

September 17 - September 30, 2021

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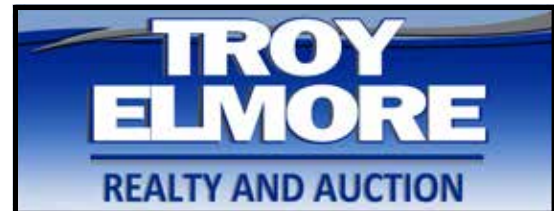


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See Our Listings Inside this edition...
Pages 25 - 32

PlayAction Sports

Catching Up...

Since the issue for our column was skipped last month, some catching up is in order -- The annual Sports Week was held during August; West Limestone's Justin Taylor coached the North boys' All-Star team to a 93-85 win over the South...
Page 9

Clean, Green & Beautiful

It's Time To Get Your Ducks In A Row (Or At Least In The Race!)...
It's the time of year that KALB likes to call "Duck Season!" The 21st Annual Wacky Quacky Ducky Derby is just a couple of weeks away...
Page 12



Cooking With Anna

An Ostrich, A Cat, Or An Elephant: Which One Are You?...

Are you an ostrich, a cat, or an elephant? Do you choose to be like an ostrich with your head buried in the sand?...
Page 13



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You Will Want To Experience The 2nd Annual Love For the City Event On September 25!

By Ali Elizabeth Turner

In the summer of 2020, a wonderful event was started in Athens-Limestone County whose purpose was to be like an old-fashioned citywide family reunion. As we all know, 2020 had been a tough year, what with facing both CO-

Continued on page 15



The 2021 Storytelling Festival -- Waiting And Anticipating

By Ali Elizabeth Turner

This may sound like an odd name for an article that is supposed to talk about one of the best events of the year, but as of Wednesday night, September 15, the one thing that was standing in the way of everything coming together for

Continued on page 17



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Publisher / Editor
Ali Turner

Copy Editor
Yvonne Dempsey

Sales & Distribution
Degan Wilder

Graphic Design
Jonathan Hamilton

Web Design
Teddy Wolcott

Contributing Writers

D. A. Slinkard
Lisa Philippart
Leigh Patterson
Anna Hamilton
Deb Kitchenmaster
Sandra Thompson
Blake Williams
Lana Woody
Nick Thomas
Jackie Warner
Tim Lambert
Steve Leland
Eric Betts
Mae Lewis

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Contents

Publisher's Point	3
All Things Soldier	4
Blake's Beat	5
Calendar Of Events	6
Steve's Corner	7
What Makes Ronnie Roll . . .	8
PlayAction Sports	9
From The Vets' Museum . . . 10	
Slinkard on Success	11
Clean Green And Beautiful . . 12	
Cooking With Anna	13
Cover Stories	15 & 17
Health And Fitness	16
Lifelong Learning	18
View From The Bridge	19
Horse Whispering	20
Mental Health Minute	21
Alternative Approach	22
Special Feature	24

Publisher's Point

Praising When It's Tough



Maybe we should call this "Grateful When You're Growly," or something that doesn't seem too much like a Hallmark card. This has been a tough year for all of us; there has been COVID, political unrest, the disasters that are natural, the disasters that have occurred in Afghanistan, and for my part I have lost friends and family members.

I have been a passionate proponent of a lifestyle of praise for decades, and it has seen me through some hard, hard times. I learned the power of praise in the three years I spent in Iraq, and was humbled by observing members of our military praise when they would

have really good cause to just complain.

In this past year, I have seen people continue to praise God even when they were in excruciating pain, both physical and emotional. Having a broken heart is a real thing, and sometimes people die from it.

So, why praise when it seems there is absolutely nothing for which to praise God? You already have your answer -- there are always things for which to praise God, always.

I went through a season of sickness recently, and it was no fun. I have certainly been sicker before, and for a longer period of time, but this time around

I found that I just had to work a whole lot harder to be civil. It was unsettling, to say the least, and I had never experienced anything like it.

And yet, I have come to the place where I can genuinely praise God for something that I know He never created, that being crud and crankiness. For the first time in my life, I have compassion for people who have a tough time managing their mouths and their emotions, and that is the blessed result of having been laid up and feeling puny.

What else happened? I had lots and lots and lots of time to think and pray, and I don't remember a time when silence

and solitude has been more restorative. It was, in many ways, a forced vacation, for which I am genuinely grateful, and it was full of moments of meditation.

What else can I say to commend the practice of praising when it's tough? Neuroscience. Studies show that a lifestyle of praise and gratitude helps fight disease, strengthens your immune system, and yes, even can help make you smarter.

So, if you are feeling like you are the Scarecrow in the Wizard of Oz after the winged monkeys took him apart on the road to the Emerald City, remember that his straw that was strewn all over the yellow brick road was replaced, and he got his heart's desire -- a brain.

I have no idea what your heart's desire is, but I bet it includes being a positive, kind person who sees things for which to be grateful, no matter what. And while praising in and for all things can seem like a bit of a stretch, I can say, "Try it, you'll like it!"

Ali Elizabeth Turner

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



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A Viral Statement Of Faith

by Ali Elizabeth Turner



It's not all that often that I struggle with something to write for this column. Anyone who knows me knows that I believe soldiers to be some of the most remarkable human beings in existence, and quite frankly, the things that are currently being done to our soldiers by traitors who consider themselves leaders in both the civilian and military arenas are so disturbing that I don't think that I can bear to discuss it, at least not tonight.

So, I am so pleased to tell a story that has gone viral, and proves once again that faith is alive and well amongst our fighting men and women. I think we all could use some good news, and I have some!

Fort Irwin, California, is the National Training Center for our soldiers who are being deployed to the Middle East. My husband has delivered military equipment for their training on several occasions over the years, and the way he supports soldiers is one of the many reasons I love him so fiercely.

A couple of weeks ago, there were seven soldiers at Ft. Irwin who wanted to be baptized in water as an expression of their faith in the Lord Jesus. Problem was, there was nothing there that could be found that could serve as a baptism. I can tell you, when soldiers are determined to get baptized, they'll use something like a

55-gallon drum, oil tanks split in half, and other "necessity-is-the-mother-of-invention" type items, and I believe God honors it.

However, this time it was several chaplains that came together to make it possible for these seven to be baptized, and the Second Stryker Brigade was blessed by the "Chaps'" can-do ingenuity as they made it happen. They took a huge scoop attached to the front of a truck, lined it with plastic, secured it with duct tape, filled it with water, and did the happy deed. The looks of joy on the faces of the still-wet soldiers say it all, and their appreciation for the chaplains has gone viral.

There have been thousands of views, likes,

shares, and comments, and there are no words to describe how grateful I am for the chaplains,

for the newly baptized soldiers, and the fact that in spite of a climate that is inarguably hostile to-

ward faith amongst the fighters, chaplains did their job "swimmingly."



Athens Main Street Projects Recognized At Main Street Alabama Conference

by Blake Williams



Athens Main Street took home four awards during the eighth annual Awards of Excellence program during the Main Street Alabama Conference on August 19, 2021.

During the Awards of Excellence program, Main Street Alabama's President and State Coordinator, Mary Helmer Wirth, honored projects and individuals that made tremendous impacts in their respective communities during the past year. Alabama Municipal Electric Authority sponsored the event that was held at The Venue at Coosa Landing in Gadsden.

Athens Main Street Executive Director, Tere Richardson is excited for these projects and initiatives to be recognized during such a trying year with the COVID-19 pandemic.

"Our merchants took a hit in 2020 due to the pandemic," said Richardson. "I am proud to see some of our work highlighted, by Main Street Alabama that helped our merchants rebound from the shutdown."

"These awards highlight what we can accomplish as a community when we collaborate, are open to possibilities, and support creativity," Athens Mayor Ronnie Marks said. "I commend the Athens Main Street Board, Director Tere Richardson and volunteers for spearheading efforts that enhance our downtown experience."

The four awards of excellence that Main Street Alabama honored Athens Main Street with are:

Excellence in Public/Private Partnership - Downtown Outdoor Dining: Athens Main Street, the City

of Athens, the Limestone County Commission, and Optimal Geo partnered to greatly increase outdoor dining in downtown Athens amid the COVID-19 pandemic. Given it became extremely popular, all four worked together to create a permanent, attractive, uniform look. This partnership provided restaurants with extra capacity when they needed it most. It also changed the look of downtown, making it more vibrant and active.

"The love of the square, in the heart of our county, has long been enjoyed by not only our citizens but also visitors," said Limestone County Commission Chairman Collin Daly. "The commission is proud to be a part of this partnership that has provided an area on our courthouse lawn that will be enjoyed by many, for years to come."

Excellence in Economic Impact - The Square Arts & Entertainment District: Athens Main Street advocated for an entertainment district

in downtown Athens with the mayor, city council, and downtown stakeholders. The goals for the district included drawing more foot traffic to downtown and increasing attendance at events. When the COVID-19 pandemic hit, a third important goal surfaced, providing restaurants with a mechanism to recoup profits from the loss of alcohol sales due to patrons' hesitancy to return to indoor dining. These goals, as well as proven data on increased property values in entertainment districts, made a convincing case for adoption.

"Our restaurant and shop owners have had nothing but positive things to say about the implementation of the district," said Richardson. "Feedback from the public has also been extremely positive."

Excellence in Promotion - Brittany Howard Mural Live Art Event: This event was held downtown during Athens Main Street's first Fridays After Five in May. Street Artist,

ARCY, was commissioned to paint a tribute mural of Grammy award-winning, singer-songwriter Brittany Howard. Within six hours the mural was complete and ready to hang in Merchants Alley, upon completion of the renovation. The goal of this event was to heighten interest in the Merchants Alley Renovation Project, increase patrons for Fridays After Five and Singing on the Square, and increase reach to the 18-to-30-year-old demographic. The district retailers ran specials and stayed open late to provide shopping and browsing opportunities. Local restaurants ramped up staff in support of the increased crowds. A district architectural firm, AMBL Studios donated \$2,000 to sponsor ARCY's artist fee. A local real estate developer donated time to create the mural's frame. Another local company donated time and trailer transportation to and from storage to the site on the courthouse lawn for the live event. Blake Williams

Communications oversaw promoting the live art event and Samuel Barker with Night Fish Productions produced a time-lapse video to document this historic event which can be viewed on the Athens Main Street YouTube channel.

"The awards received by Athens Main Street reflect the enthusiastic public and private support given by our community to enrich our downtown district," said Athens Main Street Board Member and Promotion Committee Chair Dr. Chris Hamilton. "Downtown Athens is the heart and spirit of Limestone County, and Athens Main Street is the link to blending historical preservation efforts with the economic and developmental desires expressed by business owners and our community."

2020 Main Street Hero Brad Mallette: Mr. Mallette is a hardworking architect, a talented musician, and a passionate community volunteer. He comes to Athens via Los Angeles, where he gained a wealth of experience in commercial historic renovations. He is a member of the Athens Main Street Board of Directors, a member of the Merchants Alley Design team, serves on the City of Athens Planning Commission, and is an integral contributor to the Pryor Park Project.

"Brad has been a valuable asset to our Athens Main Street team," said Richardson. "He always brings a fresh approach to the design committee and board of directors, and we look forward to continuing to work with him."

For more information on Athens Main Street, visit their website at www.athensmainstreet.org.



Photo L to R: Brad Mallette Athens Main Street Board Member & Design Committee Member, Amy Golden Special Projects Manager with the City of Athens, Tere Richardson Executive Director of Athens Main Street, and Blake Williams Promotions Committee Member.

Calendar of Events

ATHENS LIMESTONE PUBLIC LIBRARY EVENTS

· **DEEP Conversation about Managing your Diabetes with the Alabama Cooperative Extension System. Thursdays 12:00 – 1:30, September 23 – October 28. If you have any questions or to register, please contact Karen Softley (256) 324-2851.**

· **Wednesday, October 6th 2021 “Bring Your Own Lunch-N-Learn” 11:30 AM 2021 Draughon Seminar in State & Local History “Come Now, and Let Us Reason Together” – Cooperative Extension Clubs Empowerment of African-American Farm Women and Girls, 1928-1965 with Dr. Shari L. Williams of Auburn University.**

Cemetery Stroll October 3rd

Please mark your calendar for Oct 3 from 2-4pm for our Cemetery Stroll, a free Quality-of-Life event! Donations Welcome...

Annual Trail of Tears AL-TN Motorcycle Commemorative Ride September 18

From Bridgeport, TN (Lineup at 7AM, Kickstand Up at 8AM CDT) to Redstone Harley-Davidson (15100 AL-20 in Madison) for lunch (Kickstand up at 12PM CDT) to Waterloo, AL (Arrive 3PM CDT), this motorcycle ride invites riders to join in and mark the passage of the Cherokee from their native land to the Indian Territory (Oklahoma). No reservation or fee required, Rain or Shine. For more info: www.al-tn-trailoftears.net

17th Annual Duck & Run 5K September 18

Start and finish in Big Spring Memorial Park, 125 East Street in Athens. Starting at 7:00AM. Join Keep Athens-Limestone Beautiful for this annual fundraiser run through scenic Athens. Proceeds benefit Keep Athens-Limestone Beautiful. Early registration \$25 through Sept 11, 2021. Late/Race Day registration starting at 5:45AM is \$30. For more information or registration: raceroster.com/events/2021/48662/duck-and-run-5k

"Constitution Day Celebration" September 20

The Athens John Wade Keyes Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution will hold its annual "Constitution Day Celebration" on September 20 at 1pm at McCandless Hall on

the Athens State campus. The program will observe the 234th anniversary of the signing of The Constitution of the United States of America. The guest speaker will be Tom Walker, president and founder of American Village in Montevallo. The public is cordially invited to attend. For more information contact Brenda Winter, at 256-614-2092.

National Bike There Week September 20 - 26

Celebrates the workers who peddle to work each day benefiting their health, mental health, and environment. 40% of all trips in the U.S. are less than two miles, making bicycling a feasible and fun way to get to get around.

First Day of Fall Hike September 22

Joe Wheeler State Park, 4401 McLean Drive in Rogersville. Starting at 9AM and the Champion Trailhead at the end of the parking lot. Come say farewell to summer and welcome the Fall Equinox. Join park naturalist, Sam Woodroof for an 1.5-hour hike and enjoy the flora and fauna of the park. For more information: Samuel.Woodroof@DCNR.Alabama.gov

2021 Alumni Golf Classic September 23

With the Athens State University Alumni Association at Canebrake Club, 23015 Founders Circle in Athens. 10AM-6PM benefiting student scholarships. The 4-person scramble with Mulligan and Power-drive options available. 10AM - Lunch & Check-in; 11AM - Shotgun Start; and 5PM (approximately) Dinner and Prizes. Rain date: TBA 4-person Team: \$800; Individual: \$200. For more info or to register: athens.edu

Elkton Police Department Rodeo 2021 September 24 & 25

At the Elkton City Park, 545 Baugh Road in Elkton TN. 7:30PM-9:30PM each night. The gates will open at 6:00 p.m. each night with the event beginning by 7:30 p.m. Tickets are \$15 per adult, \$10 for children 6-12, FREE for children 5 & under. Monies benefit the Elkton Police Department and its programs.



Steve's Corner

Is It A Faith, Or Is It A Lifestyle?

by Steve Leland

A couple of decades ago, I bought a book about the American Indian. I was interested in the various cultures that different tribes had. I would love to quote the book by its title and credit the author. But alas, that has faded down old memory holes.

What made me sit up and take notice was the section on religion. The statement was made that they didn't have a religion, that it was all about their lifestyle. Or, to state it differently, that their religion was something that they lived, not something that they practiced. Some of that seemed a bit off to me. I mean, just the idea of having a shaman seems counter indicative, but I digress.

The concept, though, was hitting home in my

own life. Of course, I don't practice religion, that's how you describe other people's beliefs. Ours is a "faith," right?

Ok, but is that faith something that I practice? Or is it a lifestyle? Is my faith something that I filter life through? Or is it something that I access when things get hard? Or worse, is it something that I forget about until after things get so bad that I am in despair and my faith is the only thing that I have left to hold on to?

Let's make our faith the filter that we see all of life through, that we live our lives through. Let's walk hand in hand with our Heavenly Father, enjoying both the good and the bad with Him as opposed to running to Him when things get too rough for us to handle.

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“Believe In Others”

by Ali Elizabeth Turner

We agreed it had been a grand weekend in Athens, AL. The weather had been perfect, the Travis Manion 9/11 Heroes Run held in front of the Limestone County Courthouse had been record-breaking to the point that they had to close registration, and a total of 486 people participated. I had two friends that walked it, and for both of them it was the first time they had ever done a 5K. The grins on their faces were unforgettable.

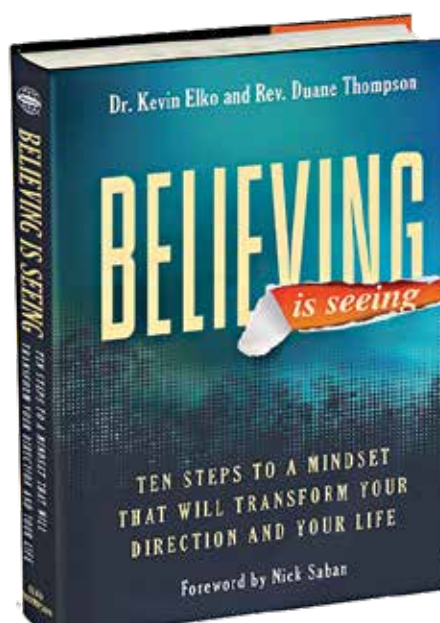
The Travis Manion event was followed by the Superheroes/Eli's Block Party parade and

celebration held in Big Spring Park, and again, there was a solid crowd, and a total of 30 superheroes assembled on the red carpet in front of Keep Athens-Limestone Beautiful. A shout out to the Athens Police Department who had to be on duty all day in order for Athenians to participate in two most worthy causes.

Mayor Ronnie and I have been working through a book that is truly beautiful, much more so than the standard personal development covers that may have comparable, excellent content, but whose covers and illus-

trations perhaps not so much. The book is called *Believing Is Seeing*, by Dr. Kevin Elko and Rev. Duane Thompson, and there are a number of references to famous Alabamians and Tennesseans in it.

For this edition of “Ronnie” we primarily referred to a chapter that was entitled, “Spending Or Investing-Believing In Others.” The chapter illustration picture was of Wilma Rudolph, the legendary member of the 1960 US Olympic Women's track team. The 1960 Olympics are



the first I remembered, and Miss Wilma made us all proud. She was the first American women to win three gold medals. She was from Tennessee, and she was the 20th of 22 children.

What many people may not know about Wilma Rudolph is that she was never expected to live, let alone walk without a brace, and for sure no one thought there would be gold medals in her future. No one, except her mother. Born a preemie into abject poverty, Wilma had developed double pneumonia and had scarlet fever at the age of four, and also had polio. Her left leg was paralyzed, and her iron brace was heavy. At the age of nine, Wilma (against medical advice) took her brace off. Then at the age of 13 she got the “crazy notion” that she wanted to run track, so she did. She came in dead last in every race, and everyone but her mother told her she could quit. Her mother,

by contrast, continually told her that she could do anything she set her mind to. Over time Wilma no longer finished last, and then came the day that she won the race. Already unstoppable, Wilma went from losing races at the age of 13 to winning a bronze medal in the 1956 Olympics to taking three Olympic golds at the age of 20, the first woman to do so. She was the fastest woman on the planet.

After her stunning success in the 1960 Olympics, a reporter asked her what helped her overcome all the obstacles in her way, starting with childhood. Wilma told him, “Well, many people told me I would never walk again. My mother told me I would. I believed my mother.”

Wilma's mother, and others, believed in her. And, Mayor Ronnie chuckled as he told me, “Now, Auburn fans may not want to hear this, but Bear Bryant used to tell his ‘Bama players, “Call your Momma, because I sure wish I could.” His mom, who had believed in him had passed, and he wanted his team to understand how important it is to have someone believe in you and invest in you.

It was then time to pray, and we did, just like we have done for the last ten years when *Athens Now* started this column. And then, it was time for Ronnie to roll.





PlayAction Sports

Catching Up

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

Since the issue for our column was skipped last month, some catching up is in order -- The annual Sports Week was held during August; West Limestone's Justin Taylor coached the North boys' All-Star team to a 93-85 win over the South. James Clemens' Avani Singiredy and Santiago Castillo and Lindsay Lane's Angela Kahler also posted singles tennis match victories as the North boys' and girls' teams swept the South. The North girls' softball team swept the South 11-8 and 6-1 in their games; Athens High's Emily Simon had two hits in the extra inning game one victory. Tanner's Manuel Felipe scored a goal in the North boys' 3-0 soccer win.

Athens Bible School and Lindsay Lane Christian Academy were two of 131 schools who were recognized Friday at the 14th Annual AHSAA SportsmanSHIP Luncheon during this year's Summer Conference. The luncheon recognized schools who had no ejections or fines for this past school year.

Reagan Conley finished first for the Athens Gators in the girls' 9-10 breaststroke at the ARPA State swim meet. Cooper McClendon came in second in the boys' 11-12 division and third in the 11-12 butterfly. Joseph Prickett placed third in boys 15-18 breaststroke. Jace Duncan won the boys 6 and under backstroke. Catherine Evans was third in the girls' race.

Congratulations to Athens High baseball players for their college commitments: Cooper Cochran (UT-Martin), Connor Beck (Bevill State), Braeden Harrison (Wallace State). James Clemens' Noah Berry also made his baseball commitment to Samford.

Football (through week 4):

Ardmore 49, Tanner 6; Athens 41, Fort Payne 40; Wilson 34, Clements 28; Rogers 37, East Limestone 20; Randolph 48, Elkmont 7; James Clemens 32, Murphy 0.

Ardmore 33, Elkmont 13; James Clemens 47, Athens 7; Mars Hill 26, East Limestone 7; Lexington 53, Tanner 20; West Limestone 55, Clements 28.

Ardmore 34, Brewer 14; East Limestone 24, Lee 14; Phil Campbell 55, Elkmont 8; James Clemens 35, Bob Jones 28 (OT); Tanner 20, Section 14; West Limestone 21, Deshler 19.

Ardmore 27, Lawrence County 7; Athens 56, Hazel Green 7; Phil Campbell 37, Clements 14; East Limestone 14, Mae Jemison 12; Colbert Heights 37, Elkmont 0; James Clemens 31, Austin 14; Tanner 20, Ider 17; Central-Florence 33, West Limestone 21.

Volleyball:

Athens Bible School recorded wins over Whitesburg Christian, Columbia, Tanner, and Falkville. Ardmore defeated Brewer, Tanner, and Lee. Athens

High topped Randolph, Decatur, Muscle Shoals, Westminster and Enterprise; Ramsay, Jasper and Hartselle in the Juanita Boddie tournament. East Limestone had victories over Clements, Columbia, Winfield, Danville Decatur, and Priceville, along with Lake Placid, Central Point, Ysleta (TX), Springstead (FL), Rosebud-Lott (TX) in the Disney World tournament. Elkmont bested East Lawrence, West Limestone, and Decatur. James Clemens came out on top against Muscle Shoals, Athens, Randolph, New Hope, Austin, and Madison Academy. Lindsay Lane beat Ardmore, West Limestone, and Oakwood Academy. Tanner posted wins against Lee, Mae Jemison and Oakwood Academy. West Limestone turned back ABS and Columbia.

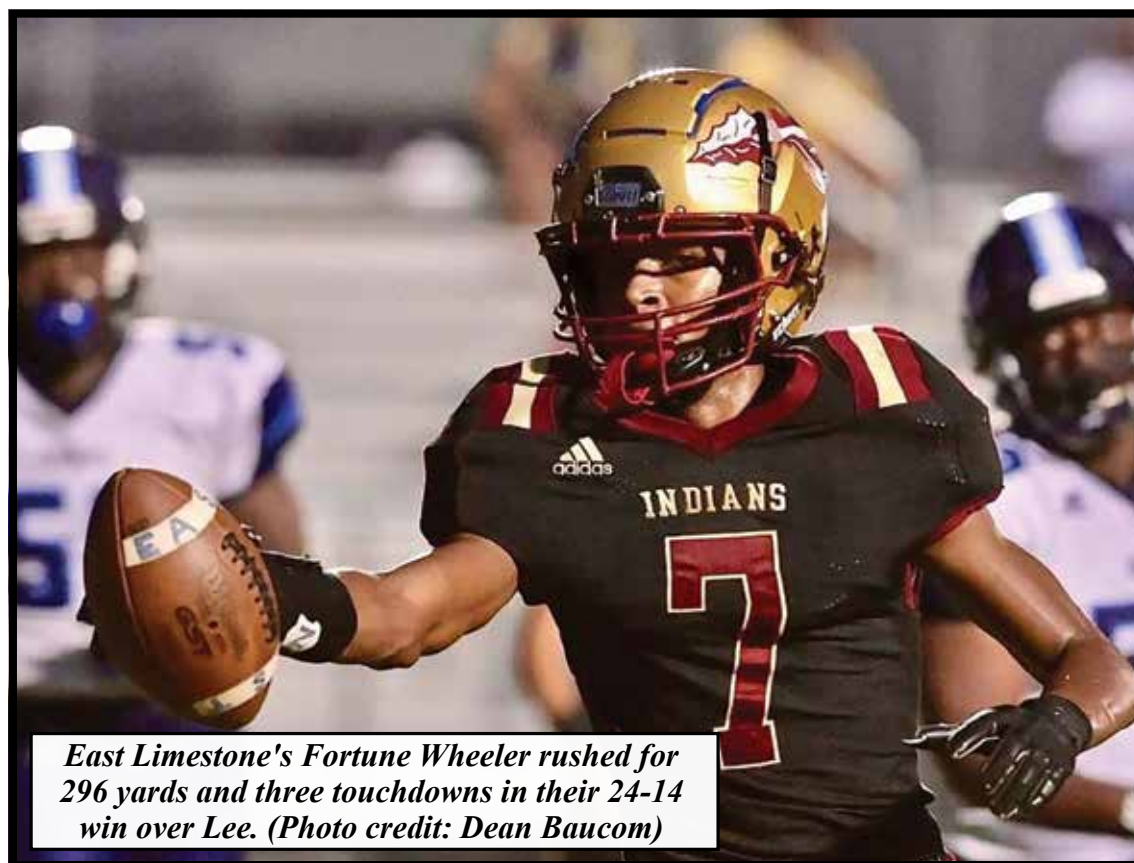
Cross Country:

Elkmont's Alex Kuntz finished first in 1A-5A varsity boys at the Bob Jones Friendly First Chance 2.1. He also won the 1A-4A division at the Brooks Invitational; Athens High's Jack Anderson finished third as the Golden Eagles came in 2nd in 5A-7A. At the Pepsi Challenge cross country meet, the varsity James Clemens boys won the large schools division, the Lady Jets were second and Andrew Gohlich's first place led the James Clemens boys to a runner-up spot in the boys' 2-mile race. Elkmont's Kuntz was second in the boys' small schools division.

Announcements:

The 17th Annual Duck and Run 5K will be September 18 at 7 a.m. at Big Spring Memorial Park. Proceeds benefit Keep Athens-Limestone Beautiful. For more information on registration cost, contact Eric or Leigh Patterson at duckandrun5k@yahoo.com or call 233-8000

Fall archery registration is going on through September 20 at the Athens Rec Center for ages 8 and up. Cost is \$30. Youth basketball registration continues through October 15 at the Rec Center for ages 5-16. Cost is \$60. For more information, call 233-8740.



East Limestone's Fortune Wheeler rushed for 296 yards and three touchdowns in their 24-14 win over Lee. (Photo credit: Dean Baucom)



From the Alabama Veterans' Museum *Isom's Orchard Holds Fundraiser For Alabama Veterans Museum! 3rd Annual Scarecrow Contest*

by Sandra Thompson, Director, Alabama Veterans' Museum

Get those creative juices flowing! It's time to start preparing your scarecrow for the 3rd Annual Scarecrow Contest.

This year's contest will

be open to our entire community! All are welcome to participate:

Individuals • Businesses
• Clubs • School Groups •
Doctor/Dentist Offices

Set up on Thursday, September 30 at 5p.m. for display Oct 1-31. Three community leaders will judge the entries for 1st, 2nd, 3rd place on October 1.

Because we love to make things a fundraiser, Isom's Orchard has decided to continue to help the Alabama Veterans Museum and Archives. Isom's will

donate \$50 per scarecrow entry directly to the museum.

Stop by Isom's On Hwy. 72 for an entry form and rules.

Set the date: The annual Veterans Day Parade for Athens will be on Saturday, November 6, 2021 at 11a.m. More information in upcoming issues.



Athens City Cemetery Stroll

October 3, 2021
2:00PM till 4:00PM



Athens City Cemetery
Between Hobbs and Washington Street

Sponsored by the Sons of Confederate Veterans and Athens-Limestone Tourism Association

ISOM'S ORCHARD

scarecrow contest

open to our whole community
individuals - businesses - school groups
dentist/doctor offices - clubs

Set up: Sept 30 | 5 pm

Cash Prize
1st - \$500
2nd - \$300
3rd - \$200

Visit Isom's Orchard for Entry Form



Museum remains open during COVID-19 testing!

DESPITE THE COVID-19 TESTING GOING ON IN OUR PARKING LOT, THE ALABAMA VETERANS MUSEUM REMAINS OPEN NORMAL HOURS OF MONDAY - SATURDAY FROM 9AM - 3PM. WE UNDERSTAND THAT IT MAY SEEM A LITTLE CONFUSING WITH THE TWO CIRCUS TENTS AND NUMEROUS CONES, HOWEVER, IF YOU FOLLOW THE SIGNS YOU WILL SEE THAT WE STILL HAVE AMPLE PARKING FOR OUR MUSEUM GUESTS.



Slinkard On Success

Self-Image: What Is Your Value?

by D. A. Slinkard

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

Do you ever feel like you are drifting about in life? Each day you are going with the flow and being reactive to what life throws at you? You do your best to get through each day; you do your best to make sure you give your best efforts. But the reality is that you know you have become complacent in living your life. Does this ever happen to you? Am I the only one? How does a person break out of this trap? --and, yes, it is a trap that catches many people. I have found the one way to escape this is to make the decision to create actions which will enable you to get out of your funk.

There are people walking around living their life, and they are in a funk and do not even know it. They get up and go to work; they come home and then go to bed, only to repeat the same process the next day. The wheel is spinning, and we are out of control when it comes to our life. Too many people fail to realize they are out of balance, and this leads many people to live life without any significant meaning to it.

Life is precious. Life is short. The Bible tells us in James 4:14, "... For what is your life? It is even a vapour that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away." Too many people never start liv-

ing their life because they never make the conscious decision to make a difference in their own life. The biggest lie I hear people say is they do not have enough time. This is a convenient lie too many people try to use as their mantra for why they cannot achieve things in life.

Reality – We ALL have 168 hours in our week. Reality – We ALL have 24 hours in our day. Reality – How we choose to spend our time is up to us. If something is important to us, we will make it happen; if something is not important, we will make an excuse. Are you making things happen in your life or are you making excuses? My next question: When you think about yourself, what do you picture? If you had to describe you, what words would you use?

Our self-image plays a larger role than what we realize. I have seen people who had everything going for them, yet they had a poor self-image; thus they came up short. I have also seen the other end of the spectrum in which you see someone and think to yourself, how are they able to achieve success? Self-image is vitally important to a person's success.

If you want to break the funk, if you want to make positive changes in your life, I would like for you to change the mental process of how you



see yourself. Henry Ford said, "If you think you can or think you can't, either way you are right." Take the time to change your thought process and you will take the time to change your life. Think positive and positive things will happen; think negative and negative things will happen. The choice is yours to make.

I want you to picture the self-image of who and what you want to be. Hold that image in your mind and start to concentrate on what actions you would need to take to become what you imagine. Make sure that when you do this, you have a pen and paper nearby because you are going to need to take notes. If you are hon-

est with yourself, you will be able to properly identify who you are and where you are versus becoming who you want to be and where you want to go. The sad reality is too many people do not want to take the necessary time to mentally think about who they want to be.

This mentality is how and why someone begins drifting about in life. They get tossed in every direction but never go anywhere. This is how you stop that from happening. Take the time right now; picture who it is you want to be. Picture how you want to be. Really think about the changes you need to make in your life and then write these down. Be descriptive

in the actions you need to take, and then take the actionable steps to make this self-image a reality in your life.

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Rita Aaron,
Owner



Clean, Green And Beautiful

It's Time To Get Your Ducks In A Row (Or At Least In The Race!) 21st Annual Wacky Quacky Ducky Derby

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

It's the time of year that KALB likes to call "Duck Season!" The 21st Annual Wacky Quacky Ducky Derby is just a couple of weeks away. This year's event will be taking place on October 2. Thanks to our generous Diamond Duck Sponsor, American Leakless Company, **the Grand Prize will be \$2,000** again this year!

So come on out and get your rubber ducks in a row and in the race because...the race is ON for the Wacky Quacky Ducky Derby! Due to the event being held outdoors, there will be plenty of room to practice social distancing. Another perk is that **you do not have to be present to win**, even though it is a fun event to watch!

Our prize list for this year continues to grow. All prizes are generously provided by sponsors, so that every donation made to adopt ducks supports the work of Keep Athens-Limestone Beautiful.

The Derby

The event will be held at **4 p.m. on Saturday, October 2 at Big Spring Memorial Park (The Duck Pond)** in Athens. Hundreds of specially-designed rubber ducks will be racing down the spillway and into the duck trap.

For a \$5 donation to KALB, one numbered racing duck will be entered into the race in your name. Ducks will be divided and raced in 4 to 6 heats, depending on the total number of ducks adopted. The numbers of winners in each heat will be determined by the number of prizes at the time of the derby. Winners of each heat will then be entered into the Championship Race, where every duck is a winner! Prizes won will be determined by the order the ducks come through the duck trap. Winners will be announced as soon after the final race as possible.

Papa Murphy's Quack Pack

For a \$25 donation to KALB, you will receive a Papa Murphy's Quack Pack. This includes 6 ducks (1 free) and a coupon for 25% off your entire order at Papa



Murphy's Pizza with no expiration date! You will also be guaranteed that you will have a duck in each heat, unless you request otherwise.

How to Adopt Ducks

Ducks can be **adopted online at www.KALBCares.com**. Click the EVENTS tab and Wacky Quacky Ducky Derby. Instructions are listed on the event page. Online adoptions close at midnight on Friday, October 1. Printable adoption forms are also located online and may be **mailed to PO Box 1089, Athens, AL 35612**. You may also **drop by the KALB office at 125 East Street in Athens and adopt your ducks in person**. Ducks

may also be **adopted in person at the KALB tent at the Old Time Fiddlers Convention at Athens State University** from Thursday evening, September 30 through October 2. Adoptions can be made on Saturday, October 2 until 1:00 pm. Our tent will be located on the south side of the Founders Hall stage area.

On behalf of the KALB Commission and Staff, we are truly grateful for the support from the community that we continue to receive. We could not do the work that we do without our wonderful sponsors, supporters and volunteers!

Wacky Quacky Ducky Derby Current Prize List



American Leakless Company

**American Leakless Co. GRAND PRIZE
\$2,000 Cash**

Marriott Shoals Hotel and Spa – 1 Night Stay plus

Dinner for 2 at 360 Grille (not to exceed \$100)

Canebrake Golf Package for 4

\$250 Osborne's Jewelers Gift Card

Gift Basket – The SK Salon (\$190 value)

\$150 Cash – American Leakless Company

\$100 Cash – American Leakless Company

\$100 Cash – Brody Jackson State Farm

\$100 Cash – Crown Service Termite & Pest Control

\$100 Cash – Distinctive Landscaping, Inc.

\$100 Cash – Morell Engineering

\$100 Gift Card – Hobbs Jewelers

\$100 Gift Card – Publix

4 Flex Tickets – Theatre Huntsville

\$50 Cash – Athens-Limestone Hospital

\$50 Cash – Distinctive Landscaping, Inc.

\$50 Gift Card – Eastside Pharmacy

\$50 Gift Card – Eastside Pharmacy

2 Flex Tickets – Theatre Huntsville

2 Flex Tickets – Theatre Huntsville

AND MORE!

Lazy Duck Awards provided by Dub's Burgers



Become a Fan



(256) 233-8000

KALBCares@gmail.com

www.KALBCares.com



Cooking with Anna

An Ostrich, A Cat, Or An Elephant: Which One Are You?

by Anna Hamilton

Are you an ostrich, a cat, or an elephant? Do you choose to be like an ostrich with your head buried in the sand? If you can't see it, it isn't happening, and everything will be all right. Your little head buried in a dark hole -- it's cozy and safe, even though the world is crumbling around you. Or do you choose to be like a cat? Everyone has heard the term: "Curiosity killed the cat." You sneak around and poke your head where it sometimes doesn't belong just so you can get the scoop. You cannot stand to not be in the know.

If you are an ostrich, you may find yourself in trouble before you know it. Choosing to ignore all the problems in your life or the world is not the answer. If you decide to bury your head in the sand when financial problems land in your lap, or when relationship issues arise, or when you need to fix your spiritual life, you will end up burying yourself so deep that it can make it almost impossible to pull yourself out. Deciding to just ignore the problems in your life causes them to grow, fester, and can start to destroy your life and relationships.

The Bible offers us numerous examples of people who tried to hide from their problems. One of the most notable is Jonah. The Lord tasked Jonah with going to Nineveh to preach

against their wickedness. But Jonah had other plans. He did not want to do this under any circumstances, and he decided to stick his head in the sand. He thought that ignoring and running from his problem would make it go away. The problem did not go away, in fact, it got worse. Don't you think that if you found yourself inside the belly of a large fish just like Jonah did, you would start to re-think running from your problems? ... Just a quick side note, the story of Jonah has always terrified me. I'm not scared of much in this world, but sharks! The thought of deep, dark water and big fish makes my skin crawl, okay, back to the story... The Lord did not allow Jonah to just ignore his problem. Jonah realized that he had to face it head on and he did. The Lord gave Jonah the opportunity to take his head out of the sand (or out of the fish in his case) and face his problem.

Now if you are a cat, you may find yourself in trouble before you know it, just like the ostrich but for a very different reason. Cats are known for sticking their noses where they don't belong. They want to know everything about everything.

continued on page 18

Fresh Cauliflower Salad

Ingredients:

*½ small red onion, diced
1 large cucumber, seeded and diced
1 pint cherry tomatoes, halved
2 medium avocados, diced
1/3 cup crumbled feta
¼ cup chopped fresh cilantro
¼ cup kalamata olives, chopped
1 cup cooked cauliflower rice, or 1 cup cooked orzo pasta
4 oz pesto
Salt and pepper to taste*

Directions:

Combine all ingredients in a large bowl. Can be served immediately or served chilled. Enjoy!





Cooking with Anna (continued)

An Ostrich, A Cat, Or An Elephant: Which One Are You?

by Anna Hamilton

continued from page 13

As humans, we are not made to know everything. Our nervous systems simply can not handle it. Trying to know everything that is happening in the world will drive you to be anxious, exhausted, and ultimately unhappy. When you try to insert yourself into everyone else's problems, your own household will start to suffer. Meddling in other people's lives is a good way to ignore what is going on in yours.

Jesus spoke on people who choose to be curious like cats. People who want to meddle in other people's lives. In Matthew, during the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus told us of the dangers of focusing on everyone else's life instead of our own. "Do not judge, or you too will be judged. For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you. Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? How can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' when all the time there is a plank in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye." Matthew 7:1-5

So, if you shouldn't be like an ostrich and you shouldn't be like a cat, what should you strive to be like? Since we are talking animals, let's try to be like the elephant. I know, you thought I was going to say dog. In an article on arapahoelibraries.org, they describe why elephants are the best. Elephants have deep family bonds. Calves are raised with help from the entire herd. Elephants are sensitive and caring animals. They comfort their young when they cry and have been shown to have complex emotions. Amazingly enough, elephants are one of the very few species that can recognize themselves in a mirror. Like humans, elephants mourn the death of their loved ones. They gently touch and caress the skull of deceased loved ones with their trunks, and they will pause for several minutes of silence in the place where their loved one dies, even several years after their death. Remember, an elephant never forgets.

Elephants are beautiful creatures that help support each other and stay aware of the world around them. They don't ignore the dangers around them but stay aware of their surroundings. They choose to help each other as a community instead of looking out just for themselves. Elephants don't meddle in what is happening in the hippo's world or the lion's. They involve themselves with their family and work to make it better. Elephants contain some beautiful qualities that we could learn lessons from.



What should a follower of Christ look like to the world? We don't want to be an isolated ostrich with our heads buried in the sand, unconcerned for the world around us. We don't want to be like a cat, so nosy and trying to find out all we can about everyone else while neglecting our own household. And while the example of an elephant is nice, I mean who doesn't love Dumbo, the apostle Paul gives my favorite definition of what a Christian should look like to the world in Romans 12:9-21.

"Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. Be devoted to one another in love. Honor one another above yourselves. Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord. Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. Share with the Lord's people who are in need. Practice hospitality. Bless those who persecute you, bless and do not curse. Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn. Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited. Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everyone. If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. Do not take revenge, my dear friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: 'It is mine to avenge, I will repay, says the Lord.' On the contrary: 'If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head.' Do not be overcome by evil but overcome evil with good." Romans 12:9-21

This week's recipe is a salad that I have become obsessed with. I can eat it at every meal, it really is that good y'all! I'm doing my best to eat low carb, so I make this with cauliflower rice, but feel free to use orzo pasta in place of the cauliflower. It will be delicious!

You Will Want To Experience The 2nd Annual Love For the City Event On September 25!

by Ali Elizabeth Turner

continued from page 1

VID and cultural unrest, and Jerome Malone, his wife Tiffany, and their church, Oasis: Christ's Church At Athens decided with God's help to do something about it. They called it "Love for the City," and as someone who both attended and participated as part of the music team, I can heartily say it was a success. There were people there of all ages, skin tones, socio-economic backgrounds, professions, and walks of life, and there was abundant proof all around that there simply is no stronger force in the universe than the pure love of God. There was diversity in music, food, and folks, and it was a wonderful day, indeed. It was held in the field just south of Oasis Worship Center on Hwy 72 and Hine Street, and was well attended.

This year, the 2nd Annual Love For The City Community Love-Fest & Concert On The Square is going to be happening on the Limestone County Courthouse steps on September 25th from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. There will be music of all types; food trucks; vendors of jewelry, apparel and candles; artisans; opportunities to hear wonderful stories of the profound transformation that can be experienced by the love of God; games; activities for the kids; and more. The event is going to be socially distanced, and you are encouraged to bring lawn chairs. So far, Happi Pappi Beignets and Beer Belly BBQ are scheduled to be the food trucks on hand, and there may be others as well. For the kids, there will be face painting, a corn hole toss, and other games, too. Also, if people wish to set up tables



or displays on the eastside perimeter of the Courthouse that showcase their product or purpose, they are welcome to do so. The only thing is that their message or merchandise must be compatible with the theme of the weekend, and you will need to check with Jerome ahead of time. He can be reached at the Oasis office number at (256) 874-4517.

Jerome also told me that in addition to everything that has already been described, there will be a fundraiser for our brave and exhausted medical first-responders who are on staff at Athens-Limestone Hospital. In addition, there will be people from various associations in our community who will be honored for the way they give to and strengthen our town and county. They are Coach Jarrett Collier of the Athens Boys and Girls Club; Donna Townsend of Beyond Blessed Ministries, which provides Christ-centered services to the poor, hungry and unsheltered; Jan Matthews of Unsung Heroes; and James Long who sends Bibles and medical supplies to foreign countries.

While Saturday is the day for the "main event," there are two more gatherings planned that I think will serve to make the weekend even more wonderful. On Friday night, Athens-Limestone Public Library will be hosting a panel discus-

sion in their large community meeting room that is entitled simply, "Love One Another," and its purpose will be to talk about the ways we can get better at loving people who are different than are we. That event will be held September 24 from 6:30-9 p.m. Then on Sunday, September 26, also in connection with Athens-Limestone Public Library, there will be a worship service held outdoors in the recently opened Athens Library Community Garden, which is located adja-

cent to the main building on the south side of the property. That event is called, "Worship In The Garden," and will start at 10 a.m. The guest speaker will be Marcus T. Watkins, and the guest worship leader will be André Ashford. I believe that the three events, "Love One Another," "Love For The City," and "Love For The World" (through worship), will combine to make this a most memorable weekend in Athens-Limestone County.

All three events are free and open to the public. Jerome and Tiffany have a goal, and that is that the people of Athens-Limestone County will get a chance to see the love of God on display the way it really is supposed to be for everybody. Come and experience it for yourself, and then be sure to pass it around!



Building A Sustainable Lifestyle – Part 3

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



I have been extremely clear about what role nutrition plays in life. Once nutrition is stable, it is time to approach the activity level needed to sustain a healthy life. There is no way that individual activity level will be a constant over the years. Everyone will go through phases of life where time or physical limitations will be a factor, which makes this type of nutrition even more important.

The activity side of fitness is not everyone's favorite topic, mainly because most do not want to hear the actual reality of what it takes to be effective. There are multiple components to fitness which have to be met in daily activity to be truly beneficial. There are also other factors which vary based on the individual as well. Age and physical ability and/or injury is a consideration, but more than that are individual goals. Things such as weight loss or gain, or even maintenance, call for different approach; along with muscle growth. Finally, what makes this all sustainable is not just success in achieving goals, but the enjoyment of the activities along the way. Simply put -- you will never stick with something you hate.

A weekly and monthly plan has to be made with sound training knowledge of exercise which is challenging while providing a total body approach, therefore giving balance, strength, and more.

For most people walking/jogging on a treadmill or spending 30 minutes in the gym doing a basic split routine a few days a week is not going to develop change either way, at least not past a certain point, not to mention how bored

life will become, ultimately leading to quitting. This is where the "sound training knowledge" comes into play. Having an educated trainer who truly understands the body and how to create challenging, personalized workout plans which progress continually so new levels are achieved and excitement is continuously peaked is key.

Working out should provide a release; it should be a tough but stress-reliev-

ing portion of the day. Yes, trainers cost money BUT they provide so many benefits. First, a trainer is going to give their expertise making sure to prevent injury and/or exhaustion with the process in general. Next, it does not matter what time of day one works out; there is just something about showing up dressed and ready and not having to think at all, just doing what is said to achieve a good burn and sweat. Finally, by having

someone to keep routines fresh and new, it is easier to stay engaged physically and mentally achieving goals. Having someone to encourage and maintain focus while pushing forward is priceless. The accountability factor gained by paying and scheduling workouts regularly with a motivating, educated trainer will exponentially increase sustainability in living a healthy life mentally, nutritionally, and physically.



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The 2021 Storytelling Festival -- Waiting And Anticipating

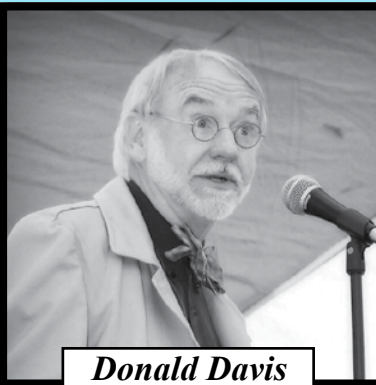
by Ali Elizabeth Turner



continued from page 1

the 2021 Storytelling Festival was securing the tent. The company that is usually hired each year is not available. Much work has gone into finding another tent, and I told Wayne Kuykendall that I would be happy to do TWO articles on what is my fave part of festival season in Athens, AL. This is the 15th year that a hard-working group of Athenians hopefully will be able to make it possible for kids and adults to experience the nearly lost art of storytelling. And, our fond hope and prayer is that a big enough tent emerges in time for the third week in October.

Adapting to challenging situations is something to which we have become accustomed in this past year, and the 'Tellers were so desirous of continuing the tradition of coming to Athens each October that last year they did the festival online through Facebook. COVID just wasn't going to stop them. And while I am deeply appreciative of their commitment to our town and our kids, I know that there is nothing like having them under the big red and white tent. For my part, it is watching the students manage to both sit still enough to listen and simultaneously squeal with laughter. They don't know that they are being taught life lessons that, if applied, can make a huge



Donald Davis



Bil Lepp



Carmen Agra Deedy



Josh Goforth

difference in their lives.

The rest of this article is relegated to the designation of "If all goes according to plan...."

The grand old man himself, Donald Davis, will be on hand for the main events as well as the School Days.

Carmen Agra Deedy will be back, and besides being an amazing storyteller, she is an award-winning children's author.

Bil Lepp will be returning to both the weekend events as well as the School Days presentation.

Madison County, AL, native Josh Goforth will be back to perform musically as well as a teller.

Simon Brooks, who hails from the UK will be a part of School Days.

And, the 8th Annual Dan Williams Local Tellers Competition will be held live and in person.

So, keep your calendar slated for October 19 through October 23, and we will keep you posted. We are all trusting that the 15th Annual Storytelling Festival will go on without even the tiniest hitch.





The Power Of A Non-Anxious Presence

by Eric Betts

Assistant Director, Curtis Coleman Center for Religious Studies and Ethics at Athens State University

“The climate of contemporary America has become so chronically anxious that our society has gone into an emotional regression that is toxic to well-defined leadership... This kind of emotional climate can only be dissipated by clear, decisive, well-defined leadership.” Edwin Friedman - rabbi, family therapist, and leadership consultant.

Friedman asserts that a leader’s job is to be “the strength in the system.” Families, groups, and institutions have “emotional fields” (like magnetic fields or gravitational fields). The leader’s self-differentiation, or lack thereof, has an effect on the emotional field. Leaders will either take on the chronic anxiety of the system, or they will transform that anxiety by their calm, steady, well-defined presence.

A major sign of being better differentiated is when the leader can be present in the midst of emotional turmoil and actively relate to key people while calmly maintaining

a sense of the leader’s own direction. Developing greater clarity about what is happening in a system will always be more productive in the long run than just having empathy for the hurting people in the system and trying to rescue them. People grow through challenge and not by simply being made to feel better about their plight

Neither reasonableness, role modeling, nor imparting insight will work with this kind of virus in an organization. For viruses to run amok, there has to be complicity in the host organism. When a pathogen attacks the organism (organization), the healthy cells are observing and waiting to see what happens to their protection – to the organization’s immune system – the leader. When the leader is well defined and clear, the pathogens don’t replicate.

Non-anxious presence -- Anxiety can lead to numerous organizational symptoms and general stuckness. Chronic

anxiety overrides thinking. When emotion swirls out of control, people simply take sides. Playfulness and creativity disappear. Leaders focus on self and hold down the level of anxiety in the emotional system primarily by managing their own anxiety, and secondarily by staying in meaningful contact with other key players in the situation. They do not tell others to “be calm.” They simply bring their own calmness to the situation.

The overfunctioning/under-functioning cycle is triggered when leaders become overly anxious to see something done because they feel solely responsible for the ownership of the organization. The more the leader over functions, the less motivated the followers will be to display initiative. Delegate anxiety rather than responsibility by reducing over-functioning (Friedman, 1999). Far easier said than done, but this stance is critical to under-functioners taking their share of responsible ownership for

the welfare of the organization. The leader may have to trade the stress of being the “lonely person at the top” for the stress of waiting for others to take initiative and assume partnership status. Underfunctioners will take more responsibility and do their job only if and when they begin to feel anxious about it being done. The self-differentiating leader knows things may get worse before they get better. When someone differentiates in a system (e.g., reduces overfunctioning), the forces to put things back the way they were will intensify before they eventually subside. Differentiation will inevitably trigger sabotage from the least well differentiated. But the enlightened leader anticipates this systemic resistance and is emboldened with the stamina to persist and override the painful anxiety of self-doubt. The self-differentiating leader understands there is no way out of a chronically painful condition except by being willing to go through a temporarily more

acute painful phase.

When anxiety fills the ecosystem:

1. **Remain true to your core convictions**
2. **Remain true to your vision**
3. **Remain true to your plan**
4. **Remain decisive**
5. **Remain connected and present (relatable)**
6. **Remain persistent in the face of sabotage**

- Unhealthy emotional systems are marked by *reactivity*. A well-differentiated leader doesn’t react to other people’s reactions; he or she is a calm, steady presence.
- Unhealthy emotional systems are marked by a *herding instinct*. A well-differentiated leader has a strong sense of self and can effectively separate while remaining connected.
- Unhealthy emotional systems are marked by *blame displacement*. A well-differentiated leader takes responsibility for himself and leads others to do the same.
- Unhealthy emotional systems are marked by a *quick-fix mentality*; relief from pain is more important than lasting change. A well-differentiated leader realizes that true long-term change requires discomfort, and he or she is willing to lead others through discomfort toward change.
- Unhealthy emotional systems are marked by *poorly defined leadership*. A well-differentiated leader takes decisive stands at the risk of displeasing others.





The View From The Bridge

Valley Blessings

by Jackie Warner

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

When you are lost in the valley, seek the LIGHT! For those of us who have come out of the valley, make sure your light is shining bright for there is somebody lost in the valley trying to get home.

I have found myself in the valley more times than I would really want to admit, but I know I am not alone. It is something about those valley experiences. I think about the significance of being in the valley. Mentally, it is a place many times associated with difficulty, burden, weight, and isolation. In life, difficult but true, we must accept that the valley can be a blessing to aid our preparation for the next mountain we either choose or are required to climb. It is an opportunity to be still and present, to hear and understand where we are in our circumstances, reflect and pray for God's ordered steps, and allow ourselves to be conditioned and strengthened for what's up ahead. The concern comes when we are in the valley and stay too long! Sometimes we

miss out on the lessons in the valley experience and get stuck or lost without a path to climb the next mountain. I admit it is hard, but it is up to us to use the valley. **Yes, use your valley but don't waste it!**

Valley experiences make us stronger and fit to climb so we have a clearer vision to see where the rough sides of the mountain are as we are coming up.

Psalms 23 says, "Even

though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my

enemies. You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. Surely your goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever."

I am reminded of a song my niece loves to sing...

Let your light shine, shine, shine. Let your light shine, shine, shine. It may be somebody lost in the valley trying to get home...trying to get home. It might be me or it might be you. But you know there's somebody lost in the valley trying to get home...trying to get home

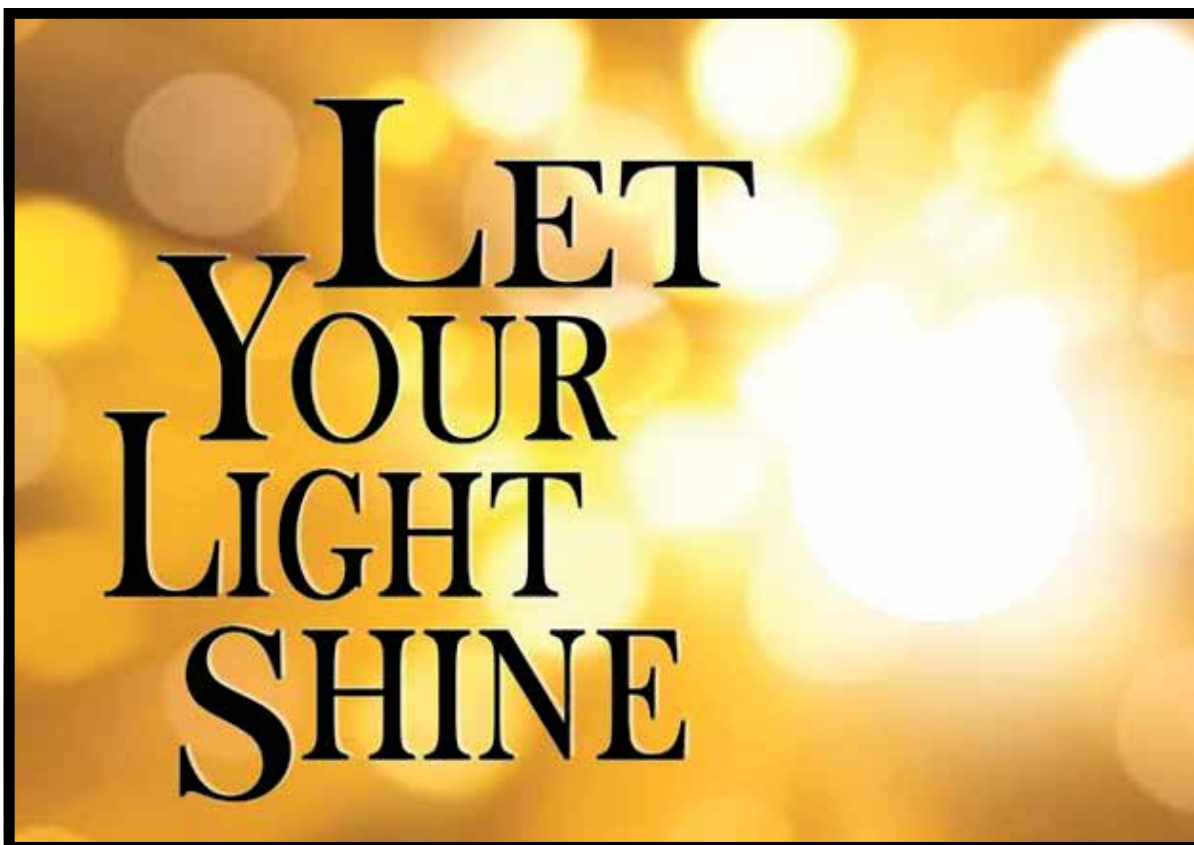
Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass." Psalms 37:3-5

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I'm Not Your Enemy!

by Deb Kitchenmaster

Walking into the barn, the early morning sunrise was shooting light beams through the alleyway, twenty stalls on the south, and an indoor arena on the north. The brilliance of the light beams permitted me to see silhouettes of the stalled horses but not definition. As I continued walking, midway (next to my grooming station), a stalled horse showed ears barred back to the alignment of its neck. "Wow," I thought to myself, "if that horse could talk, does it ever have a story to tell!"

Horses don't manifest this attitude because they woke up on the wrong side of the stall, if you know what I mean, Vern. (I realize not everyone is going to get this). I was greeted by the barn manager explaining how an out-of-state horse had arrived late last night and no one but she was to handle this horse because this horse had 'issues.'

I went about my day, working with the horse trainer and the barn manager. I had a horse in crossties when BAM! The bay Morgan gelding, with barred ears and

jaw set like stone, hit the bars of its stall with 'attack-human' energy all around him. Instinctively, I stepped back. Returning to grooming and tacking up the horse I was with, I turned my back on BB (initials for his name). I wanted to have a meaningful connection with this beautiful creature but I knew in my 'knower' it would be a narrow margin in which to work. I had no intention (horses are extremely aware of INTENTION) to tease or taunt this horse, but to connect. A strategy came to mind.

I continued my day grooming and tacking up horses as was stated on the white board. From time to time, I would turn and stand in front of BB's stall and say, "I'm not your enemy." Then I turn back around and continue with the horse in front of me in crossties. The very next day the barn manager states, "Someone is happy to see you this morning!" Sure enough, BB's ears were forward and his countenance transformed from the previous day. My life lesson in this moment came to me about the POWER of our tongues and the words that we speak. Talk about an "Aha" moment, I had one.

Within forty-eight hours I was asked if I would groom him. "Sure." He enjoyed my touch so much it brought laughter to the barn manager. Time and money are two

factors that don't work in favor of recovering a horse's soul. Sadly, thirty days was the allotted time to have this horse in the barn under our care. It simply was not enough. When being with a horse you are called into 'the moment.' It is when time and money are controlling the connecting process, there's great demand on the human and the horse rather than supply -- two extremely different energy fields! I understand these two factors; I'm simply focusing on the well-being of the horse.

Thursday, July 29, after reading July's article, I was invited to a book signing event for author Nell Parsons. What a lovely time, woman, and story! She wrote her first book, *THE BIG BAY HORSE DOESN'T LIVE HERE ANYMORE* (it's on Amazon) at eighty-five. She signs my book at eighty-seven. Nell got her first horse in her late fifties. Marlon was the name of her horse. A woman from Marlon's barn was watching ringside as

Nell was contemplating buying and taking this one home with her. She tried to warn Nell that Marlon had severe problems and was angry at the world. "I never knew he had ears; he kept them flat back all the time," Nell shared in her book. "Looking back, I see this wasn't a good sign, but I was so thrilled to be taking this gorgeous horse home with me, I didn't care."

What a journey Nell and Marlon took together! The timeless healing of Marlon's soul and the life lessons Nell encountered, transforming her from the inside out. All in all Marlon became Nell's buddy, her baby, and her friend.

Looking for a good book? Try *THE BIG BAY HORSE DOESN'T LIVE HERE ANYMORE* by Nell Parsons.

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Anxious Personality Disorders

by Lisa Philippart,
Licensed Professional Counselor

being “found out,” rejected, ridiculed, or shamed by others. A paradox often exists between avoiding relationships, friendships, and intimacy because you fear rejection, yet because of this, feeling lonely and isolated, even inferior to others. Often those with avoidant personality disorder are reluctant to try new activities for fear of embarrassment. So, you may be asking, what is the difference between generalized anxiety disorder (GAD) and avoidant personality disorder? The main difference is that people with GAD often know their fears are irrational, while people with avoidant personality disorder believe that they are inferior to others, and therefore rejection and humiliation are not only inevitable but deserved.

It is natural to need other people to care for us or give us reassurance sometimes. A healthy balance involves being able to both depend on others as well as being independent from others at times. However, if feelings and thoughts about needing others becomes so overwhelming that they impact your daily life and relationships, you may fit the criteria for **Dependent Personality Disorder (DPD.)** With this PD you may believe/feel needy, “weak,” and unable to make decisions

or function day to day without help or support from others. You may allow or require others to assume responsibility for many areas of your life. Sometimes you agree to things you feel are wrong or you dislike, to avoid being alone or losing someone’s support. Because you are afraid of being left to fend for yourself, you often have low self-confidence, seeing others as being much more capable than you are. Those with DPD often feel helpless, submissive, and have trouble making decisions.

Obsessive Compulsive Personality Disorder (OCPD) is separate from obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD,) which describes a form of behavior rather than a type of personality. The symptoms of OCD tend to fluctuate in association with the underlying

level of anxiety. OCPD, as a personality disorder, is defined by inflexibility...the behaviors tend to be persistent and unchanging over the long term. However, both OCPD and OCD involve problems with perfectionism, the need for control, and significant difficulty being flexible in how you think about things. With OCPD you may need to keep everything in order and under your control. You set unrealistically high standards for yourself and others, to the point that yours is the best and only way of

doing things. You most likely worry about you or others making mistakes, feeling anxious if things aren’t “perfect.” Often those with OCPD present with strict adherence to rules in a rigid way, acting restrained or restricted in their emotions.

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

“Today I escaped anxiety. Or no, I discarded it because it was within me, in my own perceptions—not outside.”

- Marcus Aurelius

Note: Please do not use this information to self-diagnose.

Consult a professional.

This is the last article in my series on Personality Disorders (PD). We have already discussed the categories of Suspicious and Emotional and Impulsive Personality Disorders. Here we will look at the Anxious Personality Disorder category, which includes Avoidant, Dependent, and Obsessive-compulsive Personality Disorder (OCPD.)

We all have things, places, or people we don’t like, or which make us anxious. But if these things cause so much anxiety that you struggle to maintain relationships in your life, you may fit the criteria for **Avoidant Personality Disorder** (sometimes called Anxious Personality Disorder.) With this type of PD, you may choose to avoid work or social activities that require you to be with others. You may expect disapproval and/or criticism and be very sensitive to it. You may worry constantly about



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
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The Alternative Approach

Reap What You Sow

by Lana E. Woody



If you look at beginnings, as far as things growing, one thing is for sure, they start as a seed. A seed is the tiny threshold of what is to come. A thought is very similar to a seed, metaphorically speaking. This is where faith the size of a mustard seed stems from. From such a tiny, humble start, massive and elaborate masterpieces can grow. What are you growing?

Are your thoughts, from which your life was created, from good ones. *Do you have the freedom to choose whatever you choose to worship?* Are you bearing good fruit? Not to be cliché and quote from the Bible, but it clearly states if a limb is not bearing good fruit, prune it off. When is the last time you purged or pruned rotten fruit so fresh fruit can ripen? Our ghosts in the attic or the cobwebs in the corner of our minds could be stopping us from having healthy thoughts and a healthy brain.

If you believe *thoughts become things*, then you know that you can rise up out of your environment. Instead of becoming a product of your environment, you become the strength of the lessons your environment provides. Much of this is independent of positive influence or impact.

Dr. Masaru Emoto did an experiment, using water crystals being prayed over or being exposed to classical music as opposed to heavy metal music and hateful thoughts. The positive influence of these frequencies is very apparent in these examples as the crystals are pristine where prayer and positive affirmations were used, as opposed to malformed and deconstructed where negative thoughts were present. Yet a lot of experience is internal, and that is why positive affirmations need to be internalized. When you can change your internal conversation while picturing more positive outcomes, then the situation and your internal view of yourself can create healthier results. In the movies, they call it diverging, in real life you could call it being versatile.

Not allowing or even entertaining other negative viewpoints lessens the possibility of them becoming a disturbing element. Changing the subject, and choosing to view the encounter differently allows for the same situation to have a positive outcome rather than a negative one. How is that possible, you ask? Because, one situation not deviated from produces different outcomes, depending on how the problem is handled. The ball is in our court, every interac-



tion is an opportunity to rise up, be happy, and experience joy, or you can experience the later.

Always think of the vibe, the feel, the energy of the moment, the person, or the place. Put your energy toward beneficial, empowering, motivating things and you will naturally be blessed. Pick supplements that heal you on a cellular level rather than synthetic drugs that keep you dependent and you will be infinitely blessed. Find an alternative solution to a problem that could be solved, from a cold and negative standpoint, and solve it from a non-traditional perspective.

Taking the right supplements is so important, but always remember to keep the end result in mind. Take an approach that allows for the right mind-

set, the right herbs and natural medicines, and exercise that is building your physical body and improving your overall appearance, health, and attitude. Who wouldn't want to feel better?

If you do not feel good about a situation, then ask yourself what you can do to change that. What steps can you take to set yourself on the right journey, to feel better, to have more confidence? Be an active participant in your life, stand up for yourself and your right to be healthy -- physically, mentally, and spiritually. To the fullest, above all other experiences, pick the experience that is of the highest frequency, and that feels the best spiritually. Transcend away from the need to feel painful victimizing experiences and grab onto the trolley strap,

and go with the natural flow which is to keep going and growing toward worthwhile goals. It is unnatural to stop, when in pain, and watch as others live their lives happily.

The best way to accomplish your goals in life is to believe that you can; when you fall, get back up and learn from the failure. Fail your way to success, learning from adversity and adjusting your strategy and approach accordingly. Find new and beneficial ways to heal your aches and pains, stay positive, stay grounded, gravitate towards like mindedness, and stay open to better ways to accomplish your tasks. Always give back in prayer, thanks, and meditation for all the blessings the Lord is so gracious to bestow upon you!

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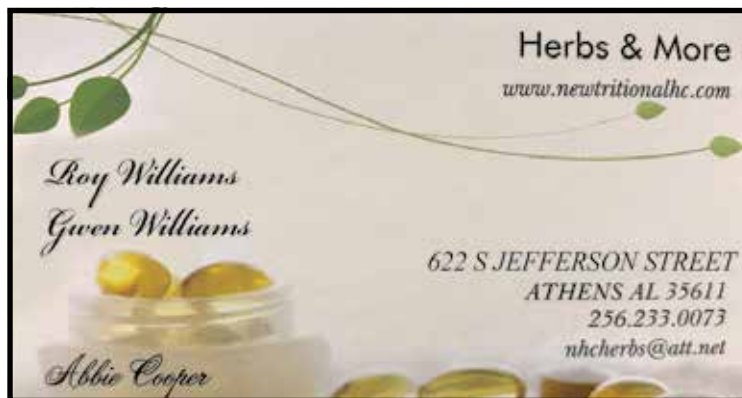
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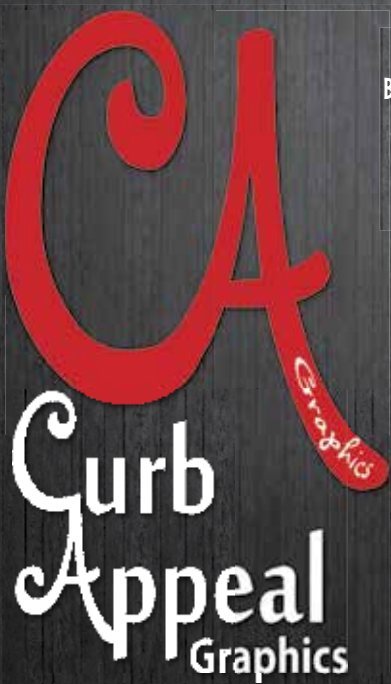
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While You Were Quarantined...

by Mae Lewis

2020 was not a good year for many people, but it was worse for the homeless. As of February 2021, it is estimated that more than 1 in 500 Americans are homeless. That is a low estimate of 650,000 homeless adults in the United States.

Since 2019, the death rates among the homeless in Los Angeles increased by 60%. New York city had a 52% increase in deaths, and Washington DC had a 54% increase. Many of these deaths are the result of pandemic health measures: public restrooms were closed in major cities, directly impacting the health and sanitation needs of thousands of homeless.

More people are living in their cars in 2021 than ever before. Vehicular homelessness was already being called an “unprecedented crisis” in 2019, and there has been at least a 10% increase since then. At the same time, there has been a 143% increase in vehicle residency bans, making it illegal to live in your car. In fact, one of the most horrible things to come out of 2020 is the number of cities that have made it illegal to be homeless.

Yes, it is illegal to be homeless in most cities, even though most cities don’t have enough shelter beds to accommodate the homeless. In 2020, there were only about 300,000 shelter beds in the United States.

In 2015, the DOJ published a statement that laws that criminalize sleeping in public violate the Eighth amend-

ment prohibition against cruel and unusual punishment: “Sleeping is a life-sustaining activity—i.e., it must occur at some time in some place.” Therefore, “[i]f a person literally has nowhere else to go, then enforcement of the anti-camping ordinance against that person criminalizes her for being homeless.”

Despite that, cities continue to crack down on the homeless, and pass legislation that criminalizes Good Samaritans who help the homeless. A friend of mine recently asked me why more churches didn’t allow homeless to camp in their parking lots. Many cities have anti-camping ordinances which prevent churches from allowing homeless to camp on private property.

As if those numbers aren’t staggering enough, in February of 2020, the New York Post published an article claiming that 1.5 mil-

lion public school students were homeless at some point during the 2017-2018 school year. It was a 15% increase from the previous school year, and a 100% increase from the decade before. This was pre-Covid.

Social programming would have us believe that homelessness is the result of bad choices, and a lack of discipline. This simply isn’t the case. Homelessness occurs for many reasons, and in most cases, it is an unavoidable reality. A medical emergency, lack of transportation, or loss of a job will end a person’s housing situation faster than an addiction will. The Federal Reserve has stated that 59% of Americans are just one paycheck away from homelessness. Fifty-nine percent!

Many cities are trying to help by providing “tiny homes” to the homeless. While this may seem like a worthy endeavor (and in

some cases, it is), the sadness of this is that these are not the pinterest tiny homes that are architectural achievements of organized space. Rather, many of these endeavors are smaller than prison cells, and resemble dog-houses more than they do human living quarters. Many of you may know them better as “Hoovervilles.” Instead of housing the homeless, we are warehousing them.

Tiny houses don’t end homelessness, they sustain it, and they promote the idea that homeless people are subhuman. We must do better than ask our brothers and sisters to live in squalor. Many of these tiny homes are not even called “homes” – they are “transitional housing” arrangements until a permanent, affordable solution can be found. The problem here is that the final step is missing. There are no affordable housing options, and

nothing to transition to. Try to find an apartment in a major metropolitan city. The answer is the same everywhere: 60-90 days out.

The urgency of this situation cannot be stressed enough: people are dying in the streets, and we treat them like it is their fault. We must demand shifts in legislation that promote the ideas of human equality and dignity. We must “love our neighbor” as ourselves and provide true and permanent affordable homes. We must ask for more solutions for affordable housing, and reversals on legislature that bans or prevents Good Samaritans from assisting.

Above all, we must remember that human dignity is priceless, and every human you encounter is made in the image of God.



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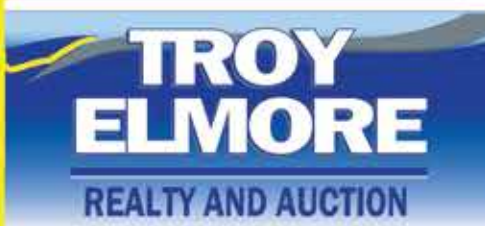
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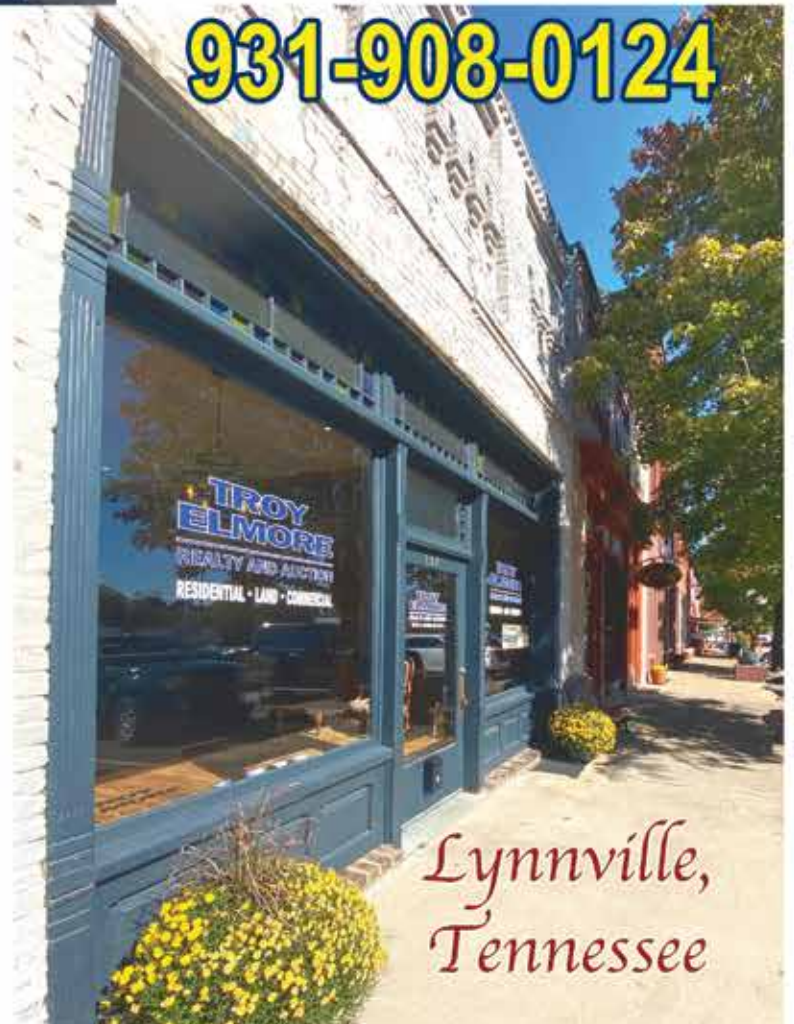
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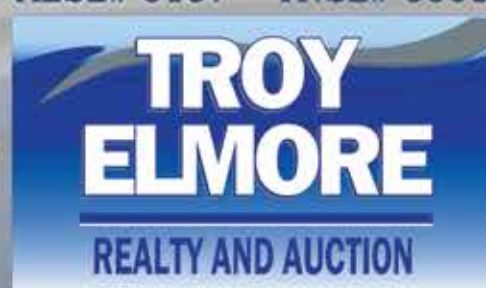
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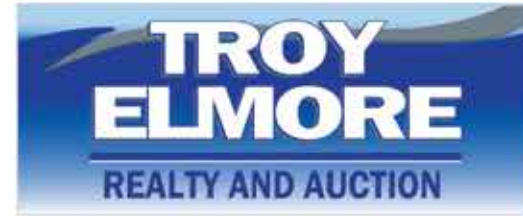
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ambition
is a bird
without wings.

~ Salvador Dali



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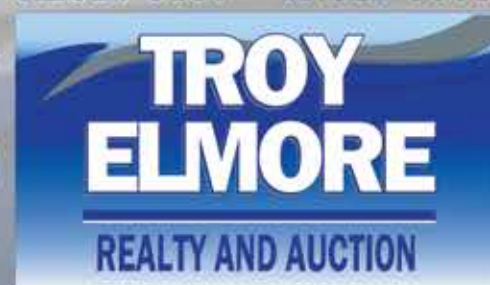
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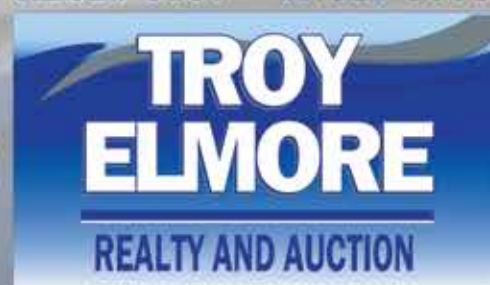
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