

March 7 - March 20, 2025

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Special Feature



**42% Of Americans
Are Willing To Pay
More To Support
Small Businesses...**
Americans are evenly
split on their shopping
habits, shopping both
big and small...
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Growing Businesses By Building Strong Relationships

Limestone Leaders BNI: *Growing Businesses By Building Strong Relationships*



By Ali Elizabeth Turner

In 1985, a business consultant by the name of Dr. Ivan Misner found himself in a pickle. He lost his biggest client and he had to pay his mortgage and put food on the table. He came up with

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What Makes Ronnie Roll

**State of the City
2025...**

We met on Monday, as we always do, and Mayor Ronnie was putting the finishing touches on the 2025 State of the City address, which was delivered the next day...
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Clean, Green And Beautiful

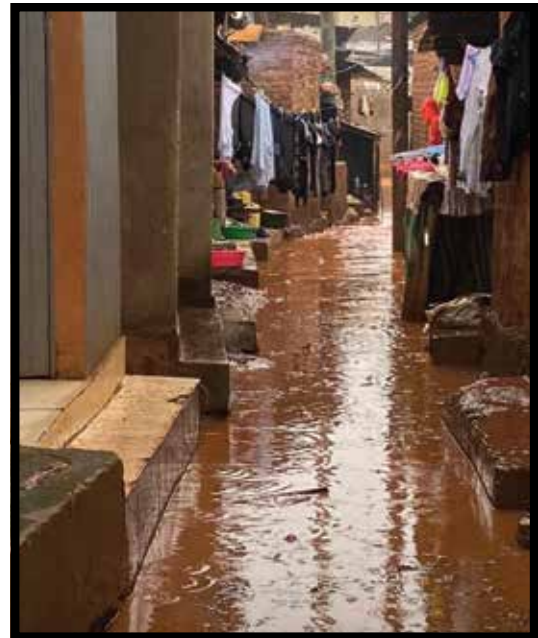


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Wildflowers International: *Dealing With Tough Subjects In Tougher Situations*

By Ali Elizabeth Turner

Years ago, Nicole Alexandra Puckett and her husband, USAF MSGT (Ret) Nick Puckett, embarked on an adventure that is keeping them on their toes still today. They became parents in the conventional way, and they also felt called to adopt. To-
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Publisher's Point

Meet D.J. Daniel, Our Newest Secret Service Agent

On March 5, 2025, at the State of the Union address, President Donald J. Trump officially facilitated the swearing-in of a courageous 13-year-old as the newest member of the Secret Service. His name is D.J. Daniel, and everything about him is inspirational. He was diagnosed in 2018 with brain cancer, and given about five months to live. However, D.J. is still with us, and it's clear he has a purpose. At the very least, he is a stalwart reminder of goodness, perseverance, the power of loving and being loved, and in under five minutes, he stole most of our hearts. He has had several surgeries which have impacted his size and his motor skills, but his speech, his heart, and his hugs are clear,

warm, and strong.

All of his life D.J. has wanted to be a member of law enforcement, and most especially a Secret Service agent. So, when the President surprised D.J. with being sworn in by the new director of the agency, Sean Curran, the look on his face was unforgettable. His eyes became big as plates, which was dear enough, but when Sean Curran came to him with his credentials, D.J. hugged the man, and I mean, he hugged the man.

There were a number of things about this incident that to me were endearing, noteworthy, interesting, and in some cases, sad and just plain rude. The first was the hug given back to D.J. by Mr. Curran. Mind you,

the Secret Service is not normally in the business of hugging, especially when they are on duty. Mr. Curran's training would have been to keep his head on a swivel and functioning full-on in protector mode. But that hug, so uncharacteristic made my night, and the nights of most in attendance. The crowd started chanting, "D.J.!"

What was noteworthy to me is that not only did President Trump honor the lad, he honored and in a way publicly restored the link between the President and the Secret Service. It was only a few months ago that the President was nearly assassinated, and part of the reason it even got to that point is the fact that the Secret Service needed an overhaul. They

were guilty of an epic functional failure that was a disaster, up to and including the death of a civilian.

There were people in the audience that managed to eke out a golf clap, and there were sourpusses who refused to clap, let alone stand and clap. That is just sad. This is a precious kid, and his story goes beyond politics. I would hope that if this had been a year ago, and President Biden had been the one to give D.J. his credentials, no one would have objected. However, Nicolle Wallace and Rachel Maddow felt the need to make dreadful comments which I won't dignify with a response, and the backlash against them has been swift, sure, and powerful.

Their rudeness has only served to strengthen our new-found love for D.J. and his dad, and for that reason, I am glad. I am also glad that people's true colors have been shown in color, and may that continue. Until then, keep your eye on D.J. The guy is a universe-denter.

Ali Elizabeth Turner

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Theodis Daniel, father of D.J. Daniel, watches as his son hugs Secret Service Director, Sean Curran



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Courage Is Contagious

by Ali Elizabeth Turner



Sixty years ago, in the beginning of the war in Vietnam, Lt. Joseph Marm found himself in a combat situation that caused him to wonder if he was in the middle of something akin to Little Big Horn. They were completely surrounded and outnumbered 7 to 1, and seeing as death seemed inevitable, the only thing Joseph knew to do is what true soldiers do: fight for the man on your left, and fight for the man on your right. In Marm's case, as an officer in the US Army's 7th Cavalry, 1st Cav Division, the goal was to get his men through the situation with honor and courage, irrespective of the outcome. Ironically, Joe's unit was the same as Custer's, but thankfully did not suffer the same kind of defeat.

There was a concealed enemy machine gun that was firing upon Marm and his men, and Joseph charged ahead, lobbed grenades, and took out the gunner. That eerie quiet set in, and then Marm was shot in the mouth. The wound was a through and through, and he just kept going. He commented recently that if it had been an inch over, it would have hit his jugular vein and he would have bled out. "God works in mysterious ways; He had a mission for me, and it wasn't my time yet."

Armed with only a rifle, Lt. Marm "kept on keepin' on" for a full three

days, and was instrumental in rooting out and taking out the remaining VC. He also inspired his men by his example to rally and finish the mission, which was to get to a platoon that was trapped and lead them to safety. They did lose 79 soldiers, and 121 were wounded, but they did get the men out.

Lt. Marm recently was interviewed as part of the Honor Project and was asked what his personal definition of courage was. "Doing what you have to do to get the job done." He then

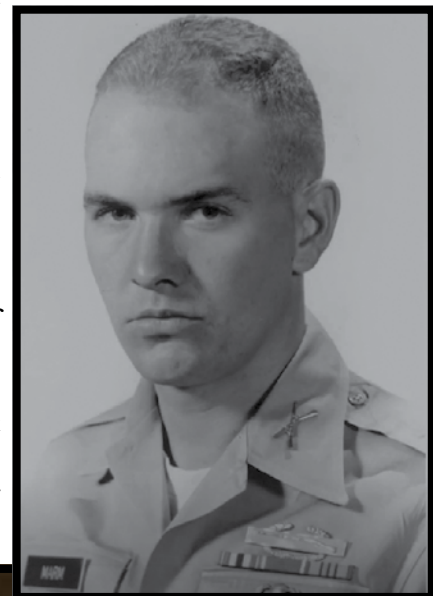
added, "In combat, they say courage is contagious, and that's very, very true. You know, I wouldn't ask my men to do something I wouldn't do myself. So, as a leader I have to lead by example, and that's very tough to do. But courage is just trying to do the best you can in everything you can."

Marm grew up in Pennsylvania, and is the son of a policeman. He saw a steadfast courage in his father, and his dad's example has inspired Joseph his whole life. "People have to do the

best they can to display courage in their everyday lives. We are the greatest country in the world because of our citizens, all races and religions. Because of you and your parents and your family, and just try to do the best you can in everything you do."

Once a year, veterans have the opportunity to be part of the Honor Project, and this year Medal of Honor recipient Joseph Marm was among them. Our congratulations to

yet another soldier who gave deeply that we may live freely, and let us remember always that we are blessed.



Col Joseph Marm, (Ret) recipient of the Medal of Honor for his courage

Photos credits: Military Times

42% Of Americans Are Willing To Pay More To Support Small Businesses

by BrandPoint Content

(BPT) - Americans are evenly split on their shopping habits, shopping both big and small - 29% favor local or small businesses, while 29% prefer national retailers. Though price remains top-of-mind for many shoppers (62%), speed is a major factor, too: 53% say they want to get an item as fast as possible, no matter where it comes from, according to a new study by Empower, a financial services company.

Shoppers appreciate the personalized customer service (36%), high-quality and craftsmanship (34%) and locally made products (56%) found at the stores in their neighborhood. Lower prices (85%), greater product variety (71%) and more flexible return policies/warranties (64%) motivate consumers to pick big-box retailers.

Key takeaways

* Best of both: 29% of Americans prefer big chains, 29% favor local small businesses; 82% of Americans say they shop at both big chains and small businesses for different items.

* 53% want to get items as fast as possible, no matter where they come from.

* Half of Americans say bigger chain stores offer convenience (56%) and more loyalty programs or rewards (51%).

* 3 in 5 (61%) prefer to buy gifts from small businesses because they can find more unique and personal options.

* Eating at local restaurants (75%) and shopping for produce at local farmers' markets (51%) are ways consumers support their local economies.

* Monthly spending at local small businesses averages \$106, with Gen X (\$113) and Millennials (\$110) splurging more.

Purchasing preferences

Economic pressures can play a role in where Americans are shopping around: 44% report purchasing items less at small businesses due to inflation. Three-quarters of spenders say they buy online from big box stores to get better deals.

Beyond price, 6 in 10 Americans prefer to purchase gifts for others at local shops because they can find more personal and unique options. Three-quarters support small businesses in their town by eating at local restaurants (non-chains) and shopping for produce at farmers' markets (51%). Other local finds consumers are on the hunt for include books and media (51%) and home goods or decor (44%).

The return or warranty policies at big chains offer financial peace of mind for many (49%), while shoppers are looking for electronics and appliances (92%) and sporting goods (81%) at national retailers.

Baby Boomers (41%) and Gen X (31%) are more likely to prefer shopping locally, while Millennials and Gen Z are more flexible - 42% and 46%, respectively, say they have no preference. Gen Xers spend the most per monthly average across both local and big chain stores, followed by Millennials, while Gen Z and Baby Boomers report lower spending overall.

Average monthly spending at local small businesses, by generation:

- * Gen X: \$113
- * Millennials: \$110
- * Gen Z: \$96
- * Baby Boomers: \$88

Average monthly spending at

big chain stores, by generation:

- * Gen X: \$379
- * Millennials: \$338
- * Gen Z: \$298
- * Baby Boomers: \$259

The appeal of small businesses

More than a third (35%) are willing to pay extra at a local store for a product they could also buy at a big chain. On average, consumers are comfortable paying up to \$14 more, with 10% ready to spend over \$30.

Convenience is another important factor, especially for younger generations. Over half of Gen Zers (56%) would shop "small" more often if faster shipping options were available.

Online platforms like Etsy have also gained traction. About half of Americans (51%), including 54% of

both Gen Z and Millennials, use these channels to support small businesses.

Additional reasons shoppers value small businesses include locally handcrafted products (56%), building relationships with owners (39%), and personalized service (36%).

The allure of big chains

Big chains attract shoppers with competitive prices, convenience, and loyalty rewards. Gen Zers are the most likely to seek rewards and discounts - 61% prefer shopping at national retailers to take advantage of these perks. When shopping online specifically, Gen Xers (79%) are more likely to buy from chain stores because of deals offered.

Methodology

Empower commissioned an online survey of 1,009 Americans in October 2024.

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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

Home Heart and Heritage Quilt Exhibition March 10 - April 21

Monthaven ARts & Cultural Center sponsored our hosting of the Home Heart and Heritage Quilt Exhibition: A quilt exhibit celebrating Black history. The exhibit is free to view and is open to the public. Athens-Limestone Public Library.

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 DRAWINGS & PRIZES: The festival will have various drawings and giveaways.

Coffee Call

April 5

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.

Spring Craft Fair

April 19

Spring Craft Fair for the library will be on Saturday, April 19th, from 9 am - 1 pm. It is free for patrons to attend. They can meet local vendors and purchase gifts for Easter, mothers day, or just for fun. Athens-Limestone Public Library.

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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State of the City 2025

by Ali Elizabeth Turner



We met on Monday, as we always do, and Mayor Ronnie was putting the finishing touches on the 2025 State of the City address, which was delivered the next day, March 5. Once again it was held on the Athens State University campus, but this year the format was going to be a bit different. Rather than the usual podium-and-power-point approach, Pammie Jimmar of the Chamber of Commerce was going to field questions to the mayor in a less formal format.

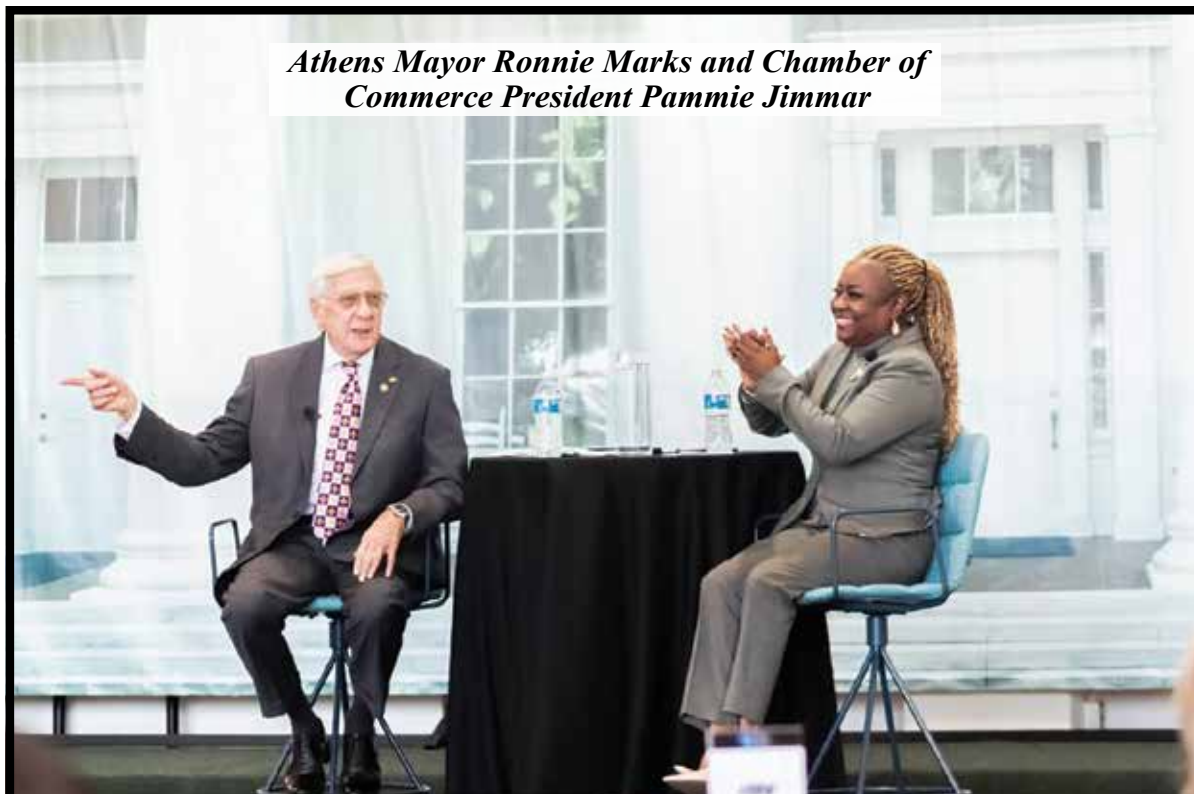
There were several things to celebrate, the most recent being Mardi Gras, both the parade as well as the food drive. It had been a full two months since the tornado, and repairs and restoration in the downtown core were moving along.

While there are several

factors that make up a successful city, quality of life is the ribbon that is wrapped around public safety, education, employment, and other components, and Mayor Ronnie has the goal of making Athens the best place to live in all of Alabama.

The budget, while complicated, is in good shape, and we have a one-million dollar cushion in the general fund. The mayor talked at length about just what is involved in getting a new firetruck for our town, and you could tell the audience was taken aback. It takes three years for a city to be able to get possession of just one!

There are two grocery stores going up on each side of the county, a Publix on the east side



Athens Mayor Ronnie Marks and Chamber of Commerce President Pammie Jimmar

of Limestone county on Mooresville Road, and a Food City in West Limestone. The Food City alone is going to be 53,000 square feet. Other developments are a hospital in Tanner, Terranova's Italian Restau-

rant, a Five Guys, and the Shoney's building on Highway 72 is going to undergo extensive repairs and be taken over by a national chain.

Sunshine Park, which once upon a time was the blighted former site of Pilgrim's Pride is coming together, albeit perhaps more slowly than we'd like. The mayor would like to see the creek have a few waterfalls, which are peaceful and beautiful.

"Anybody who knows me knows I can't stand litter," said the mayor. It's true, he was picking up litter the first time I interviewed him at the old city hall building that had been built in 1953, which also housed the fire department. He continued with, "We have two litter crews; we

could use ten. Be responsible and help keep our city beautiful," he said.

Something the mayor emphasized is the need for us to shop local so we can buy the things we need for our fair berg, such as the firetrucks. He also mentioned that now we are in much better shape when we have storms because we have installed the P-25 system, which helps us communicate even when the usual channels are unavailable.

The mayor made a point of thanking God that we have the right to pray in public, Athens City employees, first responders, educators, and all of us for helping to make Athens awesome. And then it was time for us to pray and then for Ronnie to roll.



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Captain's Log

“So How Does The Baby Get In The Woman’s Belly?”

by Brenda Wilkerson

There’s not too much that can strike fear into the heart and soul of even a veteran bus driver. Except... the heavily, yet innocently, baited questions that caused the rest of the students to pause and lean forward. The most feared question of all bus drivers across the fruited plains second to “Is Santa real?” was asked of me today. “So how does the baby get in the mommy’s belly?” It is certainly not the first time, and I have grown wiser each time.

As the words spilled out of six-year-old Ethan’s mouth, my inner gut began to churn; I’ve learned to pause each time and slowly ask the question back to them. Instinctively, they begin to come up with their own answers to their own question. With every response, I might scratch my chin, tilt my head to one side and look up at the corner of the bus as if I am pondering their response and say, “Huh” or “Maybe”, “What else do you think?” This time Ethan’s 5-year-old little sister, Paisley, began to chime in to the conversation. Together they came up with several good ideas.

Number 1 - Paisley declared Jesus put the baby in there, “cause He can do that.” But that did not settle well with Ethan as he questioned the marks that it would leave on the woman’s belly. Sister said that Jesus could

use his magic and make the marks go away. So Ethan ran with this concept and decided that a ‘Jesus magic lotion’ would be applied before and after the baby was put into the woman’s belly. “And...” Ethan continued, “...it would

be a quick-dry lotion.” Number 2 - The baby is teleported into the mommy’s belly, but then of course we knew that babies don’t teleport out of the mommy’s tummy and we thought that singing Happy Teleport Day instead of Happy Birth-

day was the silliest thing we have ever heard! Oh, how we laughed!

Lord, I had no idea how the wisdom for which I have been praying for years would appear in such timely and giggly ways. Thank you for laughter. It soothes this

Captain’s soul.

-- Bus Driver Motto --

James 1:5 -- "If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him"



Being a bus driver is a continual adventure...just ask "The Captain!"



Slinkard On Success

“E” Is For Excellence

by D. A. Slinkard

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

We are to the letter “E” and our word is Excellence. We live in a world where mediocrity often seems acceptable, and pursuing excellence is what sets high achievers apart. Excellence is not about being perfect; it is about being committed to continuous growth, striving to improve, and refusing to settle for less than one’s best. Too many people struggle to commit to this word, and this is why I feel it is necessary to write about *excellence*.

To achieve excellence, one begins with the right mindset, and it is a mindset that values learning, persistence, and resilience. Those who pursue excellence do not see failure as defeat but as a stepping-stone to success. They understand that every setback is an opportunity to refine their skills and grow stronger. Excellence requires a hunger for improvement and the discipline to push through challenges when others might give up. There is a saying, “You win some and you lose some,” and I feel this is part of our problem. I believe the saying should be, “You win some, and you learn some,” because we only lose when we do not learn from our mistakes.

Success does not happen by chance; it is the result of consistent, intentional effort. Excellence demands

discipline in habits, time management, and personal development. Those who pursue excellence create routines that foster growth. They wake up with purpose, set clear goals, and hold themselves accountable. Excellence is built daily through small, deliberate actions that compound over time. It is about doing the small things over and over again because the small things add up to be big things in our life.

One of the greatest obstacles to excellence is distraction. In a fast-paced world filled with endless entertainment and fleeting trends, staying focused is a superpower. Pursuing excellence means eliminating distractions and prioritizing what truly matters. It requires saying no to activities that drain

energy and yes to those that build momentum. Excellence flourishes where there is clarity of purpose and unwavering focus. Sometimes, we just need to exercise our ability to use the word, “No.” This word is not a bad thing – it can actually be a very good thing.

Telling people “No” is not a bad thing, and is essential for maintaining healthy boundaries, protecting your time, and staying true to your priorities. When you say no, you are not rejecting the person but rather setting a clear standard for what you can and cannot commit to. Trying to please everyone often leads to burnout, resentment, and a lack of focus on what truly matters in your life. When you try to please everyone, you will end up pleasing no one.

Saying no allows you to be intentional with your energy, ensuring that when you say yes it is meaningful and aligned with your goals. It is an act of self-respect and personal integrity, and those who value you will understand and respect your decision.

Excellence is not just about personal achievement—it is about the impact we have on others. A person who pursues excellence in their work, relationships, and character inspires those around them to do the same. Excellence is contagious; when one person strives to be better, it elevates everyone in their sphere of influence. Whether in business, ministry, or personal life, excellence should be the standard, not the exception.

Pursuing excellence is demanding, but the rewards are immeasurable. It leads to personal fulfillment, deeper confidence, and greater opportunities. Those who commit to excellence gain respect, credibility, and the satisfaction of knowing they gave their best. While the journey is not always easy, it is always worth it. I wonder -- How many people end up feeling disappointed and unsatisfied with the direction their life has gone? Every day, we have an opportunity to make the most of our time because, truly, I am finding out that life is too short not to live purposefully.

We must understand that excellence is a choice, one that must be made daily. It is not reserved for a select few but available to anyone willing to put in the work. Pursuing excellence means embracing growth, practicing discipline, maintaining focus, and striving to make a difference. When we commit to excellence, we not only transform our own lives but also inspire and uplift those around us. Choose excellence, and watch how it changes everything. You can have everything you want in life if you just commit to accepting nothing less than excellence when it comes to your effort.





Clean, Green And Beautiful

Let's Work Together

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

Let's talk about why people volunteer. We all know the wonderful benefits of volunteering -- community impact, social engagement, personal growth, etc. The reasons one volunteers are endless, and all of them as equally important as another. We all have our favorite causes and ways to support them. And each cause is, without any doubt, as important as any other. We are humbled by the tremendous support we receive from volunteers and sponsors.

Keep Athens-Limestone Beautiful's success has been built and maintained by the countless volunteers who have worked with us over the years. We are humbled at every KALB cleanup by the support we receive. We have had volunteers of all ages who have all made a difference in Limestone County. It never fails, we always come across the "why-in-the-world-is-this-

here" trash. Sofas in the river, 100's of Legos in the woods, TVs in the woods -- this list can go on forever. As adults, it's infuriating to have to clean up trash that other adults have littered or dumped.

We are lucky at Keep Athens-Limestone Beautiful. We have an amazing volunteer base that shows up and shows out. They are responsible for removing 171,072 pounds of trash from all over Limestone County in the past five years alone. That's 85.5 tons! And we're still asking for volunteers because the litter is never-ending. We hope that each volunteer knows how appreciated they are, and not just by us. The hard work that they put in truly makes Limestone County a better place.

Not only do we have an amazing volunteer base, but we also have equally amazing support from local businesses. TVA sup-



ports annual Trash Attacks at the Tennessee and Elk River. United Pest and Turf Control in Ardmore is hosting their 9th annual Spring Clean. In'Tech Medical sent employees to the TVA Trash Attack. Shape Corp hosted a company cleanup. We are currently planning a cleanup with Harmon Scrap Metal. And then there's businesses like JH Performance Lawn Care, Pressure Washing & Maintenance reaching out to reward individuals like Lukas Geiger who took the initiative to pull 28



tires from the Elk River.

I have to admit, my favorite volunteers are the kids. Adults know what we are doing and why we are doing it. You can literally watch it click when you work with kids. When you are working beside them, the same questions always come up -- "Who would do this?" and "Why did they do this?" When you answer them, you say things like, "People who were being lazy," "They didn't know how it could hurt animals," or "They didn't care." Kids almost always immediately begin to list the reasons why they wouldn't litter, and try to find solutions to

keep others from littering. In a way, they may be the most important volunteers we can have. They learn not to litter, which is a start to breaking the cycle.

If you can, we'd love to have you volunteer with us. We have several cleanups planned for this spring you can join. Or if you'd like to plan a cleanup with a specific group or club, we can do that too! We'll even loan you all of the supplies if you want to go out on your own. We have plenty of supplies, and there's plenty of litter.



Become a Fan



(256) 233-8000

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www.KALBCares.com



Cooking with Anna

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

by Anna Hamilton

Finding your identity is hard. Even as a 44-year-old (will be 45 this year) woman, I still have days that I don't truly know who I am. I feel like I am drifting through life some days. But over this year, diving head deep into finding my identity in Christ seems to be helping me find my center. This week, I am focused on being delivered.

The Bible uses the word delivered to mean rescued, freed, and set free from danger, sin, and oppression. Psalm 34:4 says, "I sought the Lord, and he answered me; he

delivered me from all my fears."

The theme of deliverance can be found in all areas of the Bible. It is a theme that embodies God's divine way of how He frees people from all kinds of worldly afflictions. Deliverance is an expression of God's love, mercy, and power. In the Old Testament, God continually delivered the Israelites from all kinds of bondage. Psalms is full of beautiful examples of how God is our refuge and strength. Psalm 32:7 says, "You

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Amish Snow Day Soup

Ingredients:

- 4 cups fresh or frozen corn kernels
- 1 medium onion, diced
- 2 medium potatoes, peeled and diced
- 3 cups chicken or vegetable broth
- 1 cup heavy cream
- 4 slices of bacon, cooked and crumbled
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1/2 teaspoon smoked paprika
- 2 tablespoons butter
- 2 tablespoons all-purpose flour
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 2 tablespoons chopped fresh parsley for garnish

Directions:

In a slow cooker, combine corn, onion, potatoes, broth, garlic, smoked paprika, and salt and pepper. Cover and cook on low for 6-8 hours or until potatoes are tender.

Once potatoes are tender, in a small saucepan, melt butter over medium heat. Stir in flour and



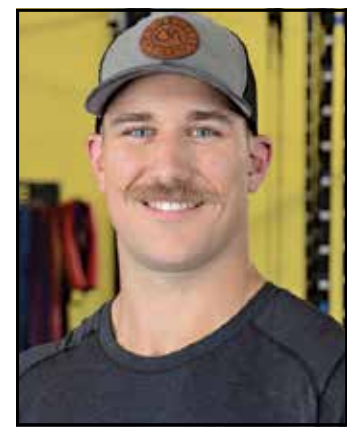
cook for 1 to 2 minutes until butter and flour are combined. This makes a roux.

Gradually whisk in heavy cream until smooth. Cook until thickened. Slowly add cream mixture into the slow cooker, mixing well.

Add crumbled bacon and stir to combine. Cook for an additional 30 minutes or until thickened. Garnish with fresh parsley.

Southern Comfort: *Healthy Swaps For Classic Alabama Dishes*

by Nick Niedzwiecki - Owner, CrossFit Athens



When it comes to Southern cooking, there's no denying the comfort and flavor of dishes like fried chicken, mac and cheese, and banana pudding. But while these classics warm the soul, they're often packed with processed ingredients and added sugars that can derail our health goals.

The good news? You don't have to give up your favorite foods to eat healthier. By making simple, whole-food swaps inspired by the CrossFit nutrition methodology—focusing on meat, vegetables, nuts, seeds, some fruit, little starch, and no sugar—you can transform beloved Southern dishes without sacrificing taste.

Here are some easy and delicious swaps to try:

1. Fried Chicken → Almond-Crusted Baked Chicken

Swap: Instead of deep-frying in processed oils, coat chicken in crushed almonds mixed with paprika and garlic powder. Bake until crispy for a satisfying crunch without the grease.

Why: Almonds provide healthy fats and protein, keeping you full and supporting muscle recovery.

2. Mac and Cheese → Cauliflower Mac and Cheese

Swap: Replace pasta with roasted cauliflower florets. Make a creamy sauce with cashews,

nutritional yeast, and a splash of almond milk.

Why: This swap is lower in carbs and eliminates processed flour, aligning with the CrossFit focus on whole foods.

3. Biscuits → Almond Flour Biscuits

Swap: Use almond flour and Greek yogurt instead of refined flour and butter.

Why: Almond flour is lower in carbs and higher in protein, making these biscuits more filling and nutrient-dense.

4. Sweet Tea → Iced Green Tea with Lemon

Swap: Brew green tea, chill, and add fresh lemon slices and a bit of honey if needed.

Why: Ditching refined sugar reduces inflammation and keeps insulin levels steady. Green tea also provides antioxidants and a natural energy boost.

5. Banana Pudding → Greek Yogurt Banana Parfait

Swap: Layer Greek yogurt with banana slices, a sprinkle of cinnamon, and a handful of crushed nuts.

Why: Greek yogurt adds protein and probiotics without the processed sugars and artificial flavors found in instant pudding.

6. BBQ Pulled Pork → Slow-Cooked Pork with Homemade Sauce

Swap: Make a simple BBQ sauce using tomato paste, apple cider vinegar, paprika, and a touch of honey instead of sugar-laden bottled sauces.

Why: Homemade sauces help you avoid hidden sugars and preservatives, keeping carbs in check.

7. Grits → Cauliflower Grits

Swap: Pulse cauliflower in a food processor, then cook it with unsweetened almond milk and a bit of grass-fed butter

for a creamy texture.

Why: Lower in carbs and higher in fiber, this swap fits the CrossFit approach to eating fewer starches.

Making the Switch

Transitioning to a healthier version of Southern comfort food doesn't mean giving up what you love. By choosing whole foods over processed options, you'll not only improve your energy levels and workout performance but also set the foundation for

long-term health.

If you're ready to take the next step in your health journey, **CrossFit Athens** offers the **Fit For Life Nutrition Program**, which is open to anyone. We provide all the tools and guidance you need to build a healthier lifestyle—without feeling overwhelmed.

Interested in learning more? Email us at info@crossfitathens.com or call 256-363-6884 to get started today!

FIT FOR LIFE NUTRITION
AT CROSSFIT ATHENS

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- ACCESS TO NUTRITION COACH
- CONSTANT ACCOUNTABILITY
- WEEKLY MEETINGS
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FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT COACH APRLE AT APRLE@CROSSFITATHENS.COM

Limestone Leaders BNI: *Growing Businesses* *By Building Strong Relationships*

by Ali Elizabeth Turner

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the idea of what is now known as referral marketing, and formed a small group that met weekly in order to find out what each other needed so they could help each other get business. Nearly 10,000 chapters domestically and globally passing billions of dollars later, Business Network International (BNI) and its core values have helped thousands of business owners do well and do good. During COVID, they pivoted beautifully and made it possible to “Zoom” all over the planet, and business continued to grow during the shut-down.

So, who are the BNI Limestone Leaders, and why, if you are a business owner, should you join us? We represent businesses that range from real estate to roofing, health and wellness, media, insurance, CPA, HVAC, property investments, athletic supply, mortgage services, a credit card payment service specialist, a florist, a banker, a financial planner, a tourism specialist, and pest control. We could not be from more diverse backgrounds, but here is what we have in common: we enjoy helping each other grow our respective businesses, and we have the numbers to prove it. We have passed millions of dollars’ worth of business, and we are a small group, by BNI standards. And, we are looking to invite new members to join us!



How does BNI work? You commit to leverage what is known as the Power of One, and that means you attend one meeting a week, spend one hour in continuing education, have one meeting with a fellow member to exchange your business needs for that week, and seek to give a referral for a fellow member if at all possible. BNI has literally hundreds of hours of training from which to draw for your CEU, and I can say from experience, that I am a much more knowledgeable business woman as a result of the four years I have been a member. Thousands of dollars of business have come my way, and while I appreciate the financial footing upon which it has put *Athens Now*, the real value has come from the relationships I have built with people I most likely would have never met. We have mourned, laughed, learned, prayed, eaten, made money with and for each other, and we have done just that in everything from three-piece suits to togas and crowns of leaves, along with overalls with straw hats and garden gloves. (The latter two occurring at fun events called the Big Breakfast held annually in Huntsville.) We would love to have you join us this and every Tuesday at 7:45 a.m. at the

Athens-Limestone County Tourism office, and hope you consider a band that is perhaps small in number, large in heart, and has prevailed in the pocketbook. See you on Tuesdays!

To register for a visit, go to bniconnectglobal.com, and when you click on search for a chapter, click Limestone Leaders. Then click register to visit, and you’ll be all set. You can also go to Facebook and leave a message for us to contact you. We are Limestone Leaders BNI on Facebook. If you need more info, call Ali Turner, visitor host

coordinator, at 256 468 9425.

On a personal note, I have just celebrated my sixth anniversary as a member of Limestone Leaders, and I have never regretted throwing in with this crew. The relationships, the things I have learned, and more than anything, having the opportunity to be a part of helping others all have served to make my decision to join in 2019 one of the best business decisions I have ever made. I am issuing an invitation on the behalf of our chapter for you to check us out. See you Tuesday mornin,’ and the coffee will be ready!

BNI (Business Network International) is the World's largest word of mouth referral organization. If you are wanting to grow your business, need more intro-

ductions, enjoy a positive community while being surrounded by supportive professionals, then come check out BNI! There are multiple chapters around town and all will be present and showcasing their culture and desire to meet people in your profession to give referrals to! You don't want to miss out on this opportunity.

Come meet hundreds of great professionals in the Huntsville area and network with top local professionals. Learn to increase your word-of-mouth referrals.

Limestone Leaders / BNI

Athens-Limestone Visitors Center

**100 South Beaty Street
Athens, AL 35611**



BNI founder Ivan Misner speaking at a conference

“Slow Down!” -- Savor the Experience

by Stephanie Reynolds, Athens-Limestone Tourism Association



“Would you SLOW DOWN?!” DP said to me with a huff that was as much frustration as it was exertion.

“Look, I don’t have time to wait. Put on some roller skates and hold onto my sleeve, we need to *go*.” It was a joke between us. At some point in my life, I started walking super-fast and have never slowed down. My dad did the same thing, and I remember more than once when my incredibly genteel, beautifully-but-approachably-elegant mom would almost drop her politesse because he had zoomed away with the shopping cart when she turned around to put something in it.

Fast walking has done me well. I have a strong heart, strong legs, and a strong need to see what’s around the bend. I am high energy and restless, eager to go and do, and experience. I feel like I am trying to cram as many lives into one as I can.

But this past Christmas, I started to realize that while I have gained, I have also lost. In a separate incidence, DP had also more contemplatively remarked that I didn’t know how to stroll. We were walking through the Huntsville Botanical Garden Galaxy of Lights, and I was doing my normal “quick glance, quick steps” without thinking about it at all. Oh, I was seeing the pretty lights, but I

wasn’t taking time to savor them, to enjoy them with my family, and I didn’t even realize that. I should have known, though.

I have gotten into the habit of taking DP with me so I can pace out how long a historical or downtown walk will take with real people who actually know how to stroll and meander. I literally use her short steps for timing our tours. In fact, even today I asked if she had time next week to pace out two more tours. Honestly, the whole thing will be a sanctification exercise for both of us—me getting lost in my thought, my feet speeding up to match my ideas, then being interrupted by her tugging on my sleeve to slow me down. Bless her heart.

Suddenly, today I had a flash. To call it a memory would be generous, it was more like an impression, a mere thumbnail of a memory. I vaguely remember being a child on a pleasant day. I think it was fall, but early fall -- cool but not brown. I think I remember the sun still with a bit of brightness reflecting off white crushed rock on the path ahead of me. I remember...slow.

As I type this, I try harder, focusing my will to pry open those drawers of long forgotten experiences, all jumbled and wrinkled like a stack of old postcards. I think I remember the scent, and taste, of quartz rock. I



think I remember exploring the trail at my feet, not trying to get to the next county over...

Slow...

Another memory, but this is more of an emotion-memory than a sensory one. I remember the feeling of “peace-in-the-moment.” Was it because I was a kid without a care in the world? Oh, no. As a child I had lots of cares and fears and sorrows. But I also knew how to be in the moment, how to let my eyes stay still enough to reflect a blue sky on a bright summer morning. How the scent of warming pines in northwestern mountains were like incense carrying a child’s prayers to Heaven, or how sometimes the entire work of the universe consisted solely of watching a ladybug for five whole minutes to see what she does.

It isn’t lack of worry that makes one enjoy the moment, it is a decision.

I wonder if I can retrain myself to stroll, to loll, to go slowly enough to hear birds and not just the sound of my boots. To breathe in petrichor. To feel the currents of air bathe my skin instead of me fussing still air into currents by my movement.

I hope I can. I haven’t just missed air and scent and sound. I am sure I have missed butterflies and laughter and jokes. I am sure that time is flying more swiftly because I am pushing it, forcing it with strong quads and a restless spirit.

I have had vocations and avocations that required me to be constantly on the alert, but not now. Right now, I am in tourism in the best county in the world amongst the most fabulous people on the planet. My job is to walk slowly, with you, on paths through forest and history at the pace of a 4-year-old who just saw a shiny bit of quartz.

I think I almost remem-

ber how.

It’s going to be a FABULOUS spring! Mark your calendars for all this Limestone County fun!

March 21-22: Singing River Smoke O’ Rama! A nationally sanctioned BBQ contest at the Sheriff’s Arena. Cornhole, craft vendors, family activities, and of course AHHHMAZING BBQ!!

April Saturdays: Free historic walking tours! Just show up at 100 N Beaty at 10 a.m. every Saturday!

May 3: Elkmont Trail Walk! Stay tuned to our Facebook page ([facebook.com/exploreathensal](https://www.facebook.com/exploreathensal))

May 10: Be A Tourist In Your Own Hometown is back again! Check our Facebook page for sign-up information!

May 17-18: Sheriff’s Rodeo, the Greatest Show On Dirt! [limestonesheriffrodeo.com](https://www.limestonesheriffrodeo.com)

As always you can reach out to me at stephanie@visitathensal.com

Wildflowers International: Dealing With Tough Subjects In Tougher Situations

By Ali Elizabeth Turner

continued from page 1

day they have a total of 12 kids and 6 grandchildren, both here and in Africa, and “missions” is their middle name. Their daughter Kristianna is number three in the line-up, and she has ministered extensively in Uganda since 2013. Nicole wears a number of other hats that keep her busy including homeschooling mom, grant writer, and post-adoption consultant. She is also knee-deep in writing curriculum for home-educated children, as well as for a popular curriculum publisher.

Kristianna and her mom are involved in ministry work that is delicate as well as daunting, and that is helping to eradicate in Africa what is known as “period poverty.” In America, women of child-bearing years typically don’t run into a situation where feminine hygiene supplies are unavailable, but in Africa, having what is needed on a monthly basis is the exception, and not the rule. It is not an exaggeration to say that the results of that dearth can be devastating. Here is what Nicole has to say on the topic:

Did you know that “period poverty” refers to the lack of access to menstrual products, hygiene facilities, and education about periods AND that remedying it is a part of holistic orphan prevention?

This is an issue that affects MILLIONS of young women worldwide, especially those in poverty-stricken areas. The impact of this goes way beyond just physical health -- it affects the girls’ ability to attend school or work and creates marginalization for them that does not affect young men.

Wildflowers International has made it their cause to provide menstrual hygiene kits to thousands of young women in the slum areas of Uganda this year. In 2024, the Ministry of Health Uganda reported that 65% of Ugandan women do not have access to feminine hygiene products.

Why does this matter? Nicole said further:

With nearly 50% of Ugandan girls completing less than 7 years of education, and 700,000 girls between the ages of 6-12 never having been to school, these precious girls are already



at risk for leaving education early. Menstruation makes education harder when you do not have supplies.

Ugandan girls who do not have period products resort to using pieces of foam, cotton, old rags, or even sand-filled bags. These can lead to infections. In a recent survey, girls reported that they missed up to 7 days of school every month because of their period. Ugandan girls who do not stay in school are more at risk for teen pregnancies or early marriages. Twenty-five percent of these girls are mothers by the age of 19, and 34% are married by the age of 18.

Imagine for a moment that you are a young girl living in an impoverished African community, and the time of the month arrives during school classes. You cannot ask a friend for a menstrual product because they either



Kristianna Walakira and her mom, Nicole Puckett of Wildflowers International

do not have one, or they cannot afford to share one with you. There aren’t exactly machines in the girls’ restroom, and even if there were, you don’t have a quarter to spend on anything, let alone supplies. You cannot ask your parents for hygiene supplies because everything they earned that day is just enough for food. So, you hurry home and find old rags and use those instead. You know that if you are not able to improvise, you will miss the next 3-7 days of school because you need a clean uniform to attend. The chances are great that eventually you will fall far behind and decide school is not for you. You find yourself instead in an early marriage. And here is the most tragic part -- some girls will turn to prostitution just so they can earn money for supplies, and the dangers along with unwelcome diseases of the “world’s oldest profession” are extensive.

Unlike girls and women in developed nations where this kind of scenario virtually does not exist, amongst Ugandan

girls, reusable supplies are greatly preferred due to the ability to wash them. However, that is only one part of what Wildflowers International distributes to girls in the villages they serve. The “kits,” which consist of underwear, reusable pads, a waterproof pouch, and a drawstring bag to ensure privacy and dignity, are paired with much-needed education. The girls are taught hygiene and how the human body functions. They are taught that they are “fearfully and wonderfully made” by their Heavenly Father, and that they have a destiny of great value in a culture that typically disagrees with that belief. As illustrator Jemima Ruby states so well in this “period poverty” slogan, “A period should end a sentence, not a girl’s education.”

If meeting this need resonates with you, then please visit www.wildflowersinternational.com today to learn about all their projects and how you can help. They are a 501(c)(3) organization, and they would be grateful for your support. Thank you!



The Benefits Of Reflective Journaling For Leaders

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



Engaging in scheduled, reflective journaling as a spiritual discipline, particularly in natural environments like a riverbank, offers a helpful way to process emotions, clarify thoughts, and deepen self-awareness. Setting aside dedicated time for reflection helps individuals create a structured space to engage with their inner thoughts without the distractions of daily life. Writing in a journal allows for the articulation of ideas, concerns, and emotions, making them more tangible and manageable. When this practice becomes routine, it nurtures consistency in self-reflection, leading to greater emotional regulation, enhanced decision-making, and a more dynamic understanding of personal experiences and encounters.

Spending time in nature, particularly near a river, enhances the benefits of journaling by creating a serene and grounding atmosphere. The rhythmic sounds of flowing water and the visual beauty of natural surroundings have been shown to reduce stress and improve cognitive function. Nature has a calming effect on the nervous system, allowing individuals to approach their reflections with a clearer mind. The river itself symbolizes movement and renewal, encouraging writers to see their

thoughts as evolving rather than fixed. This natural setting helps create a sense of connection to something greater, making personal struggles and concerns feel more manageable.

Incorporating music into this reflective practice adds another layer of emotional and cognitive engagement. Music has the power to evoke emotions, stimulate memory, and create a mood conducive to deep introspection. Gentle instrumental music, ambient sounds, or even personally meaningful songs can serve as a backdrop that enhances the journaling experience. Music helps unlock creative thinking and can bring unconscious thoughts to the surface, allowing for a richer and more honest self-exploration. It also provides a rhythmic structure that can help organize thoughts and reflections more effectively, making journaling sessions more fluid and insightful.

Beyond immediate emotional benefits, maintaining a reflective journal serves as a valuable reference for tracking personal growth over time. It becomes a record of evolving thoughts, emotions, interactions, and patterns, offering insight into how challenges have been navigated and

overcome. This documentation can be especially useful for identifying recurring themes in personal development and recognizing areas that need further attention. When combined with time in nature and music, scheduled journaling becomes a holistic practice that nurtures mental well-being, fosters creativity, and

strengthens resilience in the face of life's challenges.

Begin by setting aside one day per week for this exercise. Over time it will become a built-in habit similar to those who exercise daily. Remember that the distance from memorable moments can make them blurrier. However, recording the events can

make them more meaningful and serve as a point of reference that will prove valuable in the future. This is especially helpful for leaders who are engaged in special projects and campaigns. It helps in decision making, processing bumps in the road, and remembering your purpose.



Tennessee Valley Spotlight

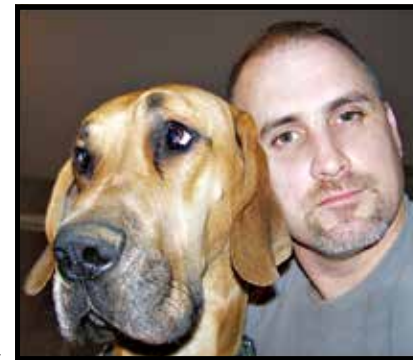


Mondays at 10am

1080 AM WKAC

Is Your Dog's Fence Secure?

by Joel Allen



One day I received a phone call telling me that a friend's two Great Danes, Petro and Fable, escaped their yard. Those two are like "Frick and Frack"...lol... where there is one, there is the other; and the only difference is Petro is bigger, white with dark spots, typical Harlequin colors. Fable has more black and has white on her face and feet, almost Mantle coloring. So, I got out and helped track them down.

It was cold, raining, and reminded me of all the winters I went to the field in the Army because the cold was trying to set in my bones even as I was riding around in a warm car with Houston, Fable's brother. They look almost identical, as I would learn while I was riding through nearby neighborhoods and speaking with people who had seen the two escaped Danes; everyone would say, "Oh good, you found one!"

Now, ask yourself, "What would I do if this were me?" Think about that for a bit. These dogs are so loved that their human mom left work to find them and we, the community, pulled together and searched with her. It is not easy going door-to-door and house-to-house asking strangers, "Have you seen two huge Danes running amuck?" or "Have you seen two dogs the size of ponies?" It is because we live in a world where evil has touched our lives, or we have witnessed true evil, that many folks do not want to get involved; and I really expected that to happen here. Well, here in Athens, Alabama, that was not the case. Everyone that I met or spoke with about Petro and

Fable were on Facebook updating the sightings and posting where they were seen. Thanks to one resident calling me, we were able to pinpoint the location where Petro was found. In fact, because of this person, we were able to track Petro and bring him home safely. Fable, was the smarter of the two. She got cold and found her way back home where she waited for her human mom to come home and let her get warm. Petro refused to come back at first; but we believe it was because he was looking for Fable. He kept running to us and then back to the woods. By his body language, we could see he was searching for something. Dogs are the funniest characters God could have given us, in my opinion. This can happen to any of us who have dogs, whether they are big or small. There are those who look at a dog and think, "Eh! It's just a dog..." and that is their opinion for which they are entitled to.

I shared this with everyone

to thank all who helped and to also talk about what we can do to secure our fences. There are many evil-minded people in the world that would not hesitate to take someone's dog or let them loose from their yard. To prevent things like this from happening, I always place chains and locks on my fences. No one is just going walk up to my property and let my dogs out, and I really wouldn't advise it due to the fact that the person opening my fence may not make it off my property until I return...lol. If I come home and find a person being sat on by a Great Dane, I am not going to call them off. I am going to take their picture and post them all over the internet with a headline, "This is what happens to stupid people doing stupid things!"

Another idea I always tell people is to take a walk along your fences and look for signs of digging. Dogs are fast diggers. There is a funny picture on the internet that shows a yard with huge holes all around, and

in one hole, there is a Belgian Malinois peering over the edge with a title saying, "I think my dog is infantry!" How do we cure diggers? One way is to fill the holes almost back up, and then place their own poop on top with a dusting of dirt for camouflage. In most cases, your dog will be like, "Ew! Really?!" and take the hint. Another method I have used is lava rocks. By placing lava rock at the top of the hole and then lightly dusting it with dirt, your dog will get a painful digging experience when starting to dig in that same spot again. One last method I have used is chicken wire. This is quite effective because not only will it cause pain in the paw pad, but the dog cannot dig past the wire.

Okay, we have covered most possibilities of escape, but there is one more. What if your dog can get over the fence? There are many ways to stop this. One is an electric fence, and it will not discriminate against who or what it shocks -- so

keep that in mind. Another is electric shock collars, either remote-controlled or sensor-controlled. One more method I know of requires a huge piece of PVC pipe with a smaller pipe in its middle held up at the top of the fence by a cable. It is designed to cause the escaping dog to roll back into the fenced-in area and also keeps critters out. I have seen a farm in Texas use this method effectively.

So, let us all keep our canine family members safe out there. Taking preventive measures can save lives; and always remember, in most cases your dog is more terrified of being lost than we can imagine. Strangers who mean well will try and approach a dog, and most often, the dog will run away. If this happens, be sure not to chase after them. They could panic and run into traffic getting hurt, killed, or causing a traffic accident. Communication, in all cases, raises the likelihood that your dog will come home safely. I am thankful that in this instance we had a happy ending. Granted, it took a couple of hours, but we all pulled together and got Petro and Fable home.

"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**





Madness And Brilliance

by Phil Williams

pilots flew by the seat of their pants.

In the late 1950s, the U.S. Air Force launched Project Excelsior to determine whether a manned flight could break up at extreme altitude and the pilot still safely eject. There was no way to know without trying, and the volunteer was 32-year-old Air Force pilot Captain Joseph Kittinger.

His first attempt from 76,400 feet (fourteen miles up!) did not go well. When Kittinger jumped, he could see the curvature of the earth. The main chute malfunctioned, the shroud lines wrapped around his neck, he was knocked unconscious as he spun downward at twenty-two times the force of gravity. The automatic reserve chute saved his life.

He was asked if he would jump again. It was about something bigger than him: the safety of extreme flight pilots. The brilliant idea had to be accompanied by absolute madness.

On Aug. 16, 1960, Kittinger ascended above New Mexico in an open gondola suspended from a huge helium balloon. At the door of the gondola some joker had put a sign that read, "This is the highest step in the world." He wore a fully pressurized suit, much like an astronaut, and nineteen miles above the earth (that's 102,800 feet!), Kittinger jumped. He fell at speeds exceeding 600 mph for over

four-and-a-half minutes. At 14,000 feet, Kittinger pulled the ripcord of his parachute and safely landed. Problem solved. Holy cow, it was madness and brilliance!

Look back at some of the greatest innovations of history and you will find they often were deemed mad when first proposed.

Ben Shapiro and Jeremy Boreing revolutionized the world of media when they built The Daily Wire from their garage. They saw a way to communicate conservative views using the Internet, social media, and radio combined. They were fired by their boss for dreaming it up. Eight years later, The Daily Wire is the largest non-traditional media company in the world with annual revenues of over \$200 million. Madness and brilliance. The world of media will never be the same.

In 1902, the *New York Times* announced that the automobile was an impractical fad. They predicted no way to achieve an inexpensive means of putting automobiles in the hands of the average consumer. They didn't see the madness and brilliance of Henry Ford's mass production assembly line. The price of automobiles came down, and the world of travel and commerce was forever changed.

I could tell a dozen more stories of inspiration, innovation, and heroic effort. True stories of Americans doing that which was deemed abso-

lute madness and turned out to be brilliance.

It is that sense of things that is needed to fix our government. The Left calls it madness, the Right calls it brilliance.

But with the advent of DOGE, common sense executive orders, the pardoning of political prisoners, the termination of bad actors, securing of the border, investigation of the withdrawal from Afghanistan, the cutting of wasteful spending on frivolous projects, the restoring of destroyed areas of North Carolina, the demand for accountability in the war in Ukraine, the end of DEI, and the restoration of military readiness...I could go on, and you know I could... we are watching a pace that no one ever thought possible in the realm of government. The left plays constant catch up to the day-to-day running of the righting of the American ship of state. It is madness and brilliance all at one time.

I don't want a government that settles for status quo. This is the nation that won the Space Race, invented atomic energy, and tore down the Iron Curtain. We survived our own civil war and established the world's premier civil rights. We have solved problems throughout our history that many thought unsolvable.

We did it because as a people, as a culture, we are mavericks. We see problems and know that solutions will take madness and brilliance, and

we love that. It is part of who we are.

This is the by-God United States of America, where we break norms, tear down walls, and run through obstacles just because we can.

And the only way to keep that brilliant craziness going is to take the leap off of the highest steps in the world. And that means having a government that is not bloated, or slow, or belligerent. It means having a government that is lean, and hungry for more, and which empowers the private sector to pursue crazy ideas that change the world.

So, yes, I'm loving the changes I see in government right now. It is madness and brilliance...it's amazing how often those traits coincide.

Phil Williams is a former State Senator, retired Army Col and combat veteran, and a practicing Attorney. He previously served with the leadership of the Alabama Policy Institute in Birmingham. Phil currently hosts the conservative news/talkshow Rightside Radio M-F 2-5 pm on multiple channels throughout the southeast. His column appears weekly throughout Alabama. The views and opinions expressed here are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the policy or position of this news source. To contact Phil or request him for a speaking engagement go to www.rightsideradio.org.



The Alternative Approach

The Miracles Of Magnesium

by Roy Williams



All prescription drugs come with risks. That's why I tell everyone on my radio shows, in my articles, and in our stores that the definition of prescription is: permission to poison. Put enough poison in your body over a long enough period of time and you will suffer the consequences. The Brown Institute writes, "There is no perfect medicine. The benefits and harms of any treatment must be carefully considered in order to prescribe the safest, most effective course of action for a patient." And there lies the problem. We depend on our medical professionals to have our best interest in mind and not their personal gain for writing the prescription in the first place.

We work with thousands of customers each year at Herbs & More in Athens and NHC Herb Shop in Killen. Most of our customers have become sick and tired of being prescribed a medication just to have to be put on another one to fight the side effects caused by the first one. At some point most of them come to us asking if we can help them come off their medications. We always let them know that they must work with their doctor before coming off their meds; however,

based on their diagnoses, we can point them to the all-natural supplements that can support their health naturally. What is often surprising is that most of them can eventually become drug free using the right nutritional support, and it almost always cost less.

There are no perfect medicines. All prescribed drugs come with a list of possible side effects ranging from skin rash, ulcers, increased blood pressure, and in some cases, death. We always recommend that our customers go online to the *Physicians' Desk Reference* and do a search using the name of the drug and read the possible side effects. Over half of them get back to us saying that the side effects are worse than the symptoms of the disorder the drug would treat. If I may, I suggest that you should possibly avoid any drug with side effects that include a possibility of death. Of course, each individual must make a personal decision for themselves.

Even though there are no perfect medicines, there are many totally safe supplements that can do extremely impressive things in the human body without



any fear of causing side effects and cost so little that I believe everyone should consider taking them. The one I'm going to focus on today is a perfect example. It may come as a surprise that over 80% of adult Americans are magnesium deficient. Let me give you some facts that may help you figure out if you are deficient and at the same time give you the benefits of magnesium. To begin with, a Myocarditis Alert was released on February 14 concerning significant health disasters in progress as a direct result of the medical madness of mRNA injections. It stated that somewhere between 20 and 100 percent of COVID-19 vaccinated patients have some level of heart damage, or what is considered subclinical myocarditis.

Everyone should know that magnesium is THE treatment for myocarditis, not saying that is a cure but is a supplementation that can mitigate some of the damages. It is the perfect treatment because magnesium-deficient patients have the highest chance of dying from myocarditis. Over fifty percent of clinical

myocarditis patients die within five years. Please remember that those with normal-to-high levels of magnesium have the lowest chance of dying. Magnesium is a very inexpensive way to stack the cards in your favor without side effects.

There are even more reasons to support your health with adequate magnesium, which has the potential to prevent a cascade of chronic diseases. Because magnesium is essential for healthy control of blood vessel function, blood pressure regulation, and regular heart contractions, a deficiency in magnesium increases the risks of endothelial dysfunction, hypertension, cardiac arrhythmias, and sudden death from cardiac arrest. Magnesium intake is also inversely associated with coronary artery calcifications or atherosclerosis. Magnesium deficiencies complicate any problem with the calcification of any body part because calcium is toxic in the face of such deficiencies. Calcium should never be taken without magnesium.

A significant cause of arterial stiffness in CKD patients is the development of vascular calcifications, which magnesium can slow down or even prevent in many cases. Magnesium is involved in more than 600 different functions including cell membrane stability; mitochondrial function; maintenance of the tertiary structure of DNA and RNA; many major metabolic and signaling pathways; protein, lipid, and carbohydrate synthesis and metabolism; insulin/glucose metabolism; nervous and immune system function; heart function; muscle formation and contraction; bone and calcium metabolism; and activation of the nutrients thiamine, vitamin C, vitamin D and iodide.

The best form of magnesium ever formulated is a part of the NEWtritional Health Care product line. It has been clinically tested to be absorbed over 95% at a cellular level, making it the first choice even in the medical profession for many years. Great news. No prescription is necessary to purchase magnesium chloride because it has no toxicity and does not interfere with any medications. Best news, you can get 100, 520 milligram tablets, a 100 day supply for most people, for under \$30.00. Go by Herbs & More in Athens, NHC Herb Shop in Killen, our website at nhcherbs.com or call us at 256-233-0073.

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Cooking with Anna (continued from page 13)

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

by Anna Hamilton

are my hiding place; you will protect me from trouble and surround me with songs of deliverance,” and Psalm 107:6 says, “Then they cried out to the Lord in their trouble, and he delivered them from their distress.”

In the New Testament, Jesus Christ is our ultimate deliverer. Jesus came to offer both spiritual deliverance from sin and the ultimate gift of eternal life. Romans 7:24-25 says, “What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body that is subject to death? Thanks be to God, who delivers me through Jesus Christ our Lord!” Galatians 1:3-4 says, “Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, who gave himself for our sins to rescue us from the present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father.” God sent Jesus to deliver us and give us eternal life.

When we have been delivered and given the gift of heaven, God also sends us ways to be delivered from temptation and evil. In 1 Corinthians 10:12-13, it tells us, “So, if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don’t fall! No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to mankind. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, He will also provide a way out so that you can endure it.”

The Bible is full of Scriptures that show us God’s readiness to deliver those who trust and who call upon Him. When we are a child of God, we learn to recognize the promise of liberation and protection from Satan and the troubles of this world.

Knowing that you have been delivered and chosen by God, you have a peace that will wash over your soul. You learn that you have the power and strength when you call upon God to deliver you from any spiritual attack. No matter what you think has a hold of you, you can be delivered from it thanks to the gift we have been given from God of Jesus Christ.

I am trying to learn to lean into God’s deliverance this year and not keep believing the lies told to me by the enemy, Satan. I am enough! My finances will not keep me from being delivered by God. My outward appearance and weight will not keep me from being delivered by God. My feelings of being “less than” will not keep me from being delivered by God. Satan’s schemes will try to bind us to the ways of this world, but we have been delivered by our Lord Jesus Christ. Satan has no power in your life or mine. Remembering that Jesus will never leave us or forsake us gives us peace, love, and a sense of purpose.

This week’s recipe is a yummy and hearty soup that will keep you warm on these cool spring nights. The groundhog did say six more weeks of winter; so this hearty soup will help you get through these next few cold nights. My family loves this and I’m sure yours will too.

“For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds” (2 Corinthians 10:3-4).

Mental Health Minute

Understanding Worry, Stress, And Anxiety

by Lisa Philippart,
Licensed Professional Counselor



“People become attached to their burdens sometimes more than the burdens are attached to them.”

- George Bernard Shaw

The words worry, stress, and anxiety are often used interchangeably. And while these terms are definitely related, those of us in the mental health field define them differently. In fact, the symptoms of worry, stress, and anxiety show up in different areas of the brain. Worry tends to be short-lived and related to a particular situation. Stress is a physical, mental, or emotional factor that causes bodily or mental tension. Anxiety is a constant feeling of unease. Let's take a look at each of these “conditions” separately to discover how

one or all three may be affecting your daily life, preventing you from being a better version of you!

Worry refers to negative thoughts and feelings that cycle in a repetitive and uncontrollable manner. Worrying is actually an essential, normal, and instinctive reaction to help us survive. We tend to worry about something because we perceive it as a threat, which causes us to focus on that danger and then shield ourselves. Unfortunately, worry can morph from a healthy, practical concern and vigilance, to a preoccupation with “perceived” threats. Interestingly, worrying can make us miserable but has also ensured our survival. Unhealthy worry can often arise from emotional childhood baggage related to our beliefs that we can't protect ourselves and others. These include

insecurity, perfectionism, need for control, social comparison, and pessimism.

In general, stress is a response to an external cause, like meeting a deadline at work or having an argument with a friend. The stress response subsides once the situation has resolved. Stress changes the brain's chemistry to make your heart pump faster or your palms sweaty to prepare to act. Thus, not all stress is bad and can actually have a positive effect. For example, it can “encourage” a child to study for a test. Since stress is activated by external factors, addressing the issues of chronic stress head-on can help. Coping skills can include physical activity, breathing exercises, eating and sleeping properly, and taking time to connect with others. Chronic stress can

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be the precursor to anxiety if not addressed.

Anxiety can be defined as awareness working against you. (I love this definition because I can so relate!) It is an intense awareness of what could go wrong or what is going wrong. Anxiety is almost never founded in truth or reality; it's a fear that sinks into you as you become aware of all the negative possibilities of what is often beyond your control. Anxiety can literally cloud your mind to believe that everything that could go wrong, will.

Unfortunately, those who struggle with anxiety realize that it doesn't fade once a threat is eliminated. Anxiety hangs around for the long haul. I believe that anxiety is your reaction to worry and stress, so it starts internally. Many people describe anxiety as a “persistent feeling of apprehension or dread in situations that are not actually threatening.” Consequently, the feeling of anxiety persists even after the concern has passed. And in severe cases, anxiety can escalate into an anxiety disorder. These disorders include: generalized anxiety, panic disorder, phobias, social anxiety, obsessive-compulsive disorder, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD.)

So, you can see that worry, stress, and anxiety represent levels of our responses to threats, either perceived or “real.” How can you reduce your symptoms on any and all of these levels? I'm saving that for next time...

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

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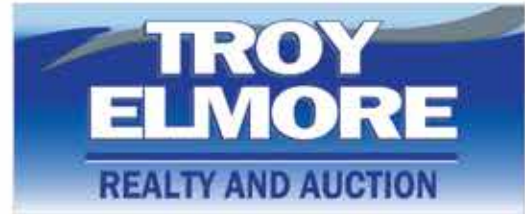
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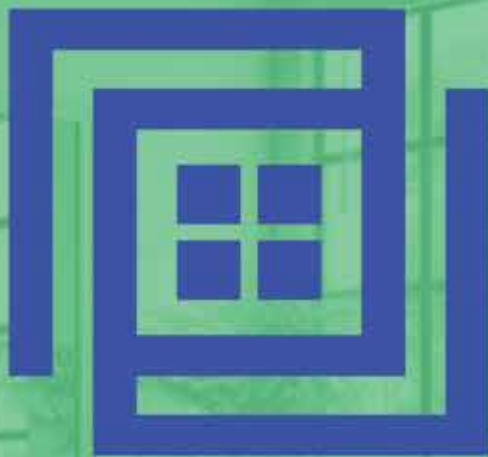
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"You just can't
beat the person
that never gives up."
- Babe Ruth



ANSWER KEY:

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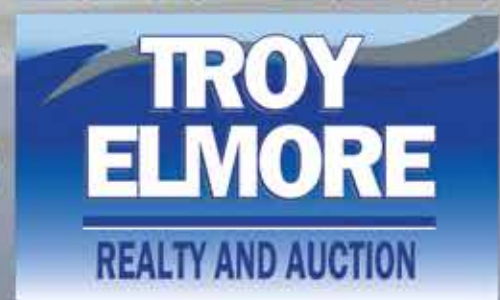
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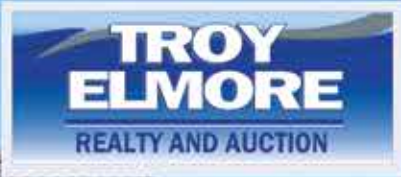
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