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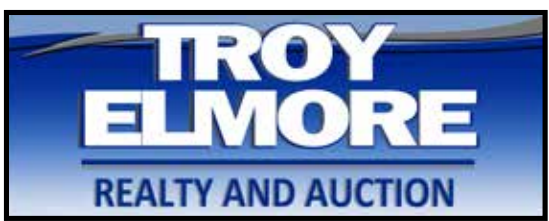


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See Our Listings Inside this edition...  
Pages 25 - 32

### Special Feature



**Crazy Llama: Custom Apparel, Careful Artistry, And Fun...**  
Jonathan McGlades served honorably in the USAF for 12 years, and retired as an E-6, better known as a Tech Sgt...  
**Page 7**

## Get U Movin' Mobile Car Detailing: It's In The DNA!

By Ali Elizabeth Turner

I first met Doug Wrucke of Get U Movin' Mobile Car Detailing at a Limestone Leaders BNI meeting, and he made us all laugh. OK, that was well and good, but it was subsequent encounters that made me

Continued on page 15



### Special Feature

**Student Who Pitched Gingerbread House Contest For City Is Ready For Second Event...**

Ella Lovvorn, an 8-year-old student at Lindsay Lane Christian Academy, is ready to become both elf and judge...  
**Page 9**



### Special Feature



**Ardmore Tinsel Trail...**  
The Greater Ardmore Chamber of Commerce Tinsel Trail is returning for another exciting year in 2024...  
**Page 16**

## Athens Health And Rehabilitation Spotlight On Peggy King



By Ali Elizabeth Turner

Peggy King was born in Iuka, Mississippi, in 1933, and married right out of high school. Her first husband was named Robert Stevenson. For

Continued on page 17

## FOR UNTO US A CHILD IS BORN



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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
- Lisa Philippart
- Joel Allen
- Eric Betts
- Roy Williams
- Nick Niedzwiecki
- Brenda Wilkerson
- Detri Mcghee
- Holly Hollman
- Blake Williams

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**Contents**

**Publisher's Point** . . . . . 3

**All Things Soldier** . . . . . 4

**Calendar Of Events** . . . . . 6

**Special Feature** . . . . . 7

**What Makes Ronnie Roll** . . . . . 8

**Special Feature** . . . . . 9

**Captain's Log** . . . . . 10

**Slinkard on Success** . . . . . 11

**Clean Green And Beautiful** . . . . . 12

**Cooking With Anna** . . . . . 13

**Health And Fitness** . . . . . 14

**Cover Stories** . . . . . 15 & 17

**Special Feature** . . . . . 16

**Learning As A Lifestyle** . . . . . 18

**McGhee On Management** . . . . . 19

**Dog Barker** . . . . . 20

**Rightside Way** . . . . . 21

**Alternative Approach** . . . . . 22

**Mental Health Minute** . . . . . 24



**Publisher's Point**

*A True Gift*

A few days ago, I was spending a couple of minutes (for reals) checking my Facebook account, and I came across what went on to be a true gift: an opportunity to attend a leadership conference where the speakers were none other than John Maxwell, Ed Mylett, and Chris Hodges. The event, which was the 10th anniversary of Impact Leadership, was sponsored by Church of the Highlands and held at their Birmingham campus. I am not at all sure how many attended live, but those who attended online numbered over 14,000 from all over the world. As far as being present with focused attention, I had to weave in and out because I was smack dab in the middle of producing this edition of *Athens Now*. However, even with only being able to catch some of it and not at all having the opportunity to take notes, I found myself experiencing something wonderfully strange. That was, that even though I had heard two of the three speakers by the hour on a daily basis over the span of several months, it was as though everything was brand new. That was the first of the gifts, being able to hear from two legends, and having their words taste like fresh manna.

The gifts just kept coming, and they were in the form of stories. John Maxwell and Ed Mylett could not have come from more diverse backgrounds, as John was a pastor raised by a pastor, and Ed was the son of an alcoholic. Now they are each other's heroes.

In my life, John Maxwell rep-



John Maxwell



Ed Mylett

resents a rare type of courage. He went to theological school and became a pastor because he wanted to help people, and the traditional ministry was the only way he knew how to do it. Then, he found himself being pulled into marketplace ministry in the form of teaching leadership in both the secular world as well as the sacred. He has taught leadership principles all over the world, to government leaders, kings, queens, CEOs, and

has written over 80 books. He is considered the GOAT, the Greatest Of All Time when it comes to teaching people how to be the best versions of themselves, and build the best teams, churches, businesses, and families. What is also so admirable about John is that he couldn't care less about the accolades, he just wants to serve God, even when people don't understand why he isn't behind a pulpit every Sunday.

Ed Mylett has coached more than one president of the United States, pro athletes, celebrities, CEOs, has been wildly successful as a business man and author, and even owns his own island off the coast of Maine, I think. He is an engaging blend of jock, jokester, and the raw real deal, who by his own account should have never been successful on any level. He is currently considered the #1, most-in-demand speaker in the world. What was their message? Love God, love people, and serve both even when it's hard. Nothing could be simpler, and nothing could be tougher.

We are in the season where we are reminded of that gritty kind of love, and may we choose to give more to the challenging folks than we receive from the delightful ones. I am not talking about the latest tech gizmo or diamond jewelry. I am talking about the only thing that lasts, and that is giving people your part of the love they need, and speaking truth in love. I am grateful that Church of the Highlands gave so freely to me, and by grace I will do my best to honor that gift and let it grow in me. My deepest thanks to all who made these gifts available and accessible. I am truly blessed.

*Ali Elizabeth Turner*

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



# Hegseth -- Confirmation Or Condemnation?

by Ali Elizabeth Turner



Pete Hegseth was in Iraq when I was there -- Fallujah was raging 15 kilometers away while I was experiencing the comparative safety of being on Radwaniyah, an intel base that was the former haunt of Uday Hussein. Pete had the courage to tell a subcommittee that was hellbent on bashing soldiers the truth—that when Fallujah II was being fought (because our soldiers were not allowed to finish the job the first time) the residents of Fallujah welcomed them into their homes with open arms and said, “Where have you been?” That narrative was certainly consistent with what I understood to be true. However, I wasn’t there kicking in doors, and I am dependent on the testimony of those who were.

This moves me to the question of the hour: Should this brilliant warrior, a

Princeton graduate, a Harvard graduate, (although he mailed his Harvard diploma back) a man who is on his third marriage, a best-selling author, and TV host be allowed to be Secretary of Defense? I have waffled on this one, and my answer has come back to a yes. That being said, I understand why you may disagree.

Pete has been accused of all kinds of things—running two charities financially into the ground, sexual misconduct, alcoholism, Islamophobia, having the wrong tattoo, and if we had not first experienced the smear campaign conducted in order to prevent the confirmation of United States Supreme Court Justice Brett Kavanaugh, I would have been far more inclined to believe that if someone was being accused, it had to be true, right? I mean, no one



would say a complete lie with the expectation of getting away with it, would they? They would.

Let’s talk about Pete’s tattoo by talking about a different tattoo, that of the Confederate flag. There are those who “get inked” with that particular symbol that to some represents autonomy and independence,

and to others, only racism. I never understood that before I moved here, but it is inarguable. If you have the stars and bars on your forearm, you run the risk of being put in a philosophical box. So it is with the Jerusalem Cross, which is sported by Mr. Hegseth. To some it is a symbol of pure, historic Christianity, and to others, Islamophobia.

Has Pete Hegseth ever been drunk? Yes, by his own admission. So have many, many soldiers. Does that mean he is an alcoholic and unfit to be Secretary of Defense? Not necessarily. He has never had anyone tell him that he needs to seek treatment. Does war break up marriages? It does. Do we believe Pete when he says that he has

been changed greatly from the man he was ten years ago by what he calls “the two J’s?” (By that he means Jesus and his wife, Jenny.) That is something you are going to have to decide.

According to Pete, President-elect Trump is still solidly behind his nominee, and wants him as Sec-Def. This is because he believes that Pete will protect our soldiers due to the fact that he has experienced the good, the bad, and the ugly of being a warrior. If Pete is guilty of the things that are being alleged, and hasn’t repented or changed, then I don’t want him. However, if he is being smeared because people are afraid that he will restore the military to itself, then I most certainly do. How about you?

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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).

## 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!

## Servsafe Manager Training December 9

Get ready to boost your food safety knowledge at our Servsafe Manager Training event! Join us for an interactive in-person session where you'll learn everything you need to know to become a certified food safety manager. From proper food handling to preventing foodborne illnesses, this training will equip you with the skills to ensure a safe dining experience for your customers. Don't miss out on this opportunity to elevate your expertise in the foodservice industry! LaunchBox, South Marion Street, Athens. 8am-5pm.

## 'Tis the Season With UAH Holiday Jazz December 10

UAH Department of Music, Theatre, and Film kicks off the season with Holiday Jazz, presented in the Ballroom (Room 112) of the Student Services Building. This year, the program features more of our stellar student talent, with some faculty spotlights, of course. Come join the party: cocktails at 6pm, concert at 7pm. Tickets: \$35/person. Free venue parking. Information at [uah.edu/holidayjazz](http://uah.edu/holidayjazz)

## Big Ben's Christmas At The Salty Cod December 11 & 17

Come celebrate the season with us for a great dinner, great friends, great times! 5:30 - 10pm. The Salty Cod, 309 Market Street West in Athens. After last year's success we are excited to do it again! Two nights this time. Doors open at 5:30pm both nights with Dinner at 7 and a raffle drawing at 10pm. Dinner will be a buffet style with Beef wellington, suckling pig, Atlantic Salmon all carved by Chef Barry O'Connor and Chef Kristen Caroseli. Additional sides and appetizers included as well. Your ticket includes your meal and your meal gratuity. If you would like to sit with another group please let us know by e-mailing [cara@thesaltycodal.com](mailto:cara@thesaltycodal.com) or purchasing tickets together.

## 2024 Historic Decatur Christmas Tour December 14

Welcome to the 2024 Tour! Get ready to experience the magic of the holiday season as you explore beautifully decorated historic homes in Decatur. 2-7pm. Westminster Presbyterian Church. Immerse yourself in the festive atmosphere and enjoy the sights and sounds of Christmas. Don't miss this opportunity to create lasting memories with your loved ones. Exclusive this year, enjoy a first look at the recently relocated Judge Horton House on the new Scottsboro Boys Civil Rights Museum complex.

## Joy of Christmas Concert December 14

Decatur Orchestra Sul Ponticello's Christmas concert of their annual performance of Handel's Messiah, and other Christmas favorites. 6-8pm. Southside Baptist Church, 709 9th Street Southeast, Decatur. General Admission: \$30.

## 14th Annual Sippin Cider Festival December 14

From Athens Main Street. 4pm to 8pm. Sponsored by Dream Key Real Estate, LLC. Downtown merchants will be open late for shopping and dining. While shopping, patrons can sip on cider and vote for their favorite! Merchants compete for the coveted Cider Cup and bragging rights for the year. Participating Merchants: Antiques on Jefferson, Athens Alehouse & Cellar, BeanBeans Boutique, Bennett's Clothing, Boutique Bliss, Broken Brush, Cotton Roe Boutique, Crawford's Gifts, Crowning Touch, Donna McCown Innovative Realty Solutions, Dottie Jewel Clothing, Driftwood Dragonfly Tea Shop, Eliza Boutique, Epiphany Boutique, EXIT Realty Downhome, Frame Gallery of Athens, Frank's Good Stuff, Hendricks Patton-Rancl, High Cotton Arts, Hi-Plane Coffee/UG White, Hyatt & Sims/Cruise Planners, Irons & Ales, LaunchBox, Li'l Mazzara's, Liz & Co., Lucia's Cocina Mexicana, Mozza Pizza, Old Black Bear, Pimentos, Rad Rags, Ro's Grille, Salty Cod, Shepherds Clothiers, Snapdragon Kids, Southern Table, Southern Throne, Studio 16 Cigar Lounge, Sweetest Things Tea Room, That's SO Art, Toodlebugs, Trinity's, Village Pizza, Wildwood Deli.

## 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.



# Crazy Llama: Custom Apparel, Careful Artistry, And Fun

by Ali Elizabeth Turner

Jonathan McGlades served honorably in the USAF for 12 years, and retired as an E-6, better known as a Tech Sgt. He was a crew chief for C-130s, and then transferred to Cyber/ IT. After he left the Air Force, Jonathan then worked as a civilian contractor on Redstone Arsenal. While he was still in the service, he would craft cool custom T-shirts for his unit as a small side gig, or sometimes make shirts for himself and his family. His wife, Brittany, actually sews (like with a sewing machine), and has a sewing business which as you know, is nearly a lost art these days. She especially enjoys making clothes for their little girl, Cara. Together last summer they took over The Last Word, which is located in the Chevron complex on the corner of Capshaw and East Limestone in Athens, and are gearing up for a busy holiday season.

The McGlades are people of faith, and attend Summit Crossing here in Athens. Back in 2021, they had custom Christmas stockings made by Last Word, and were raving fan customers. One day Brittany “happened” to see a post on Facebook that Last Word was for sale, and she talked to Jonathan, feeling that they should buy it, and was also hoping he would say no. Jonathan also felt like they were supposed to buy it, and he had his own people that he hoped would advise against it. However, everyone they admired, respected, and with whom they consulted all green-lighted the project; they bought Last Word and their baptism of fire began.

The McGlades also have a teenaged son whose name is Torin. Before they bought the business, Brittany had signed



up to go help with Torin’s church camp, and they were in the woods with no cell coverage for a full week. This was three weeks after they opened, and Jonathan held down the fort by himself until they got back. Jonathan told me that he survived by praying tons while he “figured it out.” While the McGlades were already comfortable with screen ink and vinyl, it was the embroidery machine that proved to be the most daunting for both of them. Interestingly, the embroidery machine has become a favorite for both Jonathan and Brittany. Jonathan loves to embroider hats, and Brittany loves to embroider diaper bags, blankets, and onesies for littles. Her all-time favorite, however, is custom kitchen towels, which make for a great house-warming or Christmas gift. Jonathan will tell you that embroidering

a backpack hands down has been the most challenging, as well as highly rewarding.

Crazy Llama is a family affair—Cara is a preschooler, has her little broom, and helps with cleaning up the shop, and Torin, who is a virtual student at the Renaissance School, has scanned files and helps with IT. When Brittany was a kid, her mom owned a thrift shop, and Brittany would go there after school and help. It was important to the McGlades that their kids learn to have a strong work ethic, and have the opportunity to create a business together that could really serve the community.

Jonathan describes himself as being the tech side of the team, and Brittany is the creative one. Jonathan is also an awesome chef, and Brittany says he makes the best pulled pork in North Alabama. Jonathan absolutely loves llamas,

and was happy to have a llama as their logo, mostly because they are protectors. The McGlades both say that llamas have gotten a bad rap because they spit and sometimes are mean, but they are fiercely loyal. The name Crazy Llama, which was in place when Jonathan had his side gig, has served to be a conversation piece, and some people have come into the shop just to find out the story behind the name.

So, in the few short months that they have been in business, they have successfully kept the Last Word client base as well as gain new customers who trust them so much that they come in and say, “I trust you; just do what you think will look good,” and it’s working. They have successfully embroidered things as varied as Converse tennis shoes and

sequined cowboy boots. They created a logo for a Harley-Davidson, and will do decals, yard signs, and banners, in addition to custom Tees. I asked them why, when I have choices in the area, should I come to Crazy Llama Custom Apparel? Together they said the following: “We don’t take it lightly when people trust us with their items. This is a little piece of God’s Kingdom, and we are doing what He wants.” What keeps them going when things get challenging? “Thinking about how much they will like the end product,” they said. If this is what you are looking for when it comes to custom apparel, then come meet the McGlades of Crazy Llama, and let them help you this holiday season.

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## What Makes Ronnie Roll

# “Oh The Weather Outside Is Frightful...”

by Ali Elizabeth Turner



“...but inside (ATH) it’s so delightful...”

Mayor Ronnie had been in meetings all morning that had to do with such exciting topics as sewers and drainage, and the meetings had gone long, as meetings often do. He was originally going to entitle this edition of Ronnie “The Challenges of Growth,” but then an AI-generated robo-call and a plummeting temp forecast for Thursday night’s Christmas Parade got us to laughing out loud to the point that

the only thing that made sense was to change the title to that time-honored Christmas song, “Let It Snow.” I will explain.

Many people are not aware that in the city of Athens, (or ATH, as we are at times referred to with affection) the mayor does not have a vote when it comes to things that pertain to the city. That is actually State law. City councils run cities, the mayors can make suggestions or recommendations, but that’s about it. We were talking

for a moment about people’s perceptions when a call came through on his cell phone, and Mayor Ronnie said, “This is about the tenth one I’ve gotten in the last half-hour; listen to this.” He then put it on speaker when a female AI voice began a spiel that tried to do a good job of sounding like a human, and would pause momentarily when Ronnie would interrupt “her.” However, it was when the algorithm actually said, “The government will pay your bills for you,”

that he politely with tongue in cheek said, “Ma’am, I AM the government...” and at that, we lost it laughing. Then he looked at me and said, “Did you know that it is going to be 17 degrees (F) outside the night of the parade?” For some reason then we both broke into, “Oh the weather outside is frightful...” at exactly the same time, and laughter set in as a therapy. Once we stopped laughing, I replied that I would be doing my best to avoid parade floats while

delivering Athens Now as I had since 2011. “Mister Mayor, this is when I utilize my knowledge of every back alley and one-way street in Athens.” Clearly some joy had been in order, and it definitely hit the spot.

We spoke of the season, its true meaning, and spent the rest of our time together praying, and specifically lifted up other mayors in North Alabama who were facing some tough situations. And once again, it was time for Ronnie to roll.





## Special Feature

# *Student Who Pitched Gingerbread House Contest For City Is Ready For Second Event*

by Holly Hollman - City of Athens Communications Specialist



Ella Lovvorn, an 8-year-old student at Lindsay Lane Christian Academy, is ready to become both elf and judge.

Ella is the creator of Athens' very own gingerbread house contest, named after her, of course.

The Ella the Elf Gingerbread House Contest was first held in 2023 after Ella called the office of Mayor Ronnie Marks and requested a meeting. During their discussion, when he asked what she thought the city needed, she pitched the idea for a gingerbread house contest. She added the first-place winner should get money and a lava lamp.

"How do you say, 'No,' to that request?" Mayor Marks asked and answered, "You don't."

Ella worked with her family, the Mayor's Office and Athens Arts League to kick off her inaugural contest. Now she's ready for round two on Dec. 14 at 9 a.m. at the Athens Activity Center. She recently conducted a planning session with Mayor Marks and staff to go over the details.

One of the major changes this year is, she will not taste test the entries.

"It was a little much, last year," she said.

Instead, the focus will be on appearance, creativity and structural integrity.

Her army of elves have been at work. Athens Arts League agreed to organize the event and secured this year's major sponsor, Impact Roofing. Arts League Board Mem-



ber Diane Lehr said Impact Roofing "loved the idea of supporting a community event related to houses – gingerbread houses." Im-

Impact Roofing's sponsorship secured 24 gingerbread house kits and additional decorations and supplies.

The City of Athens is sponsoring gift cards for the winners. There will be three age categories and prizes for first through third place:

- First Place - \$50 gift card and a lava lamp
- Second Place - \$25 gift card
- Third Place - \$15 gift card

Ella told Mayor Marks she wants to judge this year, and she plans to invite one of her friends to judge. She also selected Athens Fire Chief James Hand and Athens Mayor's Youth Commissioner Cevahni McNeill as judges.

Registration is limited to 24 entries. The entry fee is a new toy that will be donated to the Lincoln-Bridgeforth Park Commit-

tee's annual Christmas toy/bike give-away for kids in need.

Ella the Elf Gingerbread Contest Details

- Dec. 14 at the Athens Activity Center, 912 W. Pryor Street.
- Contest starts at 9 a.m. and ends at 10 a.m.
- Judging starts at 10 a.m., and winners will be announced as soon as results tallied.
- Can be a single entry or 2 kids per team; will be placed in age category based on oldest child.
- Link to print the form: <https://al-athens.civicplus.com/Document-Center/View/3028/Gingerbread-Contest-Registration-2024?bidId=>
- Forms are also available at City Hall in the foyer.





## Captain's Log

# Standing In Her Spot

by Brenda Wilkerson

This morning I found myself standing in my mom's tiny cluttered kitchen, fixing breakfast for my dad, and singing old gospel music loud and off key. And it brought a tear to my eye and a smile to my face. My heart broke a little with nostalgia, appreciation, and sadness.

See, I was standing there fixing breakfast for my dad because Mom wasn't here to do it. We lost her nearly two years ago. Standing there, looking out the window, I was reminded of the many, many times I heard her belting out hymns from that small space downstairs as I laid in my bed upstairs. And I had a new appreciation. I understood that

she was both praising the Lord and mustering the strength to get through the day. She was calling on the Lord.

Mom was a natural caregiver. She was a nurturer and a doer. All things were within her job description, and her responsibilities were great. She was the one people counted on, the one that came through, the one that figured it out and made a way for those around her. That place in the kitchen was where she readied and steadied herself for the day ahead. It's where she called upon the Lord to give her the strength and grace to make it through the assignments of the



day.

Oh, how my heart burst. I saw her in a new light, with a new appreciation. I heard the familiar echoes, and they sounded brand new. Because now that she's gone,

I was standing in her spot, fixing breakfast for my dad, trying to gather my strength to care for him another day. I was the one singing songs of praise to reinforce me, to let the Lord know I was trusting in and call-

ing on Him to get me through the day.

It's a privilege to care for someone when they are vulnerable. And it is a great weight. My mom understood that better than anyone, as she cared for everyone in her life. Her heart was big and her concern covered many.

This morning I saw her with new eyes, and I heard her song with new ears. I heard those off key notes, and I realized that our voices were singing them together. There, in the place that she had stood a million times, she was with me, encouraging me to sing out to declare my love and my need. She was, as she had so often, encouraging me and supporting me, giving me strength, and telling me she saw me.

I was standing in her spot, but I will never be able to fill her shoes.

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## Slinkard On Success

# Which Pain Will You Choose

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)*



Our lives are full of choices, and with every decision we make, we must understand there comes a cost. Two forms of pain oftentimes define the outcomes of these decisions: the pain of regret and the pain of discipline. The pain of regret is the sorrow we feel when we look back at missed opportunities that we should have taken, neglected responsibilities that should have been met, or just overall poor decisions. This pain of regret lingers and is typically accompanied by a sense of loss and frustration over what might have been. On the other hand, the pain of discipline is the discomfort we endure in a particular moment when we make sacrifices, keep consistently showing up, and push through challenges to achieve our goals.

While both forms of pain are inevitable, their timing and impact are the main differences. The pain of discipline is temporary and yields rewards, whereas the pain of regret lasts far longer, often coming with consequences that negatively impact our lives. The choice is ours to make whether it is enduring the effort today or facing the regret tomorrow. Either way – one sense of pain will be felt.

For example, a 45-year-old professional always dreamed of starting a business but kept procrastinating due to fear of failure and the com-

fort of a steady paycheck. Flash forward many years, and this person finds himself stuck in a job they dislike, regretting never having taken the chance to follow their dreams and passion.

Another 45-year-old decides to start their business despite the challenges. They sacrifice evenings and weekends for years to build their company, enduring stress and hard work. Over time, their business becomes successful, and they achieve financial freedom and personal fulfillment.

In both cases, effort and sacrifice are involved – but one leads to lasting regret, while the other leads to long-term satis-

faction. Too many people are walking around waiting for success to happen to them when the reality is they need to be prepared to create success. Someone once said success isn't given; it's earned with hard work, determination, and a relentless focus on your goals. Every step you take today builds the foundation for the greatness you'll achieve tomorrow.

To master the pain of discipline, I believe some actionable steps must be taken to cultivate discipline in your life. For example, the ability to set clear and specific goals, create a plan and schedule to stick to, eliminate distractions, and learn how to embrace failures

as lessons.

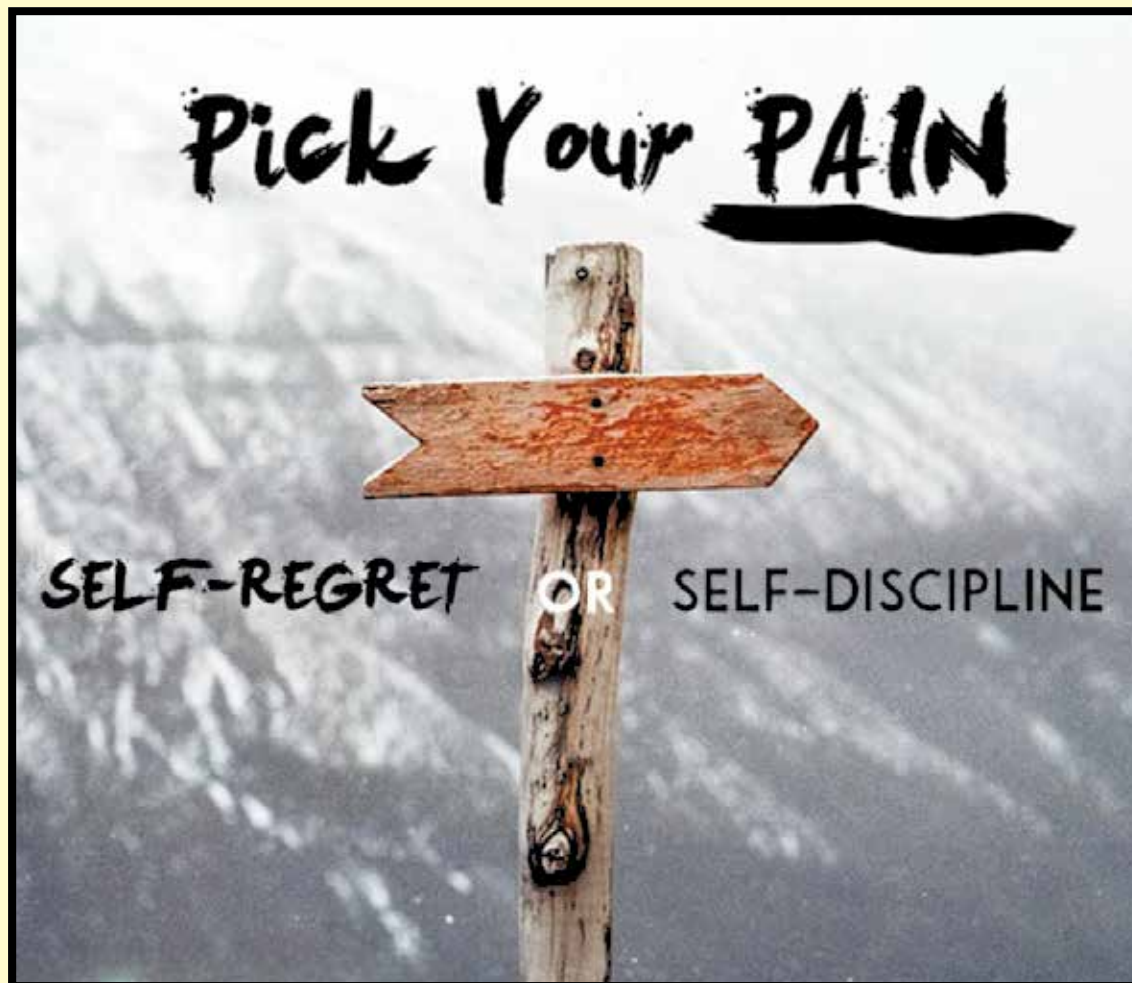
When it comes to setting clear and specific goals, we need to learn to define exactly what we want to achieve. Too many people are walking around without a clear and concise picture of what they want to achieve. We need to define who we want to become, and it takes breaking big goals into smaller, manageable milestones. For example, instead of saying, "I want to get fit," set a goal like, "I will work out 3 times a week for 30 minutes."

In creating a plan and schedule, it is important to write down actionable steps to reach goals and utilize resources such as a calendar or planner to allocate time for

these steps. An example would be scheduling daily time for focused work or practice. Another struggle for many people is learning how to eliminate distractions. It begins by identifying what disrupts your focus (i.e., social media, clutter, noise) and learning how to minimize them. For example, put your phone on silent or in another room during work sessions. Instead, what happens is we hear the notification go off, and before we know it, we are distracted by technology.

When it comes to life, we need to embrace "failures" and use them as learning lessons. Too often we take losses and dwell on the negative, but we need to take our "losses" and learn from them. We need to accept that setbacks are part of the process – reflect, adjust, and keep going. We cannot give up and quit which seems to be the case for many people. For example, if you miss a workout or deadline, restart the next day without guilt.

Consistency is key – discipline strengthens with practice and leads to long-term success. We will all face some kind of pain in our lives -- the pain of regret or the pain of discipline -- but ultimately the choice is ours to make. For this article, I want people to learn how to live life disciplined and not look back at the end of life with regrets.





## Clean, Green And Beautiful

# A Season Of Thanks

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

Keep Athens-Limestone Beautiful has so many things to be thankful for this year. We had an amazing year thanks to our dedicated volunteers and support from the Limestone County Commission, the City of Athens, and our local business sponsors. While we will never be able to repay everyone for their hard work and dedication, we do know that all of Limestone County benefits and appreciates their efforts.

Keep Athens-Limestone Beautiful has an amazing volunteer base who has shown us unwavering support over the years. With their help we have accomplished so much this past year -- from litter cleanups to the Household Hazardous Waste Collection to Shred Day, they all make these events possible. Through the hard work from this volunteer group, we were able to host 27 clean-

ups, with 355 different volunteers! We removed 8,340 pounds of litter from public roadways and waterways throughout Limestone County. The City of Athens and the Limestone County Commission have put in countless hours helping us remove the bags and piles of trash and volunteering at our events, and for that we are beyond thankful. We know it's hard to see the difference because it's a never-ending cycle, but it has a huge impact. Because of these fantastic volunteers, Athens City and Limestone County are a little bit cleaner.

Our local businesses continuously go above and beyond for Keep Athens-Limestone Beautiful. Thanks to their generosity and their love for Limestone County, they make our events come to life. The Earth Day Expo is our favorite event every year, and because of them, it can remain a FREE event for ev-



eryone. Not only do we receive sponsorship for the different shows and exhibits, but they also volunteer their TIME. Time should never be undervalued as a contribution, because as we all know, there is never enough, and we can't get it back. For those of you who have volunteered with us at any event, please know that we are forever grateful.

This year, we were lucky

enough to have a large number of student volunteers work us. Five different student groups from the Athens Renaissance Middle School chose to work with us through the Adopt-A-Spot Program. These students cleaned five different locations, totaling 1,440 pounds of litter. We also have a new partnership with the Advanced Ag class from the Limestone County Tech School. The students are helping us with the Downtown Project. They are not only helping us plant the pots, but they are also growing our plants in the greenhouse

at Tanner High School. We are so proud to have the opportunity to work with students and contribute to their education.

As the year comes to an end and we reflect on all of our achievements, we are humbled by the immense support we have received from all of Limestone County. We are proud to serve Limestone County and its residents. We can only hope to grow our volunteer base and extend our outreach efforts to better serve all of Limestone County.



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**Cooking with Anna**

## *Mind Your P's!*

by Anna Hamilton

*The holiday season is a crazy time of year. Everything is just crazy. Trying to be everywhere and be everything for everyone is exhausting. There is so much pressure to make every holiday perfect. Perfect is not the “P” we should be focusing on. Let’s learn to focus on four “P’s” that will offer a much smoother and more enjoyable holiday: Peace, Prayer, Positivity, and Possibilities.*

*Finding your peace is something that you have to continually work on. Once you find peace, it doesn’t stay around forever. The devil wants to keep us in a state of confusion and unrest because he knows only perfect*

*peace can be found in Jesus. When we are in Christ, we are promised a peace that surpasses all understanding. When we decide to step back from the craziness of life and come into the presence of God, peace will follow. Philippians 4:6-7 says, “Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”*

*To help you be in a state of peace, you must have an active prayer life.* continued on page 23

## *Fire Roasted Tomato and White Bean Soup*

### *Ingredients:*

- 2 Tbsp olive oil*
- 1 yellow onion, diced*
- 3 cloves garlic, minced*
- 1 ½ cups potatoes, diced*
- 2 Tbsps. tomato paste*
- 2 ½ tsps. Italian seasoning*
- 2 tsps. red pepper flakes*
- 2 (14 oz) cans fire-roasted tomatoes*
- 2 (14 oz) cans white beans, drained*
- 32 oz vegetable broth (or chicken broth)*
- ¾ cup heavy cream*
- ½ cup grated Parmesan cheese*
- Salt and pepper to taste*

### *Directions:*

*In a large Dutch oven, heat olive oil over*

continued on page 23



## Health and Fitness

# *The Imperative Of Self-Care: Nurturing The Most Important Relationship You'll Ever Have*

by Nick Niedzwiecki - Owner, CrossFit Athens

In the hustle and bustle of daily life, it's all too easy to neglect the most critical relationship we'll ever cultivate — the one with ourselves. The concept of self-care extends far beyond bubble baths and spa days; it's a holistic commitment to nurturing our physical, mental, and emotional well-being. In this fast-paced world, dedicating time and energy to self-care is not a luxury but a necessity, and here's why.

**Physical Health: The Foundation of Well-Being** - At the core of self-care lies the recognition that

our bodies are the vessels through which we experience life. Taking care of our physical health is not merely about aesthetics but about ensuring we have the vitality and strength to navigate our daily challenges. Regular exercise, a balanced diet, sufficient sleep, and preventive healthcare measures are all integral components of self-care that contribute to longevity and a higher quality of life.

**Mental Clarity and Focus: Sharpening the Mind** - The demands of modern life can leave our minds cluttered and fatigued. Engag-

ing in self-care activities that promote mental well-being such as mindfulness meditation, journaling, or pursuing hobbies, can foster mental clarity and enhance cognitive function. By carving out moments for mental rest, we create space for creativity, problem-solving, and a greater ability to navigate life's complexities.

**Emotional Resilience: Building Inner Strength** - Life is inherently filled with ups and downs, and emotional resilience is the key to weathering the storms. Self-care involves acknowledging and vali-

dating our emotions, allowing us to process and navigate them healthily. Whether through therapy, self-reflection, or seeking support from loved ones, taking care of our emotional well-being equips us to face challenges with greater resilience and a more balanced perspective.

**Enhanced Productivity: Quality Over Quantity** - Contrary to the belief that constant hustle leads to success, the quality of our efforts often outweighs sheer quantity. By taking breaks, prioritizing self-care, and ensuring we are mentally and physically rejuvenated, we can enhance our productivity. Well-rested minds and bodies are more focused, creative, and capable of producing high-quality work.

**Improved Relationships: The Ripple Effect** - The way we treat ourselves often sets the standard for how we allow others to treat us. By prioritizing self-care, we communicate to ourselves and those around us that our well-being matters. This self-respect fosters healthier relationships as we establish boundaries, communicate effectively, and engage with others from a place of emotional abundance rather than depletion.

**Stress Reduction: The Antidote to Burnout** - Chronic stress is a pervasive issue in today's society and can have detrimental

effects on both physical and mental health. Self-care acts as a powerful antidote to stress, helping to regulate cortisol levels, promote relaxation, and prevent burnout. Activities such as deep breathing exercises, yoga, and spending time in nature can be effective tools for stress reduction.

**Increased Self-Compassion: The Heart of Self-Care** - Self-care is an act of self-compassion, a practice of treating ourselves with the same kindness and understanding that we extend to others. Embracing self-compassion involves acknowledging imperfections, learning from mistakes, and letting go of self-judgment. By cultivating a compassionate relationship with ourselves, we build a foundation for a more fulfilling and meaningful life.

In a world that often glorifies busyness and productivity, the importance of self-care cannot be overstated. It is not a selfish indulgence but a fundamental investment in our well-being. When we prioritize self-care, we lay the groundwork for a healthier, more balanced, and more fulfilling life. Remember, you are your longest commitment, and taking care of yourself is not only a gift to your present self but an investment in a resilient, vibrant future.

Come join us at CrossFit Athens to begin your self-care journey!



# Get U Movin' Mobile Car Detailing: It's In The DNA!

by Ali Elizabeth Turner

*continued from page 1*

realize that car detailing is something that is deeply in his DNA, and he is truly passionate about taking "good care of your baby," meaning your car, truck, Piper Cub airplane, RV, boat or firetruck. Yep, he has done them all and has 25 years of experience under his belt. Literally, Doug has detailed thousands of transportation machines, and wrote a detailed manual regarding how to detail them the "Southern California" way.

Doug served in the Marine Corps, has been a CFO of a telecommunications services company, and is a pastor/missionary. His wife is from the Philippines, her name is Marilyn, and she is clearly the love of his life. "You married up, bro," I teased. Their story is epic, and I hope to get to share it with you someday!

So, on to the topic of how to "Get U Movin'." Doug is originally from Ocean-side, California, and if you hail from the land of the Beach Boys, it is just understood that your car routinely needs a "gleam team." Doug invested in a week-long detailing course that back in the day cost \$800, which was a big risk. It was sponsored by a well-known company called Tropic Shield, and he

was off and running toward being an entrepreneur... sort of. Doug looked at me and said, "The way to learn detailing is to do detailing." He started off talking to people in parking lots of shopping malls, and built relationships by building routes. He would come to certain areas on certain days, and the rest is history. "We built a business and had a lot of fun," he said.

Doug has taught others to do detailing, and has often found that what "separates the men from the boys" is the fact that in order to be successful, you have to do it until it's done, no matter what. It's just a DNA thing. In a word, Doug IS the "one man gleam team for YOUR movin' machine."

He lives and ministers in Hartselle, and does work all over North Alabama. Besides his work ethic and proven results, I love the way Doug puts people at ease when it comes to "taking care of their baby." He told me, "I have seen and cleaned it all -- chocolate milk, goat throw up, and everything in between." That includes McDonald's and Burger King wrappers that were tossed in the back seat that stacked up to a full four feet high. So, I took him outside of my office to see my work truck, which was named Oscar by its previous owner. "Give me four hours, and



**Doug and Marilyn Wrucke**

I will get it done," he said with a smile. I can hardly wait, and I KNOW Oscar is going to look awesome!

Doug does what he calls "organizing your car." He divides the "stuff" he finds into trash and treasure, and has literally returned hundreds of dollars to owners, along with paper clips, receipts, and fountain pens. Windows sparkle, "dead paint" gets revived, dirt that you didn't know you had has been totally cleaned up, and you now have a car that is no doubt cleaner than the day it rolled off the assembly line. "I CAN'T leave a gum wrapper," he told me with a chuckle.

Doug also does what is known as "claying," if your car needs it. Claying is a way of applying a special clay designed to get rid of rough spots, and few people do it. Doug has also developed his own special "secret sauce" when it comes to putting a

shine on the inside as well as the outside. Would you like to know the toughest part of detailing a Piper Cub airplane? "The underside of the wings," he said, and added, "You have GOT to do those first, or else you'll be too tired to do the job well." Would you like to know why, when you meet Doug that his shirt is not tucked in? Well, it turns out that while it would be in some people's minds that it is not the way to make a great first impression, it is in fact just the opposite. He leaves his shirt untucked because he refuses to run the risk of scratching the hood of your car with his belt buckle. He explained to me, "My shirt isn't untucked, I am covering my belt buckle so I can take good care of your baby."

Doug will stick by his estimates, and do the work 'til it's done. He has maintenance packages, mini-wash packages that are better than many competitors' detailing bids, and does it for less. If this is what you are looking for -- someone whose DNA demands that he gets "down to the detail" -- then give Doug Wrucke a call today at 256-612-4450. He will leave you with a choice of scent for your car, a mint, a flyer, a smile, and your "baby" will have never looked better.

**Get U Movin' Detailing**

256-612 4450

[www.getumovin.com](http://www.getumovin.com)

[blogspot.com](http://blogspot.com)

Facebook--Get U Movin'



# Ardmore Tinsel Trail

by Blake Williams

The Greater Ardmore Chamber of Commerce Tinsel Trail is returning for another exciting year in 2024.

The idea of the tinsel trail in Ardmore is for the community to actively participate in the fun of decorating trees throughout town.

The Ardmore holiday tradition will be located at the corner of Ardmore Avenue and 1st Street near Ardmore Town Hall and The Bryan House.

A special tree lighting ceremony will occur on

December 6, 2024, at 5:30 p.m. at the town hall pavilion. The Ardmore High School Jazz Band will perform as the community kicks off the holiday season.

Greater Ardmore Chamber Director Yolanda Eubanks says it's a great way to come together and promote community spirit during the holidays.

"The Chamber invites the community to join the holiday fun at Tinsel Trail," she said. "We are grateful for our sponsors and tree decorators who



will make this year's event possible."

Visitors coming to town to view the trees are also

encouraged to shop and dine at the local businesses in historic Ardmore.

For more information on the Ardmore Tinsel Trail, visit <https://greaterardmorechamber.com/tinsel-trail>





# Athens Health And Rehabilitation Spotlight On Peggy King

BY Ali Elizabeth Turner

*continued from page 1*

one year, Peggy experienced living in New York City and worked at Bloomingdale's in their finance department. During her time in Bloomingdale's employ, U.S. President Harry Truman's wife, Bess, along with their daughter, Margaret, came to shop at the iconic store. I asked Miss Peggy, "Did you get a chance to meet them?" "Oh, no," she said and added, "We were told that we would be fired immediately if we tried to make any type of contact." To this day, Harry Truman has remained Peggy's favorite U.S. President.

The Stevensons had one daughter, Deborah. Bill served in the Korean War, and Peggy went back to Iuka. After the

war, Bill came home and worked in Jackson, MS, at a newspaper known as the County Ledger. He was in production and delivery, and was tragically killed in an automobile accident. Peggy experienced being a widow as well as a single mom, and then she met Joe King. They married, and Joe adopted Deborah. "He was the only father Deborah has ever known," Peggy told me. Joe was in the oil business, and they lived a life of adventure. His job took them to New Orleans; they lived in Scotland for two years and in Norway for three. Peggy especially loved the beauty of Norway with its mountains, fjords, and waterfalls. "God gave us such a beautiful country," she said. Meanwhile, Deborah attended Ole Miss, mar-

ried, and eventually she and her husband settled in Athens. Deborah has two daughters, and it was taking care of them that brought Peggy to Athens. Peggy has been a member of First United Methodist Church in Athens for many years, and thanks God for the wonderful life she has lived. Peggy's favorite scripture is John 3:16, "For God so loved the world..." Her favorite hymn is "In The Garden," and we sang it together.

Her favorite actor? Alan Ladd.

Her favorite actress? Jane Wyman.

Her favorite movie? Gone With The Wind. She told me that the movie was filmed about 25 miles from where she was raised in Mississippi.



She enjoys books about the Amish, and she loved to make her special dressing at Thanksgiving. Since being at Athens Health and Rehab, her favorite activity has been to play bridge. We talked at length about how popular the game was, and how almost no one plays it any more. She was also president of the Women's Society. I asked her how life has been for her at Athens Health and Rehab, and she responded with a

forceful, "Oh gosh yes, people have taken good care of me." I asked her if she had any advice for young people, and she said, "Remember to keep church first in your life." Any other advice? "Don't give up on children; they will come back."

Wise words from a grateful woman, Miss Peggy King, a happy resident at Athens Health and Rehabilitation, LLC.



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*Our Family Caring For Yours*

# The Perils And Pitfalls Of People-Pleasing

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



People-pleasing is an exhausting behavior rooted in the relentless pursuit of approval and validation. It involves constantly worrying about how others perceive you and going to great lengths to accommodate their desires, often at the expense of your own needs. Consider Sally, a hypothetical example of a people-pleaser. She is a compassionate, empathetic, and friendly young woman who grew up doubting herself, never learning to set boundaries. Sally's life revolves around pleasing family and friends, leaving her disconnected from her own authenticity. She struggles with a troubling question: Is her goodness genuine, or is it a result of her fear of displeasing others? For Sally to find freedom, she must learn an essential truth—she is not responsible for

others' happiness, nor should she live solely to meet their expectations.

Sally's people-pleasing tendencies stem from a deep-seated addiction to external validation and an intense fear of being disliked. At its core, this behavior is rooted in insecurity—a loss of self-identity and authenticity. Without clear personal boundaries, Sally has left herself vulnerable to the demands and expectations of those around her. She fears asserting her needs and saying no, perpetuating a cycle of self-neglect.

This behavior has dire consequences, particularly in her relationships. People-pleasing often leads to resentment—both toward oneself and others. For Sally, it means saying yes when she desperately wants to say no, allowing partners to take ad-



vantage of her emotionally and physically, and prioritizing the desires of coworkers or friends over her own well-being. She often finds herself engaging in activi-

ties she dislikes, attending events she'd rather avoid, and even consuming things she doesn't enjoy. These repeated acts of self-betrayal erode her sense of self, leaving her resentful and lost. Sally recognizes this pattern of behavior as her own doing, yet she struggles to break free. Her "addiction" to external validation traps her in a vicious cycle of pain and dissatisfaction.

At the heart of Sally's struggle is an internal monologue that constantly asks, "What will they think of me? How will they feel about me?" These questions reinforce her insecurities and perpetuate her self-doubt. But the more helpful questions for Sally to ask would be, "What will I think of myself if I allow this inauthentic behavior? How will I feel about myself after betraying my values?" Unfortunately, these reflections only come to her after the damage is done, further entrenching her in a cycle of re-

gret and self-recrimination.

Breaking free from this cycle requires Sally to embrace the discomfort of being disliked. She must learn to trust herself, set boundaries, and prioritize her own needs. A "factory reset" of her mindset is essential, one that includes self-improvement exercises and professional therapy. People-pleasing is a struggle faced by many, and it often leads to a life of exhaustion, resentment, and unfulfilled potential. The inability to express one's true feelings or enforce personal boundaries can drain a person of their individuality and happiness.

To avoid this fate, one must break the chains of people-pleasing and reclaim their autonomy. A life lived solely for others is a life lived in vain—a life where the question remains unanswered: Whose life was it, really? The answer, sadly, would be everyone's but one's own.

# Tennessee Valley Spotlight

## Mondays at 10am 1080 AM WKAC

# Building Character VS Being A Character Part I

by Detri McGhee - CLU, ChFC



A bit of disclaimer first: In cleaning out very old files, I ran across this program I prepared long ago for a high school senior class. I am sure all the thoughts aren't mine because I remember collecting many of them from a variety of sources, one-by-one in a book I kept just for that. However, I am also sure that many of them were my thoughts about "their" thoughts.

Webster defines "CHARACTER" in a variety of ways, but for this time together, we will use Webster's definitions of character as 1. Moral strength and 2. Reputation.

It's about being REAL. It's revealed by what you say when you hit your finger with a hammer.

You are growing up in a unique America. Leadership with CHARACTER is in short supply. Since the founding of our nation, NEVER BEFORE has our country seen such a crisis in the development of future leaders for America.

The POTENTIAL is here -- but the initiative and the drive to develop that potential is at an all-time low. Never before has the stage been set more favorably to bring YOU to success. The choice is YOURS.

John Henry Fabre, a French naturalist, experimented with processionary caterpillars, so called because the travel in a line, blindly following one another. He lined the caterpillars around a flowerpot in a complete circle. Around they walked 24 hours a day for 3 days. No food. No water. Then, he put their food, pine needles, in the pot within their reach but they would have to break rank to reach it. They kept going round and round – 7 days and 7 nights until they literally dropped dead.

Why? With nourishment right within smell/reach, they just wouldn't leave the pack. Because, they confused activity with accomplishment. They ONLY Followed.



Think. THINK. THINK!!!

Life-giving sustenance was available if only they would look up, reach up, and give up their blind obedience to following others no matter the cost! And consider this... ALL would have been saved if only ONE OF THEM had been willing to THINK for himself... and reach up for life.

How do we develop a good, rock-solid character that will carry us through all of life with our heads held high, and our lives counting for something?

Did you know that most of us have, at best, about 1000 months to live? A twelve-year-old has already used up 144 of them. What are you trading your 1000 months for?

HOW, we ask, do we develop the right kind of character?

You must have VISION! The Wisdom Book says, "Where there is no VISION, the people perish." Someone defined V-I-S-I-O-N as...

Victory In Seeing Innovative Opportunities Now

Become a detective, set on discovering the secrets of LIFE! Your LIFE!

WHO are you? WHAT do you want to become? WHEN will you start? WHERE will it lead? WHO, WHAT, and WHERE will you be in 5 years if you DON'T start moving in this new direction? How will you get there? If you have never taken time to define WHO you want to be, and plan HOW to get there, then other people are deciding your life for you. And, if you don't know where you are going, how will you know if you get there?

From: John J. Beckley: **Most people don't plan to fail; they fail to plan.**

The best advice you will likely get today: Prepare to face all the tomorrows of your life by seeking WISDOM – not just knowledge. Go to the SOURCE = Go to the one who created your mind and body and spirit and soul. Go to God. Go directly to God. Do not pass GOD. Do not collect just \$200. "Compare the cost of doing something with the cost of doing nothing."

*(Next time we will look at one important tool for success! See you in a couple of weeks!)*

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



# “Dear Doggie Claus”

by Joel Allen



Dear Doggie Claus,

Here we are, another year and another letter. I love sending you letters every year! I have some requests again, and I have been a good dog no matter what the cat(s) says.

I need you to ignore the “naughty” list that the cat sent...“SNITCH”! You probably heard some things like me chasing the neighbor, the tall tale of me chasing the cats that live with us causing them to hide (they hide well, by the way), the mailman running away when I barked or intercepted the mail he would push through the mail slot on the door, and there were the times that I grieved the UPS and FedEx drivers by causing them to run to the porch and throw the family’s packages. It got so bad this year that they won’t even stop anymore. They just chunk our packages in the driveway as they drive by. In truth, they knew the risks of doing their jobs when they took them on, I just don’t understand. All these accusations are really the cat’s way to stir up trouble for me. No dog would dare tell (I mean lie) on me.

So, in my defense, I only made the neighbor aware that they were too close to the fence. To help with this problem, Doggie Claus, could you bring me a few signs stating, “Beware of Dog,” and it could also say, “Violators Will Be Chased and

Chewed On” and “All Items Such As Shoes and Clothing, If Left Behind, Are Mine”?



The allegations that I chase the cats is kind of true. They run and I just want to see which one squeaks the loudest. I mean really, they are so much fun to chase. But in fairness and kindness, could you bring them one of those tall cat towers? The one that has a lot of toys to keep them distracted so I can sneak up on them? Hehehe... I like to practice treeing them too.

As for the mailman, I just don’t know what to say. He wears clothing that screams, “Chase me!” I mean really, who wears shorts year round?! It’s so fun to play “Tug of War” through the mail slot. I am growling and he is fussing at me. We make beautiful noise together, LOL, and the frustration I hear in his voice is such fun. But, to be nice, could you bring the mailman some squeaker toys and dog treats so he can think he is distracting me? After all, I don’t want to scare the guy; I can be a good friend to him.

Lastly, in my defense, those UPS and FedEx drivers just need to stop looking suspicious. I have successfully run off approximately 30 plus delivery attempts

this year. Oh, they delivered their cargo, but I made them sweat on all attempts. So, in reference to this I have two requests:

1. A Ring camera to record all my exploits and publish them on YouTube. (After all, my adventures should be shared with the world for laughter.)
2. A driveway alarm to alert me to their arrival and to surprise them. Besides, I can better protect my home if I have good intel.

All in all, my year has been good and I would like to ask you, Doggie Claus, if you would please look out for the

homeless hoomans and animals of the world. I wish peace and goodwill to all. God bless and we love you.

Sincerely,  
Everybody’s Canine Family Member

*“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**



## Rightside Way

# To Our Neighbors' Aid

by Phil Williams

Democrat leadership.

But these are our neighbors. Cities and states are the neighbors of other cities and states. Neighborly behavior is warranted. It is needed. It should be expected.

There was a day when the nation did not sit idly by when the border was breached. It was a question of national security. National sovereignty. Neighbor watching out for neighbor. States watching out for states.

In 1916, American communities suffered raids by Mexican bandits. The Mexican government was no help. Bandit leader Francisco "Pancho" Villa led an army of 1,500 guerillas across the U.S. border against the small American town of Columbus, New Mexico. Villa and his men killed 19 people and left the town in flames. U.S. President Woodrow Wilson ordered General John "Blackjack" Pershing to lead 6,000 American troops into Mexico and capture Villa.

American sentiment was high. Cross border damage and destruction was an outrage, an affront to our very being as a nation. One editorial cartoon of the time by Clifford K. Berryman depicted Uncle Sam leaping the border saying, "I've had about enough of this." A smoldering home lay in the background of the image as Uncle Sam gave chase to Villa. The states answered the call with thousands of National Guardsmen. Alabama's own 167th Infantry joined the "Punitive Expedition of the US Army."

For the better part of two years, Pershing and his soldiers chased the elusive Villa. The American troops had several bloody skirmishes with the rebels. Mexican troops began to resist the U.S. forces. In February 2017, diplomatic ef-

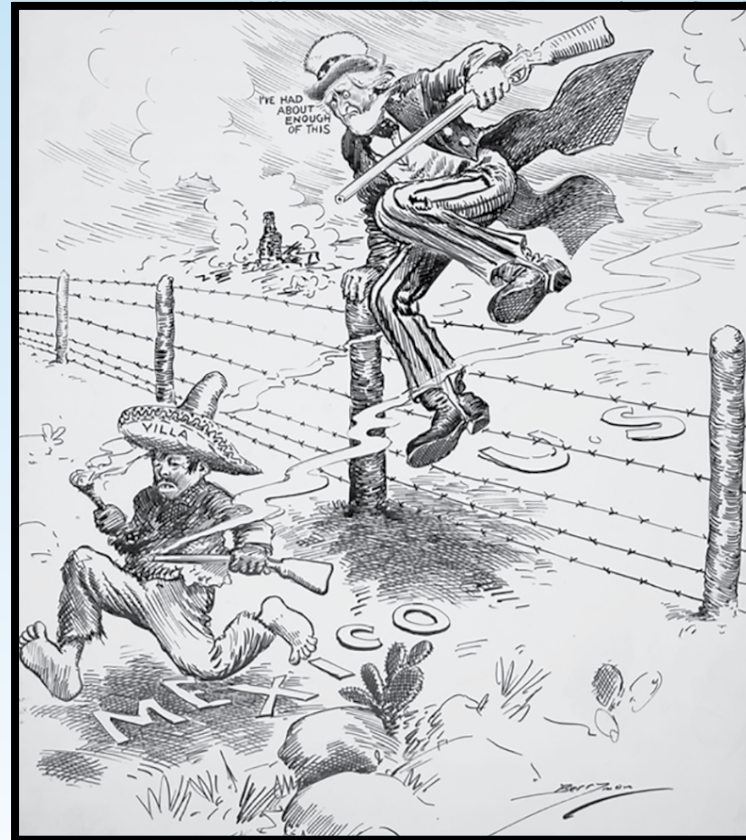
forts avoided war in the Western hemisphere. The war in Europe became the pressing matter, and troops on the border shipped out to the battlefields of WWI.

There was a time when the federal government was willing to go to war to protect the Southern border of the U.S. and the states answered. No one wants that. No rational person desires armed conflict. But the point is that a time existed when the U.S. government would not sit idly by while border communities suffered. Neighbors needed help.

American communities had been harmed, and it was seen then as an invasion -- destruction of the sense of security and sovereignty that every U.S. citizen has a right to expect and to demand their government ensure. Armed intruders, squatters, vandals, and thieves coming across our border were not welcomed. As one we responded to our neighbors' distress.

It has not been that way for the past four years. In what seems to be a blatant and intentional effort to blur the lines of national borders, the Biden administration has failed to provide even a hint of care and concern that U.S. citizens should expect them to provide. Taken into context, all of the actions and inactions of the Biden administration make this lack of security at our Southern border clearly appear to be an intentional effort.

Secretary Mayorkas claimed the border was secure. Vice President Harris went to the border all of twice as border czar. Customs and border patrol officers have been overwhelmed. Texas has been forced to take unilateral action in its Operation Lone Star



and sued for doing so by the Biden administration. Border wall construction stopped. Millions of illegal immigrants rushed the border and flooded into the United States.

But if we actually care about what happens at our neighbor's house, then you will agree that we must not sit idly by. We must venture across the property lines to assist our neighbors. Because if the danger to our neighbor goes unchecked, then eventually it comes to our own house.

Securing our borders is a core principle of good governance. It is a key portion of providing for the common defense, supporting the general welfare, and ensuring domestic tranquility. Without a border, you have to question whether we really have a nation.

Armed intruders, squatters, vandals, and thieves still have open invitations from progressive leaders. But there was a time when a president saw the border as something to fight for -- when Uncle Sam leaped the fence and said, "I've had

about enough of this!"

*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

## No Credibility

by Roy Williams



America is in a huge transition because we have been deceived to the point that we have lost our faith in our government and its leadership. Almost every day we learn about corruption at the highest levels. From the presidency all the way down to our local officials, we are seeing the corruption and we are fast becoming so sick of it that the entire system has lost credibility.

Our elections are rigged, the president lied and pardoned his son, the FBI is abusing its powers, our schools are ranking the lowest in our nation's history, lawfare is completely out of control, our borders are overflowing with illegals, the FDA has been bought out, our sick care system is unsustainable, our debt is so high that we have endangered the future for our children, and we are allowing foreigners to purchase land within our borders.

For a nation to survive, the leadership must maintain credibility and accountability. The people must believe that those in power are operating in their best interest. The basics, food and housing,



must also be affordable or the nation will quickly become a banana republic. Those in power must be held accountable and must pay the price when they fail. The people spoke, and spoke very loudly in the last election. We have opened the door for a major change of direction.

If we, the people, will begin to pay attention to what those in power are doing and make sure they are telling us the truth and at least trying to keep their promises, they will find out that we will, over time, begin to trust them again.

But leadership is like respect, it must be earned. Don't speak out of both sides of your mouth and expect us to just ignore what you are doing. This election was a wakeup call and we are watching every move you make. Do what you say, act like you should, set good examples, and tell us the truth. We can handle it.

Not so long ago, America was recognized as the healthiest place on earth. People from all over the world would come here for diagnoses and treatment. In just the last fifty years, all that has changed. So many people are expressing that they no longer trust our medical establishment, their diagnoses, or their methods of treatment. They have lost their credibility and it is well-deserved. On a daily basis, we are finding out that they have been hiding all-natural treatments from us for many years now. Ev-

erything from safe and effective treatments to cures for even the deadliest diseases such as heart disease and cancers have been hidden or made illegal to use in the U.S.

At the same time, the cost of medicine, hospitalization, and insurance have skyrocketed, making it harder than ever to use their failed methods of sickness care. We have reached the tipping point of no return, if we keep moving in the direction of sick care that they are promoting. What's even more disturbing is the fact that we are now recognized as the sickest industrialized nation on planet earth. The only people who really benefit from their systems are the doctors, hospitals, pharmacies, and of course, the stock holders in those powerful organizations. The real losers are the people who have become dependent on their methods of health

care.

At the same time, thanks to MAHA (Make America Healthy Again), we are making the faithful decision to shift away from the synthetic drug industry that insists on treating the symptoms of disease without ever addressing the cause. Robert F. Kennedy Jr. has promised to expose the greed and unsustainable programs that have been promoted and to release the real cures that have been kept from us. His ideas are to tell the truth about the addictions caused by the food and pharmaceutical industries and release the classified documents proving how we went from the healthiest nation on earth to the sickest in just four decades.

Soon, Americans will learn how to live to their genetic potential without suffering from so many man-made illnesses. Everything from the addicting chemicals approved by the FDA, which have been added to our food and water supply, to the dangerous drugs prescribed that were intentionally designed to make sure we were dependent on the medical profession and their drugs, will be exposed. Soon, everyone will know that the only way for us to be a healthy nation again is to move away from man and his concoctions back to God and His creations.

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## *Mind Your P's!*

by Anna Hamilton

*Prayer is what directly connects us to Christ and allows us to speak to him one-on-one. Minding your prayer life is of the utmost importance. Prayer gives us a chance to be humble and sincere with Christ and gives us the power to grow our faith. The Bible continually affirms the power of prayer in our lives. It brings comfort, guidance, and healing. In 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18, it tells us, "Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you."*

*Once you have found peace and are in constant communication with Christ in prayer, positivity will grow in your life. Learning to be positive and not negative is so hard. It is so much easier to wallow in the negative. Being positive, having a good attitude in all situations, is hard work. It takes consistency in your prayer life to find peace and positivity. What many people don't realize is that positivity in your life is a sign of faith in God. When you fully trust in God, nothing can scare you in the world. No matter what the devil throws at you in this life, there is always a positive outcome because we are children of God. "If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where*

*Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth."* (Colossians 3:12)

*Once you have peace, prayer, and positivity, the possibilities of a beautiful life in Christ are a reality. With Christ all things are possible. Most of us have heard that since we were children. A huge part of our faith is trust; we must trust God that nothing is impossible with Him. We need to have full trust that God will take care of all that we cannot. Jesus tell us so many times that "even with that faith like a grain of mustard seed, you can move mountains, nothing is impossible." (Matthew 17:2) When you are a Christian, your life is filled with endless possibilities! "With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible." Matthew 19:26*

*This week's recipe is a delicious soup that is perfect for those chilly December nights. It is comforting, warm, and sure to please all of those picky eaters in your life. I hope you enjoy it as much as my family does.*

*"Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make straight your paths." Proverbs 3:5-6*



**Directions:** *medium heat and add onion and potato. Cook for 3-4 minutes, then add garlic and continue cooking until potatoes are tender.*

*Add tomato paste, Italian seasoning, and red pepper flakes and continue cooking for another 5 minutes, stirring often.*

*Pour in tomatoes with juices, beans, and broth and bring heat down to low. Simmer for 20 minutes.*

*Stir in heavy cream and Parmesan until fully combined.*

*Garnish with additional red pepper flakes and serve with crusty bread.*

## Mental Health Minute

# Staying Mentally Healthy During the Holiday Season

by Lisa Philippart,  
Licensed Professional Counselor

***“Linus, Christmas is coming, but I'm not happy. I don't feel the way I'm supposed to feel.”***

*- Charlie Brown*

Over the years I have had many clients tell me that they dread this time of year. For those struggling with a mental illness, particularly anxiety or depression, Christmas stirs up extreme emotions that many are forced to relive year after year. Even if you just find the holidays stressful, I have some suggestions for what you can do to not only survive the next few weeks, but maybe even return to feelings of joy during this season.

Let's begin by looking at your particular pressure points. Are you some-

one who surrenders to sweets and rich foods? Do you fret yourself into an anxiety spiral because you can't afford to buy everything for everybody on your list? Do you pull away from others and isolate because of the emphasis on family togetherness? Once you have identified your triggers, you can focus on finding some specific problem-solving techniques. Find someone you trust to share your concerns, who may be able to help brainstorm positive measures to manage the challenge.

“We are what we eat.” And this is never truer than during the holidays. Your diet can either improve or aggravate your mood. I know you will be tempted over and over again, testing your willpower and commitment to moderation.

Take a few moments to answer this question, “What can I do to stay healthy during the holidays?” Then, make a list of specific and realistic goals on one side of the page, and challenges (what typically derails you) on the other side. Track your frustrations and achievements daily, especially if you are prone to overthinking or negative self-talk. And it never hurts to give yourself small rewards along the way. Next, make a list of all the things you THINK need to be done, including shopping, parties, volunteer activities, family visits, etc. Then take a calendar, and pencil in a schedule of when these things need to happen. Now here is the important part: Think hard about what is really central to your celebrations. To protect your well-

**Lisa Philippart LPC LLC**  
NCC, BCPCC, BC-TMH  
Licensed Professional Counselor  
Living Life Counseling Center  
44 Hughes Rd, Suite 1050  
Madison, AL 35758  
256.326.0909 cell  
256.631.7898 office  
256.542.3366 fax  
urlifematters@hotmail.com or  
Lisa.P@livinglifecounselingctr.com  
livinglifecounselingctr.com



being, you may have to make some difficult choices about traditional activities. For example, does reducing the emotional strain of travelling to visit family outweigh the potential hurt feelings and arguments?

Let's be honest. You, yourself, can't do it all. It's okay to divide up some of the tasks among family members. Maybe the family party that you always host could be pot luck this year? Remember last year when you didn't think you would

get everything done? Take a breath and have faith in yourself to do the best you can. As with most things in life, attitude is everything. Take a moment to tweak your outlook. You may be placing unrealistic expectations on yourself and others, which can only lead to disappointment and conflict. There is always that relative or friend who sets you off, but wishing they would change will go nowhere. You can only control how you think, feel, and act, not how others treat you. So, let's be less self-critical because the house isn't spotless and more grateful for the company.

I know you have heard it before, but an attitude of gratitude has benefits both mentally and physically. If you do find yourself slipping into the fog of anxiety or depression, remind yourself that you are human and that this time too, will pass.

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





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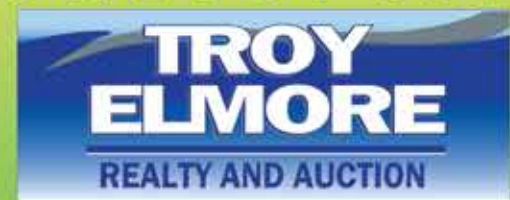
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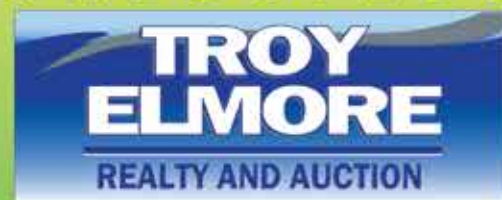
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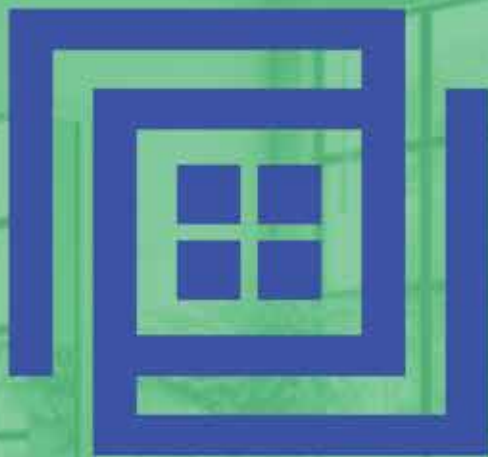
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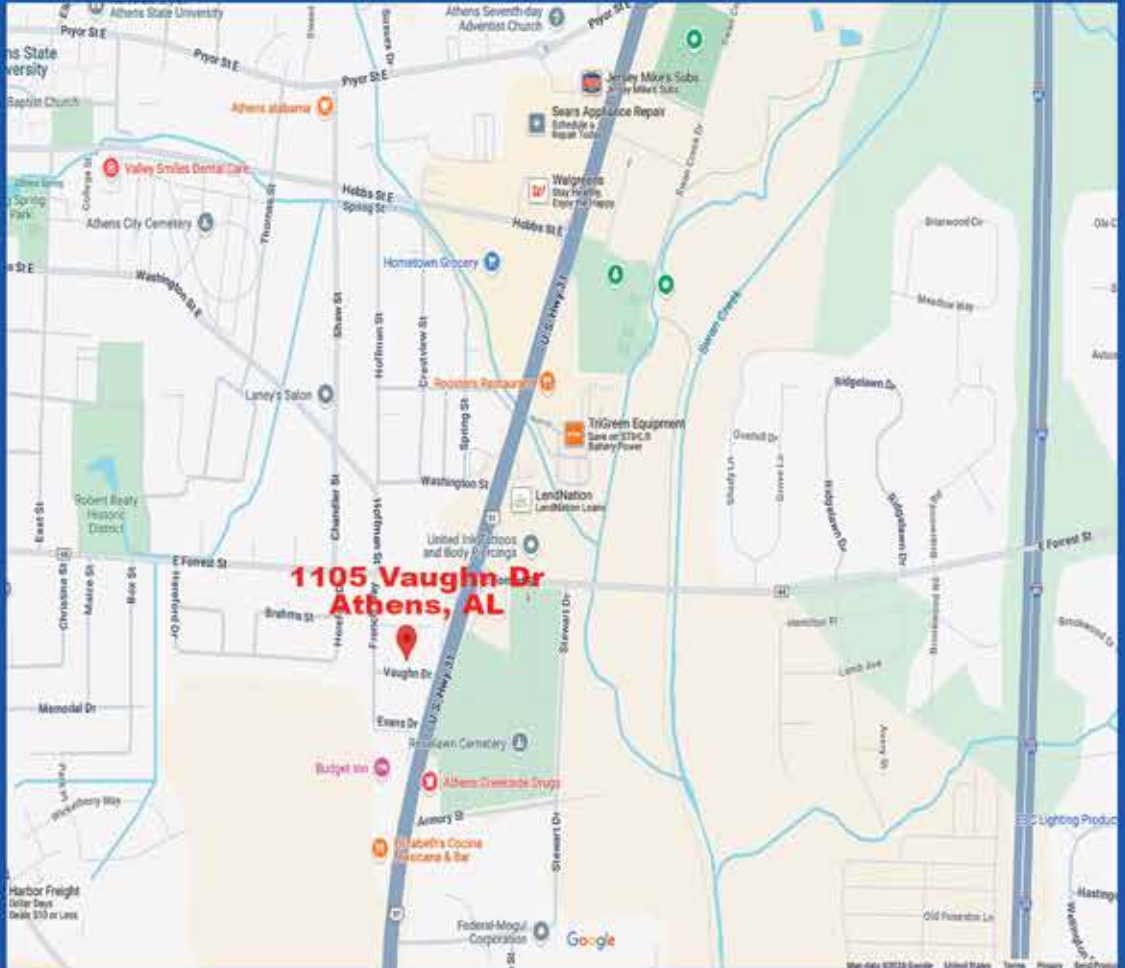
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