

February 7 - February 20, 2025

Athens Now

information & inspiration

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Celebrate Spring At The 2025 Home & Garden Show



By Ali Elizabeth Turner

After a winter that has so far included an EF-1 tornado and a stout snow storm, one of the best parts of spring in Limestone County is just about here! Sponsored by the Chamber of Commerce, the annual Home & Garden Show will be held

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J.R.'s Heating And Cooling, LLC: Providing Certainty And Service

By Ali Elizabeth Turner

For years, Tim Townsend, Jr. worked with and was mentored by his father, Tim, Sr. Tim, Sr. has pastored a church for 17 years, worked at Chrysler and Dunlop, is licensed as a HVAC contractor, and is someone greatly admired by his whole family. Tim wanted to both honor and emulate his dad's work ethic and heart to serve, and three years ago, with his dad's blessing, launched

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Publisher's Point

*Pass The Popcorn...
And Pray*

"That's a lot of Ps," I thought to myself, but there really is no other way to put any other title on this "Pub Point." In our family, we have a saying that is applied to an unpredictable situation over which we have no control. It goes something like, "Large bucket of popcorn, extra butter," and if you say, "Please pass the popcorn," that means that several people "in the theatre" are involved in "watching the flick," and the bucket is big enough to take care of everyone in the row... as long as they like "extra butter."

What in the world am I talking about? It is the little more than two weeks that President Donald Trump has been in office, and believe it or not, this is not an article about politics. It is rather the "buckle up, butter cup" disruption that we are seeing to "business as usual." I grew up in the Civil Rights era, and it was wild. I grew up in the '60s, and it was wild. But I will readily admit, I have never seen anything like this.

With at least a bit of tongue-in-cheek, we have had to consider the possibility of buying Greenland, having Gaza turned into a Middle Eastern version of the Riviera, and Venezuela being interested in housing all kinds of criminals.

Politico has been proven to have received millions



of dollars from the government, biological men are no longer going to be able to give women head injuries in the Olympics, the classified documents re: the assassinations of John Fitzgerald Kennedy, Martin Luther King, and Robert Francis Kennedy, Sr. are going to be released, and most likely the list of "clients" that were "serviced" by Jeffrey Epstein's enterprise is going to be exposed. Oh, by the way, there has been a stunning revelation, and that is that in the United States of America, there are only two genders.

In other here-to-fore-thought-to-be-impossible-turns-of-events, several folks who formerly were sworn political enemies of President Trump are now on his team, including one from the most famous Democratic Party family in our country's history. "Who-da-thunk-it?"

Whether the events of the past two weeks make you want to shout, "Oh, Hallelujah," or "Oh-hot-place-no," the "point of this Point" is that the U. S. of



A. is in uncharted waters, and we need prayer. You may think President Trump is effectively cleaning house and taking care of things that no one ever thought would be confronted. Or, you may think the man is on a dangerous romp and his policies and people are going to be the end of us. Perhaps you think it is a combination of the two, and that each new development needs to be regarded on a case-by-case basis.

Whatever you think, there is one thing that we as believers are commanded to

do, and that is pray for our leaders, all of them, whether or not we agree with their actions. We need to make sure that our "popcorn" is doused with the "butter of prayer," and that as we watch things that no one has ever seen, we take our place as "watchmen on the wall." Let's get to it.

Ali Elizabeth Turner

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Harry Stewart And The “Hat Trick”

by Ali Elizabeth Turner



On Sunday, February 2, 2025, 100-year-old Lt. Colonel Harry Stewart passed peacefully at his home. He was one of the last surviving Tuskegee Airmen, and not just any “Red Tail.” He was one of four Airmen who, during World War II, shot down three Nazi pilots in one day. The most famous picture of Harry is known amongst some as “Harry and the Hat Trick,” showing him holding up three fingers as though he was entertaining guests with some kind of parlor trick.

There was no “trick” to Harry—he was the real deal on so many fronts that not even the term “Greatest Generation” is

enough to contain his heroism, within and without. He was born in Newport News, Virginia, on July 4, 1924, and was the descendent of slaves. As a child, he was always interested in aviation, so when World War II broke out, and the Tuskegee fighter pilot program was started, Harry was ready to go. Harry also triumphed over polio he had experienced as a young child.

Harry’s patriotism ran deep, despite the racism and segregation he endured in the process of actually *being* a patriot. He loved our country so much that it was worth it to him to have a vision for a better day domesti-

cally while fighting fascism and a different type of racism in the European theatre. That kind of courage to me is mind-boggling, and here is what he said about it: *“When the Army Air Corps said that they would recant and they would build a field, but it would have to be just for the Negro trainees there, I was willing to accept that in order to go ahead and get my wings; that was the prize as far as I was concerned. I was frankly willing to do anything to go ahead and get my wings.”*

The day Harry did the “hat trick,” he had already shot down two Nazi planes. The third one came after

him, and he did a daring nose dive. The Nazi plane came after him, and Harry pulled up at what should have been an impossibly late moment, and for the Nazi, it was. Harry literally lived to tell the tale and fight another day. For his bravery, he was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross medal, and much later in life, the Congressional Gold Medal.

After the war was over, Harry served as a reservist and ultimately became a Lt. Colonel. He went to NYU and got his degree in mechanical engineering, and retired from the ANR Pipeline Company as their vice-president. He did, in part at least, get

a chance to experience the American Dream.

“We are deeply saddened by his passing and extend our condolences to his family and friends around the world,” said Brian Smith, the president and CEO of the Tuskegee Airmen National Historical Museum in Detroit. *“Harry Stewart was a kind man of profound character and accomplishment with a distinguished career of service he continued long after fighting for our country in World War II.”*

Rest in peace, Colonel Stewart, and thank you for making the world a much better place...for all of us.



A Precious Gift

by Carissa Lovvorn



Valentine's Day, a time when most people go out of their way to show their appreciation and affection to their significant other. The holiday is rich with cards, chocolates, flowers, and fancy meals. Like most couples, throughout our relationship, my husband has embraced this tradition, and I have treasured and appreciated each thoughtful gift. But as I look back over the years, there was a different kind of gift that I most vividly remember receiving.

Unfortunately, depression and anxiety have plagued me throughout adolescence and adulthood. There was a time during the early years of

our marriage when I was particularly vulnerable, and I received a phone call from my husband after he left for work. He said, "I just wanted you to know that I love you, and I prayed for you this morning."

What a gift! I realized then that he not only cared about my worldly needs like being clothed, fed, and having a place to live, he cared deeply about my spiritual needs as well. He was (and still is) concerned about the moment when I will meet God face-to-face and make an account for my life. There is no deeper love for someone than caring about where they will spend eternity,

and prayer is a powerful way to show your love and support for them.

The Bible addresses the concept of prayer in various ways. In the Old Testament, Moses shared with us this well-known prayer. "The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you; the Lord lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace" (Numbers 6:24-26 ESV). In the New Testament book of Luke, Jesus provided us with an example of how to pray, and during his time on earth, He prayed continually to the Father making intercessions for us.

Just as Jesus loved us enough to pray to God on our behalf, we are called to do the same for our spouse, children, neighbors, strangers, and even our enemies. Take this verse in James for example, "Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working" (James 5:16). Likewise in Galatians 6, the apostle Paul encouraged us to carry one another's burdens. By doing so, we fulfill the law of Christ.

Paul's prayer for the people of Ephesus provided us with a standard of

how to pray for one another. "For this reason, I bow my knees before the Father...that according to the riches of his glory He may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith..." (Ephesians 3:14-17).

The gift of knowing that my husband prayed for me touched my heart more than any material gift that I could ever receive. Please know that I pray for my readers, and I hope everyone has a happy Valentine's Day.

*Many blessings,
Carissa*



Calendar of Events

2025 Summer Camp Registration Open Now

Your child will participate in a variety of fun activities designed by the North Alabama Zoological Society to promote awareness of our Alabama biodiversity, ecosystems and conservation. Campers will enjoy include art projects, games, hands-on experiences, and lots of time enjoying the Alabama outdoors. www.nalzs.org/nature-camp-pnp

Camp Helen Baptist Camp

14477 Baptist Camp Rd, Harvest, AL 35749

June 2-6, 2025 (ages 6-11) \$295 9:00am - 4:00pm

July 7-11, 2025 (ages 6-11) \$295 9:00am - 4:00pm

BIO QUEST: June 2-6, 2025 (ages 12-14) \$295 9:00am - 4:00pm

&

J.D. & Annie S. Hays Nature Preserve

7161 US-431, Owens Cross Roads, AL 35763

June 24-27, 2025 (ages 6-11) \$250 8:00am - 3:00pm

Gettin' Dirty At The Library - The Library Garden February 11

11am-12pm. 603 S. Jefferson St, Athens. Presented by Alabama Master Gardeners and Emily Clem. Free and open to the public.

Limestone County Master Gardeners Saturday Workshop: Growing Tomatoes February 15

10 AM. February is the time to start tomatoes indoors. Learn the tricks that will help you have success growing tomatoes. Master Gardener Bonnie Gardener will share her knowledge and expertise with you. First 20 participants to arrive will receive a potted tomato seedling. No registration necessary. At the Limestone County Extension Office, 1109 W. Market Street, Athens. FREE and Open to the Public For further information call 256-714-0611.

2025 Home & Garden Show February 15-16

Athens Middle School. Sat 8am-4pm. Sun 12pm-4pm. More details to come.

LaFayette Bicentennial Remembered February 20

In honor of the 50th anniversary of America's Revolutionary War, Gilbert du Motier, the Marquis de LaFayette, the last surviving general of that pivotal event, was invited to make a tour of all the U.S. states and 2025 is the 200th anniversary of his visit to the young State of Alabama. Mr.

Larry Krumenaker's book, "Nine Days Traveling," covers this visit and the historical Alabama sites on his route that you can visit today. The Sons of Confederate Veterans invites everyone to the Disabled American Veterans building, 25396 Airport Road, starting at 6:00 p.m., to meet the author and learn more about this American war hero. Please email camp768@alscv.org with any questions.

2025 Athens-Limestone Empty Bowls Luncheon February 28

11:30 am to 1:00 pm. 303 Washington Street, Athens, AL. Please join us for the 2025 Athens-Limestone Empty Bowls Luncheon. The annual to-go luncheon includes delicious soup donated from local restaurants and a handmade pottery bowl to remind patrons that there are those in our community whose bowl may be empty. Ticketholders receive two servings of soup, bread, and a handmade bowl. Tickets are \$20 and available from Empty Bowls committee members, the church offices at First Presbyterian Church and Athens First Methodist Church, and online via Square: <https://square.link/u/R6H1W89s> All proceeds from the event go to local organizations fighting food insecurity.

2025 Kids Festival April 5

9AM - 4PM. Calhoun Community College, 6250 US-31, Tanner, AL. This Festival is free to attend, General Parking is free, Premium Parking is \$10.00/car. The North Alabama Zoological Society is excited to host our 4th annual outdoor Kids & Family Festival. We love teaching children about Alabama's unique biodiversity and helping them to have opportunities to be outside and explore nature. This event also highlights the vibrant array of local vendors and exhibitors who contribute to our community's family-friendly environment. Come as a family and join us for a day of fun, food, and the best of Alabama's outdoors! We are so excited to present the 2025 Kids Festival Sponsor, Passport Booths and Partner Booths! www.nalzs.org/kf2025 DRAWINGS & PRIZES: The festival will have various drawings and giveaways.

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.



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February 22, 2025

Presented by Perfect Praise Music

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- Ages:** 7 years and up. Children under age 16 must have a caregiver present. (Caregiver Ticket Required)
- Limited Seating:** Don't wait... reserve your space today!

This Songwriter's Workshop has 2 Modules:

- Module One:** 1:00 – 2:00pm Teaching Time. **This module only: \$50**
- Module Two:** 2:00 – 3:30pm Advanced Teaching Time, and opportunity for personal critique with your original song. What an incredible opportunity! **This module only: \$100**
- I Want it All! Attend Both Modules for \$125.**
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- Lenny LeBlanc performs in a FREE concert that same evening. Suggested Donation of \$35 at the door. Tickets are required.**

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What Makes Ronnie Roll

Spring And "The State"

by Ali Elizabeth Turner



Spring was definitely acting like it wanted to "spring" this past Monday when we met at Mayor Ronnie's office. This was right on the heels of a pretty sharp cold snap that had been in the single digits, and Mayor Ronnie talked about the daffodils starting to come up. "They are always the first promise of spring," I said, and he nodded in agreement. I had also just seen my first flight of cranes, and he and his grandson Quinton had watched them as well. We talked about the huge difference between how cranes sort of seem to fly in circles

as opposed to the tight formation of geese, yet they both still manage to migrate to their destination. Throw in the beauty of the moon and Venus, and we both agreed that we will make it through this winter with gratitude and anticipation for what's coming.

"Chocolate Walk," said the mayor with a smile, and everyone knows that the tickets sell out in the first ten minutes that they go online. That "sweet" time will be on February 8, and High Cotton Arts has moved out of its former "home" in the old Estes building down the street to "Lit-



tle Red," or the Scout House, which is also going to be the place where music is going to

be made by kids in our community.

We moved on to the topic of the State of the City gathering that will be held on Tuesday, March 4. Mayor Ronnie chuckled as he told about the fact that a particular city employee had reminded him that not everyone is interested in the details of the budget. I laughed and said, "You could probably recite the line items in your sleep." "That's why we are going to do things a little bit differently this year. I can't go through all 100 projects that are going on right now and cover them in a half hour," he said. The topics will be largely confined to growth, finance, and projects, just no "pie charts in the slide deck."

So, for this year's "State," it looks like the format is going to be a question-and-answer session with some questions about which the mayor will be aware,

and some that will be asked spontaneously. I told him I thought that was a good idea. Out of nowhere, former Alabama Speaker of the House Mac McCutcheon called to let the mayor know that he was thinking about him, and wanted to know how the mayor was doing. I thought to myself, "I love my town."

We discussed why it's important to maintain history and integrity, and wanting our lives to count. "What do you want to be remembered about you?" asked the mayor, somewhat rhetorically. "We can't forget the little things," he said, and added, "We have such a great town and so many opportunities." As always, we finished our time in prayer, and it was a prayer of thanks for all that we have, and the opportunities that are ours in our town and in our nation. And then, once again, it was time for Ronnie to roll.

SAVE THE DATE

STATE of the CITY
ADDRESS

Featuring Mayor Ronnie Marks

— March 4, 2025 —

8:00AM - Breakfast 8:30AM - Program

Athens State University Gymnasium

The Joy Of Becoming A Balcony Person

by Detri McGhee - CLU, ChFC



Our new washer made the strangest noises as it worked through the cycles. Wondering if we had purchased a “lemon”, I got out the manual and pulled up videos from the internet. We still had concerns, so a few days later when we were near the store where we purchased the appliance my husband and I went in to learn more.

After much explanation and consultation, Mary called the maker’s service department, explained the problem and got directions on how to handle the issue to set up an in-person service call. I complimented her on how well she handled that, and thanked her for making detailed notes on the conversation, phone numbers, time of call and even remembering to get the name of the customer service representative she spoke with.

“You really are extra good at documenting the call and being sure you got all the information we would need to call them after we get the serial number! Thank you.” I said.

“Oh, you’re very welcome. I can’t do much right, but I have learned a little about that one thing!” She quipped.

I saw the fatigue behind her kind but somewhat downcast eyes and smile. “Mary, you did a lot more than that right with us!” And I went on to say how much I appreciated her willingness to listen to us, and offer to call the number for us instead of just giving us the number, and several other things she did well. Her eyes seemed to smile a bit to match the smile on her lips.

Joyce Landorf Heatherly, late author of *Balcony People*, shares how important it is for us to develop our skill of encouraging and lifting up the people around us. It took less than 5 minutes to have a short conversation about accepting ourselves as we are while seeking to become better, not letting the negatives overtake our opinion of and thoughts toward ourselves or others, and reminding Mary that God loves her NOW. HERE.

As she mentioned some-

times getting down remembering the past mistakes and failures in her life, I shared with her a truth someone shared with me years ago. Most people have one of 2 problems:

1. Group 1: Finds it hard to forgive others, but they tend to overlook their own hurtful ways or excuse them with “that’s just me!” , or “I didn’t mean anything by it.” Or even putting the blame on others: “I wouldn’t have said/done that if they hadn’t done this/that!” <OR>

2. Group 2: Finds it easy to forgive others, but they tend to kick themselves and grieve over their mistakes time after time after time, even letting past failure stop them from trying again.

One day, quite a few years ago, I was again re-living a dumb mistake I’d made and putting my stupid, thoughtless, ignorant self down, anguishing over the fact that I couldn’t change the past and erase the mistake. Then, I realized that what I thought was humility was actually the other side of

the coin of arrogance and pride!

Really? How could that be? I was degrading myself, not attempting to put myself up as perfect or better than others, like the unforgiving, condemning prideful people do.

Ah, but THERE was the pride and arrogance staring at me right in the face! I could forgive others, because we all make mistakes. Maybe they didn’t mean it, or perhaps they didn’t realize they had offended. Or, even if they did, they were just being human.

But, when I couldn’t forgive myself, what was I saying? Really! I could forgive YOU because you are human, and we all fail. But I..... BUT, I.... I have no excuse. I am BETTER THAN THAT! I shouldn’t make mistakes. Not ME!

Unforgiveness, whether of myself or others, is pride, selfishness, arrogance and damaging choices that we can learn to overcome. It isn’t humility. Quite the opposite. And whether it is unforgiveness toward oth-

ers or toward ourselves, it leads only to destruction, depression, damage and danger. Who do you need to forgive today? Will you CHOOSE to do so for the sake of all involved? It is a freeing thing, and allows us to focus on higher more profitable life activities.

Whether in our Personal or our Professional life, Forgiveness is a beautiful, powerful and freeing choice. “We all have many choices to make in life – but we cannot choose the consequences.” May this week be filled with choices that bring life, joy, peace, kindness, patience, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Balcony People enjoy life!

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: detrimghee@gmail.com or Facebook: Criticism Management by Detri. Free outline for Criticism Management available at www.criticismmanagement.com





Captain's Log

Love Is In The Air... And On The Bus *Valentine Edition*

by Brenda Wilkerson

Captain's Log ~ I'm a Sucker

I am SUCH a sucker! I don't know why, but I immediately caved to the timid request of the love-bug butterflies dancing in Gentleman P's tummy. Gentleman P is a quiet 3rd-grader whose presence is loud even though you don't ever hear a peep out of him. He is the perfect gentleman rider. He always lets the girls go first and draws me beautiful artwork from time to time. Two days ago, Gentleman P quietly requested a seat change so he could be with a brother/sister friend duo, instead of his little sister and her friend. Requested granted little man! I am usually pleased to grant the requests of my quiet riders. Assuming he wanted to sit with the brother, I put the girls in the other seat across the aisle.

The following morning, Gentleman P again waited to be the last one to unload at the school. He stopped beside my Captain's chair, and I understood this meant he requested another conversation with the Captain. "What's up buddy? How do you like the seat change?" Gentleman P bravely spoke, "Could I sit with the sister instead?" Ahhhhhhh, the clouds are beginning to clear. I think there is a crush happening on this ol' bus. "Sure, buddy, I will change it tomorrow." And I did. So this afternoon at Gentleman P's stop, I asked again how he liked his seating arrangement.

"She didn't ride today," he said with his eyes looking at the floor." I quietly responded, "I'm so sorry, buddy." He explained, "She had Good News Club after school...I'll be fine." His voice trailed off as he turned and quietly descended down the three big steps to the sidewalk. My. Heart. Broke. Hang in there Gentleman P. Maybe fate will be on your side tomorrow. Until then...

Captain's Log ~ The Love Bug

Ladies and Gentlemen, the 'Love Bug,' the newest unseen visitor on our bus, has bitten early and caused endless giggles, squeals, 'ewwwwws,' and many other verbal reactions from my tiny passengers behind me. An ooooy-gooey love note complete with two characters with overly sized, big, fat lips kissing created such a giggly response. The note was passed around and then wadded up so tightly and thrown away thinking it was gone forever...heh, heh. Not today, turkeys! In the silence of my now empty bus, I doubled over as my laughter, like a ping pong ball, echoed within my yellow metal friend. Oh my littles, the Lord knew I needed the therapy of laughter first thing on this morning to help balance the heaviness of this world! I am forever thankful for opportunity to live with, love on, and serve these future leaders in the making.

~Ecclesiastes 3:4 -- "There is a time to LAUGH and a time to cry..."

Captain's Log ~ Heart-break On Wheels

Somebody told somebody that somebody has a crush on someone. Someone freaked out. So, somebody also freaked out thinking that even the friendship between some-

body and someone was over which resulted in somebody writing another note to someone who wadded up somebody's note and threw it in the floor. Bless the elementary hearts entangled in another day of young emotional drama. Everybody sing "Thuuuuuuuu drama on the bus goes round and round, round and round,

round and round..." Bless it!

Lord, we are forever grateful that You showed us Your perfect love first so that we can love others well. I pray You gift us the strength and grace to reflect genuine love with others today!

1 John 4:19 -- We love because God first loved us.





Slinkard On Success

“C” Is For Courage

by D. A. Slinkard

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

We are moving right along in 2025, and we are up to the next letter which is “C” for Courage. We must understand that courage is not the absence of fear, but it means taking action despite fear. Courage shows up in many forms -- from physical, emotional, moral, and intellectual. Some everyday acts of courage include speaking up for what is right even if it is unpopular. Maybe it means stepping outside of your comfort zone to pursue growth. Sometimes it can be facing personal fears, whether starting a new venture, having a difficult conversation, or making a major life change.

Every successful person in life has been able to draw up enough courage to find success. Courage allows for us to take risks that lead to personal and professional growth. It has been said in the past that you miss 100% of the shots you do not take and this true. It takes courage to be willing to take the shot in the game of life. That is why so many people fail to get off the bench...because if it was easy, everyone would be doing it.

We have many people who are afraid to take the risk and step out to do what they know is their passion. Instead of stepping out with faith and having courage to succeed, they become paralyzed wondering what will happen if they

fail. We cannot look at failure as being an option, and this is why it is important to go all out when it comes to success in life. The reality is too many people have told the lie that they tried their best at something even though they know they really did not try their best. How many times did you tell your parents you tried your best but you knew that was a lie?

The difference between those who succeed and those who don't is often the willingness to act despite uncertainty. We are not guaranteed tomorrow, and too many people fall victim to trying to play it safe. This is one of the reasons why many people feel as if their life is not quite what they want it to be. Why play it safe? Why not stretch yourself and take the risk? Can you imagine what life would be like if people were not afraid to take a chance? We would not have the societal advancements we have today -- in fact, we would probably still be traveling by horse and buggy had it not been for people with courage.

We must understand that growth requires discomfort. True personal growth happens outside of your comfort zone, and if you are not a little uncomfortable in your life, then you are probably not growing. If you are not growing, then you are dying. I understand that fear is a natural response to change, but it should not be a barrier. When

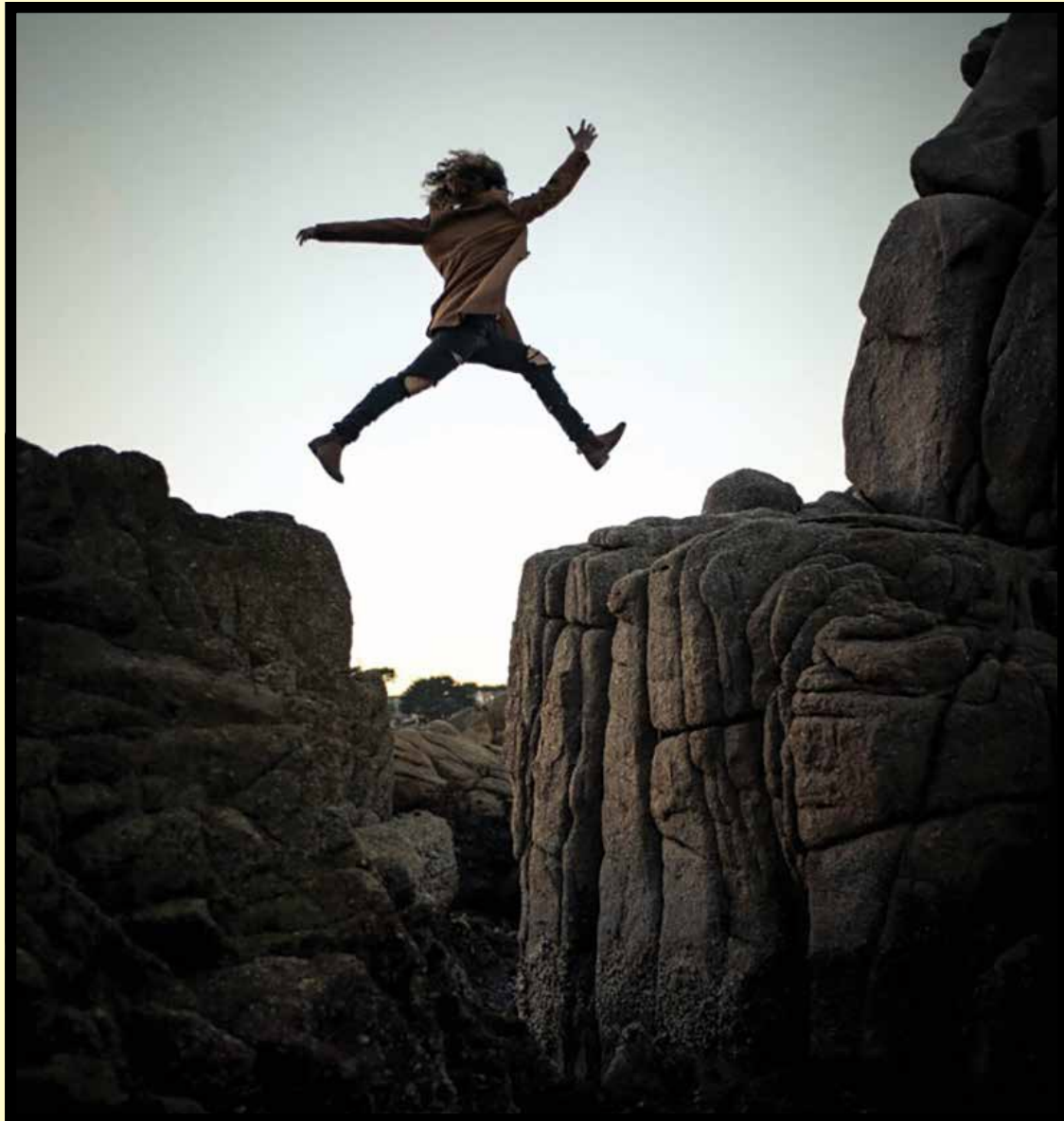
I notice this feeling of fear coming on, I like to ask myself, “What is the worst thing that can happen?” I have found that the fear is bigger than the reality. I conjure up things being much worse than what they actually are, and then when I do get the courage and face my fears, I say, “That wasn't so bad.”

Every successful person has failed, sometimes multiple times. Failure isn't the opposite of success; it's part of the process, and the most courageous thing you can do is

try again after a setback. It is not about how many times you get knocked down, but how many times are you willing to get back up again. Getting back up takes courage in itself. The first step is always the hardest -- but just do it!

Many people want to wait until they have more knowledge or skillsets before tackling a new venture. Waiting to feel "ready" keeps you stuck, and the only way to grow is by taking action, even when you're scared. Momentum builds with each

courageous step you take. I am reminded of the quote by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., “If you can't fly, then run. If you can't run, then walk. If you can't walk, then crawl. But whatever you do, you have to keep moving forward.” Courage is the spark that ignites personal growth and progress. It is not about being fearless but about moving forward despite fear. Take the leap, embrace discomfort, and remember -- every step, no matter how small, matters. This is how you own 2025.





Clean, Green And Beautiful

Bet On A Beautiful Limestone

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



Keep Athens-Limestone Beautiful has a new fundraiser, and we are beyond excited! We are hosting our first ever Casino Night - "Bet on a Beautiful Limestone" at Irons & Ales on March 15, 2025. Dress up and walk down the red carpet and join us for a fun night playing casino games with "funny money"! We have some great prizes to win that were donated by some of Limestone County's amazing businesses. We'll have a little bit of everything from poker and roulette to slot machines and more!

Since we are a nonprofit, we rely on appropriations and donations to operate. All the services that we provide are completely free, and that ain't cheap! We are proud to offer supplies for cleanups, speakers for programs, and our educational programs. We are in the process of rolling out a new program that will mod-

ernize our approach to education, but we'll talk more about that when the last few pieces are received.

What we do makes a huge difference in the day-to-day lives of all of us; most people just wouldn't notice until it stopped. In the past five years alone, Keep Athens-Limestone Beautiful

is responsible for removing 169,372 pounds of litter from public roadsides and waterways. Some of your county commissioners are removing anywhere from 900-1200 pounds of litter per week. It's just too much. We believe that education is key to helping change habits, and we hope that we can educate and inspire change.

As you know, we provide an annual, free Household Hazardous Waste Collection for all Limestone County residents. We do receive appropriations for this service, but our costs vary from year to year depending on how much and what chemicals are collected. Since this event is the only way to ethically dispose of most of these chemicals, it is very important to us. With Limestone Coun-

ty's new and very rapid growth, we are hearing the cries for this service more and more, so we know it's important to you as well. We are hoping that Casino Night makes a big splash in our HHW fund! Side note -- the Limestone County Commission Recycling Program accepts motor oil Monday-Thursday, 7 a.m.-3 p.m. They are located at 1301 North Jefferson Street.

In an attempt to bring something new and different to Athens, we have landed on "Bet

on a Beautiful Limestone." We hope that a chance to dress up and have fun brings everyone out to roll the dice with us! Tickets are \$75 each, and they include hors d'oeuvres, one drink, and \$100 in funny money. Additional funny money can be purchased to play with as a straight donation to Keep Athens-Limestone Beautiful! Stop by the office at 125 East Street, Monday-Friday, 9 a.m.-4 p.m. We accept cash or check.

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Cooking with Anna

My Identity In Christ: God Says I Am Loved

by Anna Hamilton

This year I will be 45, truly middle-aged. Ouch! That hurts to actually write down. Do I feel middle-aged? No, I feel like I'm 25. I truly forget that I am older, which has led to somewhat of an identity crisis. I think the identity crisis of middle age is what leads people into a true crisis. Luckily, as a Christian, I have a true identity in Christ that has nothing to do with age, how much I weigh, how much money I make, or what the world thinks I should be. Over this next year, I am going to explore all the things that make up my identity in Christ.

My identity in Christ says that I am loved. No matter what people may say, we all want to be loved. Thankfully God loves us. God loves everyone, whether they are Christian or not. We truly come to understand the depth of God's love once we become Christians. Romans 5:8 tells us that, "But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us."

God's love for us takes many forms throughout the entire Bible. In 1 John 4:8, it even refers to God Himself as love. God in his purest form is love. It is

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Winter Farro and Kale Salad

Ingredients:

- 1 cup dry farro (or quinoa)*
- 1 head of broccoli, cut into florets*
- 1 small red onion, diced*
- ½ Tbsp avocado oil or olive oil*
- ½ tsp ground cumin*
- ½ tsp ground coriander*
- ½ tsp smoked paprika*
- ½ tsp dry basil*
- ½ tsp dry thyme*
- Salt and pepper to taste*
- 2-3 cups kale, destemmed and roughly chopped*
- ¼ cup pomegranate seeds*
- ¼ cup pumpkin seeds*
- 1 (15 oz) can chickpeas, rinsed and drained*

Garlic Citrus Dressing:

- 1 large clove garlic, crushed*
- 2 Tbsp olive oil*
- 1 tsp Dijon mustard*
- Juice and zest of 1 lemon*
- 2 tsp maple syrup*
- ¼ tsp red pepper flakes*
- 1 tsp dry oregano*



Directions:

Bring a large pan of salted water to a rapid boil. Add in your farro and allow to cook for 15-17 minutes. Once cooked al dente, drain your farro and allow it to cool.

Preheat your oven to 400°F. Place broccoli and onion on a lined baking tray with the listed spices ...

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Health and Fitness

Discover The Difference At CrossFit Athens And ROAR Athens

by Nick Niedzwiecki - Owner, CrossFit Athens



Are you looking for a fitness community that offers expert guidance, a supportive environment, and results-driven workouts? Look no further than **CrossFit Athens** and **ROAR Athens**! Unlike traditional gyms, where you're left to figure out workouts on your own, every class at CrossFit Athens and ROAR Athens is **led by a coach** who ensures you move safely, efficiently, and effectively toward your goals. Whether you're an experienced athlete

or just starting your fitness journey, we have something for you!

CrossFit Athens: Functional Fitness for Everyone

CrossFit Athens isn't just another gym; it's a **training facility designed to help you build strength, endurance, and confidence**. Our CrossFit classes focus on constantly varied, functional movements performed at high intensity. That means

no boring routines—each workout is different, keeping your body and mind engaged while improving overall fitness.

Why Choose CrossFit Athens?

- **Coached Workouts:** Every class is led by a knowledgeable coach who provides instruction, motivation, and modifications based on your fitness level.
- **Community Support:** You'll work out alongside

like-minded individuals who encourage and challenge you to be your best.

- **Scalable for All Levels:** Whether you're a beginner or an experienced athlete, workouts are adjusted to fit your abilities and goals.

- **Proven Results:** Improve your strength, endurance, mobility, and overall health with a program backed by science.

ROAR Athens: Strength and Conditioning for Everyone

ROAR Athens is a **dynamic strength and conditioning program designed for all fitness levels**. Whether you're looking to build muscle, increase endurance, or improve your overall health, ROAR Athens provides expert coaching and innovative tools to help you achieve your goals. One of the key features that sets ROAR apart is the **MyZone heart rate monitor system**, which allows you to track your effort and optimize your workouts in real time.

What Makes ROAR Athens Different?

- **Expert Coaching:** Every session is guided by a professional coach who ensures proper form and technique.
- **MyZone Heart Rate Monitoring:** Track your effort and performance in real time to maximize results.
- **Supportive Atmosphere:** We prioritize **empowerment, encouragement, and community**, so you always feel supported in your fitness journey.
- **Effective Programming:** Our classes blend strength

training, conditioning, and mobility work to help you **build lean muscle and improve endurance**.

- **Safe and Inclusive:** No matter your starting point, we meet you where you are and help you progress at your own pace.

Why Coaching Matters

One of the biggest advantages of CrossFit Athens and ROAR Athens is the **coached structure of every single class**. Unlike traditional gyms, where you're left to navigate the equipment and workouts on your own, we provide expert instruction at all times. Our coaches help you master technique, prevent injury, and push yourself beyond what you thought was possible. This level of attention and care is what sets us apart from other fitness facilities in Athens, AL.

Join the Best Fitness Community in Athens, AL!

If you're ready to experience a fitness program that delivers real results in a **fun, supportive, and expertly coached environment**, CrossFit Athens and ROAR Athens are here for you. Whether you want the high-intensity, functional workouts of CrossFit or the specialized strength and conditioning of ROAR, we have a place for you!

Come see the difference for yourself. **Your first class is on us!** Contact us today to schedule a free class and take the first step toward a healthier, stronger you! 256-777-8275

ROAR DAILY FOCUS SCHEDULE Feb. 3rd - Feb. 9th

MONDAY LEGS & CORE

5:15 am
9:00 am
12:00 pm- XPRESS
4:30 pm
5:45 pm-XPRESS

TUESDAY ATHLETIC

5:15 am
6:30 am- XPRESS
12:00 pm- XPRESS
4:30 pm
5:45 pm-XPRESS

WEDNESDAY CHEST & BACK

5:15 am
9:00 am
12:00 pm- XPRESS
4:30 pm

THURSDAY GLUTES & CARDIO

5:15 am
6:30 am- XPRESS
12:00 pm- XPRESS
4:30 pm
5:45 pm-XPRESS

FRIDAY ARMS & CORE

5:15 am
9:00 am
12:00 pm- XPRESS
4:30 pm

SATURDAY TOTAL BODY

8:30 am-XPRESS
9:15am- XPRESS

SUNDAY SHOULDERS, BIs, Tris

2:30 pm
3:45 pm- XPRESS

Celebrate Spring At The 2025 Home & Garden Show

by Ali Elizabeth Turner

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February 15-16 at Athens Middle School. The hours on Saturday are 8 a.m.-4 p.m., and on Sunday the show will be open from noon-4 p.m.

“This is our second show since COVID,” said Pam-mie Jimmar, who heads up the Chamber, and it is an event she has come to enjoy greatly. When she became the president/CEO of our Chamber of Commerce, we were still somewhat on COVID “lockdown,” and Pam-mie, the Chamber crew, vendors, and attendees worked diligently to pre-prepare for the day when we could gather together once again. In 2024, the return of the H & G Show proved to have a wonderful effect on our whole community when it made “the comeback.” And, enthusiasm for the show has only grown since then.

Once again, the Presenting Sponsor for our 2025 show is Impact Roofing. The Gold Sponsor is Window World, and the Silver Sponsor is Elite Sanitation Services. The Hospitality Sponsor is Synovus Mortgage. All of these businesses will

come together to make this free event a “must-attend” for North Alabama and beyond. It is important to note that Athens is definitely situated well for this event; it’s right in the middle between Huntsville/Madison, Decatur, and Florence. We are a straight 90 miles south of Nashville, 90 miles north of Birmingham on I-65, big enough to have something for everyone, and small enough to have that “feel” that makes Athens worth the trip.

Chamber Events Manager Brooke Pettus likes the Home & Garden shows because it “sparks new ideas.” She also noted that it is important that we support what she calls the DIY (Do It Yourself) community. There are people who love tackling projects great and small, and this event is perfect for them. There are also a whole lot of folks who want to find an excellent company to take care of what they envision, and again, this event is perfect for them.

One of the special features for this year’s show is a \$500 voucher that is going to be awarded to a lucky winner by Breeze Airways. Winning that voucher and

having the chance to choose from the more than 50 destinations coast to coast serviced by Breeze will make spring just be that much sweeter.

Representatives from every aspect of home improvement will be present, from remodeling to roofs to windows to siding to plumbing to new construction to real estate to financing and more. You will be able to explore the latest trends in kitchens, baths, paint, siding, lighting, and decorating. For your garden, there will be people from a big-box store as well as a large local nursery. For your home’s interior, you can find help with custom picture framing, lighting, and furniture selection. And, if all the choices before you make you feel stressed, there will be professional massage therapists to help with that.

Because the Chamber of Commerce is all about building business as well as building community, this annual event is something that I think all of us can agree is needed in order for us to continue to be #AthensStrong. With Limestone County being the fastest growing county in



the great State of Alabama, people are hungry for the chance to see what makes this area so attractive, why living here is such a good idea, and what they can do to make their own personal space beautiful and unique. I expect that this year’s Home & Garden Show will still feel like a celebration rather than a largely commercial endeavor, and I know it will have been worth the wait!

In all, there is something for everyone at a price (free admission for all) that can’t be beat and the Annual Limestone County Chamber of Commerce Home and Garden Show is a marvelous way to enjoy the springing of spring. See you there!

The Limestone County Chamber of Commerce Annual Home and Garden Show

Athens Middle School

100 US Hwy 31
Athens AL 35611

Chamber phone:
256-232-2600

Facebook:
Athens-Limestone County Chamber of Commerce

V E N D O R S

- Access Garage Doors of Huntsville
- AFS Foundation Repair
- Alabama Landscape Creations
- Aon Water Technology
- Athens Handyman Services, LLC
- Comfort Masters of North AL
- Crawlspace Medic
- Dog Training Elite
- Elite Sanitation Services
- Flirty Flame Candle Co LLC
- Floor and Decor
- Freedom Exteriors
- Frontier Foundation & Crawl Space Repair
- IMPACT Roofing
- Innovative Realty Solutions

V E N D O R S

- Invisible Fence of Huntsville
- Kennedy & Sons
- LeafFilter Gutter Protection
- Leafguard
- Legacy Health Chiropractic
- Let's Face It, Face Paint
- Lottie Partridge, RE/MAX Legacy
- M. A. Jackson Co.
- MEWS Lighting and Bath
- Mighty Dog Roofing
- Mosquito Shield of Huntsville
- Park Supply Company
- Pool Scouts of Huntsville
- Redstone Realty Solutions-Decatur
- Refine Chiropractic

V E N D O R S

- Renewal by Anderson
- Riverside Builders LLC
- Shelton Construction, Inc.
- Sky Green L&L
- Southern Industries
- T-Mobile Inc.
- The Rustic Willow
- Thompson Roofing and Construction
- UNITS Moving & Portable Storage HSV
- Valley Pools LLC
- Waynes Pest Control
- Window World of Huntsville
- Yellowhammer Roofing
- Your Home Window Company

Who Here Has Heard Of The Trixie Belden Books?

by Stephanie Reynolds, Athens-Limestone Tourism Association



I used to read them when I was a kid (and an adult, I still have the first one on my Kindle, and I read it when I want a little bit of my childhood back).

In any case, in that, book Trixie or Honey (I can't remember) gave this quote: "If you stay two weeks somewhere, you'll see most of what you want to see. If you stay a month, you will see all of what you want to see, but if you live there, you will never see anything at all!" Put a pin in this for a moment...

Now, have you ever thought about what life is like for the locals you see when you go on vacation? For example, if you go to the beach, do you ever look at the locals and think, "I wonder how often they go to the beach?" Or if you are eating at a famous restaurant on the strip in Vegas and you really enjoy it, do you ever think, "It would be so cool to live here! I'd eat here every week!"?

Have you ever been eating at a restaurant, maybe lost on your phone, and realize that the next table over is filled with people who are EXCITED to be here on vacation?

One of the problems with living somewhere is we tend to "never see anything at all." We get so jaded about the familiar that we don't stop to think that for someone else, where we live is extraordinary, fun, calm, or sentimental.

So often we get like kids in summer -- "There's

nothing to DOOOO!" -- not realizing that our "nothing" is a place that people actually come to on purpose.

I want to help you rediscover how amazing Limestone County is. Below is a list of 56 things you can do in Limestone County through the year. I invite you to cut this list out and post it on your fridge. Now, whenever you have a spare weekend or someone coming into town, you can do something on this list!

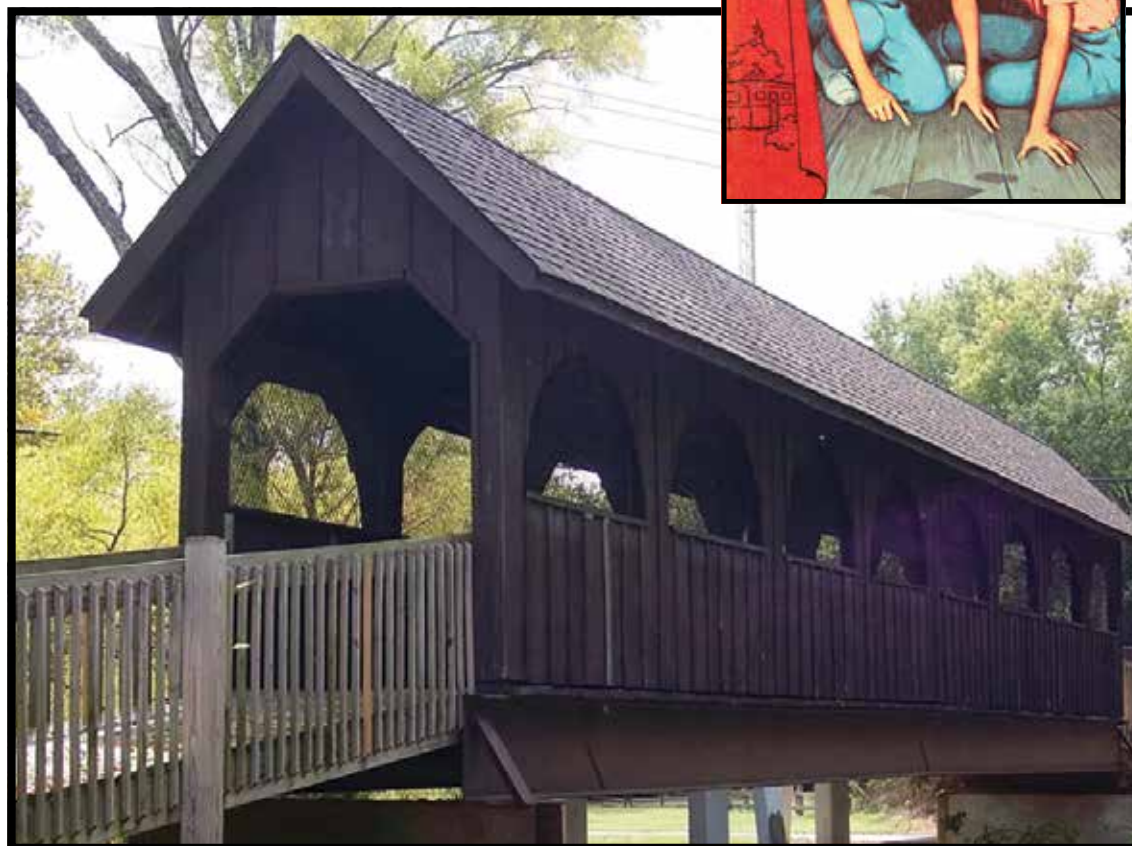
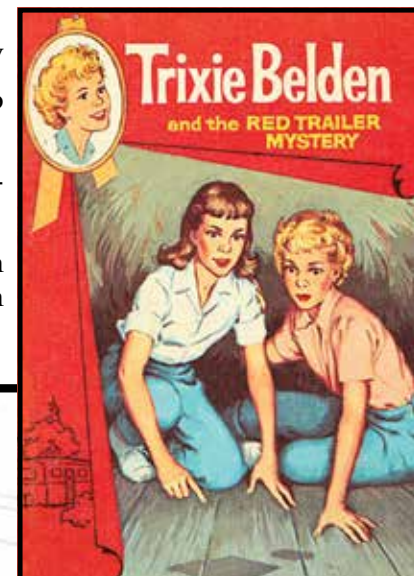
1. Sheriff's Rodeo
2. Red White and BOOM
3. Merry Market
4. Chocolate Walk
5. Home and Garden Show
6. April Walking Tour
7. Donnell House
8. Richard Martin Trail
9. Swan Creek Trail
10. Marbut Bend
11. Cemetery Stroll
12. Haunt Walk
13. Tinsel Trail
14. 1818 Farms
15. Mooresville Tour
16. Feed the ducks at the pond
17. Fridays after Five
18. Kiddie Carnival
19. Cruise-in On The Square
20. Houston Library
21. Farmers Market
22. Merchants Alley Happy Hour
23. Piney Chapel Heritage Tractor Show
24. Ardmore Rodeo

25. Crape Myrtle Festival
26. Fiddlers Convention
27. Storytelling Festival
28. Veterans Parade
29. Christmas Parade
30. Sippin' Cider
31. Tour of Homes
32. Rural Village walking trail (extra point if you saw the waterfalls, two extra points if you went to the cave when the bats were flying)
33. Take an arts class
34. Business event at Launch Box
35. Lunch and Learn at the library
36. Use the Sportsplex for anything exercise related (not just watching, actually using it -- like the pool, the archery range, etc.)
37. Attend any concert at any of the schools

38. Run/walk any race in Limestone County (the "rat race" doesn't count!)
39. Try paintball
40. Practice at any driving range
41. 9 or 18 holes at a local golf course
42. Try pickleball
43. Hit balls at the batting cage
44. Attend air show at Pryor Field
45. Go to the Sulphur Creek Trestle Battle Monument
46. See the Trinity School display
47. Fish in the county
48. Skeet or trap shooting
49. Archery or hunting
50. Boat or kayak on any lake or river in Limestone County

51. Alabama Veterans Museum
52. Delmore Bros. Museum
53. ASU Sports Museum
54. College Inn/Newby Gulf Station Museum
55. Complete our Columns and Cultures walking tour
56. Go on a carriage ride

If there is anything that you heard that interests you, come see me. I would love to help you organize an itinerary completely free! Let me help you cross some of these things off your list!



J.R.'s Heating And Cooling, LLC: *Providing Certainty And Service*

By Ali Elizabeth Turner

continued from page 1

J.R.'s Heating and Cooling, LLC. Both "Tims" are husbands, fathers and grandfathers, and these days Tim, Sr. serves more in a mentoring and troubleshooting capacity in his son's business. He instilled in his son the desire to "do it right the first time," and to provide certainty re: the services rendered to each client. That has been the "secret sauce of success" for both Tims.

Tim, Jr, also known as "J.R.," is a graduate of Tanner High School, and has always loved sports. When he was a "Rattler," he played everything, but his own great love was baseball. He is a HUGE Alabama football fan, and also plays the drums, keyboards, and is a worship leader. He coaches 4th grade basketball for the Tennessee Valley Basketball Association, and realizes that his role in the lives of the young men he coaches goes far beyond how well they shoot hoop.

As a family man, between Tim and his wife, Jemeca, there are seven kids ranging in age from 7 years to 24 years. Five are girls, two are boys, and there are two grandkids, one boy and one girl. When Tim gave a presentation about his business recently at our Limestone



Leaders BNI chapter, it was clear that his tribe is what motivates him to be the best he was designed to be.

Tim made a real point of educating us in the process of giving his presentation, something I greatly appreciated. Here are some of the things I learned and want to pass on to you:

- HVAC installation typically costs between \$5,500 and \$12,000, and your system can last up to 15–20 years with proper maintenance.
- Replacing air filters, investing in a smart thermostat, and hiring an experienced HVAC technician will help maintain your home's heating and cooling systems.
- Three million HVAC units are replaced annually, and \$14 billion is spent on

HVAC services and repairs yearly.

- The HVAC industry is expected to grow by 7.4% through 2030.
- In 2020, nearly 90% of U.S. households had AC units installed.

Tim is horrified by the number of "technicians" that AREN'T -- that rip off customers, and whose work he has to try and go in and repair. Sometimes he can't, and it does not sit well with him. There are also scoundrels who try and defraud insurance companies, and Tim educates his customers well in order to protect them and their investment in their home or business.

The business is experienced with the following:

- New Construction
- Remodel/Renovation

- Maintenance
- Repairs
- Warranty Claims

There are simple things that a homeowner can do to help out their house's HVAC system. The number one thing? Change your air filter. As Tim explains, "If your lungs in your own body aren't clear, you have a hard time breathing and getting oxygen to go where it needs to go. It's the same with your HVAC. Its 'lungs' need the filter to be clear and clean in order to work well." He has had to deal with everything from ants destroying a HVAC system, mice eating up the lines, and one I must admit I had never thought of: mowing the lawn.

Once summer hits and we are either doing our own lawns or having someone else do it, you need to protect your HVAC unit! Either completely turn it off while the mower is working, or put a large piece of plywood or cardboard across the intake vent. If you suck grass into your HVAC, you can ruin it and not even know why.

Everyone wants their home and lawn to look well kept, but if you plant trees too closely around your outdoor

HVAC unit in order to hide it, you can ruin it because it does not have enough "air space" to get the job done. It also makes it tough for a technician to do maintenance or repairs because they either can't get to the unit in the first place, or the branches get in the way.

Tim Townsend is looking out for you, and will make sure that you get the best possible service with certainty. Call him today to schedule a no obligation appointment, and let him help you get the best possible HVAC unit, for the best possible price, coupled with the best possible service from J R's Heating and Cooling, LLC.



J.R.'s Heating and Cooling, LLC

256-497-2840

**Facebook:
J R's Heating and Cooling**

Learning As A Lifestyle

The Enduring Legacy Of Trinity High School And The Pillars Of Progress

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



Black History Month highlights the resilience, achievements, and contributions of African Americans throughout history. Trinity High School in Athens, Alabama, is one such example. Founded after the Civil War by the American Missionary Association with the support of individuals such as George Freeman Bragg and Mary Smith Peake, it provided education to formerly enslaved individuals and their descendants. This institution became a symbol of hope, demonstrating that education could shatter barriers and open doors for future generations.

One of Trinity High School's most distin-

guished alumni is C. Eric Lincoln, a renowned scholar, author, and social historian. Lincoln's groundbreaking work on race, religion, and African American culture has left an enduring legacy. He authored several influential books, including *The Black Church in the African American Experience* and *The Avenue*, Clayton City, which won the Lillian Smith Book Award. Lincoln's work continues to shape conversations around racial justice, religion, and identity in America. His achievements reflect the foundation of excellence and empowerment instilled by Trinity High School.

Beyond Lincoln, many

other graduates of Trinity High School went on to excel in their fields, becoming educators, community leaders, and change-makers. Alumni like Dr. Peter Myles, who became a respected educator and civil rights advocate, and prominent leaders like Alma Boyd Weeks, who dedicated her life to improving education in her community, demonstrate the transformative impact of Trinity High School. These individuals embodied the school's values of perseverance, faith, and service, carrying its legacy forward in meaningful ways.

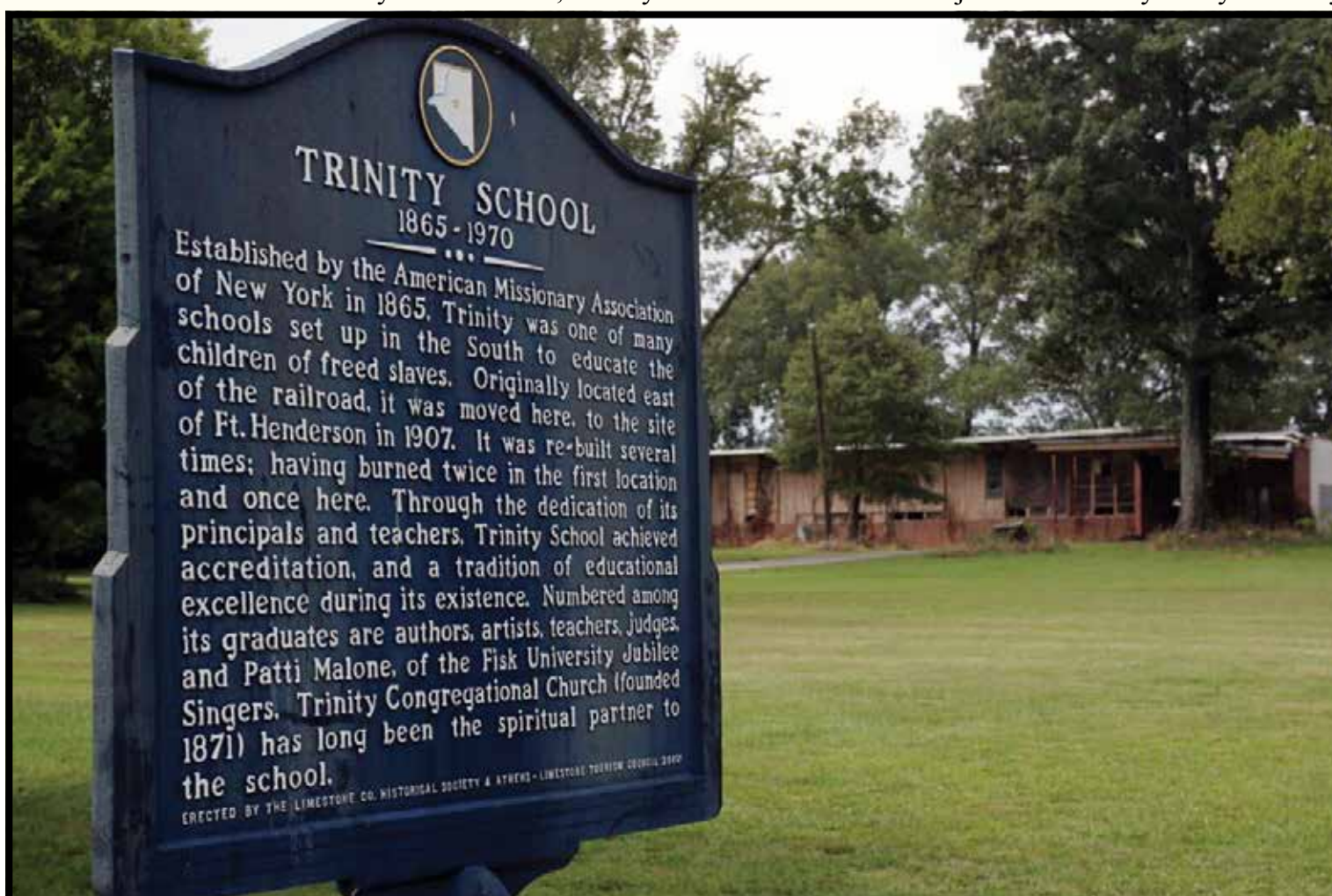
At the heart of Trinity High School's mission was faith—not just

in their Creator, which was most important for them, but in the inherent worth and potential of every student. The founders believed that education was the key to breaking the shackles of bondage, instilling in their students a sense of dignity, purpose, and belief in their God-given talents. This spiritual and academic foundation empowered students to overcome adversity and strive for a better future, making Trinity High School much more than just a place of learning—it was a source of hope.

The courage and dedication of Trinity High School's leaders and educators remain an inspiration today. They not only

imparted knowledge but also modeled the strength and unity required to overcome challenges. Their commitment to investing in others exemplified the principle of giving back to the community, leaving a lasting impact on Athens and the Limestone County area. Trinity High School became a cornerstone of education and progress, shaping generations of leaders and fostering a spirit of resilience and cooperation. Freedmen churches also played a significant role, providing essential support in establishing educational opportunities and serving as pillars of strength for the community. During Black History Month, their story reminds us of the importance of uplifting others, honoring our collective history, and continuing the fight for justice and equality.

Trinity High School's legacy also underscores the responsibility to equip younger generations with knowledge, Christian values, and a sense of history. Committed to the nurturing of young minds, the educators at Trinity prepared their students to surpass the accomplishments of previous generations. The story of Trinity High School, along with remarkable figures like C. Eric Lincoln and its many other accomplished graduates, is a testament to the power of faith, education, and courage to shape a brighter future for all.



Tennessee Valley Spotlight



Mondays at 10am

1080 AM WKAC

Man vs. Dog

by Joel Allen



Hello, folks! Years ago we had a neighbor who loved his dogs and, well, one of his dogs was killed by a Charter cable guy who was driving through to a repair job near our home. What had happened was the dog had gotten out of the yard and ran in front of the vehicle and was hit and killed. What made it a bad situation was the guy did not even seem to care what he had done to our neighbor's dog because he had the "It's-just-a-dog" attitude. When my Mom heard what happened, she immediately went over to our neighbor to calm him down, and lucky for the guy who worked for the cable company, my mom got our neighbor to calm down. He was ready to shoot the cable guy. When I think back on this, I shake my head and realize there are many of us who love our dogs more than people.

Mark Twain said it best, "The more people I meet, the more I love dogs." How many of us think this way? I know I do. Call me a "soft heart," but if I am watching a show where the dog dies, well, the TV gets turned off or I leave the room. I have been accused of valuing dogs more than people, and I own it. GUILTY! When coming home is your dog waiting for their "hooman"? I know mine does. Dogs look to us for their food and water. Dogs are never plotting to see what they can get from someone. The worse you're gonna get are shoes chewed up, trash raided, your food stolen off the plate left at their level, or even someone getting bit. Dogs don't betray their families unless there is some health reason messing with their mental state or they were severely abused. Other than that, they make the

best family. Think about it...if someone raised a hand to your dog, what would happen? Me? Touch my dog in a harmful way and you'll find out real quick! Many of us look at our dogs like they are our kids. Some people refer to their dogs as babies, fur babies, or just their kids. I call mine my babies. LOL...when I went through a bad divorce in the '90s, I looked at my mom and pointed at my dogs saying, "There are your grandbabies because I am not going through that again!" She didn't like that but what parent would? Does anyone remember when the news covered a story of dogs being shot by law enforcement when the dog growled or showed any aggression when they were answering a call? I can't remember the exact details or as to why it

happened, but I did watch a video one time where a police officer walked into a fenced-in yard to check on the resident of a home. I heard on the video the dog barking and coming. The officer was trying to tell the dog to stay back and pulled his weapon. The dog charged and he shot the dog. Then the officer proceeded to knock on the door, and when a man answered and he told him he shot his dog. I would have lost my mind. Now everyone reading this, this article is not to add to any disgruntled attitude or hate for the police. In fact, I am a big time advocate of our law enforcement, so do not make from my article your reason for disliking the police. A lot of the news media just love to stir up problems for the police. Truth be told, it matters not to me if you're a cop or civilian, harm my dog and you're gonna find

out how crazy I can get. So, how many of us would save the dog first when the house catches fire? My thinking is I want to get everyone I love out so I am grabbing everyone. I won't even crate my dogs while I am away, if I can help it, because if the house catches fire or something happens, and they could not get out or away, I would never forgive myself. There are many who think as I do I know. Is it wrong to think this way? Where is your heart at? Does anyone think as I do? I know dogs don't live as long as hoomans; the short time we have them is a bit-sweet feeling because time does fly. I guess what this article is really about is to wake us up and enjoy the times we have with our canine family members. Proverbs 12:10 "A righteous man regardeth the life of his animal, but the tender mercies of the wicked are cruel."

All right, folks, I hope everyone enjoys February and I will talk with everyone next month. Y'all be safe now, ya hear?!

"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

State Legislature Has The Wind At Their Backs

by Phil Williams

Have you ever been in one of those “no-lose” situations? We’ve all seen “no-win” situations, but sometimes the stars align and you find yourself looking at your personal situation and thinking, “Why would I not?” I’ve said before that there come times when I pray that way. At times, seeking the Lord’s guidance moves from asking for wisdom in the form of “Lord, should I?” to “Lord, why would I not?”

When all facts, all principles, all gifts and talents, seem to align with His word and His will, there can come that moment when we step into our authority and act. The biggest decisions can actually become the easiest. The facts and circumstances line up in such a way that there’s nothing to lose and everything to gain.

I asked Charlene to marry me (39 years ago!) and it was a no-brainer. No money, no job, still in school. But I knew the upside. Why would I not?

I went to Army Ranger School with no advance notice. A slot opened up with 6 days’ notice. It was the only shot I would get. Why would I not?

When I ran for the State Senate, started my own law firm, or kicked off Rightside Radio, I reviewed each opportunity, prayed it through with my wife, and came back to “Why would I not?”

Each of those no-lose situations involved risk and effort. Each of those decisions, and others, have been more rewarding than I could have ever asked or

imagined. They came down to “Why would I not?”

The elected leaders of our states need to think along the same lines. As state legislatures convene, they need to know they have been given a golden opportunity. They are in the middle of one of the most dynamic conservative movements in modern history. A time in which public sentiment has swung decidedly in favor of conservative values, conservative principles, conservative politicians. The recent election cycle was not just a red wave, it was a tsunami!

Every state in the Southeast has a Republican supermajority in their Statehouse. Notably, Alabama, Tennessee and Florida Republicans have such strength in numbers that they literally control their own destiny. But will they? Any state Republican supermajority could act in a decisive and deliberate manner to enact the things they say that they stand for. State voters gave them a supermajority for such a time as this. Why would they not?

In Florida, the Republican majority is squabbling amongst themselves over Governor Desantis’s call for state level illegal immigration laws. The bill that finally passed was arguably watered down, going so far as to strip the Governor of Florida of his immigration enforcement powers and transfer them to Florida’s Secretary of Agriculture. The Governor may well veto the legislation. Republicans in Florida can pass whatever they want to pass. State and national sentiment is in their favor.

Immigration reform from the Florida capital -- why would they not?

In Tennessee, Governor Bill Lee called the State House and Senate into special session to enact major school choice legislation. Tennessee parents deserve the ability to determine what is best for their child’s educational needs without being bound to a zip code or a bureaucracy. President Trump signaled overwhelming support for Tennessee’s Education Freedom Act having previously labeled school choice the “civil rights issue of all time.” Tennessee Republicans fought the usual fights, even among themselves. But they got it done and are bringing school choice to Tennessee. Why would they not?

Alabama’s House and Senate go into the annual Regular Session on February 4. Speculation abounds whether the rarified air in the Statehouse will be consumed with gambling once again. In 2024, easy layup bills like the “What is a Woman Act” languished. A simple bill to activate porn filters to protect children died on the vine. Backroom debate is ongoing whether Alabama will address illegal immigration at the state level.

Have they read the room? Do they see the national mandate for a restoration of values? Are they aware of the strength of their position? The Republican supermajority in Alabama can pass anything they want. Lower your taxes? Done. Protect children? Done. Streamline government? Done. Alabama il-

legal immigration laws? Done.

They must look at the times and realize there will never be another moment like this for conservatives to act. To actually walk in the authority they’ve been granted. Alabama legislature, why would you not?

The public, who voted for Republican supermajorities, would see that elected officials care about not wasting a mandate. They would see that when they cried out that the legislature listened. The political winds are at their back. Do something meaningful. Be conservative warriors. It’s a no-lose situation. Why would they not?

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



The Alternative Approach

The Guru Of Good Health

by Roy Williams



Yes, I am the “Guru of good health,” a name given to me after a few years on the radio. One of the people working for the station tagged me with that name and it stuck. *Today's Health Update* is the name of my show, which is often called the fastest 30 minutes on the radio. The shows are built around my favorite Scripture in the Bible, John 8:32, which says, “And ye shall know the truth, and the truth will set you free.” If you believe that, and I certainly do, then one must consider the opposite. If the truth sets us free, then remember, a lie that is believed will hold us in bondage.

Are you being held in bondage? Do you believe what the national media is telling you? What about your politicians or public officials? Do you agree with what our school systems are teaching our children? What about your doctors and the medical profession as a whole? How long have they been telling us that if we just give them enough time and money, they will cure every disease known to man?

In elementary school, a friend of mine learned that his mother had cancer. She lived only a few months, and I will never forget just how devastating it was. That incident made us aware of cancer, and we all took some comfort in the pharmaceutical industry, which claimed they were going to cure cancer in our lifetime.

That was in 1960, which was 64 years ago, and to my knowledge, there are still no real effective cures for cancer. What happened? President Richard Nixon's wife developed cancer while he was in office, so he called for a war on cancer. What happened? Cancer is now the number two cause of death in America, and even worse, the chances of developing cancer then was that one in every 14 people could expect to be diagnosed with it. Today, it is one in three. What happened to all the promises of science, Pharmacia, the medical profession, and the trillions of dollars that has been invested in research? Obviously, when you look at the numbers, we lost the war on cancer.



Is it possible that we have been lied to? Is it possible that all their research has gone into the wrong areas? Could it be that they, the medical industrial complex, don't want to find a cure? Do they make so much money treating the symptoms of disease that instead of looking for the root causes they are hiding the truth? Common sense would tell us that in order to solve a problem, one must identify the reason for the problem, and then make sure that they don't repeat what caused the problem in the first place.

To this day, the medical industrial complex ignores the root causes and has no interest in finding the root causes because if the cause of disease was solved, all their money would dry up. Now you know the truth about why we have, in the last 60 years, gone from the healthiest

nation on earth to the sickest. Remember, Jesus told us that the truth would set us free.

Thanks to Robert F. Kennedy and the MAHA movement, the cures are coming. They can no longer ignore the root causes. They can no longer hold us in bondage. To give you an example, we at NEWtritional Health Care and our locations here in North Alabama have started introducing technology that was developed a few years ago. This technology allows us to not only learn what is happening in the human body that causes the symptoms of disease, it also identifies the root causes of disease, which then allows you to support your body while it heals. It shouldn't surprise you that the medical industrial complex has ignored this technology for years.

It is called Electro Dermal Testing or Bioenergetic Testing, and it has proven to be so effective that thousands of people are using it to get to the bottom of their disorders and solve them. This non-invasive technology evaluates over 5000 items, without drawing blood, urine, or even saliva. It covers everything from hormone evaluation, food sensitivities, circulatory problems, digestive disorders, immune dysfunctions, and much more. So, if you are sick and tired of getting the runaround from the medical industrial complex and wish to get to the root cause and solve it, please consider contacting us at 256-233-0073 or going by Herbs & More in Athens.

*Your friend in health,
Roy P. Williams*

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Cooking with Anna (continued from page 13)

My Identity In Christ: *God Says I Am Loved*

by Anna Hamilton

hard for us to understand love in terms of just purity. God loves you simply because he loves you. We aren't required to work for His affection. We don't have to get ourselves all put together before God will pour out His love over us. God, simply put, is love.

It is no joke that this world is hard. It is tough to feel love and to truly believe you are loved just for being yourself. But believing that we are loved by God can keep our heads above water in this world full of doubt and disappointments. By staying fully in God's love, we learn how to navigate and balance our life. Jude 1:21 tells us -- "Keep yourselves in God's love as you wait for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to bring you eternal life."

Romans 5:3-5 encourages us to keep going even when things are hard, even when we may not feel loved, because God's love has been poured into our hearts. "Not only so, but we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope. And hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us."

One of the most beautiful parts about being in Christ is knowing that no matter what this world, what Satan, may throw at us, nothing will keep God's love away from us. Once you take on Christ and become a Christian you are completely protected by God's love. This does not mean that once we are a Christian it is all smooth sailing, just the opposite. The devil

wants nothing more than to try to convince us that we are not loved and that we should search for love in anything but Christ. Romans 8:37-39 tells us that nothing can separate us from God's love, "No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height or depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

My identity in Christ tells me I am loved. I am excited to explore all of the ways God describes me as a Christian. I hope through my articles this year you will be reminded of just how much God loves and cares for us. The year 2024 was by far the hardest year of my life. Losing my brother and battling my health has made me truly question who I am and what my identity is. I know that this study is going to help me stand firm in what I know to be true: In Christ, I am loved.

This week's recipe is a delicious warm salad that is packed full of veggies and sure to help you feel warm and cozy, even when it is cold and chilly outside. This recipe doesn't contain any meat, but pairs extremely well with chicken or salmon.

"Though the mountains be shaken and the hills be removed, yet my unfailing love for you will not be shaken nor my covenant of peace be removed," says the Lord, who has compassion on you." Isaiah 54:10

and herbs and oil. Give a good toss to coat and place in the oven for about 15 minutes.

While the vegetables cook, make the dressing. Combine all the dressing ingredients in a small bowl and mix well.

Once the vegetables are roasted, begin assembling your salad. To make your salad extra special, start by adding your kale to a large mixing bowl and with 1 to 2 teaspoons of the dressing. With your hands, massage the dressing into the kale until it softens and turns bright green. Top with the roasted vegetables, pomegranate, pumpkin seeds, chickpeas, and dressing along with a pinch of salt and pepper. Give everything a good toss to coat and serve.

What's My Name? The Story Of A Promise And Persistence

by Lisa Philippart,
Licensed Professional Counselor



Therapy metaphors use a story or illustration to see alternative ways of looking at something. Every culture and religion uses these types of stories, analogies, or parables to improve understanding, make a point more memorable, and hopefully help us to make positive changes. In my next few articles, I will be sharing metaphors that help us to see thoughts (their nature and role) in a different light. Just this alone, seeing thoughts differently, allows us to create a space between us and our thoughts, which leads us to see things a bit more objectively. Once we are able to do this, we can make wiser and more helpful decisions about how to respond (not react) effectively.

The Quicksand is used by Stephen Hayes to in-

troduce his clients to Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT.) When we are stuck in quicksand, the immediate impulse is to struggle and fight to get out. But this is exactly the opposite of what you should do -- because as you put weight down on one part of your body, it goes deeper. The more you struggle, the deeper you sink. The only option for survival is to spread your weight over a large surface area, laying down. It goes against all our instincts to lay down and be with the quicksand. So, it is with distress. We struggle and fight against it, but we have perhaps never considered just letting it be. If we considered being with the distressing thoughts and feelings, we'd find we get through it and survive...much more effectively than if we'd fought

and struggled.

Passengers on the Bus. You are the bus driver. You can be driving while all the passengers (thoughts) are being critical, abusive, negative, distracting, and shouting directions. Some passengers (thoughts) may be kind, considerate, friendly, helpful, and encouraging. Either way, keep your attention focused on the road ahead, driving the bus towards your goal or purpose.

The Beach Ball. We try to stop thoughts, but that is really impossible. It's like trying to constantly hold an enormous inflatable beach ball under the water. It keeps popping up in front of our faces. We can allow the ball to float around us, just letting it be. So rather than stop the thoughts, we can stop fighting them, and let them happen, without re-

acting to them.

Tug of War with a Monster. Imagine you are in a tug of war with some huge anxiety (depression, etc.) monster. You have one end of the rope and the monster has the other end. In between you, there is a huge bottomless pit. You're pulling backward as hard as you can, but the monster keeps pulling you ever closer to the pit. What's the best thing to do in that situation? Pulling harder comes naturally, but the harder you pull, the harder the monster pulls. You're stuck. Dropping the rope means the monster's still there, but you are no longer tied up in a struggle with it. Now you can do something more useful.

The Tunnel. When we get anxious driving through a tunnel, the best option is to keep going rather than stop or try to escape. This feeling will pass...there is an end to this tunnel.

The Mountain. Whatever the weather, or whatever happens on the surface of the mountain, the mountain stands firm, strong, grounded, permanent. We can be like that mountain—observing thoughts,

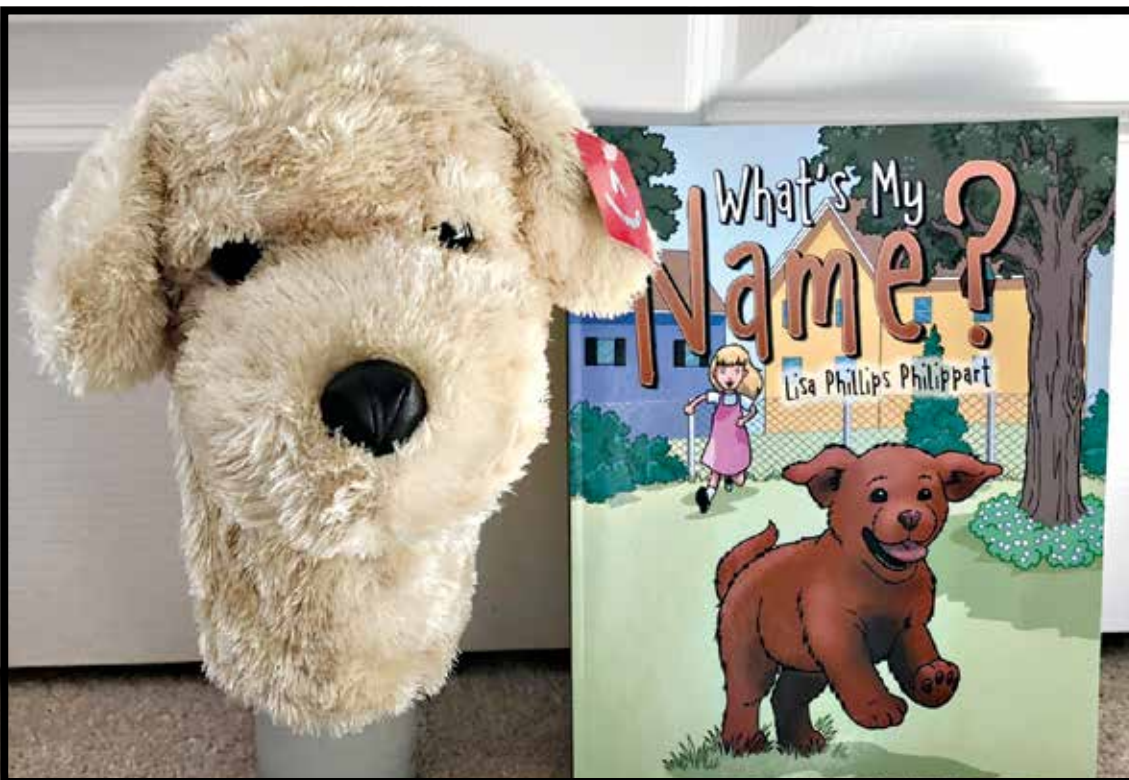
feelings, sensations—knowing inner stillness and strength.

Thought Train. We can sit on the train, watching the scenery (our thoughts, feelings, and sensations) go by, or stand on the platform, watching the thought train pass through. We don't have to jump on it.

The River. Sometimes it feels like we're being carried away downstream, struggling to stay afloat among the mud, filth, and debris. The muck is negative thoughts and feelings, and the river is our distress as we drift helplessly downstream. But we can stand on the riverbank. You might watch individual items as they pass. For example, you might picture a negative thought floating on a tree branch or a troubling event as an old bicycle tire. You can stand and watch without being caught up in the flow.

Join me next time for more therapy metaphors.

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



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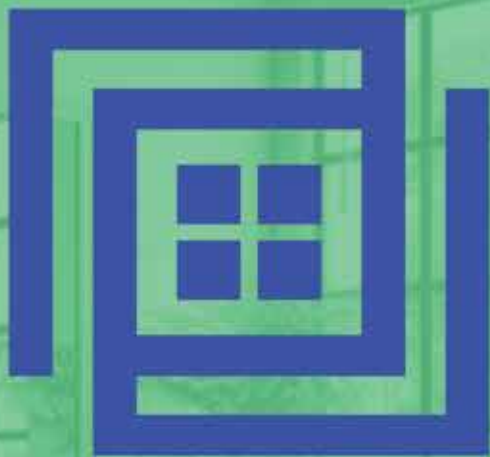
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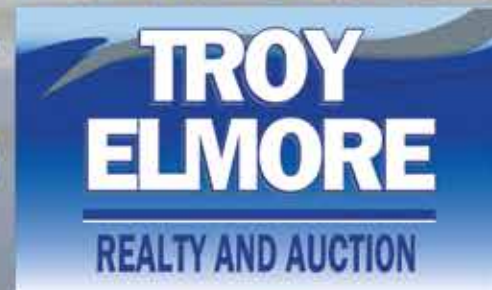
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