

August 16 - September 5, 2024

Athens Now

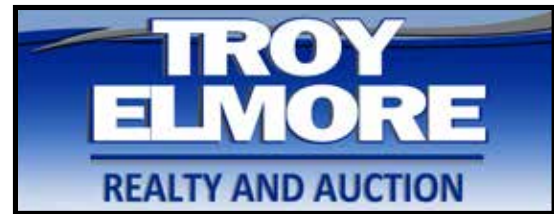
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Special Feature



Athens Athletics: "If It Can Be Decorated, We'll Decorate it!"...
Since June of 2003, Randy McKinney and his crew at Athens Athletics have been "decorating" all of Athens and Limestone County. ...
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Women's Resource Center To Host The "Pro-Life Doc" On September 12

By Ali Elizabeth Turner

Since November of 1987, the Women's Resource Center of Athens has worked tirelessly to provide life-affirming choices and support for families facing a crisis pregnancy. Each year

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What Makes Ronnie Roll

"Teamwork Makes The Dream Work"...
It had been a wonderful weekend, and the "Taking It To The Street" gospel event held outside of High Cotton Arts had caused about 100...
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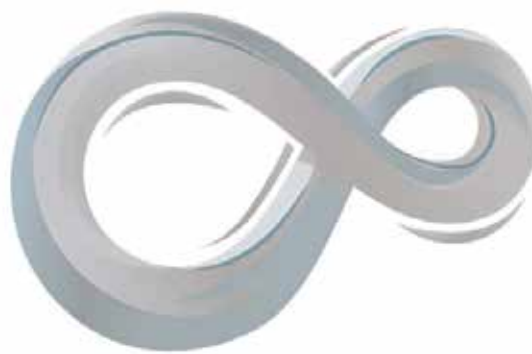


Clean, Green And Beautiful

Thank You...
"What separates privilege from entitlement is gratitude"— Brené Brown. This is such a fitting quote for Keep Athens-Limestone Beautiful...
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The SIMRP: An Advantage For Employers And Employees



THE SIMRP
INFINITE SAVINGS PLAN

By Ali Elizabeth Turner

Years ago, the concept that changing one's lifestyle and choosing to build health from "womb to tomb" made sound economic sense began to take root throughout our country. Few would argue the need to make progress in that regard here in

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Publisher's Point

Southern Hospitality-Saving And Healing

This past Tuesday at my Business Network International weekly meeting (which is held from 8 to 9:15 a.m. in the Veterans Museum), I heard a story that gave me chill bumps and made me have to swallow hard. Stephanie Reynolds, who works at the Limestone County Tourism office, gave a marvelous presentation on the role and impact of tourism in our county. The Tourism Office articles have been a part of *Athens Now* from the paper's inception in 2007, and we are utterly blessed to have Stephanie's articles show up in each edition.

In the 14 years that I have been involved with the paper, fall is the kick-off of festival season as it pertains to tourism, and so I was expect-

ing to hear about one of my favorite times of year in Athens-Limestone County. And, I was not disappointed—so many of the best parts of living in Athens-Limestone County are nearly upon us -- Fiddlers' Convention, the Storytelling Festival, Thanksgiving, Christmas. As Pammie Jimmar of the Chamber of Commerce likes to say, "It's when we turn into a Hallmark movie," and she is right.

However, as special as festival season is, that isn't what got me about Stephanie's presentation, as good as it was. It was the reminder that the power of simple kindness and what we think of when we talk about Southern hospitality can and has defeated literal death and preserved the

life of a weary stranger.

At one of the hotels in our area (and we have some lovely ones), a woman who was at her front desk position was doing what she always does—checking people in and out of the hotel. A man came up to her to begin the check-in process who happened to be from up north. Nothing about the situation seemed out of the ordinary. There was no "vibe," no sense of anything being off, and the woman was literally being her normal self -- kind, attentive, friendly, and helpful.

The woman let the guest know all of the amenities and perks he had coming to him as a guest of the hotel—the free breakfast and its hours, the use of the pool and the fitness center, and other features

of the facility. She chatted with him, showed professional interest in him, made sure he was comfortable, expressed welcome, and in a word, was "just doing her job."

Unbeknownst to the front desk clerk or anyone else in the hotel, the man had come to the place for the purpose of ending his life. He did not let on, of course, when he checked in, got his key and went up to his room. But the next morning he came down and told her, just as she was getting off the night shift what his plan had been. He let her know that the kindness that she showed him as a complete stranger made him decide to choose life and keep going.

Oh, my, has this story ever affected me and everyone to whom I have told it. The power of a kind word! Let us remember that "life and death are in the power of the tongue," and give thanks that the simplest expression of "Southern hospitality" foiled the enemy of a precious man's soul.

Ali Elizabeth Turner

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Army To Revive Writing... And Writers



by Ali Elizabeth Turner

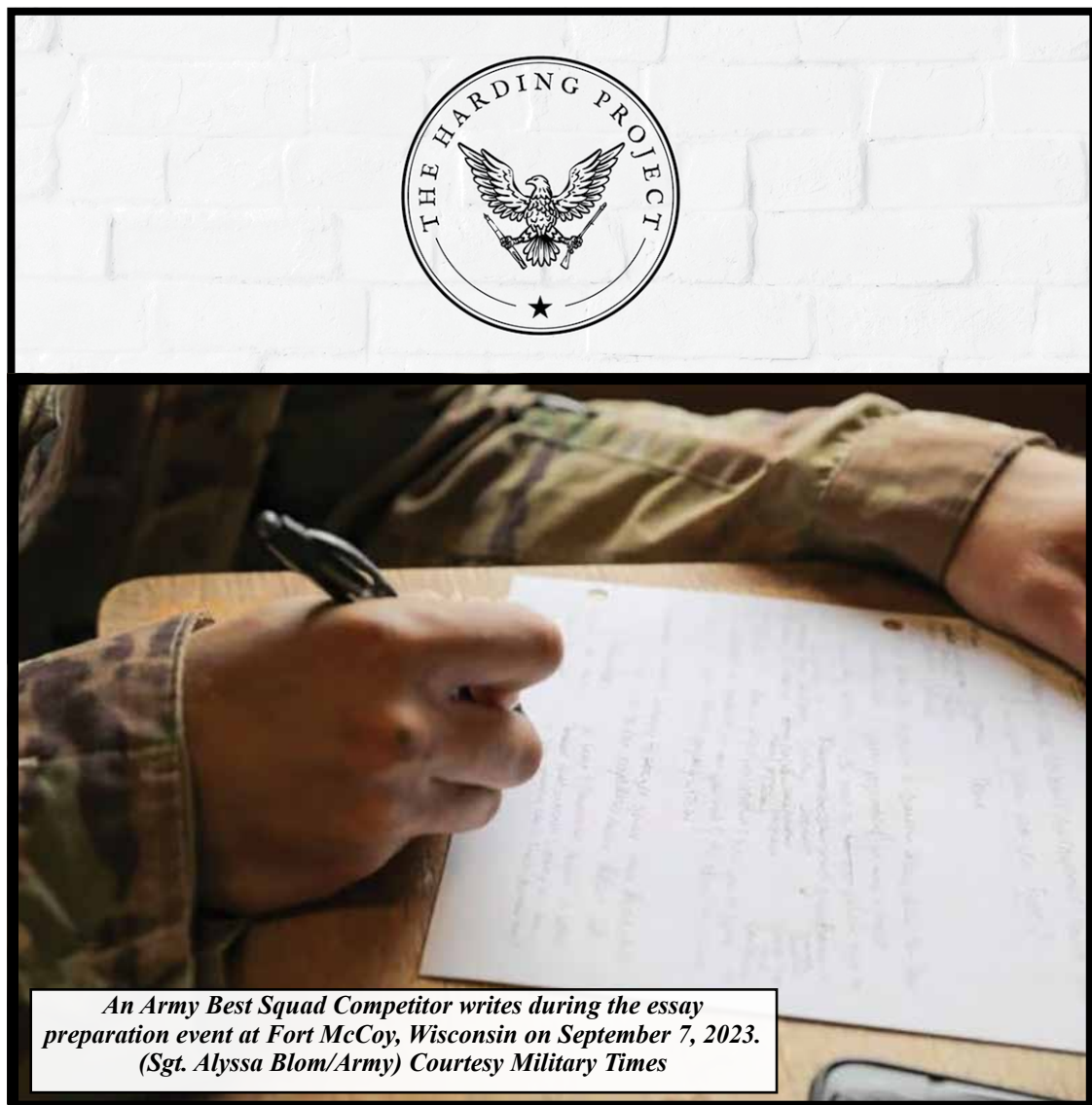
When I was in Iraq, 10 years ago, there was a soldier by the name of Eric who wrote for *Stars and Stripes*, the famous military paper that has been with us since 1918 and which is known affectionately simply as *Stripes*. Eric from time to time would play drums for our praise and worship band that sang their hearts out on Sundays in what had been Saddam Hussein's fishing lodge. He was a good guy, and though we have lost touch, I hope that somehow this article finds him and I can thank him for the inestimable and actually unsung service he provided us as a writer. There is an old saying that "the pen is mightier than the sword," and I have come to understand that in a whole new way, and so has the Army.

Looking back, I realize that at the time I didn't get the full value of the role that was played in-theater by people like the writers and the historians. They were interesting, to be sure, and though I have always loved history and had the chance to learn a lot of it in the three years I was in the Great Sandbox, writing as a career was nowhere on my list

of long-term goals. Now that I have been at it for a while, I have a greater appreciation for the role of writing and the kind of impact it can make, both on the writers themselves and their readers.

Stars and Stripes first was published for American soldiers in France right at the end of WWI, and was the brainchild of General John Pershing. The purpose, according to Pershing was to provide "uncensored news from soldiers for soldiers." Soldiers are the writers, soldiers are the readers.

All of the branches of service in the United States have their own papers, such as the *Army Times*, the *Navy Times*, etc., but it was a fellow by the name of Major Edwin Harding who in 1934 more than doubled the circulation of the infantry *Times* in the space of about four years. Major Harding was all about calling for debates, which was critical especially in the years running up to WWII. There has been a lot of criticism re: how unprepared we were for WWII, and I have to wonder if it would have been worse if it weren't for people like Harding?



An Army Best Squad Competitor writes during the essay preparation event at Fort McCoy, Wisconsin on September 7, 2023. (Sgt. Alyssa Blom/Army) Courtesy Military Times

In honor of Harding and in response to the decline of writing and thinking skills that have reached the military as a result of failing schools from which soldiers graduate, the Army has started what they are calling the Harding Project. According to *Military Times*, the Harding Project "is aimed at reinvest-

ing in professional military writing and fostering discussion and debate on a variety of military topics."

One of the driving forces behind the Harding Project is Lt. General Milford Beagle, who is quite open about how he was "pushed" to improve his own writing skills back in

the day when he was still a young officer and got accepted to the School of Advanced Military Studies. He had to write, and what he wrote had to make sense. *Military Times* said further, "Good writing is clear thinking, "and clear thinking is also disciplined thinking. How disciplined can you be to get your thinking on paper in a succinct and precise way for others to digest and understand what you're saying?" Excellent question, sir. And may the Harding Project serve to not only restore the skills of soldiers, but have an impact on our culture when the day comes that they are no longer in uniform.

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Athens Athletics: “If It Can Be Decorated, We’ll Decorate it!”

by Ali Elizabeth Turner

Since June of 2003, Randy McKinney and his crew at Athens Athletics have been “decorating” all of Athens and Limestone County. We are talkin’ everything from T-shirts to trophies, coffee mugs to caps. In a word, “If it can be decorated, we’ll decorate it!”

For the two decades previous to opening the shop, Randy worked at Steelcase, which was a solid, steady job for a young husband and father of three sons, including a set of twins. However, like so many folks, Randy had a desire to be his own boss and own his own business. He considered starting a construction firm, or a store that sold only sporting goods. He settled on what became somewhat of a hybrid—certainly there is a solid sporting goods inventory, however, the “bread and butter” of Athens Athletics has always been custom decorated shirts and hats.

A very smart move that Randy made that served them well especially during COVID was to become a rental site for U-Haul. It helped keep their doors open, and I can say from experience that we have used them on more than one occasion to help people in our life move into Alabama the Beautiful, and have always been given the best possible service. In addition, Randy has made shirts for *Athens Now* and

has made some dearly-loved custom caps for my husband, Steve, who is an over-the-road trucker.

When one walks into Athens Athletics, it is clear that a love for baseball is central to the life of the owner. There are old posters of Lou Gehrig and Babe Ruth, and over the years, the McKinney family has traveled to almost all of the major league baseball stadiums in America. Fenway Park and Wrigley Stadium are among Randy’s favorites, and he and his sons also love playing the game.

To learn the trade, Randy took two weeks of vacation and apprenticed at a store in Athens that no longer exists. Then, after putting in his notice, Athens Athletics opened up, and the real learning curve began. Randy laughs when he says that at the beginning, he kind of thought he would be able to have ESPN going all day long out on the main floor, and he would be able to catch most broadcasts. However, it soon became apparent that being a business owner would mean doing the lion’s share of the work for several years. He is quick to point out that he has a great crew that keeps the place hummin’, and now that his wife Beth has retired from her long career with Athens City Schools, she is helping with some of their new services. The Athens Athletics

crew includes Karen Owens, Brianna Smith, Jessica Samples and Mandy Marks. And, of course, Beth is “the best wife in the world!”

Beth spent years teaching math, STEM, IT, and more, and in 2017 Dr. McKinney became the principal of Cowart Elementary, now known as Spark Academy. She retired two years ago, and has been instrumental in helping Athens Athletics launch their online store, which also serves as a fundraiser for local schools and organizations. The McKinneys chuckle when they say, “Beth brought the store out of the dark ages.” Having an online store makes it possible for Athens Athletics to serve the community by streamlining the shopping experience in general, and will be expanding that service. As it pertains to a fundraiser, the way it works is that the organization decides how much they want to charge for the particular T-shirt, settles on the design, and after Athens Athletics covers their costs, whatever is left over goes to the group promoting the shirt. Randy is happy to have been able to recently write a check for \$1800 after a fundraiser closed that went free-and-clear to the organization that utilized the online store option. Athens Athletics compiled the order, did the legwork, produced the shirts, and also managed to promote the store in one fluid motion. “We do spirit wear for the whole county, and that means every school,” Randy said, and now that school has started back up, there will be a lot of that going out the doors of Athens Athletics.

Speaking of “fluid motion”, a major purchase was made



The Athens Athletics crew: (L-R) Randy McKinney - owner, Mandy Marks, Brianna Smith and Karen Owens



in the form of a new machine known as a DTF, or Direct to Film machine. It is faster, can produce one shirt to a thousand with equal ease, has the same high-quality result, and is a whole lot easier on the humans involved than with the traditional silk screen approach. It can also produce custom shirts with up to 16 colors per shirt, which makes for far more creative options than were possible before.

Athens Athletics still is totally involved in traditional screen printing, and in addition, they do sublimation, computerized embroidery,

engraving, wood carving, customizing cups, and more. If it can be decorated, they will decorate it! Stop by today and let them show you what they can do for you, your business, or your group.

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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 Saturday Workshop Fall Vegetable Gardening

August 17

10 am. At Limestone County Extension Office, 1109 W. Market St., Athens, AL. Presented by Limestone County Master Gardeners. Find out everything you ever wanted to know about growing a fall vegetables: timing, preparation, care, best fall plants, and planting steps. Taught by Master Gardeners Owen and Allyson Hofer

Summerfest 2024

August 24

5:30pm - 8:30pm. Eastside Steps of the Limestone County Courthouse, 150 S Marion St, Athens. Join us for our 3rd annual summer concert on the square in downtown Athens. Bring your lawn chair and friends to enjoy a night of bands while we raise money for a great local charity. This is a local benefit honoring our community. Food trucks will be on the square and all the local brick-and-mortar businesses will be open. Our 2024 beneficiary is The Stacy Wolfe Breast Cancer Foundation. Please check out their website or facebook to find out more information about their mission. <https://www.swbcfoundation.com/about> We look forward to raising money for a great cause. - with Stacy Wolfe Breast Cancer Foundation.

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.yesterdayevents.com

FB: www.facebook.com/YesterdayEventCenter

Adult Color and Coffee

August 23

9:00am - 12:00pm. Athens-Limestone Public Library, 603 S Jefferson St, Athens. Come join us as we drink coffee, color, and CHILL! (Every 4th Friday)

Coming Soon! Karaoke At The Disabled American Veterans (Dav) September 6

25396 Airport Road, Athens, AL. Every first Friday of the month beginning on September 6. 7pm - 11pm. \$5 cover charge to help support our DAV Veterans' Programs. Thousands of songs to choose from. Covering all genres. "No more paper song requests!" Song requests are made by using your iPhone or kiosk. Food & beverages will be available for purchase provided by the DAV Auxiliary. So, give yourself a break from all the stress and anxiety of the day and join us for an evening of entertainment with music, singing and fun with friends and family all while supporting your local disabled american veterans.

Celebration of Constitution Day September 17

The John Wade Keyes Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) and Athens State University (ASU) will hold its annual Celebration of Constitution Day at 1 p.m. on Tuesday, September 17 in McCandless Hall of the University at 300 North Beaty Street in Athens. The guest speaker will be Colonel Phil Williams, a 30-year veteran of the War on Terror, serving tours in both Afghanistan and Iraq and a recipient of two Bronze Star medals among others. The Athens High School Chorus will also be performing along with the Sons of the American Revolution posting colors and a local bagpiper. The event is free to the public and the University will be providing a free hot dog lunch at 12 noon at Cafe 1822 located in the Sandridge Student Center on the east side of McCandless. For info call Pam Porterfield at 205-789-2294.

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.

Back To School -A New Perspective

by Carissa Lovvorn



It is that time of year again! Time for blank sheets of paper, nametags, colorful binders, sharpened pencils, and new outfits. I hope that everyone has had a wonderful start to the new school year. I loved seeing the back-to-school pictures and well wishes for all the children, teachers, and staff. I also thoroughly enjoyed reading the funny jokes about hard-to-wake kids, car lines, and first-day blunders. Let's just say, I laughed a lot and that I can completely relate.

As a mother, I confess that I tend to have many racing thoughts when my two girls start back to school. Will they behave and act like they were taught some sense by my husband and me? Will they get good grades and excel in their academic strengths? Will they make friends that will help them grow and develop their Christian faith? And unfortunately, due to the times we live in, will they be safe?

I used to panic over these questions and concerns, but the sendoff for this school year was a bit different. Painful life circumstances over the last fifteen months caused me to reflect on my convictions as a mother and as my children's defender. I now have a better perspective. God loves my children much more than I do.

In the book of Psalms, King David wrote about God's all-knowing care and guidance regard-



ing his (our) wellbeing. When it comes to my children, I know that God took the time to intricately form them in my womb. David wrote, "For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb" (Psalm 139:13 NIV). God also knew them before I did, with their days already planned. David continued, "Your eyes saw my unformed body; all the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be" (Psalm 139:16). And thankfully, God goes before them. "The Lord himself goes before you and will be with you..." (Deuteronomy 31:8).

I can also rest in the

knowledge that whatever happens in their lives will be used for the good of His kingdom as seen in this familiar verse in Romans, "And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to His purpose" (Romans 8:28).

Please do not misunderstand as this is not to say that I don't have worry moments. I am human and a mommy. I pray for my girls constantly. However, I now find myself resting more in the peace and knowledge that I gained over the past year. God goes before my children. He will never leave nor forsake them. I will not be anxious or dismayed. "Have

I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go" (Joshua 1:9).

I pray that everyone will have a wonderful, productive, and safe school year. Keep those funny posts coming!

*Many Blessings,
Carissa*

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What Makes Ronnie Roll

“Teamwork Makes The Dream Work”

by Ali Elizabeth Turner



It had been a wonderful weekend, and the “Taking It To The Street” gospel event held outside of High Cotton Arts had caused about 100 people to gather, fellowship, worship, hear the Word preached by John David Crowe, have “angels” (or people who sounded like angels) show up and sing, and close out with the Malones singing “Amazing Grace.” Mayor Ronnie made the following statement of gratitude: “We have the freedom in our country to have an event like this, and so many places don’t.” The street was closed, hearts were opened, and talking about it served as a perfect launch for our series on John Maxwell’s excellent book, *High Road Leadership*.

As we talked about John Maxwell’s contribution

to our country and our culture, I learned something. Did you know that the now common phrase, “Teamwork makes the dream work” is actually a “Maxwellism,” if we can call it that? John Maxwell coined the term in 2002, and wrote a book by the same title. I doubt that he ever expected that phrase to catch on so completely. After all, Mr. Maxwell has managed to write a mere 85 books in his long career as an expert on excellent leadership, and in this time when we are so fractured, Maxwell’s strategy based on experience shows that the power of excellent leadership can indeed work miracles.

“Leadership in the community is not just ‘the chairs,’” said Mayor Ronnie, and by that he



The first Taking It To The Street Gospel Concert: Beautiful night, beautiful voices, and beautiful message!

meant the titles we usually apply to leaders. Even if the only person we lead is ourselves, we have a responsibility to do it well,” he said. He went on to read to me some other Maxwell quotes, the most pertinent to our current discussion being that, “No leader can ever achieve anything great or long-lasting alone.” How true. The book goes on to say, “Leaders who practice high road leadership value all people, do the right things for the right reasons, take accountability for their actions, and place people above their own agenda.” We see precious little of that these days, unfortunately and being in leadership in the classic sense can be

quite lonely when there are those whose values absolutely do not include “doing the right things for the right reasons.”


Maxwell says further:


“As we look at the current state of leadership, if we think all these problems have been created by ‘the other side,’ we’re missing the point. If we want a better culture, a better country, and a better world, we need to look in the mirror and recognize our own contributions to the division we’re experiencing. We need to have a change of heart and mind in how we treat people. Instead of widening the chasm between us, we need to build bridges and move toward others while

looking for common ground. The way to do that is to become a leader who takes the high road. That is what this book is about.”

Though we are only going to talk about *High Road Leadership* for just a handful of “Ronnies,” we both know that the impact of the book is going to be powerful long after we finish it, and hope that people will catch the vision and get it for themselves. There is much to be done, and it is critical that it, in fact, gets done before it’s too late.

So, to that end we prayed, like we always do, and then it was time once again for Ronnie to roll.




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Free Speech: *Come And Take It*

by Phil Williams

The government of Great Britain is cracking down on its citizens. Not for crimes, but for thoughts and opinions. I question whether we are next in line for this biggest of big government pressure.

Despite being called “far right protests” by British media, the fact is that civil unrest centered on crimes and perceived injustices related to mass migration and cultural upheaval. British streets have been flooded with protestors and counter-protestors. British law enforcement has been stretched. Average citizens have had enough. Immigrants who demand amnesty and public services are stretching British resources. The British government has decided that words on social media are to blame.

A mere two years ago, Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas announced the creation of a DHS Disinformation Governance Board. Nothing scary there! There’s never a problem when government governs your thoughts! The ill-conceived “Disinformation Board” died a quick and public death, and rightfully so. Ostensibly DHS would have monitored communications, opinions, and reporting of domestic citizens and businesses right here in the United States. When did that become okay? Short answer: never. It is not the role of government to determine truth, assign opinions, and censor thought. It was only

the outcry of freedom-conscious conservatives that shut down DHS’s Orwellian effort before it got off the ground. Yet, even knowing they tried should give you pause.

But the increasingly socialistic government of Great Britain did just that. Recently rebranded as “the National Security Online Information Team,” what had started to fight COVID disinformation has morphed into an effort to redirect and prosecute thought that has alarming implications for the citizens of our greatest ally.

Add to the fray that the British government recently passed legislation making it a crime to post, repost, or host topics that it considers inciteful or designed to malign or cause unrest, and you begin to sense the foreboding hand of big brother. The benignly named Online Safety Act is still in the process of implementation but the liberal mayor of London (the same mayor who posts cameras to verify use of climate-friendly vehicles) is asking UK ministers to review the law “very, very quickly” in light of recent civil unrest.

But who decides? Who has the final say for this word to be okay, but that word not. The government apparently.

By their own admission, British law enforcement has begun “scouring social media” via “dedicated police officers” under their new mandate. Stephen Parkinson, Britain’s Director of Public Prosecutions, said, “Their job is to look for this

material and then follow up with identification, arrests, and so forth. So, it’s really, really serious. People might think they’re not doing anything harmful—they are, and the consequences will be visited upon them.”

But that wasn’t enough as Parkinson described further. They intend to hunt down people outside of their own borders who dare to post online in a manner not deemed fitting under British law. “We have liaison prosecutors around the globe, who’ve got local links with the local judiciary... We would certainly consider extradition if we are satisfied that an offense has been committed,” he said.

How about this: “come and take it.”

Extradition is not likely. The idea that an American citizen may post something on their social media in a manner otherwise protected under constitutionally protected speech in the U.S., be tried in absentia in England, and then extradited against their will to serve out a judicial punishment for crimes in that foreign land is out there on the margins of disbelief.

But the mere fact that he said it all should give all of free Western society a moment of collective pause.

Calls are already being made to condemn and indict Elon Musk for daring to speak into the situation on his own social media platform. Posting on X (formerly Twitter) Musk said, “Freedom of speech is the bedrock of democracy. If the truth is suppressed,

it is impossible to make an informed voting decision. The degree to which freedom of speech is being undermined around the world is extremely alarming.” In other posts, Musk has drawn the ire of British leaders by addressing their heavy handedness directly.

In a recent column, legal scholar and professor Jonathan Turley cited innumerable cases of seemingly benign speech resulting in the arrest of British citizens. Turley went on to say that too many liberal progressive leaders in the U.S. are working to bring this same measure of thought control to our own borders. He concluded by noting, “The effort of these politicians would allow free speech to be reduced to the lowest common denominator as countries export their anti-free speech laws.”

All of a sudden, George Orwell’s writings seem very prescient. This is nothing more than the “thought police” from Orwell’s classic novel 1984. The secret police of the dystopian superstate in Orwell’s writing had a charter to discover and punish thoughtcrime – those personal and political thoughts unapproved by the regime. Their methods were a mix of psychology and omnipresent surveillance. When the book was written in 1949, it sounded far-fetched.

Once again, reality is stranger than fiction, and sometimes fiction is based in reality.

I lived in Great Britain for three wonderful years. It was a lifechanging time in

my personal life. The British people are the salt of the earth. They may call soccer football, and drink their tea hot, but they are much like us. Freedom minded, independent, courageous, and capable. Great Britain is our greatest ally, and we cannot be without their presence alongside us on the world stage.

But the government is NOT well suited to set itself up as the arbiter of truth. When those who govern believe they can regulate thought, well... that is where truth goes to die and freedom of speech becomes a dusty memory.

Speech is our right. Come and take it.

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



Slinkard On Success

Get The Proper Support

by D. A. Slinkard

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



What kind of support system do you have? What kind of people do you have to lift you up when it feels the weight of the world is against you? If you cannot answer these questions, then why are you trying to go at life alone? Life is all about having the right support system. Take your house, for instance, in which the wrong support system leaves you living in a home with a weak foundation. The storm comes and then you see how well you can pray! Yes, I said pray.

We live in a world that is afraid of offending someone, and we have backed ourselves into our little Christian corner with no way out, as we are surrounded in a world of sin. It amazes me how quickly our society has changed, even in my lifetime, and I think about the Good Book and the Scripture of Hebrew 13:8 which states, "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today, and forever." If it was an abomination to God 2,000 years ago, then according to Hebrews 13:8, it's an abomination today!

I write all of that to come full circle to the support system. The first part of that support system begins with having God in your life and the relationship you build with the man upstairs. In the past, I have written about having the right priorities, and how it is imperative to make

sure you have the right people surrounding you. The business books I read tend to suggest that if you want to know the character of a person, just look at the five main people they hang out with.

I'm just going to say that these books haven't been wrong, as they have been pretty accurate when it comes to depicting the character of an individual. I'm writing this to suggest that either you need to reconsider who surrounds you, or you need to get some people to surround yourself with. I've been surprised at the number of people who try to go at life alone without seeking out the guidance of others.

For myself, my support system starts with God and then it goes to my wife. I can tell you that if

I am in the doghouse, then my demeanor changes, and before anyone gets any ideas, I am not blaming my wife. I take full responsibility for the idiotic words that spew out of my mouth. Folks, I get in the doghouse because I deserve to be in the doghouse. Once I get out of the penalty box, and I'm back in the good grace of my wife, my demeanor once again changes.

What I'm saying is that if you are not lifting each other up, then truly you're just tearing each other apart. Make your spouse a part of your support system because they play more of an instrumental part in your success than you realize. Besides, if you are not lifting your spouse, then you have a weak foundation. Maybe this is why 50% of all

marriages now end in divorce.

The next portion of my support system would be CW Kennedy, a local pastor with whom I have built a friendship over the last seven years. I can bounce ideas off of him because he understands the daily obstacles that pop up in life. The next person who is a part of your support system needs to be someone you can be able to connect with and talk about life. This person can be either a mentor or a friend, and when I say mentor/friend, let me clarify this. Your support system needs to be with members of the same sex because mixing the two sexes on this type of support system tends to hurt the support system with your spouse. Ladies and gentlemen, just don't

do it.

The next portion of my support system comes down to my neighbor Billy Taylor and my father-in-law, Denny Urhahn. They have seen the sunrise and sunset more than me, and they have something that I have not yet gathered. They have life experiences that I don't have because they have lived longer, and we can all learn from those older than us. We need to humble ourselves to make ourselves ready to learn, ready to use a support system.

I challenge you to either reignite your support system or start up one and see how it changes your life. Remember, you're only as good as the five closest people surrounding you!





Clean, Green And Beautiful

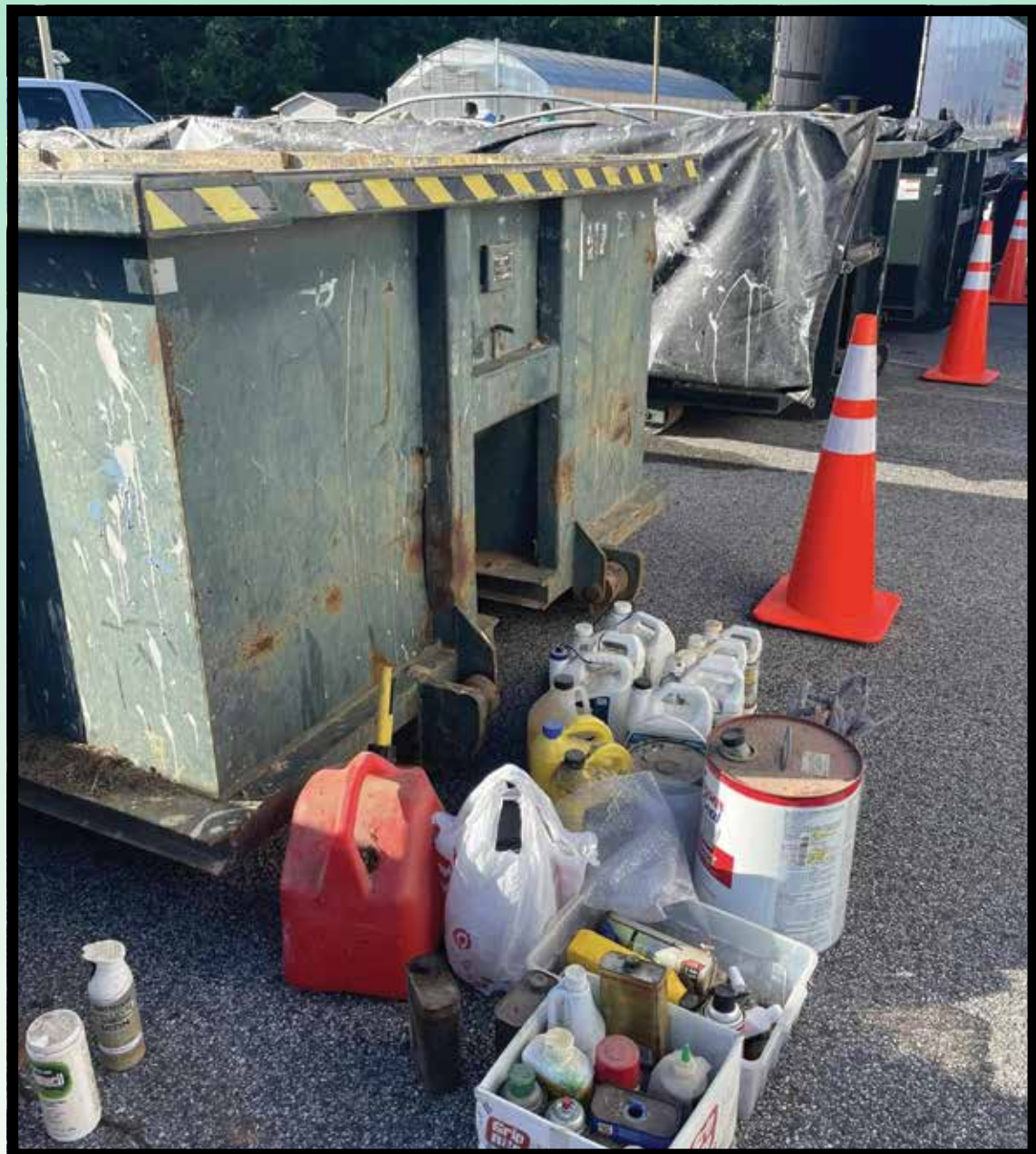
Thank You

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

“What separates privilege from entitlement is gratitude”– Brené Brown. This is such a fitting quote for Keep Athens-Limestone Beautiful. We are a non-profit organization that relies on the support from Limestone County, the City of Athens, local businesses, and our amazing community who all donate time, labor, and funding. A simple “thank you” will never be sufficient. Our goal is to make Athens and all of Limestone County a better place for everyone -- the work we do has a positive effect on all residents and visitors.

On August 9, Keep Athens-Limestone Beautiful held an Appreciation Breakfast for the City of Athens officials, the Limestone County Commissioners, and business sponsors that have been unwavering sources of support for us over the past year. Because of them, we are not only able to function as an organization and host litter cleanups throughout the county, but we have been able to have our Earth Day Expo, Household Hazardous Waste Collection, and the Wacky Quacky Ducky Derby.

Why are these events so important? Well, the Earth Day Expo is an event that is FREE to the entire community. We provide educational shows such as Steve Trash, Rockin’ Eco Hero; the Soap Bubble Circus; and Rise Raptors for children (and let’s be honest, adults too!). We also have crafts that are free to make. Other exhibits such



as a petting zoo, Master Gardener tips, and the Athens State University Biology Department provide a fun educational experience for everyone. There are so many people in Limestone County that look forward to this event every year. All the credit for the Earth Day Expo goes to the fantastic support from Limestone County businesses and Athens State University.

The Household Hazardous Waste Collection is another event that Limestone Coun-

ty residents look for every year. Because of the Limestone County Commission, we are able to host this drive-thru service FREE of charge for our county. This collection allows for the recycling of and proper disposal of so many harmful chemicals, and we hope that one day we will be able to host them more often. All of this is possible because of the amazing support we received from the Limestone County Commissioners.

The Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) is another major supporter of Keep Athens-Limestone Beautiful. Without TVA, the outcomes of our river cleanups

would not be as grand as they have been. Just this past spring, TVA sponsored the Trash Attack Tennessee River Cleanup and the Joann Christopher Memorial Elk River Cleanup. District 3 Commissioner Derrick Gatlin and several members of his crew worked right there with us to get all the trash picked up and hauled off before it was strown about again at the Tennessee River Cleanup, and District 4 Commissioner LaDon Townsend and his crew did the same at the Elk River. This kind of support is what makes the work we do not only possible, but successful.

Although we know that “Thank you” isn’t enough, we want everyone who has supported Keep Athens-Limestone Beautiful over the years to know that we are ever so grateful for you. And for the businesses that have offered sponsorship for our events, we want you to know that you are the reason we can do the wonderful things we do for all of Limestone County. Our volunteers are the heart of this organization, and we will never be able to thank you enough!



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www.KALBCares.com



Cooking with Anna

Bear Hugging A Potbelly Stove

by Anna Hamilton

Sunday morning, our preacher told the story of a bear. A group of hunters were staying in a cabin in the woods. When they left out to hunt for the day, they left a fire burning in the potbelly stove in the cabin. Shortly after the hunters left, a bear broke into the cabin. The bear saw the glowing fire coming from the stove and immediately thought it was a predator and attacked the stove. It wrapped its arms around the stove and was burned badly, but the bear did not let go. The bear thought the stove was fighting back, so he

held on tighter and tighter, until it there was no way the bear would ever recover. The bear was unable to recognize that the stove was actually hurting him. He didn't realize that if he'd just let go, he would be okay.

This little story made me take a hard look at my potbelly stoves. What am I holding on to that continues to hurt me though I am too stubborn to let go? The safety of the things that hurt me is sometimes easier to process than letting go for the unknown. As

continued on page 23

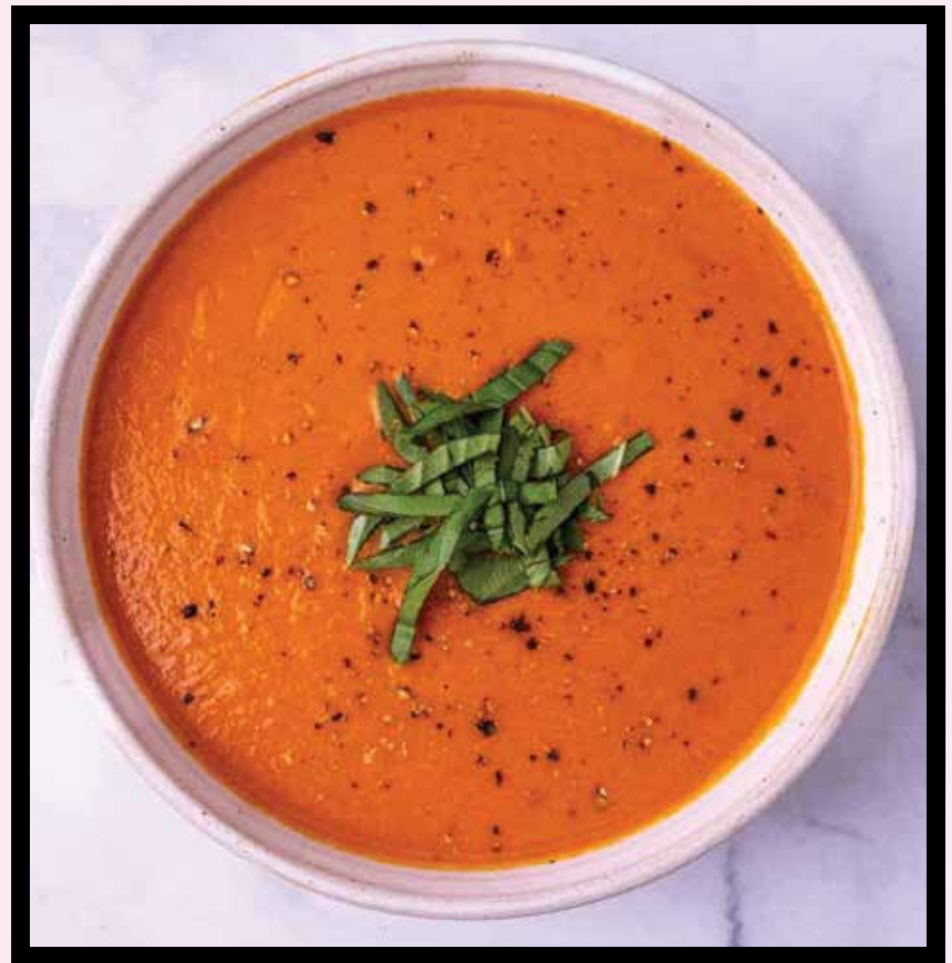
Tomato Bisque

Ingredients:

- ½ onion, chopped*
- 1 Tbsp. garlic, minced*
- 1 Tbsp. olive oil*
- 1 (28 oz.) can whole, peeled tomatoes*
- ½ tsp paprika*
- 3 cups low sodium chicken broth*
- 1 ¼ cup heavy cream, or milk, or half-and-half*
- Salt and pepper to taste*
- Optional toppings:*
 - Fresh basil, chopped*
 - Shaved Parmesan*

Directions:

In a large stock pot, add oil, onions, and garlic. Sauté for 10 minutes or until tender. Stir in tomatoes, paprika, broth, salt and pepper, and cream. Bring to a boil and then reduce heat to a simmer for 45 minutes.



Cool for 10 minutes. Puree soup using a blender or immersion blender to your desired smoothness.

Sprinkle each serving with your topping of choice.

The First Step In Health And Wellness: *Why CrossFit Is The Best Place To Start*

by Nick Niedzwiecki - Owner, CrossFit Athens

Embarking on a health and wellness journey can feel overwhelming. With a myriad of fitness options available, choosing the right one can be a daunting task. However, one of the best places to start is CrossFit—a dynamic and inclusive fitness regimen that offers a structured yet flexible approach to health and wellness. Here’s why CrossFit stands out as the ideal starting point.

1. Community Support: A Key to Consistency

One of the most challenging aspects of beginning a new fitness journey is maintaining consistency. CrossFit thrives on a strong sense of community that can make all

the difference in sticking with your routine. Unlike traditional gyms where you might feel isolated, CrossFit boxes (gyms) foster an environment where everyone knows your name and encourages you to push through challenges. This camaraderie can be incredibly motivating, especially when you're just starting out. The support from both coaches and fellow members creates a sense of accountability and belonging, which can be crucial for long-term success.

2. Scalability: Tailored Workouts for All Levels

CrossFit’s scalability makes it accessible to people of all fitness lev-

els. Whether you're a beginner or a seasoned athlete, CrossFit workouts (often called Workouts of the Day, or WODs) can be modified to suit your current abilities. This means that even if you’ve never lifted a weight or performed a burpee before, you can participate in CrossFit. Coaches are trained to help you scale the intensity, weights, and movements to match your fitness level while still challenging you to improve. This adaptability ensures that you can safely and effectively build strength, endurance, and confidence from day one.

3. Comprehensive Fitness: A Holistic Approach

proach

CrossFit isn’t just about lifting weights or running; it’s a well-rounded program that combines elements of cardio, strength training, gymnastics, and flexibility. This comprehensive approach ensures that you develop a balanced fitness foundation. The variety of exercises keeps workouts exciting and prevents the monotony that can sometimes make other fitness routines feel like a chore. Additionally, CrossFit emphasizes functional movements—those that mimic real-life activities—helping you improve your overall physical abilities in a way that’s practical and applicable to everyday life.

4. Education and Coaching: Learning the Right Way

Starting a fitness journey can be intimidating, especially if you're unsure about proper form or technique. CrossFit boxes provide expert coaching that emphasizes education and safety. Coaches guide you through each movement, offering personalized feedback to ensure you’re performing exercises correctly. This hands-on instruction helps prevent injury and builds a strong foundation of knowledge that you can carry with you as you progress. The skills and techniques you learn in CrossFit can be applied to oth-

er areas of fitness and health, making it a valuable educational experience.

5. Goal-Oriented Progress: Measuring Improvement

One of the most rewarding aspects of CrossFit is the ability to track and measure your progress. The structure of CrossFit workouts allows you to see tangible improvements in your performance over time. Whether it’s lifting heavier weights, completing workouts faster, or mastering new skills, CrossFit offers endless opportunities for personal achievement. This focus on measurable goals helps keep you motivated and engaged, as you can clearly see the results of your hard work.

Conclusion

Taking the first step towards health and wellness is often the hardest part of the journey. CrossFit offers an ideal starting point by providing a supportive community, scalable workouts, a comprehensive fitness approach, expert coaching, and a focus on measurable progress. Whether you’re looking to improve your physical fitness, boost your mental well-being, or simply find a routine that you enjoy, CrossFit has the tools and environment to help you succeed. So why wait? Take the first step and discover the transformative power of CrossFit.



Women's Resource Center To Host The "Pro-Life Doc" On September 12

by Ali Elizabeth Turner

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they have a fundraising banquet to make it possible to protect the lives of as many women and preborn babies as they can, and this year the WRC is pleased to announce that their honored guest and keynote speaker will be Dr. William Lile, also known as the "ProLife Doc."

On Thursday, September 12, from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. at the Alabama Veterans Museum, a marvelous and memorable gathering will take place whose purpose is to celebrate life, and to remind people, as Dr. Lile says so often, that "a patient is a person, no matter how small." The theme this year is "Abundant Life," and the Scripture for this year is John 10:10, "I am come that they might have life and have it more abundantly."

The Women's Resource Center's 2024 goal is to raise \$60,000 for operational expenses that include extending their hours of service, having an evening where the center is open for those whose work schedule makes it impossible to come during the day, and expanding their educational focus for young parents to increase their success in parenting skills.

The following is a brief bio of Dr. Lile, and the Women's Resource Center is hoping you will reserve your spot soon to come hear him speak. He is considered a powerful motivational speaker, and we are blessed to have him as a guest in our fair town.

In 1999, Dr. William Lile, the "ProLife Doc," took over a practice that was the largest provider of abortion



services in Pensacola, Florida. On day one, he stopped any and all abortion services and abortion referrals. The clinic's former abortionist retired and left the country. Today, Dr. Lile uses that clinic's abortion equipment to demonstrate the brutality of abortions performed in all three trimesters, while the tools of modern obstetrics have become instruments for his pro-life ministry! That's because Dr. Lile believes that the life and personhood of the preborn can only be understood through love and empowered education.

Dr. Lile is board certified in obstetrics and gynecology and is the former OB/GYN Department Chair at Sacred Heart Hospital in Pensacola, FL. He is licensed to practice medicine in both Florida and Alabama and has served as an instructor with both The University of Florida and Florida State Medical School OB/GYN residency programs.

The ProLife Doc is passionate about providing quality healthcare to all of his patients – inside and outside of the womb. Abortion is never the right 'choice,' but Dr. Lile's message, though borrowed from Jesus Christ, is a clear one – forgiveness is available to all through His blood. (Ephesians Chapter 1)

Dr. Lile also has experience in saving the lives of babies whose mothers took the

"abortion pill," and now regret it. They now want to save the life of their baby if at all possible, and often it is. He says that in 70% percent of cases where the first abortion pill is taken, if an emergency introduction of progesterone occurs within 72 hours, the life of the baby can be saved. So far, Dr. Lile has successfully reversed over 1,000 abortions. In addition, he delivered more than 4,000 babies. Dr. Lile lectures all over the country and has developed curriculum to help educate those in pro-life ministries to be more successful in their endeavors.

Dr. Lile is adamant that the preborn have medical rights, and skillfully poses this thought-provoking question: If heart surgery can be performed on the preborn, if spina bifida can be corrected, and other medical procedures can save the lives of the tiniest and most vulnerable of patients, does that not indeed prove that they are persons?

His presentation is sure to strengthen those who believe that the life of the mother and her preborn baby must be protected, and equip them for success in that ministry. He draws from the arenas of medicine, philosophy, history, theology and life experience, and Athens

is blessed to have him come and teach us.

This event is free to attend, thanks to the following sponsors:

- Passionate Penny Pinchers
- Kerwin Edelman Electric LLC
- Matthew's Law
- Bank Independent
- Tradebank
- Journey Church
- Lindsay Lane Baptist Church
- Ken and Lisa Philippart
- Samuel Trotter
- Imprinting by Abigail
- Danny and Mary Kay Crawford
- Capshaw Baptist Church
- Ulises and Becky Somarriba

The meal will be catered by Phil Sandoval's, and reservations are required. To RSVP and secure your seat, please go to give.ministrylnq.com/App/Form/ea4b4bc6-f6ba-494e-8343-5095ac110951.

The Women's Resource Center hopes you will join them for a delicious meal and an unforgettable evening of inspiration.



Athen's Women's Resource Center
 INVITES YOU TO THEIR
 2024 FUNDRAISING BANQUET

Abundant Life

Thursday, September 12th, 2024
 6:30 PM - 8:30 PM

VETERAN'S MUSEUM
 100 PRYOR ST. WEST,
 ATHENS, AL

RESERVATIONS REQUIRED
Seating is Limited

Doors Open at 6:00PM
 Dinner Provided
 Dressy Casual

Guest Speaker
 Dr. William Lile
 THE PRO LIFE DOC

RSVP AT WRCATHENS.ORG/BANQUET

I am come that they might have life and that they might have it more abundantly.
 John 10:10 KW

Ruckin' And Rollin' Part 1

by Stephanie Reynolds, Athens-Limestone Tourism Association



Want an exercise that is fun, easy, great for your legs and core, and is as easy as a post-supper stroll? We got you covered!

Going along with our discussion of our amazing trails here in Athens-Limestone County, I wanted to talk about one of my favorite ways to enjoy them: Rucking.

Now, you can just walk the trail and that is perfectly fine. Walking a trail is excellent for your mental, physical, and emotional health. But if you want to get extra benefits without any noticeable extra work, try rucking.

What's rucking? It's the fancy term for carrying weight in a backpack while you walk. When I hit the trails, I'm rucking. Now, I love to run and I REALLY love to run trails (and treadmill, actually), but rucking is a whole different thing.

If you've never tried it, here are a few reasons why you should:

1. Easy cardio for beginners, *especially* those who can't run. If you're just starting your fitness journey, rucking is the way to go. If you can walk, you can walk with 5 or 10 pounds in a pack and get so much more bang for your buck. With a moderate weight, you won't notice the slight extra work your body is doing, but you'll see the results.

2. Great for bones. If you are like me (a person of a certain age, ahem) hip bone strength is on your mind. Carrying the backpack properly on your hips (not shoulders) is excellent resistance exercise to build bone density.

3. Great for core and balance. When you put weight on your back (again, riding on your hips, not your shoul-

ders), you're throwing your core a curve ball. It has to work just a little bit harder to remain stable and steady. That means your back and abs get a workout, so do your balancing muscles in your feet and legs. Speaking of legs...

4. Awesome for your legs. Just two weeks after I started rucking (many years ago), my daughter remarked how amazing my calves looked. 'Nough said.

5. Calorie burner. If you have a moderate amount of weight in your pack, you can burn hundreds of calories an hour without feeling winded and weary.

If you carry a decent sized purse or the occasional kid or grandkid, you probably have more of a foundation for rucking than you think. Women, especially, are used to carrying things on their hips. So you

might try it and see if you like it!

Here are a few safety tips for rucking (you know me and my safety tips):

1. Start with a very low weight if you are not used to exercise or carrying things. Just start with an extra bottle or two of water.

What is a good weight to aim for? Whatever YOU can comfortably carry over distance without feeling like you're losing your balance or hurting yourself. You know your own fitness level, back health, knee health. You do you.

2. Never EVER run with weight on your back. Never. Not even once. It's terrible for your knees. Plus, my military husband said, "In battle, if you actually need to run, you drop the pack." So you aren't wimping out by walking, that's what you're supposed to do. There is something called a "ruck shuffle" that is a slightly faster gait, but is still not even a jog.

3. Do NOT bend over, squat instead. Your legs are stronger than your back and you can make them even stronger. Every time you go out with your pack, just do a couple of little squats. It will be awesome for your legs AND help you learn balance under weight. This too is excellent, especially for we men and women who have passed the half-century mark. Balance, bone mass, and muscle

mass are critical for us. Rucking addresses all three.

4. We'll get into gear in more detail later, but when you first start out and are just carrying an extra bottle of water and your cell phone, you can use any backpack you find. Grab the old "Jansport" bag your kids don't use anymore and go.

However, when you start carrying heavier weight, you'll need a pack that has a padded waist strap so the weight rides on your hips. Again, we women have the advantage here, as the waist strap fits perfectly above our hips and suddenly it feels like we aren't carrying weight at all. When I lift up my pack, it seems so heavy and awkward. When I put it on, it feels nice like a weighted blanket (but not hot, just comfy).

5. Bug spray, sun screen, water, etc. You know the drill.

GoRuck (and other rucking organizations) have monthly challenges you can do to earn patches, such as "ruck to the nearest donut shop" (no, really!). They also have actually difficult challenges as well. A great beginner challenge is to ruck one mile every day for a month. That's usually pretty accessible for most, but if you are beginning, start with a half mile or even a tenth of a mile. Rucking actually builds pretty quickly. If you have any questions, let me know. See you on the trail!



The SIMRP: An Advantage For Employers And Employees

by Ali Elizabeth Turner

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Alabama the Beautiful. To that end, Legacy Heritage Capital, LLC was formed as a way to make it possible for employers to bless their employees with outstanding supplemental health care, and for employees to be able to keep more of their take home pay.

I spoke with the some of the LH Capital team, and encountered a high level of professionalism, an ability to educate, and a driving compassion to help people; all without leaving me feeling bewildered or patronized. In this article, I would like to pass that experience on to the readers of *Athens Now*, and my fond hope is that you will consider them if you are looking for benefits options, either as a business owner or an employee.

Legacy Heritage Capital is a company that helps businesses utilize what is known as a SIMRP, which is:

A well-structured SIMRP stands as a powerful tool for employers seeking to provide comprehensive benefits to their workfor-

ce while maintaining cost efficiency. A SIMRP is an ADA, ERISA, HIPAA, and IRS compliant employee benefit intended to create a tax and healthcare cost savings for employers and employees alike.

Congress understands that embracing wellness takes some of the strain off the healthcare system. The SIMRP empowers employers as well as employees to take control of their physical, emotional, and financial health, all without personal cost to themselves or their business.

The tax incentives are substantial for both employers and employees. Implementing the SIMRP allows for employers to save \$550 per year per employee on FICA costs, and employees an average of \$150/month toward supplemental benefits, including:

- Whole life with long-term care
- Chronic illness care
- Cancer care
- Disability

The Wellness program includes a 24/7 telehealth program available for the

whole family, with no co-pays. To strengthen the resolve to “take healthy back,” there is health coaching and weight loss coaching. Sometimes part of building wellness is emotional, and couples’ counseling is available in the privacy of one’s own home.

Stress reduction is a part of a robust wellness program, and these days in particular, financial counseling that is available as part of the benefits package can help reduce stress. There are tools for work-life balance and legal help available; again at no cost to the employer or the employee.



LEGACY HERITAGE CAPITAL

Another strain on our healthcare system is the fall-out that is the result of addiction and other mental/emotional health challenges. The National Institutes of Health state that

Mental health and substance abuse cost US businesses between \$80 and \$100 billion annually. Serious mental illness costs America up to \$193.2 billion in lost earnings per year. Depression is thought to count for up to 400 million lost work days annually.

The SIMRP Wellness program offers a virtual recovery program, and all programs are HIP-PA-compliant.

What if you get injured, either on or off the job and can’t work for a while? The available supplemental benefits can offer a plan that will pay 60% of the employee’s wage.

The supplemental program essentially comes alongside a major carrier like Blue Cross or Blue Shield, to fit seamlessly with existing benefits. LH Capital will craft a

plan that works for your people and you.

The people at LH Capital have carved out lives that show me that they genuinely care about people and want to help. One has been involved in foster care and adoption. Another is very involved in the youth group at his church. They have years of experience in the insurance industry, and are waiting to help you build a healthy life while keeping your bottom line healthy. To learn more about the SIMRP and LH Capital, visit www.thesimrp.com today and schedule a no-obligation appointment. I can say that they will assess your needs professionally, and then craft a wellness plan that will empower you to be your best.

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Learning As A Lifestyle

A Path To Personal And Leadership Growth

by Eric Betts, Assistant Professor | Course Developer, Hampton University School of Religion

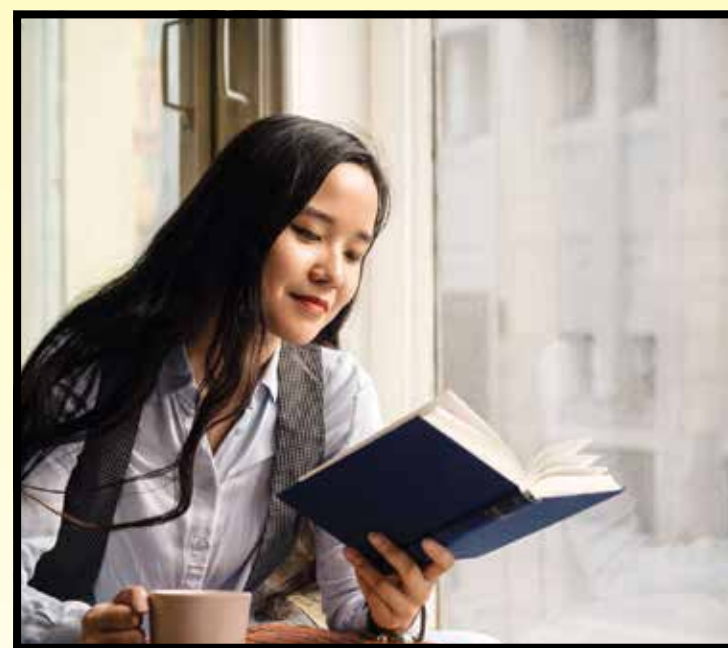
In an age where information is more accessible than ever, adopting learning as a lifestyle is crucial for personal and professional growth. One of the most effective ways to cultivate this mindset is through reading books. Books provide a deep well of knowledge, offering insights from experts across disciplines and eras. Unlike the transient nature of social media, which often distracts more than it informs, reading demands focus and critical thinking, fostering a more profound understanding of complex subjects. This habit of continuous reading shapes individuals who are well-versed, thoughtful,

and equipped to make informed decisions, not only as leaders but also as more aware and introspective people.

Beyond reading, engaging with your community through events and gatherings is another essential aspect of lifelong learning. Attending lectures, workshops, and cultural events allows you to interact with diverse perspectives and ideas. These experiences can spark new interests and challenge preconceived notions, leading to a more nuanced worldview. This not only enriches you as a leader but also deepens your understanding of humanity, helping you grow as a person with greater em-

pathy and wisdom. The growth you experience personally enhances your capacity to navigate the complexities and struggles of leadership with resilience and a grounded sense of purpose.

Volunteering is another powerful way to learn from the world around you. By dedicating time to help others, especially those facing significant challenges, you gain a deeper understanding of the struggles and resilience that define the human experience. These experiences inform your approach to leadership, making you more empathetic and effective in guiding others. But more importantly, they culti-



vate a sense of humility and gratitude, which contributes to your growth as an individual. As you grow, you become better equipped to handle the pressures and challenges of leadership, with a

clearer sense of your values and the ability to lead with authenticity and compassion.

Finally, embracing wisdom from cultures and groups outside your usual sphere can dramatically enhance both your personal growth and leadership abilities. Whether through travel, cultural exchange, or simply spending time in diverse communities, exposing yourself to different ways of thinking broadens your perspective. This openness to new ideas and practices not only enriches your personal life but also makes you a more adaptable and innovative leader. As you grow personally, you become more resilient and adaptable, better able to navigate the inevitable struggles of leadership. In embracing learning as a lifestyle, you cultivate the qualities that define truly exceptional leadership and a fulfilled, growing person.



The View From The Bridge

Stop Giving Discounts -- Know Your Worth!

by Jackie Warner

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



Value is defined as a noun: the regard that something is held to deserve; the importance, worth, or usefulness of something.

And as a verb: consider (someone or something) to be important or beneficial; have a high opinion of

I hope that every one of you is having a wonderful summer and enjoying life just a little bit more than you have in the past. This month my topic is self-worth and how we all have the opportunity to invest in each other.

I remember when I was a little girl, not more than 7 or 8 years old. My grandfather would ask me this question, and I wasn't quite sure how to answer it but I did. He asked me "Well, did you see anybody you liked today better than you did yourself?" Being 7 or 8, I remember saying to him, "Yes I did." He scolded me and said you never want to like anybody better than yourself! Ever!

I think back to so many years ago and now realize he was preparing me to love me firsthand -- to know that I had worth without any doubt, to be comfortable with myself, and to truly know my self-value.

Are we as parents and role models of today speaking genuine worth into our children, grandchildren, and loved ones? This is not a boastful or proud self-worth, but a lesson of love for self that allows them to truly love and care for the life they have. I remember while waiting at the bus stop over the years, I would always tell my daughters to radiate from within "shining brightly like stars!" just before they would step upon the bus for school. I loved them hard but most of all I taught them to love self and know their worth.

Make the investment because there are so many missed opportunities- Our children look for their worth in all the wrong places- other people as evident in our high divorce rates and bad relationships, drugs,



money, material possessions... the list continues.

"Self-respect, self-worth, and self-love -- They all start with self. You cannot find

them in anyone else."
-Unknown

Until Next Time, Be Sincere, Kind and Intentional

Jackie Warner, Community Outreach Specialist

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

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Vision

by Deb Kitchenmaster



“There is something about the gentle wisdom in a horse’s eye that can put even the most troubled soul at peace.” This is a quote made by Maisie on November 17, 2020. No pun intended.

Some facts about the eye of the horse:

- Horse eyes are among the largest of any land mammal. They are positioned on the sides of the head (positioned laterally).

- The range of vision is about 350° with approximately 65° of this being binocular vision and the remaining 285° monocular vision

- Their range of vision is somewhere between 20/30 and 20/60

- Horses can see color! They see blue and green colors on the spectrum

- They have amazing night vision. Helpful in the detection of predators.

- Horses have two blind spots: 1) right behind them, 2) Right in front of them. They can’t see the carrot you are holding to their mouth.

They use their whiskers around their mouth to feel objects.

- The eye of the horse is a diameter of around two inches. Everything is magnified and they can use their eyes separately.

- Vision is believed to be the horse’s primary sense

The eyes tell us a great deal about a horse’s emotional state. A tired horse may have limited eye movement or a dull, vacant look, while a nervous horse in a new environment may have extremely expressive eyes.

The white part of your horse’s eye is called the sclera. Be careful if you see the sclera of your horses’ eyes showing. This means he is afraid, startled, or very nervous. A happy and relaxed horse will have his eyes wide open, but the sclera not showing.

When you encounter a horse staring at you, he’s assessing you! You have this horses’ curiosity up and he’s trying to understand your intentions.

Have you seen a horse with a fly mask on this time of year? The mask



is simply a piece of gear used on horses to cover their eyes, jaw, sometimes their ears and muzzle, to protect them from flies and other biting insects.

What about when a horse gives you the side eye? They get more detail in what they’re seeing when they look with just one of their eyes.

Have you seen or experienced a horse look away from you, either with his eyes or whole head and neck? What message is the horse communicating? Calm down! That’s

right. Actually it is a calming cue. The horse uses a signal like this when he feels pressured and wants the rider to know he senses the person’s agitation or aggression, so that person can calm down because this horse is no threat to the human. Lighten up! Relax!

A well-known quote in the horse world says horses offer a mirror to your soul. Sometimes you like it, sometimes you don’t. However, the horse continues to send messages to you. Like a mirror, he is reflecting to you what he senses. In this mirror-like reflection, the horse opens the opportunity for you to face your deepest fears, insecurities, and the emotions you tend to bury. Horses attach no judgments, agendas, or opinions to these reflections. You can choose to listen and allow them to teach you, or you can ignore them. They leave that completely up to

you. The horses simply react to what they sense, and they are far more intuitive and tuned in than we allow ourselves to be.

May we learn from the horse and reflect vision, a vision reflecting life, truth and righteousness. May we look beyond the color of skin and gender? May we look directly into the mirror where intentions and motives of the heart/soul are revealed and by the Grace of God accept and cast our vote to come back into alignment with FREEDOM? After all, the main spiritual symbol of the horse is FREEDOM. This FREEDOM reflects ENDURANCE, CONFIDENCE, and TRIUMPH. Yes. We are at war. And it is spiritual. “Steady.” “Steady.” “Hold.”

*Your NEIGHbor,
Deb Kitchenmaster*

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The Power Of Joy

by Detri McGhee - CLU, ChFC



A massive power behind the development of high levels of Emotional Intelligence is the ability to wisely handle both Fear and Joy. One day we will look at Fear. But, for the next few sessions, we will look at the Power, Promise, Potential, and Profit of JOY.

Suppose someone cuts you off in traffic, nearly causing a collision. Most of us get an immediate flood of fear and anger at how foolish and dangerously that idiot acted. For some, the anger rises and rises, ruining many hours of the day, only to re-surface each time during the day – and longer – as we relive the incident to anyone who will listen. Would you like a simple, nearly foolproof way of getting your mind off that irritating event? You might want to take notes on this, for it is near GENIUS! Okay, ready? All you need is a hammer. Place your hand on a hard, clean surface. Take a hammer and firmly and forcefully slam it down on one of your fingers. MAGICALLY, you will no longer be aware of the driving incident! Perhaps forever, or at least for the rest of the day, you will not even THINK of the ignorant, reckless driver!

Would you prefer an easier, less painful way to take away the power of anger and fear to ruin even more of your life? Replace the negative with positive. Instead of fear caused by a near collision, try gratitude. Be grateful that it DID NOT result in a wreck or damage. Instead

of anger, think of the time YOU did not see that car in the side mirror and almost caused the wreck yourself. Be filled with gratitude that YOU didn't cause a wreck. Extend the same grace to your fellow human. You are not necessarily all those things you said about THAT driver, are you? Probably, neither are they. You were not hurt by either your own or another person's carelessness. Instead of sharing your anger/fear/frustrations with family or a co-worker, when you see them, think of something uplifting to share, or a compliment to give. Refuse to seek the limelight of retelling your story, because, honestly, YOU are probably the only one interested.

Every time we re-live a negative or upsetting incident, we choose – yes, CHOOSE, because you have a choice whether or not to keep re-kindling the flames of anger, frustration, and fear – we choose to let that negativity not



only steal a significant portion of our life, but we often hold hostage another person's peace of mind and disturb their spirits.

JOY and her friends, Gratitude, Praise, Positivity, Happiness, etc. make much better daily companions than her enemies, grumbling, griping, gossip, fear, negativity, etc. Joy seeks to bless and heal. Fear and com-

plaining seek to destroy and cause harm. Which are you embracing by the choices you make daily? What we embrace, tends to sink into our hearts and be reflected on our face and in our actions.

An important observation: JOY and HAPPINESS are not the same thing. Joy abides. Happiness happens. Joy is present even in the midst of great pain

and grief. Happiness depends on circumstances. Joy survives into eternity. Happiness fades in a moment. Joy infuses the whole of a person. Happiness survives on the surface. JOY comes from the heart and soul and spirit. Happiness depends on circumstances. JOY can survive alone. Happiness usually depends on others to feed it. I pray you and I will be Emotionally Intelligent and choose Joy and Positivity, Praise and Gratitude.

Our next time together, we are going to look at The Exponential Power of Vicarious Joy. I hope you will join us.

Detri would love to hear from you! Especially your thoughts on how to handle criticism, or problems you would like to get feedback on from others. Email: detrimcghee@gmail.com or Facebook: Criticism Management by Detri. Free outline for Criticism Management available at www.criticismmanagement.com

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The Alternative Approach

Minerals -- The Building Blocks Of Life

by Roy Williams

Almost every health disorder can be tied directly to mineral deficiencies. Osteoporosis or bone loss, high blood pressure, irregular heartbeat, gout, muscle cramps, spasms, twitching, restless leg syndrome, autoimmune disorders, and even cancer are just a few of the disorders effecting Americans today. In most cases these disorders can be prevented or even reversed when the body has proper amounts of minerals.

There are 74 minerals and trace elements that are necessary for a balanced body and a healthy life. For instance, if your food supply doesn't contain enough calcium, the most abundant mineral, and vitamin D, you will develop osteoporosis. If your diet lacks magnesium, you will have muscle cramps, spasms, restless leg, irregular heartbeat, and constipation.

Osteoarthritis, the most common type of arthritis, is a lack of the minerals necessary to grow cartilage and connective tissue. Gout is caused by a build up of uric acid, which is due to a deficiency of alkalizing minerals such as magnesium, potassium, copper and

selenium. Irregular heartbeat or tachycardia can be caused by the fact that your calcium and magnesium levels are out of balance.

In other words, minerals affect every aspect of the human body from circulation and elimination to brain function and sexual performance. Even the endocrine system must have proper amounts of minerals to work as designed. For instance, if you aren't getting enough

The Standard American Diet (SAD) is so deficient of minerals that deficiency diseases are epidemic. Even allergies and other respiratory disorders are now being linked to low levels of specific minerals.

When they first had the ability to diagnosis bone loss it was predominately women over the age of 70 that showed any bone loss. Today, the average woman will have the be-

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1. Ulcers | 15. Osteoporosis (partial) |
| 2. Cancer | 16. Hormones |
| 3. Arthritis | 17. Smell/taste loss |
| 4. Alzheimer's | 18. Longevity |
| 5. Kidney stones | 19. Osteoporosis |
| 6. Aortic aneurysms | 20. Gingivitis/receding gums |
| 7. Varicose veins | 21. Arthritis |
| 8. Stroke | 22. Hypertension/high blood pressure |
| 9. Cardiomyopathy | 23. Insomnia |
| 10. Cravings | 24. Kidney stones/bone spurs/heel spurs/calcium deposits |
| 11. Liver or age spots | 25. Muscle cramps/twitches |
| 12. Hyperactive children/low blood sugar/diabetes | 26. PMS |
| 13. Baldness | 27. Low back pain |
| 14. Deafness | 28. Diabetes |

of the mineral iodine, you will develop either hypothyroidism (weight gain) or hyperthyroidism (weight loss).

Here are just a few disorders associated with mineral deficiency:

ginning stages of bone loss by age 26 and full-blown osteoporosis by 48.

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

We did not replenish the soils; instead, we began using fertilizer, which has



only 3 of the 79 minerals needed. The results are degenerative diseases such as those mentioned above.

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

Most soft drinks fall in the range of 2.3 to 2.4 on the pH scale. It is estimated that it would take 32 eight-ounce glasses of water with 12 pH alkalizing drops in each glass to overcome the acid in just one 10-ounce soft drink. Remember, cancer loves acid.

What I Would Do

Now that you know what is causing most of the health disorders in America, I'm sure you would like to know what can be done. If we aren't getting our minerals from our diet, then what can we do to support our health?

Humic Minerals: To make sure your body has every mineral take **Hu-**

Minerals, either in liquid form or capsule. This is the brand that I chose because it contains over 74 minerals and trace elements to help your body maintain balance and remain healthy even into your 90s and longer. It will also help maintain alkalinity and at the same time support your organs, hair, skin and nails.

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

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For more information go by Herbs & More in Athens or NHC Herb Shop in Killen or call 800-745-4408 and get a free CD explaining how the HGH Gel works.

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Cooking with Anna (continued from page 13)

Bear Hugging A Potbelly Stove

by Anna Hamilton

Christians, we are not promised an easy life. We are promised, however, that God will always take care of us and he will take our burdens from us.

Even though God knows every fiber of our being, He knows what our troubles are and what we are holding on to, so why doesn't he just take them from us without us asking for help? Asking God for help letting go of the stove will help you develop a deeper faith. It also will help others see the wonderful grace of God. Seeing someone find their strength in Christ is a wonderful way to give others the confidence to trust completely in God. In order to obtain the peace that we all want so much, we have to bring all of our troubles to the Lord in prayer. "Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus." Philippians 4:6-7

Letting go of what you know is hard. It feels sometimes easier to live with what is hurting you than to take that leap of faith and let go of what burdens are weighing you down. God wants us to trust in Him enough to take that leap -- letting go of everything that is keeping us from having full faith in God. As Christians, we should have full confidence that God will take care of us. "Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need." Hebrews 4:16

I urge you to let go of the potbelly stove that is burning you. Let go of all that is harming you and keeping you from the love and grace of God. Letting go will bring you closer to God and will help others around you come to know Christ.

This week's recipe is an easy tomato bisque. It is so much better than the condensed stuff in the can and everyone will love it! Serve it with a simple green salad or a gooey grilled cheese sandwich. Either way, you can't go wrong!



"Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks, it will be opened. Or which one of you, if his son asks him for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a serpent? If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask him!" Matthew 7:7-11

Mental Health Minute

What to Expect from Mental Health Counseling - Part I

by Lisa Philippart,

Licensed Professional Counselor



“Sometimes you just need to talk about something... to allow the truth of things to hit the air.”

- Karen Salmansohn

nique that modifies or improves someone’s thoughts, feelings, or behaviors. (And couldn’t we all use some help with this?) As a therapist, my goal is to utilize multiple approaches that provide my clients with the tools they need to enhance their overall well-being.

So, let’s say that you have decided to seek help. Before you ever enter a therapist’s office, you need to do your homework. The most important decision you will make is picking the therapist who is right for you. There are many ways to begin your search. Word of mouth is still a reliable option. Talk to people with whom you are comfortable about their recommendations. Do they know a therapist who specializes in anxiety or depression, or has certification in substance abuse or eating disorders? You can

also go to the Psychology Today website, which has a therapist finder section. These therapists have been screened and vetted, and can be searched by modalities, insurances accepted, gender, age, language, location, and issues addressed. The American Association of Christian Counselors also has a Find a Counselor tab called Christian Care Connect that lists providers with pastoral, biblical, or Christian-based training. While use of the internet makes your quest much easier, I would caution you about just doing a “yellow-pages” search. You can find further information on a potential therapist by doing a Google search, checking out the therapist’s website, and looking for a Facebook business page.

Many people don’t realize that their employer may

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be a resource. Some businesses offer EAPs (Employee Assistance Programs). You can find out if your employer offers this benefit by either contacting your HR department or checking your employee handbook. EAPs generally have contracts with various therapists and therapy practices to provide short-term counseling services. This means that your employer may cover a certain number of sessions to assist you in working through a “temporary” issue or struggle.

I am part of an EAP which provides 6 sessions free to the employee. An example of a temporary issue might be grief counseling or an adjustment-type of event. If you are employed at a university, personal counseling is usually provided free of charge. At Athens State, I work with staff, students, and faculty at no cost, providing short-term therapy services. And lastly, counseling services are available through your local community mental health centers. In Limestone County, therapists are available through the Mental Health Center of North Central Alabama. In Madison County, therapists are available through Wellstone Behavioral Health. These agencies provide low-cost services and accept most insurances, but you will probably not be able to choose your therapist.

Once you have selected a therapist, the next step is that big first appointment. Part II will address your concerns and uncertainties regarding what to expect from the initial session.

Lisa Philippart is a Licensed Professional Counselor whose practice is in Madison, Alabama



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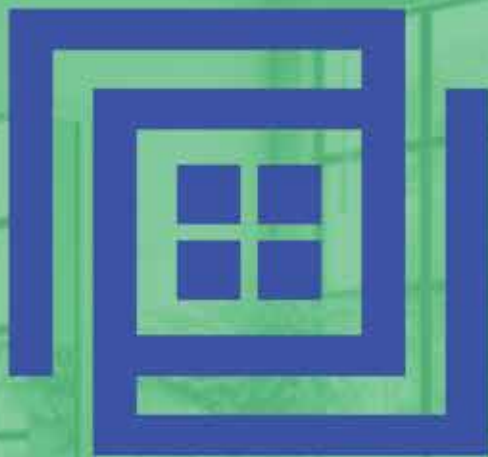
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~ Zig Ziglar

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