

September 6 - September 19, 2024

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Re-elect LaDon Townsend, District 4 Commission: *Workin' Till The Work Is Done*

By Ali Elizabeth Turner

In 2019, lifelong Limestone County resident and farmer LaDon Townsend decided to put his hat in the ring to run for the 4th District Com-

missioner position, and he won as an Independent by about 600 votes. He is running again as an Independent, and if you are voting straight ticket, fill out the "bubble" next to his name completely, and he will get your vote. Recently,

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The Townsend Family



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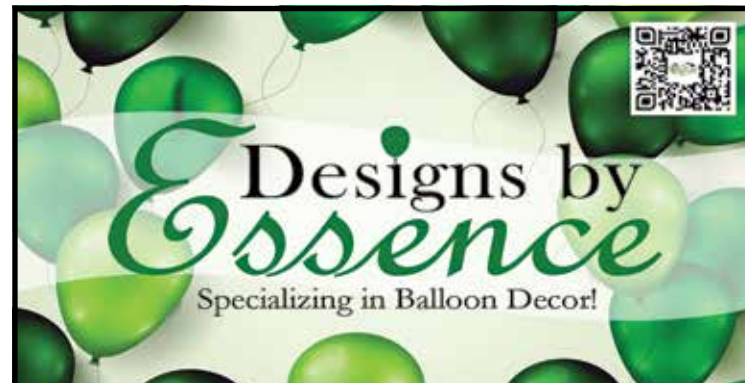
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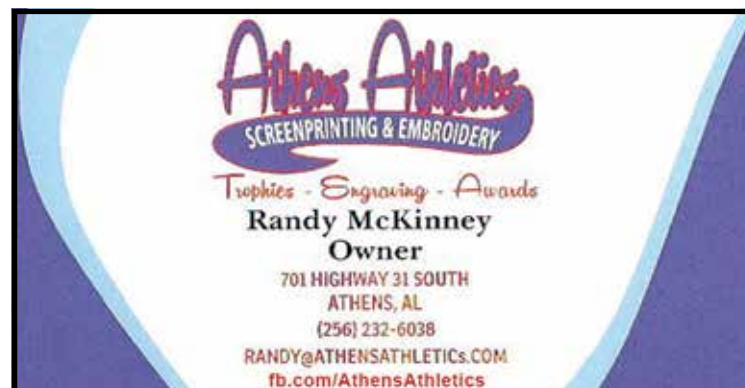
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Publisher's Point

The Forge - Whoever Wants The Next Generation The Most Will Get Them

The Kendrick Brothers, Alex and Stephen, have been part of the steady march of producing and improving faith-based films and taking the genre from being often cheesy to inarguably excellent. Their latest offering is called *The Forge*, and it is currently playing in theatres. By way of background, the Kendrick Brothers made history when they produced *Facing the Giants*. It was a classic underdog story, a David-and-Goliath-on-the-gridiron that was picked up for distribution by Sony, a surprise hit at the box office, and on a \$100,000 budget, made 10 million dollars at the box office. Other movies have included *Fireproof*, *Courageous*, *War Room*, and *Overcomer*. Each of them deals with

a different tough topic, and each victory that emerges is hard fought and satisfying.

The Forge is about a young man being raised by a single mother, and it would not take much to have him be recruited into a gang, end up on drugs, end up in prison, or all of it. He has no vision for the future, no connection to his calling, and sees little need to get a job. All he wants to do is shoot hoop and play video games and is more than annoyed that the people around him want to suggest that he “get a life,” especially if it’s his mom.

The young man’s name is Isaiah, and he is about to encounter what happens when mamas pray and men step up to mentor. He also is go-

ing to be challenged to a melting point, hence the appropriate use of the term “forge.” He becomes part of a group of men of faith who have banded together for each other, for the purpose of having brothers-in-“spiritual” arms, for being held accountable on their journey, breaking bread together and even having a bit of fun. Isaiah joins them and is given an actual sword, a symbol of growing into manhood.

There is a term in the English language that is known as anachronism. It can be used positively or negatively, and has to do with being old-fashioned or out of place. For example, if someone alive in the 21st century routinely dressed in clothing from

another era and adopted that era’s mannerisms, it could be said that they are anachronistic. But, if we are honest, there is something in all of us that longs for times, beliefs, and behaviors that are rooted in something deeper, sweeter, stronger, nobler, and just better. I truly think that there is something in every man that wants to be a hero -- a knight -- if you will.

In today’s culture, we are in the midst of continually spinning as a result of fatherlessness. Men have been relegated to being ridiculed, and the power of their role in the lives of their children is mocked at worst and ignored at best. Boys and girls both experience “daddy hunger” which manifests in a number of ways, and honestly, if I weren’t a woman of faith, I would despair. However, we are promised that the hearts of fathers and children will be turned toward each other, and *The Forge* gives a blueprint as to just how that will happen.

Ali Elizabeth Turner

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What A Life I Lived

by Dale Lone Elk Casteel



When I was born in 1932, we were just coming out of The Great Depression. There were not too many things great about it; I know it put everyone in the family to work. When you came out of diapers, you went to work in the fields. As you grew older, the work got harder, but with God's help we made this country into a great nation. The work was hard, and the pay was very little, but we were healthy people with peace and love in our hearts. Neighbors were your friends not your enemy, I did not know anyone that did not believe in God. It was a great time for a kid to grow up in this country.

I began to like country music after my dad bought our first battery-operated radio, and we could listen to the Grand Ole Opry. I loved it so much that it became my dream -- I wanted to

become a country music singer. What a joy it was to get to go to the Grand Ole Opry with my uncle Henry on his school bus! At times he would carry a load of people to Nashville to go to see the Opry and always asked me to go with him because he knew my feelings about country music.

A few weeks back, this radio announcer from Birmingham, Alabama, called me wanting to interview me about my part in the Alabama Ramblers Band in Korea. His name was Burgin Mathens, and I told him, "Sure you can." He said it would be put online where anyone could watch and listen to those old songs that are now online. You can find it by going to "www.southernmusicresearch.org" and searching for the Alabama Ramblers; it is currently one of their featured stories. The




quality of the songs is not that great because the songs were put on acetate discs in 1951. I never dreamed that these old tapes would still have been around


after that long.

I also put my other musical experiences in this interview. I have always loved country music and enjoyed my little part in it. Nowadays, I

am a big fan of Bradley Walker, Mo Pitney, and Joey Feek was my favorite female singer of all times. In a song that she and Bradley sang together called, "Did I Do All I Could Do in The Time He Gave Me," Joey was wearing a pair of Indian-made earrings that I had given to her.

I want to thank Burgin Mathens for doing this as it brought back a lot of good memories.




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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.

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

September 6

25396 Airport Road, Athens. Every first Friday of the month beginning 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 available for purchase provided by the DAV Auxiliary. 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.

Gettin' Dirty At The Library: The Value Of Oaks

September 10

11:00am - 12:00pm. Public Library, 603 S Jefferson St, Athens. Limestone County Master Gardeners Association Lecture Series "Gettin' Dirty At The Library" Presents: "The Value Of Oaks" by Toby Gray. Free and open to the public!

Trail of Tears Commemoration Day

September 16

This annual event day marks the anniversary of the day when the last Cherokees arrived in Oklahoma and commemorates the people forced to marches from their tribal lands in the east to the lands of the Indian Territory (now Oklahoma) from 1838-1839. Learn more with the National Park Service Local governments, area agencies, attractions, restaurants and shops may be closed or have modified hours of operation in observance of this holiday.

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.

Fiddlers 5k and Fun Run

September 28

7:00am - 10:00am. 327 E Bryan St, Athens, AL. The Athens State University Alumni Association is hosting the Fiddlers 5k Race and Kids Fun Run event. Our USATF-certified race route (#AL23020JE) will begin and end at Athens State University and will showcase the historic district in Athens. The route will highlight historical buildings including the famed Donnell House and Beaty Mansion. Our FREE Kids' Fun Run will start and end on Athens State University's Campus and will be highlighted by an appearance from Hebrew the Bear. Find Registration and more info at <https://runsignup.com/Race/AL/Athens/Fiddlers5kandKidsFunRun>

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.

Senior Lunch Matinee Series

Third Thursdays Monthly

We are back to full speed with our third Thursday Senior Lunch Matinees and first Saturday Early Dinner Shows, already scheduled through Dec 2023. Public events most often will sell out in advance, welcoming attendees from 17 adjacent counties, and 2 neighboring states. Our Senior Lunch Matinees provide guests with a complete lunch including drink and dessert, and a one hour live show featuring one of our roster of 8 of the best regional oldies groups and performers in rotation throughout the year. E-mail reservations are required in advance for all Lunch Matinees and Early Dinner Shows. web: www.yesterdaysevents.com

FB: www.facebook.com/YesterdayEventCenter

Step Up And Kneel down

by Donna Clark



As I write this article, we are 67 days from a decision that will make a huge impact on the future of our country. We can definitely feel the weight of each election, but with this one, the heaviness of it is extreme. The 2024 presidential election is pivotal in the direction of not just our country but the world. Former President Trump and Democratic nominee Kamala Harris have both stated this is the most important election of our lifetime, the most important in the history of our country. I totally agree. However, there are those that feel these words set a toxic environment for politics. That comment makes me feel that we are to just bury our head in the sand and pretend that everything is fine. I believe you know as well as me, things are not fine...a far cry from it.

Driving home from a doctor's appointment this week, passing numerous places of worship, businesses that people with dreams and hard work have made successful, I was feeling so thankful for our freedoms and the opportunities given us. I was even thankful that I got to choose the doctor that I wanted, not one chosen for me. With all the faults and failures we have seen over the last years, I'm still thankful to be an American, thankful that I live in a country that is capitalism based, a country that has experienced the blessings of God, and by Him has become the greatest nation in the world. But what if all that is about to change? What if we're headed down a slippery slope, and if someone doesn't do something, what will this



country look like for my children and my grandchildren? Yes, Trump and Harris, I agree, this is the most important election by far.

I want to make an appeal to all the readers that profess faith and trust in our Savior, Jesus Christ. All who believe in the power of God, this is for you. I've struggled writing this article. I do not want to appear judgmental in my delivery, but those of us with this faith, it's time we step up and kneel down. One of our greatest presidents, Abraham Lincoln, when seeing the condition of America, made three proclamations for a day of prayer and fasting. He saw

the condition of the nation and he called it just as it was. This man and Congress knew who the true source of power and the agent of real change was. He asked the people to bow in humble submission, confess national sins with a full conviction of the holiness of God, pray with fervency for the pardon of these past offenses, and ask for a blessing on the nation. He did exactly what is instructed in 2 Chronicles 7:14, "If My people who are called by My name will humble themselves and pray, seek My face and turn from their wicked ways, I will hear and forgive and heal their land." I believe

this Scripture is applicable for us believers today. There is a need for prayer, fervent prayer. No individual under their own power can change the direction of this nation. The responsibility of seeking God's face lies upon the shoulders of the believers; we are held to this charge.

Before we head to the polls on Tuesday, November 5, take the time to seek God

for wisdom. We are bombarded with information from the left and the right. The rhetoric is strong. It's time to do the fact checking. Look into the actions, decisions of these candidates, research the past. Pray for wisdom and insight. Listen to what each of these candidates are saying, their stand on all the issues, and check it against the Word of God. Do their policies, the laws they claim to put into place – do they reflect the instruction given us in God's word? Will the direction they take our country honor God?

Lee Greenwood's song, "I'm Proud to be an American," still rings true today. Even though my heart is broken over the actions and decisions of some, I still love and appreciate the country I live in. I believe you feel the same. For our nation, a prayer of blessing derived from Numbers 6:24-26 – "May the Lord bless America, may His face shine upon her and be gracious to her. May He show His favor and give peace."

- Donna



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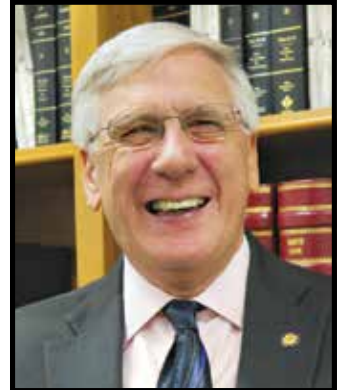
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The Need For Exchange

by Ali Elizabeth Turner



The mayor and I met the day after Labor Day, and it was definitely one of those “hit the ground running” types of mornings with a shorter work week. Nonetheless, as has been the case for a decade, I was reminded of how blessed I am to be living in Athens, Alabama, and have the freedom and voice to do what I do, including telling Athens’s story through the eyes of her mayor.

Some of our time was spent in frustration, so I’ll get that out of the way first. As of this past Tuesday, the many inquiries Mayor Ronnie has made at the federal level regarding the immigrant influx have been met with...crickets. “I can’t get anybody to help

me connect the dots! No one will call me back to tell me what is going on, and I don’t know what to tell people,” he said. I listened as he told of the swirling rumors that he encounters as his phone is ringing off the hook. Getting some accurate answers would certainly help with beginning a productive exchange of ideas as to how to deal well with the actual facts of the situation.

We discussed our mutual concern regarding trafficking, which we both know can easily happen when people come to a foreign country, and Mayor Ronnie told me a hair-raising and heart-breaking story of his years working as a DHR supervisor for the State of Alabama. We thank-

fully could move on to another type of “exchange,” and that was the Exchange Zone that has just been added to the services offered by Athens Police Department.

We live in a time when at worst, parental kidnapping or at the least, insecure situations in which kids are dropped off to go spend time with or be returned to one of their parents is commonplace. Amber Alerts pop up on our phones when a child has been taken, and the system was designed in 1996 when then nine-year old Amber Hagerman was kidnapped and murdered in the Dallas-Ft. Worth area. As of early 2024, more than 1,200

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kids have been rescued as a result. Though her kidnapping was not parental, the purpose of the Exchange Zone is to greatly lessen the possibility of that happening. There are cameras in both marked areas of the Exchange Zone, and law enforcement is close by. The other thing that has happened is that people selling goods online are vulnerable because they are meeting strangers in order to exchange purchased goods and receive payment. The Exchange Zone ups our level of public safety, and that is the mayor’s number one concern. “Without public safety, nothing else matters,” he said.

We moved on to something truly positive, and that is the softball tournament coming up on September 14 that is

sponsored by Athens Fire Department. Every holiday season, the firefighters get together to go shopping for Christmas gifts with a kid from our community. “Shop With A Firefighter” is always a big hit, both for the kids, and certainly for the firefighters. The softball tournament helps raise funds to make that event memorable for as many kids as possible. In addition, Isom’s Orchard is having their annual scarecrow contest that will benefit the Scout House, which is almost ready to make music and help kids to “get their music on.” Scarecrow set-up will be September 28-29, and judging will be October 1.

We had much to pray about, so we did, and then, once again, it was time for Ronnie to roll.

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Standing On The Wall

by Phil Williams

My wife recently said something so noteworthy about the times we live in. “He gave us freedom so we could spread freedom,” she said. “He” meaning God, gave us freedom so that we could spread freedom. I agree with that.

Once we’ve been entrusted with something valuable, our role thereafter is to be a good steward. We could take freedom for granted and be no more than a miser, hiding in a dark room and talking to our precious like Gollum in his dark cave. Or we can be a steward, an investor, a person who believes that to whom much is given much is expected.

Freedom is one of the greatest gifts ever given and something that many nations and peoples only dream about. Freedom to speak, to move about, to gather, to worship, to vote, to be defended. Actual freedom is more than just a notion, it is a right, a measure of life.

Next to the life-changing freedom I have in Jesus Christ, there is no greater freedom than those of an American citizen. But the freedoms that you and I have are under attack in a major way. There are those who believe their role is not to serve the greater good, but to show the masses why their version of good is

greater. But when you always err on the side of freedom, and personal liberty, it’s hard to go wrong. There is no substitute for the freedoms we know as Americans. We don’t want some cheap imitation of freedom. We want nothing less than to be free to succeed in life knowing that what we build is not going to be redistributed liberally to others, or that what we hold as self-evident is tarnished by the waves of cultural populists.

In the book of Nehemiah, we’re told the story of the rebuilding of the wall around Jerusalem. Walls in those times meant safety and sanctuary. Nehemiah was distraught with the fact that the wall was in ruins, so he petitioned the King of Persia for whom he worked to allow him to return to Jerusalem and rebuild the wall. It was no small thing. The Jewish people were beaten down, with no real leadership. But the rebuilding began.

First, there was ridicule. But in Nehemiah 4:6, “The people had a mind to work,” so the ridicule was ignored. Then came full opposition. So Nehemiah encouraged the people to pray, which they did, but he also put armed men to stand on the wall while the building continued. Nehemiah told the people, “God will fight for us,” but he never told them to put down their swords, or to

stop rebuilding the wall. He encouraged the people not to lose heart because of their opponents, saying: “Do not be afraid of them. Remember the Lord, who is great and terrible, and fight for your kin, your sons, your daughters, your wives, and your homes.” The wall was rebuilt in record time.

Culturally speaking, America is in a similar place right now. As for cultural walls that provide safety and sanctuary, America is at an inflection point. Like Maximus said in the movie *Gladiator*, “The time for half measures and talk is over.”

In December 1776, Thomas Paine wrote *The Crisis*. In that work, he wrote of the need for good men to rise up, to ensure that future generations would not only have freedom but enjoy freedom, with the freedom to spread freedom.

“These are the times that try men's souls.” Paine said. “The summer soldier and the sunshine patriot will, in this crisis, shrink from the service of their country; but he that stands by it now, deserves the love and thanks of man and woman. Tyranny, like hell, is not easily conquered; yet we have this consolation with us, that the harder the conflict, the more glorious the triumph. What we obtain too cheap, we esteem too lightly: it is dearness only that gives

everything its value. Heaven knows how to put a proper price upon its goods; and it would be strange indeed if so celestial an article as FREEDOM should not be highly rated.”

In essence Paine was saying that freedom is priceless and too many sunshine patriots would choose to let freedom slip away rather than take the hard stand on the wall.

Samuel Adams once said, “The liberties of our country, the freedoms of our civil Constitution are worth defending at all hazards; it is our duty to defend them against all attacks...It will bring a mark of everlasting infamy on the present generation – enlightened as it is – if we should suffer them to be wrested from us by violence without a struggle, or to be cheated out of them by the artifices of designing men.”

I will speak, and so should you. I will assess the issues of the day and measure their outcomes against the ideal of freedom, and so should you. I will vote, and I will act, and I will assemble, and I will worship, and so should you.

It is in the “doing” of freedom that we spread freedom.

There’s a poem from an anonymous author that reflects on a life well lived in the service of freedom. One stanza describes the sense attained in a final lookback with

no regrets about being a poor steward of freedom.

I stood upon the wall, I stood my post.

A servant to the cause and a foe to the host.

Lie down and feel the rest, a rest well earned.

They called and I went, the world yet turns.

Freedom is not free. It requires time and treasure and toil. He gave us freedom so that we could spread freedom.

So we’d best be taking up that spot...up there, standing on the wall.

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/talk-show 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.





Clean, Green And Beautiful

2024 Shred Day

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

Keep Athens-Limestone Beautiful has partnered with North Alabama Better Business Bureau (and many others!) to bring Limestone County a FREE Shred Day Event on September 21, 2024! It will still be held at Athens State University (enter the parking lot on Hobbs Street and exit on Pryor Street.) As always, it is a drive-thru event; we will have plenty of volunteers to unload for you. This event will give North Alabama residents the opportunity to protect their identities and the environment in a quick and easy drive-thru set

up.

The following FREE* services will be available onsite:

Document Shredding: Attendees can bring paper documents that contain personal or financial information. All other materials such as plastic, metal, and binders must be removed. There is a limit of three kitchen size bags or three file storage boxes per vehicle. Shredding will be accepted until the shred trucks reach full capacity. Shredding is completed onsite, and paper is then recycled.

Electronic Recycling: Items under 40 lbs. in-



cluding computers, tablets, cell phones, game consoles, etc. will be accepted. There is a \$10 fee for each plasma and flat screen TV. **Large-back TVs, CRT monitors, and appliances will not be accepted.** We will have plenty of young, strong volunteers to unload for you!

Drug Take Back: Athens Police Department will be collecting prescription, veterinary, and over-the-counter medications. Needles and liquids will not be accepted.

Food Drive: Donations of non-perishable food items will be accepted to benefit Limestone County Churches Involved, Inc. If you are able to donate, this is a great opportunity to help improve the lives of others in the community.

We will also have Keri Chalmers from the Limestone County Commission's Recycling Program there to collect the cardboard boxes that items are brought in to be taken back for recycling! She can also answer any questions you may have about her recycling program.

This year's event sponsors are the Alabama Cooperative Extension System, Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated®, Rho Chi Omega Chapter, Athens High

School JROTC, Athens Police Department, Athens State University, City of Athens, Cook's Pest Control, Family Security Credit Union, Keep Athens-Limestone Beautiful, Inc. (KALB), Limestone County Churches Involved Inc. (LCCI), Retired & Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP), Quest Prevention Services, Team Daks, and The News Courier. We hope to see you there!



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Cooking with Anna

God Is Still Good

by Anna Hamilton

Growing up in church, the Old Testament story of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego was told often in Sunday morning Bible class on little felt boards. The teachers would move the three paper characters into the blazing furnace, and our little eyes would widen with excitement and anticipation of what was going to happen next.

In Daniel Chapter 3, the popular children's Bible story of King Nebuchadnezzar, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego is told

in dramatic fashion. King Nebuchadnezzar had made an image of gold in his likeness and had commanded, "Nations and peoples of every language, this is what you are commanded to do: As soon as you hear the sound of the horn, flute, zither, lyre, harp, pipe, and all kinds of music, you must fall down and worship the image of gold that has been set up. Whoever does not fall down and worship will immediately be thrown into a blazing furnace." (Daniel 3:4-6)

continued on page 23

Cauliflower Chicken Soup

Ingredients:

- 1 lb. chicken breast, cooked*
- 3 cups chicken broth*
- 2 ½ cups cauliflower florets*
- 1 carrot, chopped*
- 1 ½ Tbsp. ginger, grated*
- 1 small onion, chopped*
- 2 garlic cloves, minced*
- ½ tsp turmeric*
- 1 tsp dried mint*
- 2 Tbsp. olive oil*
- Salt and pepper to taste*

Directions:

Heat 1 Tbsp. olive oil, onion, garlic, turmeric, salt, and pepper and sauté for 2 to 3 minutes.

Add cauliflower and 2 cups of chicken broth. Cover and cook at medium high for around 7



minutes or until the cauliflower has softened.

Add the ginger, mint, and carrot and cook for another 5 minutes or until the carrot has softened. Then, blend half of the soup using an immersion blender or regular blender. This will make the soup thicken.

Add in the chicken and adjust the salt and pepper if needed. If the soup is too thick, add 1 more cup of chicken broth. Cook for 5 to 6 more minutes, allowing the flavors to combine. Serve warm with a warm piece of crusty bread and enjoy.

Mental Toughness: *Turning Goals Into Achievements*

by Nick Niedzwiecki - Owner, CrossFit Athens

Mental toughness is a crucial attribute that distinguishes high achievers from the rest. It is not just about enduring challenges or overcoming obstacles but about transforming one's goals into tangible achievements. This unique blend of resilience, focus, and perseverance allows individuals to push beyond their limits, stay committed to their objectives, and ultimately succeed.

At its core, mental toughness is the ability to stay focused on long-term goals despite the setbacks, failures, or discomforts that may arise along the way. It involves maintaining a strong sense of purpose and a positive attitude, regardless of the circumstances. People with mental toughness are often characterized by their relentless pursuit of excellence and their unwillingness to give up, no matter how tough the journey gets.

The Pillars of Mental Toughness

Mental toughness is built on several key pillars: commitment, control, challenge, and confidence.

1. Commitment is the unwavering dedication to a goal or task. It is what keeps someone moving forward even when the path is unclear or when results are slow to appear. Committed individuals are goal-oriented and persistent, continuously striving towards their objectives.

2. Control refers to the belief that one can influence their circumstances, rather than feeling powerless. It is about taking

responsibility for one's actions and outcomes, understanding that while we cannot control everything, we can always control our responses. This sense of control helps individuals remain calm and composed under pressure.

3. Challenge is the perception of difficult situations as opportunities for growth rather than threats. Mentally tough people embrace challenges, understanding that overcoming adversity is a part of the journey toward success. They view failures not as setbacks but as valuable lessons that contribute to personal and professional development.

4. Confidence is the belief in one's abilities to achieve goals. It stems from a history of overcoming challenges and learning from failures. Confidence helps maintain motivation and perseverance, especially when the going gets tough. It is this self-assurance that fuels the courage to take risks and push the boundaries of what is possible.

The Role of Mental Toughness in Achieving Goals

Transforming goals into achievements requires more than just setting objectives; it requires a mental framework that supports sustained effort over time. Mental toughness provides this framework. It allows individuals to remain focused and motivated, even when immediate results are not visible. This quality is particularly important in high-stakes environments, such as competitive sports,

business, and personal development, where pressure and challenges are a constant.

For example, consider an athlete training for a marathon. The physical demands of the training regimen are intense, and the athlete will likely face moments of doubt, exhaustion, and frustration. It is mental toughness that keeps the athlete on track, pushing through the pain and monotony of training, always keeping the end goal in sight. Similarly, in the business world, an entrepreneur launching a new venture must navigate uncertainty, financial pressure, and potential failure. Here, mental toughness is what drives the entrepreneur to persevere, innovate, and adapt, turning initial setbacks into stepping stones toward success.

Cultivating Mental Toughness

While some people may naturally possess mental toughness, it is a skill that can be developed and strengthened over time. Cultivating mental toughness involves consistently pushing oneself outside of one's comfort zone, setting challenging yet attainable goals, and reflecting on both successes and failures to learn and grow. It also requires developing a resilient mindset—one that sees setbacks as temporary and changeable rather than as permanent and insurmountable.

Practices such as mindfulness and visualization can also play a crucial role in building mental toughness. Mindfulness helps individuals stay present and focused, reducing the im-

pact of negative thoughts and distractions. Visualization, on the other hand, involves mentally rehearsing successful outcomes and strategies, which can boost confidence and reduce anxiety.

In conclusion, mental toughness is the bridge between goals and achievements. It is the strength of character that enables individuals to stay the course, maintain focus, and push through the inevitable obstacles that arise on the path to success. By fostering commitment, control, challenge, and confidence, mental toughness turns aspirations into reality, making it an invaluable asset in any endeavor. Whether in sports, business, or personal growth, developing mental toughness is key to turning dreams into achievements.

**NOT EVERY DAY
WILL BE YOUR BEST DAY**



SHOW UP ANYWAY

Ruckin' And Rollin' Part 2

by Stephanie Reynolds, Athens-Limestone Tourism Association



Last time we talked about rucking (walking with a weighted backpack) for health. Now, let's get into the fun stuff... gear!

Let's start with the basics:

Shoes/Socks: You need shoes (Well, and the rest of your clothing. No sense in scaring the horses.) Wear whatever is comfortable. You can wear hiking boots, running shoes, or whatever your foot likes. I recommend closed-toed shoes because trails have little sticks and rocks which hurt if they jab your feet. I also recommend foot-shaped shoes to help prevent blisters and other ouches (Imagine that, shoes that actually are shaped like your feet! What a concept!) Shoes with nubs are great on wet red clay. Also bring an extra pair of socks. I highly recommend any socks you wear, just not the little "no see" socks because there's too much room for stuff to fall in and your shoes will rub. You're a real rucker now and officially epic, so go ahead and dress for it.

Backpack: Like I mentioned in the previous article, any to start with. When you begin tackling longer distances/carry heavier weight, you'll need a backpack with padded shoulder straps and a WAIST BELT. Seriously, the waist belt is key. You actually want all the weight on your hips, not your shoulders (Moms, sisters, aunties, we have

trained for YEARS for this moment. All that toddler carrying makes us naturals for rucking!) This protects your shoulders and back. When you're ready, go to an outfitting store and get measured OR go online and see what size of pack is best for you. They come in different torso lengths from tall people to short-waisted, "ribs-on-hips" folk like me.

Weight: Anything. Books. Bricks. Snacks. An equal volume of kit-tens. It doesn't matter. Those in the Go-Ruck community often just use weight plates in their packs. The Wonder Sweetie and I are of the mind that if we are going to carry stuff, it needs to be useful. If you want, please ask; I can give you a rundown of what I carry in my 96L pack, but suffice it to say, you

could live fairly comfortably out of my bag for a week. We have had to use our gear for first-aid and to remove trees from the trail. We LOVE our gear, but we worked up to it. Start out light.

An "I'm-An-Optimist" First Aid Kit: Three Band-Aids and any medications you might need on the trail.

Other Gear: If you REALLY want to get into rucking, perhaps with an eye on tackling part of the Appalachian Trail or something, consider these additions: an actual first-aid kit, 3 ways to make a fire, 3 ways to get water, 3 ways to attract attention, battery for your phone, and easy to eat food, etc. If you want to stop by the office, we can geek out about gear together.

Now, I know I am making rucking sound awe-

some – it actually got me in shape to run 10 miles – but don't go too far, too fast, too heavy, too soon. If you are a beginner, stop when you feel that happy tired of "Whew! That was good! I could go a little further!" End on a high with some left in the tank so you are eager to go out again tomorrow.

So right now, put the paper down, go find a backpack, and put a water bottle in it and walk around your house. These are your first steps to awesome fitness. You got this!

OH! WAIT! Before you do that, I need to tell you about a few fabulous events we have coming up!

Sulphur Creek Trestle/Battle For Athens Event: 14 September 2024 9 a.m.-noon

This year marks 160

years since the 1864 Battles of Athens and Sulphur Creek Trestle occurred in Limestone County. Bring your family out to learn some local history from experts in the field at the very places it happened. Local historians will be on site to tell the story of the battles and the men who fought them. Presentations will start approximately every half hour at both Fort Henderson (former Trinity School site) and in downtown Elkmont on the Richard Martin Rails to Trails. You can start at either site. This is a free event, but donations are always appreciated.

Cemetery Stroll: 6 October 2024 2-4 p.m.

Join us at the old Athens Cemetery on Hobbs Street to remember the famous (and infamous) folk who wove their story into the history of Athens. Costumed folk will regale you with tales of their person's life. This is a free event.

Haunt Walks: Tuesdays and Thursdays in October 7 p.m. and 7:30 p.m.

It's almost here (and with all the calls I have been getting, I know many of you can hardly wait!) Keep an eye out on our Facebook page and the Chamber of Commerce page for ticket ordering!

We have also rearranged our main office, and it looks so nice and bright! Please come see me, grab a brochure or three, and let's chat! (Ok, NOW go get your pack!)



Re-elect LaDon Townsend, District 4 Commission: *Workin’ Till The Work Is Done*

by Ali Elizabeth Turner

continued from page 1

I sat down with LaDon and his wife, Lisa, and we were later joined by his daughter Mallory and her adorable little firecracker of a girl, E.J.

LaDon and Lisa were high school childhood sweethearts at West Limestone High, and married as teens. LaDon became a successful, hard-working farmer. He grew row crops, raised chickens and hay, and he also drove a truck for 10 years. Once their three kids were in school, Lisa got her degree in education from Athens State University, and taught at Brookhill Elementary for eight years. LaDon, who played football and baseball at WLHS has volunteered ever since as a coach, the guy who mows, cleans and stripes the field, and as a farmer, he knows that hard weath-

er and hard work just go with the territory. Both LaDon and Lisa love to serve wherever they are; always have, always will. LaDon describes himself as being a conservative, a man of faith, and his love for his family is obvious.

Right out the gate, LaDon wanted me to make clear that he is adamant with regard to the people of Limestone County being more important than politics. “I serve the people, not a party,” he said, and approaches his job as commissioner much like Athens City Hall; from his perspective, the position is non-partisan. Everyone drives the roads, everyone needs a sheriff, and everyone needs help in a literal or figurative storm. He is also committed to seeing that tax dollars are spent prudently, services grow well as we grow rapidly, and that the charm of Athens-



Lisa and LaDon Townsend

Limestone County remains as we increase in population and respond positively to that impact.

Here are some of the things that LaDon believes, wants to do, and what he has been able to accomplish in his first term:

Public Safety

Public safety is a top priority for LaDon. He supports strong law enforcement and emergency services, working to ensure that Limestone County remains a safe place for families to live, work, and worship. LaDon is dedicated to providing the necessary resources and training for our first responders

so our community feels safe and can raise their families without the threat of crime.

LaDon is committed to adding officers to the Limestone County Sheriff’s Department as we grow, wants to see to it that the jail is improved by expanding/building facilities, and is pleased to report that Limestone County also now has its own attorney, Drew Dill. Mr. Dill’s job is to focus on all legal matters that pertain to running the county smoothly and with integrity. LaDon would also like to see the county add a judge to the bench to accommodate growth while upholding and protecting

the judicial system.

Infrastructure

As your County Commissioner, LaDon Townsend has worked to enhance Limestone County's infrastructure. He prioritizes improving roads, bridges, and public facilities to ensure safe, efficient, and modern infrastructure that supports economic growth and community well-being all while working to save tax dollars and be efficient in the way the county spends money.

LaDon told me that they have made great strides in getting roads paved and striped, and in his next

**RE-ELECT
LADON
TOWNSEND**

**DISTRICT 4 COUNTY
COMMISSIONER**

Paid for by the Friends of LaDon Townsend, 27485 Maples Rd., Lester, AL 35647



Granddaughter E.J. lights up the life of her grandparents

county are well-connected to drive education, business, and personal opportunities.

Property Rights

LaDon Townsend is a staunch defender of property rights. He believes in protecting the rights of property owners from overreaching regulations and an overbearing government; ensuring that property ownership remains a fundamental right for all residents of Limestone County.

Taxpayer Protection

LaDon Townsend is committed to protecting taxpayers. He promises to ensure that taxpayer money is spent wisely and efficiently, advocating for transparency and accountability in county budgeting and expenditures.

Less Government

Believing in less government, LaDon Townsend advocates for reducing unnecessary regulations, promoting individual freedoms, and allowing the free market to thrive without the overbearing pressure of bureaucratic red-tape. He strives to make local government more efficient and less intrusive

in the lives of Limestone County residents whenever possible.

Quality of Life

Improving the quality of life for all residents is central to LaDon Townsend's mission. He aims to enhance community services, recreational facilities, and public spaces, making Limestone County an even better place to call home for families who currently live here as well as making Limestone County an attractive and competitive place for families to relocate to all while maintaining the family-friendly atmosphere that makes Limestone County so special already.

Family

Family values are at the heart of LaDon Townsend's service. He supports initiatives that strengthen families, including quality education, family-friendly policies, and community programs that support the well-being and development of children and parents alike.

Conservative Values

LaDon Townsend upholds conservative values, including fiscal responsibility,

personal responsibility, and a commitment to traditional principles. He believes these values are the foundation of a strong and prosperous community. LaDon looks for every opportunity to educate the younger generation on the importance of caring for your family and neighbors, while respecting those who came before you. LaDon believes we should always work to impress upon our youth the importance of defending our faith, family, and the freedoms we hold dear.

As we ended our time together, I asked LaDon what I ask everyone: "I have choices; why should I choose you?" He answered, "I am proud to be a voice for the people, and re-elected or not, I'm going to keep doing what I do. I see Limestone County as a special place, and the work here is unfinished."

If you are a resident of District 4 in Limestone County, Alabama, and this is what you are looking for in a leader, then re-elect LaDon Townsend in November.

term secondary roads will be the focus. Part of his vision is to get a full recycling service established in Limestone County. This will help manage our growth, helps us be good stewards of the gift that is Limestone County, and will also create a revenue stream that can accommodate proper growth of services. LaDon wants to build a facility that would function as a "one-stop-shop" housing every office of the county and streamline its function from top to bottom. He also wants to increase the ability to work well with other commissions.

Connectivity

One of the things that demonstrated the need for connectivity and "internet infrastructure" was the challenge that the people of District 4 experienced during COVID in being able to get online, especially for business and education. West Limestone was underserved, and LaDon started working that issue early in his term with considerable success.



Learning As A Lifestyle

The Overlooked Service: *Recognizing Unseen Acts Of Compassion And Justice Celebrating The Unsung Heroes*

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



As we observed Labor Day this week, a time dedicated to honoring the contributions of workers across the nation, it's fitting to reflect on the often overlooked individuals whose quiet acts of kindness and integrity sustain our communities. Consider the healthcare provider who cares for those who cannot afford to pay, the employer who ensures fair wages even when it's not profitable, or the local tradesperson who chooses honesty over exploitation. These people may not receive public accolades, but their work is vital to the fabric of our society. They represent the unsung heroes whose efforts are rarely acknowledged or rewarded in a world that often overlooks selfless service.

The Invisible Recognition: A Broader Perspective

While society may undervalue these acts of service, there is a deeper truth that transcends societal recognition. For those who believe in a higher power, the assurance comes from texts like Hebrews 6:10 which remind us that no act of love goes unnoticed by God. However, this message extends beyond religious boundaries; it speaks to a universal principle of justice and recognition. Whether one is religious or not, there is comfort in the idea that good deeds, even when



unrecognized by people, carry intrinsic value.

Justice Beyond Human Eyes: The All-Seeing Eye of Integrity

In many traditions, including Christian Scripture, there is a belief that a higher power sees every small act of righteousness. For example, the Bible speaks of God's care for the lilies of the field and the birds of the air, implying a divine attentiveness to even the smallest details (Matthew 6:26-30). The work done by those who seek to be a voice for the unheard often goes unrecognized by human institutions, but the principle of justice reminds us that such work is seen and valued beyond our immediate reality.

Understanding the Weight of Service: Acknowledging Sacrifice

Hebrews 6:10 speaks to the idea that every effort made in the name of goodness and love is remembered, not just by a divine being but by the very essence of justice itself. This recognition is crucial, especially when the labor involves physical, emotional, or spiritual sacrifice. Acts of compassion are often lonely, filled with challenges that are not always rewarded in the short term. The life of civil rights activist Fannie Lou Hamer illustrates this well; despite facing immense personal suffering, she continued her work, driven by the belief that her efforts

were known and valued.

The Promise of Justice: Reward beyond Recognition

For those who believe in a divine power, there is a promise that transcends human systems of reward. While society may not always recognize or compensate small acts of kindness, there is a belief in a greater justice that does not adhere to the limitations of human recognition. The story of the widow's mite (Mark 12:41-44) is a powerful illustration of this, showing that even the smallest, most sacrificial acts are of great value. However, this principle can also resonate with those outside religious circles, as it speaks to the intrinsic worth of compassion and integrity.

Encouragement for All Who Serve

As we celebrate Labor Day, a holiday that reminds us of the importance of work and the dignity of labor, let us also remember and honor those whose efforts go unnoticed. Every act of service, whether public or hidden, grand or small, carries immense value. For those who serve with integrity, justice, and love, the assurance is that their work is not in vain. Whether one finds strength in the promise of divine reward or in the satisfaction of contributing to the greater good, the call remains the same: to continue serving with the knowledge that such work is meaningful and impactful.

Space For What's Important: *Filing Made Simple And Clear*

by Sonya Fehér



Filing isn't just about stuffing papers into folders; it's about creating a consistent system that helps you find and store important documents easily.

Over the years, I've heard the same complaints: people don't know what to save and they can't find their papers. Here's how to set up a system that works.

What to File

In "Say Goodbye To Paper Clutter," we explored how to pare down your papers and in "Prevent Paper Piles," I showed you how to create action files. Now, it's time to create a filing system for your reference files with essential documents you may need to refer to later, such as:

- Medical records, including test results and receipts for tax deductions.
- Account data, like insurance policies and credit card agreements.
- Proof of ownership, including titles, deeds, and receipts for high-ticket items.
- Important documents, such as certificates of birth, adoption, marriage, divorce, and death.
- Identification, like your social security card, passport, and visa.
- Records of achievement, including transcripts, degrees and diplomas, military, and work records.
- Tax documentation (ask your CPA how many years to keep) in-

cluding W2 and 1099 forms, bank and brokerage statements, tuition payments, charitable donation receipts and anything else you claimed as a deduction or filed on your return.

How to Set Up Your Filing System

Though it may be tempting to reuse those old manila folders and handwrite your files, I do not recommend it. Clutter is contagious, but so is calm. When you create files that are clean, organized, and nice to look at, you're more likely to use them.

If you're setting up a paper filing system, you will want:

1. Filing Space: A file drawer, box, or filing cabinet.

2. Folders: Get exterior hanging folders with plastic category tabs and interior file folders with third-cut top tabs. A simple search at an office supply company or online will get you these common file types. They're not expensive and they're worth having. You can get a box of one hundred interior folder and might get twenty-five exterior hanging files to start.

I recommend getting folders in a color you like to look at so when you open your file drawers, you're happy with what you see. You can get the exterior in one color and interior in another or keep them the same. I do NOT recommend you get multiple colors thinking you'll have folders for

various categories. You'll inevitably need more of one and less of another, so just keep it simple and use the same color. It's tidier, cheaper, and easier to keep track of.

3. Label Maker: Using a label maker makes things easier to read and encourages you to keep things organized because the labels look so tidy. I highly recommend the Brother P-Touch with the black lettering on white background 1/2" M-Tape. The label maker costs less than \$20, doesn't waste a lot of tape with preset lengths, lets you choose different size fonts for labels or index tabs in binders, and has enough functions to give you numbers and symbols, but isn't so complicated you have to

reread the manual every time you use it.

Setting Up Your System

Arrange your exterior hanging folders with plastic category tabs on the right-hand side and insert them in the front tabs of the folder, not the back.

Your third-cut interior folders have tabs for left, middle, and right. Use alternating tabs for interior folders so labels are visible at a glance. Keep your categories specific enough to find what you need but general enough to avoid creating a mish-mash of miscellaneous papers. For instance, a financial folder would end up with hundreds of pages in it and make it hard to find anything, but you don't need a folder for every month of statements that you're getting.

If you're setting up a digital filing system by scanning papers and creating digital files on your computer or in the cloud, you'll use the same strategies and create exterior folders for your file categories and folders within them for subcategories. You might want to consider encrypted folders or a firewall to keep your data secure.

For a copy of my filing guidelines, email sonya@spacewiseorganizing.com and I'll share my spaceWise Filing Categories with you.

Sonya Fehér

*Organizer, Coach,
Author, & Speaker*

<https://spacewiseorganizing.com>



Traveling On The AMTRAK With A Service Dog

by Joel Allen



The room seemed to rock back and forth like someone was cradling us and trying to lull us to sleep. Every now and again the scream and grind of metal could be heard outside the train car we were in because of the steel wheels on the rails. Houston, when we first started our journey would raise his head and give a curious look like, "What is that noise and why are we rocking back and forth?" He would sometimes look back at me to see my reaction, and when he saw I was not alarmed, he would settle down. Since my Army days when I was in Korea, I have not been on a train, and like Korea's train ride, this one was very relaxing. As we traveled on the train, the staff and conductor always stopped and complimented Houston on how well he behaved. Great Danes get a lot of attention as service dogs, and people are either amazed at their size or terrified they might get eaten. In Houston's case, no one ever knows he is there until he gets up from his blanket. That's how quiet he is. As a rule, I do allow staff, police, and EMTs to interact with my service dog. Why would I do that? Think about it. If an emergency happens and someone with a service dog needs assistance, it's always good to train them not to panic and be used to people. I appreciate people who ask

to pet my service dog. It is respectful and gives Houston new opportunities to meet different people. Anyway, in this article I will share with everyone what it was like to travel a great distance for two days with a service dog and how to be prepared for things to come.

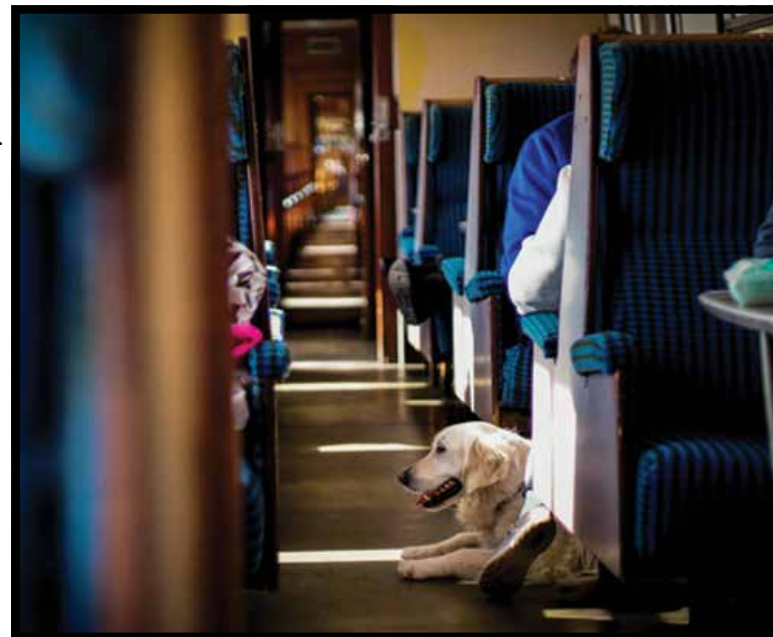
So, we took the train to Maine. Houston had a great time. When he was not sleeping on his blanket I usually bring with us, he was staring out the train car window with a curious look on his face. He watched as the scenery went by for a while, then he looked at me again checking on me, and then laid back down.

So, here is what I learned on a train ride traveling with a service dog. To start with, I recommend anyone making plans to travel to notify who you're traveling through like I did with AMTRAK that I would be traveling with my service dog. I also notified them he was a Great Dane, to ensure they knew I needed a little more room than most people with service dogs. AMTRAK was very receptive and met my accommodations I needed.

Now, when traveling with your service dog, it is always wise to pack a drinking bottle for your dog. During my travels with my service dogs, I will give them some people food to hold them over until we get

to where we are going. I know, some of my readers will not agree with me, but that is okay. Lugging a bag of dog food is not a great or logical idea, and besides, I was raised that dogs ate people food and lived longer than they do on the marketed dog food today. I always bring a very comfortable blanket that is easy to fold and is very temper-pedic for their joints. When Houston does not have a blanket that is comfortable, he will not remain long in one place. It would be wise to also purchase a thin, small blanket to fold inside the dog blanket to give additional comfort on cool or cold nights during your travels together.

As we traveled, I would always ask the conductor how long we would be stopping and time Houston's bathroom breaks with long stops. Note to self: In some areas of the country, it is frowned upon if one does not clean up after their dog, service dog or not, and in some parts of our country, one can be fined for this if the mess is left. So, be sure to pack some doggy bags for cleanup and know the laws and ordinances where traveling. Also, it would not hurt to pack your own Walmart plastic bags because through some areas one travels, plastic is outlawed. Let's say we are traveling and Houston becomes thirsty. Let's also add



that I forgot his watering bottle designed just for dogs. No worries! I always travel with a sharp pocket knife and will find myself carving up a plastic cup forming a trough for Houston's muzzle to fit, and I pour water into this to satisfy his thirst. I recommend giving water every other time your service dog pees somewhere.

I also found that stopping at different train stations, such as Washington DC's train station, one should ask the staff or a police officer where best to walk your service dog to use the bathroom. Remember, in places like DC, cleanup behind your service dog is required.

All in all, it took two days to travel, and Houston was a rock star as always. One more thing I would insist on is to ensure your service dog's tags are up to date in case you're separated, and additional information should be printed on the tags. For

example, Houston's tag states his name and my contact information. I list it like this:

Dad-my number

Grandma-her number

Auntie-her number

I also have my address on there too. Houston is micro-chipped, but I do not trust technology.

Well, folks! Traveling is easy with a well-trained service dog. Houston met other service dogs and one police dog. He was a model canine citizen. God bless you all and see y'all next month.

"Remember to love your dogs because they love you. Maybe not the way you want them to, like chewing up your favorite shoes or what not, but that is just love chewing. Be thankful for the time you have with them always."

Joel Allen

ABC Certified

Dog Trainer

256-651-2211

The POWER Of JOY, Part II Happiness “Happens”: Joy Abides

by Detri McGhee - CLU, ChFC



Happiness depends upon a “happening,” an event, a word, or deed. Joy exists because it simply “IS.” The kind of JOY that I am speaking of cannot be manufactured or manipulated. And it cannot be imitated or even faked for very long.

Happiness is easily replaced by another “happening.” Happiness can be destroyed quickly -- by a skinned knee, or a cross word from another, or even a hot door handle on these scorching Southern summer days. Joy cannot be destroyed, and it will not even be dampened for very long. True JOY has self-healing properties that enable it to heal from within very quickly.

The power of JOY cannot be overstated. Pure, simple, delightful JOY turns an ordinary, everyday man or woman into a powerhouse of ability and a vessel able to carry positive influence into the far reaches of their world.

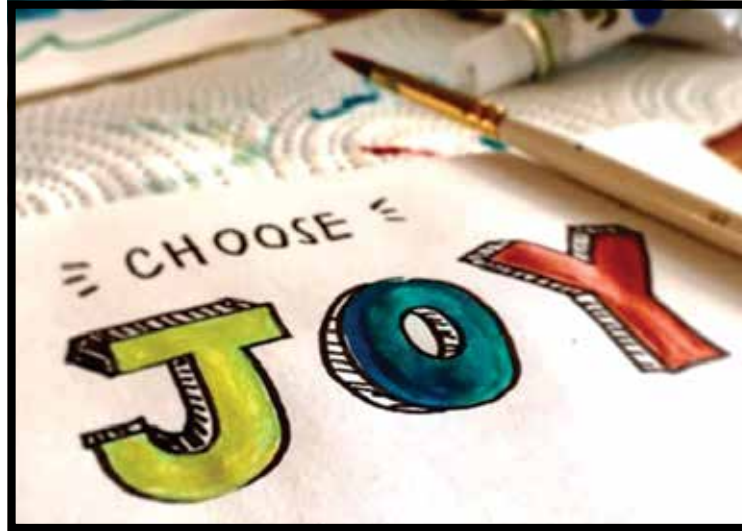
The JOY I am speaking of comes from deep within and does not depend upon circumstances, comfort, or the actions/reactions of others. True JOY cannot be taken from the owner. Abiding JOY can be present when there is much pain, disappointment, sorrow – even measures of fear and trepidation. Real JOY can be misunderstood by those who do not possess it. They may say we are not “realistic,” or we live in a fantasy world, unwilling to face the “real” world.

So, what exactly is this kind of “JOY” that I am

speaking of? This beautiful thing called JOY exists deep within the soul of a person and cannot be touched by any outward or foreign person, place, or thing. True JOY comes from knowing beyond a shadow of a doubt that when all is said and done, it will all be okay. Peace surrounds Joy, even when the world around us is chaotic. Fear trembles in the face of True Joy. After all, FEAR is F-E-A-R, and stands for False Evidence Appearing Real. At least, fear CAN be that...But only as you come to understand what the future really holds for you, and you know it is all eventually good.

I miss my momma! And her wisdom. Once when I was upset about something, she calmed me and then asked: “A hundred years from now, what difference will it make? If the answer is “Nothing!” then deal with it and move on. If there is another answer, then this is really worth doing whatever it takes to set it right.”

WOW! That wisdom has meant a lot to me through the years. So, especially when problems persist, or hurts happen, or sadness strikes, or disappointments develop, or exhaustion exists... that is the time to ask: How important really IS this thing I am consumed with right now? I mean, compared to eternity, does it really matter? Wouldn't it be to my advantage to react to this problem in the most beneficial way possible? Couldn't I handle this issue better if I thought through it and considered



my options with a calm, clear mind, instead of a frazzled, rushed response? In the midst of this confusion, chaos, pain, fatigue or whatever is distracting me, demanding my time and energy right now, where is my JOY? Where is my Anchor? Where is my Peace in the midst of the storm?

I cannot tell you where yours is. I cannot define your Source of Joy! But I can share with you that in all my (many!) years, I have never known but One Source of Joy that has never abandoned or deserted me or all I have personally known -- Only One Abiding Person Who has never let me down, lied to me, or brought me harm. That One Powerful Joy-filled and Joy-empowering Person is Jesus Christ, the Son of the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

Now, you don't have to be a “believer” to benefit some from what the world calls JOY! If you choose another path, there is no one who can prevent that! God Himself gives each person the right to choose for themselves whether to submit to and acknowledge

God and accept His gift of eternal life. What God has given to you, NO ONE can take from you. You can always choose. (But, CAUTION: You cannot choose the consequences.)

Everyone alive, believer or not, can benefit from happiness, and the secular kind of joy that many have. That kind of pleasure – joy – is still deeper than happiness. It grows with gratitude, thankfulness, kindness, practicing peace, forgiving. But it doesn't ABIDE forever.

I didn't start out with this column this week to talk

about my Faith. I started out encouraging positivity. Choosing to be grateful, kind, pleasant, uplifting, and more – simply because it is GOOD FOR YOU AND ME to do that. It brings us good results, and brightens our day. But, I had to share as I did this week because I realized, that for ME, there is no Peace, Love, Joy, Patience, Kindness, Goodness, Gentleness, and Self-Control except because I belong to Jesus Christ. My desire for each of you is that you find that power and peace and JOY for yourself. Be blessed, dear friends!

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The Alternative Approach

Eternally Sick

by Roy Williams



America is now recognized as one of the sickest nations in the industrialized world, largely due to our food supply or the food complex that is tied directly to the sick care system. What better way to support the sick care system than to poison our food supply and **make our citizens eternally sick?** It all stems back to the invention of processed foods that destroy the body at a cellular level, a highly complex destructive system of addicting the citizens with great tasting, addictive and toxic foods that lead to chronic disease. They are destroying the human body from within, which is the same platform of communism. How do you destroy a representative republic? From within. Communism 101.

Let's take a look at the baseline condition of "America's Public Health."

Obesity: 74% of American adults are overweight or obese; close to 50% of our children are overweight or obese. Today, 77% of young adults are not qualified to be in our military due to weight issues. A full 50% of American adults now have type II diabetes or are pre-diabetic and 30% of our teens now have pre-diabetes. To help you understand that number better, in 1950 only 1%

of Americans had type II diabetes. This is a condition affecting our children that no pediatrician in the 1950s would have had to deal with.

Now, 18% of our teens have fatty liver disease. Fatty liver disease was only diagnosed in late-stage alcoholics until the 1990s when it started to spread to all age groups, even those who had never used alcohol. Please realize that fatty liver is now the **number one disease killer** around the world and is caused by eating excessive amounts of addicting sugar of which high fructose corn syrup is the most consumed form of sugar in the world. Young adult cancers are up 79% and this is the first year in American history that cancer has passed two million cases. Slightly over 25% of women are on antidepressant medications. Another scary fact is that over 40% of young adults have mental health conditions. We have the highest infant mortality rate in the entire developed world, in spite of spending two-times more on health care than all other countries spend on maternity health.

Remember, the food industry has been developing this slow progressive plan using addicting and toxic chemicals that are FDA approved to be added to our foods be-



ginning with the genetically modified seeds they plant, the insecticides they spray on the plants we eat, and the toxins used to preserve our food supplies.

Protecting our Freedoms

Our elections are just around the corner, and I believe they are the most important in our history. To do my part, please allow me a few words to remind everyone what Trump was able to accomplish while he was in the White House. He stopped all new wars from breaking out, almost closed the borders, lowered taxes on the middle class, created more jobs for more people from all ethnic groups than any president in history; Americans were saving money, food costs stabilized, interest rates were low, and the U.S., Canada, and Mexican pipeline was flowing with average gas prices at \$1.89. We were experiencing the best economy in 60 years.

What has the Biden - Kamala administration done? They are supporting wars all over the Middle East, borders are wide open and we are being invaded, taxes are higher on the middle class than they have been since

the Jimmy Carter administration, many people are out of work or having to work two jobs just to make ends meet. I personally can't remember food costs so high in my lifetime; interest rates are so high they are predicting millions will lose their homes. Our economy is in horrible shape.

Yes, of course, the deep state wants to stop Trump because all of that goes against their agenda, which is to make slaves of every citizen in the U.S. and around the world. They want a one-world government, one-world money system, total surveillance of everything we do, control all the food supplies worldwide, open borders, replace the Constitution, and force everyone into fifteen-minute cities. They don't believe that anyone should own their own land because they believe that all land should be owned and controlled by government. They want everyone on their drugs so we, the citizens, should live. Please, make an informed decision before voting. We cannot afford, as a nation, to vote based on emotions in this important election. We must look at the facts and

put our feelings aside and do what is best for this, the greatest Republic ever to exist. We will not survive another four years like the last four. It is also time for all of us to learn the facts about our food supply and stop supporting deadly foods just because they taste good. Deciding to support your health with all-natural supplements is the only thing standing between each of us and eternal dependency on big pharma, expensive medical care, and foods that should not be consumed by any human. Trump has promised to turn the power back over to the states and the people. He is definitely getting my total support.

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Cooking with Anna (continued from page 13)

God Is Still Good

by Anna Hamilton

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego paid no attention to King Nebuchadnezzar. They did not serve any of the gods of Babylon, and they did not worship the image of the king when it was put before the people. This made Nebuchadnezzar furious, and he summoned the three men before him. He asked them why they did not worship his many gods and why they did not worship the image of him. He asked, "What god will be able to rescue you from my hand?" (Daniel 3:15)

These three men knew that the God they served was the one true God. They replied to him, "King Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to defend ourselves before you in this matter. If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God we serve is able to deliver us from it, and he will deliver us from your majesty's hand. But even if he does not, we want you to know, your majesty, that we will not serve your gods or worship the image of gold you have set up." (Daniel 3:16-18)

We know the end of the story, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego did not burn in the furnace. In fact, when they were in the furnace, a fourth man appeared which King Nebuchadnezzar said looked like the son of God (Daniel 3:25). They were called out of the furnace and Nebuchadnezzar declared praise to the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. He declared that anyone saying anything against their God be destroyed. He knew that these three men truly served the one, true God.

These three men had such strong faith that even in the face of death they knew that God was still good. They were so bold that they knew if God did not answer their prayers

and save them from the furnace, their faith was true. In Daniel 3:18, they answered the King, "and if not, He is still good." Their answer to whether or not their God would save them was firm and noble. They did not fear anything in this life. Faith has no room for fear, and they boldly stood before one of the most feared kings in history and declared their belief in God.

They did not know whether God would deliver them or allow them to die in the flames. They knew, however, that He was able to deliver them. They were determined to be faithful to God, no matter what. Even if that meant death, they trusted the Lord with the outcome.

When we are faced with the horrible things that happen to us in this life, are you bold enough to say, "and if not, He is still good." Just like Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, we can have the same boldness of faith. We must have the same boldness of faith. God is always with us and will not abandon us. We must not waiver in our love for God, and we must always be willing to show our faith in times of trouble. By standing firm in our faith, it will bring others to know God, just like King Nebuchadnezzar.

This week's recipe is an easy, delicious, and nutritious chicken and cauliflower soup. It will be perfect for this fall and is sure to be a crowd pleaser. I hope you enjoy it as much as my family.

"Now to Him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to His power that is at work within us, to Him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen." (Ephesians 3:20)

Mental Health Minute

What to Expect from Mental Health Counseling - Part 2

by Lisa Philippart,
Licensed Professional Counselor



"You can't start the next chapter of your life if you keep re-reading the last one."

- Anonymous

In my last article, we decided that you were going to seek help by making an appointment to see a mental health professional. I shared how to search for a therapist, and also looked at resources to find the right fit for you. Once you have chosen a therapist, it's time to schedule that first appointment. I have had so many first-time clients voice such thoughts as, "I was so nervous... I just didn't know what to expect," or "Wow. This wasn't at all what I thought it would be," or "I

wish I would have come sooner." Whatever is going through your head, I can help you to be a little bit better prepared, which may serve to allay some of your fears or concerns.

Many therapists now have websites, which not only provide a wealth of information about who they are, but also contain the forms that they use for their practice. If these forms are available on the website, the therapist will most likely ask you to print out and complete this paperwork. The forms are usually an intake questionnaire, informed consent, and an authorization to release information. The intake can be overwhelming because we want and need to know about your past and current situation.

Some of the questions may seem extremely personal and even hurtful. The important piece to remember is be honest. I can't help you if the person on the paper doesn't match the person in front of me. If you don't feel comfortable answering a particular question, then don't. That's right, don't. Intakes can be invasive and triggering. So maybe you just aren't ready to "share" before you have even met your therapist. I understand. Either leave the answer blank or write "not ready to go there." At my client's first session, I ask if she would like to take some time to review her information, or do we need to go right to what brought her in to my office. Remember this is your time. The counsel-

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ing session is about you.

Informed consent is letting you, the client, know that you have the legal and ethical right to understand and agree to the proposed "relationship" to which you are entering. The consent contains information about practices, procedures, and methods. There are usually sections about cancellations, risks and benefits, termination, social media restrictions, financial arrangements, arbitration, communication techniques, and patient's rights. Your most important right is found in the confidentiality statement, which lets you know that what is discussed in session remains private, except for certain safety issues, which include harm to self or others, and elder or child abuse. Your privacy is critical because you need to know that you can be free to express yourself without fear of judgment. The authorization to release information form is used only if you are willing to allow others to have access to the information in your file.

The first session is usually spent information-

gathering, and the therapist may need to ask LOTS of questions. During that initial session most therapists alternate between directive and non-directive therapy. For example, if you have a hard time opening up and/ or getting started, I may need to take the lead and explore through my inquiries. I have had other clients walk into that first session and they don't stop talking until the hour is up! These clients are often the ones who have waited way too long to come see me and can't wait to just "spew." After your session, take some time to reflect. Ask yourself: Is this someone who can help me? Do I feel comfortable sharing the most intimate parts of my life with this person? Did they seem genuine and caring?

I will come full circle in my next article and address how a counselor could help you to change unhealthy relational patterns.

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



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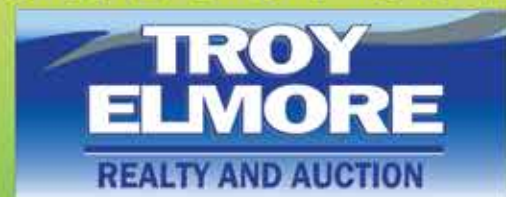
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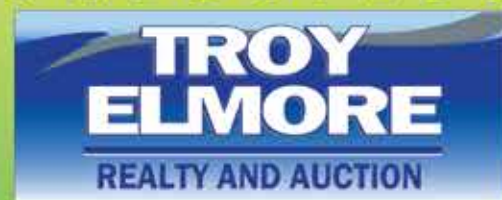
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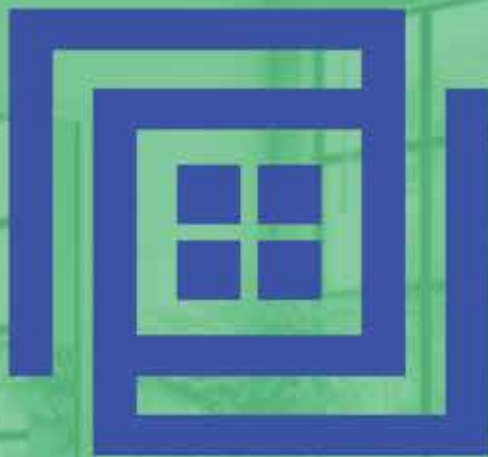
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- James Farmer

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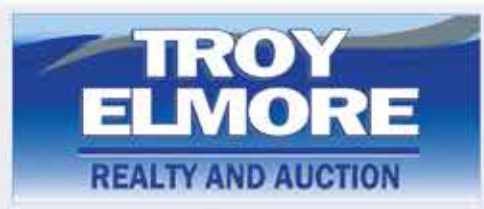
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