

April 4 - April 17, 2025

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E-MAIL: info@athensnowal.com

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Grace Covenant Presbyterian Church Invites You To "Focus On Your Financial Future" On April 24



GRACE COVENANT
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, PCA

By Ali Elizabeth Turner

On April 24, Athens natives Bill Matthews and Tim Chasteen will present a free seminar that is designed to teach local residents the basics of preparing for retirement when it comes to wills,

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Clean, Green And Beautiful



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The All New Athens Now Real Estate Section

By Ali Elizabeth Turner

Since its beginnings in July of 2007, *Athens Now* has been blessed to be the exclusive publisher of real estate listings for Troy Elmore Realty. Troy has been a true friend of the paper, patiently walking me through the vertical learning curve

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Ali Elizabeth Turner
Publisher

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Caleb Lawler
CERTIFIED FINANCIAL PLANNER™
Financial Advisor | Edward Jones

27453 Capshaw Rd. Suite D | Athens, AL 35613
Phone 256.233.4037 | Fax 855.225.7589
caleb.lawler@edwardjones.com



Publisher / Editor
Ali Turner

Copy Editor
Yvonne Dempsey

Graphic Design
Jonathan Hamilton

Web Design
Teddy Wolcott

Sales
Rosemary Stainbrook

Contributing Writers

D. A. Slinkard
Anna Hamilton
Phil Williams
Claire Tribble
Eric Betts
Roy Williams
Nick Niedzwiecki
Stephanie Reynolds
Detri McGhee
Brenda Wilkerson
Lisa Philippart

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Send Inquiries to P.O. Box 428, Athens, AL 35612, or call (256) 468-9425. Emails are preferred, send email to info@athensnowal.com

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Publisher's Point

I Just Might Have Missed It!

A month ago, I wrote a **Publisher's Point** about D.J. Daniel, the 13-year-old kid that been made an honorary member of the Secret Service by President Trump when he gave his address to both Houses. No one knows how long DJ has to live, and he stole our hearts with his passion for law enforcement, his love for his dad, and his affection for Secret Service Director, Sean Curran.

Fast forward almost exactly a month, and I am sitting and having a meeting with Stephanie Reynolds, who writes for this paper and is the Limestone County Tourism Specialist. My phone

rings, and it is from the Atlanta area. I click the side of my phone to make even the silenced buzzing stop, and within seconds, it buzzes again. Now, all the things I have been taught about being present and professional insist that while you are with someone, you don't let your cell phone pitch a fit until you answer it, and that is what I was determined to do. It buzzed a third time, and Stephanie says to me, "You know, you may want to answer that. They have called back-to-back three times, and it might be real."

My Stephe has wisdom beyond her years, and

so I put on my most professional (and hopefully least annoyed) voice: "This is Ali at Athens Now; how may I help you?" On the other end of the phone I heard, "Ma'am, this is Officer Dennis Rowe from the Atlanta Police Department..."

And now, I am in a dilemma. I am wondering if the next phrase is going to be, "I am calling on behalf of the Policemen's Benefit Association," or "Would you like to buy a ticket to the Policemen's Ball?" And to top it off, I am feeling annoyed all over again.

All I want to do is talk to Steph. Then I hear one

of the strangest questions: "Ma'am, do you have DJ Daniel's contact information?" I stammered a no, and came up with the kind of lame suggestion of calling the White House Press services. Officer Rowe then proceeded to tell me that his department wanted to make DJ an honorary officer. Oh, wow! Talk about feeling small. Here I was thinking that this was a scam, and the truth was, this guy had read my article online and was reaching out to me for help.

So, we began to brainstorm, and officer Rowe decided to Google other police departments that had made DJ an honorary officer, and got DJ's dad's contact info. He called me back to tell me, and we celebrated together this kid that had touched our hearts. Then we spent a bit of time praying. Officer Rowe promised me that he would stay in touch and let me know when they were going to do the ceremony, for which I was so glad. And, if it had not been for Steph, I just might have missed it.

Ali Elizabeth Turner

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



athensnowal.com



The DAV Dinner For Vietnam Veterans

by Ali Elizabeth Turner



Athens, Alabama, is blessed to have a Disabled American Veterans chapter that loves to fellowship, cook and eat great food, encourage its members, and honor them for their service. The James L. Daniels DAV/DAVA Unit #51 on Airport Road is where I got to experience all of that on March 29. They had a "Welcome Home" Chinese dinner, and I was glad to know that our copy editor, Yvonne Dempsey, was voted Citizen of the Year. Jim Watson was the EMCEE for the evening, and was himself an honoree.

For those of you that are not familiar with the DAV, here is some background:

"DAV is a nonprofit charity that provides a lifetime of support for veterans of all generations and their families, helping more than 1 million veterans in positive, life-changing ways each year. Annually, the organization provides more than 600,000 rides to veterans attending medical appointments and assists veterans with well over 200,000 benefit claims. In 2019, DAV helped veterans receive more than \$21 billion in earned benefits. DAV's services are offered at no cost to all generations of veterans, their families and survivors."

DAV is also a leader in connecting veterans with meaningful employment, hosting job fairs and providing resources

to ensure they have the opportunity to participate in the American Dream their sacrifices have made possible.

With nearly 1,300 chapters and more than 1 million members across the country, DAV empowers our nation's heroes and their families by helping to provide the resources they need and ensuring our nation keeps the promises made to them."

The DAV was started in 1920, at the beginning of what was known as the Roaring '20s, where vets were still reeling from the effects of World War I. The organization has never wavered from its mission to keep its promises to our vets and their families.

In January of 2025, Yvonne also noted in her article on the DAV/DAVA:

Those eligible for membership in the DAVA (Disabled American Veterans Auxiliary) are: Any person who is eligible for membership in the DAV; any person who has served in the armed forces of the United States of America, who has not been dishonorably discharged; family and extended family members of any disabled veteran (or deceased) or of any person injured and still in active service; family and extended family members of any person who served with the armed forces of any nation associated with the United States of America as an ally, was

honorably discharged, and became an American citizen; and family and extended family members of any person who has served in the armed forces of the United States of America and has not been dishonorably discharged or sepa-

rated from such service.

Awhile back, Jim Watson told the members that their DAVA group needed to be called the "Roadrunners," in part because they were always moving quickly to help out vets and volunteer where needed. Well,

I had a young man by the name of John David McGee as my plus one for the evening, and as a 17-year-old, decided he wanted to become a Roadrunner. And I don't think anything could have made Jim Watson any happier.



John David McGee and Jim Watson at DAV dinner

On The Trail Of Richard Martin - Part 2

by Stephanie Reynolds, Athens-Limestone Tourism Association

"There was a young mother with a boy who was about 6 or 7 and a baby walking down the trail..."

"Oh, here. I have been meaning to give you this," he said as he handed out spiral-bound books of the history of the Richard Martin Trail. We had boldly intruded on his time, but he was gracious to invite us to sit for a few minutes. We had already walked several miles, and it didn't take much encouragement for us to plop down in a chair. "Only for a few minutes," we each thought to ourselves, but we quickly became enraptured of his stories of Athens history and the trail and the time flew.

The Richard Martin Trail started in 1989 by members of the "Athens Roadrunners Club" -- a group of folk enthusiastic to promote running in Athens, Limestone County, and the state of Alabama.

First, they started "small" (though the results were anything but). They hosted the "Fiddler Run", a 10k and fun run in conjunction with the Fiddlers Convention. The next year they added a wheelchair race as well. This race was not only a running outlet, they partnered with the Limestone County Department of Human Resources to benefit the foster children of Limestone County. Over the next 11 years, the program generated \$110,000 for fos-

ter children in our area.

In 1986, they decided to tackle another project: building a track around the high school and rec center. The track became so popular that the city added lights to accommodate night running.

With that project tucked under their belt, they looked for another. It seems that the same drive and discipline to run also transfers to other projects that require dedication and hard work. In 1988, the Athens Roadrunners happened to see an article from the national *Roadrunner Magazine* about the Rails-to-Trails Conservancy, which turns old railroad beds into trails. It so happened that the line from Athens to Pulaski had been abandoned in 1986.

Richard Martin, Mignon Bowers, Henry Blizzard,

and a slew of other folk got to work. TVA jumped in with a full survey of the line, which was a huge blessing for the project.

"The little boy was on the side in the ditch. Suddenly I heard a scream. I thought, 'Oh no...!'"

But this was going to require approval, negotiation with the railroad and landowners, legwork in two states and two counties, and a lot of money. However, this group was nothing if not dauntless. Multiple income streams were paddled including grants and an event called "Blaze the Trail with Pennies," a program in the schools where the students could donate pennies. The classroom with the most pennies got to have pizza on the trail with "Bigfoot." This raised \$16,000! The students from the city and

county donated 1.6 MILLION pennies, which all had to be counted!

In 1993, the group sold prints to generate income. You have seen them in our office. There are some very interesting stories about some of the side characters in the prints. I won't go into them here, but let's just say that some of the folk in the paintings aren't from the time periods that the paintings portray.

In 1999, the covered bridge over Mill Creek was built on the abutment that had been built there in 1901! When you cross that bridge, just pause and think of who was looking at the same abutment in 1901. I wonder what they were thinking, who they were, if they were having a good day.

Year after year, section

after section, the Richard Martin Trail came together, and on Saturday, March 21, 2009, the trail project officially ended. After 20 years and 1.4 million dollars, the dream was completed.

"'I CAUGHT A CRAWFISH!' the boy hollered. And that made everything worth it."

This is just part of the history of the Richard Martin Trail! Sign up for our May 3rd trail walk to create your own history on the trail!

And don't forget that our April Walking Tours are starting April 5. Come to the Tourism office at 100 N. Beaty Street at 9:45 a.m. for a free walking tour of one of our districts. I will be there in costume; feel free to wear yours too! See you there!



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 9am - 4pm

Vidalia Onion Sale

Athens Ladies Civitan Club is selling 10 lb. bags of freshly harvested Vidalia onions for \$12. To order, call Carolyn Stair at 256-658-1985 or Ruby McCartney at 256-655-6080, or send your check to ALCC, PO Box 1814, Athens, AL 35612. Include name, address, phone, and number of bags ordered. Onions will arrive in early May. Orders must be received by April 21, 2025.

Southern Gospel Singing April 18

The Pylant family and Lauren Talley will be in concert on Fri, Apr 18 at 6:30PM. Nebo Community Church, 17772 Nuclear Plant Rd, Athens. Free admission. Contact is Brandon Pylant, 256-339-0665.

Home Heart and Heritage Quilt Exhibition Through 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.

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

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.

Limestone County Master Gardeners Saturday Workshop: Eco-friendly Gardening – Gardening With Native Plants April 19

10AM – 11AM At the Limestone County Extension Office, 1109 W. Market Street, Athens. Discover plants that: * Are well-adapted to Northern Alabama's climate and ecosystem * Use less water * Less fertilizer * Are happy in Alabama soil * Are pollinator magnets * Bring more birds into you yard * Require less maintenance * Are beautiful, many with three season appeal. Taught by Master Gardener Emily Clem. Free and Open to the Public.

Act of Congress In Concert May 15

7:00pm Mccandless Hall, Athens State University, 367 E Bryan St, Athens. Act of Congress has been touring as a band for over 15 years, but it feels like they're just getting started. Dave Higgs of NPR's Bluegrass Breakdown called them "one of the freshest sounding, exuberant bands in all of the known acoustic universe." This genre-bending acoustic quartet's unique blend of pop, folk, gospel, and bluegrass shines on their latest release, The Hymns That Made Us. The state of Alabama has proven to be rich soil for the creative growth of Act of Congress. They have consistently been voted a "Must See Live Act of Alabama" and were the featured artist in the state's "Keep Alabama Beautiful" campaign. Adult tickets are \$15. Kids under 18 are \$5. The Gold Sponsor for this concert is Southern States Bank.

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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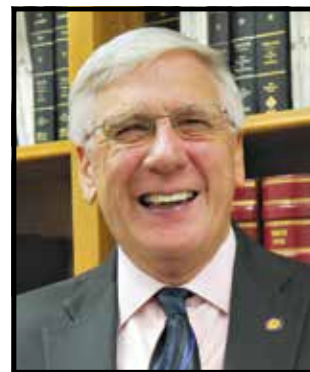
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Goin' And Glowin'

by Ali Elizabeth Turner



Mayor Ronnie called me from the road Wednesday morning. He was on his way to a League of Municipalities meeting in Perdido, and had just landed the night before after a whirlwind trip to Washington D.C. that lasted from “0-dark hundred” Monday until Tuesday p.m. I laughed as he talked about “goin’ and glowin,” which referred to the speed of the trip as well as one of the most tell-tale signs that indeed spring had sprung in North Alabama—that distinct, “day-glow” green of pollen that ends up everywhere. It’s visible along the roads, down in cracks of bricks, and of course on cars. And as far as allergies go, it becomes visible by the amount of Kleenex boxes we empty if we happen to struggle with seasonal allergies.

No matter, the trip had been successful. Mayor Ronnie, Athens City councilman Chris Seibert, Athens City councilman James Lucas, and Athens City Communication Coordinator and Grant Specialist Holly Hollman were pedal to the medal the entire time as they met with numerous federal representatives to discuss appropriations for various needs in our community.

The mayor did chuckle as he talked about being in DC during a physical remodel. Senator Katie Britt’s office was so filled with boxes as the renovations continue that there was hardly room enough for people

to squeeze in there. “The staff managed to be so gracious to all of us in spite of it,” he said.

One of the things that made the trip so profitable was that Mayor Ronnie and Congressman Robert Aderholt were on the same flight to DC, so a relaxed conversation about our growth, our needs, and our vision could take place without having to rush to the next appointment. Congressman Aderholt is a member of the House Committee on Appropriations, whose job it is to oversee federal government funding.

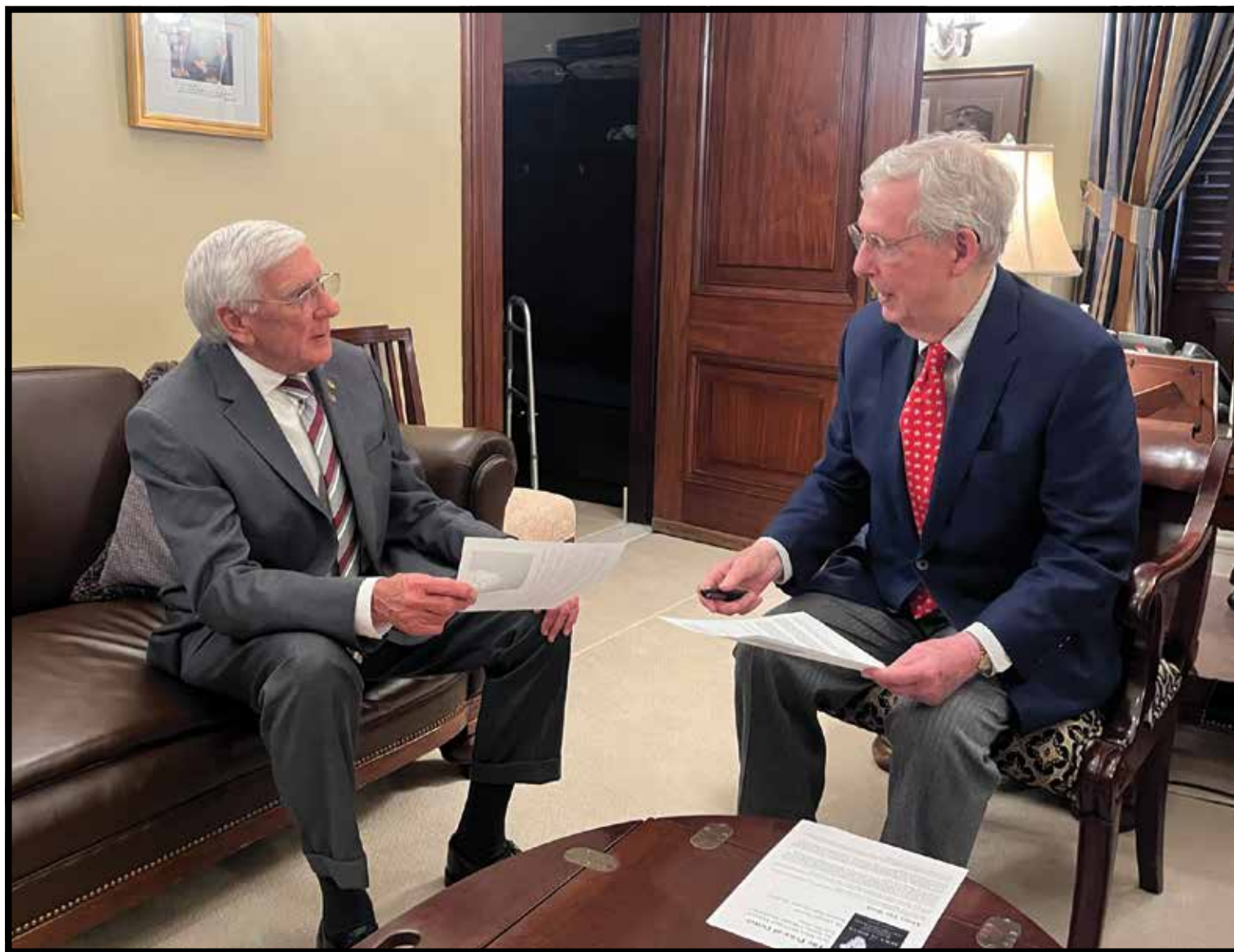
He chairs the Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health & Human Services, and Education, which is responsible for the largest non-defense segment of the federal budget. Aderholt is also a member of the Agriculture Subcommittee and the Defense Subcommittee. Seeing as North Alabama is full of farms, colleges, and is one of the most important centers as it pertains to defense, this “chance” meeting was one of the highlights of the trip.

The team was able to personally meet with Congressman Dale Strong,

with Senator Tuberville’s staff, and the mayor had “glowing” reports about those encounters. The topics of the trip ranged from funding for upgraded equipment for the Athens Police Department, along with managing the fact that in recent years, just one firetruck has gone up in cost from about 1.8 million dollars to over three million; and the waiting list to take delivery is nearly three years. “With how we are growing, we need that truck,” said the mayor, and he was able to communicate that personally with the powers

that be.

Mayor Ronnie also was pleased to announce the hiring of Justin Travis to help Holly Hollman handle her ever-increasing responsibilities, and down the road this column will give him a proper introduction. There was one only one thing left to do, and that was pray. “Ali, I can’t close my eyes while I’m driving,” said the mayor. “That’s a relief, and I know He can hear you if your eyes are open, Mister Mayor,” I retorted. So pray, we did, and once again it was time literally for Ronnie to roll.





What Is Your Choice?

by Detri McGhee - CLU, ChFC

The rain was blowing sideways, pounding the windows so loudly I feared it would wake my three-month-old son who had finally settled down for his afternoon nap. Kelly, only two and a half, was fascinated by the "loud rain." I always enjoyed those few minutes with my daughter while Sam slept.

I hurried to catch the phone when it rang, hoping it would not wake little Sam. I listened carefully while my husband told me about his truck problem and asked if I would come pick him up. Now.

The mind is a marvelous thing, and in a few seconds, we can process situations that would take us hours to make others understand. I hoped he wouldn't hear the disappointment at his request to wake up my baby, and get all of us out in the storm...we had no garage.

As I hung up the phone, my precious little Kelly, with her tiny nose pushing against the windowpane, said with a voice that revealed wonder, joy, and even love, "Mommy, isn't it a boo-ti-ful day for rain!?" "Yes, sweetie," I replied. "It is indeed a BOO-ti-ful day for rain!"

In the decades since that moment, I have recalled this whole situation so often when I needed to see the beauty and wonder of what at first felt like a disappointment, or criticism, or failure. Our response to every event of our lives truly

IS our CHOICE. And we can cultivate a positive, uplifting, beneficial response, or we can build a negative, depressing, and costly response. We CHOOSE. Whether we consciously do so or not, we do CHOOSE.

Some people are simply born with more positive, sunny dispositions. However, it should be the goal of growing up to develop our natural good personality traits to their fullest, and learn to take our natural weaknesses and focus on building them into strengths that allow us a better life...and certainly bless those who choose to be around us in our daily life.

Unfortunately, EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE SKILLS are not an education class we take yearly, like math or reading. So, we are left to develop them on our own, or more often by osmosis from the people we grow up around and those we choose as our friends.

I'm thankful that I ended up in a sales career. There we were constantly learning about personalities and how various words, thoughts, approaches, and facts would affect our clients' choices and thus our career outcomes. We were highly encouraged to invest in ourselves, both professionally and personally.

For a moment, can we do a little exercise? Write down 10 things that irritated you during the past week. Things that made you frustrated, mad, irritated, dejected, or caused

"that word" to fly out of your mouth like it was a regular. Now, write down 10 things that pleased you, causing you to feel and, hopefully, express that joy and gratitude.

Now, pick at least one from each list and imagine how the scenario would change had you CHOSEN to see that event in the opposite way.

Example: Hubby took out the trash. Nice. Thanks. It's so great to have plenty of room to toss my next handful of trash, and avoid any unpleasant odors, etc. He noticed it was getting near overflowing, and it wasn't even trash day! Buuuutttttt...WHY won't he EVER put a clean liner in the can??? I had my hands FULL of trash, and couldn't put it where it belongs because HE didn't put a liner in the ##4%^&# trash can!

Now, tell me, folks... WHO would you rather live with? Spouse #1 - Grateful Greta, or Spouse #2 -Grumbling Gertrude? Spending time, whether at

work or home or outings, with constant complainers, generous grouches, daily downers, or angry attitudes is like living with a loud dripping faucet. Even if the negativity isn't really directed at you, it is exhausting and difficult to handle without falling prey to picking up the habits ourselves.

So, this evening as I placed the fresh trash bag in the empty can, I deliberately thought of positive comments I could... and should...say to myself. I chose (!) to go one step further and make it a prayer. Thank You, Lord, for a big stash of fresh trash bags! Thank You my husband carried out the trash, without even having to be prompted. Thank You I have an abundance of items that even my trash is plentiful!

Thank You that you sent many "someones" into my life through the years who helped me see how my choices truly are My Choices! And may I remember that I have many, many choices to

make during my time on this earth. Many, many Choices. But, may I never forget that I cannot choose the consequences.

Choose wisely. Your choices shape your life and affect the lives of all those with whom you come in contact. A kind word here and there may even save someone's life...or at least place a smile where tears were creeping up, or perhaps cause their burden to be a little lighter. And, I can assure you that you will likely receive many more pleasant moments, the more you give them out.

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





Captain's Log

Doot Doot

by Brenda Wilkerson

Turns out, my momma concerns were unnecessary and the heartfelt prayers for how I would keep my tiny Pre-K munchkin in his seat and entertained for an hour have been answered! Thank you to those that prayed for us - you know who you are! I picked Tiny up at 6:30 a.m. Seated right behind me, he flawlessly entertained himself as he babbled, giggled, and shrieked in delight at every single thing which is actually pretty impressive as he is so tiny he can't even see out of the window to keep him occupied. He can, however, see diago-

nally out of the narrow double doors of my bus. This kid! Who knew my concern and worry ended up being the Mighty Miniature blessing that absolutely overflowed my cup today! After lots of giggling and rambling, I asked him to sing a song. Out of his lungs and through his vocal cords came the cutest non-verbal giggly string of random parts of words that ever crossed my ears. There were many verses. I was belly laughing, which is not what most bus drivers are doing after school. After this 'song'



ended, I quickly wiped my laughing tears and suddenly realized... there was silence. In my

mind, I patted myself on the back and marveled at the creative wisdom of asking him to sing that may have calmed this precious chatterbox directly behind me. Sweet silence.... "BAAAAAAAAAABY SHARK DOOT DOOT DO DO DO DO." Yep, allllllll the verses. I immediately stopped the imaginative patting of my back and wondered what teensy Pandora's Box I had unknowingly unlocked!! Yes...All... The...Verses...The entire shark family and then some! Tiny concluded his early morning concert with the most

precious rendition of "Little Bunny Foo-Foo" accompanied by lots of unrecognizable words. At last, we picked up his seat buddy and the songs were no more. Lord, You know me better than anyone could ever. You KNEW from the beginning of my existence exactly what I needed today. I needed Tiny on this here bus. I am humbled and thankful as I feel Your assurance speak to my heart. "I got you. I love you." Once again, thank you Father for blessing me for what You know I need and not what I selfishly want.

Tennessee Valley Spotlight

Mondays at 10am
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Tel: (256) 828-4288
Fax: (256) 828-4250
hazelgreenchiropractic@yahoo.com
hazelgreenchiropractic.com





Slinkard On Success

“G” Is For Gratitude

by D. A. Slinkard

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

We are now to the letter “G” and our word is Gratitude. The definition is: *The quality of being thankful; readiness to show appreciation for and to return kindness.* When it comes to your life, do you show gratitude for others? Do you show gratitude for what you have in your life? It is a yes-or-no answer and, far too many people do not show enough gratitude when it comes to life. Too many people take things for granted and in doing so miss out on so many blessings.

I have found gratitude as an effective way to change my mindset. It is easy to think negatively in life – to become a “Debbie Downer” – but when we start to show gratitude for what we have in life, we can change a negative mindset into that of a positive one. The world needs more positive people in order to have the necessary impact on society.

Too many people are focusing in on the negative, focusing in on what they do not have or do not want, and we need to have gratitude for life’s blessings. Instead of thinking about how far you still have to go, try to reflect and be thankful for the progress you have already made. The more gratitude I have in life, the happier I seem to be. I have a lot to be grateful for and chances are so do you.

It is having a proper perspective and an ade-

quate amount of gratitude that helps us when difficult times come in life. There will always be valleys in life and there will be mountaintops. We all like living on the mountaintops, and though it would be nice to bounce from mountaintop to mountaintop, the reality is we must go through a valley to get to the next mountaintop. It is inevitable that the valley will be coming, and we need to pay attention to see who we can help elevate with us to reach that next mountaintop.

What usually happens instead is we only focus on our own situation, and we become blinded to others that could benefit from our life experiences and help. When we help others it helps us to have an impact on the world around us and can change our own opinions about our lives. We need to constantly be on the lookout for those we can help.

When we see life through

the lens of gratitude, it changes our way of thinking. Instead of seeing challenges as setbacks or negative events, we can ask ourselves what each moment can teach us. Life will give us trials and tests but we must remember that you cannot have a testimony without a test. You cannot have a message without a mess. We need to take what happens in our life and be thankful and reflect upon what we need to do in order to get where we want to be.

We are where we are at in life because of decisions we have made. The decisions I made five years ago led me to today, and the decisions I make today will lead me to the destination I reach five years from now. The question becomes whether or not we will be proactive in our growth, or will we simply be reactive to what life throws at us?

I cannot answer this ques-

tion for anyone other than myself, and the same is true for you. If we want to change the course of our lives, we must first change the course of our thinking. We need to do a better job of showing gratitude. I suggest having a Gratitude Journal and take a moment each morning to reflect on three things you're grateful for. This simple habit rewires your brain for positivity. I suggest in the morning because we need to run the day or the day will run us.

We also need to learn how to express appreciation to others. People need to hear more positive

talk coming from our mouths. We live in such a negative world that we can become that positive difference in the lives of others. Expressing appreciation strengthens relationships—whether in business, friendships, or family. People remember how you make them feel. The most successful people practice gratitude regularly. It keeps them humble, driven, and focused on what truly matters. Just like exercise, the more you do it, the more natural it becomes. Take the first step now and watch your life change for the better.



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Clean, Green And Beautiful

Celebrate Good Times!

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

Spring has sprung! We are getting ready to be busier than ever as we enter April. We have cleanups planned, the Earth Day Expo, Casino Night, and the Household Hazardous Waste Collection coming up. We are excited (and tired) just thinking about the 2025 Earth Day Expo! The Earth Day Expo is our favorite event every year, and we are excited for the new things in store for this year. While we work hard on this event, it would never be possible without the amazing sponsors that make this event happen. Athens State University is such an amazing

sponsor, and they work as hard as we do to bring this fun, free event to Athens every year. This year, we will be adding an art show to the Earth Day Expo! TBAKI of Athens is sponsoring an art contest for all Limestone County students. "Trees Root Our Community" is the theme, and all mediums are accepted. So grab a paintbrush, pencil, clay, or anything else you can think of and get busy! The K-5 prizes are a bicycle, a hoverboard, and a 3-D pen. The 6th-8th prizes are a microscope, an art set, and a bicycle. The 9th-12th prizes are a telescope, a Polaroid camera, and an art

set. All entries are due at the KALB office on April 18 at 4 pm. Entries will be judged by TBAKI and announced at noon at the Earth Day Expo. All works will be displayed during the Expo as well. TBAKI isn't stopping there, they will also be giving away FREE native tree seedlings! Thanks to Limestone County Water and Sewer Authority, we will have Steve Trash, Rockin' Eco Hero again! Steve Trash's show is a favorite of so many kids. His magic and music make learning fun, and kids love his interactive shows. We will have two different performances, one in the morning and one in the afternoon. It's always exciting to watch the kids when they see their favorite TV star in person! He truly makes learning fun and exciting! Thanks to the Muscle Shoals National Heritage Area, we will have the Science Guys back! We will have two different booths, Catapults and Optical Illusions. At the Catapult booth, kids will learn the science behind the catapult and be able to make their own to take home. They will even get to have a try at the MEGA Catapult! At the Optical Illusions booth, kids will have a chance to learn how their brains are tricked through colors and patterns. The Science Guys are a hit every year, and we are excited to try out their new booths. Muscle Shoals National Heritage Area is also sponsoring Beth Haney Face Painting -- and we all know her beautiful designs! Rise Raptors will be back again with their beautiful raptors. They will also have two shows, a morning and

an afternoon show. Come learn about these majestic birds they will have on display. They are a rehabilitation facility for injured birds, so while they won't fly, you can admire their beauty and learn how to help keep them safe. The Athens State Biology Department will also be there with their snakes, turtles, and other native amphibians. And they will be giving Tree Tours of the beautiful and historic trees around the Athens State Campus. This year, we will have a Recycling Corner to help answer any questions you may have about recycling in Limestone County. Harmon Scrap Metal, Indorama, Phoenix Glass Recycling, Limestone County Recycling, and a Household Hazardous Waste expert will all be there to answer questions and get you on track to better recycling! We also have an amazing vendor lineup. We have a little bit of everything from art to honey to flowers, we have something for everyone! BluBailes Farms, Lucas Ferry Flower Farm, Treetop Terrariums, Katie's Creations, Greenhouse Candles, Green Books, Positive Vibrations (Alabama Rockhound), just to name a few! We will also have the Limestone County Master



Gardeners on site to answer your plant and flower questions. And we can't forget the Lion's Club train will be back! Don't miss this amazing event! It's fun, it's free and we have something for everyone! From information to crafts to products, you'll find something that interests you and your family. We even have a Guided Nature Walk with TVA's Damien Simbeck at Marbut's Bend that morning to kick off the day. You don't want to miss any of this, or any of the other things that I didn't have the space to write about! Join us on April 26 at 10 a.m. to get the party started!

EARTH DAY ART CONTEST

PRIZES FOR THE TOP 3 WINNERS IN EACH CATEGORY!

K-5TH

6TH-8TH

9TH-12TH

"TREES ROOT OUR COMMUNITY"

ALL MEDIUMS ACCEPTED. PARTICIPANTS MUST BE FROM LIMESTONE COUNTY. ALL WORKS WILL BE DISPLAYED AT THE EARTH DAY EXPO, APRIL 26TH AT ATHENS STATE UNIVERSITY. WINNERS WILL BE ANNOUNCED AT 12 PM AT THE EARTH DAY EXPO. SUBMISSIONS DUE APRIL 18, 2025 BY 4 PM. INCLUDE NAME, AGE/GRADE, EMAIL AND PHONE NUMBER.

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Cooking with Anna

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

by Anna Hamilton

Redemption is defined as: 1 - The action of saving or being saved from sin, error, or evil. 2 - The action of regaining or gaining possession of something in exchange for payment or clearing a debt. If you picked one word that describes the theme of the entire Bible, it would be redemption. Redemption is used in both the Old and New Testaments of the Bible. Isaiah 43:1 says, "But now, this is what the Lord says—he who created you, Jacob, he who formed you, Israel: 'Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have summoned you by name; you are mine.'"

Growing up going to church every Sunday, I became accustomed to seeing my daddy lead singing on Sunday mornings. He would stand in the pulpit of that old country church, sunbeams streaming through the frosted glass windows. He would announce the song number to the congregation, even now I can hear the sound

of the hymnal pages turning. We didn't have a piano or any other instruments, just Southern, four-part harmony singing praises to God.

My daddy's favorite hymn composer is Fanny J. Crosby, known as the "Queen of Gospel Song Writers." In her lifetime, she wrote more than 8000 hymns and had more than 100 million copies printed. While this seems like an amazing body of work, what makes it even more amazing was the fact that at six weeks old, Fanny Crosby caught a cold that caused inflammation in her eyes which resulted in permanent blindness. She was quoted as saying later in life, "It seemed intended by the blessed providence of God that I should be blind all my life, and I thank him for the dispensation. If perfect earthly sight were offered me tomorrow I would not accept it. I might not have sung hymns to the praise of God if I had been distracted by the beautiful and interesting things about me."

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Sheet Pan Sesame Chicken and Veggies

Ingredients:

*1 lb. boneless, skinless chicken breast, cut into 1 inch pieces
1 large head of broccoli, chopped (about 2 cups)
2 medium red bell peppers, cut into pieces
1 medium onion, cut into pieces
1 cup sugar snap peas
Salt and pepper to taste
Green onions for topping
Sesame seeds for topping*

For the sauce:
*¼ cup soy sauce
1 Tbsp. sweet chili sauce
2 Tbsp honey
2 cloves garlic
1 tsp fresh ginger*

Directions:

Preheat the oven to 400 degrees.

While the oven is preheating, prepare the sauce. In a small saucepan, heat soy sauce, sweet chili sauce, honey, garlic, and ginger on medium heat and bring to a boil. Turn down heat and allow sauce to simmer,



whisking occasionally, until sauce is thick and bubbly. Remove from heat.

Spread chicken and chopped veggies on a baking sheet sprayed with oil, and season with salt and pepper. Drizzle half the sauce over the chicken and veggies and toss to combine. Bake in the oven for about 20 minutes, tossing halfway through, and continue cooking until veggies are tender and chicken is cooked through.

Drizzle the remaining sauce over top and sprinkle with sesame seeds and green onions. Serve over brown rice

Why Persisting In Crossfit, Or Any Health And Wellness Activity, Is Worth It

by Nick Niedzwiecki - Owner, CrossFit Athens

CrossFit, with its high-intensity workouts and demanding exercises, is undoubtedly tough. It pushes you to your limits, tests your strength, endurance, and mental resilience. In the midst of grueling workouts and muscle soreness, you might find yourself questioning why you should keep going. However, beyond the immediate discomfort lies a myriad of benefits that make persisting in CrossFit well worth it.

Firstly, CrossFit is a catalyst for physical transformation. The varied and intense workouts

engage multiple muscle groups simultaneously, leading to improved strength, endurance, and flexibility. Whether you're lifting weights, sprinting, or performing bodyweight exercises, CrossFit challenges your body in ways that traditional gym routines often can't. Over time, you'll notice changes in your physique, increased muscle tone, and enhanced overall fitness levels.

Moreover, CrossFit fosters a sense of community and camaraderie unlike any other fitness regimen. The shared

experience of pushing through challenging workouts alongside fellow athletes creates a strong bond and support system. In CrossFit boxes (gyms), you'll find a diverse group of individuals cheering each other on, celebrating successes, and offering encouragement during tough moments. This sense of belonging and accountability can be incredibly motivating, keeping you committed to your fitness goals even when the going gets tough.

Additionally, CrossFit cultivates mental toughness and resilience. Ev-



ery Workout of the Day (WOD) presents a new challenge, pushing you to step outside your comfort zone and confront your limitations. As you persevere through difficult workouts, you'll develop mental fortitude, learning to push through discomfort and overcome obstacles both in the gym and in life. The mental strength you gain from CrossFit transcends the walls of the box, empowering you to tackle challenges with confidence and determination.

Furthermore, CrossFit promotes functional fitness, preparing you for the rigors of everyday life. The emphasis on functional movements such as squatting, lifting, pushing, and pulling translates directly to activities outside the gym, whether it's carrying groceries, lifting furniture, or playing sports. By improving your body's ability to perform real-world tasks efficiently and safely, CrossFit enhances your overall quality of life and independence.

Beyond the physical and mental benefits, CrossFit

offers a constant source of motivation and inspiration. The culture of continuous improvement encourages you to set and strive for ambitious goals, whether it's mastering a new skill, achieving a personal best in a workout, or competing in CrossFit competitions. The satisfaction of progress and the pursuit of excellence keep you motivated to show up and give your best effort day in and day out.

In conclusion, while CrossFit may be undeniably hard, the rewards it offers are immeasurable. From physical transformation and community support to mental toughness and functional fitness, persisting in CrossFit yields a multitude of benefits that extends far beyond the gym. So, the next time you find yourself facing a daunting WOD or feeling the burn of sore muscles, remember why you started and embrace the challenge. Your perseverance will not only transform your body but also empower you to live a stronger, healthier, and more fulfilling life.



CROSSFIT ATHENS

CLASS TIMES:
MONDAY - THURSDAY:
5AM, 630AM, 830AM, 430PM,
6PM
FRIDAY:
5AM, 630AM, 830AM, 430PM
SATURDAY:
830AM



Grace Covenant Presbyterian Church Invites You To “Focus On Your Financial Future” On April 24

by Ali Elizabeth Turner

continued from page 1

probate, trusts, Social Security, and Medicare. This educational evening is sponsored by Grace Covenant Presbyterian Church, and will be held at the church. The address is 1432 Freeman in Athens, across from the cemetery around the corner from Lowe’s. The time is 6-8 p.m.; refreshments will be served, and you owe it to yourself to get this kind of educational introduction no matter your age or financial standing.

Tim and Bill have been friends since their days at Athens High School, both having graduated in 1981. They were members of the basketball team and involved in drama, and have remained friends. Bill went on to get his law degree from Samford University Cumberland School of Law in 1989, and his law practice has been located on the Courthouse Square for many years. Tim graduated from Georgia Tech. He was in software engineering and management, and lived in the Atlanta area. Tim and his wife Barcia raised their 4 kids there, and also have maintained a home here in the Rogersville area. Tim and Bill have teamed up to craft a presentation to help out our community because of a shared concern for people trying to navigate the often confusing topic of what is sometimes referred to as “pre-tirement.” Much of what Tim has learned has sprung from his own life experiences as well as the need to prepare well for the future. He says, “A self-proclaimed ‘cash flow expert’ based on 37+ years of marriage, four adult children, and two grandsons. I’ve seen cash flow in volumes, varieties, vectors, and velocities I

never imagined possible.” He also added that he and Barcia are headed straight into their Social Security and Medicare years. To gain confidence along with the desire to be able to help others, Tim attended several seminars. He decided he wanted to be able to do what he used to do when he was in the software business, and that was to “de-mystify” the topic. Tim went on to talk about an experience he and Barcia had recently. “This fall we were discussing Social Security and Medicare with another couple we’ve known for decades. I told them that I believed they were eligible for another \$7K annually in SS payments. They were very skeptical to say the least. Both are very capable and well informed, but sometimes we don’t know what we don’t know! Fortunately for them, they were able not only to increase their monthly payments by \$600, but also received a nice retroactive lump sum windfall.” Tim and I talked a good bit about something that often gets in the way of people getting financially educated, and then getting help. Simply put, it is old-fashioned shame. Everyone knows they need to prepare for their senior years, but precious few do so. And, those who are inclined to do some preparation can easily become overwhelmed with the financial lingo that at times seems to be designed to confuse. “We want people to know that we are not here to judge or embarrass anyone. Our church is doing this in order to reach out to the community. Hopefully people will feel comfortable enough that they will want to come back.” Tim also told me that as of January 2025, there have been some changes made to Social Security that have the poten-

tial to increase the monthly benefits of certain groups of citizens who are normally considered public servants. The Social Security Fairness Act is a law that “aims to address long-standing disparities in Social Security benefits for public sector workers,” according to Tim. What this means is that retired persons such as police officers, teachers, firefighters,

and others could see both an increase in monthly benefits, and in some cases, there could be a retroactive lump sum applied to their accounts. Obviously, this is all very new and Tim will be discussing these changes as part of his presentation. The format for the April 24th event will be that for the first hour, Bill Mathews will cover the wills-probate-trust portion

of the presentation, and then there will be a break for refreshments. Tim will speak the second hour, and there will be plenty of time for questions and answers. Remember, the purpose of the seminar is not to deal with complex, individual financial situations; rather, it is to give information and encouragement. See you there!

FOCUS ON YOUR FINANCIAL FUTURE

Wills, Trusts, Probate, Social Security, & Medicare

Join us at Grace Covenant Presbyterian Church in Athens for an educational evening led by local lawyer Bill Mathews and Tim Chasteen. Learn more about the basics of estate planning and how to access your federal government benefits.

The goal of the evening will not be to resolve individual complex financial issues, but rather to de-mystify these topics and instill confidence for all of us to manage our finances and glorify God together. The evening should prove useful to anyone facing “pre-tirement” or currently navigating retirement.

April 24, 6PM-8PM
1432 Freeman Ave, Athens, AL



PLEASE SCAN TO RSVP

Helping Health Anxiety

by Lisa Philippart,
Licensed Professional Counselor

“We repeat what we don’t repair.”

In my previous article, we discussed the process of dealing with health information through information seeking, evaluating, and asking questions. In this article we will look at a new way of operating to manage health anxiety. The old health anxiety model represents a vicious cycle where the things that you think and do actually increase the amount you worry about regarding your health, and the frequency and intensity of physical sensations you experience. The good thing about a cycle is that you can change it from a negative to a more positive one.

In the new way of operating, we still begin with the internal or external triggers that create the health anxiety. These triggers activate our unhelpful health rules and assumptions. But instead of leading us down that negative path, we can adjust our thinking by asking questions -- “Where did this thought come from and why is it still here? What impact does it have on my life? How is this thought unreasonable or unrealistic? What would be an alternative assumption?” Next, let go of the focus on health symptoms and worries. Practice attention exercises such as doing a mundane task, focusing on mindfulness or meditation exercises, or using apps that guide your positive self-talk and imagery. You can also use postponement to delay any further focusing on health issues until a later time or day, the “worry period.”

Now reevaluate your unhelpful health-related thoughts. If you are still worrying after the “worry period” ends, use a diary, either written or on your phone, to directly challenge the worries. For example, if you felt your heart racing earlier, you could document what you have done since then. Have you exercised or walked the dog, which would disprove that you were having a heart attack? The next step is to reduce checking and reassurance seeking. Again, you can ask questions such as: How helpful is my checking and rechecking, especially if nothing changes or I feel better? Can I decrease the checking, postpone, or eliminate it? For example, if you

are continuously checking your heart rate, what could I do instead? Then test out this new behavior.

And lastly, work on reducing avoidance and safety behaviors. You can gradually start confronting feared thoughts, people, places, and activities. Be aware of and try to slowly decrease safety behaviors. For example, if you have chosen not to go shopping for fear of having heart issues, you could talk through some of your options, such as going when there are fewer people or making a list to only pick up a few items. I realize that initially there may be an increase in anxiety, discomfort, and uncertainty. But the long-term consequences far outweigh these temporary

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

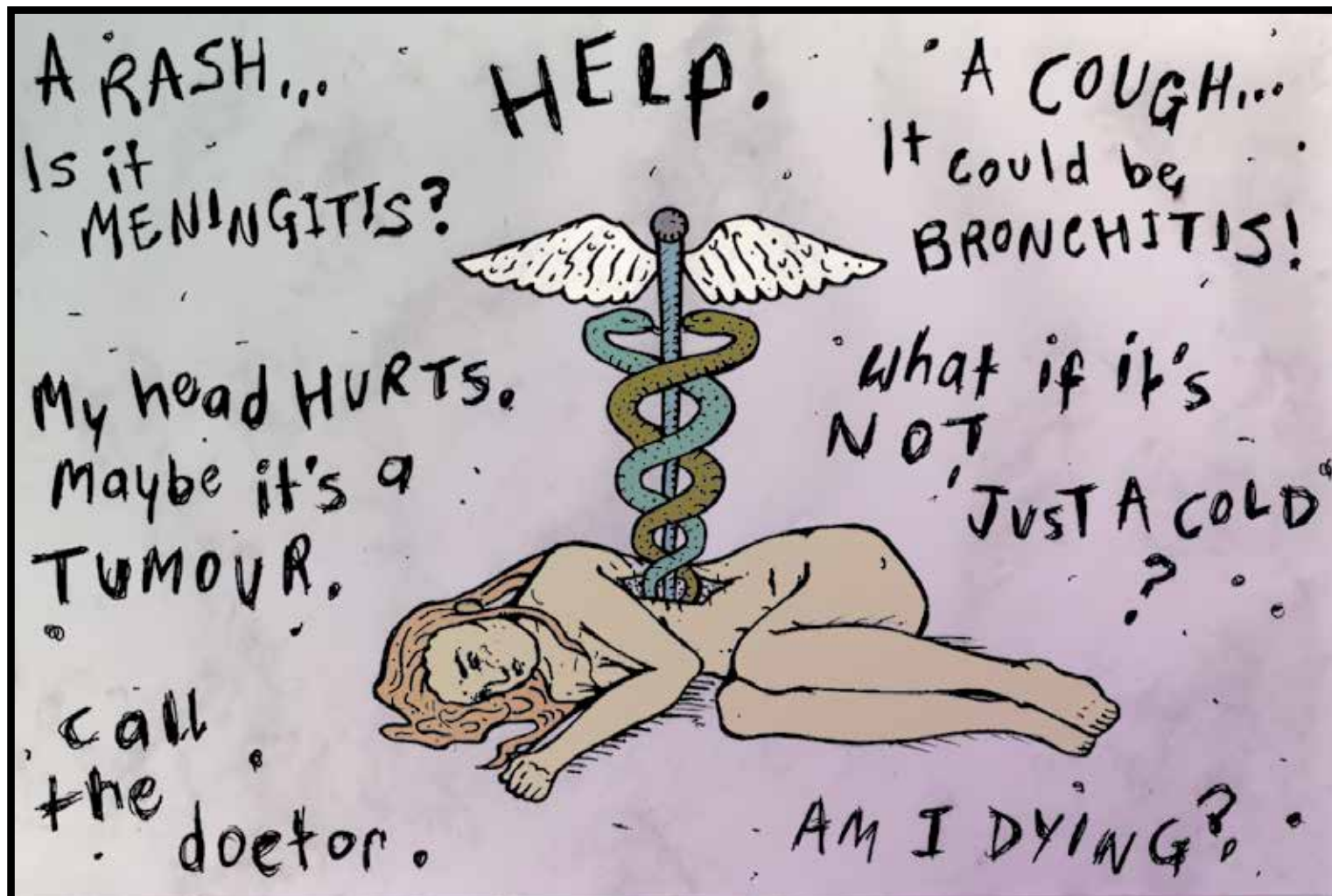


feelings. The hope is that you will develop less worry and concern about current symptoms leading to less chance of creating new symptoms. Less checking behaviors will lead to more opportunities and confidence in your ability to be able to respond appropriately to future health issues that may arise.

The long-term goals are improved relationships and

more time for other important or enjoyable activities. The key is to keep using the above strategies, which will more likely lead to reversing that old cycle of health anxiety.

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





Cooking with Anna (continued from page 13)

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

by Anna Hamilton

One of my favorite hymns written by Crosby is, "Redeemed—how I love to proclaim it!"

*Redeemed—how I love to proclaim it!
Redeemed by the blood of the Lamb;
Redeemed through His infinite mercy,
His child, and forever, I am.
Redeemed, redeemed,
Redeemed by the blood of the Lamb;
Redeemed, redeemed,
His child, and forever, I am.*

The New Testament is an announcement of the message of redemption. It is the announcement that Jesus of Nazareth is the fulfillment of God's promise of salvation. The long awaited redemption had arrived. The separation of man from God had been bridged, had been redeemed, by the death and resurrection of Christ.

Living in a fallen world as Christians means we will experience trials and tribulations and will continue to struggle with temptations.

We are forgiven, but as long as we are in this broken world, God is not finished with us yet. Philippians 1:6 says, "And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ." We live with the anticipation of a promise made by God, that when we become Christians and commit our lives to living for Jesus, we will see the glory of heaven. The debt of sin we owe has already been paid. We have been redeemed.

This week's recipe is an easy one-pan dish that is sure to be not only delicious but also a go-to meal on those busy weekday nights. We love this recipe, but as always, make it your own! Change out the proteins and veggies for the ones your family loves.

"Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; his love endures forever. Let the redeemed of the Lord tell their story—those he redeemed from the hand of the foe, those he gathered from the lands, from the east and west, from north and south." Psalm 107:1-2

Fanny Crosby



Redeemed how I love to
proclaim it. Redeemed by the
blood of the Lamb. Redeemed
thru His infinite mercy. His child
and forever I am.



Learning As A Lifestyle

From Palms To The Cross: A Journey Of Courage And Hope

by Eric M. Betts, PhD

Hampton University School of Religion | Athens State University Coleman Center for Religion Leadership and Culture

The week between Palm Sunday and Good Friday is a journey from celebration to suffering, from public acclaim to apparent defeat. It is a story that resonates beyond Christian tradition—a story of courage in the face of shifting tides and hope that endures even in the deepest darkness.

Palm Sunday and Good Friday are bookends of a paradox: the same crowd that shouts, "Hosanna!" on one day will cry, "Crucify him!" just days later. Yet, woven into this narrative is a lesson that transcends faith traditions: the path of purpose often requires the courage to endure misunderstanding, rejection, and suffering. And yet, even in these moments, hope

remains.

The Courage to Walk the Path

Palm Sunday is the moment of triumph. Jesus enters Jerusalem to the sound of cheers and waving palms, a sign of honor. But his courage is not found in the crowd's approval; it is in his knowledge of what is to come. He rides in humility, not as a conqueror but as one who knows that his mission will lead him into suffering.

This journey reflects a truth familiar to many—there are moments when we are celebrated, when we feel the wind at our backs. But courage is tested not in applause, but in what happens after, when the same voices that once

supported us fade or turn against us.

Jesus does not turn back. He does not reshape his mission to please the crowd. He walks forward, knowing that the road will lead to betrayal, trial, and ultimately, the cross. His courage is the kind that withstands the shifting nature of human loyalty, standing firm in truth rather than seeking security in popularity.

The Hope that Endures

Then comes Good Friday. The joyous cries of Palm Sunday have turned into the silence of abandonment. The very people who laid palm branches at Jesus' feet have now left him to face his suffering alone. The world, at this moment, seems devoid of

hope.

And yet, Good Friday is not the end. Even as Jesus breathes his last, the story is still unfolding. Hope is not destroyed by suffering—it is hidden within it.

This is a truth echoed in many traditions: the greatest transformations often come through pain. The seed that falls into the earth must die before it grows into something new. The night must come before the morning. Struggle and even apparent defeat can be the soil in which new life takes root.

The hope of Good Friday is not in avoiding suffering but in knowing that suffering is not the final word.

A Journey for Us All

The path from Palm Sunday to Good Friday is a path walked by many—by those who stand for justice in the face of opposition, by those who remain true to their purpose despite rejection, and by those who hold onto hope when all seems lost.

This story invites us to be people of both courage and hope. Courage to stand firm even when the crowd turns. Courage to walk forward even when suffering awaits. And hope that, no matter how dark the night, resurrection—new life, new beginnings—is always on the horizon.

From palms to the cross, the journey is not easy. But it is one worth taking.





The Alternative Approach

What Should I Be Taking?

by Roy Williams

With over 30 years of nutritional experience under my belt, one of the most common questions I receive is, "What supplements should I be taking?" With all the knowledge I have accumulated after establishing NEWtritional Health Care, our parent company, we decided to put together what we call the **Healthy Combos** based on each person's specific needs.

For anyone in good health and in fairly good physical condition, we put together the **Healthy Maintenance Combo** which supports good health throughout their life. It was specifically designed to meet all the needs for basically healthy people. It is a combination of **MSM+C and Ultimate Fruit and Veggie**. Anyone who takes the recommended daily dose can rest assured that they are receiving the same as five servings of raw fruits and vegetables every day. It is far superior to any other fruit and vegetable supplement on the market today at about half the price.

Our other combos are each formulated to support specific organs and systems of the human body. Since heart disease is still the number one killer in America let me share the

Health Heart Combo with you. It is a combination of **MSM+C and Heart**, which is formulated around Dr. Matthias Rath's book, *Why Animals Don't Get Heart Attacks but People Do*. Using the most expensive medical equipment known to man, he proved that no one should ever die of heart disease if they simply got the necessary minerals, vitamins, amino acids, and essential fatty acids in their diet.

Of course, almost no one alive today gets all those nutrients in their diet, so we formulated the **Healthy Heart Combo**, which covers every nutrient, in the specific ratios, recommended by Dr. Rath. The results have been nothing less than amazing, with so many people showing their medical reports before and after being on the **Healthy Heart Combo**. Most of them in less than three weeks can walk a mile or better without shortness of breath, in three months regular heartbeat returns, in six months many reports prove better blood pressure and cholesterol ratios. In one year, 50% smaller blockages and in two years no blockages at all.

Osteoarthritis is the number one cause of disability



in America. It is called the wear and tear arthritis because it is due to a lack of proper nutrients that support cartilage, resulting in bone on bone. Without that cushion called cartilage, inflammation begins causing pain and eventually suffering. It can lead to less activity, weight gain, muscle loss, and eventually disability. For those reasons, we developed the **Health Joint Combo**, which is **MSM+C and Ultra Joint Health**. When taken as suggested, in three to four weeks, almost 100% report less pain and inflammation, better range of motion, more energy, and overall better outlook on life. Over the years we have received medical reports of improved cartilage and connective tissue, and in a few cases, up to a 1/8-inch growth in cartilage.

With Type II diabetes slowly becoming an epidemic, we decided to create the **Healthy Sugar Combo**. Type II diabetes is a deficiency disorder, which many doctors now

agree can be prevented and reversed with proper diet and nutritional support. The combo consists of **MSM+C and Sugar Shocker**, which is in all reality a multivitamin-mineral combination for diabetics. It covers all the basics necessary to support insulin production and pancreas health, while protecting the kidneys to help prevent kidney failure, vision support to protect the eyes, and circulation to help avoid neuropathy, which are all associated with diabetes. So many of our customers have proved that this combo works.

We have also formulated combos for women and adolescent girls, called the **Healthy Female Combo**, which supports the entire female endocrine system helping them go through all the changes of life. The **Healthy Male Combo** helps men maintain healthy testosterone levels naturally. The beautiful thing about **Test Up and MSM+C** is that it helps your body make the amount of testosterone you

need, instead of some doctor guessing about how much you should have. The **Healthy Prostate Combo** is designed to support a healthy prostate. It has been prized for those suffering from a swollen prostate. The **Healthy Bone Combo** feeds the body every vitamin and most importantly the minerals that are necessary for bone health. After two years, the results prove that anyone can grow stronger bones.

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Abbie Cooper

Special Feature

Athens Search Warrant Leads To Arrest

by Holly Hollman - City of Athens Communications Specialist



ATHENS, AL – On Monday, March 31, officers with the Athens Police Department (APD) executed a search warrant to address an alleged commercial dog breeding operation on Lindsay Lane after receiving a call about an odor emanating from a residence.

Officer Paul Tucker responded to the initial call, finding numerous dogs living in squalid conditions without access to proper veterinary care.

With assistance from Dr.

Elisabeth O'Connor and Dr. Jorge Acosta at the Limestone Veterinary Clinic, APD was able to successfully remove the dogs from the residence.

A comprehensive investigation conducted by APD has led to a 75-year-old male and 73-year-old female being charged with 38 counts each related to animal cruelty and neglect. Cruelty to animals is a misdemeanor crime.

The investigation suggested that the couple had allegedly been operating the

large-scale dog breeding operation for an extended period of time. The couple turned themselves into APD today and their bond has been set at \$38,000.

Statement from Athens Mayor Ronnie Marks:

"This was a terrible situation that we do not tolerate here in our community. We took immediate steps to remedy this situation. We are so proud of the work that has been done by both the Athens Police Department and the Limestone Veterinary Clinic here in

Athens."

Statement from Athens Police Chief Anthony Pressnell:

"These were very bad living conditions for these animals to live in. The Athens Police Department is committed to protecting all of the members of our community – including animals. This was a very bad situation, and we will continue to work to ensure that those responsible for any kind of animal abuse are held accountable."

This is still an ongoing in-

vestigation and there will be no further comment at the time.

The Athens Police Department would still like to thank the Limestone Veterinary Clinic for working tirelessly to get each dog ready to be rescued by foster families.

According to Dr. O'Connor, the animals will not be ready to be adopted until next week. There is a process to fill out an application online at www.alanimalservices.com.

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Rightside Way

“Race Baiting”

by Phil Williams

Race baiters and charlatans are seeing their storylines unravel in real time.

The era of common sense has returned. President Trump issued two executive orders in recent days designed to undo the left-wing racism, strawman lies.

On the evening of March 27, Trump ordered federal park museums to restore all monuments torn down or removed during the racial reckoning history purge. Likewise, exhibits that advance a racially divided portrayal of modern American are to be amended. Statues of Thomas Jefferson, Christopher Columbus, and even (inexplicably) Abraham Lincoln were all destroyed, removed, warehoused. “Racist!” screamed the race baiters.

How insulting to claim that Americans of the modern era are bound to the sins of the past by claiming racism where none exists. Race baiters claim a washing of history by soiling the present.

Earlier the same week, a second executive order went into effect designed to preserve the integrity of voting in America by requiring proof of citizenship, which will by necessity require proof of identity -- an ID. “But that’s racist!” said the liberal white Karens in academia and race-baiting pundits in media.

It’s so insulting to claim

that “disenfranchisement” occurs when someone is asked to do something as patently simple as showing an ID. We heard the same tripe a decade ago when I was proud to help pass Alabama’s voter ID laws. The court knew it wasn’t hard. All God’s children know it ain’t hard. But liberal race baiters and charlatans need you to believe that it is hard. Because, you know...racism!

Over the past 5 years, screaming leftists told us time and again that racism permeates every aspect of this wonderful society we live in. They foisted the lie that we are born racist, born privileged or unprivileged, solely on the basis of skin color.

Trump issues executive orders aaaannnnndddd...cue the racism mantras.

By the way, I’m a white guy. Whitey McWhitebread, that’s me. White as a cave cricket! Any whiter and I would be clear. Scripture tells me that I am fearfully and wonderfully made, and that God knew me even as he knit me together in my mother’s womb. Apparently being a white guy was part of God’s plan the same as anyone else was born black, Asian, Hispanic, or Martian.

Despite my overtly pale skin tones, I am nonetheless allowed to have an opinion on the state of racial equality in America because: a. God made me that way; b. I have a brain; and c. I have a constitu-

tional right to freedom of expression.

My opinion: The United States of America is NOT a systemically racist nation.

The mere fact that God saw fit in His infinite wisdom for anyone to have any skin color does not negate their right or ability to form an opinion on matters of racism. I’m a man but I have a right and ability to form an opinion about abortion. I’m an American but I have a right and ability to form an opinion about foreign policy. I’m white, but I have a right and ability to form an opinion about racism.

The goal of left-wing race baiters and charlatans will always be to disabuse anyone of the notion that they are worthy to have an opinion on race relations. This is a circular argument -- one in which they wind up only talking amongst themselves about everyone else. Doing so pre-determines an outcome, allows for revisionism, and promotes a festering of the perceived wounds of grievance. No healing is ever allowed in a circular gripe session.

Yet that is what the race baiters want. They want societal wounds. Race baiters want festering, oozing, sucking racial chest wounds right in the heart of society because that’s how they make their money, their notoriety, and their power.

I have two beautiful grandchildren now. There is an innocence that I am

reminded of when I see them. The world is full of wonder. Potential friends are on every playground. Despite what the race baiters and charlatans would have us to believe, children like my grands are not born with racist tendencies. Anyone who has held a small child knows that ideological transference onto an innocent child is not only wrong, it is evil.

I have also lived and served in twelve U.S. states, and seven foreign countries. I’ve seen oppressive governments and the effects they can have. I know America, and this is not that. Knowing what I know, and having seen what I’ve seen, I am convinced that the race baiters and charlatans who preach the hateful rhetoric that the sins of the past must be by necessity thrust upon the generations of the present have no desire to make things better. They need division.

I was taught about slavery in school. My parents taught me that racism was wrong and that prejudice creates division. But I also believe we can teach the wrongs of history while not accusing the current generation of somehow being complicit. No child of modern America has ever owned a slave or been a slave. But we can teach the wrongs of slavery.

The world should know about the march across the Edmund Pettus Bridge. The world should know who Bull Connor was. But the children of the 21st

century are not modern Bull Connors. Teach it all. No skew and no spew. When we accept that bad things have happened, but that not all things are bad, there is healing.

Hateful thoughts left unabated breed hateful rhetoric, which left unchallenged leads to hateful action, which left unchecked causes hateful division. This is what the race baiters and charlatans need to advance their agenda.

I’m a white guy, and I can say that America is not a systemically racist nation.

The sooner the race baiters and charlatans realize we will not be cowed down by their endless frenzies the better off we will all be.

Phil Williams is a former State Senator, retired Army Colel 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 All New Athens Now Real Estate Section

By Ali Elizabeth Turner

continued from page 1

of becoming a publisher, and from time to time would give coaching and suggestions that were indeed helpful. In March, he decided to free up some space for other realtors and advertise with us when he has an auction. Steve and I have nothing but thanks for his support and friendship, and wish Troy Elmore Realty family. It is said that when God closes a door, He opens a window, and we are excited to announce the launch of a platform for area realtors that are interested in beautifully presenting their listings, making space for their trusted vendors, and as space allows, offering suggestions for both buyers and sellers to improve their experience. Kathy Lawrence of Redstone Realty is our first advertiser, and there is room for six more pages. By way of history, *Athens Now* was founded by Wayne and Deborah Huff, and in its infancy,

they were wanting to come up with a tag-line that would “describe the vibe” of the paper -- its values, focus, reason for being and commitment to the community. Nothing came in terms of inspiration until one night Deborah had a dream. In the dream she heard the words “Information and Inspiration,” and that has been tucked beneath the header of each edition ever since. We in turn chose to keep that descriptor when we bought the paper in March of 2011. That phrase has been our “true north,” and what we aspire to be and say each time we go to print or online. My reason for going into that bit of background is to let would-be advertisers (realtors or others throughout the paper) know that having high levels of integrity, customer service, and a desire to strengthen our community are non-negotiable. We truly want to “inspire and inform” from cover to cover, and are prayerfully hopeful that the people who choose *Athens Now* to

Athens Now

information & inspiration

Featured REAL ESTATE



This week's Athens Now Featured Realtors...

To be included in the Athens Now Real Estate Feature call 256-468-9425

get their message out love this place and its people the way we have come to since we took a “divine detour” and landed here 25 years ago. The paper is published on the first and third Friday of every month and is distributed in two states, nine towns, and four counties. Four thousand copies are printed each run, and *Times Daily* in Florence, who publishes the paper, estimates that what is known as the “pass-along” rate is between 12,000 and 16,000. That term refers to when someone reads

it in the doctor’s office and brings a copy home. The online version is read in over 80 countries and has well over a million hits. And, as everyone knows, once you are “out there” in cyberspace, you are out there forever. There is no additional charge for the online publication. If you are a realtor and want to get in on this new development, we encourage you to move quickly. The buzz is building, and honestly, one of my favorite parts of this process is to

discover a wonderful level of collaboration amongst those who are in the real estate business and technically are competitors. More than once I have heard, “Oh, you need to contact so-and-so at such-and-such realty. She’s good people, and would be perfect for this.” That coming from a competitor makes me want to cheer, and we look forward to helping you build your business as we make North Alabama even more beautiful, within and without.

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