

November 1 - November 14, 2024

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information & inspiration

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

## Special Feature

*Prepared, Proven, And Professional...*

The day before Hurricane Helene made her malevolent romp through the Southeast, I met with my friend and long-time...  
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## Museum News

*Patriotic Events At The Museum...*  
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## Clean, Green And Beautiful



*A Gift From A Flower To A Garden...*  
Since downtown Athens has been growing rapidly, the Athens-Limestone Beautification Board has officially opened their Downtown Memorial Flowerpot sale...  
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ATHENS-LIMESTONE COUNTY  
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... **NOVEMBER 22-24, 2024** ...  
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**Publisher / Editor**  
Ali Turner

**Copy Editor**  
Yvonne Dempsey

**Graphic Design**  
Jonathan Hamilton

**Web Design**  
Teddy Wolcott

**Sales**  
Rosemary Stainbrook

**Contributing Writers**

- D. A. Slinkard
- Anna Hamilton
- Phil Williams
- Claire Tribble
- Stephanie Reynolds
- Lisa Philippart
- Joel Allen
- Eric Betts
- Roy Williams
- Nick Niedzwiecki
- Yvonne Dempsey
- Brenda Wilkerson
- Donna Clark

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**Publisher's Point**

**Unreasonable Hospitality: The Remarkable Power Of Giving People More Than They Expect**

The holiday season has officially begun, and soon it will be time for families to gather around tables, (both residential and commercial) and eat food that is hopefully delicious. Maybe there will be plates, real napkins, and glassware. Maybe there will be several courses, or perhaps a buffet. Maybe it will be take-out, delivery, or drive-thru. Maybe it will be at a shelter, and maybe it will be at a Sheraton. At the end of the day, it won't be about the food; it will be about how all involved treated each other, and whether anyone leaves the table crying, and that includes the server.

To say that manners have been marginalized in our culture is an understatement, but I have good news: they can be recovered, and as it pertains to business, marvelous manners and stellar service actually affect profit margins. *Unreasonable Hospitality* is proof of that, and its story is one that transcends the hospitality industry. The principles found in this book contain what I call "transferable skills," meaning that they can apply to everything from fine dining to farriers.

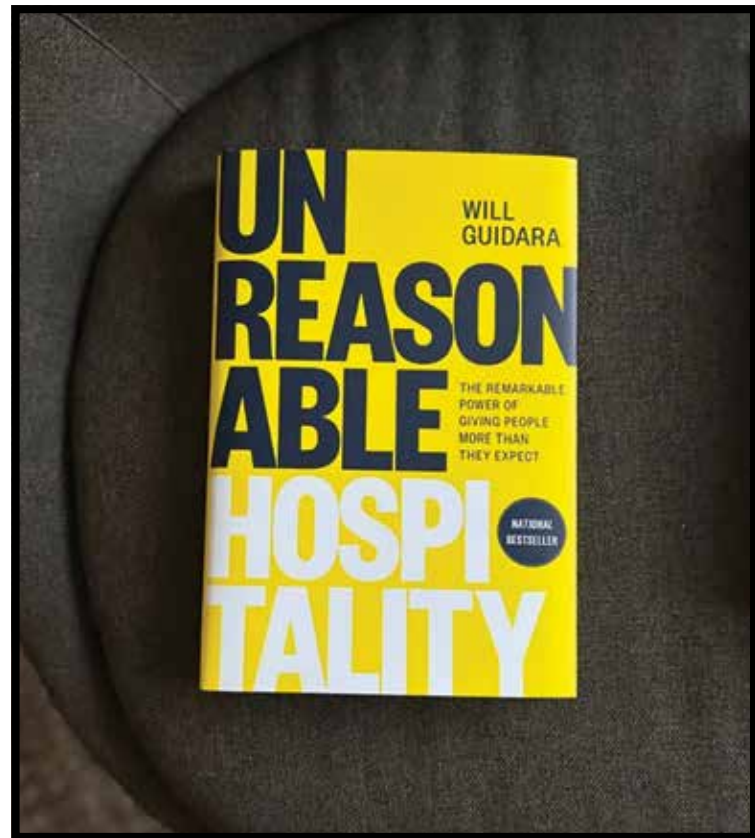
When Will Guidara, the author of *Unreasonable Hospitality*, was only 26 years old, he took over a brasserie in New York

that had always struggled. That state of struggle is all too common in the restaurant business, and truth be told, most restaurants eventually fail. Over time, by treating both his crew and his customers as though they were actually made in the image and likeness of God, Will's restaurant eventually became known as the *finest restaurant in the world*. Now Will has not only written a *New York Times* best seller, he even offers a coaching program that teaches anyone how to apply what Will learned the hard way to any business, no matter how seemingly unrelated.

Here are some reviews and descriptions of the content and its application to business and even life:

*"Unreasonable Hospitality: The Remarkable Power of Giving People More Than They Expect by Will Guidara offers a compelling exploration of how going beyond the call of duty can transform service. Rooted in Guidara's extensive experience in the hospitality industry, the book blends personal anecdotes with practical insights, making a strong case for extreme generosity in all areas of life and business."*

*How did Guidara pull off this unprecedented*



*ed transformation? Radical reinvention, a true partnership between the kitchen and the dining room—and memorable, over-the-top, bespoke hospitality. Guidara's team surprised a family who had never seen snow with a magical sledding trip to Central Park after their dinner; they filled a private dining room with sand, complete with Mai Tais, and beach chairs, to console a couple with a canceled vacation. And his hospitality extended beyond those dining at the restaurant to his own team, who learned to deliver praise and criticism with inten-*

*tion; why the answer to some of the most pernicious business dilemmas is to give more—not less; and the magic that can happen when a busser starts thinking like an owner.*

It might be a good idea to "ingest" this book before the doorbell rings and the guests arrive. I know that I am intrigued, and there is no better time than the holidays to experience a transformation.

*Ali Elizabeth Turner*

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



# Voting For Veterans

by Ali Elizabeth Turner



In just a few days, citizens (hopefully vetted ones that are actually walking around and not previously thought to be deceased) are going to cast their vote in one of the strangest and snarkiest presidential elections in American history.

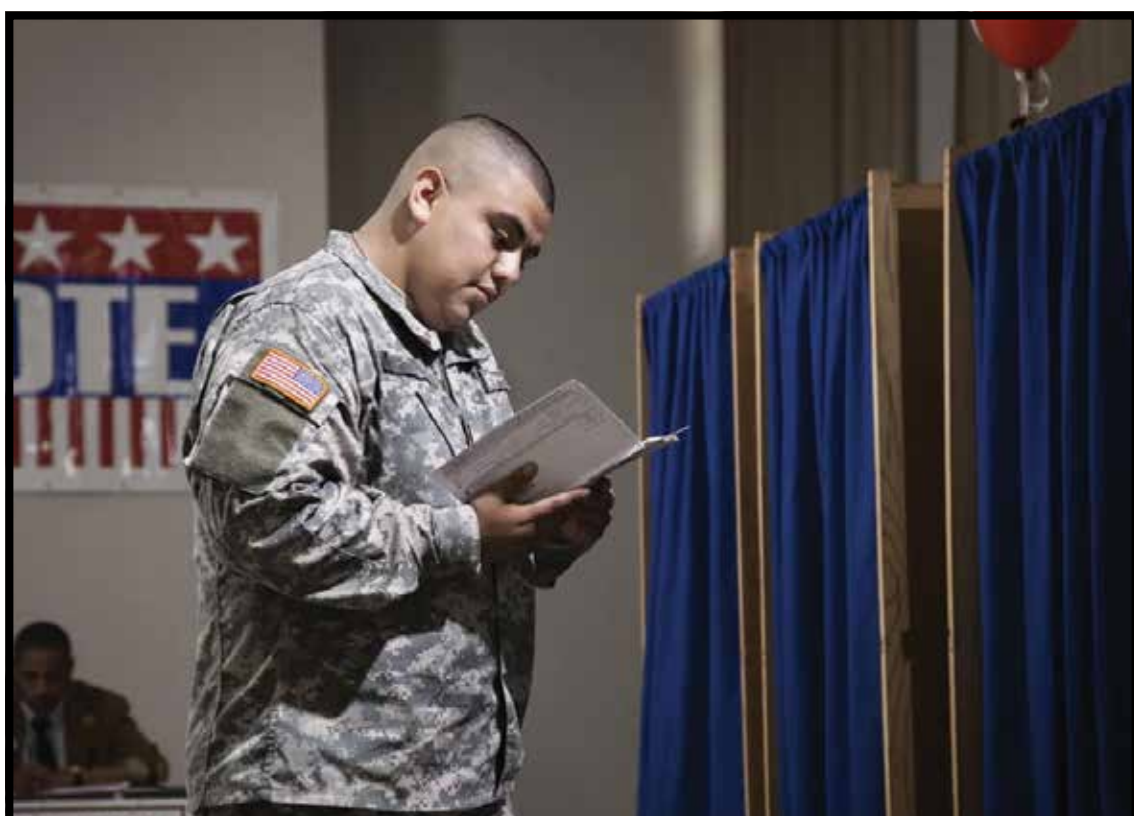
I am not going to try and persuade you along partisan lines as to who the best candidate is. I am sure that you have already made your choice long ago, and it is my fond hope that you did your own research, asked the tough questions, and if you are a person of faith, that you prayed about your choice before you sign in at the polling place in your district on Tuesday.

Nor am I going to pitch a fit if you didn't do any of the above. I am, however, going to appeal to you by

way of a story. It is one that I have told on several occasions and platforms, and it bears repeating because it involves veterans, and veterans who put their lives on the line so that complete strangers could vote.

It was January of 2005. I was "serving those who served" by working for the Department of Defense in Morale, Welfare, and Recreation, otherwise known as MWR. I was on a base known as Radwaniyah, and it had been the stomping grounds of Uday Hussein, the son of the Butcher of Baghdad (one of them at least), who happened to be his father. That man's name was Saddam Hussein, arguably one of the most evil men that ever drew breath.

It was cold, and the Iraqis had set the date for the



first true election since 1958. There had been various socialist dictators that had "show elections," prior to Saddam, and Saddam himself had two. In the first, he claimed a

99% vote in his favor, and the second boasted a 100% unanimous vote that served to "re-elect" him.

Enter our veterans, and those of the Coalition that had gone to Iraq to help. Due to the fact that Radwaniyah was an intel base, it was almost exclusively populated by Americans, with the exception of some elite forces that served to protect the perimeter. Here is where I saw something that changed my life forever. As it pertained to our soldiers, I saw guys put their lives on the line so that complete strangers had the chance to vote. It was a long, long day. There was bloodshed; thankfully not much, but I made coffee for the guys when they came in. It was a moment of celebratory tiredness.

As far as the Iraqis were concerned, Al-Zarqawi

had promised to kill any who dared defy Al-Qaeda and vote. He managed to take the lives of a little over 45 Iraqis. Some had purchased their coffins in case they didn't make it through the day, and a 96-year-old woman voted for the first time. She was brought to the polling place in a wheelbarrow. "Blood and treasure" took on a whole new meaning, and I want to finish this **Soldier** by asking a question as it pertains to our troops:

Who, in your mind will lead and inspire our troops as Commander-in-Chief to manifest this kind of selflessness, and when they do, who will protect **THEM**? Once you have your answer, then vote for that person on November 5. And, while you're at it, pray that we will never have to have soldiers protect **US** while we "fill in the bubble" on our ballots.

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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](mailto:jhunt9155@gmail.com).

## VVA Chapter 511 and the AVVA Meeting November 4

VVA Chapter 511 and the AVVA's next meeting is Monday, Nov. 4, at the AL Veterans Museum, 114 W. Pryor St, Athens. Food and fellowship at 5:30 p.m. with the meeting at 6.

## James L. Daniels DAVA Unit 51 Meeting November 5

James L. Daniels DAVA Unit 51 meets monthly on the first Tuesdays at 6 p.m. at 25396 Airport Rd, Athens.

## Veterans Day Parade November 11

11:00 AM. Location: Starts at Athens High and takes Pryor to Shaw to Hobbs to Jefferson to Market to Marion to Washington to Jefferson to the library.

## ServSafe Manager Training November 11

8:00am - 5:00pm. The Launch Box, 121 S Marion St, Athens, AL. Upcoming ServSafe Manager Training! Are you in the food service industry? Whether you work in a restaurant, daycare, nursing home, or hospital, our one-day ServSafe Manager Training and Certification is perfect for you! Check out more information at [www.athenslaunchbox.com](http://www.athenslaunchbox.com).

## 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](http://www.yesterdayevents.com)

## Gettin' Dirty At The Library: Composting November 12

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

## 2024 Athens-Limestone Tinsel Trail November 18 - December 31

Big Spring Memorial Park in Athens. This is a month-long OUTDOOR event, and we take every precaution to protect Big Spring Memorial Park, its users, and its animal inhabitants. Athens Police Department will increase patrols in the park the duration of the event. Thank you to Athens City and Limestone County for arranging for temporary power poles this year!

## 2024 Athens-Limestone County Christmas Parade December 5

2024 Theme: Christmas Carnival of Lights. Line up: 3:00 p.m. – 4:30 p.m. Parade Time: Promptly at 6 p.m. Entry Fee: \$50.00 (Must be paid by November 19th or you will not be able to participate. No exceptions) IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR THE 2024 PARADE: In order to increase safety measures, the following new rules have been implemented: • 4:30PM will be the CUT OFF time for all drop offs, float line up, walking groups, band arrivals, and single vehicle entries. Latecomers will be turned away. No exceptions. • You are NOT ALLOWED to throw any items from floats (candy, toys, goody bags, food, coupons, souvenirs, etc.). Athens PD will be monitoring this, and you will be denied entry to subsequent parades if this rule is ignored • NO HORSES will be allowed in the parade aside from carriages/or miniatures on floats • The amount of float entries will be limited this year. This is a first come first serve basis. No additional floats will be accepted, and registration will be CUT OFF once max number of floats are registered. To enter, email [brooke@alcchamber.org](mailto:brooke@alcchamber.org)

## 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.



# Prepared, Proven, And Professional

by Ali Elizabeth Turner



*The Muse Menfolk of River City Roofing Solutions: from left, Michael, the late Danny Ray, and Chris*

The day before Hurricane Helene made her malevolent romp through the Southeast, I met with my friend and long-time *Athens Now* client, Michael Muse of River City Roofing Solutions. Both Michael and the business are not strangers to either natural or personal disasters, as we'll discuss in a minute, and this whole article could be summed up by saying, "If disaster hits, these are the guys you want." But, a bit more detail is in order, so read on.

What most people don't know is that there are still areas here in Limestone County that have not yet been "made whole" from our tornado in May. We were hit harder than what was first thought, and I know from the weekly reports I get in our Business Networking International group that River City has never wavered from their commitment to our community to bring quality roofing

quickly and with care, no matter what.

When disaster strikes, Michael and RCRS co-founder Chris (who is Michael's older brother) have what they call the "tarp teams" as part of their customer service protocol, and that is only the beginning of what they do to protect homeowners. When heavy weather is on the way, they gear up and are ready 24/7 to respond to water mitigation emergencies before they take the next step of repairing or, if needed, putting on a whole new roof.

Chris and Michael Muse began working in the construction industry when they were teenagers and learned every aspect of the trade. Together they have more than 40 years of experience roofing, and that does not include the experience level of their well-trained crew. The Muse brothers have done framing as well as every aspect of the roofing process, and they have worked together, except for the time that Chris served in the armed forces in Korea. In 2018, they launched River City Roofing Solutions. They started off with the desire to

do "small and good," rather than "huge and mediocre." They have demonstrated this in the last six years, have exceeded their goals, and have an unwavering commitment to "do it right the first time." They have also added 2 of their sons and both of their other siblings to the River City team, and River City truly is a family affair.

Due to a motorcycle accident in August 2020, Michael lost his leg. Healing began with understanding that it was caused by his decisions; however, I'll be the first to tell you that I have been blown away by his comeback, attitude, and commitment to be unstoppable. Michael is quick to credit God, his family, friends, support team, and like-minded business owners with what he has needed for this blow to be turned into a blessing, and he still rides his motorcycle (a little more careful) as well as snow bikes in the mountains. I told him when we met this time that I am expecting him to compete someday in the Paralympics!

The year 2020 was also a challenge because of "COVID Crazyiness." Supply chains were disrupted, and the cost of plywood went

through the roof. Forced social distancing, along with the bike accident, made it necessary for Michael to integrate drones as part of the inspection process. Chris and Michael are pleased to report that the COVID challenges have been resolved, and they have been able to lower their prices.

Having the drone service as well as CAD software that creates an architectural-style rendering of the new roof has also served to help "repair the repairs" of fly-by-night roofing companies that come out of the woodwork any time we have a stronger than usual storm. RCRS loves to educate and thus protect clients. They also make sure that the insurance companies are doing what is spelled out in the homeowner's policy. They will never "shingle over" anything, and they will treat the homeowner of a small, modest home exactly the same as someone who owns an executive home. They offer shingles that are hail resistant, and have what are known as architectural shingles, some of which can withstand 130 mph winds and hail. They will provide excellence within your bud-

get, always.

River City Roofing Solutions has recently added a new service called LeafX, which is a gutter screen system that will prevent your gutters from backing up and ruining your new roof.

Finally, over the years, I have observed that this family-owned business has always treated their employees like cherished family. They provide incentives -- trips to places like Jamaica, Gatlinburg, and the beach -- and they love kids. Their Pops who taught them everything they know has now passed on, and I think it's safe to say that he is proud of his boys!

Whether you are dealing with the aftermath of a storm, or are looking for a quality outfit to repair or replace your roof, you would do well to contact River City Roofing Solutions today. Simply stated, River City will do it right for a reasonable price. Call them today.

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# What Makes Ronnie Roll

## The Bucket List City

by Ali Elizabeth Turner



Every year, mayors of cities from fifteen S.E. states get together for a couple of days to talk shop, exchange ideas, find out what's working and what's not, and ask for ideas. Mayor Ronnie was just back from the League of Municipalities' annual meeting, and this year it was held in Greenville, South Carolina. He described the city as "gorgeous," and in fact, provided the title for this installment: "A bucket list city."

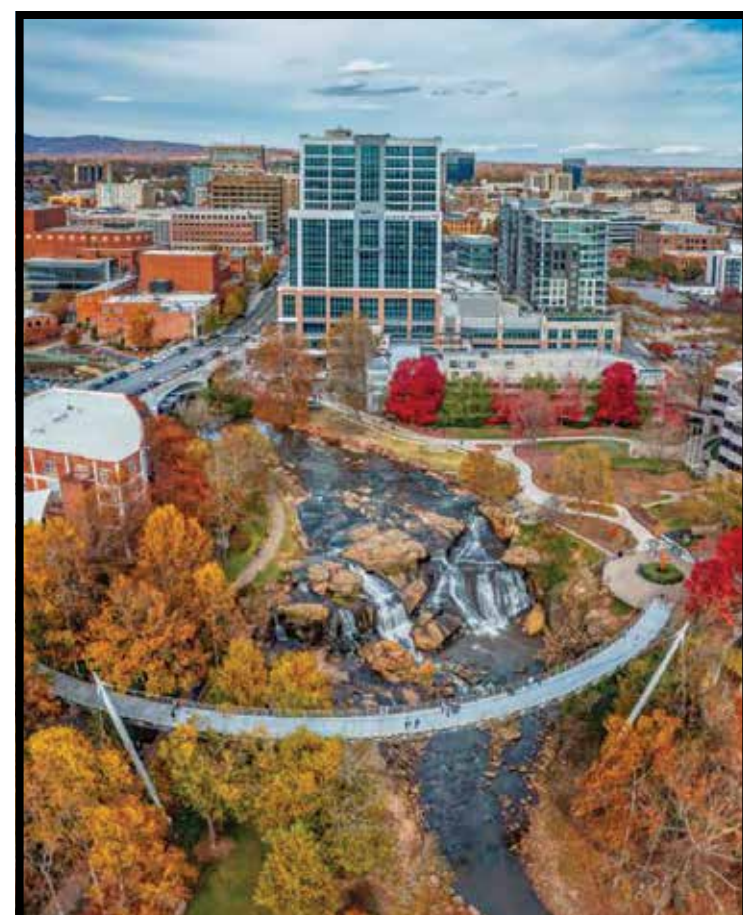
The first thing that stood out to Mayor Ronnie was that there was no trash anywhere to be seen in Greenville, at least anywhere he walked. Anyone who knows the mayor knows that trash drives him wild, and cleaning up Athens is a high priority, always.

"Everyone's concerns were the same," said the



mayor. He went on to say that topics were as varied as IT and cybersecurity to drugs and trafficking. As always, public safety was at the very top of the list, and a city in West Virginia brought some hope to the issue of police dealing with incidents connected to citizens afflicted with mental illness. They have specially trained social workers that go on ride-alongs with police officers, and they work in tandem to diffuse situations where

mental health is a factor. The mayor mentioned that at first the patrol officers were completely opposed to the idea, and for good reason. People who are untrained could certainly complicate already complicated situations that might involve drugs, mental illness, or both. However, over time it became apparent that this was a good idea, and now the officers are solidly behind it. We are looking into this," said the mayor, and went on to describe how helpful



this program had been.

Another topic was dealing well with town hall meetings that had the potential to become uncivil without much provocation. This presentation was entitled, "Taming the Town Hall: Simple Strategies for Productive Public Discourse." We talked at length about the need in our culture for the restoration of civility, and the fact that civility is powerful. Seeing as the South is well known for hospitality and good manners, that restoration would be more than welcome. The subject might be a topic for a future installment, and there's much to be said on it.

One of the things that Greenville has done beautifully is clear up its waterways. There were

blighted buildings, dirty water, broken streets and roads, and with persistence, that area now is one of the crown jewels of Greenville. There is a road that has been converted into a suspended bridge walkway, where before it had become "the road to nowhere."

The mayor mentioned the fact that everyone present felt energized by the fact that they were all facing the same concerns, and troubleshooting together was encouraging. The mayor came home with ideas that can help make Athens a "bucket list city." "We have to be 'we' and we have to have a vision to keep moving no matter what," said the mayor.

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

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# Patriotic Events At The Museum

by Yvonne Dempsey

Many of you are as excited as we are to finally have our museum park finished! The Alabama Veterans Park is beautiful, and we invite everyone to join us for the ribbon-cutting ceremony Saturday, Nov. 2 at 9 a.m. directly after Coffee Call, our free breakfast for veterans and their families on the first Saturday of the month at 8 a.m. It is an enjoyable time for food and fellowship. There are other events taking place at the museum the following weekend.

On Thursday, Nov. 7, the museum will host the Alabama Mountain Lakes Tourist Association's inaugural Patriot Trail In Honor Of Veterans Celebration from 8-10 a.m. Featured speakers will be Sam Heflin, mayor of Priceville, AL, and Major General Janet Cobb, Executive Director U.S.S. Alabama Battleship Memorial Park. The N. AL. Patriot Trail honors and celebrates our veterans as it highlights museums, parks, memorials, and events in the North Alabama region. Several of the sites are close enough to visit in one day, perfect for fall outings with the family.

Athens State University will once again hold its Veterans Day program at the Alabama Veterans Museum on Friday, Nov. 8 at 11 a.m. The featured speaker will be Major General Frank J. Lozano, Program Executive Officer Missiles and Space at Redstone Arsenal. He is responsible for the development, production, fielding, sustainment, and international program as-



pects for assigned missile and space systems. MG Lozano assumed his current position in August 2022.

MG Lozano graduated from Texas A&M University in 1993 and commissioned as a second Lieutenant in the Armor Branch. He served as a Platoon Leader, Executive Officer, Cavalry Squadron Staff Officer and Cavalry Troop Commander, before transitioning into the Army Acquisition Corps in 2001. He graduated with a MBA from the University of Texas at Arlington and served with Lockheed Martin Missiles and Fire Control in Grand Prairie, TX, in 2002 as part of the Training With Industry (TWI) program.

After completion of Command and General Staff College, MG Lozano was assigned as the Assistant Product Manager for Project Manager Soldier Weapons, PEO Soldier, followed by an assignment as an Ammunition and Demolition System Acquisition Manager for the Special Operations Command (SOCOM) and the Army Research Development and Engineering Com-

mand (RDECOM).

In 2008, MG Lozano was assigned as a Department of the Army System Coordinator (DASC) for Tactical Missile Systems and Ballistic Missile Defense Systems. He was subsequently selected to be the Special Assistant for the Army's Vice Chief of Staff. In his position as the Special Assistant, he provided insight, advice, and counsel on Army acquisition programs crossing many different functional capability areas.

MG Lozano commanded the Product Management Office for Soldier Protective Equipment, PEO Soldier from 2011 until 2014. From 2014 to 2016 he was assigned to the Joint Staff, J-8 Capabilities and Acquisition Division. Upon graduation from the U.S. Army War College, he assumed the position of Project Manager for the Lower Tier Project Office, PEO Missiles and Space from 2017 until 2020, followed by an assignment as the Integrated Fires and Rapid Capability Office PM. He was then assigned as the ASA (ALT) Chief of Staff from 2021 to 2022.

MG Lozano's operational

and combat experience include deployments to Bosnia, Kuwait, and Iraq. His awards and decorations include the Parachutist Badge, Ranger Tab, Legion of Merit, Bronze Star Medal, Joint Service Commendation Medal, the NATO Service Medal, the

Army Staff Identification Badge, and the Joint Staff Identification Badge. He is certified in Program Management; Contracting; System Research; Planning and Engineering; and System Test career fields.

The deadline to reserve seats for this event is Monday, Nov. 4 at 5 p.m. Seating is limited, so please register in advance. Reservations can be made at [www.athens.edu/veterans-day](http://www.athens.edu/veterans-day).

Please join us for these upcoming events as we recognize and honor our veterans, their service and sacrifices. We appreciate them and extend our heartfelt thanks to all of our veterans, heroes one and all.

Join us for the Inaugural

**NORTH ALABAMA**

**PATRIOT TRAIL IN HONOR OF VETERANS CELEBRATION**

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8:00-10:00 AM  
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114 WEST PRYOR STREET, ATHENS, ALABAMA

*Featured Speakers:*



Mayor Sam Heflin  
Priceville, Ala



Major General Janet Cobb  
Executive Director,  
U.S.S. Alabama  
Battleship Memorial Park

Self-serve light breakfast will be available.  
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**NORTH ALABAMA**



## Captain's Log

# Nowhere To Go

by Brenda Wilkerson

*Brenda Wilkerson has a masters degree in elementary education, spent some time teaching, but has found her purpose in living through and surviving the daily adventures of a school bus driver.*

### Welcome to our crew!

“How will we ever get home?!” one of my precious passengers cried, with big tears welling up in her wide brown eyes. With only 11 students left on board towards the end of our route, we drove upon a wreck so fresh that the occupants were just coming out of their damaged vehicles that were, unfortunately, blocking both directions of traffic on the dangerous curvy road.

My heart ached for the young lady who, once she got out, had just collapsed in the road, all alone, with her head in her hands as she was obviously upset and in shock. In my heart

of hearts, I wanted to run and check on her. I wanted to see if she was okay, call her mom, comfort her, explain what shock was, and stay with her until a family member or the ambulance arrived to help her through the next overwhelming and complicated steps. We have all been there. But my allegiance as bus captain was to stay with my yellow ship and comfort my precious cargo tucked inside. There was no danger to us, so I didn't have to execute the 'evacuation' plan, yet we were so very stuck with no way forward and a winding road behind us.

Calling in the wreck over the county radio to the school was the first thing I did so parents could be notified and other buses that run this street could find an alternate route. My job now was to keep the kids calm. I explained that the wreck was not serious, and all involved seemed to be



okay as they awkwardly waited for the police and paramedics to arrive. A few kids were still very worried as this may have been the first ever wreck that they were front row seat to. After trying many ways to talk through and comfort, I finally asked, “Does anyone know how to pray?” Lil Momma K immediately responded, “I do.” I encouraged that line of action for anyone who felt comfortable to do so, for the people we saw hurting before us being played out like a bad movie through our windshield big screen TV. My man L piped up and added, “I can pray, but only in my head.” I said,

“Alright, go.” Immediately he interlocked his young fingers and bowed his head, silently praying so hard his eyes were tightly squinted shut.

My older kids quietly comforted the younger ones by holding a hand or whispering encouragement with gentle and kind words about getting home soon. By this time, onlookers and concerned neighbors were caring for those involved. At this point, others were showing up to help this stranded bus get these babies safely home. Several volunteers helped us by walking alongside our bus, creeping along in reverse,

making a safe path to a driveway wide enough to back into and turn around. With the generous help of random strangers, we were free! Although we were all so very relieved, I knew the kids were affected by the 'trauma' of the situation except for Sweet & Sassy J who miraculously slept peacefully through the entire thing. 'Brown Eyes' stayed teary and at her stop, dramatically ran into her grandmother's arms to release the rest of her tears. Luckily, all parents were alerted to our sticky situation and expressed thankful gratitude for getting their frightened bus baby home safely. One parent claimed that I was the 'Best Bus Driver Ever.' As sweet as that was, and I won't deny her right to claim that. I feel I just did what any other bus driver would do.

Lord, thank you for Your safety and provisions through the generosity of others. Amen!

**Tennessee Valley Spotlight**

**Mondays at 10am**

**1080 AM WKAC**

New & Used Tires  
Wheel Alignments

All Size Tire Repair  
& Auto Repair

**Athens Auto Tire & Wrecker Service**

24 Hr. Road & Wrecker Service

306 Fifth Avenue  
Athens, Alabama 35611

Tommy Morris  
Office: 771-7537

24 hour TOWING SERVICE

## Slinkard On Success

# *Laziness Has Fooled Many People*

by D. A. Slinkard

*D.A. Slinkard would love your feedback. You can contact him at [da.slinkard@gmail.com](mailto:da.slinkard@gmail.com)*

It seems something is missing in our society...and that something is determination. Many people are lacking *determination* in their life. It also seems to me that laziness has some people believing they have an unfair life, but I have found if you do nothing, you will get nothing. I wanted to look up the definition of determination and *Webster's Dictionary* states, "The act of determining or deciding. Absolute direction to a certain end."

I really like the last part of the definition because we need some absolutes in our life. Too many people are going about their life drifting out of control with no certainty in their life. The only certainty they have is they are uncertain. If a person is to

have success in their life, they are in desperate and dire need of absolute direction with their life. Where are you headed?

When a person has the determination to succeed in life, they have an opportunity to achieve what others only dream about. It is not easy to find success; it is not easy to find the discipline to stick it out the battle. We see many people who suffer defeat because they have a lack of determination when it comes to achieving their desires and goals in life.

The question becomes: How does a person increase their determination to get positive results in their life? I wish this answer was an easy one, but truthfully, it differs from person to person. You must find what motivates you, what drives you for achieve-

ment, and then you must be willing to pay the price to achieve the desired results. To put it simply, you must define what success is for yourself, and you must keep your expectations high.

The word *determination* is going to take a level of focus that most people are not accustomed to having. We have so many distractions around us, and though we have the usefulness of technology, too often our technology makes us useless. When a person determines where they want to go in life, what they want to do, and what they want to achieve, they have an opportunity to place their focus specifically on these desired results. This is the breeding ground of determination. Knowing what you want to achieve, knowing how you can achieve

it, and knowing what it will take, will help almost anyone be able to elevate the determination in their life.

Will it always work out picture-perfect? Absolutely not. However, when we fail to achieve the desired results, we need to have the determination to get an education. I have been guilty of this in the past when I got lackluster results, instead of learning from it, I found myself being discouraged. When a person faces too many discouragements in life, they typically find it easier to just quit and give up. You have one shot at today. You have one shot at tomorrow. You have one shot at life. What will you achieve? What expectations will you set for yourself?

The success we have tomorrow will directly be

impacted by the actions we take today. The actions we take tomorrow will directly impact the success we have next week, next year, and even beyond. The difference, though, is we must act now, and we cannot delay. We must have the determination to say, "Today, I will take the necessary actions to achieve greatness in my life." It is good to have a vision of what you want to achieve, and even better to have a plan of how to achieve it; the actions you take today will lead you to the goal or it will lead you away from it.

I have found that most people have a plan, but typically that plan goes out the window the moment they face an obstacle. Mike Tyson once said, "Everybody has a plan until they get punched in the face." This is when the difficulties and realities of life sink in, and we must face the realities of the obstacles in our present situations. There will be times in your life when everything will go your way, and other times you will seemingly fail over and over again. The funny saying is, "Sometimes you're the windshield and sometimes you're the bug." But please know, it does not have to be that way. Determination will go a long way in life, but you must have specific solutions *now* for what you will do to achieve success.





## Clean, Green And Beautiful

# A Gift From A Flower To A Garden

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

Since downtown Athens has been growing rapidly, the Athens-Limestone Beautification Board has officially opened their Downtown Memorial Flowerpot sale! We are adding 15 new pots to the downtown area for everyone to enjoy. The large concrete pots are beautifully and seasonally planted to give color and beauty to the downtown sidewalks. While they are beautiful all year long, they are especially eye-catching during the dreary winter months with their bright pansies! This is our favorite project, and we look forward to expanding and bringing a little more joy to Ath-

ens. Firstly, let's talk about cost. These pots are \$500 each, and this is a one-time payment. This covers the cost of the large concrete pot, the memorial plaque, and the soil. After the pot is purchased, the Athens-Limestone Beautification Board and the Advanced Ag class from Limestone County Tech School will keep it filled with bright and bold plants year-round. Not only will we plant them, but we will also deadhead and maintain healthy plants throughout each season. We take great pride in the beauty these pots bring to downtown Athens!



The pots will also have the option to include a name plaque like some of the current pots have. These are great ways to memorialize or honor a loved one. As patrons of downtown shop, eat, and stroll by, they are able to remember the honoree when they read the plaque. This helps us as a community remember amazing people and their contributions to Athens. It also helps to teach those who are new to Athens about some of our history. The students at the Limestone County Tech School will be making these plaques for us, allowing them to practice and master this trade and the machines used.

Commission Office on Washington Street, the corner of Jefferson Street and Hobbs at the corner of Dream Key Realty, Hobbs Street in front of City Hall, and the north corner of Hobbs and Marion Street (the corner of the old bank), and the south corner by the old Democrat building. There will also be 4 available at the Farmer's Market and 4 available at the Alabama Veterans Museum and park.

ens-Limestone Beautiful Office at 125 East Street and fill out one. You can mail your checks to KALB, P.O. Box 1089, Athens, Alabama 35612. These pots would be a great Christmas gift for that person who has it all or is just plain hard to shop for! Don't hesitate to contact the KALB office for more information; we are happy to answer any questions you may have. And keep your eye out -- the Athens-Limestone Beautification Board has a new project coming this Christmas!

If you are interested in purchasing a memorial flowerpot, the form can be found on our Facebook page, or you can stop by the Keep Ath-



## Downtown Memorial Pots

Honor or memorialize your loved one with a seasonally planted flower pot to be enjoyed by all!

**\$500**  
with customized name plaque

**15 Available**



Locations will be very specific and limited. Call or email KALB to reserve your pot and location. 256-233-8000 or [KALBCares@gmail.com](mailto:KALBCares@gmail.com)

The locations of the new pots are very specific and will be available on a first-come basis. The new locations around the downtown sidewalks include 2 pots in front of the Limestone County



(256) 233-8000  
[KALBCares@gmail.com](mailto:KALBCares@gmail.com)  
[www.KALBCares.com](http://www.KALBCares.com)



## Cooking with Anna

# Surrender

by Anna Hamilton

*On any given Sunday morning, at churches across the world, you can hear Christians singing the beautiful hymn, “All to Jesus I Surrender.” The lyrics of the hymn speak of fully surrendering our lives to Jesus.*

*“All to Jesus I surrender,  
All to Him I freely give;  
I will ever love and trust Him,  
In His presence daily live.  
I surrender all,  
I surrender all,  
All to Thee, my blessed Savior,  
I surrender all.”*

*The lyrics are beautiful. The music is*

*beautiful. But do we truly put these words into practice? Anything that is holding you back (anger, fear, jealousy, frustration, bitterness, unforgiveness, anxiety, doubt, worry) keeps you from fully surrendering to Jesus.*

*We are told in Scripture to fully surrender our lives to Jesus in order for us to receive the gift of salvation. But once we have received the gift of salvation, we must pursue a daily surrender of ourselves. We have to completely empty ourselves in order for God to fill us up. If you keep holding onto your old ways, the ways in which the world tells us that we are safe, you will never experience the full blessings of God.*

*continued on page 23*

# Scalloped Golden Turnips

## Ingredients:

- 1 ½ pounds shredded yellow turnips*
- 2 medium apples, peeled and chopped*
- 2 Tbsp brown sugar*
- 1 tsp salt*
- ¼ cup butter*

## Directions:

*Heat oven to 350 degrees.*

*Combine shredded turnips and 1 diced apple. Add brown sugar and salt and mix well.*


*Put turnip mixture into a small baking dish. Sprinkle the top with the remaining chopped apples. Dot with butter and cover with aluminum foil.*

*Bake for 45 minutes to 1 hour, or until the turnips are tender.*



# Just Do Hard Things

by Nick Niedzwiecki - Owner, CrossFit Athens



In today's fast-paced world, it's easy to be drawn to quick fixes and instant gratification. We're surrounded by solutions that promise fast results with minimal effort, from crash diets and get-rich-quick schemes to shortcuts in learning and skill development. While these easy routes may seem appealing, they often fall short of creating meaningful, lasting change. Taking the hard route—pursuing discipline, consistency, and a long-term mindset—leads to sustainable habits and ultimately a more fulfilled and successful life. Here's why choosing the chal-

lenging path is worth it.

### 1. Fostering Resilience and Mental Strength

The easy route rarely tests our resilience or mental toughness. When things come too easily, we miss out on valuable opportunities to grow and strengthen our ability to handle adversity. Taking the hard route—whether in work, personal growth, or health—demands that we push through discomfort and face setbacks. These challenges are essential for building resilience, a quality that not only helps us stay committed to our goals but also equips us to handle other life chal-

lenges with greater confidence. People who face and overcome difficulties develop a mindset of “I can handle this,” which is crucial for maintaining long-term success.

### 2. Developing Discipline and Consistency

Choosing the hard path requires discipline, a skill that is foundational to creating any sustainable habit. Whether it's building a fitness routine, developing a career skill, or managing finances, discipline keeps us on track when motivation wanes. The hard route pushes us to show up consistently, even when we don't feel

like it. Over time, this discipline becomes a habit. The result is a reliable routine that supports steady progress toward our goals, creating a positive feedback loop that strengthens our resolve and commitment. The easy route, on the other hand, usually bypasses the need for discipline, making it difficult to achieve or sustain meaningful progress.

### 3. Promoting a Growth Mindset

When we take on difficult tasks and face challenges head-on, we cultivate a growth mindset—a belief that abilities and intelligence can be developed through dedication and hard work. A growth mindset encourages us to embrace failure as a learning opportunity, which fuels personal growth. People who take the hard route are more likely to view obstacles as stepping stones rather than roadblocks. They adapt, adjust, and keep moving forward, gaining skills and confidence along the way. This mindset is essential for success in nearly every area of life and helps us become lifelong learners.

### 4. Creating Genuine Self-Confidence and Satisfaction

Achievements gained through hard work and perseverance bring a deep sense of satisfaction and self-worth. There's a unique confidence that comes from knowing you've earned your accomplishments through effort and resilience. The

easy route may lead to temporary satisfaction, but it often lacks the pride and fulfillment that comes from overcoming obstacles. People who take the harder path tend to have a stronger sense of accomplishment and self-belief because they've proven to themselves that they can rise to challenges.

### 5. Laying the Foundation for Long-Term Success

Shortcuts and easy solutions can provide quick wins, but they rarely set us up for enduring success. The habits we build through the hard route—consistency, resilience, and growth—become the foundation of lifelong habits. When challenges arise in the future, people who have taken the hard route are better equipped to handle them and stay on course. They've built a toolkit of sustainable habits that support continued success, no matter the situation.

To sum it up, while the easy route may seem tempting, it's the hard route that leads to sustainable habits and a more fulfilling life. By choosing the path of resilience, discipline, and growth, we lay a strong foundation for long-term success. Embracing challenges not only transforms our habits but also strengthens our character, equipping us for a lifetime of personal and professional growth. The hard route may be challenging, but it's a worthwhile journey that leads to genuine, lasting achievements.



# Sliding Into Growth

by Stephanie Reynolds, Athens-Limestone Tourism Association



“WHOOAA...OW!” I thought to myself as I painfully skidded to a halt on the grippy rubber mat. At least I think I thought that to myself; it’s all kind of a blur. I remember shooting down the slide, a bit of airtime, then a hard landing. I realized that my dress wasn’t where I had tucked it at about the same time I saw two honored elders sitting on a bench six feet away. I scrambled to prevent any evidence of wardrobe malfunction and apologized with as much grace as a 53-year-old woman launching out of a metal tube with her untucked dress could muster.

“You’re fine, nothing showed,” laughed one of the gentlemen, and the other seconded his assessment. I think they were just being polite because I felt a very definite rubber mat burn distressingly high on the back of one leg...but plausible deniability is a wonderful thing to preserve the idea of dignity when actual evidence of such is lacking.

I was at Discovery Park in Union City, Tennessee for the Rural Tourism Conference. You might have seen in the paper back in June that we (Athens-Limestone County Tourism) won the bid to host the 2025 con-

ference when we, along with Chamber, LCEDA, Main Street, and the mayor, presented at Tuscaloosa against two other great organizations.

This is a huge deal for us as an office and as a county. The host community arranges hotels, venues, food, entertainment, shopping, speakers, and more. The 200-300 guests get a chance to visit other areas, shop at our stores, eat our amazing cuisine, learn new ways, and share struggles.

Regardless of location, rural tourism generally shares the same difficulty: funding. Large counties with big venues and attractions such as theme parks, large convention centers, zoos, and beaches have very little trouble proving their tourism worth and get budgets to bring in more.

However, in smaller communities where there are no built-in attractions, the struggle is real. You need tourists to bring in funding for the county, which provides money for roads, schools, and services. You need funding to bring in tourists. Tourism in Limestone County brings in \$55 million a year (yes, that is correct), but because the tourists are coming in ones and twos, and shop, eat, and browse individually. It is difficult to see what we do and what we can do in the future with a few brave decisions.

But let’s look at Union City...

Union City, where we

visited, is a town of 11,000 people in a county of 30,000 people. In comparison, Athens has a population the same as their whole county! And Limestone County has a population of 110,000!

But they have Discovery Park, which welcomes 250,000 visitors each year. I had no idea the key to turning me back into an 8-year-old girl was simply walking through the doors. I went high in the air and stood on a glass floor 13 stories up. I held onto a rail as a room shook in an earthquake simulation. I climbed through a tunnel to pop up in a polycarbonate observation bubble, face-to-face with a mildly bored catfish.

We had free rein of the entire park, and it was glorious! Room after room of history and science and space and cars and every cool thing! And I didn’t even tour outside!

Now, this is where the tourism professional in me kicks in: Imagine the revenue from those visitors eating, sleeping, shopping, buying fuel. The park provides jobs. The park provides documented proof of tourism. The park provides mightily for the city and county and for quality of life for the residents. We need something like that here.

But I am careful with progress—not all progress is good, and my job is to watch out for my fellow citizens and improve their quality of

life. I looked at “250K” and thought, “Would that negatively impact Limestone County in some way? Would this make a ton of traffic and congestion and strain?” I don’t want that for me or for you.

But breaking down the numbers, that’s just an extra 685 people per day. Fiddlers Convention brings in 10 thousand people over the course of 3 days, and the only traffic impact was around the university, which is right in town on narrow streets. A venue that is just outside of town wouldn’t even have that tiny bit of headache.

If we got a venue that would host just 250,000 people per year (for comparison, the Von Braun Center seats 10,000 people at one time), and those people spent a mere \$100 in Limestone County, that is an extra \$25,000,000 per year! That money goes to us directly (shops, restaurants, etc.) and indirectly (roads, tax savings, etc.).

Why am I bringing this up? Because we need to invest wisely in the future of our community. We are past the point of relying mostly on passive tourism to fund us. We can, wisely, draw people in, provide them with an excellent experience, then use the revenue they provide to better our future. We need something, even if it isn’t another Discovery Park (though if we do get a big slide, I’ll make sure to wear shorts under my dress).



# On Its Way -- Christmas In The City... And The County

by Ali Elizabeth Turner

It's coming soon... that time of year that transforms our already amazing city and county into a place of lights,

laughter, and, by grace, love. Pammie Jimmar of the Chamber likes to describe it as "when we become a Hallmark mov-

ie," and the purpose of this article is to let folks know some of the things that are going to make the 2024 season a special one. We spoke recently, and there are some new features, classic favorites, and the chance to re-ignite the true "reason for the season." It is also the 38th year that the Christmas Open House has been a part of our holiday festivities.

For several years we have had the North Pole Stroll in Big Spring Park, which is essentially a festival of beautifully decorated and well-lit trees. Businesses, not-for-profits, individuals, and families have purchased trees and decorated them to uniquely celebrate the season or

remember a recently passed loved one. Each tree is an original, and the decorating styles are as individual as those who have purchased the trees. "This year there will be a few changes. For starters, the North Pole Stroll has been renamed the Athens-Limestone County Tinsel Trail. Athens City Parks and Recreation has generously provided additional electrical power

throughout the park, allowing us to illuminate the trees around the pond for a truly magical experience that the entire community can enjoy," shared Pammie Jimmar, President of the Chamber of Commerce. The trees are \$150 each, and as of this writing, there is room for 48 more to round out the 100 total. Pammie hopes that next year we will be



ATHENS-LIMESTONE COUNTY

## CHRISTMAS

*Open House*

Presented By: **DREAM KEY REAL ESTATE, LLC**

... NOVEMBER 22-24, 2024 ...

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**MERCHANTS ALLEY TREE LIGHTING**

- Friday, November 22 | 5PM
- Merchants Alley on Jefferson Street
- Performance by: Athens High School Chorus

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**CHRISTMAS PHOTOS**

No Santa - Christmas Set Only

- Friday, November 22 | 6PM-8PM
- Athens State University LaunchBox | 121 S. Marion Street

Santa Photos

- Saturday & Sunday, November 23 & 24 | 1PM-3PM
- Athens-Limestone Tourism Office | 100 N. Beaty Street

Photos Sponsored by: Fly Leaf Photography Studio  
Santa's Carriage Sponsor: AllStar Pro Services  
\$25.00 Per Photo

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**SKATING ON THE SQUARE**

- Friday, November 22 | 4PM-8PM
- Saturday & Sunday, November 23 & 24 | 1PM-5PM
- Marion Street Downtown Athens
- \$5.00 Per Person - Cash Only

Sponsored by: **Window World** | **LIMESTONE COUNTY**

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**MERRY MARKET ON MARION**

- Friday, November 22 | 4PM-8PM
- Saturday, November 23 | 11AM-5PM
- Sunday, November 24 | 12PM-5PM

Sponsored By: Athens-Limestone Hospital & The Broken Brush Art Studio







House, skating is back once again, beginning on Friday night and continuing through the weekend. It is \$5 per person, CASH ONLY. I have never gotten over the fact that they can even manufacture a bit of falling snow, no matter the weather, which adds to the ambience.

Once again there will be a Merry Market, which will be held outside the Courthouse. All kinds of vendors and artisans will be present with their wares, alongside delicious local food trucks. Stan Smith will have his horse-drawn carriage available for memory-making rides, and Fly Leaf will offer Christmas photos starting Friday, with Santa joining the photo fun on Saturday and Sunday.

There is so much more happening this season than the Christmas Open House or the annual Christmas Parade in Athens. As you will notice, the rest of Limestone County has sev-

eral events. Ardmore will have its own Tinsel Trail and Christmas Parade, along with cookies with Santa in the Ardmore Town Hall. Elkmont is following suit with a Tinsel Trail and holiday parade, Mooresville will host historical walking tours, and the festivities will finish on December 14 with Sippin' Cider by Athens Main Street.

Oh, and don't forget the Athens Elf on the Shelf Challenge: Can You Find Athie the Elf!

If you go on Facebook Nov. 18 through the 24, you'll see that Athie will be giving clues each morning at 8 a.m. about his whereabouts, and if you find him, the shop where he was hiding will give you goodies and gift cards.

As you can see, a whole lot of care has gone into crafting a beautiful holiday season here in Athens-Limestone County. So may you and your family enjoy each moment. Merry Christmas!

able to have a train go through the park and make it into a true winter wonderland, possibly even adding a spectacular Bright Lights in the Park walking tour as part of the Tinsel Trail. On Thursday, November 21 at 6 p.m., the Athens-Limestone County Tinsel Trail Tree Lighting will occur, and for the first time, all the trees will be lit at the same time. There will be a story time with Santa and Happy Pappi Beignets will be on hand to make a sweet start even sweeter.

“Year of Trees” with a total of three Christmas tree lightings throughout the season. The second one is Friday, November 22 in the Merchants’ Alley at 5 p.m. That night will also feature music performed by the Athens High School Choir as a kickoff to Christmas Open House. The third one is sponsored by the County Commission and will be at the southwest corner of the Limestone County Courthouse on Thursday, December 5, the same day as the Christmas Parade.

For Christmas Open



## CHRISTMAS IN LIMESTONE COUNTY

### SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

**ATHENS-LIMESTONE COUNTY TINSEL TRAIL TREE LIGHTING CEREMONY**

📅 **November 21, 2024 | 6PM**  
 📍 Athens Big Spring Memorial Park  
**Tinsel Trail Dates: November 21st - December 31st**  
*Presented By: Hughes Properties II, LLC*

**LIMESTONE COUNTY COMMISSION TREE LIGHTING**

📅 **December 5, 2024 | 6PM**  
 📍 Southwest Corner of the Courthouse

**ATHENS LIMESTONE COUNTY CHRISTMAS PARADE**

**December 5, 2024 | 6PM | Christmas Carnival of Lights**  
*Presented by: Bryant Bank*

**ARDMORE TINSEL TRAIL TREE LIGHTING**

📅 **December 6, 2024 | 5:30PM**  
 📍 Ardmore Town Hall  
*Presented by: Daly and Son Car Care*

**COOKIES AND PICTURES WITH SANTA AT ARDMORE TOWN HALL**

📅 **December 7, 2024 | 10AM-12PM**  
 📍 Ardmore Town Hall

**ELKMONT CHRISTMAS FESTIVITES**

📅 **December 7, 2024**  
 3PM: Elkmont Christmas Parade  
 4PM: Meet Santa  
 5PM: Lighting of the Elkmont Tinsel Trail

**ARDMORE CHRISTMAS PARADE**

📅 **December 9, 2024 | 6:30PM**

**ATHENS MAIN STREET 14TH ANNUAL SIPPIN' CIDER**

📅 **December 14, 2024 | 4PM-8PM**  
 📍 Downtown Athens  
*Presented by: Dream Key Real Estate*

**HISTORIC MOORESVILLE HOLIDAY WALKING TOURS**

📅 **December 14, 2024 | 12PM-4PM**  
 📍 Historic Town of Mooresville  
*\*For more information and tickets please visit [www.mooresvilleat.com](http://www.mooresvilleat.com)*

## Learning As A Lifestyle

# *Balancing Visionary And Sustaining Leadership: Navigating Growth And Stability*

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



Visionary leadership is a style of leadership characterized by the ability to define a clear and compelling long-term goal or vision for an organization or team. Visionary leaders are able to motivate and inspire others by painting a picture of an attractive and attainable future, which often involves transforming existing structures and practices. They possess the unique capacity to envision change before it is necessary and guide their team through the process of achieving these ambitious goals. Visionary leaders are often seen as innovative thinkers who encourage creativity and foster an environment where new ideas are valued.

To effectively practice visionary leadership, one must exhibit a few key behaviors. The starting point is developing a clear and compelling vision that aligns with the core

values and mission of the organization. Communicating this vision with clarity and enthusiasm is essential, such that it resonates with and energizes the team. Visionary leaders also need to demonstrate flexibility and adaptability, as innovative paths often come with unforeseen challenges. Empowering team members, fostering collaboration, and providing opportunities for professional growth are also crucial for cultivating a culture where the vision can thrive. Moreover, visionary leaders must be proactive in seeking feedback and continually refining their approach to meet the evolving needs of their audience.

In contrast, caretaking leadership focuses primarily on maintaining and managing existing systems, ensuring stability and reliability within an organization. While caretaking leaders may not drive transformative



change, they are adept at managing day-to-day operations and addressing immediate challenges. They concentrate on preserving established processes, minimizing risks, and ensuring compliance with existing standards. This leadership style can be invaluable during periods of stability or when organizations require consis-

tent results and conservative decision-making. However, during times of rapid change or when innovation is necessary, caretaking leadership may fall short in guiding an organization through new ventures.

A more fitting name for the concept of caretaking leadership might be "sustaining leadership." This term captures the essence of this leadership style, emphasizing the importance of sustaining and managing existing systems to ensure stability and reliability. Sustaining leadership conveys a sense of stewardship and responsibility for maintaining continuity within an organization, highlighting the role of leaders who prioritize consistency and reliability in operations. By focusing on preservation and effective management, sustaining leaders provide

a steady foundation that supports organizational health and performance over time.

Both visionary and caretaking leadership styles have their strengths and applications, depending on the needs and context of an organization. Visionary leadership is instrumental when an organization seeks growth, innovation, and expansion, while caretaking leadership is well-suited for maintaining efficiency and stability. Ideally, organizations benefit from a blend of both styles, where visionary leaders are complemented by caretakers who ensure that the operational foundation remains strong. Developing the ability to balance these styles empowers organizations to navigate both current realities and future possibilities effectively.

**BRAD STOVALL'S  
AUTO BODY**

Let us get your  
**BODY** back  
in **SHAPE!**

**Behind Tanner Post Office • 233-5140**

The advertisement features a vibrant red sports car, possibly a Ferrari, shown from a side profile against a blue and white background with motion lines. The text is bold and eye-catching, with the phone number and location clearly displayed at the bottom.

# The Important Christian Vote

by Donna Clark



Many Christians fail to recognize the importance and responsibility that is given to casting their vote. Here are some shocking statistics from the 2020 election. In the State of Georgia, 1,349,454 professing Evangelicals did not vote; Biden carried this state by 11,779 votes. In the State of Arizona, 730,624 Evangelicals did not vote; Biden carried with 10,457 votes. Michigan, 1,338,126 Evangelicals did not vote; Biden won by 154,188 votes.

Looking at these numbers, imagine the outcome if the Evangelicals had cast their vote. Why is it that so many self-described Christians don't make it to the voting booth on Election Day? Many believe that their one vote doesn't really matter. Others believe that no candidate measures up to their standards of moral conduct or matches their beliefs on all the issues. While others simply believe that politics is corrupt and they want no part. None of these reasons excuse us from the responsibility that is given to us as Believers.

1 – Each vote makes a difference in cumulative numbers. This is how we as Christians are to be as salt and light in the darkness of godless deeds, to influence our society. Prv 12:26

2 – Voting recognizes the right of all citizens to express their values through their votes. Prv 29:2, Psa 34:14

3 – Voting is a privilege of our free nation, not shared by other countries of the world. Those who reap the benefits of living in a democratic nation should play a part in upholding the constitutional republic that defines it. Is 1:26

4 – Voting according to God's word promotes the application of Biblical standards in the selection of elected officials in our country and to whose authority we are to submit, as established by God. Rom 13:1

5 – Not voting is a form of voting, as it affects the outcome. "All that is required for evil to prevail is for good men to do nothing." Edmund Burke. Jas 1:22-25

6 – Voting is one way to obey God's command to seek good for those around us and to protect our nation. Prv 11:3

7 – As people of faith, we will be held account-

able for our actions, as well as our lack of action. Luke 12:48

8 – The early Christians elected elders by voting; voting has Biblical precedence. Acts 14:23

9 – Voting is a part of stewarding all the resources we have been given in ways that honor God. To waste a vote is to squander a gift. Matt 5:13

10 – By not voting, we condemn an entire generation. What we allow today will affect future generations. Gal 6:7-8

Ben Carson stated it so well as he spoke at a Republican Convention. "This election is not about Democrats or Republicans. This election is about whether we are a secular nation or one nation under God. Years ago, Benjamin Franklin exiting Constitution Hall after vigorous arguments over how the nation was to be run, was asked "Sir, what do we have here?"

A monarchy or a republic?" To that he replied, "A republic, if you can keep it." We have kept it for 240 years, but we are as close to losing it as we have ever been at any point in time. We must never forget there is a struggle between good and evil. There is a battle to fight to restore our country to the values that she once had.

I consider the situations we are currently facing, such as an unprotected border allowing an unknown number of illegal immigrants to reside in our country. I was reminded today of the death of 12-year-old Jocelyn Nungaray. She had been raped and died of strangulation. Two illegal immigrants involved in a Venezuela gang were charged with her murder. Also, Laken Riley, murdered by a Venezuelan male who had entered the United States illegally. The abortion situation -- in six states abortions are

permitted to nine months, and eight states have no restrictions, according to The Dispatch, 9/16/24. Jim Chilton, a rancher in Southern Arizona, will tell anyone who asks about smugglers using the trails through the mountains on his ranch. Chilton says video cameras have captured images of more than 3,000 people over the past two years. For other looming issues, need I mention gender confusion, sexualization of children, tax dollars that were to be used for those caught in natural disasters now used for the betterment of illegal immigrants, weaponization of government, and on I could go.

How can we not vote? Especially those of us who know the truths of God's word. And how can we vote for a candidate who doesn't uphold those truths. Remember the stats I gave in the opening of this article? If we want a change, we can make the difference. I, for one, want our wounded country returned to the great America she once was. If you read this article before election date, please vote. If you're seeing this after the fact, there will be other elections to come at our state and county levels; make the decision to get involved.

No matter the outcome of the 2024 election, let me leave you with this quote from Corrie Ten Boom, "Never be afraid to trust an unknown future to a known God." This is our firm hope.

- Donna



# A Trip To Remember

by Joel Allen



Hello, folks! It has been one interesting month for me and my family. My wife and I took a road trip in a 2007 Ford Escape with three Great Danes and a border collie/heeler mix. Needless to say, we were very crowded because Escapes are not at all roomy and Danes tend to get grumpy with each other when they feel crowded... not to mention a bossy border collie/heeler. It took us three days on top of that, and let me tell everyone, I learned a lot about how to be better prepared for my next crowded trip. But if I have my way, I will have a much roomier vehicle so as not to relive this road trip nightmare again. I kind of felt like *National Lampoon's Vacation* with me being Chevy Chase...LOL.

First, we left on the be-

ginning of the weekend to avoid rush hour or working hour traffic. We all piled into the vehicle and up until Nashville, everything seemed to be going well. Then one of the Danes, Felix, let go of an SBD (silent but deadly) gas bomb. Between my eyes tearing up and my wife asking, "Who did it?" I had to roll down a window. This was the beginning of a 3-day trip of stopping and letting everyone potty break plus some Pepto to ease the situation.

Something else I learned, it's a good idea to keep rubber gloves on hand and plenty of clean linen to lay down for your dogs, including a supply of garbage bags to place the dirty linen in. Oh, and stock up on quarters for a laundromat too. It is also a good idea to get

it in your head not to get mad at the dog(s) because it was not their fault.

So, Nashville was the beginning of a long nightmare. We had a few doggie accidents but we managed to clean up everyone and the vehicle. (I'm shaking my head) I do not want that nightmare road trip to happen ever again!

When someone in my predicament has to make a stop every 50 to 100 miles, it's exhausting. During a trying time like this, patience should be your ever constant companion too.

Now, what I am about to share with everyone is not for the queasy or faint of heart. For those that have seen the movie *The Matrix*, you're all going to love this. In a crowded vehicle, Felix had another ac-

cident. Yep, straight up projectile "poo"... LOL. At the time, I was not laughing, but poor Houston got hit. And just like in *The Matrix*, "Woodie" dodged the "poo" projectile with surprising finesse given his age and the lack of room in the vehicle. Now we're all gagging and trying to get off the highway to get this all cleaned up. It's during times like this that good dog training comes in handy because Houston and Felix did well when told to stay after getting them out.

Once we got off the highway and to a gas station, I took Houston and Felix, poor guys, out of the vehicle first and grabbed a jug of water out of the back. I was able to clean them up, and my wife converged on the vehicle getting it clean. Note to

everyone -- always carry extra water, paper towels, rags and towels for a just-in-case-of-emergency event such as this. Oh, and Dawn dish soap too! So, we managed to get Houston and Felix cleaned up. And I have another thing to add, don't panic when something this bad happens. A lot of people never realize they are able to handle just about anything if they use what we call "problem solving" skills. Always be ready for "Murphy" too. I always say that when I die I am going to find Murphy and kick his tail up onto his shoulders for all the bad stuff that seems to happen. You know, "If it can go wrong, it will!" (Murphy's Law 101)

Anyways, we arrived safely but exhausted to our destination. But take it from me, learn from my mistakes and keep a clear head about ya'. I hope everyone has a great Thanksgiving coming up, and I will talk with 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**



# Faith And Politics

by Phil Williams



In one of those too-weird-to-be-true-but-yet-it-is moments, Kamala Harris just dissed Christians everywhere. In one of her recent rallies, a young man yelled, “Jesus is Lord,” causing her to adopt a smarmy look and retort, “Oh, I think you came to the wrong rally.” Empowered by the jeering laughter of her supporters she followed with, “I think you meant to go to the smaller rally down the street.” The audience howled and guffawed. She looked so proud.

Reality set in as the story went viral. In one fell swoop, Kamala Harris told Christian voters their faith-based political views were not welcome in her camp. Misinterpretation? You decide. I have.

Christians everywhere should take note how their faith is either revered or reviled in politics.

While serving in the State Senate, I frequently sponsored pro-life bills. I recall more than once being accused of the dastardly offense of mixing my faith with my politics. “Say it ain’t so Phil! You didn’t really act like a Christian in the political realm did you?!” Well, I hope I did!

I was not elected to be less than who I am. I ran as a conservative, a patriot, and an unabashed

believer in Christ. If my faith makes me who and what I am, I would be a hypocrite to leave it at home.

Dr. Ben Carson recently headlined the Alabama Policy Institute’s annual dinner and included his own thoughts on faith in the public arena. “It is said that there are two things we should never talk about in public: politics and religion. But those are the two things that we must talk about because those are where we are being attacked,” Carson said. I would also add that we absolutely, unequivocally, should talk about them together: faith AND politics.

Truth and common sense combine to say we must mix our faith with our politics. Vote our faith. Vote with faith. Pray for our candidates. Pray for our governance.

Christians everywhere should unapologetically mix their faith-based values, traditions, and principles with their politics. In the absence of Christian voices in the public arena, the vacuum will be filled by those who believe just the opposite, even by those would mock and remove our ability to live out our Christian worldview.

Christians must care who makes and enforces the laws that govern our country. It’s very simple: either we as Christians speak out about our faith, or those who don’t be-

lieve will speak out about our faith. I would rather it be us than them.

But despite the freedom to do so, a recent study by pollster George Barna determined that, inexplicably, thirty-two million self-identified, church-going Christians are expected to sit this election out. For one reason or another, they just won’t make it to the polls. Fully 68% of them said it is due to “a lack of interest in politics and elections.” It’s just not their bag...just doesn’t get their attention...just not into it.

Dr. Jeff Myers, president of Summit Ministries, recently opined that it is not about knowing all of the candidates or all of the issues. He gave a very succinct set of principles that Christians can weigh -- Constitutional principles like “life, liberty, [and] property,” because those “are the three things the Constitution said it’s developed in order to provide,” Myers said. He elaborated, saying that when a Christian struggles with knowing everything they can at least lean on “...which candidate for any given office is going to be most likely to lessen the evils that occur around life, liberty, and property...That is going to help inform my decision.” Myers is right.

It is not about knowing everything about politics. It’s about being a good steward of this nation. We have been entrusted with a nation that

gives us great freedom, including the freedom of worship. If we as believers abdicate our role as stewards by deferring our right to vote a faith-based worldview, we are no better than the unfaithful servant in Matthew 25 who took the resources given him by his master and buried them in the ground instead of investing them wisely. He just sat on it. He did nothing to advance the cause.

Stewardship of that with which we have been entrusted is not only sought, it is expected. What will we do with this country we have been given? Will Christians take bold action to grow and shepherd it. Will people of faith be good stewards of America? Or will we sit on our haunches and just wait to see what happens? I don’t want to be the one who realizes in the end that I squandered an opportunity to advance our nation’s capabilities, enhance our strength, and protect life, liberty, and property.

The Christian faith is not based on works. I believe that. Salvation is assured through a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. Yet there are two parts to being a Christian: making him Savior and making him Lord of our lives. Salvation is assured but lordship is our witness. In James 2:18 (NASB) we’re told that faith and works go together as the visual reminder to the world that we believe. “But someone may well say, ‘You have

faith and I have works; show me your faith without the works, and I will show you my faith by my works.’”

Voting is works. Sometimes Christians need to be busy being Christians, in real and practical ways.

Faith and politics go together like a hand in a glove. Get up Christians. Get busy, and go to the polls and vote your faith. Vote like your faith depends on it. Your ability to openly practice your faith without fear of loss of life, liberty and property actually does.

*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](http://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](mailto:Commentary@1819News.com).*



## The Alternative Approach

# Who Are You Going to Believe?

by Roy Williams



Our freedoms, in all areas of our lives, depend on that question. We can start with the oldest and most accurate history book ever written, the Bible, where we are instructed to, "Study to show ourselves approved." In other words, make sure you know the truth, and the only way to know if you are being taught the truth is to look at the fruits they bear. Are they living what they are teaching?

With that in mind, please allow me to ask you some questions. Are you being taught the word of God (the Bible) chapter by chapter, verse by verse? In the final chapter of that great book, Revelation 22:18-19, we are warned against adding to or taking away from "this prophecy," the Bible. Many so-called churches, preachers, and teachers are constantly adding to and taking away from the word of God. Is what you are being taught actually in the Bible or is it just the traditions of man? Who are you going to believe God or man?

Are our school systems teaching our children the truth? Many years

ago, our public-school systems began teaching a lot of propaganda that is inappropriate or in some cases, downright dangerous to our society and our way of life. Socialism, communism, and Darwinism are being taught as facts, while at the same time they have made it all but a crime to teach the Bible or anything about Christianity in our schools. Much of the history they teach in our schools has been re-written to slant toward a political idea that most Americans do not approve of. They are even teaching that there are more than two genders, and that each child can choose which sex they wish to be.

Are our elections fair and honest? Most people have no faith in the voting systems that are in place today. As a young man, I voted on November 5 and knew who won the election before going to bed that night. We are now recognized as one of the most technologically advanced societies on earth, and they want us to believe that it is no longer possible to have an accurate count the same day. They even call it racist to ask for

proof of citizenship before voting. It is as though they want illegal immigrants to be able to help us decide who should run our country. Are you going to believe the elitists or the system that has worked for over 200 years?

Why are our politicians driving us so deep in debt? At the time of this report, 39 cents of every dollar paid in individual income tax is going toward servicing the debt interest. As outrageous as that sounds, it is not getting better because we keep borrowing... and guess who we are borrowing from? Nations that are hostile to us and our way of life, such as China and other communistic regimes. You would think that our elected officials, who write the laws, would know that the borrower becomes a slave to the lender. We better start paying attention!

Are we really the healthiest nation on earth? Absolutely not. America now ranks last of all the industrialized nations, and it is getting worse every year. That is in spite of the fact that we spend more on health care than all other nations. We have the highest obesity rate, highest diagnoses of diabetes and heart disease, and take more prescribed medications than all other nations combined. Our so-called healthcare system is one of the most corrupt on planet earth. Are we going to believe



those who are paid from sickness or those who are paid for wellness?

So, what are we to do with this information? May I suggest that if you are running a business, a household, a school, or a country, and all the signs say it is failing, the first step is to stop the flow of money that is supporting it. We must stop throwing good money toward bad results. The definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over again the same way while expecting a different outcome. Our schools are failing, and the only answer they can give us is to spend more money on it. Our sick care system is failing with more heart disease, cancer, and diabetes than ever, and they just keep begging us for more money. The political system is bankrupting us, and all they want to do is tax us even

more.

Yes, we need some common-sense solutions, and step one is to shut off the money supply. We as a people must demand positive results, or we must fire those responsible. We must demand that we as a nation go back to the Constitution and anyone breaking their oath of office be punished to the fullest extent of the law. Only then will things start to get better. Are we going to believe those in power or those who have a proven track record?

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Cooking with Anna (continued from page 13)

## Surrender

by Anna Hamilton

*You can pray and pray and pray for God to fill you up, for God to be in every aspect of your lives, but He cannot do that if we are holding onto to the things of this world. There is no room for blessings where there is bitterness. The world will tell you not to forgive someone that hasn't apologized. The world will tell you to worry about every step you take. The world will tell you to be jealous of your friends when they are blessed. The world will tell you to be anxious about the unknown. When you listen to the things of this world, you are not fully surrendered to God.*

*Romans 12:2 tells us, "Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing, and perfect will." The pattern of this world is to hold on to all that bitterness. God wants to fill you up, but He has no room in your hearts when it is full of everything that holds us back.*

*Proverbs 3:5-6 tells us, "Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight." If I was to just have to rely on my own ways to make it in this world, the path would not be straight. We must empty ourselves in order to fully trust in the Lord. The Scripture doesn't say to trust in the Lord with part of your heart, it tells us to trust with our entire heart and in all of our ways submit to him.*

*It is so scary to fully give everything to God. We, as humans, want to be in control, and for us to fully surrender, we have to realize*

*that God is in control of our lives. No matter how much we pray about a situation in our lives, whether it's financial, relationship with family, personal fears...God cannot fully transform our lives if we aren't in a state of complete surrender.*

*Have you fully surrendered yourself to Jesus? Can you sing the words, "I surrender all, I surrender all, All to Thee my blessed Savior, I surrender all," and truly mean it? I am working on fully surrendering to Jesus every day, and it is so hard. I want to see and feel Jesus in every part of my life, so I know full surrender must happen. I pray that you will join me in completely surrendering everything we have to Christ.*

*This week's recipe features two fall favorites: apples and turnips. Turnips are one of my favorite vegetables and are definitely overlooked. This delicious warm side dish will be perfect for a cool, autumn night or on your Thanksgiving table this year. I hope you love it as much as my family does.*

*"Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time. Cast all your anxiety on Him because He cares for you. Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that the family of believers throughout the world is undergoing the same kind of sufferings. And the God of all grace, who called you to His eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will Himself restore you and make you strong, firm, and steadfast." 1 Peter 5:6-10*

# Stepping Away From Domestic Violence

by Lisa Philippart,  
Licensed Professional Counselor



**“Do not look for healing at the feet of those who broke you.”**  
- Rupi Kaur

talk with those you trust about what’s going on in your relationship. A professional therapist is one of those resources because that person can help you build your self-esteem and learn how to help yourself, without feeling judged or rushed into taking action. If you can’t afford individual therapy, learn all you can from books and online resources, join online forums, and find a support group at a local women’s shelter. Do these things even if it means keeping them a secret. Your life and your children’s lives may depend on it.

The easiest way to avoid getting involved in an abusive relationship is to avoid getting involved with an abuser. I acknowledge that

it can be difficult to identify someone who could be abusive. So, I recommend that you beware of someone who:

1. Criticizes you or family.
2. Is rude to you and others.
3. Displays anger outbursts.
4. Insists on having his or her way and will not compromise.
5. Presents with paranoia.
6. Is overly jealous or possessive.
7. Threatens you or your family.

Please pay attention to these signs! I know it can be difficult when someone is pursuing you and expressing love and affec-

**Lisa Philippart LPC LLC**  
**NCC, BCPCC, BC-TMH**  
**Licensed Professional Counselor**  
**Living Life Counseling Center**  
 44 Hughes Rd, Suite 1050  
 Madison, AL 35758  
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 urlifematters@hotmail.com or  
 Lisa.P@livinglifecounselingctr.com  
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tion. But remember this: An abuser won’t risk becoming abusive until he or she knows that you won’t leave. The abuser’s first step is to win you over and then isolate you from your family and friends. Many times the violence doesn’t begin until after the marriage or after the birth of a child, when you are less likely to leave. (But it can also escalate if you try to leave.) This is why it is so

important to have a plan and support.

If you are already in an abusive situation, please don’t wait for the next attack. Call the National Domestic Violence Hotline at 1-800-799-SAFE. To prepare for an emergency, you can:

1. Have a safe place to go, like a friend or family’s home.
2. Open a bank account or credit card in your own name.
3. Let neighbors know to call the police if they hear loud noises or suspect a dangerous situation.
4. Make extra car and house keys. Hide a car key outside, so you and your children can get away.
5. Have a bag packed with important legal papers and cash. Pack a separate bag with clothes and comfort items for your children.

Remember, you have value and your life matters. Change takes courage.

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

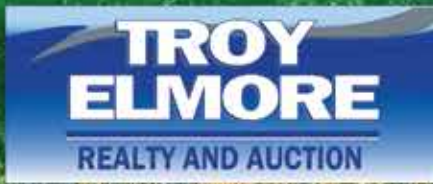




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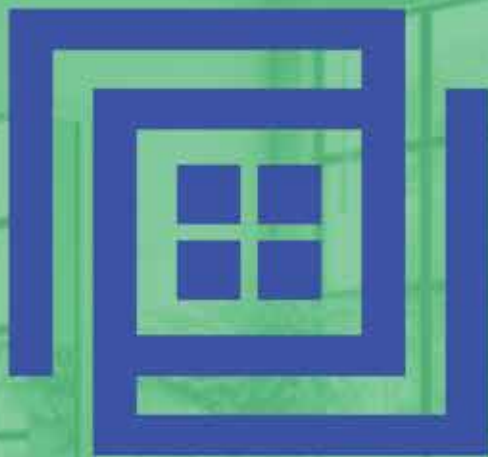


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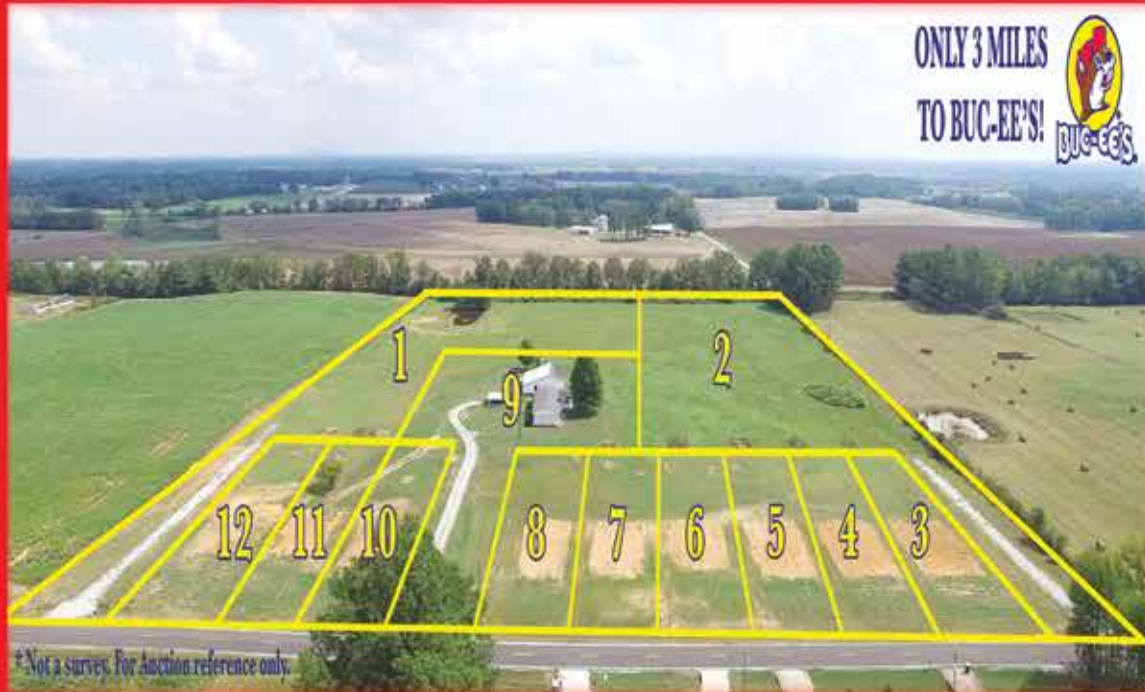
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