place winners, the second and third place winners and other top scoring pieces will be on display at the City Hall Art Corner from Nov. 6 through February 2024.

"The Youth Commissioners had a difficult time choosing the Top 3 in each age group," said Youth Commission mentor and City of Athens Relay for Life Team Captain Holly Hollman. "The student artists each had a unique perspective on how to convey messages of hope through art."

The public can view the artwork Monday-Friday from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. The Art Corner is in the front foyer.

The City of Athens Relay Team will have a Hope Chain as part of the art exhibit, where those who want to honor a loved one impacted by cancer can donate \$5 to include the loved one's name on the chain. To donate and submit a name, call Kim Glaze at 256-233-8730 or email Hollman hhollman@athensal.us. All proceeds will go to the American Cancer Society.

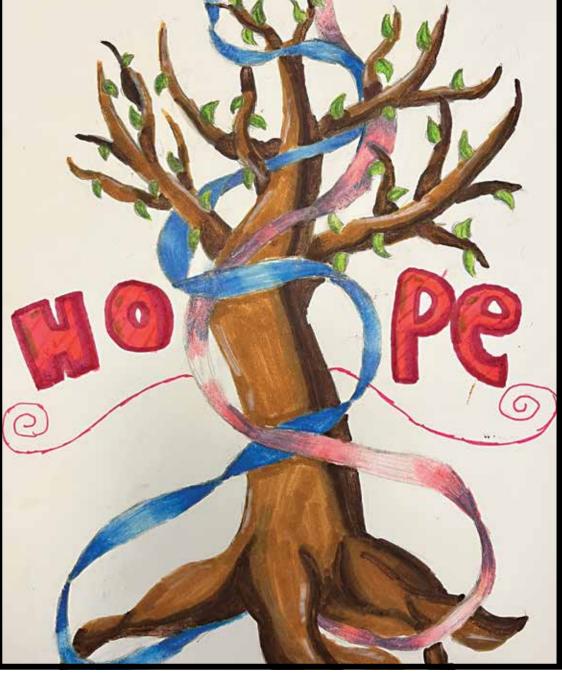
List of Top 3 Winners

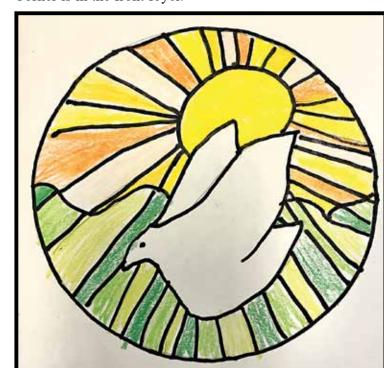
Elementary Division:

- First, Jareth Paz Perez, third grade, Athens Elementary
- Second, Willa Gibson, first grade, Athens Elementary
- Third, Alice Gibson, first grade, Athens Elementary

6-12 Grade Division:

- First, Isabella Adams, 16, Elkmont High
- Second, Zoey Powers, 14, Athens High
- Third, Jaxon Williams, 11, Athens Middle





Dog Barker

Happy Thanksgiving!

by Joel Allen

Hello, folks! Well here we are again, wishing everyone a Happy Thanksgiving and hoping we are all being safe for the holidays.

Years ago, I had a huge female Dane named Beauty. She was so large that it was nothing for her to carry a professional sized football in her mouth. A big girl she was and she was sneaky. One time I caught her coming out of the kitchen and all I could see was a pink something in the front part of her mouth but could not make out what it was. And I swear, the fastest dog or child in the world is one knowing they have something they are not supposed to have trying to get by you quickly, LOL. All you heard was,

Me: "What have you got in your mouth?"

Beauty: Her feet making the tire screeching sound as she made her bid to escape.

Me: Sounding like Mortal Kombat, "Get over here!" And I caught her by her collar.

I then reach into that huge mouth and pulled out a whole piece of raw chicken that was the breast, thigh, and leg! I was a younger man then, and I was harsh with my dogs before I knew better. I corrected Beauty by whooping her with that whole piece of chicken! Did she ever do it again? Nope.

Let that story serve as an example, and let's all think of ways to prevent this from happening to anyone who might have the "Counter Surfer," the "Food Swiper," the "Beggar," or the "Enabler."

The Counter Surfer is the dog who finds a way onto your counter either by means of being able to reach the counter with their height or able to leap tall buildings in a single bound and walking all over your counter. There are a few ways I use to handle this. The first thing I try is an aluminum can with 22 pennies inside, taped shut, and with fishing line attached to the top. The setup is quite easy. Place the can in the cabinet, leaving the door open, and tape the fishing line down to the counter where the "violator" is most likely to pass through. The fishing line acts as a tripwire and the can will fall making a loud noise that will either scare the dog away or, even better, land on the dog's head and scare

the dog to never do this again. Another simpler way is to tie a bell to your dog's collar and keep your ears sharpened to pinpoint their location where if they are heard in an unauthorized area, they can be encouraged to leave.

The Food Swiper is the magician of all dogs. They use distractions as opportunities to pull a morsel or two off your plate or out of the main meal. I like to think of them as quiet as Batman and fast as a ninja. When they strike, they will leave the area with their prize and quickly eat it. The way this can be prevented is by using the "no dogs in the kitchen or eating area" rule or becoming hypervigilant and carrying a spray bottle with plain water or with 1/3 vinegar to 2/3 water and "pew pewing"

the dog.

The Beggar is the byproduct of being fed from the table or never having a boundary taught them. This is where the Enabler comes into existence too. The Beggar likes to give that look that melts everyone's heart and tricks them into giving the Beggar food from the table. The Enabler gives the Beggar whatever he wants, thus encouraging the problem. How this is fixed is when we take the spray bottle in hand, verbally tell the dog no, and spray them. As a bonus, spray the Enabler too because they caused this to hap-

All in all these are simple fixes and your dog will be safer for it too. Plus, the family will have a better time if their food is still there when they sit and eat. Oh, and one more thing, if all these methods do not work, the dog can always be temporarily placed in a safe place until the festivities are over.

All right, folks, that's it for now. I hope you all have a safe Thanksgiving and God bless everyone.

"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



Mental Health Minute

Discipline

by Lisa Philippart, Licensed Professional Counselor

Discipline is not a mystery. It's the simple and dedicated practice of aligning your vision with your actions.

- Jim Bouchard

When people think about discipline, the term willpower usually comes to mine—pushing yourself to work harder or stay focused. But if you actually observe highly disciplined people closely, you'll notice something striking... Disciplined people don't rely on willpower. Of course, they make use of it from time to time. But willpower isn't their main tool for getting things done. Instead, highly disciplined people cultivate mentalities that help them do consistently great work without needing to use willpower. Let's look at the mindset characteristics of highly disciplined

Maybe the biggest misconception I see among people who struggle to be disciplined is their "do more" mindset. They think being focused and productive comes from doing more things. For example, they may use an app or to-do list system to stay focused. Or, they may read more self-help books and watch more YouTube videos about how to be more productive. Now there's nothing wrong with these examples, but the problem is the underlying belief behind them that says, "If I want to be more disciplined, I need to do more." In my opinion the "do more" mindset leads to wasting even more time, energy, and resources on everything besides the real thing you need to do. Instead, truly disciplined people will take the opposite approach and cultivate a "progress through removal" mindset. This mindset allows for the best way to stay focused and actually get meaningful work done (especially creative work) by removing distractions and obstacles and letting their natural motivation pull them toward progress.

Here's an example of making progress through removal: Instead of trying to add more positive emotions to your headspace whenever you feel insecure or afraid about your work, focus on removing negative self-talk or constant worry. The main idea here is that it's usually more productive to spend your energy removing obstacles and friction points than trying to add inspiration or willpower. So, the next time you find yourself stuck, procrastinating, or just wishing you were more disciplined, ask yourself this question: What can I remove or do less of that will help me work better? Consistently disciplined people are also highly

motivated, which makes

sense. But how do these

people stay so motivated

all the time? Here's the thing about motivation... the most powerful source of motivation is progress. For example, you'll be much more likely to stay focused and complete a report if you successfully complete the first section in good time. What I have noticed is that the size of the progress has almost nothing to do with how motivated it makes you feel. Just making some progress, even a tiny amount, will boost your motivation significantly, which means a higher likelihood of staying focused and disciplined. When you're stuck, break it up. If you are constantly completing small chunks of work, you'll have a steady supply of motiva-

tion. And to the outside world, you'll look incredibly disciplined. Inside, you'll know that it's really that you always stay motivated by making continual progress, because you are smart enough to break up the big projects into small chunks.

Join me in my next article for more suggestions on how to maintain a disciplined mindset.

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The Alternative Approach

We Are A Nation In Starvation

by Roy Williams

Yes, we are a nation in starvation and that is what this article is all about. The truth is we are starving from lack of nutrition, we are starving for the truth about our food supply, our so-called health care system, our financial situation, our legal system, our morality, our moral responsibilities, and our God-given rights that were secured by the Founding Fathers and the Constitution.

Over the last few decades, millions people are aware of the lack of vitamins, minerals, enzymes, and amino acids in the American diet. Allow me to offer a challenge to all people reading this article, but especially those who are responsible for raising children. The challenge is to look at the nutrient values in everything you eat, especially what you are allowing your children to eat.

Almost everyone who has taken this challenge begins to realize just how nutrient deficient our food supply has become. Most of the food we feed our children and adults contains plenty calories but not nearly enough nutrients. Calories without nutrients cannot sustain life. Remember, calories are not necessarily nutrients.

Just one example is a favorite among the

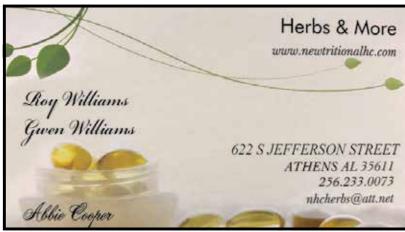
American children called macaroni and cheese. Don't just look at the ingredient list, look at the nutrient list. The most popular brand delivers only 10% of the RDA of calcium, only 15% of the RDA of iron, and only 6% of the potassium. While it has no vitamin D, (where did the cheese come from), it does contain 360 calories in each cup. It would take 10 servings a day just

to cover the calcium needs while delivering over 3,600 basically empty calories, adding to our obesity epidemic.

Even if you try hard to choose so-called healthy foods such as vegetables, fruits, or even salads, you would have to eat between 14 and 21 pounds a day to even get close to the Recommended Death Allowance. No, that wording

to servings a	day Just ance.	No, that wording					
Fat Soluble	RDA Men	RDA Women					
Vitamin A	900 μg	700 μg					
Vitamin D	600 IU (50–70 yr)	600 IU (50–70 yr)					
	800 IU (>70 yr)	800 IU (>70 yr)					
Vitamin E	15 mg	15 mg					
Vitamin Ka	120 μg	90 μg					
Vitamin B1	1.2 mg	1.1 mg					
Vitamin B2	1.3 mg	1.1 mg					
Vitamin B3	16 mg	14 mg					
Vitamin B6	1.7 mg	1.5 mg					
Vitamin B12	2.4 μg	2.4 μg					
Vitamin C	90 mg	75 mg					
Folic acid	400 μg	400 μg					
Pantothenic acida	5 mg	5 mg					
Biotina	30 μg	30 μg					
Cholinea	550 mg	125 mg					
Signifies AI. Table 14.4. RDAs or AIs for Minerals for Older Adults (USDA, 2016)							
10016 14.4. KD.	13 or 113 jor minerals for Older.	1111113 (USDA, 2010)					

<u>Mineral</u>	RDA Men	RDA Women
Calcium	1000 mg (51–70 yr)	1200 mg (≥51 year)
	1200 mg (>70 year)	
Chloridea	2 g	1.8 g
Copper	900 μg	900 μg
Iodine	150 μg	150 μg
Iron	8 mg	8 mg
Magnesium	420 mg	320 mg
Manganesea	2.3 mg	1.8 mg
Molybdenum	45 μg	45 μg
Phosphorus	700 mg	700 mg
Potassiuma	4.7 g	4.7 g
Selenium	55 μg	55 μg
Sodiuma	1.3 g	1.2 g
Zinc	11 mg	11 mg



wasn't an accident because if all the nutrients you get in your daily diet is the Recommended Daily Allowance, you will most likely die many years younger than your genetic potential from some form of deficiency disorder.

So, now that you know that we are a nation in starvation, is there something that each of us can do to make sure we are receiving those precious nutrients? Yes, each of us can take responsibility for ourselves and our children by supplementing our diet. Today, only a fool would believe that we get everything we need in the four basic food groups. Evidence is everywhere. Heart disease, diabetes, cancer, stroke, arthritis, many digestive disorders including IBS, fibromyalgia, chronic

tive disease is through proper nutrition.

NEWtritional Health

fatigue, and all the au-

are the results of poor

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With that written, be diligent and look at the labels of the food you are eating to see just how deficient they are and face the facts. Even if you eat healthier, you will find out that you are still short of the important nutrients. Settle in your mind that in order to cover all the basics, you must supplement. Go by Herbs & More in Athens or NHC Herb Shop in Killen or go to www.nhcherbs. com to learn more.

Your friend in health, Roy P. Williams

Cooking with Anna (continued from page 13)

What Small Thing Lives In Your Heart?

by Anna Hamilton

understand what we are supposed to think and what we are to let live in our hearts. So why do we continually think the worst of ourselves? I know that I am guilty of this as I suspect some of you are as well. Nowhere are we instructed to think about how much we fall short compared to this world's standards. I am constantly judging myself, comparing myself, to what the world values. Not only is that a dangerous pattern to fall into, but it is also so damaging to yourself.

You can love yourself and not be prideful. God commands us to love others as we love ourselves. How can you love others like yourself if you are constantly entertaining negative, damaging thoughts in your heart. The simple answer is that you can't. You simply can't love others properly if you are living with negative thoughts in your heart.

Learning to evict negativity from your heart is a process. I am happy to report that I have given the boot to many negative thoughts about myself but still have trouble with others. Shaping your thoughts, shaping your heart to look like the heart of Jesus is a building process, and one that is ever evolving.

Could you imagine that watching your Saturday morning cartoons as a child would have held such

wisdom? Winnie the Pooh had it right, "Sometimes the smallest things take up the most room in your heart." What small things are you allowing to live in your heart? Are they good things? Things that are holy, things that are pure, things that are just. Are, or they things of judgement? Things that are full of negativity, things of comparison, things of sadness. You control what goes into and lives in your heart. Be a good landlord of your heart. Only let the good tenants unpack.

This week's recipe is a one-dish wonder. It is healthy and delicious. We make it with ground chicken, but feel free to use ground beef, turkey, or sausage. Or if you like, leave it vegetarian. It is the perfect supper on a cool fall evening and pairs perfectly with a green salad and a warm loaf of bread. I hope you enjoy it as much as my family does.

"Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moths and vermin destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moths and vermin do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." Matthew 19-21



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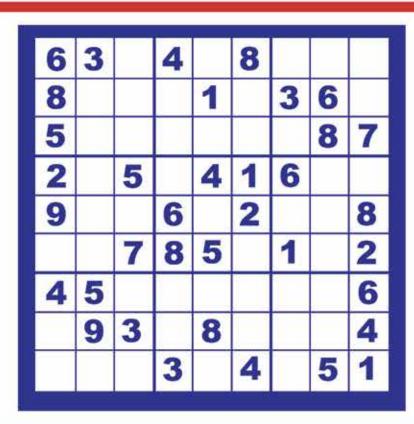
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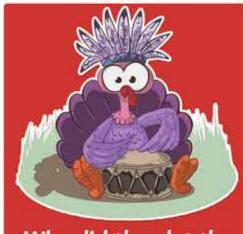


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Why did they let the turkey join the band?

Because he had his own drumsticks.

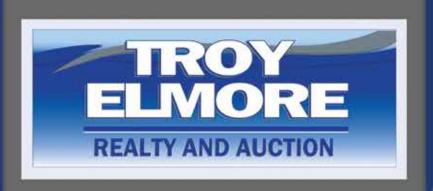


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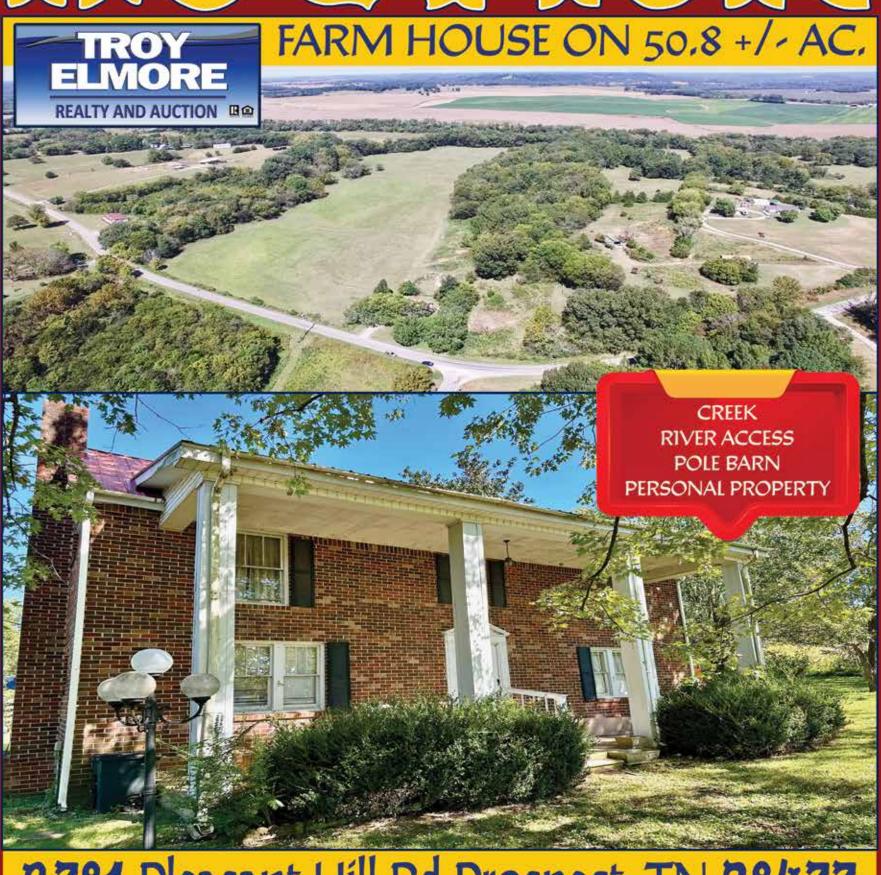
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