

May 16 - June 5, 2025

Athens Now

information & inspiration

AthensNowal.com



E-MAIL: info@athensnowal.com

ADVERTISING:
Ali Elizabeth: 256-468-9425

IN THIS ISSUE:

Special Feature

**Limestone's Boys
State Attendance
Largest Ever in 2025...**
Monday evening, May
5, The American Legion
Post 49 of Athens
hosted a pizza party
and an orientation...
Page 5

What Makes Ronnie Roll

Boots And Suits...
On Monday, May 12,
U.S. Congressman Dale
Strong, who is over
the 5th Congressional
District spoke, at Athens
State University for the
annual Washington
Update breakfast...
Page 8

Cooking With Anna

**My Identity In Christ:
God Says I Am
Victorious...**
I am not an athletic person.
I do enjoy watching sports
but have never been able
to play anything very well.
I'm not even very good at
games like darts or pool...
Page 9

Clean, Green And Beautiful

Thank You...
The 2025 Earth Day Expo
was a huge success, and
we owe a lot of huge thanks
to so many. Without the
generosity of Athens State
University, Limestone County
businesses, and some pretty
amazing volunteers...
Page 15



Eggs Up Grill: It's In The DNA

By Ali Elizabeth Turner

These days, "corporate culture" is a buzz word in the business world, and it is usually associated with "values, vision, mission statement" kinds of things—all good, to be sure. However, I laughed with delight when I spoke with Kris McLellan and she used the term, "The Eggs Up DNA." That term refers to hospitality so

Continued on page 11

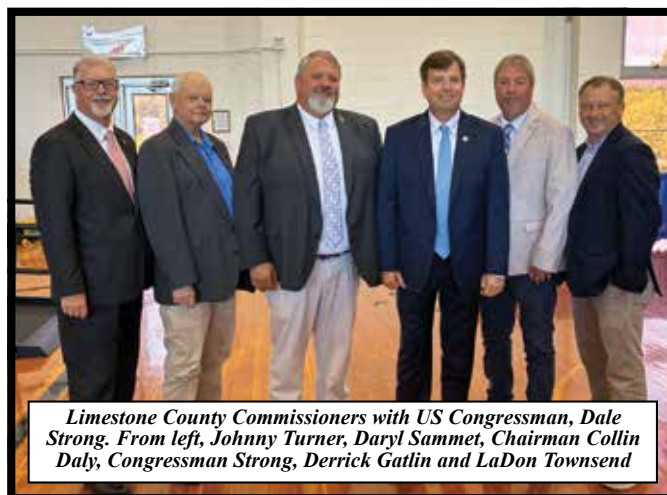


Leading Limestone: Updates From The Commissioners

By Ali Elizabeth Turner

This is the first in a series of articles from and about our Limestone County Commission that are designed to inform, educate and empower our citizens so that we can work together to "grow well." This is a phrase we

Continued on page 13



Limestone County Commissioners with US Congressman, Dale Strong. From left, Johnny Turner, Daryl Sammet, Chairman Collin Daly, Congressman Strong, Derrick Gatlin and LaDon Townsend



FRAME GALLERY
OF ATHENS

YOUR HOMETOWN FRAMER

FRAMES | MIRRORS | SHADOW BOXES | DRYMOUNTS

256.232.2302

TRACIE@FRAMEGALLERYOFATHENS.COM

125 NORTH MARION STREET, DOWNTOWN ATHENS



MATHEWS LAW



www.Athens-Lawyer.com
256-232-2310
 117 S. Marion Street • Athens, AL 35611

"No representation is made that the quality of legal services to be performed is greater than the quality of legal services performed by other lawyers."

RIVER CITY

ROOFING SOLUTIONS INC.

256-274-8530
 WWW.RIVERCITYROOFINGSOLUTIONS.COM

Athens Athletics

SCREENPRINTING & EMBROIDERY

Trophies - Engraving - Awards
Randy McKinney
 Owner
 701 HIGHWAY 31 SOUTH
 ATHENS, AL
 (256) 232-6038
 RANDY@ATHENSATHLETICS.COM
 fb.com/AthensAthletics

Celebrating over

36 years

Legacy of Life

WOMEN'S RESOURCE CENTER OF ATHENS



A T H E N S, A L

WOMEN'S RESOURCE CENTER

256-233-5775 • 24-Hr Hotline
727 Market Street W, Ste. D in Athens
www.savallifeathens.org



PSI

PREMIER STRUCTURES...

GENERAL CONTRACTOR
 2311 S. Hine Street
 232-2092
 EST. 1986



256-497-2840

JR'S HEATING & COOLING LLC

Facebook:
 J R's Heating and Cooling



Dugger's Florist & Gifts, LLC
 www.duggersflorist.com
Melinda Dugger
 Owner
 duggersflorist@gmail.com
 800 Hwy 72 East, Suite A
 Athens, AL 35611
 (256) 232-5777

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
Brenda Wilkerson
Detri McGhee
Jackie Warner
Deb Kitchenmaster

Athens Now is published every first and third Friday of the month and is a publication of Turning Press, LLC. Reproduction in whole or in part, without expressed written permission of the publisher, is strictly prohibited. Athens Now is not responsible for the content or claims of any advertising or editorial in this publication. All information is believed to be accurate. © Copyright 2007.

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

Contents

Publisher's Point	3
All Things Soldier	4
Special Feature	5
Calendar Of Events	6
Slinkard on Success	7
What Makes Ronnie Roll	8
Cooking With Anna	9
Captain's Log	10
Clean Green And Beautiful	11
Cover Stories	12 & 14
Health And Fitness	13
McGhee On Mnaagement	15
From The Tourism Office	17
Learning As A Lifestyle	18
Alternative Approach	19
Horse Whispering	20
Rightside Way	21
View From The Bridge	22

Publisher's Point

The Keeper Is A Definite Keeper!



New York Times best-selling author Charles Martin has just released his fourth installment of the Murphy Shepherd Series, and this one is called *The Keeper*. I will admit that after I heard it was coming out, I was a bit reluctant to read it. This was because I simply didn't think anything else could be said after the first three made me chuckle, sob, and fight with the temptation to, shall we say, speak inappropriately. Boy, was I wrong—it is a *definite* keeper; the kind that makes you feel like a kid who once again snuck the flashlight into their room and stayed up all night to read beneath the covers because you just couldn't put it down. This was the first time I had listened to one of

Charles's books on Audible, and found myself making excuses to drive places and do errands just so I could listen. It is, on both platforms, a most satisfying read as well as a listen.

The hero in all four is a highly successful author whose "day job" involves complex, special ops-style rescues of mostly girls and some boys from the darkest of all worlds: sex trafficking. He has a team, he has a mentor, he has the coolest dog ever, he falls in love, and he travels all over this big blue marble to get the kids to safety and restoration in a place called Freetown. In addition, he doesn't rest until he has dismantled the organizations that enslaved the children in the first place.

There are so many things I appreciate about Martin's treatment of the subject of trafficking and the characters he creates to fully tell the tale. The hero is a man of faith, as are the members of his team, but they are raw, real, and have struggles and strengths that make their individual and corporate journeys entirely credible. Charles has the skill as a writer that paints enough of a picture to vividly and accurately describe the darkness without making you feel like you need to shower or book a session with your pastor, priest, or therapist when you have read the last page.

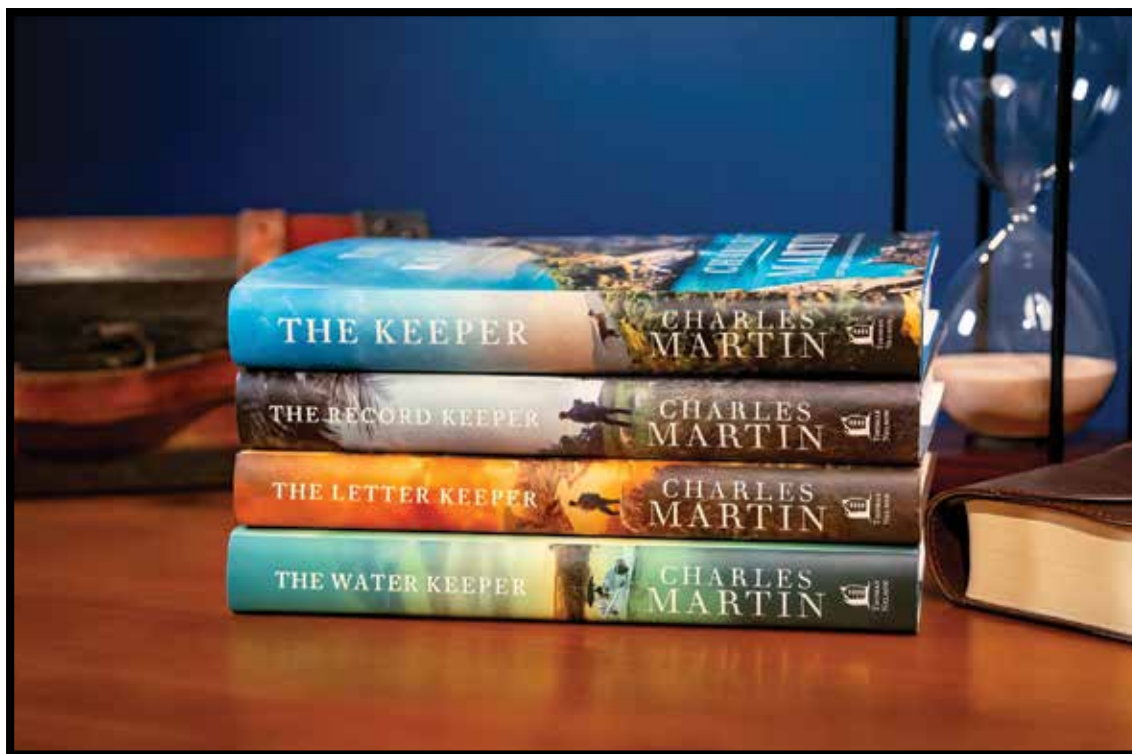
The fierce battle against evil has just the right level of spiritual warfare, and not a one of the victories comes easily or

quickly. And, as a reader, just when you need some relief in the form of comedy, parables, romance, history, or the beauty of nature, those topics arrive in the narrative to help you breathe again. Then, the battle starts right back up before you have the chance to back out.

Not one of the books in this series could be described as an easy read, nor are they supposed to be. *The Keeper* was the toughest for me personally because of the level of commitment needed to demonstrate the "greater love" of the Shepherd that is required of the characters, and by extension, the reader. I recommend you start with the first three: *The Water Keeper*, *The Letter Keeper*, and *The Record Keeper* before you tackle *The Keeper* because of how richly they set the stage for *The Keeper* to do its work. That "work" is to remind us once again that "the needs of the one outweigh the needs of the ninety-nine." Find out how and why, and let me know if you need to borrow a flashlight.

Ali Elizabeth Turner

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



athensnowal.com



Operation Oscar, A Smile In The Great Sandbox

by Ali Elizabeth Turner

Sometimes, I have a hard time getting my head around the fact that it is now nearly 21 years to the day that I left Alabama -- first for Houston and then to what we have come to affectionately refer to as The Great Sandbox, better known as Iraq. My plan was to stay for a year; God had other plans, and they say that if you want to make God laugh, tell him your plans. I stayed for a total of three, and if I felt that I was supposed to go back, I would. Next to becoming a Christian, it was the most transformational experience I have ever had.

One of the things I have a difficult time explaining to people is the powerful and unlikely role of humor in a combat zone. I guess it's because everything is so tenuous, including that life could be over in an instant, and laughter just lightens all kinds of loads.

So, I must tell you that re-

cently I sat at the post office in Athens, which is named after judicial hero Judge James Horton, and laughed in my truck as I heard Col. Phil Williams, who writes for this paper (and others around the state), tell about a caper that is written in a book entitled, *The Devil's Sandbox: With the 2nd Battalion, 162nd Infantry at War in Iraq*. Phil is the host of *Right Side Radio*, and at the beginning of every show he does a monologue entitled, "The Right Side Way." It is a commentary on any manner of subjects, sometimes sobering and sometimes hilarious, sometimes political and sometimes spiritual, always well done. It is my favorite part of the show, and I try to catch at least that part live Monday through Friday.

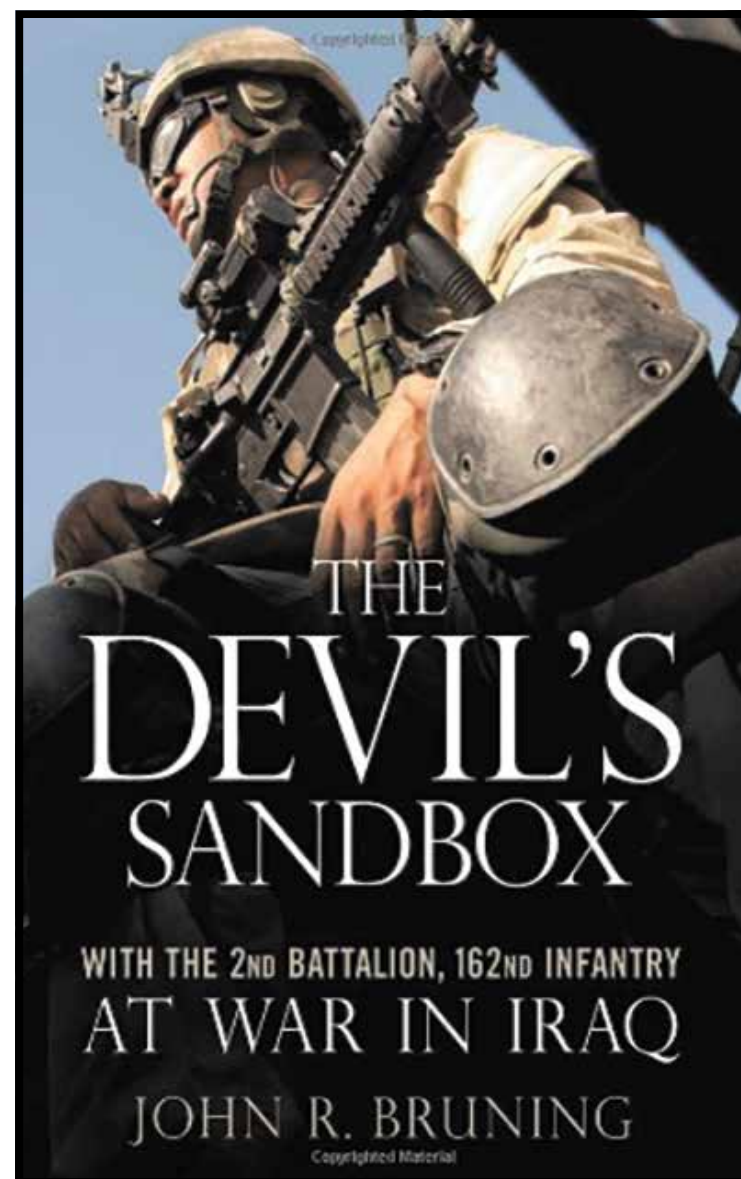
Both Phil and I were in Baghdad the summer of 2004, but our paths did not cross until I called in to his show which is heard on

WVNN. He has the three-hour slot from 2-5 p.m., and now Phil has listeners throughout the Southeast, in California, Hawaii, and Dubai.

What made me laugh? Phil's description of something that is discussed in *The Devil's Sandbox*, in which he participated while still a major. He retired from the Army as a full-bird colonel, served in the Alabama State Senate for eight years and also has a law practice.

In the chaos that was all things post-Saddam, Iraqi garbage truck drivers had commandeered the trucks they had driven, privatized the pick-up service, charged like the Mafia to collect garbage, then dumped it anywhere they could find a spot to do so, and used the garbage trucks also as a taxi service. Baghdad stank, and could have easily exploded in that summer heat of '04. Garbage piles were the size of houses, and no one knew what to do.

But Major Williams came up with a plan that was cheerfully named Operation Oscar after the Muppet of the same name who was a perpetual grouch and who also lived in a garbage can. His crew got word out that



American soldiers were looking for the drivers of the garbage trucks because they had something for the drivers to do. The Iraqis thought surely this involved making even more money because money was flowing swiftly in all directions that summer. So 25 of the 26 drivers came on to the base, and then the gates

were closed behind them. The "something" that was waiting for them to do involved going around Baghdad with a military escort to ensure that the houses of trash were scooped up and taken to the various landfills. There was no protest, just the firm assurance that this was not a negotiation, and the 162nd even found the 26th garbage truck. In addition, the garbage trucks were no longer going to be operating their own Uber service. Operation Oscar was a smashing success, and you can read all about it and other stories from Operation Iraqi Freedom in *The Devil's Sandbox*. Enjoy!!

Flirty Flame
CANDLE CO. LLC

MOBILE CANDLE BAR NOW BOOKING

American Dream Project Winner - Decatur Mall 2023
Singing River Trail Launch Tank Winner 2024

Sherry Jefferson, Owner

256-604-3871
www.flirtyflamecandleco.com

BRADFORD'S PAWN & GUN
ATHENS, AL

Voted #1 Gun Shop 4 years in a Row!
*Source: Athens News Courier

THOUSANDS OF GUNS IN STOCK EVERYDAY!

GUNSMITH ON SITE!

Downtown Athens ~ 256.233.0016
www.bradfordsgunandpawn.com



Mike's Cafe
Owner: Mike Holt
(256) 444-1979
20982 Tillman Mill Rd.
Athens, AL 35614

Limestone's Boys State Attendance Largest Ever in 2025

by Ali Elizabeth Turner

Monday evening, May 5, The American Legion Post 49 of Athens hosted a pizza party and an orientation for high school students selected to attend 2025's Boys and Girls State and their parents. This year's class of Boys State participants is the largest ever at 42 boys.

The program this year returns to the University of Alabama after three years at Troy State University. Boys State is sponsored by the American Legion Department of Alabama and has been held annually since 1937, except for 2022 because of COVID. Beginning May 27, this leadership program in government runs for one week at the University of Alabama. The boys participate in an intense program learning about the establishment of governmental bodies and their operations at city, county, and state levels. Opportunities are available for the boys to win scholarships to both in-state and out-of-state universities.

Boys State Class of 2025, 1st Row (L to R): Connor Johnstone, Athens High School; Kylan McDonald, Ayden Stanford, Jackson Chalmers, all of West Limestone High School. 2nd Row (L to R): John Wilburn, Ardmore High School; Max Thomas, Elkmont High School; Noah Stafford, Brady Sirton, Noah Breland, all of Ardmore High School; Brady Bennett,



Joel Harbin, both of West Limestone High School; Jackson Britnell, Athens Bible School; Ryan Nix, Athens Renaissance school; Briggs Brown, East Limestone High School, Wesley Dean, West Limestone High School. 3rd Row (L to R): Zechariah Shell, Taylor Gooch, both of Elkmont High School; Jacob Plitsch, Lindsay Lane Christian Academy; Tanner Cannon, Jack Deemer, Benjamin Hutton, all of Athens High School; Jason Novalis, Tanner High School; Isidro Mendez, Tanner High School; Drew Stephens, Ardmore High School; Skylar Adams, West Limestone High School; Brodie Coker, Brantly Stinson, both of East Limestone High School. 4th Row (L to R): Andrew Staggs, Elkmont High School; Isaac Britnell, Athens Renaissance School; Benny Seibert, Athens High School; Will Seabolt, Ardmore; Caleb Click, Davis

Williams, both of East Limestone High School; Matthew Fletcher, Tanner High School; Reece Boyett, Kendall Gill, Brayden Mooney, all of Athens High School; J. T. Winter, Reagan Hathcote, both of West Limestone High School. Not Pictured: Sam Coggin, Clements High School; John Deemer, Athens High School; Wesley Dean, West Limestone; Blake Talbot, Ardmore.

Girls State, a program of The American Legion Department of Alabama Auxiliary, follows Boys State at the University of Alabama. Eleven girls from Limestone County will attend this year.

2025 Girls State Delegates: 1st Row (L to R) Anna Page Hammons, Clement High School; Kinly Smith, West Limestone High School; Allie Lovell, Athens Bible School;

Marisa Gonzales, Ardmore High School; Addison Norwood, Elkmont High School. 2nd Row: (L to R) Makaya Dillard, Tanner High School; Katherine Kiel, Athens High School; Josie Starnes, East Limestone High School; Kaleigh Langford, Athens High School; Sophia Steadman, Lindsay Lane Christian Academy; Sarah Nix, Athens Renaissance School.



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

Fridays After Five - JUICE Party Band May 16

5:00 pm to 9:00 pm in Downtown Athens. 200 W Washington Street. Due to inclement weather, Fridays After Five was rescheduled from April 25 to Friday, May 16. But here's the good news - we're doubling the fun in May! You'll now have TWO chances to enjoy Fridays After Five with us: May 16 and May 30. That means twice the live music, twice the food truck goodness, and twice the opportunity to shop, dine, and explore downtown Athens. On May 16, we'll be bringing in Juice Party Band, DJ J Dawg, and all your favorite food trucks, shops, and restaurants for a high-energy night you won't want to miss. The highly anticipated Fridays After Five Music Series, presented by The Orthopaedic Center - Athens, is back and better than ever! The party starts at 5 PM, with DJ J Dawg setting the mood. The main act JUICE party band will take place at 7 PM. Pro Tip: Arrive early for some retail therapy, bring a lawn chair, grab a bite from a local restaurant or food truck, and make a night of it! athensmainstreet.org/fridays-after-five

Tea Honoring Dr. C. Eric Lincoln May 17

2pm-5pm. Pincham-Lincoln Community Center, 606 Trinity Circle, Athens. Come join us for a special event celebrating the life and legacy of Dr. C. Eric Lincoln at the Pincham-Lincoln Community Center. This in-person gathering will feature heartfelt tributes, engaging conversations, and of course, plenty of tea! Let's come together to honor and remember the impact Dr. Lincoln had on our community. Don't miss this opportunity to connect with others who share a deep appreciation for his work. See you there!

Rocket City Spring Tune-Up May 31

9am - 2pm. The Inaugural Spring Tune-Up Car Show at Trash Pandas Stadium Parking Lot. Family-friendly event!! Kids 12 & under get in for free!! Spring Tune-Up Event Link: <https://>

www.facebook.com/share/1BmVSKbGoh/

Spectator Tickets: <https://reserve.imclutch.com/carshow>

Also check out other Kids events & activities in Huntsville. Rocket City Trash Pandas, 14210 Cochran Rd SW, Huntsville.

Vietnam Veterans of America Chapter Meeting June 2

The next meeting of the Vietnam Veterans of America Chapter 511 and the Associates of VVA is on Mon. June 2 at the AL Veterans Museum Event Venue, 114 W. Pryor St., Athens. A meal will be served at 5:15 with the meeting at 6 p.m.

Disabled American Veterans Meeting June 3

The Disabled American Veterans Auxiliary Unit 51 will meet at 6 p.m. on Tues. June 3 at the DAV building, 25396 Airport Rd, Athens. Initiation of officers will be held.

Coffee Call June 7

Free breakfast for veterans and their families will be held at the AL Veterans Museum on Sat. June 7, at 8 a.m. sponsored by Vietnam Veterans of America Chapter 511.

Cruise-In On The Square June 7

6pm. 200 W Washington Street, Athens. Cruise-In On The Square is a once monthly event focusing on classic cars and trucks in Athens Alabama.

Red, White And Boom July 4

Red, White And Boom 4th of July Festival. Starts at 10am. Athens Sportslex, US 31 N, Athens. Join us for a spectacular 4th of July celebration at the Red, White and Boom festival. Get ready for a day full of fun, food and festivities the entire family can enjoy.

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.



Slinkard On Success

“J” Is For Journey

by D. A. Slinkard

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

Our next letter in this series is the letter “J” and the word is “Journey.” We have been on a journey since the start of 2025, and I hope you have been able to get some nuggets out of these previous articles. What I am finding out about the journey is that it goes way too fast and before we know it, our lives pass us by. I remember being a kid and thinking I was going to be a kid forever, and gradually time picked up. I am in my forties with two teenage daughters, and I question where the time has gone.

Too often we get so caught up in what is happening around us that we forget to slow down and enjoy life. There have been numerous people who have generated success in their business life but would be considered a failure in their personal life. This article is to be a reminder of redeeming the time we have now because we are not guaranteed tomorrow. What are some things you have neglected that you could be doing a better job building up? It could be your relationship with your spouse, or maybe with your own children, or even friendships that need some extra care. We all have something we could focus on concerning our journey through life.

One of the guides I use in my daily life comes from reading the King James Bible. If you are not currently reading your Bible, YES, I would suggest you start. Recently, I read in

Ephesians 5:16, “Redeeming the time, because the days are evil,” and this is an extremely truthful statement, especially concerning the times we are living in. We have agendas being touted that are detrimental to what the Bible teaches. When it comes to our children and the journey of life, it is high time we be active in raising our kids. Sadly, though, too many people want to be passive when it comes to childrearing, and what we are finding are kids being brought up with strange ideologies.

The notion that there are more than two genders is beyond me. The notion that a person can decide whether they want to be male or female is absurd. We need to redirect our journey of life and bring back some simple common-sense applications. As I write this article, I hear the television show, Father Knows Best, playing in the background, and I am amazed how wicked our television shows have become. There was a time in which the father of the home was respected, but over the course of time, we have grown to see fathers be the butt of jokes and seen as good for nothing. Our journey through life has seen the home life be destroyed.

It has been said that what one generation tolerates, the next generation will embrace, and we are seeing this play out before us. I do not believe there are many parents out there who do not want the best for their children, but it is time we begin to focus on the journey we are on. We



want so many things in our life, but many times we do not know how we are going to get there. If we do not know where we want to go, how will we know when we get there?

Now we need to figure out

where we want to go in life and then how we are going to get there. Life is all about decisions we make, and the decisions need to be made daily. Life will give us choices to make and the choices we make will determine our future.

What decisions have you made when it comes to the journey you are on?

Life is about learning from the journey even when bad things happen. When these negative situations occur, and they will occur, you need to focus on what you can learn from the event. When we do not try to learn from what is happening to us, this is when we end up making the same mistakes over and over again.

The definition of insanity is doing the same things repeatedly yet expecting different results. We are all on a journey of life, but not everyone will reach their desired destination. Are you willing to commit to the journey to find success in your life? Remember the journey of 20,000 steps begins when you decide to take the first step to start your life’s journey.



Alabama Biz Finder

... Always Open - 24/7
alabamabizfinder.com



Sand Blasting & Powder Coating

Give us a Call:
256-614-2016
www.Tennesseevalleycoatings.com

What Makes Ronnie Roll

Boots And Suits

by Ali Elizabeth Turner

On Monday, May 12, U.S. Congressman Dale Strong, who is over the 5th Congressional District spoke, at Athens State University for the annual Washington Update breakfast. Mayor Ronnie, along with many local elected officials were in attendance, and I caught up with the mayor for a few moments after the event.

“No one can question Congressman Strong’s passion to represent our area,” said the mayor with a smile. Indeed, Congressman Strong has been quite open about what a “different planet” Washington, D.C., is and some of his adventures have been noteworthy. There are two which stood out to us. The first was when Rep. Strong was first sworn in and took a trip with other lawmakers to the Southern Border. He actually ended up helping Border Patrol document illegal crossings that were taking place as he observed from a helicopter. Having spent decades as a first responder in medevac

situations, Strong was able to help create a grid over the mountains that assisted the pilot get an accurate count and picture of what was going on below.

A second “adventure” occurred in the office of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. The Prime Minister greeted Dale and was already aware that Mr. Strong hailed from North Alabama. Netanyahu wanted to personally convey his thanks to the defense industry in our area, mentioning that the Iron Dome, David’s Sling, and other defense systems operating in Israel owe their existence to corporations based here. Dale called that a “defining moment” in his career. Netanyahu’s exact words to Dale were, “Thank you for what you do for peace.” Strong fleshed out that statement by setting forth the realization that we don’t just help keep the peace in Israel, but all over the world.

Another area of concern that is being investigated



is the amount of land either owned or leased by the Chinese. During the Biden administration, no one seemed to know what that number was, and Mr. Strong was able to find out that it is upwards of 380,000 acres, much of which is located near military bases. It is noteworthy that getting to the bottom of what could easily be

a national security issue is becoming bi-partisan. No one would have ever thought that California and Alabama would work together on something like this, and Dale asserted that if we work together, there is no limit to what we can accomplish.

It looks like Space Force is finally, rightfully, and legally going to find its “home” on Redstone Arsenal, and there will be a sizable presence of the FBI here as well. Space Force will provide 1700 direct jobs, and the support employment sector will provide spin off jobs for about 3,000 people. We learned that the FBI has been on Redstone actually since 1971, and Strong was quick

to note that both FBI Director Kash Patel and Assistant Director Dan Bongino have both been here to visit -- something quite rare.

Mayor Ronnie quoted Rep. Strong when he talked about “boots and suits,” meaning that it takes both to make our region along with Washington, D.C., work well. Mayor Ronnie closed our brief time by emphasizing that fact that we “need to stay to stay strong at the local level,” and thanked all first responders for what they do for us. Mayor Ronnie and I were both runnin’ and gunnin,’ but not so much that we couldn’t do what we always do, and that was pray. So we did, and then it was time for Ronnie to roll.



**Chaj Rondelle Enterprise**

Real Estate Solutions

C. Vincent Anderson

2046 Alf Harris Road
Prospect, Tennessee
38477

931-371-7123
chajrondelleentllc@gmail.com



Cooking with Anna

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

by Anna Hamilton

I am not an athletic person. I do enjoy watching sports but have never been able to play anything very well. I'm not even very good at games like darts or pool. When my husband and I were dating, we went to the fair for one of our dates. We decided to play the little game where you throw darts at the balloons. Well, over to the side of the booth was a sign that clearly stated, Do Not Throw Darts Here! Being the gentleman my husband is, he let me go first. I stepped back, pulled the dart up and "woosh," I let it go. Did

it hit a balloon? Nope. Did it hit the board behind the balloons? Nope. It hit the sign that said, Do Not Throw Darts Here. It hit it right square in the middle of the sign. The carnival booth worker and my soon-to-be husband both looked at me in complete shock. So simply saying I'm not athletic is not enough.

I do know how it feels to be victorious though. I am a child of God and Jesus gave me the victory over death by His great sacrifice. In 1

continued on page 16

Hawaiian Chicken Sheet Pan Meal

Ingredients:

*1 ½ lbs. chicken breast cut into cubes
1 red bell pepper, diced
1 orange bell pepper, diced
½ red onion, cut into chunks
1 cup pineapple chunks
½ cup Hawaiian BBQ sauce, such as Baby Ray's
1 Tbsp. olive oil
Juice of 1 lime
Salt and pepper to taste
Optional: Cilantro and sesame seeds for garnish*

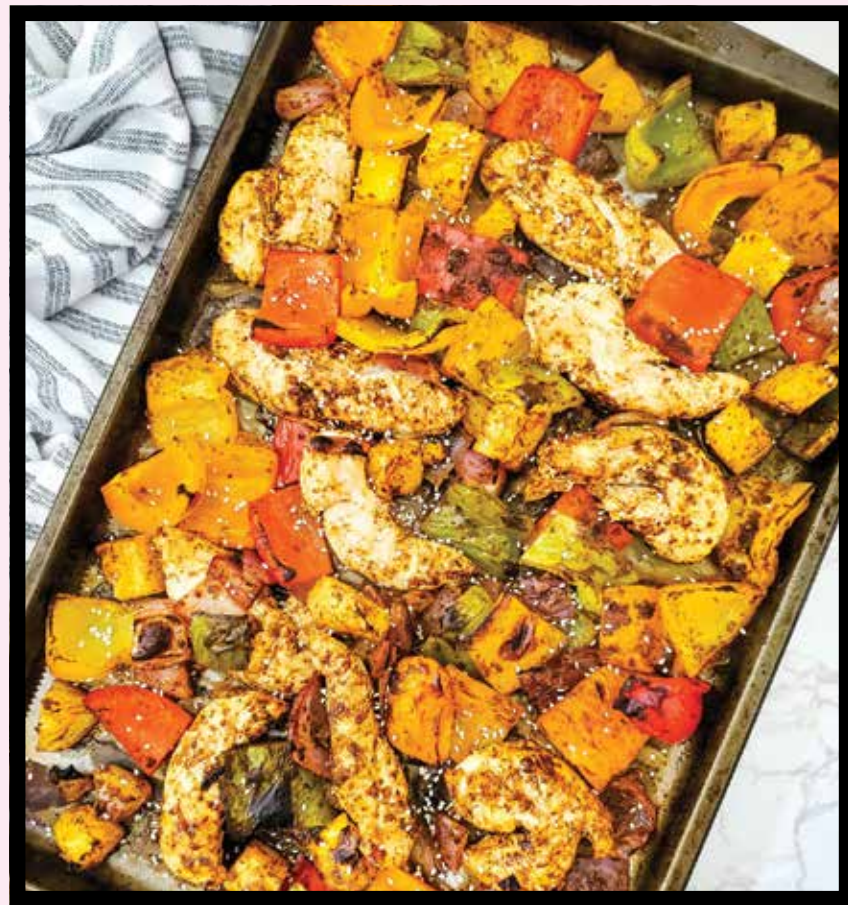
Directions:

Preheat oven to 350 degrees and prepare a baking sheet by lining with parchment paper and spraying with olive oil spray.

Season chicken with salt, pepper, and oil and add to a mixing bowl.

Next, add diced bell peppers, red onion, and BBQ sauce to chicken. Mix thoroughly, so each piece is coated in sauce.

Bake in the oven for 20 minutes, then remove sheet pan and add pineapple chunks before returning to the oven for 10 to 20 more minutes



or until the chicken is cooked through.

Remove sheet pan from the oven and squeeze lime juice over the chicken and veggies. Add cilantro and sesame seeds to garnish if you wish. Serve with rice, cauliflower rice, or quinoa.



Captain's Log

Little Bubble, Big Impact

by Brenda Wilkerson

Driving an elementary bus of giggly wiggly children isn't all fun and games. There are those days that my nerves seem to be fragile and raw. On this particular day, I am admittedly a bit grumpy. I tried all my tricks to get the rambunctious mob behind me mostly under control. We sang all of our songs, chanted the old McDonald's 'Big Mac' chorus, etc. Nothing. Nada. Still no control and the volume was wayyyy over the normal acceptable level. And then it happened. I

declared, "Quiet ride," over the mic. The kids knew they had pushed me to my limit and must now endure excruciating silence for a short time. If that 5 minutes of (somewhat) silence cannot be achieved, then we all have earned an entire route of no talking - which is always sweet music to my weary ears. Welp, as this day would have it, a lower decibel was not achievable. There was the obnoxious, you know, fake sneezes here followed by a cough-laugh there and the low murmur of children talking ducked down behind seats. I



**ADAMS WESTERN WEAR
AND FEED**
Kenneth & Marie Adams
Owner/Operator
28100 Hwy 251
Ardmore, AL 35739
Phone/Fax (256) 423-5868
Mon. - Fri. 10:00 A.M. to 6:00 P.M.
Sat. 10:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M.

**The Original
Rocket City Barns**
•Sheds •Carports •Metal Buildings

See our inventory at:
RocketCityBarns.com

Call or Text
256-221-7062

was desperately trying to ignore all that but this day, I felt myself creeping toward that 'mean/ugly bus driver' condition.

Somehow, I kept it all in check and exercised deep breathing, prayer, and a 'let it go' mentality. Ahhhh, Jesus took the wheel and I was feeling better. And then it happened. I glanced up in the huge rearview mirror briefly to monitor the squirmy bus fam-

ily behind me, and there I saw it. One. Single. Bubble... slowly floating up and throughout our large yellow cab. After all of my behavior management cards were laid out on the table, and I THOUGHT I had finally gained some control. But, someone bravely decided to challenge the cranky bus driver and take their own life, and the lives of each child riding the bus, into their small

little hands by secretly taking out a plastic vial of bubble solution, unscrewing the top, pulling out the wand, holding it close to their lips, and meticulously blowing the perfect single bubble. When my eyes locked on that innocent bubble, in that very moment, I had a big decision to make in a nanosecond -- A. Completely lose it or B. Laugh.

I wisely chose B. We laughed. Yes we did! It was then that I inwardly thanked the good Lord for my job and these bus babies. I finally gave in and accepted the bus chatter which became less and less as each kid departed. Thank you Jesus for the sporadic bubbles in our lives that keep us from taking ourselves too seriously.

**Grant Gilbert
Owner**
Gilbert's Jeeps
Sales • Service • Accessories
www.webejeeping.com
6494 Hwy 72 West
Athens, AL 35611
Cell: (256) 777-2436
Office: (256) 729-1980

Eggs Up Grill: It's In The DNA

by Ali Elizabeth Turner

continued from page 1

well done, whether it is the food, the service, the ambiance, or any other aspect of running a franchise made-to-order restaurant that one can honestly say, "That is, (or is not) part of our DNA." And, that standard just exists without apology or compromise. "We want every person to be seen and valued, whether it's the customer, the delivery person, or the staff," said Kris. As important as fresh and tasty food is, there is so much more involved in making a restaurant experience into something that creates raving fan customers. The proof is that Eggs Up Grill, which started out as one restaurant, is expanding, and very shortly will reach 100 stores. That is no small feat in an uncertain economy.

In Athens and Madison, both Eggs Up shops are owned by Kris and her husband Alex. Alex is a Navy vet who spent his career in the nuclear power program, and they moved here at the behest of TVA. Since retiring from Browns Ferry, he is making science fun for all ages as The Nutty Scientist of Rocket City. Alex gave



Kris his full support when she came to him with what seemed at the time like an audacious ambition: becoming a restaurant owner. He was all for it, and it was actually their "date day" experience that inspired looking into Eggs Up. "We are not night people, so we would always go out for breakfast or brunch for our dates," said Kris, and added, "There was not a lot to choose from, so something like Eggs Up was a logical choice." Kris did a lot of research and found that she liked everything about the Eggs Up culture. Two shops later, she knows she is doing what she was made to do. And, because more than anything she wanted to make a difference, everything about Eggs Up Grill has empowered her to do just that.

Here is a bit of what Eggs Up Grill has to say about themselves:

Eggs Up Grill is home for the whole neighborhood – a

place to sit down, relax, and catch up with friends and family, all while enjoying delicious meals, prepared with love, and served by team members who care.

Every time you enter your local Eggs Up Grill, you can experience a solid sense of community, where the sweet aroma of blueberry pancakes, that first bite of your favorite omelet, and the crunch of crispy bacon make you feel right at home. When you're here, the hectic pace of the day fades away into the sounds of laughter as folks make up for lost time. At Eggs Up Grill, we are neighbors serving neighbors, where everyone who walks through the door is warmly welcomed and greeted with a smile!

The menu ranges from traditional breakfast fare such as omelets, waffles, biscuits and gravy, shrimp and grits, pancakes, and burritos. Eggs can be prepared as the cen-



ter piece or sides. In addition, there are sandwiches, melts, bowls, burgers, salads, wraps, and that's just the beginning! Each Eggs Up Grill also offers catering services, and at the recent Washington Update breakfast held at Athens State University, Eggs Up Grill provided us with truly "great grub." The catering menu features a buffet that can be from basic to more elaborate, and if it is lunch time, there are platters of wraps, sandwiches, "boxed brunches," with several choices of additions and beverages, depending on your budget.

Kris told me that one of the things she appreciates the most is that the corporate culture is the "real deal." She has gotten handwritten thank you notes from the CEO, Ricky Richardson, and franchise owners are encouraged to mentor other would-be franchisees. I told Kris about my own experience at Eggs Up Grill, which involved ce-

lebrating the completion of a complicated project with a teenager, and everything from the food to the service to the cheerful décor made the day extra special. Let Kris and her crew show you what I am talking about, and let Eggs Up Grill demonstrate what it means to have excellence be their 7-days-a-week "DNA."

Eggs Up Grill
Athens and Madison
Locations

Hours: 6 a.m.-2 p.m.,
7 days a week

Athens

22083 Hwy 72
Athens, AL 35613
256-262-9070

Madison

300 Hughes Rd,
Madison, AL 35758
(256) 325-5777

eggsupgrill.com





Clean, Green And Beautiful

Thank You

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

The 2025 Earth Day Expo was a huge success, and we owe a lot of huge thanks to so many! Without the generosity of Athens State University, Limestone County businesses, and some pretty amazing volunteers, we would not be able to host this fabulous event. It takes a lot to find funding, exhibits, and enough volunteers to make it all come together, but it is so rewarding to see the months of planning come together.

First off, I need to thank Athens State University for all the work that they put into this event, especially this year. This year, they had the new president, Dr. Catherine Wehlburg's inauguration the WEEK of the Earth Day Expo. Everyone worked tirelessly to

make everything happen and happen on time. Amy Garrison, Necedah Henderson, Donald Evans (and his entire crew), and Darryl O'Donnell all deserve a month-long vacation. The amount of work they put in just the day before was enough to make anyone go crazy. Not to mention the student ambassadors, Biology Department -- the list may be a mile long. We are grateful for the wonderful partnership we have built, and thank you is never enough.

Then we have the amazing financial sponsors. It takes a lot to keep the Earth Day Expo a free event, and we know that it is a huge request when we reach out for sponsorship. We have been lucky to have great support from the community, and I hope that they recognize the financial investment

that Limestone County businesses make for them. This year, we were thankful to have the support of Athens State University, Limestone County Water and Sewer Authority, Muscle Shoals National Heritage Area, TBAKI, Indorama Ventures, and Bank Independent.

Limestone County Water and Sewer Authority brought us Steve Trash -- Rockin' Eco Hero. This is an amazing show blending magic, music, and education. If you've never seen him, check out his show on PBS! Muscle Shoals National Heritage Area sponsored Mr. Bond's Science Guys and Beth Haney Facepainting, and the kids went crazy for both! We learned about catapults and lasers with Mr. Bond himself. Indorama brought us Tiny Hiney's Petting Zoo with the KANGAROO! I'm not going to deny it, I was out there several times! Bank Independent sponsored Rise Raptors, a raptor rescue located in Toney. They are a great organization who rescues and rehabilitates injured raptors, and they are amazing presenters.

And then there is TBAKI. When I reached out to them, they suggested the tree seedlings, which I loved. But then I realized they were going to sponsor an exhibit on top of that! When I asked them what they wanted to sponsor, they were unsure. So, I explained my idea of having a student art contest, and they jumped on the idea. "Trees Root Our



Community" was born. All students countywide were able to enter artwork of any medium for a chance to win some pretty amazing prizes. There were bicycles, a hoverboard, a 3-D pen, a microscope, a telescope, art sets, and a Polaroid camera. We had so many talented young artists enter, I was glad I didn't have to judge. And just a little side note, the Athens Middle School entries were all crafted on recyclable materials!

Then there are all the volunteers. Damien Simbeck from TVA started the day off with a guided nature walk through Marbut's Bend, and it is different and amazing every year! Vendors chose to take

the time to come and set up and offer really great products, artwork, and advice. We hope that they know how great they are. Athens State provides us with the student ambassadors to work the gates and provides refreshments and offers historic tree tours! Steelcase and United Way sent us so many volunteers this year, it was truly humbling. And of course, there is the Keep Athens-Limestone Beautiful Board that continues to go above and beyond and support me and my crazy ideas. Thank you to everyone; you are amazing people, and I am grateful for each and every one of you!



Become a Fan



KEEP AMERICA BEAUTIFUL AFFILIATE

(256) 233-8000
KALBCares@gmail.com
www.KALBCares.com

Leading Limestone: Updates From The Commissioners

By Ali Elizabeth Turner

continued from page 1

hear often these days, and Chairman Collin Daly, along with the rest of the commissioners, want to make sure that people understand what they mean when they use it. Some of the articles will spotlight individual commissioners and their concerns which are specific to the districts they represent, some articles will reflect ongoing Town Hall events, and some will talk about the functions of various departments and services that are the purview of the county and the commission.

Because we are indeed the fastest growing county in Alabama, and one of the fastest growing counties in the United States, this article is going to include the function and focus of the Commission, and highlight the Leading Limestone Town Hall meetings and surveys.

Collin Daly set the tone of our meeting by asking, "How do we do what we do?" There are a lot of moving parts to making the county run well, and nothing is more important than public safety. "You have to have a safe community at all," he said, and the Sheriff's Department is committed to doing that task well, 100%.

We have eight municipalities, and the City of Athens is in the middle of it all. It takes a network and excellent communication to have a city and county work side by side, and we

have that.

Education is crucial. We have county schools outside of Athens Public Schools; we have the Career Tech center, Calhoun College, and other facilities that are preparing the next generation to be a part of the work force. We also have Senior Centers and much deserved support for one of the largest concentrations of veterans in the United States. Athens Main Street, the Chamber of Commerce, the list is by no means complete, and the endgame according to Daly is to "keep Limestone County's small town feel while we grow."

Besides the chairman and the district commissioners, we have the revenue and license commissioners, and utilities. There's more, for sure, but Chairman Daly wanted to emphasize the need for our residents to get involved in the Leading Limestone meetings and surveys. Here is some of what Leading Limestone

is saying about the next 12 months, and how you can get involved in the process to ensure that we really do grow well:

Limestone County is developing a Strategic Plan, and we need your input to create a vision for the future! This plan will guide decisions on economic growth, infrastructure, housing, transportation, and community services—but it starts with YOU. During the public engagement process we will be defining a future vision for Limestone County. What do the next few decades of development look like for the county?

Over the next 12 months, the county will hold public meetings, and begin working on planning for the future. The final product will be a strategic plan that will guide county leadership through implementation of the strategies and goals developed throughout the process.

During the end of April

and beginning of May, the county held the first of the planning meetings, and they were located at public facilities in the four quadrants of the county. I attended the one held in West Limestone at the volunteer fire station. There were large pieces of paper on several tables which addressed concerns such as infrastructure, housing, economic development, education, quality of life, environment, and more, and we gathered around and brainstormed. All ideas were recorded, even ones with which other tablemates disagreed, and there was lively discussion, laughter, network-

king, and the quality of communication was solid. I appreciated the fact that Chairman Daly mentioned to me that as a result of the West Limestone meeting, a shift in concept and direction was experienced by one of his staffers in the Engineering Department. It was a whole new perspective that had never been considered, and this kind of result is the exact purpose of the Leading Limestone meetings as well as the survey.

There will be more meetings, but for now, the whole commission is hoping you will take the time to complete the online survey and let your voice be heard. This is your chance to shape the place you and your family will call home for decades. Then, please attend every meeting you can. You can also feel free to attend meetings outside of your district, which is what I did, and I am so glad that I did. Whatever you do, get involved. To take the survey, go to www.leadinglimestone.com. We will be sure to let you know about upcoming meetings and developments, and hope you will catch the vision of making our home, as Chairman Daly calls it, "a place to be proud of."



LEADING LIMESTONE



You Don't Need To Be Fit To Start - But You Do Need To Start To Get Fit

by Nick Niedzwiecki - Owner, CrossFit Athens

One of the most common things I hear from people who are curious about getting healthy is, "I need to get in shape before I come to CrossFit." If that's been your thought too, let me be the first to tell you — **you don't need to be fit to start.** You just need to start.

The belief that you must already be in shape before walking into a gym is one of the biggest barriers to improving your health. It's rooted in fear—fear of being judged, fear of failure, fear of not being able to keep up. But here's the truth: the hardest part is just showing up. And once you do, everything changes.

At CrossFit Athens, we work with people of all ages, backgrounds, and fitness levels. Some members join after years of inactivity. Others are recovering from injury or dealing with health conditions. Nobody shows up "already fit." They show up ready to change, and that's what really matters.

We don't expect you

to know how to do a squat or a push-up or use a barbell. That's our job. Our coaches guide every class, every workout, every step. We teach you how to move safely, scale movements to your current abilities, and build strength over time. You'll be amazed at what your body can do when you have support, direction, and accountability.

You also won't be doing it alone. CrossFit Athens isn't just a gym—it's a community. Every person here remembers what it felt like to be new. You'll be cheered on, encouraged, and never judged. You'll find a place where showing up as you are is enough, and that's where the real transformation begins.

Progress doesn't come from perfection. It comes from consistency. It comes from walking into the gym on the days you feel tired. It comes from doing the work even when it's hard. Over time, your body changes. Your



**TRY A CLASS
ON US**

**CROSSFIT
ATHENS**

WWW.CROSSEITATHENS.COM

confidence grows. And your mindset shifts from "I can't" to "Watch me." So if you've been waiting for the "perfect

time" or the "right level of fitness," stop waiting. There's no better time than now, and there's no better place to start than

CrossFit Athens. We offer a free trial class for anyone who wants to see what it's all about—no pressure, no commitment. Just show up and take the first step.

Your future self will thank you.

To schedule your free trial class or learn more about how we can help, email info@crossfitathens.com or call 256-363-6884.

We're here to help you start—no matter where you're starting from.



**HAZEL GREEN
CHIROPRACTIC**
Dr. JOHN BOYLE

13971 Highway 231/431
Hazel Green, AL 35750

Tel: (256) 828-4288
Fax: (256) 828-4250
hazलगreenchiropractic@yahoo.com
hazलगreenchiropractic.com



New & Used Tires
Wheel Alignments

All Size Tire Repair
& Auto Repair

**Athens Auto Tire
&
Wrecker Service**

24 Hr. Road & Wrecker Service

306 Fifth Avenue
Athens, Alabama 35611

Tommy Morris
Office: 771-7537

24 hour
TOWING
SERVICE



Two Questions

by Detri McGhee - CLU, ChFC

Q #1: What is something your mother used to say to you that still rings in your ears today? How about you? What advice/saying/thought immediately popped up for you?

One of my greatest blessings was having a wonderful, godly, loving, smart, kind mother. My deepest sympathy to those of you who didn't have that blessing, for whatever reason. Perhaps you could apply the question to another person in your life. What advice rings in your ear, sometimes in the most surprising places and at the most unusual times?

There are many responses that come to mind with time to think, of course, but the first one that jumped into my mind today, and especially comes up when something happens that upsets me, most especially something trivial: "A hundred years from now, what difference will it make?"

There are so many direct routes, side roads, and rabbit holes we can take from here, depending on the importance of the problem, the other people involved, the urgency of a needed resolution, and so much more. First, and easiest, is to apply this wisdom-question to trivial things that set us off, sidetrack us, or spoil our mood, sometimes for hours or days. "That careless/thoughtless driver just cut me off!" How many

thoughts, words, minutes/hours does that tiny event control or affect my life? And, how many other people will I share that with and ruin some of their day? In light of eternity, what difference will it make?

Well, let's play pretend, and ponder. "What if...?" Scenario: Driver rudely and dangerously cuts you off, almost causing a massive wreck with cars and big rigs!

1. You get so angry at that driver that you curse, call them names, and as soon as you get to work, you tell the first five people you see how stupid drivers are! What difference do you make in your life and theirs by your choices?

a. One of those co-workers was reminded of a similar rude encounter with a neighbor, and their uncontrollable temper sends them into an all-day

task of plotting what will be her retribution for the neighbor's horrible manners. They will retaliate soon. Where does the ripple end?

b. Another co-worker is dealing with a critical spouse, and all his/her frustrations, soul-wounds, fear, and deep, deep pain resurface. Their workday is less productive, blood pressure rises, and that might be the "straw that broke the camel's back" that leads to a huge fight and many negative results.

c. The third co-worker says, "Get over it!" and now, you are forced to decide whether you WILL... or if you will choose to add another angry reaction toward your "rude!" coworker.

d. The fourth co-worker silently thinks, "I am SO SICK of his/her griping, complaining,

and angry attitude!" Their respect for you continues to decline.

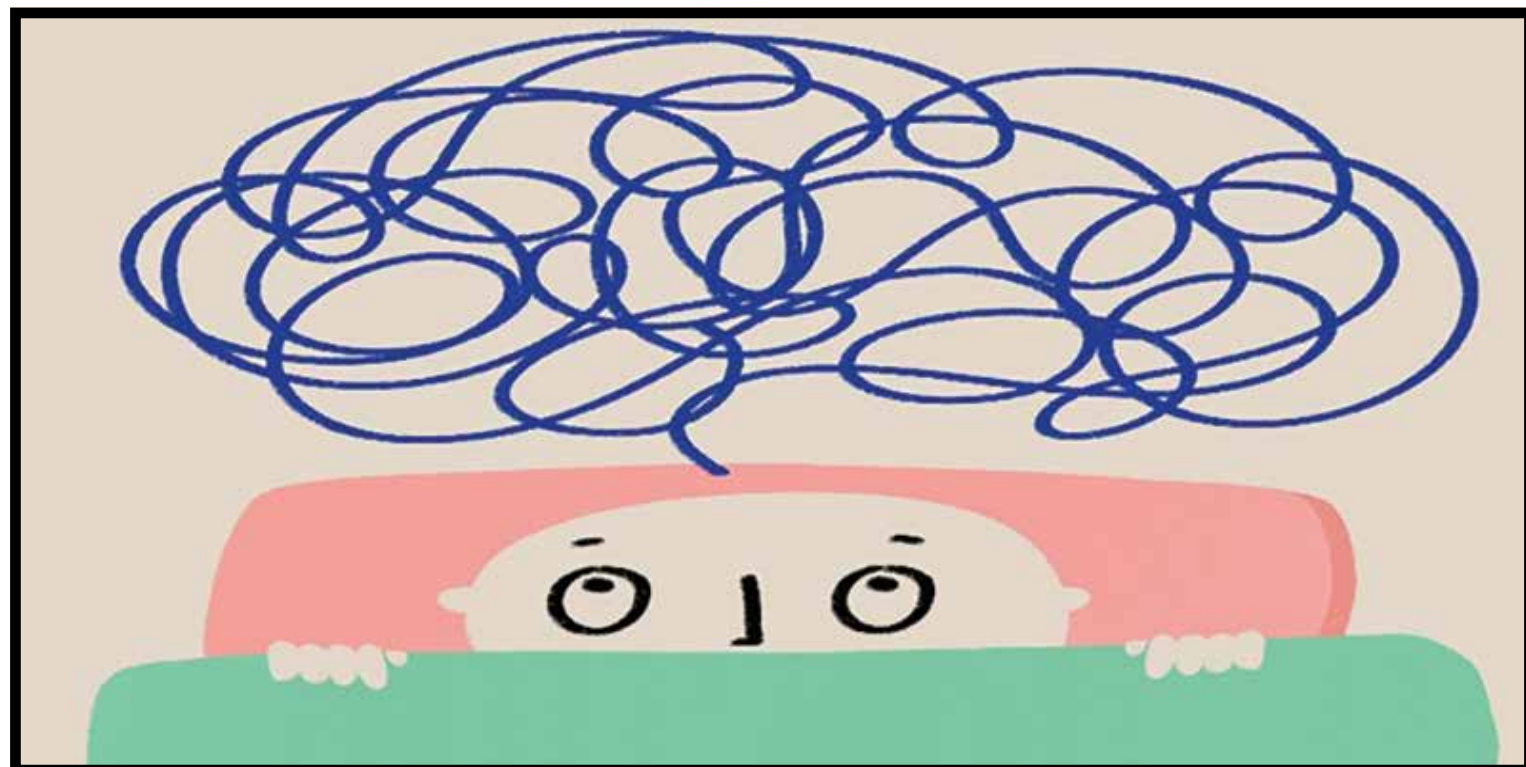
e. The fifth co-worker silently thanks God that they are no longer troubled by such fleeting rudeness, even imagining that the driver was possibly rushing to the hospital for an emergency, and then verbally expresses gratitude that no one was hurt there.

2. Same incident: Driver rudely and dangerously cuts you off in traffic. What would/could have set you off earlier in your life, and made fingers fly into the air to support those ugly words now brings the response: "WOW! Thank you, God, there was no wreck from that, and please protect that driver and others from harm." Your mind goes back to productive things, your heart rate quickly returns to nor-

mal, your attitude stays pleasant, and your blood pressure stays stable. When you get to work, you don't tell anyone about the incident because, frankly, you will never give it another thought. All that could have been robbed from you, simply never existed. Hmmmmmm...Let me think about that!

Q #2: What are the first two words in the following sentence, "**I lost my temper**"?

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.criticism-management.com





Cooking with Anna (continued from page 9)

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

by Anna Hamilton

Corinthians 15:55-58 it says, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, for as much as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord."

When Jesus gave His life for us, He gave us victory against the ways of this world, against the devil himself. Taking on Christ as our Savior give us the peace that we so desperately seek. Jesus tells us in John 16:33, "I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world." How wonderful it is to know that no matter what this world throws at us, no matter what the devil may use to try and take us down, we have already won! We have the prize of heaven

waiting for us, we already have the victory.

How many sports teams go into a game knowing that they are going to be victorious, no matter how the game plays out? Isn't it amazing that we are guaranteed victory through our Lord, Jesus Christ? And nothing can keep us from His love! "Nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 8:39).

The Bible teaches that true and lasting victory is ultimately found in God and through faith in Jesus Christ. It encourages believers to trust in God's power, acknowledging that victory results from us accepting Jesus as our Lord and Savior and having full reliance on the love and strength provided by the Lord.

Victory in Christ doesn't always mean our problems disappear. Sometimes it means we endure with peace, joy, and purpose, even in the middle of difficulty. It means sin no longer has power over us, and fear no longer controls us. Our victory is not just for the future -- it's for today.

This week's recipe is a quick, easy, and delicious one-pan meal for those busy weeknights. My family loves it with chicken, but it would be equally delicious with pork chops, smoked sausage, or steak pieces. I hope you love it as much as we do!

"And my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for He has looked on the humble estate of His servant. For behold, from now on all generations will call me blessed; for He who is mighty has done great things for me, and holy is His name" (Luke 1:47-49).



“What Trail In Limestone County Are You?” Quiz

by Stephanie Reynolds, Athens-Limestone Tourism Association

Ok folks, let's have a little fun!

Since it's the Year of Alabama Trails (2025-2026), and to kick off our series of trail events, let's see which of just a FEW of our fabulous trails matches the even more fabulous you!

1. If you were an animal, what would you be?

a. Chimpanzee: Sun's out, guns out, baby. I'm super strong & not afraid to show it.

b. Bat: I'm quiet and love to do great things when no one is looking

c. Swan: I am willing to travel for the perfect water

d. Horse: I love dappled shade to meander in. And snacks.

e. Cheetah: Look, my dude--lead or follow, but get out of my way.

f. Dog: I like lots of different things to see and sniff.

g. Robin: I am companionable while also doing my own thing.

h. Butterfly: There is always a pretty flower right around the bend.

2. If you were the color green, which shade would you be?

a. Racing stripe green

b. Changing greens like an artist palette

c. Illuminated green like a streetlight

d. Shades of deep green like an emerald

e. A bright green like

grass

f. An iridescent green like a beetle

g. A soft green like fresh moss

h. A mysterious green like jade

3. If you were a food what would you be?

a. Spaghetti

b. Hushpuppies

c. Gummi bears

d. Hot dogs

e. Jerky

f. Chocolate milk

g. Ham and cheese sandwich

h. Baked potato

4. If you were a dog, which one would you be?

a. St. Bernard: Watchful, great with kids, built for distance. “Saving the world, one stranded hiker at

a time.”

b. Standard poodle: A Renaissance man... er, dog. Super smart, often surprising, you know you can be well-groomed AND athletic.

c. Leonberger—Gentle natured, serene, careful, open to everyone.

d. Cavalier King Charles spaniel: Regal, even-tempered, content to get a move on or watch the clouds go by. Or both.

e. Australian shepherd: Agile, keen, you thrive on challenge. “The only easy day was yesterday.”

f. Vizsla: Great stamina, loves its pack, “Let's goooo fastah-fastah!”

g. Great Dane: Rarer, sociable, perhaps in-

timidating at first, but absolutely fabulous.

h. Newfoundland: “Taking it easy, cruisin' with my peeps, but I got your back.”

Ready? SCORE!

Richard Martin Trail:
1-D, 2-B, 3-C, 4-A

Swan Creek:
1-F, 2-G, 3-D, 4-B

Marbut Bend:
1-C, 2-D, 3-H, 4-C

Big Spring (Duck Pond):
1-G, 2-E, 3-G, 4-D

Fitness Park:
1-A, 2-A, 3-F, 4-E

Noah Bike Trail:
1-E, 2-C, 3-E, 4-F

Rural Village:
1-B, 2-H, 3-A, 4-G

Canoe/Kayak:
1-H, 2-F, 3-B, 4-H

Now that you know the trail that most matches you (as far as a 4 question quiz can tell), it's time to explore! You don't have to pick the trail you got, go to any of them, or all of them! Take photos and tag us in them on Facebook and Instagram. Send them to me at stephanie@visitathensal.com. I would love to see you! (Btw, if you enjoy quizzes, let me know. I love making them.)



Ali Elizabeth Turner
Publisher

📞 (256) 468-9425
✉ ali@alturner.com
✉ ali@athensnowal.com

Athens Now AL

Protecting Your Story

Telling It Well



Learning As A Lifestyle

Rewiring Brain And Nervous System For Success: *Habits Not Hype*

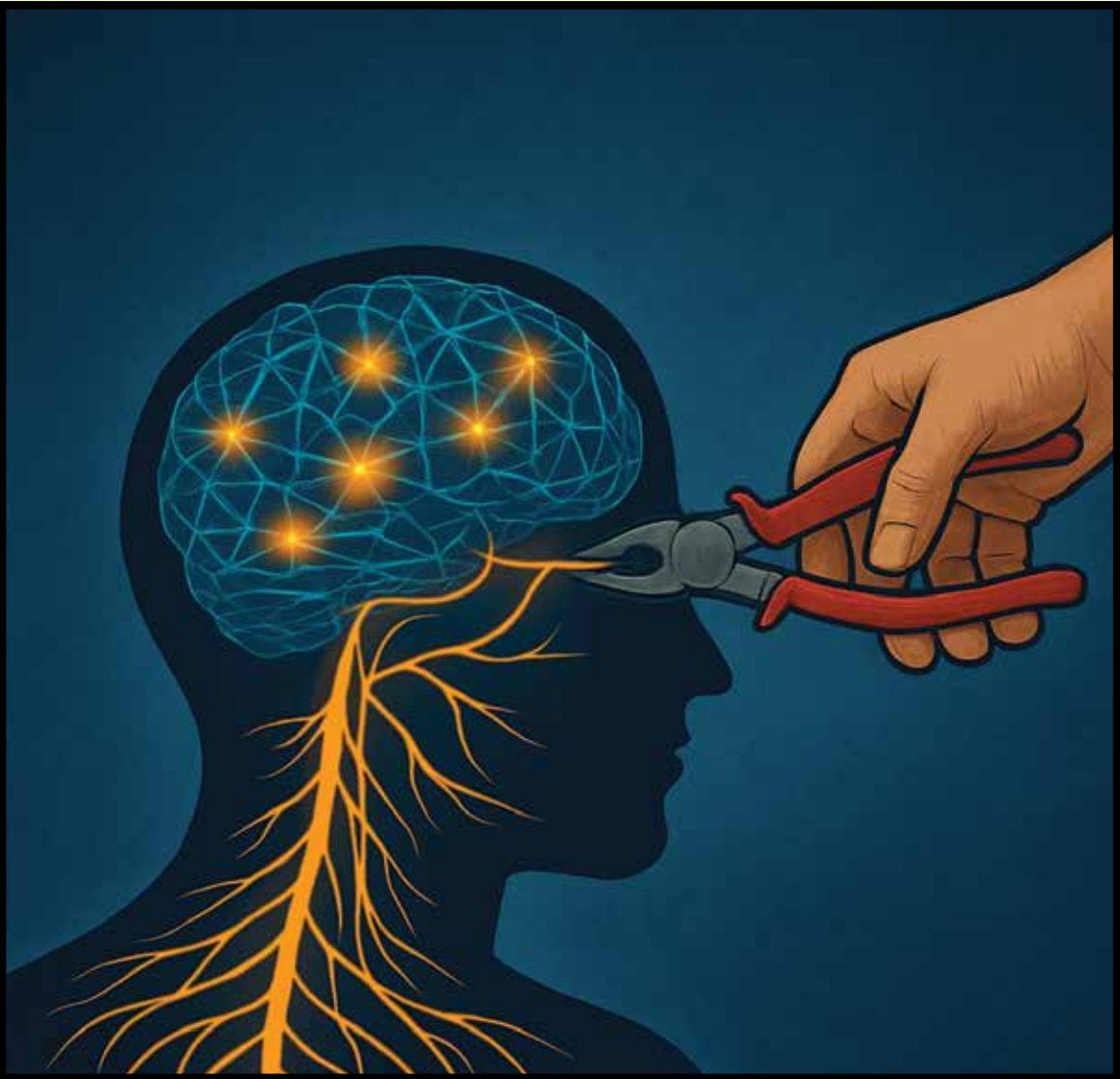
by Eric M. Betts, PhD
Hampton University School of Religion | Athens State University Coleman Center for Religion Leadership and Culture

Leadership workshops, retreats, and seminars can be incredibly energizing. They offer inspiration, tools, frameworks, and even moments of personal breakthrough. For a brief window, it feels like change is not only possible, it's inevitable. But all too often, we return to our regular environments, and within days, we find ourselves sliding back into the same behaviors, reactions, and mental ruts we thought we had left behind. The high of the event fades, and reality—work stress, habits, and deeply rooted responses—settles back in.

The reason is simple: Our brains are wired for habit. Licensed therapist and theologian, Vanessa Brooks, speaks on this often. We don't act based only on what we know—we act based on what we've practiced. Leadership isn't just about having the right information;

it's about developing instinctive, practiced responses in the face of real challenges. Information doesn't automatically rewrite behavior. Most of our responses to stress, conflict, decision-making, or team dynamics were shaped long before we read our first leadership book. The neural pathways in our brains—how we instinctively think, feel, and act—were carved by years of experience, emotion, and repetition.

This is why real leadership growth requires something deeper than inspiration... it requires rewiring. And rewiring happens through the intentional formation of new habits. Leadership development must be more than attending the next big event; it must become a disciplined journey of retraining our minds and bodies to respond differently over time. This means creating structures that reinforce growth: daily reflection, account-



ability partnerships, journaling, feedback loops, and small practices that become muscle memory. Transformation is not a

leap; it's a rhythm.

Ultimately, the leaders who grow are the ones who make a plan to practice. They know that wisdom without habit formation becomes shelf-help, not self-help. They understand that the goal isn't just to know better,

but to do better instinctively. And they commit to the slow, deliberate, often unseen process of becoming someone whose responses are shaped not just by what they've learned, but by who they're continually becoming.

**BRAD STOVALL'S
AUTO BODY**

Let us get your
BODY back
in **SHAPE!**



Behind Tanner Post Office • 233-5140

**CROWN SERVICE**
Termite & Pest Control

TERMITES, ANTS, ROACHES, AND OTHER PESTS

256-631-1168
crownpest8@gmail.com
3413 6th Ave. SW Huntsville, AL 35805



The Alternative Approach

A Better World

by Roy Williams

Something special is coming, and for those who choose to stay informed, you will be ahead of a consciousness that is going to change humanity forever. The biggest fear the pharmaceutical industrialized complex has is the cure of disease. We now know that they already have many of the cures. We have evidence that the powerful industrial medical and pharmaceutical industry buried them. We can now connect those same powerful organizations with the money they used to buy out the leaders of the FDA, CDC, WHO, AMA, and many other three letter governmental organizations, so they could stop any competition from competing with their schemes to enslave our society. When the cures are released, it will expose and destroy them.

All of us will see the cures for ourselves and

will be able to watch that industry become obsolete. All people will soon realize that type 2 diabetes is totally preventable and even reversible in most cases, which will cost Big Pharma billions of dollars of dollars. Watch as heart disease is eliminated and the cardiology industry collapses. Soon, the man-made diseases will be seen for what they are, man-made, designed in a laboratory, enhanced to be even more destructive, and then used to empower the industrial medical complex. The hospitals, the "research" centers, the charities, the foundations -- *they never intended to heal you*. They built empires on your suffering. And now they feed on your silence.

Because we still have freedom of speech and are willing to die for the freedoms given by our creator, the truth will be revealed. Yes, over the

next few months those of you who have a desire to know the truth, will be awakened. This ride will be exciting, and I am going to ask you to share this information with everyone you know, as we expose more and more of the evidence with you. Right now, you can learn more by going to NHCHERBS.COM, then scroll down to the microphone and click on it to listen to Today's Health Update, especially the Freedom Friday shows so you can be aware of what is coming.

In the next few weeks and months, we will give you what they refused to reveal. We will show you how they blocked taxpayer money from ever being used for double-blind studies on all-natural cures. Everything that didn't fit their motto of "Never cure, only treat symptoms," have never



seen the light of day. And not because it didn't work, but because it worked too well. There's no money in a healthy population. And yet, **health is your birthright**. To them, the only healthy society is one that will bow down to their system, which is to control us through deceptions, manipulations, and the promises they have no intentions of fulfilling.

We have studied their data, read their trials, and uncovered their secrets. We know the truth, and now we are developing a system that will help us reveal those hidden secrets to you -- not as a rebellion, but as a righteous duty. Revealing the truth is not a right...we look at it as a **responsibility**.

Our mission is to bless humanity with the one thing their agenda can't afford for us to know, the **truth**. Nothing scares them more. Why does the truth scare them so much? Because an informed society will demand a system that plans to actually prevent disease, not just treat the systems of disease. They not only never look for prevention, they will spend billions of dollars trying to keep it from

the population because prevention will cut their income by 75%. We will demand that all proven and documented cures be made public. It will force the medical profession to use the majority of their time and effort for trauma, which is the one area that they have been most successful. We will demand that the truth about vaccines, the truth about the side effects of synthetic drugs, the true of the damage caused by those drugs, and the true number of deaths that result from the use of those drugs be published.

The people of the world will soon understand that pain is not permanent, that disease does not have to be our destiny, and that our future is not for sale. If you are ready to know about true healthcare, go by Herbs & More in Athens, NHC Herb Shop in Killen, call 256-233-0073 or visit our website at www.nhcherbs.com.

Are you ready to take responsibility for your own health care? If so, we are looking to working with you.

Your Friend in Health,
Roy P Williams



Kentucky Derby

by Deb Kitchenmaster



Grab your hats, ladies and gentlemen and boys and girls. Let's take a walk down the muddy tracks of the Kentucky Derby and see what we can grasp from the symbolism of Kentucky Derby 2025.

Churchill Downs, a horse racing complex in South Louisville, Kentucky, known for its annual Kentucky Derby race held the first Saturday of May, announced their 151st Kentucky Derby race this year.

On Kentucky Derby Day, there are a total of 14 races at Churchill Downs; the Kentucky Derby itself is the 12th race on the program. So what is required for a horse to get a spot at the starting gate in the Kentucky Derby? The horse needs to qualify through the "Road to the Kentucky Derby" series, which is a point system. Horses are awarded points by placing in the top five positions during a designated race, held at various tracks across the U.S. and even internationally.

There is a SOUND that is released calling the horses and their jockeys to the starting gate. This sound is referred to as the "Call to the Post." It is one of the most iconic sounds of the Kentucky Derby that heralds the arrival of the horses. Something, such as the "Call to the Post," is considered iconic because it evokes a strong feeling among the masses, and it's recognizable. As the sound of the "Call to the Post" is released, horse, jockey, and the crew assigned to the starting gate make their way to the gate. On race day, the crew will be seen dressed in khaki jeans, white polo shirts, and green protective vests. All 12 have duties for every race no matter how many horses are running. In between races, some play cards in a small building on the backside of the track. However, once they hear the "Call to the Post," they head out along the track to the gate.

These 12 men are men of experience, agility, and alertness. It can be a



dangerous job. When the horses are led into the gate, the rear doors shut, and the crew member must stay right there, in the stall, with the horse and the jockey. Blankets make some horses feel secure in the gate. They're fastened with Velcro and fly off at the start of the race. The start crew is aware of the horse and is there to quiet jittery horses and to assist the jockey. "Things happen."

The starting gate is a symbol of horse racing -- the bell clanging, the doors springing open, and the horses surging forward as the race begins. This year's race consisted of 19 horses (20 is the max), 3-year old THOROUGHBREDS. A horse is not able to run twice

in the Kentucky Derby, as the horse has to be 3 years old as of the first Saturday of May of the year. All of them must run a distance of one and one-quarter miles. There is an entry fee of \$25,000 each and a starting fee of \$25,000 each. All 19 horses running came from the bloodline of Secretariat.

In the midst of a lot of mud flinging, horse #18, with the name Sovereignty, pushed through the mud to have a blanket of roses draped on his back. The number "1" means UNITY. The number "8" means NEW BEGINNING.

People, united we stand; divided we fall. Come on Bride of Christ; believers, we can do this! Let us do our part, run our race to unify in Truth, Grace, and Righteousness. Sovereignty means supreme

power and authority entrusted to "we the people." The birth name of the jockey is Raphael Alvarado Jr. "You, Raphael, you heal the earth." (Raphael, from ancient writings, was identified as an archangel whose name means "God heals; healing from God")

Second place went to a horse by the name of "Journalism." Isn't that GOOD NEWS! Journalism was #8 horse, meaning "new beginning." We would truly benefit for NEW in reporting, wouldn't we? It sounds like a "Call to the Post." No more politics; just the facts!

In the 151st Kentucky Oaks, the 3-year-old Good Cheer took first.

*Your NEIGHbor,
Deb Kitchenmaster*

horsinaround188@gmail.com





Rightside Way

Republicans Should Play To Win

by Phil Williams

Let's be honest, Democrats are in complete disarray on an epic scale. Gone are the halcyon days of "hope and change." There is no grand figure around which to rally their base. They have no galvanizing message, no political rhythm, no mandate. All of which is self-imposed.

This should serve as a warning to Republicans.

"We don't rise to the level of our expectations," said Greek philosopher Archilochus, "we fall to the level of our training." Meaning, those who fail to prepare in the off-season, fail to perform in the big game. Republicans would do well to remember that. There is no great political competition for the right side of the aisle right now. There is certainly bluster, obstruction, filibuster, and mayhem. But rhetoric does not connote responsibility. Obstruction does not equate to brinksmanship.

The danger here for Republicans is laziness due to a lack of competition.

In the absence of true political opposition, Republicans can slip into their echo chambers and applaud themselves for mediocrity. There was no fight. Yet they can claim a victory. Year after year,

session after session, speech after speech. Without breaking a political sweat, they do enough to get by, write a congratulatory op-ed about themselves and slip into that decaying place of tepid insolence as political muscles atrophy and political will becomes flaccid.

All because they had no real competition. No reason to be what they claim to be in their campaign commercials.

The Alabama Democratic Party was the canary in the coal mine for the national level Democrats. Since losing ground in the 2010 Republican wave election, Alabama Democrats have had only one statewide officeholder via one-term U.S. Senator Doug Jones. An election that was marked with an asterisk.

Jones himself has recently said that the Alabama Democratic Party is a complete "disaster," saying further, "It is just an unmitigated disaster that has nowhere to go. They can't even get a quorum to hold a meeting. And the reason they can't get a quorum to hold a meeting is because the leadership of the party wants to kind of do all these weird shenanigans."

No real competition there.

On the national level, Democrats have cascaded into self-imposed

chaos. Longtime Democratic strategist James Carville and newcomer activist turned party leader David Hogg recently clashed over direction. Trading insults and ideas the two de facto leaders of the left opined conversely that Democrats should be replaced, or just march on in current fashion. Meanwhile, Senator John Fetterman (D-PA) is facing attacks from the left for daring to moderate his positions. Democratic members of Congress are bum-rushing the gates of ICE detention facilities. Jasmine Crockett's verbal inanity embarrasses her colleagues, and Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez is being touted as a viable candidate for the office of president in 2028.

Watching the Democrats shoot themselves in the proverbial foot on a near daily basis is the political version of the Mad Hatter's tea party -- hyperactivity, riddles with no answers, poise without purpose.

If Republicans squander this moment in time, it will not be because the Democrats had their act together and put up the better fight. It will be a loss that is solely born by the team that had everything to lose. Donald Trump, in a recent interview with NBC News' Meet the Press, said that "being challenged is okay....it keeps you sharp."

The danger here for Republicans is the lack of challenge. The complacency that comes from controlling their own destiny. In the absence of challenge, Republicans have two choices: get busy winning or get busy slipping into mediocrity.

Author J. Oswald Sanders wrote a seminal classic called *Spiritual Leadership*. It's a book that I have dog-eared, underlined, and reread more than any other next to the Bible. In the fifteenth chapter, while talking about the fact that leadership can mean great exertion and long hours, Sanders said something that should be printed on bumper stickers, t-shirts, and inspirational posters everywhere. That if a person "...is not willing to rise early and work late, to expend greater effort in diligent study and faithful work, that person will not change a generation. Fatigue is the price of leadership. Mediocrity is the result of never getting tired."

That, my friends, is not a mantra for what to do only when your competition is at its strongest. That is a formula for success that is driven by a sense of mission, a time and place of calling, a moment when it is yours to do. Republicans have to move forward on the field of political battle whether the opposition is fighting hard or

not.

Eric Cantona was a famed forward for Manchester United Football Club, and one of the greatest players to ever take the pitch. His philosophy was the same. "I don't play against a particular team. I play against the idea of losing," Cantona said.

There's a difference. If you play down to the team on the other side, then you play less of the quality that you are capable of.

Republicans must play to win. They must seize the moment and play to the idea of victory with an actual game plan.

Anything less is mediocrity.

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.



Deliverance

by Jackie Warner

Career Development Facilitator
"Impact, Engage, Grow" Community Matters



"Moses answered the people, 'Do not be afraid. Stand firm and you will see the deliverance the LORD will bring you today. The Egyptians you see today you will never see again. The LORD will fight for you; you need only to be still'" (Exodus 14: 13-14).

I pray for everyone's strength during unpredictable and unprecedented times. Today I share a Scripture with you from Exodus 14: 13-14 to read and absorb these words into your life. In this Scripture, the Israelites were facing opposition and obstacles all around. Pharaoh's army was approaching, the mountains surrounded them, and the Red Sea lay before them.

1. Do not be afraid - This Scripture does not tell us to not know fear, but we have to resist the urge to let fear run our lives.

2. Stand firm - Yes, give it all you have, be confident, put on the breastplate of God's strength to stand and trust him through the fear.

3. Deliverance - We ask, and we seek it daily. But when it comes to us, we doubt if it is the right time. We often retreat to what we know and lose sight of what is in the forefront. Remember when Peter

was walking on the water? Instead of looking forward toward Jesus, Peter started doubting when he saw the wind and began to sink. Jesus said, "O you of little Faith" (Matthew 14: 22-23).

4. The Lord will fight for you - This does not

mean that you are not taking action. The Lord will fight for us through us, equipping and preparing us to be bold. "For I will give you speech and wisdom that none of your adversaries will be able to resist or contradict" (Luke 21:15), and "It will not

be you speaking but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you" (Matthew 10:20).

5. Be still - Be still in your spirit but trust God with His way of escape and go. Remember what he said first? Do not be afraid. Stay woke in the Almighty!

Until Next Time, Be Sincere, Kind and Intentional

*Jackie Warner,
Community Outreach Specialist*

*Email:
thebridge.us@gmail.com*

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



NEW LISTING



899 Pine Grove Rd, Harvest,
AL 35749

KATHY LAWRENCE

256-278-9149 |

REDSTONE REALTY SOLUTIONS |

919 6TH AVE SE, DECATUR, AL 35601



WHICH HOME LOAN IS RIGHT FOR YOU?

The 4 Most Common Mortgage Programs

Example Scenario:

\$525,000 Home Price - 30 Yr Fixed Rate

Conventional

- Min. 3% down payment
- Min. 620 credit score
- Competitive interest rates
- No limits on income, area, or occupancy type



\$52,500 10% Down Payment
3.75% Interest Rate
4.75% APR
\$472,500 Loan Amount

\$67,131 Cash to Close
\$3,202 Monthly Payment

USDA

- No down payment required
- Min. 640 credit score
- Income restrictions, eligible areas only
- May only be used as primary residence



\$0 Down Payment
3.25% Interest Rate
4.75% APR
\$530,357 Loan Amount

\$15,230 Cash to Close
\$3,270 Monthly Payment

FHA

- Min. 3.5% down payment
- Min. 580 credit score
- Lower limits than conventional loans
- May only be used as primary residence



\$18,375 3.5% Down Payment
3.25% Interest Rate
4.75% APR
\$515,490 Loan Amount

\$34,267 Cash to Close
\$3,595 Monthly Payment

VA Loan

- No down payment required
- Min. 580-620 credit score
- Ultra-low interest rates
- May only be used as primary residence
- Must be active military or veteran



\$0 Down Payment
3.25% Interest Rate
4.75% APR
\$537,075 Loan Amount

\$13,160 Cash to Close
\$3,342 Monthly Payment

KATHY LAWRENCE[®] REALTOR[®]



**SEE IF YOUR DREAM HOME IS
A PURR-FECT MATCH FOR YOUR
FURRY FRIEND**

Send me a DM for your Pet
Friendly Home Report!



REDSTONE
REALTY
SOLUTIONS

256-278-9149

klawrence9149@gmail.com

