

February 21 - March 6, 2025

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# St. Paddy's At ATH Ale: Save The Best 'Til Last

By Ali Elizabeth Turner

Once upon a time, actually just a few months ago, award-winning veteran chef Bill Harden was down at our Farmer's Market with some friends who were part of Rocket City Chefs and decided to take a stroll around the Square. He came upon Athens Ale, which is sometimes referred to affectionately as "ATH Ale," wandered in, and just "knew in his know-er" that the place was "calling his name" to come work there. Bill told me that he walked in to the Alehouse and wondered in a positive way, "What is going on here? Where is the owner? I gotta be a part of this!" However, at the time there was no plan to hire a chef.

Continued on pages 16-17

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**Publisher's Point**

**Super Joy -- Hype Or Help?**

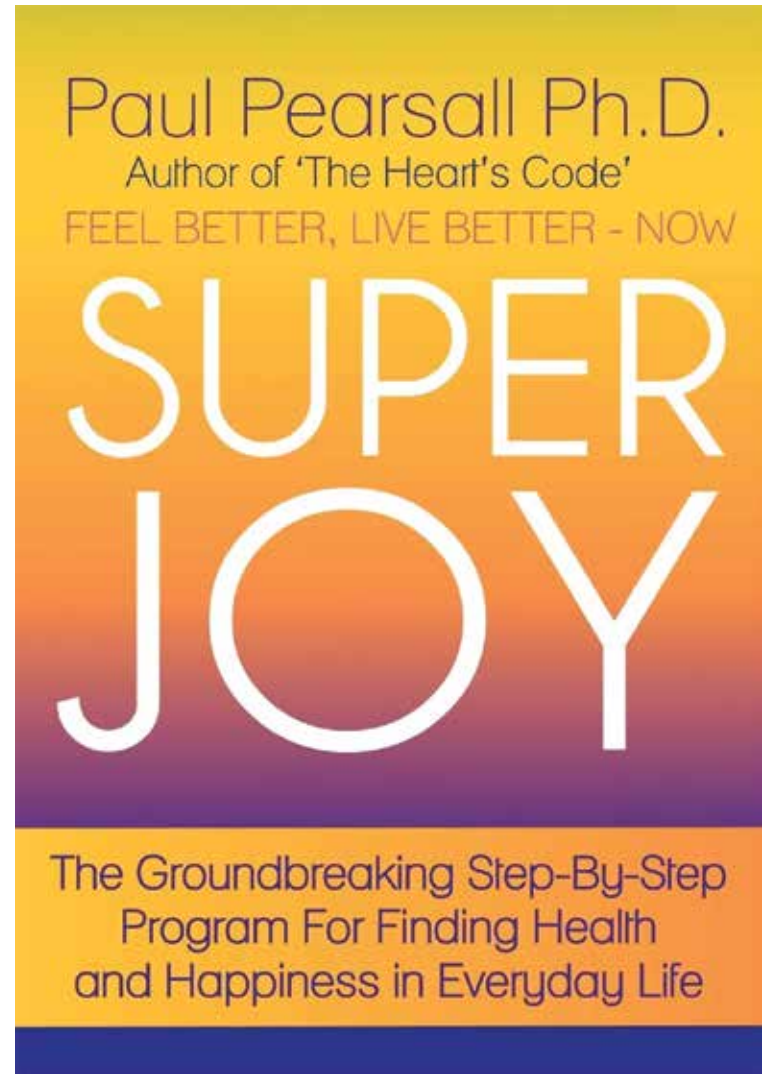
I will tell you at the outset of this *Point* that I will categorically say that in my view, this pioneering work on joy's effect on the brain written by Dr. Paul Pearsall is a help, a big one. I read *Super Joy* not long after it came out in 1988. I was at a low point in my life -- broken-hearted and trying as a single mom to keep it all together. I will be forever grateful to another single mom who told me about it, and I am currently having "the joy of rediscovering *The Joy*" all over again.

There is so much more understanding on neuroplasticity now then there was back then, and lest you are put off by a big word that may sound too hoity-toity, the word simply means that the brain is able to be changed, effectively re-wired, and on this side, we will probably never get to the bottom of just how "fearfully and wonderfully made" our brains really are.

For me, the litmus test of *Super Joy* and its efficacy is

now an endangered species. By that I mean people who survived the Holocaust. There are precious few of these folks left, and of those precious few, the ones who are world changers are the ones who not only survived, but went on to do what we call in our tribe, "sur-thrive." What does that mean? That somehow by grace they found a way to live out the tough truth that it is not what happens to us that has the power, it is what we do with it. While trauma of all kinds needs to be acknowledged, mercifully treated and respected, there is a singular category of folk that endured the unimaginable. They lived as prisoners at actual factories whose sole purpose was to efficiently kill millions. They watched it; they heard it; they smelled it; and they lived to tell the tale.

What got Dr. Pearsall so curious, spurred him to do research, and led him to write the book was a woman who came to him for counseling



who still had "the tattoo" on her arm. She wasn't coming to him because she was depressed, she was needing his help because her depressed, negative, self-piteous, and complaining family thought she was crazy for not being depressed about what she went through. Mind you, it is not that this woman never cried, or didn't still have nightmares from the memories. It was that she had been able to "re-frame and grow a new brain" to the point that she could bless the experience because of how precious life with all its warts had become to her. Martin Luther King quoted Friedrich Nietzsche by saying,

"What doesn't kill me [you] makes me [you] stronger," and these guys were right.

Turns out, we have an internal pharmacy that actually produces highly addictive chemicals, and joy is one of them. As believers we are told that "the joy of the Lord is my strength," but we have to access it, and *Super Joy* helps to do just that.

*Ali Elizabeth Turner*

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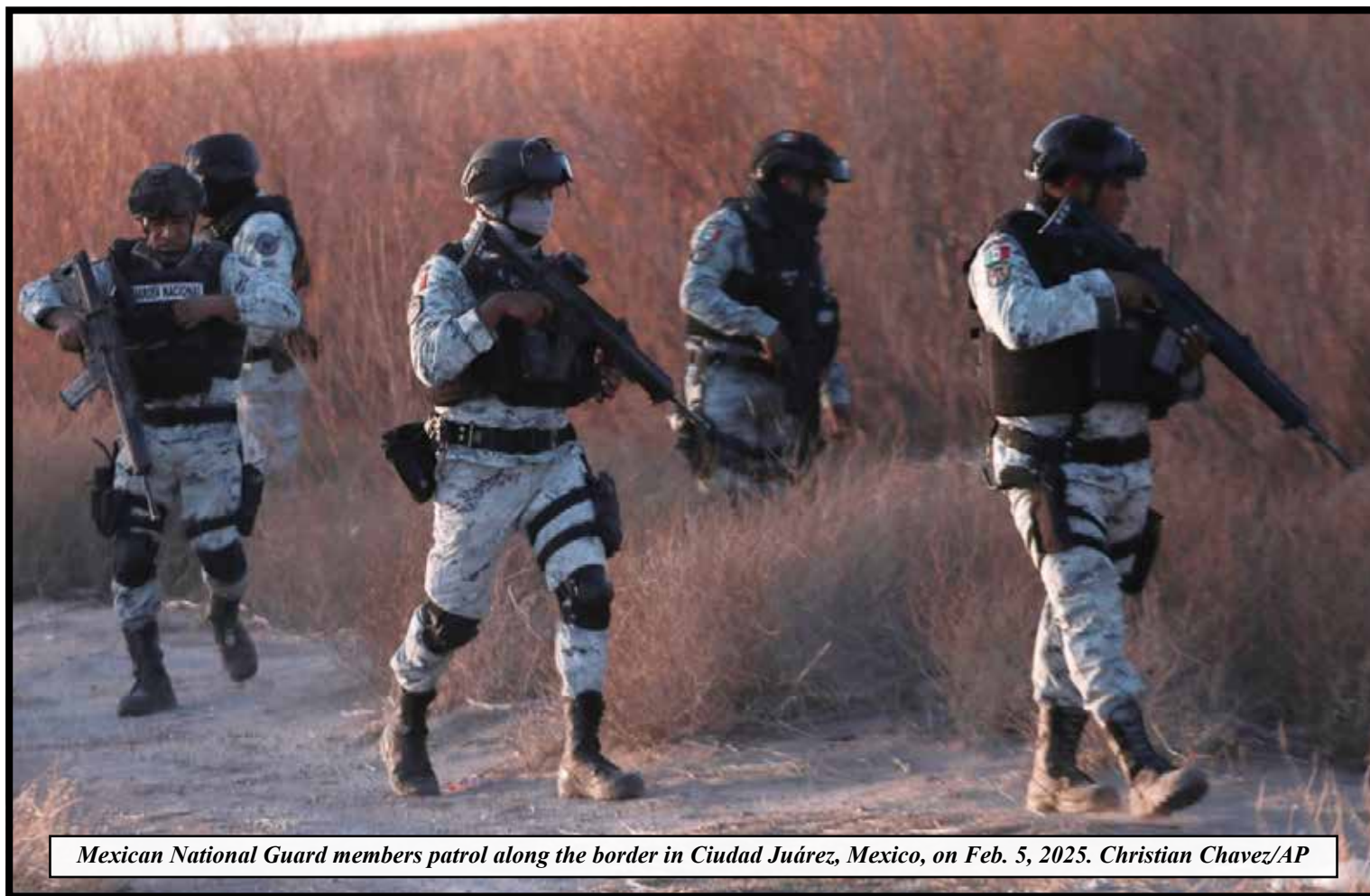
# Mexican National Guard On The Mexican National Border



by Ali Elizabeth Turner

When Steve and I lived and worked at an orphanage in Ciudad Juárez from 1998-2000, there was talk often amongst fellow missionaries about the prospect of having the military in Mexico actually get involved in stemming the tide of drugs and illegal border crossings into El Paso, just across the river. We lived in Anapra, located on the far northwest part of town. It was essentially where the American states of Texas and New Mexico, along with the Mexican state of Chihuahua, intersected with each other, and we literally watched people cross the orphanage property in order to “make it” to the other side.

It seemed like deploying troops to stem the drug tide was a logical move for a country to make with its most powerful ally. However, because everyone knew that the cartel was in bed with the Juárez police, the federales, and the military, it also seemed like a pipe dream. While we certainly were not military



Mexican National Guard members patrol along the border in Ciudad Juárez, Mexico, on Feb. 5, 2025. Christian Chavez/AP

strategists, it also seemed reasonable to us to have American National Guard units do rotations on the border on the El Paso side, and this was a quarter of a century ago. Now this has become a reality.

The orphanage was also located 15 kilometers away from a cartel ranch where in the late ‘90s, 22 bodies of people murdered by the cartel were exhumed by American and Mexican agencies, and we drove past that ranch every time we entered the U.S. at the Santa Teresa border crossing into New Mexico. Needless to say, each time we did so, we were highly motivated to pray, and on country dirt roads, there were no speed limits. I will freely admit that I kicked up my fair share of dust while driving like a bat-out-of-a-very-hot-place-that-you-don’t-want-to-occupy-even-for-a-second. If there is one thing that has surprised me since President Trump was sworn in

for his second term, it is to watch things that appeared to be so entrenched start to unravel and wrinkle like a cheap suit. Only a few months ago recruitment levels in our military were at dangerously low levels, even with unprecedented incentives including gender reassignment surgery, which can cost anywhere from \$6900 to \$140,000. In under two months, recruitment quotas have been met handily, and once again it is because young men and women want to serve and protect their country for that reason alone. So, recently I cheered inside when I saw pictures of the Mexican National Guard actually working the border on the Juárez side, and all that it took was the

threat of tariffs to get them there within the space of 72 hours. What was their operational focus? Fentanyl. The White House made a statement saying, “Last fiscal year, Customs and Border Protection (CBP) apprehended more than 21,000 pounds of fentanyl at our borders, enough fentanyl to kill more than 4 billion people.” FOUR BILLION PEOPLE. At this point, there is a plan to deploy 1,650 of the Mexican NG to Juárez, and I am quite sure the cartel will not just “go quietly into that good night.” Their viciousness is legendary, and the people on both sides of the border are going to need our prayers as this war on narco-terrorism is fought.

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# The “I Am”

by Donna Clark



About three years ago, I decided that my husband and I needed a furry companion. It took a few months of convincing my hubby that this was just what we needed, and after selling him on the idea, we welcomed Embers, a dog rescue from Kentucky. Not really sure what breed she was, we consulted Google. From that world of “perfectly precise information,” we determined she is a Nova Scotia Duck Tolling Retriever. I had never heard of such; however, I should have paid close attention to the retriever blood line.

One night before Ember’s bedtime, I clipped on her leash and outside we went for her potty time. As soon as I opened the door to the great outer world, she bolted for some critter she had spotted in the back yard of our country home. The hunt was on and she was in Heaven! Unfortunately, I was not. I found myself face planted on the ground. I had to take a few seconds just to make sure all my limbs were still intact, and after getting back up on my feet, I was so thankful to know I still had all my teeth, my nose was in the correct place, and thanks to the good Lord, my glasses even survived. I was not expecting that terrifying moment; if I had known what was going to happen, I would have prepared myself. A funny story about me and my dog, but a parallel to our lives.

Out of nowhere, completely unexpected, we can find ourselves pulled down, face planted on the ground, life has hit and hit hard. We assess the damage and now

we wonder how, or even if, we will survive the traumatic event. It can be the death of someone we love or the death of a marriage. It can be words spoken from an unbridled tongue. The loss of a job, a friend, a status, a false accusation, a betrayal. Whatever caused us to hit the ground, the unexpected blow that came from out of nowhere has left us hurt and damaged. We emerge from the blow we’ve taken with a feeling that all the wind has been knocked out of our sails. The pain is real and can’t be denied. The question now is how do we deal, how do we recover from such a traumatic event?

I’ve experienced pain from the unexpected. I’ve tried to make sense of it all, determine a source, a reason, in hopes of fixing what is broken, but I have found

that there are situations that seem to come with no explanation. One thing I have found though, my ability to survive the unexpected will be according to what I am anchored to. In this life there are many things – finances, career opportunities, social status, friends, or family that we can anchor ourselves to. But in the times of dire need and crippling circumstances, those things will not give us the security we long for.

One thing that is constant in the midst of the chaos that is taking place in mine and your life right now is that 'God is.' No that wasn't a typo. God is. That's the statement. This is one truth on which we can rely, that the all-powerful God is still every bit God. Still faithful, still mighty, still all-knowing, still God. The all-sufficient God who in-

troduced himself to Moses as I AM in Exodus 3:14 still is. When God said, “I am who I am,” that pretty much summed it all up.

No matter the situation, crisis, pain, our God is still able to hold us, protect us, and strengthen us. He never leaves and He never forsakes. I’ve prayed for pain to go away immediately, to lay my head down one night and the next morning wake to birds singing and all would be right with the world, but unfortunately it rarely happens that way. However, the process, moving through the difficulty, as long as I stayed anchored to God and His word, only allows me to learn more about Him, grow in my faith in Him, and receive strength from Him. I tell God often He is my best friend. There is no one else that sees me and

knows me, loves me and cares for me as He does. And He can be the same best friend for you in your time of hurt and need, if you’ll allow Him to be. He can be your “I am.”

As you go about your day, be encouraged by this scripture: "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. Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable -- if anything is excellent or praiseworthy -- think about such things" (Philippians 4:6-8).

- Donna



# 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](http://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

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7161 US-431, Owens Cross Roads, AL 35763

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

## 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.

## Coffee Call March 1

Alabama Veteran's Museum, 100 Pryor St W, Athens, AL. Veterans and their families are invited for breakfast and fellowship from 8:00am - 9:30am. at the Alabama Veterans Museum and Archive. 256-771-7578.

## Limestone County Master Gardeners Presents Saturday Gardening Workshop Vegetable Gardening 101 March 15

10am. Introduction to small-scale, in-ground vegetable gardening. Topics include: soil preparation & fertility, planting timelines for North Alabama, transplants & direct

seeding, insect & disease management, succession planting and more. Hands-on opportunity to start a small number of vegetable seeds for transplant. Taught by Holt Akers-Campbell, Regional Extension Agent. The workshop will be held at the Limestone County Extension Office, 1109 W. Market Street, Athens, AL. Register at <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/70A0849ABA96-54963224-vegetable>. FREE and Open to the Public

## National Walking Week Apr 1 - 7

Hosted by AVA America's Walking Club is a great time to get out and about on Athens-Limestone's trails, tracks and treks including the AVA Athens Historic Volksmarch (you can explore trail options more here) to explore and take steps to benefit your heart, mind and spirit. Trail brochures are available at the Athens-Limestone Visitors Center 100 North Beaty Street in Athens Monday-Friday from 8:00AM-5:00PM and a selection of guest favorites are available on the porch in the covered boxes year-round.

## 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](http://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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# What Makes Ronnie Roll

## *Dan, Millie, A Storm, Some Snow, And Spring*

by Ali Elizabeth Turner



Because City Hall was going to be closed on President's Day, two weeks ago we had planned on meeting on Wednesday the 19th. However, everything from yet another tornado followed by some snowfall and just a bit of COVID tossed in made actually getting a chance to do any interview at all a bit dicey. Thanks to Alexander Graham Bell's wondrous invention patented in 1876, we prevailed. The following is our crazy quilt of topics, with sorrows mixed in with celebrations.

Mayor Ronnie had been conquering COVID, and after five days of being under the weather while the weather was under itself, he was finally back in the office.

With regard to the tornado, we sent utilities crews to Tuscumbia.

"That's what we do. They help us, we help them," said the mayor. With regard to the snow, the mayor said, "Our guys got out early, and streets and roads are looking good. I have been out and about, and we are adjusting to the weather. It's winter in Alabama," he chuckled.

"I went out and put bird seed in the feeders, and the buttercups had come up," said the mayor. I told him that they always cheer me up. The weather can be pitching a fit, and winter and spring seem to be locked in mortal combat, but the buttercups, (or daffodils, as they are known in some parts) quietly bring their cheer and hope that spring will once again triumph. "Check on your neighbors, and we hope and pray that everyone is all right," he said. He also mentioned that he

was really looking forward to getting his energy back.

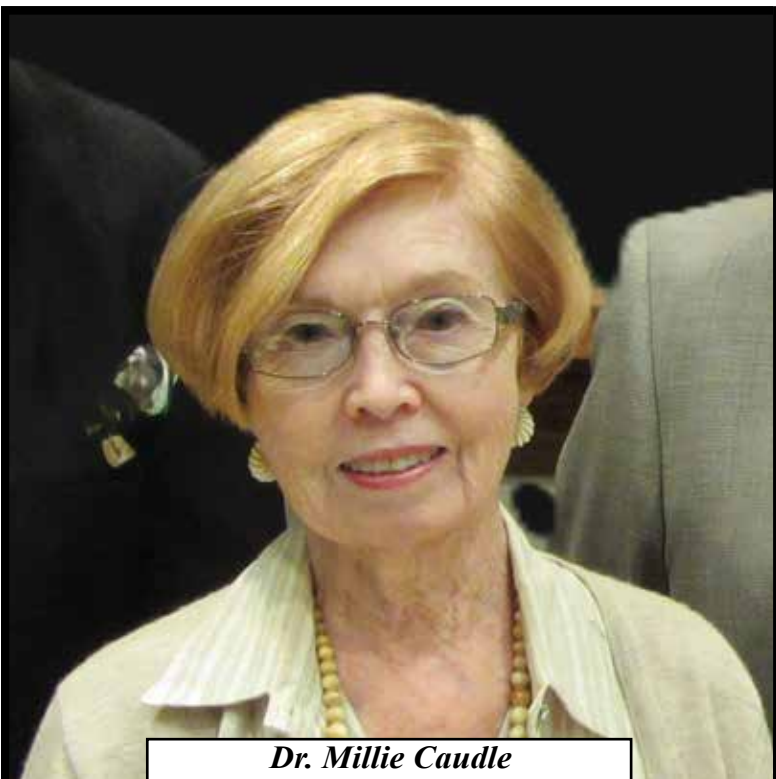
There had been some sad passing of two of Ronnie's dear friends, Dan Havely and Dr. Millie Caudle. Before Dan was ever Athens's beloved band director, he and Ronnie had gone to UNA together when it was still known as Florence State College. This was before Ronnie went to Vietnam, and he used to listen to Dan play "gigs" all over. "He would play, and I would listen. He played horn, and somehow the horns of the '50s and '60s sounded so good. I am guessing in his career, at least a thousand kids passed through, and he was so well thought of by the kids and the parents. He was a good drill sergeant," said Ronnie. "They named



a practice field at the high school stadium after him," he added. Dan Havely's career as a musician spanned over a half century.

Dr. Millie Caudle arrived in Athens from Mississippi in 1946. As a sixteen-year-old, she

attended Athens College, got her degree in history, and went on to get a Ph.D. from the University of Alabama. She taught "everywhere," and became the head of the history department at Athens State University. She served with Mayor Ronnie on the City Council from 2006-2012. Millie was a lovely force to be reckoned with, and had a passion for history, libraries, historical trees and dwellings, and of course, learning. Ronnie said, "She was so bright and sharp, so well educated. She was really, really, a Southern lady... a Southern. Classic. Character." He had inverted the order of our city slogan to describe his friend, and then he let me know that he needed to "get to gettin'." So, we did what we always do, and that was to pray. And then it was time for Ronnie to roll.



**Dr. Millie Caudle**  
1930 - 2025



**Dan Havely**  
1944 - 2025



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# **Tennessee Valley Spotlight**

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# Captain's Log

## Grass Stained Victory

by Brenda Wilkerson

For the past few days as I drive within eyeshot of his house, Isaiah's uncle throws the football from the front porch, with Isaiah (my teddy bear, tender-hearted football player) running to catch it before he reaches his designated area to wait for me.

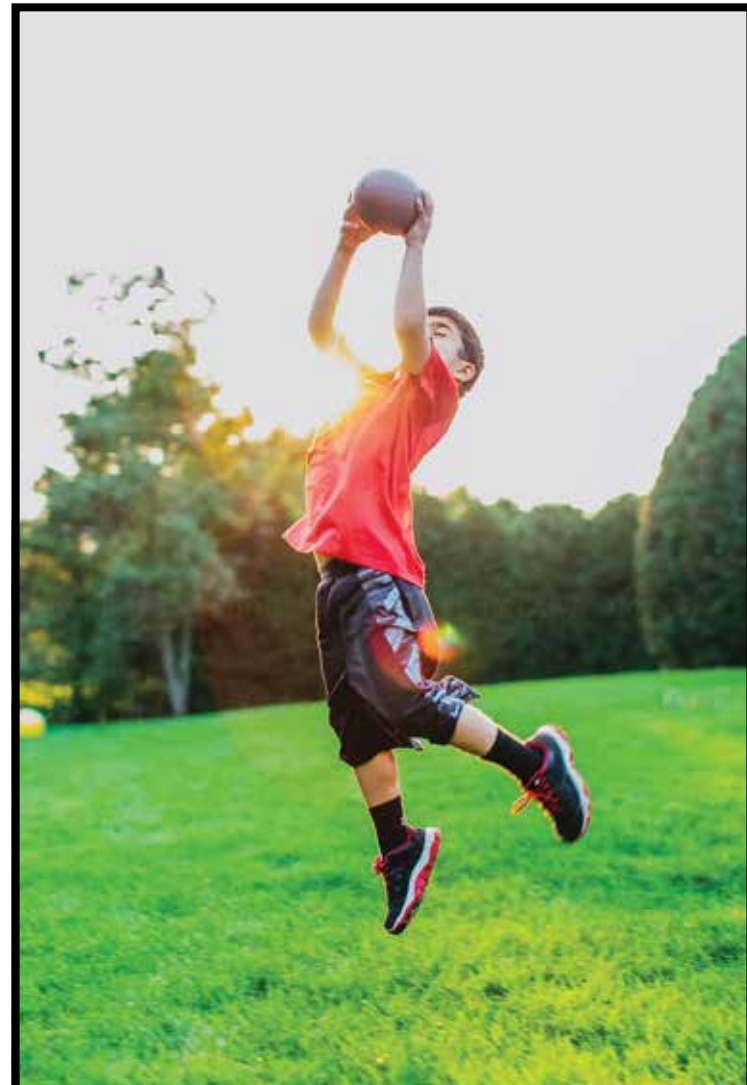
The first day, he caught it but fell backwards, leaving a skinned place on his knee and a wet spot on his back. Oh, I cheered his bravery for

trying and gave him a "10" for the best fall. Day 2, he tried even harder for us, and this time he caught it and tumbled forward. There was no bodily injury or need for a Band-Aid, but his shirt had gained another wet grass stain. Again, we absolutely cheered the bravery and his full body attempt for us when he climbed aboard.

Then we came up with a plan. Isaiah was to leave

his backpack at the bus stop area instead of wearing it, to give him better movement and some freedom from added weight. Day 3, as I was approaching, I saw his backpack at the bus stop. It's GO TIME, ladies and gentleman!!! Mr. Uncle threw the football from the front porch... somehow my brain watched in slow motion as the football was in the air. Isaiah caught the football...BUT, could. he. stay. on. his. feet?! We all watched as he bobbled and struggled to keep his feet under him. Yes, YES!! He did it!!! As he threw the football back to Mr. Uncle on the front porch, he slung his backpack over one shoulder with a smirk and waited for the lights of bus, the squeak of the brakes, and the yellow double doors to open...then he proudly floated up the steep steps and into his seat. We cheered; oh, we celebrated his tenacity to try and fail before getting it right.

My friend, let me encourage you today that you WILL fail, sometimes more than you succeed. We will get skinned knees and grass stains -- many times for all to see. Press on friend, PRESS ON!! Say your prayers to the One who knows you best and who will one day announce for all to hear, "Well done." The victory, sweet victory, is worth the risk to try, and fail -- again and again and again...



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## Slinkard On Success

# “D” Is For Determination

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)*



We are to the letter “D” and our word is Determination; through this word, we can unlock our full potential. Determination is the fuel that drives success, the grit that pushes you forward when obstacles arise, and the resilience that keeps you going when you feel like giving up. Whether you are striving for personal growth, career advancement, or a healthier lifestyle, determination is the key ingredient that separates those who achieve their dreams from those who settle for less.

Determination is not a personality trait you are born with -- it is a skill you can develop. It is a skill you can strengthen, and your determination can be applied to every aspect of your life – if you are willing to commit to this.

A determined mind thrives in a clear direction, when we can appropriately set goals and expectations for our lives. Without a goal, it is easy to drift aimlessly, lacking the drive to push through challenges. Take time to define what you want. Is it a promotion? A healthier body? A stronger mindset? Be specific about your goals, write them down, and set deadlines. The clearer your goal, the stronger your determination to achieve it. I want to encourage you to write down three goals you want to achieve in the next six months. Break

them down into smaller milestones to track your progress.

In life, challenges and failures are inevitably going to happen, but determined people see them as steppingstones rather than roadblocks. When you encounter setbacks, remind yourself that every failure is a lesson in disguise. Resilience is not about never falling; it is about getting up every time you do. The next time you face a setback, ask yourself, “What can I learn from this?” Too many people dwell on disappointment; instead of this, we need to focus on how you can improve and move forward.

Determination is not about feeling motivated all the time -- it is about being disciplined even when motivation fades. Successful people do not rely on fleeting emotions to get things done; they create routines and habits that keep them moving forward. To keep the momentum moving forward, identify one habit that aligns with your goal and commit to it daily. Whether it is waking up earlier, exercising, or reading for self-improvement, consistency will build your discipline muscle.

We become those we hang around with, and it has been said, “Show me your friends and I will show you, your future.” The people around you influence

your mindset and determination. Negative, doubtful individuals can drain your energy, while positive, driven people can inspire and uplift you. Choose your circle wisely and seek out those who encourage you to grow. It is important for us to evaluate the relationships we have in our lives. Spend more time with people who challenge and inspire you, and limit interactions with those who bring negativity into your life.

Your mind is a powerful tool. When you visualize yourself achieving your goal, your brain starts to believe it is possible. This mental rehearsal increases confidence and strengthens your determination to take action. What would happen if

you would spend a few minutes each day visualizing your success? If you can see yourself reaching your goals, really feeling the emotions of accomplishment, and letting that vision fuel your daily efforts, you will notice a change in your life.

True determination means staying committed even when things get tough. There will be days when you feel like giving up, but remember why you started in the first place. Your “why” is the anchor that keeps you going. I recommend you write down your reason for pursuing your goal. When you feel discouraged, read it aloud to remind yourself of your purpose.

Determination is not

about being the smartest, the strongest, or the most talented -- it is about refusing to quit. It is about pushing forward, one step at a time, no matter how hard the journey gets. As you apply these principles, you will find that determination is not just a mindset, it is a way of life. And when you embrace it fully, there is no limit to what you can achieve.

We have one shot at life and we need to make the most of each day. We cannot get back yesterday and we must be present in the moment. When it comes to your dreams and goals, start today. Set your goals, stay disciplined, and never back down. Your future self will thank you.





Clean, Green And Beautiful

# Takin' Care Of Business

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

Are you looking for something to do this spring? From litter clean-ups to a night on the town, we have you covered! We have a very busy spring planned, and we hope that we will see you all somewhere! As the (very hopefully) warmer weather approaches, we all need some time outdoors to soak up some sunshine.

We'll kick off the season with the United Pest and Turf annual Ardmore Spring Clean! Toby Thomas, his family and wonderful team do a fantastic job of planning this cleanup each spring, and we can't thank them enough. Despite being cold and very wet last year, the volunteers still managed to remove 1,380 pounds of litter and debris from alongside Ardmore's roadways. I'd say we are due for a nice, sunny cleanup this year, so join us March 8 at 8 a.m. in the Jones Drug parking lot for breakfast, supplies, and directions. This is a great opportunity to get out and show Ardmore some love!

We're literally rolling the dice with the next one -- "Bet on a Beautiful Limestone" casino night fundraiser on March 15! Come walk on the red carpet and enjoy a night of good food, good music, and some Vegas fun. We'll have plenty of fun for everyone, and a drawing for some amazing prizes that have been generously donated by Limestone County busi-



nesses. The tickets are \$75 each and they include food, one drink, and \$100 of funny money! For a small donation, you can get additional funny money. Tickets are limited, so stop by the KALB office and get yours soon!

On March 29, we will have the TVA Tennessee River Trash Attack. This will be my 3rd Tennessee River cleanup, with the first two yielding 11,220 pounds of trash from the same three roads -- Cowford, Hatchett Ridge, and Dairy Roads. Once the ground dries a bit, Derrick Gatlin and I will scout out the roads and find the ones that need the most work, but I have a feeling we will unfortunately be in (or close to) the same spots. We will meet at 8 a.m. for breakfast, supplies, and instructions. TVA will provide a gift for volunteers to say thank you!

Next up is the TVA Joann

Christopher Memorial Elk River Trash Attack! Join us on April 12 to help us clean up the Elk River. Last year, we had a HUGE group of volunteers, and we're hoping to top it this year. I think that Commissioner Townsend and I have found some spots that need lots of work. Maybe we can top Lukas Geiger's 27-tire haul from earlier this year. I'll announce a definite meeting location soon, but we will begin at 8 a.m. We'll have the usual -- breakfast, supplies, instructions, and a gift from TVA!

Shaking things up again, next up is the Marbut's Bend Guided Nature Walk and the 2025 EARTH DAY EXPO. We'll be back at Marbut's Bend and Athens State University's Carter Gym on April 26! This are our favorite events every year, and we are so proud to be able to offer them to Limestone County for free! Start

out the morning at Marbut's Bend at 7:30 a.m. for a guided nature walk through this hidden gem. Damien Simbeck, a TVA expert, will guide you around the beautiful trails and will answer almost any question about the local wildlife and plant life that you can think of. The Earth Day Expo begins at 10 a.m. and we'll be hoping until 3! We'll have plenty of exhibits and vendors for all ages. We will have some exciting new things this year, and we can't wait to tell you more!

To wind down the marathon, we'll have the an-

nual Household Hazardous Waste Collection on May 17. Thanks to the Limestone County Commission, we are able to host this event every spring. This is the only way to dispose of harmful household chemicals in Limestone County, and it is free to all residents! We will accept all of the usuals again this year; hopefully we will all have the opportunity to get some spring cleaning done and have our vehicles loaded! I'll release more detailed lists closer to time.



Become a Fan



(256) 233-8000

KALBCares@gmail.com

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Cooking with Anna

# My Identity In Christ: *God Says I Am Chosen*

by Anna Hamilton

*This week I am continuing my series on my identity in Christ. Colossians 3:12 says, "Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience." Everyone is searching for a place where they belong. We all want to know our purpose in this world.*

*I have found myself, over my lifetime, seeking purpose and attention from worldly things. Things like my work, family, husband, church, and even social*

*media. Every time I was passed over for a promotion at work, I would be so disappointed. If my parents didn't feel like I made the correct choice, I felt like I had let them down. When my husband forgets to say that I'm pretty, I begin to feel ugly.*

*Putting my identity in earthly things was a constant disappointment. Who I was, my identity, was easily shaken because I tried to define who I was with things in this imperfect and unstable world. Everything in this world will pass away. Everyone in this world will disappoint you at some point*

*continued on page 23*

## Chicken Alfredo Zucchini Boats

### **Ingredients:**

- 2 medium zucchini, sliced lengthwise and the center removed*
- 3 cups cooked chicken, diced*
- 1 jar Alfredo sauce or 1 jar of marinara sauce*
- 1 cup shredded mozzarella cheese, divided*
- 1 tsp Italian seasoning*
- Salt and pepper to taste*

### **Directions:**

*Preheat oven to 400 degrees.*

*Cut zucchini in half and scoop out the center of each half to create little boats. Place zucchini boats in a casserole dish.*

*In a large bowl, add the cooked, diced chicken, Alfredo sauce (or marinara), half of the*



*mozzarella, Italian seasoning, and salt and pepper. Spoon mixture into the zucchini boats. Top with the remaining mozzarella cheese.*

*Bake 20 to 25 minutes, or until zucchini is fork tender. Sprinkle with Parmesan cheese if desired.*

# Your Health Matters - *And We're Here To Help At Crossfit Athens*

by Nick Niedzwiecki - Owner, CrossFit Athens



In a town like ours, we take care of our own. We show up for each other -- at Friday night football, church on Sunday, and when a neighbor needs a hand. But too often, we put our own health on the back burner.

If you've been feeling tired, sluggish, or frustrated with your health, you're not alone. Many people in our community struggle with weight, energy levels, and preventable health issues. Maybe you've tried to make changes before but got overwhelmed. Maybe you feel like it's too late.

I want you to know this: It's never too late, and you don't have to do it alone.

## A Different Kind of Gym - A Place Where You Belong

At CrossFit Athens, we believe that fitness isn't just about looking better -- it's about living better. It's about having the energy to play with your kids or grandkids, the strength to carry your groceries without getting winded, and the confidence to take on whatever life throws your way.

And here's the best part: You don't need to be in shape to start.

That's right -- whether you haven't worked out in years or you're already active, our coaches meet you exactly where you are. Every movement can be adjusted to your fitness level, and you'll never be left guessing what to do.

## Why CrossFit Athens Works

Unlike big-box gyms where you walk in and don't know where to start, we guide you every step of the way. Here's what makes CrossFit Athens different:

- **Expert Coaching:** You're not just thrown on a treadmill. Our coaches show you how to move safely and effectively, so you get results without injuries.
- **A Supportive Commu-**

nity: No judgment, no egos -- just real people cheering you on. Whether it's your first workout or your hundredth, you'll feel like you belong.

• **Workouts That Fit Your Level:** Everything is scalable. Can't do a push-up? We'll modify it. Never lifted weights? We'll teach you. No matter your starting point, we help you progress.

• **Results That Last:** This isn't a quick-fix fad. It's a proven way to build

strength, endurance, and confidence that carries over into your everyday life.

## Don't Wait for 'Some-day' - Start Today

If you've been waiting for the "right time" to get healthy, this is it. One year from now, you could still be stuck in the same cycle, or you could feel stronger, more energetic, and more in control of your health than ever before.

Which version of you do

you want?

Come try a free class at CrossFit Athens and see for yourself. No pressure, no expectations—just a chance to move, feel good, and take the first step toward a healthier you.

You don't have to do this alone. We're here to help.

Call 256-262-7884 or visit [www.CrossFitAthens.com](http://www.CrossFitAthens.com) to sign up for a free class today.

Your future self will thank you.



# Suspended In Air(ports)

by Stephanie Reynolds, Athens-Limestone Tourism Association



“Aww man, I’m sorry, Babe...” The Wonder Sweetie confessed with an “I-messed-up-and-feel-terrible-please-don’t-be-mad” tone I could hear over the phone.

He was buying tickets for me to come back home from Colorado after a sorrowful, but not unexpected, funeral. Flying to and from Alaska almost invariably entails a layover at SeaTac but usually not the twelve-hour layover that he had missed somehow when making the reservations for me.

Lest you think I am throwing my husband under a whole fleet of Greyhounds, let me say that The Wonder Sweetie is a logistical master. In fact, that was his job—logistics. He is brilliant and thorough and conscientious...and also slightly dyslexic.

“It’s okay, Babe, no worries,” I said and meant it. Our family had been having a really rough summer. We were all struggling and this was a small thing.

I will spare you the details of my time in Denver, but between heartache and altitude sickness, I was “done fer.” By the time I landed in Seattle though, time, water, and a pressurized cabin helped, and I was able to even get a little bit excited about my layover. I had twelve hours to spend in an airport before I could go home. What to do to pass the time by myself among strangers? Ex-

plore the airport! I winked at a hastily made budget and began my mini-adventure.

I took my time visiting the shops like I was at a mall. I spent too much money on gifts, but not TOO too much money. Just enough “too much money” to feel like a splurge for my family without a sick feeling in my tummy about the bill.

I got my nails done. I never get my nails done, but it seemed the perfect time. Coat after coat of the most dramatic red nail polish I had ever seen turned my nails from “weary” to “WOW!” from “High Stress” to “High Style.” The rest of me might look like I was rode hard and put up wet, but my nails looked like I was ready to go to the poshest gala of the season. I bought two bottles of nail polish and kept them for years, even after they had gotten thick and gummy from time and air.

I lingered over an overpriced but delicious pizza whilst watching the sun set through giant glass windows, feeling the same wash of melancholy I have always felt at sunset since I was a kid. After a summer filled with wringing and wrenching of my emotions, at least that felt exactly the same.

And I watched people. When I got tired of watching people in one section of the airport, I watched people in another section. Airports are such amazing, almost-physics-breaking places. On the surface they are merely

a transportation hub, a literal means to a topographical end, but one doesn’t have to be a philosopher to break through the manifest surface to the meaning underneath. Airports are a bubble, a waypoint, a hesitation between travel. Airports link people to the blue of their dreams or the clouds of their fears. Airports (and the planes that come to then leave them) impassively, calmly, expect you to drop control of your immediate future, to leave your life in the hands of skilled pilots, smiling flight attendants, and authoritative (literal) gatekeepers.

They are a place of Almost But Not Yet for every person—“I am ALMOST to the convention...I am ALMOST on vacation...I am NOT YET on the plane...I am NOT YET home.”

Travelers, some exhausted, some excited, provid-



ed a constantly evolving visual of life-in-suspension like beads in a lava lamp. Slowly weaving around other beads. Drifting...but not outside security. Checked in but not boarding. Restless and resting. Almost and Not Yet.

It would be tempting to fret about being away from my family, to be frustrated and worn thin from the events of the day, week, season, but I truly think that it was a blessing, a gift just for me. I was given a twelve-hour bubble of timeless,

weightless, “enclosed but not trapped.” I didn’t have to cry or not cry, laugh or not laugh, talk or not talk.

I was free to roam the halls of the concourse and of my heart. To process, to linger, to ponder, to pray.

Eventually, my gatekeeper started making her cheerful boarding announcements. I shuffled into line with my fellow beads and wound my way through the stars for home, incredibly thankful to the Lord for a husband with a touch of dyslexia.



# St. Paddy's At ATH Ale: Save The Best 'Til Last

by Ali Elizabeth Turner

*continued from page 1*

A bit of time passed, a friend of Bill's got wind of the fact that Athens Alehouse owners Ken and Lori Hill were open to the idea of hiring a chef, and a meeting was set up. Bill told Ken and Lori, "I'd like to help you with this," and the rest is becoming Athens Alehouse history. I actually had the chance to meet Bill on his first day of work back in December, and his enthusiasm to bring his expertise to an already

successful and unique venue was contagious. Bill has the strong feeling that he was born to do what he's doing, and that is causing food to be an art form as well as a welcome addition to any place he works.

Speaking of work, Bill has been a chef in the Huntsville/Decatur area since 1996. He has been a part of Tortellini's, Heidelberg, Chop House, 801 Franklin, Below the Radar, the Railyard, and more. During COVID he was intensely involved in

caring for the health of a family member, and is glad to be back in the kitchen. Having a chef at ATH Ale has made the journey easier for the Hills, and Chef Bill enjoys the idea of the food now served as being "lighter, brighter, seasonally-focused, fresher, and NOT from California," he said with a chuckle. There is no desire on his part to radically change what ATH Ale regulars have come to love and expect, just give some other options to explore from time to time.



Bill wants to have five menus a year. They correspond to winter, spring, early summer,

late summer, and fall. "We also have wonderful events planned," he said. They just had a hugely successful Valentine's Day celebration, and are gearing up for Saint Patrick's Day. On Saturday, March 15, Athens Alehouse & Cellar will "scrap the whole menu" and serve traditional Irish food. There will be Irish potato stew, shepherd's pie, egg rolls with lamb, "bangers and mash" (which is the British term for sausages and mashed potatoes), Reubens, and for dessert there will be grasshopper pie, cheesecake, and a Guinness chocolate cake with a light cream cheese frosting. For St. Paddy's Day, the celebratory beverages will be Guinness, Harp Lager, and Hi Wire Irish Cream Stout. ATH Ale will also be the last stop on the St. Patrick's Day







# ATHENS ALEHOUSE & CELLAR

111 WASHINGTON STREET  
ATHENS, ALABAMA

Hours: Tue - Thurs 4-9pm  
Fri 4-10pm • Sat 2-10pm

FACEBOOK: @ATHENSALEHOUSE



him focused on what he needed to be doing. At his own home, his favorite pan is a cast iron skillet that he inherited. He also is experienced in making sourdough bread, and once worked in a place that used a starter that was over 100 years old. He had a bit of culinary training at a tech school, but the things that have “made” his career have been learning from family, along with on-the-job training. Come celebrate St. Patrick’s Day and get a literal taste of carefully selected and authentically prepared Irish food in a family-

friendly place that even has old-fashioned rope swings outside for all to enjoy; Athens Alehouse & Cellar on the Limestone County Courthouse Square.

## Athens Alehouse & Cellar

113 South Marion Street  
Athens, AL 35611

Hours: Tue-Thur 11-9,  
Fri-Sat 11-10

Closed Sunday and Monday

Facebook:  
Athens Alehouse & Cellar  
athensalehouse@gmail.com

Pub Crawl, and Bill is confident that “the best is being saved ‘til last.”

Another new event that is coming to Athens Alehouse will be a once-a-month brunch on a Saturday. The first one will be held from 10 a.m. to noon on Saturday, March 1, two weeks before St. Paddy’s. There will be pancakes made from scratch, shrimp and grits, and three types of egg-based breakfast sandwiches.

Bill grew up in his grandmother’s authentic Sicilian kitchen and knows the secrets that make for great food of all kinds. In her honor, Bill sports tattoos on his right arm that are exact replicas of her long handled wooden spoon and her

meat cleaver. He told me with great affection that she used to tap him between the eyes with her wooden spoon to get his attention and get



# The Redemptive Journey Of St. Moses The Black: *Lessons In Forgiveness And Humility*

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



St. Moses the Black, also known as Moses the Strong or Moses the Ethiopian, is an often-overlooked figure in religious history and a powerful example of early African contributions to Christianity. Born in the 4th century, Moses began his life as a servant and later became a leader of a notorious gang of bandits. His story took a remarkable turn when he sought refuge in a monastery to escape the authorities. Immersed in monastic life and guided spiritually by the monks, Moses underwent a profound transformation. He renounced his violent past, embraced Christianity, and devoted his life to prayer, repentance, and service. Rising to prominence as a monk and eventually a revered church father, St. Moses stands as a testament to redemption, faith, and the significant role of Africans in the early Christian Church.

As a church father, St. Moses contributed significantly to the teachings and spirituality of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church. His life embodied the power of repentance and redemption, proving that no one is beyond the reach of God's grace. Moses also became a spiritual guide and mentor to many monks in the Skete Monastery in Egypt, where his wisdom, humility, and deep faith profound-

ly impacted those around him. His teachings emphasized forgiveness, self-discipline, and the importance of examining one's heart regularly. His legacy as a spiritual leader continues to influence Christian thought within the Ethiopian Orthodox tradition and throughout the worldwide systems of Orthodoxy.

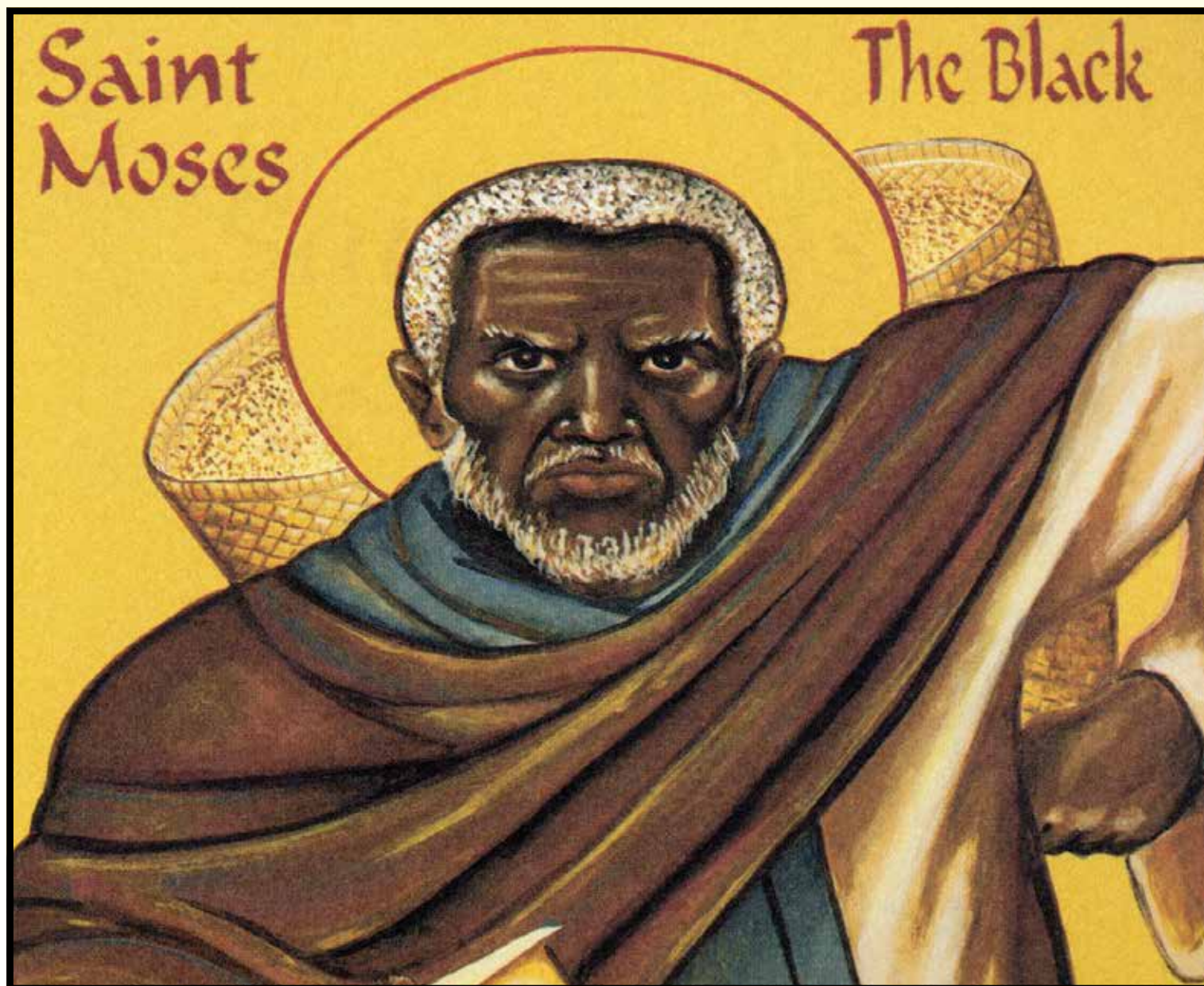
One of the most famous quotes attributed to St. Moses the Black is, "If the man does not keep himself from all imagin-

ings of evil, he will be consumed by them." This statement underscores his emphasis on self-discipline and the inner spiritual battle that every believer must undertake. Another powerful teaching of his states, "You fast, but Satan does not eat. You labor fervently, but Satan never sleeps. The only dimension with which you can outperform Satan is by acquiring humility, for Satan has no humility." These teachings highlight the

critical importance of forgiveness, humility, and self-mastery as central pillars of a righteous life. His life and words continue to serve as a guiding light for Christians seeking spiritual growth.

The lessons from St. Moses the Black's story are timeless and relevant to today's world. His transformation from a life of violence to one of peace and spiritual fulfillment is a powerful testament to the possibility of change and redemption. His em-

phasis on forgiveness challenges individuals to overcome grievances, fostering compassion and unity. Furthermore, his teachings on self-reflection and inner discipline serve as a reminder of the importance of personal responsibility in the spiritual life. By studying his life, modern believers can draw inspiration to persevere through struggles and strive toward a life guided by faith, humility, and love.



# Faith-Based Weight Loss: A Journey of Body and Spirit

by Jackie Warner

Career Development Facilitator

"Impact, Engage, Grow" Community Matters



Weight loss is a journey that often involves not only the body but also the mind and spirit. For many, integrating faith into their weight-loss efforts can provide the strength, motivation, and sense of purpose needed to achieve lasting results. Here's how you can make faith-based choices for weight loss:

**1. Seek Divine Guidance:** Turning to your faith for guidance can help you navigate the challenges of weight loss. Pray for strength, wisdom, and perseverance. Trust that your faith can provide the support you need to make healthy choices and stay committed to your goals.

**2. Honor Your Body as a Temple:** Many faith traditions teach that the body is a sacred temple. By adopting healthy eating and exercise habits, you honor and respect the body that has been entrusted to you. This perspective can motivate you to make choices that promote overall well-being.

**3. Practice Mindful Eating:** Faith-based mindfulness practices, such as prayer and meditation, can enhance your awareness of eating habits. Before meals, take a moment to express gratitude for the food you have and ask for the discipline to eat in a way that nourishes your body and soul.

**1 Corinthians 10:31 (NIV)** "So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God."

**Reflection:** Eating mindfully and choosing foods that

nourish your body is a way to honor and glorify God.

**Philippians 4:13 (NIV)** "I can do all this through him who gives me strength."

**Reflection:** Draw strength from your faith to make healthy eating choices and stay committed to your weight loss journey.

**1 Corinthians 6:19-20 (NIV)** "Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your bodies."

**Reflection:** Treat your body with respect by choosing foods that promote health and well-being.

**Galatians 5:22-23 (NIV)** "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness,

faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law."

**Reflection:** Practice self-control and mindfulness in your eating habits, guided by the fruits of the Spirit.

**Psalms 34:8 (NIV)** "Taste and see that the Lord is good; blessed is the one who takes refuge in him."

**Reflection:** Approach eating as a moment of gratitude and mindfulness, savoring the blessings provided by God.

**Proverbs 25:27 (NIV)** "It is not good to eat too much honey, nor is it honorable to search out matters that are too deep."

**Reflection:** Exercise moderation and wisdom in your eating habits, avoiding over-indulgence.

**Matthew 5:6 (NIV)** "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteous-

ness, for they will be filled."

**Reflection:** Seek spiritual fulfillment and nourishment, rather than solely focusing on physical hunger.

**4. Join a Faith-Based Support Group:** Connecting with others who share your faith can provide a sense of community and accountability. Consider joining a faith-based support group focused on healthy living. Sharing your journey with others can offer encouragement, motivation, and practical advice.

**5. Embrace the Power of Prayer:** Prayer can be a source of strength and motivation throughout your weight-loss journey. Pray for guidance in making healthy choices, for resilience in the face of challenges, and for the ability to stay focused on your goals. Consider incorporating prayer into your daily routine, such as before meals

or during exercise.

**6. Focus on Holistic Health:** Faith-based weight loss is about more than just shedding pounds. It's about achieving holistic health -- body, mind, and spirit. Strive to create a balanced and healthy lifestyle that nourishes all aspects of your being.

**7. Celebrate Small Victories:** Acknowledge and celebrate your progress, no matter how small. Recognize that each step forward is a testament to your commitment and faith. Celebrate your achievements with gratitude and joy.

**8. Reflect on Your Purpose:** Remember that your weight-loss journey is not just about physical appearance. It's about becoming the best version of yourself to fulfill your purpose in life. Reflect on how achieving better health can enable you to serve others and live out your faith more fully.

Choosing to make faith-based choices for weight loss can support you in finding strength, motivation, and a deeper sense of purpose on your journey. May your faith guide you towards a healthier and more fulfilling life.

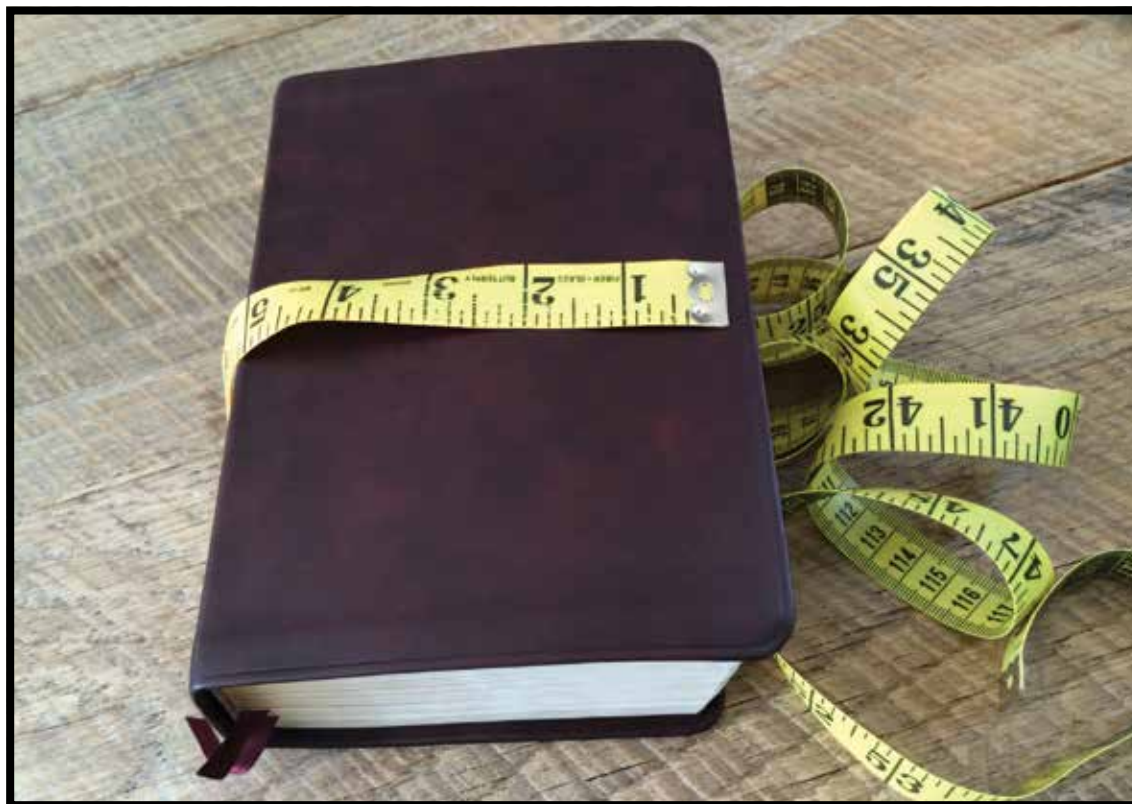
*Until Next Time, Be Sincere, Kind and Intentional*

Jackie Warner, Community Outreach Specialist

Email:

[thebridge.us@gmail.com](mailto:thebridge.us@gmail.com)

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



## H.E.A.L.E.R.

by Deb Kitchenmaster



Just curious...what thought or picture came across your mind as you read the caption, 'HEALER'? It has been said many times, in sundry ways, dating back to the beginning, the Bible is a book written by the hands of mere individuals who have entered into a love-based communication between themselves and their Creator. It is a book not read through the rational mind but a book read by the heart. And out of the heart flows ALL issues pertaining to life. An acronym for Bible could read, 'Believing Imagining Beyond Life's Experiences.' It's a book that encourages one to LOOK UP; after all, there's nothing new under the sun.

Another book of absolutes and Truth-telling is the book of NATURE, written

by God Himself. Have you ever considered the lilies in the field? How about counting stars at night, or sand in a desert or shoreline? What about the planting of a seed?

The horse, donkey, and mule are recorded in both books. The word 'horse' is referred to around 150 times in both Old and New Testaments of the Bible. During King Solomon's reign, there were horses in the military. Horses are often connected to some type of warfare. The spiritual symbol of 'horse' reflects freedom, power, and independence. Donkeys, on the other hand, symbolize the pursuit of peace. A man by the name of Balaam encountered a donkey he was riding on that talked to him. Imagine that! Kings rode on mules. People actually gave mules to King Solomon as

gifts. Whether a warhorse, in pursuit of peace or a gift to royalty, all have purpose and meaning.

Here's one more acronym -- H.E.A.L.E.R. Horses Express A Language Exemplifying Restoration. The Creator's language is faith. Faith comes by hearing, and faith works by love. Jesus is the author and finisher of your faith. Say "no" to anyone or anything who wants to put a saddle of law and performance on you. A horse's language is 'mirroring' or 'reflecting'; a horse simply reflects a clear image. "Mirror, mirror what am I seeing? Are the eyes of my understanding free from condemnation, fear, pride, shame, even ego?" To exemplify means to BE or GIVE an example of something. The clarification of this word described a ballerina. I quote, 'The grace and beauty of a ballerina dancing on stage; an exemplification of the principles of ballet itself.' In other words, she is a living example. A horse has been graced (gifted) by its Creator to bring alignment with restoration. Restoration is the action of returning something to a former owner, place, condition; an original, normal or unpaired condition.

Here are a couple of stories:  
#1 Slowly a car turned onto the long driveway that led up to the house. Five horses in the southeast corner of the pasture lifted their heads, and in single file peacefully trotted up to the carport area. By the time we adults were standing together on the porch, the vehicle that had arrived to pick up our visitor was at the carport.



As they remained in single file for motion, we watched as these five horses formed a figure-eight pattern right in front of our eyes in the northwest corner of the pasture, near the carport. "What are they doing?" I was asked. "I have no idea." I paused while observing the gracious movement of the horses, and then said, "Someone in that car must need this." Now, how in the world did these horses know that two young people, adopted as toddlers, were in that car? Come to find out the figure-eight pattern is called a cross-crawl configuration, and is used to "reset the internal thermostat." These horses, through their movement, gifted humanity with alignment to restoration from the trauma of abandonment that day. Go figure!

#2 Out of nowhere, the

horse began to limp on her left hind leg, and then gave me what I have come to call, "the Look!" I felt the urge to ask the handler to tell me about the horse's left side. Now, how did that horse KNOW, that as a little girl, the handler had been in a car accident and surgery on her left hip was required? The handler showed no physical indicators of a limp, but she had some left-over trauma on the inside, and that horse KNEW alignment to ORIGINAL DESIGN (restoration) was necessary. As soon as the handler told me the story, the horse stopped limping, and the handler, with joyful tears, told me that the trauma had lifted.

*Your NEIGHbor,  
Deb Kitchenmaster*

*horsinaround188@gmail.com*



# “No Free Lunch!”

by Phil Williams



Robert F. Kennedy Jr. was confirmed by the U.S. Senate to serve as the next Secretary of Health and Human Services. A Kennedy was brought back to the White House by a Republican. Amazing times indeed!

RFK Jr. has ambitious plans to save America's kids from an overmedicated, under-exercised, overly diagnosed, epidemic of fragility. I for one, am glad.

In a recent interview, RFK discussed changes to school lunches for kids. He strikes me as a guy who will thread that needle between what kids need and what they want. RFK seems to know that fitness and good health are found in a mix of have-to and want-to.

School lunches? Well, what's on the menu? You can put it on the plate but you can't make them eat it. A hungry kid is still a hungry kid whether from lack of food, or because the food was just awful. The least nutritious school lunch is the one not eaten.

My sense is that he is going to promote good health through good life choices, couched in a common-sense approach that mixes nutrition with exercise, play time, and more robust living.

Despite having just assumed his new role,

liberals immediately attempted to troll RFK before he had a chance to hang pictures in his new office, saying that Michelle Obama had tried to address school lunches and conservatives in America lost their minds. Well, that's a bit of dishonest revisionist history.

Obama lunches were unpalatable dry toast and pabulum. The multi-billion-dollar school lunch program championed by the former First Lady forced participating schools to make changes. But kids left the nasty, highly-rationed food on their trays and defaulted to snack machines in the hallway for Snickers and a Coke.

Obama lunches became the stuff of legend on social media with kids posting pictures of kibbles and bits their dogs wouldn't eat. Three cherry tomatoes and a celery stick, a spoon of high fiber meat paste on a whole wheat tortilla, and a skinny carton of watery skim milk. It was a failure from the word go. It was an agenda couched in a lunch program.

But the Biden administration took lunchroom manipulation to new heights. In 2022, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, which doles out all of the money for free and reduced lunches to schools around the nation, directed all state agencies and Food and Nutrition Act program operators to conform to new gender ideology

guidelines or lose their nutrition grants.

In essence, liberals thought nothing of kids having their lunch held hostage unless conformity on transgender ideology was achieved. Does that sound like a group of folks who care about kids?

There were decades of American kids eating square pizza, tater tots, and applesauce with a half-pint carton of whole milk. We drank from garden hoses, rode in the back of pickup trucks, ran in flat-bottom Keds, drank sugary Kool-Aid, and played outside until the street lights came on. We grew up strong, won wars, put a man on the moon, tore down the Iron Curtain, and revolutionized the world economy.

Yes, we had robust meals that we all liked. But we also had roughhousing, scheduled PE classes, patches for the Presidential Physical Fitness Test, after-school sports, and the madness of red rover in the parking lot.

It was always about how fast we could ride our bikes. How high we could climb in that big tree. Summers were barefoot, and loose change wasn't meant for saving – it was meant for running down to the corner store by yourself to buy a comic book and candy.

There were no cry rooms, no trigger words, no gender fluidity, and no month-long celebrations of one demograph-

ic over others. We were American kids living our best lives and the world was better for it.

But by God, we still won the Cold War.

To be sure, there are some things we shouldn't go back to. It would not have been uncommon back in 1975 for your dad to take a long drag off an unfiltered Camel and turn up the 8-track of Johnny Cash while your ten-year-old self sat in the front passenger seat with a loosely fitting lap seat belt while sucking down sugary root beer from a glass bottle.

I may or may not have just described my own life.

I can joke about this. But am I really joking? Good health and quality of life is about more than just school lunches. It's about good, solid, Christ-centered, conservative, value-driven options for kids. It's about life lessons -- like telling the truth, playing hard, treating each other well, the value of faith, and loving our country.

But too often children are used by the left as pawns, as tools, as a means to an end. Children are a gift from God. But there is an ongoing battle for our kids. There are those who want to inculcate, indoctrinate, and vaccinate whether parents want it or not. Liberal progressives know that if they can get their hands on our kids (sometimes literally) and tell them that they are aberrations, or

that they should not listen to their parents, or that right is wrong and wrong is right, or that by virtue of their skin color they are somehow born an oppressor or one of the oppressed, or that the biological sex they were born with is notional regardless of biology, they can destroy values before they are even valued. They can change future adults before they become adults.

They can do all of that, and more, and they will use a school lunch to do it.

And that liberal progressive lunch is never free.

*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*

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## The Alternative Approach

# The Harder They Try

by Roy Williams



It's becoming obvious that the harder they try to stop Trump's agenda, the more it shows us just how effective his agenda will be. Most of the three-letter organizations such as the WHO, FDA, CDC, as well as FEMA, USAID, and many more are proving to be nothing more than money laundering organizations. Have you noticed how desperate the Democratic Party, some in the Republican Party, the national media, some judges, and the legal system are pushing to stop everything Trump wants to do now that he is back in office? It's like everything Trump does that goes against their left leaning, immoral, satanic plans, will be demonized, censored, and destroyed in the courts, on the media, and sometimes from the pulpit in churches.

Common sense will tell you that if they want to stop what Trump is doing, it must be good for the nation and the public. It seems like everything they want to promote is immoral, even evil. The more disgusting it is, the more it goes against what the Bible and our God says is right, the harder they will work to destroy it. Anything that supports morality, goodness, and whole-

someness, the harder they move against it which tells us who they are and what their agenda is really all about.

Look at how they have been using tax payer dollars to promote and force their agenda on the American people and in many cases the people of the world. It's like they wish to destroy anything that promotes normality. Take a real look at the money USAID takes from taxpayer funds. Hundreds of thousands going to transgender education in other countries, millions teaching people in other countries how to use their pronouns, millions for LG-BTQ education all over the world, millions sent to Afghanistan for condoms, and ninety million spent for luxury hotels in New York City to house illegal aliens. And, unfortunately, that is just the tip of the iceberg of what is really being wasted on things most taxpayers would not want their tax dollars being used for.

Thanks to Trump, the transformation that is taking place in Washington and around the country is full speed ahead. They are wasting no time implementing his plan to Make America Great Again. As the truth comes out,

more and more people are backing MAGA, MAHA, opening the pipeline that will lower gas prices, closing the border and sending the illegals back where they came from, making sure we are not involved in wars around the world, and lowering our taxes. One of my favorites that Trump is talking about is to stop taxes on tips, on overtime, on Social Security, and getting rid of the IRS altogether. Imagine getting your full paycheck every week or month and with no taxes taken out. That would be between 20 and 40% increase in the average Americans take-home pay.

As a result, many Democrats, some Republicans, deep state media, judges, and so many of the deep state are in a panic. Now why is that? What are they so afraid of? What are they hiding? All Elon and DOGE are doing is exposing waste, right? Or could it be that USAID and other so-called official agencies are being used to laundering billions of dollars into their and their friends personal accounts? Elon is trying to protect the American people and make sure the money is going where it can help those like the flood victims in North Carolina, fire victims in California, and the average hardworking American that is paying more for food, clothing, and shelter. Could it be that they are so mad because their money train is coming to an end?

When everyone under-



stands the corruption and see how the guilty ones are using taxpayer funds, those who are guilty will not be able to walk down the streets without being embarrassed and shamed, as well they should be. We, the citizens of the United States of America, are watching to see if those in the powerful positions that are found guilty will be held accountable. Imagine if you or I, the average citizen, were found guilty of robbing from the tax system, what they would do to us? Most people agree that it is time that they are held accountable and even more so for those who were elected to defend and protect the Constitution of this great country. I, for one, think that they should be held to even higher standards and higher penalties with greater sentences.

How bad is it? The waste that has already been identified is enough to pay every working age American citizen over a million dollars each. The flood of information is coming and nothing can stop it as long as we, the people, step up and demand that the guilty ones be held accountable.

Shut down the three-letter organizations. Demand that they go to term limits on all elected officials. Let's talk about how each of us can do our part. Every time those fools on either side of the party try to stand in the way of Trump's agenda, we must call our representatives, senators at the state level and the federal level, and let them know that we are paying attention, that we demand they get out of the way or they will not be elected again. When they start using lawsuits against Trump, Elon, or any of his appointed officials, call and let them know we are paying attention, that we see what they are doing, and that it is obvious which side they are on.

Thanks to all who read these articles and choose to shop with Herbs & More in Athens, NHC Herb Shop in Killen or go online at [www.nhcherbs.com](http://www.nhcherbs.com). While there, scroll down to the microphone and click on it to listen to one of Roy's radio shows called Today's Health Update. You'll be glad you did.

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Cooking with Anna (continued from page 13)

# My Identity In Christ: God Says I Am Chosen

by Anna Hamilton

*in your life.*

*The only answer is Jesus. Learning that Jesus' love is all you need. That you are handpicked and chosen by God gives you an overwhelming sense of validation. When your identity is in the hands of Christ, it will not be shaken. You may feel like the world has forgotten you, but you have never been forgotten by God. Isaiah 41:9 says, "I took you from the ends of the earth, from its farthest corners I called you. I said, 'You are my servant.' I have chosen you and have not rejected you."*

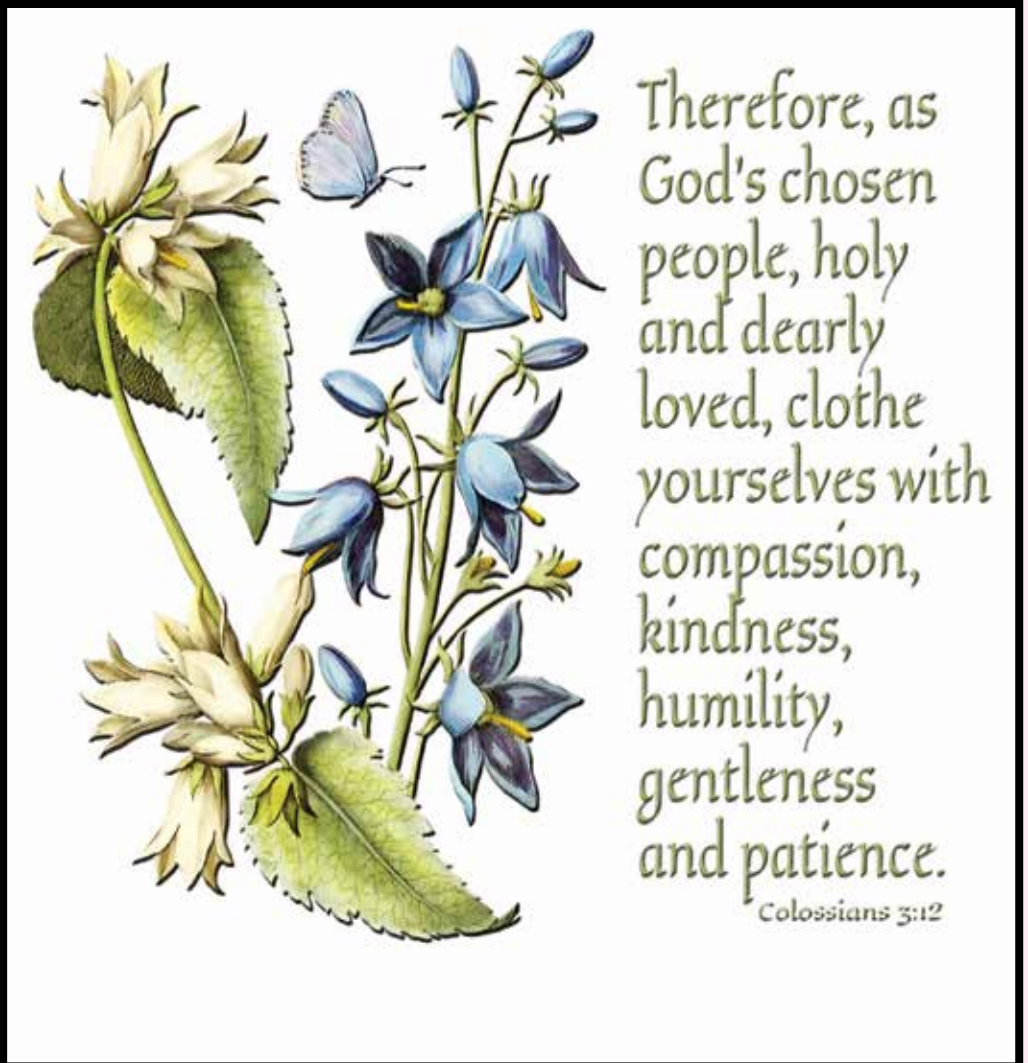
*When we decide to fully live our lives for Christ, we choose to walk with God. We are God's children. And just like a good parent, He will guide our every step. By letting our identity rest in Christ, God delights in us as his children. "The Lord directs the steps of the Godly. He delights in every detail of their lives" (Psalm 37:23).*

*Jesus wants us to stop looking to all the things of this earth for acceptance. Jesus has already chosen us. Once you start placing your identity in Christ, you will discover the very purpose for which He created you. Jesus will never stop pursuing you because His love is unfailing. Jeremiah 31:3 says, "I have loved you with an everlasting love; I have drawn you with unfailing kindness." Never forget that you are chosen by God.*

*This week's recipe is a yummy chicken*

*Alfredo, but instead of serving it on pasta, it is served in a delicious zucchini boat. My family also loves this served with marinara sauce instead of Alfredo. Use whichever sauce your family loves the most. Husbands and kids will love it! It is super yummy served with a tossed salad and a piece of garlic bread. I hope that your family loves it as much as mine does.*

*"You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you" (John 15:16).*



# The Story Of Narrative Therapy

by Lisa Philippart,  
Licensed Professional Counselor



**"We need to look hard at the stories we create, and wrestle with them. Retell and retell them, and work with them like clay. It is in the retelling and returning that they give us their wisdom."**

- Marni Gillard

"We need to look hard at the stories we create, and wrestle with them. Retell and retell them, and work with them like clay. It is in the retelling and returning that they give us their wisdom."  
Marni Gillard

I love words, and writing, and stories. I always have. When I was in elementary school, my favorite time of the day was creative writing. We would be given a topic, or a sentence, to get us started, and then we were to just write. Because I tend to be more introverted, (although I do believe we are all ambiverts depending on the situation... topic for another

time!) words and writing quickly became my favorite venue. I could take the time to think about exactly what I wanted to say and how to say it. And if it didn't sound right, I could erase and start over. I didn't have to be quick on my feet as in the verbal world. Nothing gave or gives me greater pleasure than to discover the perfect word to describe a feeling or an object or an event. I am a believer in the power of words to harm or soothe, to encourage or degrade, to transport or to stifle. So, it only makes sense that there would be a therapy technique that uses stories. Narrative therapy is a method of mental health counseling that separates the person from the problem through the stories we tell ourselves.

Narrative therapy is a positive and encouraging way for people to rely on their own skills to minimize problems in their lives. For all of us, our personal experiences become our personal stories. And for better or worse, these stories develop meaning for us and help shape our

identity. NT uses the power of these stories, our life stories, to help us discover our life purpose and direction. I believe, and NT believes, that each of us is the "narrator" of our own story. The basics of NT are rooted in the role of the therapist to empower and collaborate with the client. By separating the person from the problem, people can focus on using their skills and expertise in guiding change in their lives. My goal, as the therapist, is to externalize the issue/problem. I love the idea that telling your story is a form of action toward change. How does this work?

As a narrative therapist, I have three goals: to help objectify the problem, frame the problem in a larger social and cultural context, and then teach my client how to make room for other stories. The idea is for us to identify and build on an alternative or more preferred storyline for life. Your best life. Take a moment and think about something that is causing distress in your life. Is the real problem the story you have

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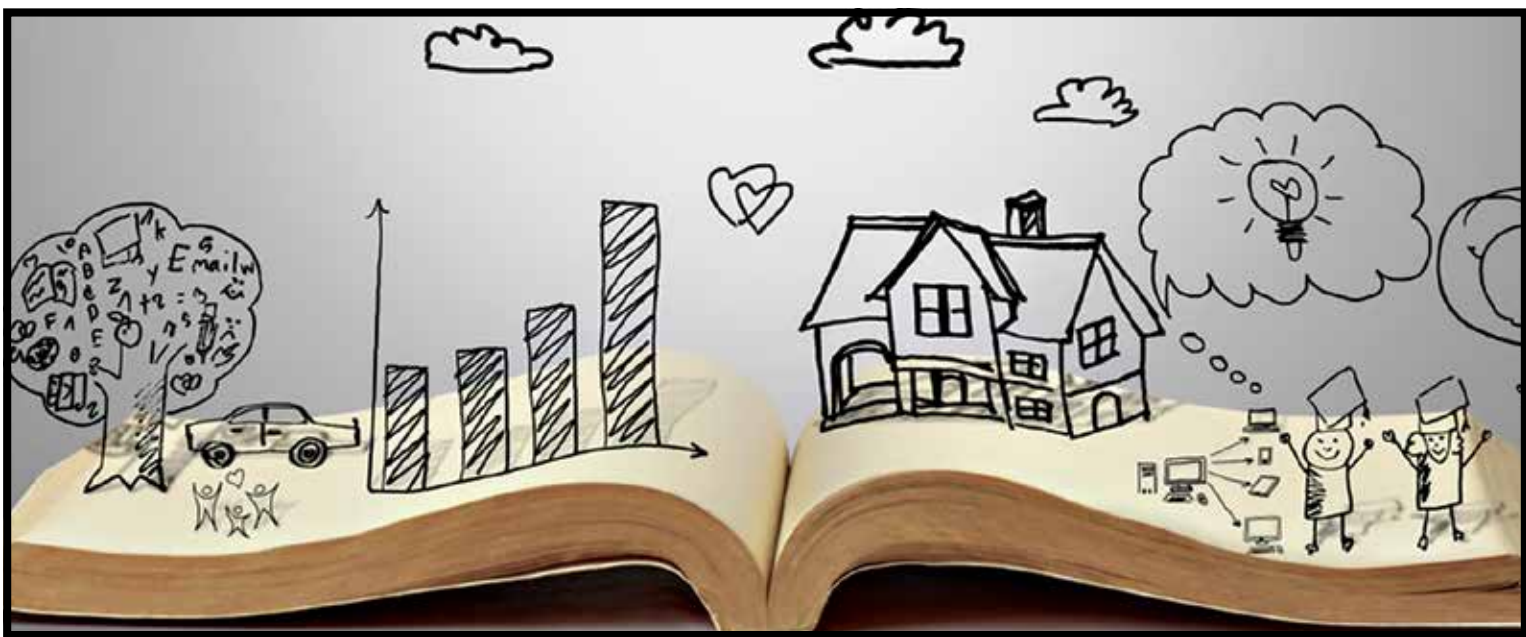


been telling yourself? Your storyline is separate from the problem, which allows you to rewrite your story! You are writing your story every day. And if you are in the present moment, you are writing in pencil, with a big eraser on the end of it! What is the impact of your problem? NT helps the client to identify what is valuable in a broader context...beyond just the problem itself. It probably goes without saying (but I'll put it in writing here) that there is always a connection between your actions and your choices. If we can connect our pattern of choices to life experiences, we gain insight into how to address problems going forward.

What I truly love about NT is

that my goal is not to transform my client. (No one can do that but you!) My goal is to transform the effects of the problem...to make space between you and your challenges. And this can help you develop greater self-compassion. "I'm not the problem. The problem is the problem." On your own, I encourage you to journal. Whatever that means for you. Some people enjoy blogging. I started a private blog several years ago, documenting the interconnectedness of my life with my grandchildren. Some people prefer pencil and paper and the actual process of writing. And now you can even write your story on your phone! If you have trouble getting started, there are journals that have daily prompts. And if you aren't a "writer," then please just take a few minutes each day to jot down three things you are grateful for, or one thing you learned, or one act of kindness you showed. Your book is being written, with or without you. The year is waiting for you to share your story.

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





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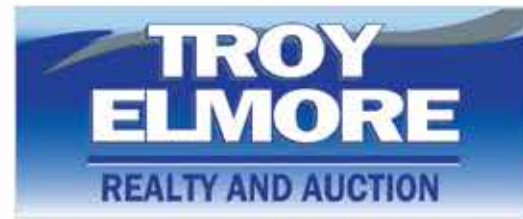
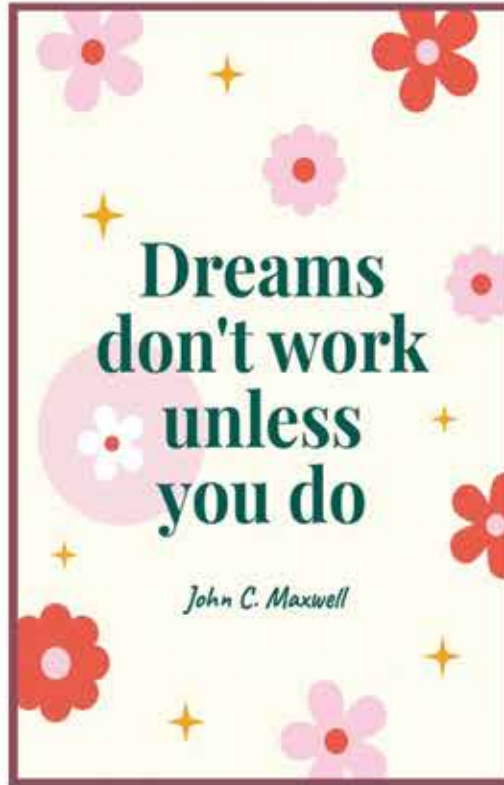


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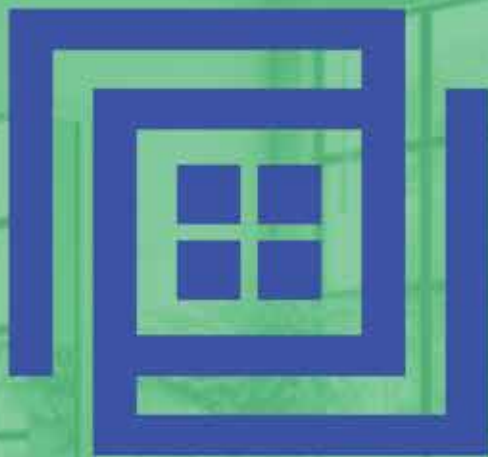
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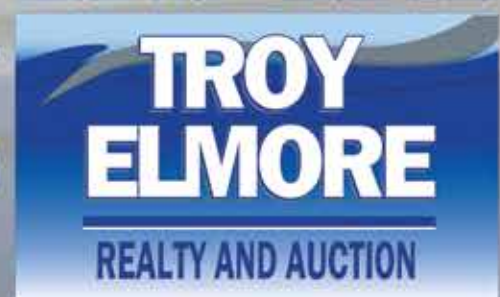
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