

June 06 - June 19, 2025

# Athens Now

information & inspiration

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## Coming Soon To Limestone County: *The Midwest Invitational Juneteenth Celebration Rodeo*

By Ali Elizabeth Turner

Carolyn Carter was 22 the first time she ever got on a horse. She happened to be visiting her sister who happened to have fallen wildly in love with a handsome cowboy and then married him, but Carolyn never had any dreams of becoming an avid horsewoman, let alone a champion barrel racer. "I was

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Carolyn Carter, champion rodeo rider and event promoter

## Read Tee Jackson's Latest: *Lessons Learned On Mama's Lap And Daddy's Knee, And It Boils Down To This*



By Ali Elizabeth Turner

Coach, pastor, member of the ministry team at First Baptist Church in Athens, animal lover, history teacher, and committed "joy-slinger" Tee Jackson has just released his ninth and tenth books, and

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## Publisher's Point

# What If There Had Been No Winston?

Today, June 6, 2025, marks the 81st anniversary of the invasion of Normandy, better known as D-day. At the helm of the operation was General Dwight Eisenhower, and Winston Churchill was prime minister of England. I am old enough to remember his distinct voice, and not just his voice, but everything about him, his walk, his posture, stature, and of course, his ever-present cigar. I also remember when he died, and while I was only 11 years old, I had a sense of loss. At that age, I had no idea what the man had actually done to help defeat Germany in WWII.

It was much later that I discovered how he had tried to warn Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain that it was a mistake to try and appease a man like Adolph Hitler, but no one would listen to Winston. A chagrined Britain then looked to Winston to bring them through the war after Germany attacked, and by God's grace, bring Britain through, he did. Then a "grateful" Britain kicked him out of office and to the political curb in 1945, and re-elected him in 1950. He was a fierce orator who had such a fear of public speaking that he would get dizzy. He battled depression, calling it his "black dog," and he drank a lot.

Winston won the Nobel Peace Prize for Literature and became a highly accomplished artist, and who can forget his quotes? That "bull-dog" voice, stance, gestures, and demeanor gave hope, and

that of an industrial strength. He was indeed a force to be reckoned with, and perceptive far beyond his years.

Here are some of Winston's most famous quotes:

1. "If you are going through hell, keep going."
2. "Never, never, never give up."
3. "Time and money are largely interchangeable terms."
4. "Personally I'm always ready to learn, although I do not always like being taught."
5. "Vengeance is the most costly and dissipating of luxuries."
6. "Harsh laws are at times better than no laws at all."
7. "Everyone has his day, and some days last longer than others."
8. "Success is not final, failure is not fatal, it is the courage to continue that counts."
9. "It is not in our power to anticipate our destiny."
10. "All the greatest things are simple, and many can be expressed in a single word: freedom; justice; honor; duty; mercy; hope."
11. "Nothing in life is so exhilarating as to be shot at without result."
12. "My tastes are simple: I am easily satisfied with the best."
13. "To improve is to change, so to be perfect is to change often."
14. "All wisdom is not new wisdom."



15. "Every man should ask himself each day whether he is not too readily accepting negative solutions."
16. "If you destroy a free market you create a black market."
17. "The price of greatness is responsibility."
18. "All I can say is that I have taken more out of alcohol than alcohol has taken out of me."
19. "I like pigs. Dogs look up to us. Cats look down on us. Pigs treat us as equals."
20. "When the eagles are silent, the parrots begin to jabber."
21. "In finance, everything that is agreeable is unsound, and everything that is sound is disagreeable."
22. "You have enemies? Good. That means you've stood up for something in your life."
23. "The greatest lesson

in life is to know that even fools are right sometimes."

24. "The farther backward you can look, the farther forward you are likely to see."

25. "One ought to be just before one is generous."

Not many people are aware that Winston was a prisoner of war in the Boer War. He also nearly died after getting struck by a car while visiting in New York City before he became prime minister. All of it served to make him an inarguably tenacious leader who was loved, hated, and sorely needed. What if, 81 years ago there had been no Winston?

*Ali Elizabeth Turner*

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# A Quilt Of Valor For WWII Veteran Herman Swanner

by Ali Elizabeth Turner



Herman Swanner had just celebrated his 18th birthday when he signed up to serve in the Invasion of Japan. While he was in the Army, he spent nearly all his time on a boat, and dealt with heavy equipment. Hiroshima had already been bombed, and now it was mostly up to the United States to organize the rebuilding of Japan in the aftermath of the deadliest war in history. His official service dates were 03 May 1945-13 December 1946. Herman remembers that there were "about a million boats," so many that they could hardly move. He came home, married, had children, and settled into being part of what would eventually become known as the Greatest Generation. And, like the men of that era, he never expected to be honored or celebrated for his efforts—he believed he was just doing his duty like every other Joe.

Fast forward eight decades, and it comes to the attention of certain veterans and veteran supporters that Herman had never been given a

hand-made Quilt of Valor as an expression of gratitude for his service. Now, that was a situation that needed to be rectified immediately, given the fact that our dear Herman is now 98 years old!

So, people snapped into action, and here is a description of how it all came together, with much of the information provided by Barry Sammet:

On Saturday, May 24, 2025 Mr. Swanner was presented a Quilt of Valor at the VFW Post 4765. Attending with Mr. Swanner were his son Jimmy, daughter-in-law Nan, daughter Nancy, and friend Glenn Fleming. Mr. Swanner was in good spirits, thankful to be able to be present to receive his Quilt of Valor. With a smile on his face and proudly wearing his WWII cap, Mr. Swanner accepted his quilt with a "Thank you." Presenting his quilt were Marty Kent

and Teresa Donahue, of the Limestone Chapter of Quilts of Valor.

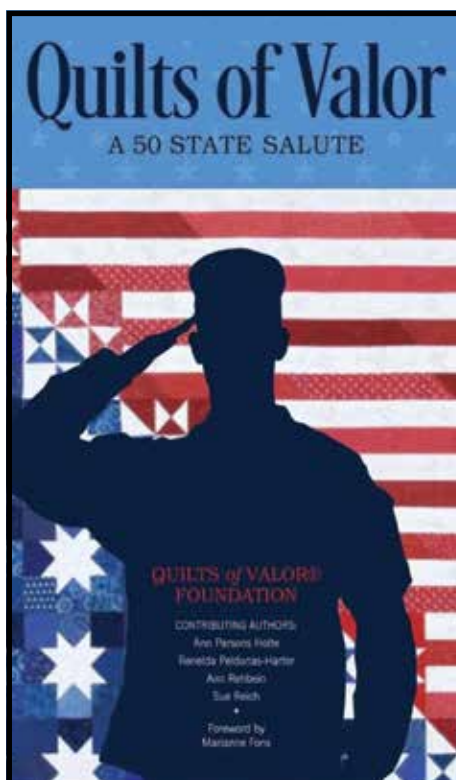
There were seven veterans to receive a Quilt of Valor on this date. Family and friends were in attendance, as were some of the ladies and gentlemen who make the quilts from here in Athens, AL, from the 3 Hens & A Chick Quilt Shop.

After the presentation was over, Mr. Swanner told me about remembering when he was

very young, his mother would have several ladies over to her house to make quilts. He said his mother had a quilting frame that hung from the ceiling and the ladies would sit around the quilting frame most of the day and make their quilts.

I spoke with Herman's children, Jimmy and Nancy, and they expressed how proud they were of their dad. They also mentioned that they weren't sure if he would accept the quilt, and at first, he was hesitant. Then he decided to "go for it." "If anybody deserves to receive a quilt, it's him," they both told me. And what says it all is the ear-to-ear grin on Herman's face as he sits wrapped in his Quilt of Valor.

Congratulations, Mr. Swanner, and thanks to all who helped make this possible!



Herman Swanner, wrapped in his Quilt of Valor



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## Special Feature

# Spilling The Tea

by Charlotte Fulton

Motorists driving along Browns Ferry Street on a recent Saturday afternoon may have wondered if they'd entered a time warp as they watched scores of people flocking into the Pincham-Lincoln Center sporting fashions of yesteryear, Sunday finery of decades past – the women in floral dresses, fascinators or cloche hats and gloves, the men in bowties and fedoras. The 1930s and 1940s fashions were in tribute to Dr. Charles Eric Lincoln, a 1941 graduate of Trinity School who was recently elected posthumously to the Alabama Writers Hall of Fame.

Approximately 100 guests attended *Spilling the Tea*, an event sponsored by Athens Limestone Community Association in celebration of Lincoln, who would go on to earn degrees from LeMoyne, Fisk, University of Chicago, and Boston University; teach at Clark-Atlanta, Fisk, and Duke; and lecture or act as visiting professor at institutions as far-flung as Ghana University. He authored or co-authored 22 books, including sociological and scholarly works widely known and respected, especially among seminary students. His works also include one book of poetry, *This Road Since Freedom*, and one novel, *The Avenue, Clayton City*, which is set in a small southern town very similar to Athens.

The site of the celebration held special significance. Pincham-Lincoln Center is named for Dr. Lincoln and a fellow Trinity grad-



*Spilling the Tea* attendees from left, Richard Martin, Pammie Jimmar, Carolyn Williams, Tiffany and Jerome Malone



uate and lifelong friend, Judge R. Eugene Pincham, for their continuing loyalty and generosity toward their alma mater, and to ALCA, which seeks to preserve the history of Trinity which, from 1865 to 1965, was the only school in Limestone County where African Americans could earn a high school diploma. The school closed in 1970 due to desegregation. The Center is located on the former site of Trinity School and, prior to that, of Fort Henderson, constructed and defended by former slaves and some of the country's first U.S. Colored Troops.

The Pincham-Lincoln Center is also just a few yards away from the home of Less and Mattie Lincoln, the grandparents who reared Dr. Lincoln, and a short distance from Valley View United Methodist Church where

the Lincolns worshipped.

Judge Pincham's daughter, Dr. Andrea Benton, and her husband attended from Birmingham, and came forward to make another generous donation and to express her fond memories of spending time in Athens with her paternal grandmother, Hazel Caldwell.

Four speakers talked of Dr. Lincoln's life and legacy:

Pastor Eugene English described Dr. Lincoln's childhood and youth, how affirmations from family and church and school were salve for the scars inflicted by growing up in the Jim Crow south. Pastor Ernest Williams talked about the decades Lincoln spent in the classroom, first as a student and later, as a teacher, culminating in his retirement from Duke University as head of the Department of Religion and Culture.

Pastor Barbara Clemmons talked about the impact Lincoln had, and continues to have, on lives around the world – from seminarians to readers of his books to the people of his hometown. She ended with a bit of advice for each of us to, like Lincoln, never forget our roots, no matter how far we have risen in the world.

Pastor Jerome Malone spoke of Lincoln's accomplishments as a composer of poetry and of hymns, one of which is published in the United Methodist hymnal.

Providing inspiration and levity were the *Spilling the Tea* Ladies – Cynthia Hines, Mary Freeman, Angela Hughes, and Renee Cain – under the direction of Jerome Malone.

Cecelia Malone, a 16-year-old student at Renaissance School in



Athens, recited her original poem paying tribute to Trinity founder Mary Fletcher Wells and acknowledging the far-reaching influence of the school and its graduates.

*Spilling the Tea* was conceived by ALCA treasurer Carolyn Williams, and planned by Williams, Della Darby, Charlotte Fulton, and Pastors Malone and English.



# Calendar of Events

## **2025 Summer Camp Registration Open Now**

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

### **Camp Helen Baptist Camp**

14477 Baptist Camp Rd, Harvest, AL 35749

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

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

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

## **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.

## **Juneteenth PDA FEST: African American Cultural Freedom June 14**

2-10pm. Swan Creek, Athens. Multicultural Performing Arts Event with Speakers, Dancers, Martial Arts, Marching Band, Community Choir, music genre variety, poetry, games, drama, Culinary/Cook Off, Food Trucks, children pageant, business vendors, breakfast and lunch menu etc

## **Glow Run 5K June 21**

6-10pm. Join us for a glowing 5K celebrating women in every season of life. Every step supports our mission to uplift and empower women. Light up the night at the Through The Seasons Glow Run! Swan Creek Park, Highway 31, Athens.

## **Limestone County Master Gardeners presents Saturday Gardening Workshop: Maintaining Your Garden June 21**

10 AM at Athens-Limestone County Public Library. After you've worked so hard planting your garden and it has started

to grow, do you know what do when the bugs come and the days are long and hot. Let Extension Agent Lily Oaks teach you how to keep your garden beautiful and productive throughout the gardening season. FREE and open to the public.

## **Wonder Junction Vacation Bible School June 23 - 26**

Join us every night from 6-8pm for vacation bible school at The Church at River Mills. 13435 Elk River Mills Road,. For ages 3 yrs - 6th grade. Also join us for our VBS Kick-Off event on June 22 from 4-6pm with water slides, games, food & snow cones! 256-444-1306. [www.churchrivermills.org](http://www.churchrivermills.org)

## **Art After Hours with 3 Savile Row June 29**

Marion Street in Downtown Athens. Bring a chair and enjoy a night of music in historic Downtown Athens. Dine at local restaurants in the downtown area before the concert. 3 Savile Row is the Tennessee Valley's premiere Beatles music tribute act. The band includes dedicated musicians passionate about sharing their love of the Beatles' music with the world. 3 Savile Row faithfully showcases classic Beatles music from every era. Includes an art station for kids. The Art After Hours concert series is sponsored by: Alabama Tourism Dept. through Sen. Tim Melson, City of Athens, Morell Engineering and Athens-Limestone Tourism Association. You may also like our next event next month: July 5th at 7:00 pm, Art After Hours with JED Eye (A Fourth of July weekend celebration) in Athens.

## **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

# “K” Is For Knowledge

by D. A. Slinkard

*D.A. Slinkard would love your feedback. You can contact him at [da.slinkard@gmail.com](mailto:da.slinkard@gmail.com)*

Continuing in our series of the “ABC’s of Slinkard on Success” – we have come to the letter “K” and our word is Knowledge. There is a big disconnect with this word because many people think knowledge is the key to life. There is a quote that states, “Knowledge is power,” however, Tony Robbins once said, “Knowledge is NOT power. Knowledge is only POTENTIAL power. Action is power.”

Having knowledge can be a great thing, but what we do with that knowledge is another thing. We live in a time when it is easier now more than ever to obtain knowledge, but having the knowledge is not enough. If a person wants to lose weight, they can watch videos, read books, and gather information all from the Internet. You can become an expert on any topic you so choose, but being an expert and being able to actually apply your knowledge is a completely different realm.

In your life, what is something you would like to be able to achieve or accomplish? Going off the premise that knowledge is only potential power, what would you like to achieve in your life? Too often, people do not take the time to sit down and properly plan out their life. In failing to plan, they are planning to fail. I do not believe anyone purposely sets out with their life to be a failure, but too often people fail to achieve simply because they fail to take the time and map out a course for their life. Is this

you? I admit that there have been times I have just tried to wing it and in doing so I have drifted off my desired course.

I believe having knowledge in how to do things is greatly important, but we need to realize there is more to life than just possessing the knowledge. We have a generation of Americans growing up who are failing to utilize the technological advancements all around us. We have information at our fingertips, and I cannot help but chuckle to think back to when I was growing up and the times I had to use an encyclopedia in order to find out information that is readily available today on the Internet. Yet, we have a society of people growing up who do not know how to properly utilize the tools they have, and it is not their fault.

The kids these days not knowing how to put into action the knowledge they have readily available – the potential power – is our fault and not theirs. If we want our kids and grandkids to be successful in life, it is going to take an active approach to learning. We cannot be passive in the knowledge we pass down because too often we think our kids are going to learn by watch-

ing us live our daily lives, and this is just not true. We have an entire generation of boys that are growing up not to be men but are growing up to be sissies. Our boys need to be men and our girls need to be women. We need to show our boys how to be a man and our girls how to be a woman.

However, we have a society that is teaching our men to be ashamed of who they are, and that masculinity is a bad thing. Of course, this is also coming from the same group of people who cannot identify or give a definition for the word “woman.” The basic concept and ideology of gender is now a confusing topic because we have blurred the lines between common sense and reality. We have people who try to sound sophisticated, yet the only ones they are impressing are the ones who are blinded by their lies.

If a person wants success, they must learn to be honest with themselves and seek out knowledge and then be able to apply this knowledge to their life. If a person wants to be the best real estate agent, they need to study what the best of the best do, and then put these practices into action. If you want a different life, you need to obtain the knowledge of what



you need to do and how you need to do it, and then take action on a daily basis to achieve these results. Getting the wrong knowledge and disinformation leads to

failure and even confusion such as what we see going on in this world. Will you turn your knowledge into action?



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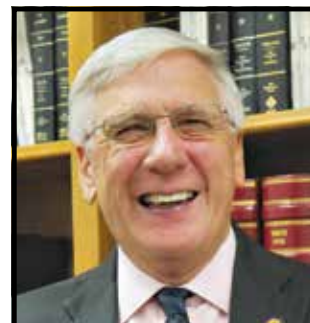


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## Summer In The City... Almost

by Ali Elizabeth Turner



Officially, summer is not here yet, but let's just say that things are hop-pin' and poppin' enough to where venues are crowded, folks are happily lined up to wait for fresh summertime treats, the trees look gorgeous, and it is a good time to be alive in Athens, Alabama.

Mayor Ronnie and I met on Wednesday rather than Monday, which just added a couple of days' worth of events about which to celebrate, but starting with Fridays After Five, I don't think I had ever seen so many people on the Square. The seventh annual Addiction Eviction will be held tomorrow in Swan Creek Park beginning at 11 a.m., and there is going to be a huge pickleball tourney. There is no shortage of things to do!

Mayor Ronnie told me about the walk he had taken out and about on Tuesday, June 3. The

redbud trees as well as the crepe myrtles had made the announcement that summer is here. As the mayor walked past the benches on the south side of City Hall, he stopped for awhile and soaked up the memories. There is a bench honoring Jimmie Gill, the first African American to sit on the Athens City Council. The mayor and Jimmie had a friendship filled with laughter that lasted decades, and it has always "gotten" to Mayor Ronnie that Jimmie passed away from cancer before the new City Hall was finished. Frank Travis has a bench, too, and the mayor talked about how Frank, when he was president of the city council, would start off meetings with stories, some times songs, and more. Former Mayor Dan Williams has a bench on the south side, as well. "I had to stop for a while, and I



*The recently renovated Farmer's Market on Strawberry Shortcake Day*

got misty-eyed," Mayor Ronnie told me. Me too. All three of these men were kind to me, and especially encouraging when I first started producing Athens Now.

Mayor Ronnie headed on over to Southern Table to meet with some developers, and on the way he encountered

some women from another town who had come to Ro's Grill and were eating outside. "Mayor, we were just talking about you," they said. They were going through some tough times in their town and were wondering if they could see restoration in their own city. "You can, and you will," he said, "but it will take time."

After the meeting at Southern Table, the mayor headed on down to the Farmer's Market for Strawberry Shortcake Day. However, on the way he noticed that Kreme Delight had a line of folks waiting for the cones that have made that place an icon since the early '60s. It is just not summer in Athens without ice cream from Kreme Delight.

Speaking of lines, there was a long one at the re-



*City Hall benches honoring residents, past mayors and city council members of Athens*

cently renovated Farmer's Market for the celebration of all things shortcake, and no one seemed to mind. Vendors lined the stalls, smiles abounded, and it was just an all-around reminder that it's summer in the city...almost.

There was just one thing left to do, and that was to pray, and then, once again it was time for Ronnie to roll.







Cooking with Anna

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

by Anna Hamilton

*In a world filled with chaos, fear, and uncertainty, one of the most powerful truths a believer can hold onto is this: God says I am safe. This divine assurance does not mean we are exempt from trouble, but it means we are held, protected, and guided through it. The promise of safety is woven throughout Scripture, reminding us that God's presence is our refuge, and His love is our shield.*

*We have the assurance in the safety of God's presence. The Bible repeatedly affirms that safety is found not in circumstances, but in the*

*presence of God. Psalm 91:1–2 says, "Whoever dwells in the shelter of the Most High will rest in the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the Lord, 'He is my refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust.'"*

*This passage paints a picture of closeness—of a God who shelters, who covers, and who never leaves. When God says you are safe, He's inviting you to dwell near Him, to rest under His wings where fear cannot reach and harm cannot destroy your soul.*

*continued on page 16*

## Cabbage and Pea Salad

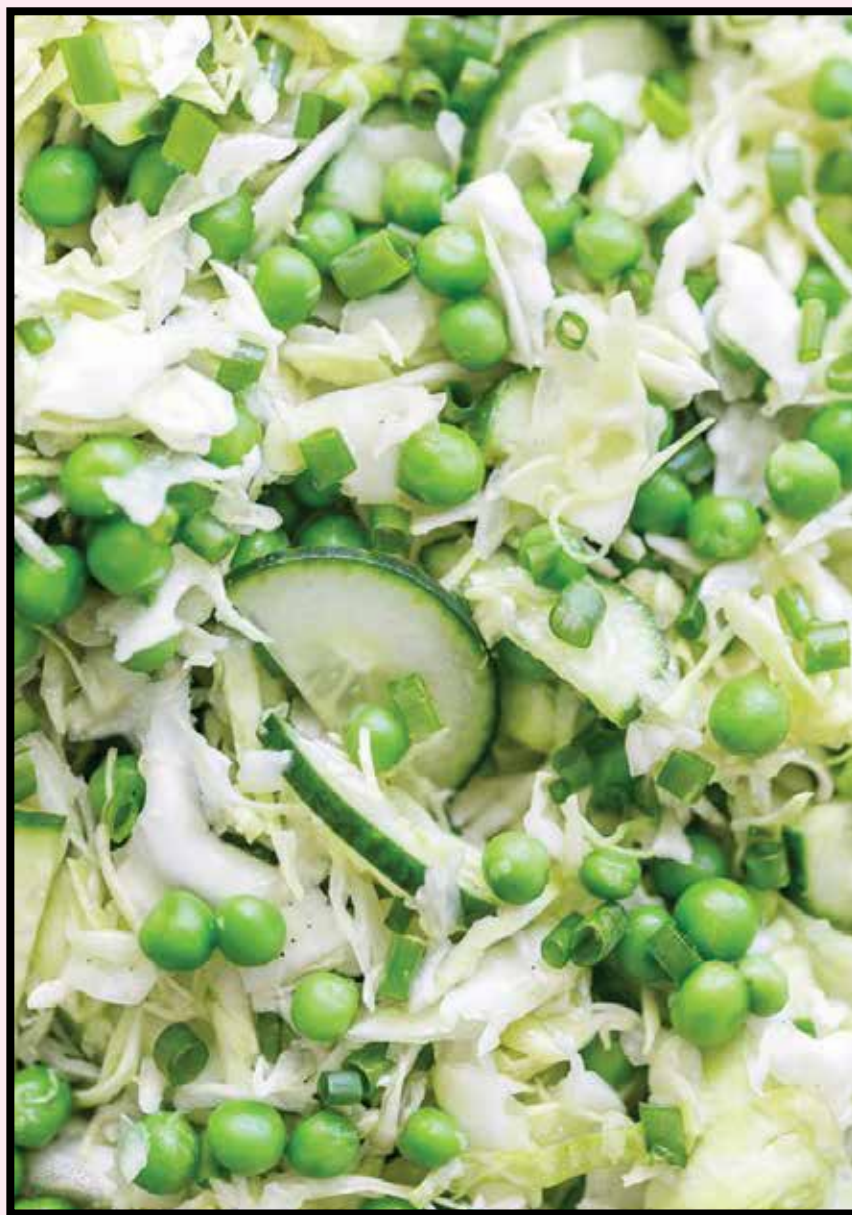
### Ingredients:

*1 medium cabbage, super finely sliced  
1 English cucumber, thinly sliced into half circles  
1 bunch green onions, chopped  
2 cups sweet peas, cooked and cooled if fresh, or thawed if frozen  
3-4 Tbsp. olive oil  
2 Tbsp apple cider vinegar  
2 Tbsp white vinegar  
1 Tbsp sugar or maple syrup  
Salt and pepper to taste*

### Directions:

*To finely chopped cabbage, add cucumbers, peas, and green onions. Toss lightly to combine.*

*Drizzle salad with olive oil, apple cider vinegar, white vinegar, and sugar (or maple syrup). Toss to combine. Before serving, sprinkle with salt and pepper to taste. Serve and enjoy!*







## Carissa's Corner

# New Keys, New Adventures

by Carissa Lovvorn

Two pieces of jagged metal. Alone, they hold little significant value, but placed in a corresponding deadbolt, they have the ability to unlock possibilities. On Saturday May 31, Habitat for Humanity of the River Valley handed over housekeys to its first Limestone County partner family. Staff, volunteers, elected officials, family friends, and a few little girls wearing tutus welcomed the Walton family to their new home during the dedication ceremony. The Habitat for Humanity service model not only provides a family with affordable housing, it provides them with the knowledge and skills necessary for life-long success. In order to complete the program, the partner family must complete numerous hours of "sweat equity" along with fifty-five hours of financial and homeowner-

ship classes.

After construction is complete, Habitat for Humanity sells the home to the partner family through a thirty-year mortgage with 0% interest. I've heard countless stories of how these homes changed the lives of the recipients. Instead of a vast portion of their income going to rising rental costs, they now can maintain a savings account, purchase more nutritious food, and further their education. Additionally, safe and stable homes have a significant impact on the lives of children. According to Habitat for Humanity International,

"Stable home environments raise young children's math and reading test scores, and affordable homeownership is a conduit for greater residential stability. Removing hazards and providing homes that eliminate



overcrowding leads to better physical and mental health, development, and educational achievement for children."

Soon after the dedication ceremony our youngest daughter made a thoughtful observation. "Mommy, do you remember the first day we went to the Habitat home? When Daddy and Granddaddy used strings to lay it out? Now there is a whole house there!"

Much like my daughter, I'm always blown away by the amount of volunteerism that goes into a Habitat home. To keep costs down, the framing, landscaping, painting, and various other tasks typically performed by hired contractors are carried out by volunteers. This allows the low-cost model to work efficiently. Furthermore, the attractive home designs bring value to neighborhoods. Due to their involvement in the building process,

partner families are proud of their new living situation and strive to maintain the upkeep of the yard and home.

Habitat for Humanity of the River Valley seeks to make an impact in Limestone County. They hope to obtain a large piece of land that would accommodate several partner family homes. To donate toward the Habitat for Humanity cause or sign up for future volunteer endeavors, please contact: Traci Draper @ [tdraper@habitatrivervalley.org](mailto:tdraper@habitatrivervalley.org) 256-533-2282 ext.153

When I ride by and look at this house, I can't help but be proud of our community. This particular set of keys not only signifies upcoming adventures for the Walton Family,



they also stand for possibilities for the affiliate. I look forward to many more dedication ceremonies where new keys are handed over to deserving families.

"My people will live in peaceful dwelling places, in secure homes, in undisturbed places of rest" (Isaiah 32:8 NIV).

Many blessings,  
Carissa



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# Coming Soon To Limestone County: *The Midwest Invitational Juneteenth Celebration Rodeo*

by Ali Elizabeth Turner

*continued from page 1*

hooked,” said the woman who juggles being a nurse, mom, grandmother, business woman, event promoter, and so much more. She hails from Oklahoma, and last week came to Athens City Hall along with WAAY 31’s Dion Hose to promote the first annual Juneteenth Rodeo in Limestone County, and to go tour the Sheriff’s Rodeo Arena where the event will take place.

The Juneteenth Rodeo Celebration has taken place in Huntsville for the last seven years, and this is the first time there has been a rodeo planned for our area. Carolyn spent years working for well-known rodeo producer Bill Pickett, and has produced for the three largest Black rodeo associations in America. As far as Carolyn’s champion events were concerned, barrel racing and steer undecorating were her best. The first

time Carolyn competed was in Washington, D.C., and she took home \$900. “I was told to hang on,” she told me with a laugh, and back in 1985, going home with \$900 helped a lot with raising two daughters. The whole family has gone on to be fine riders and competitors, and Carolyn beams with pride when she talks about them.

Carolyn has numerous accolades to show for her years of competition, all of which include buckles, saddles, and of course, cash. Her focus has since changed to bringing in the next generation. The 4th generation of Black cowgirls includes her granddaughter Jay, her great niece Amora and now her great granddaughter, 2-year-old Paisley Rae.

Carolyn’s rodeo partner Dean Osborne, a calf roper also from Oklahoma, persuaded her that they could produce rodeos and do it better than some of the ot-



*Paisley Ray watching the rodeo while being watched over by JD, Carolyn's horse*

her promoters. Dean’s belief was based on the fact that they were both actual rodeo athletes and knew what rodeo cowboys were attracted to. Carolyn handles the front end and production of the event while Dean handles the back side dealing with stock, equipment, and manpower.

African American cowboys have been an important part of American history, most notably because of the Buffalo Soldiers who served in the U.S. Army after the Civil War. Their nickname came from Native Americans who were reminded of the curly hair of buffalo, and most importantly, their fierceness in battle. The Buffalo Soldiers were also known for their courageous service. The Midwest Invitational Rodeo folks saw an opportunity to bring true Black rodeo to communities who don’t typically get to see black cowboys. Their past cities visited include Detroit MI, Bakersfield CA, Huntsville AL, Tulsa OK, and Marietta GA. Now they are adding Athens, Alabama, to the schedule after being asked to participate in the city’s 2nd annual Juneteenth Celebration. This will be

the first year for the city to celebrate this national holiday with a rodeo.

The rodeo itself is a one-day event, and will be held on June 21. Gates open at 6 p.m., and the rodeo starts at 8 p.m. Like the annual Limestone County Sheriff’s Rodeo, it will be held rain or shine, and it is an invitational rodeo, meaning that you need to apply to be accepted to ride. To do so, you can go to the Midwest Black Rodeo Facebook page to get the info re: participating in the event.

There will be an open relay race for all local riding clubs, that will involve a three-man team in uniform. For the main event, there will be a number of competitive categories. They are:

- Ranch Bronc Riding
- Tie-Down Calf Roping
- Ladies’ Barrel Racing
- Steer Wrestling
- Bull Riding
- Relay Race
- Junior Events

The total purse is \$7500 dollars, and there will be \$5 parking on the grounds. Proceeds from parking go

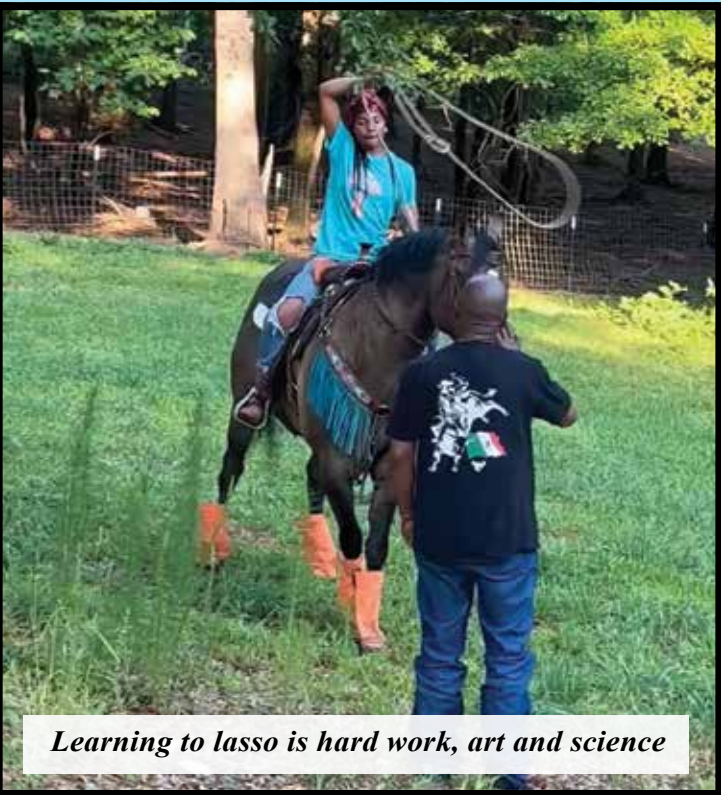


*Cowgirls all: from left, Jay Carter, Amora Lindsey, and little Paisley Ray*

to Have-i-Hope, which is a non-profit that gets at-risk kids and horses connected, and also does horse rescue. Concessions will also be available.

Another feature of this year’s Juneteenth Rodeo is the performance of the Willow Wind Riding Drill Team, and this group hails from Ardmore. They are under the direction of Zoe Smith.

One thing that the rodeo organizers are emphasizing is that the tickets are ONLY available at their site, through the use of the QR code, or by calling 256-665-2397. There have been attempts by scammers to appear to be agents of the rodeo, so please be use the above points of contact to secure your tickets. Pre-sold tickets are \$20, and tickets at the gate are \$25. Save the date, and don’t be late! There is a family-friendly



*Learning to lasso is hard work, art and science*





# Clean, Green And Beautiful

## Breaking Ground

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



Guess what...RECYCLING is coming back in FULL force to Limestone County! Limestone County residents were left scrambling after the closure of the Athens-Limestone Recycling Center during the summer of 2022, but the Limestone County Commission created a small recycling program to take its place. It's been a process, but we are finally back on track. Thanks to a grant written by Christa McCurry at the Limestone County Commission, the Alabama Department of Environmental Management has awarded the Commission a \$600,000 grant for a building.

When the Athens-Limestone Recycling Center closed, Athens and Limestone County residents lost many ser-

vices to which they had become accustomed and expected. Thankfully, the Limestone County Commission recognized the need for such a program in Limestone County and came together to hire Keri Chalmers from the Athens-Limestone Recycling Center to lead the department and develop a temporary plan to offer basic recycling services. In an attempt to not only show our support but to enhance their program, Keep Athens-Limestone Beautiful donated all of the equipment from the Athens-Limestone Recycling Center.

Keri worked hard to develop a system that was able to function within the limitations of this new department. Initially, she was able to offer a recycling drop-off location at 1301 North Jefferson



Street, which is as close to the center of the county as possible. She has been able to accept mixed paper, cardboard, plastics #1&#2 as well as aluminum and steel cans. Electronic recycling, glass recycling, and motor oil recycling have been some of the most missed services. Since opening, Keri has worked hard to find the best solutions to be able to accept more items. She added an oil tank to the lot to accept motor oil -- she doesn't even require you to transfer it to the tank yourself. She also accepts electronics at her current office, located at 100 Cherry Street. She is still unable to accept tube TVs, but anything else she can take.

While Keri was busy working out the logistics of the program, Christa McCurry was working behind the scenes to grow the program. She secured

a grant from the Alabama Department of Environmental Management (ADEM) for funding to build a new facility. She was awarded \$600,000 for this building, and they are officially breaking ground on June 16 at 11 am. The Limestone County Recycling Department will be located just north of the current drop-off at 1301 North Jefferson Street (the old L&S Grocery shopping center). We are beyond excited as this new recycling opportunity begins to grow for all of Limestone County. Hopefully, it will be bigger and better



that ever before. Come out and join us and show your enthusiasm for this great new opportunity for Limestone County.

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# Read Tee Jackson's Latest: *Lessons Learned On Mama's Lap And Daddy's Knee, And It Boils Down To This*

By Ali Elizabeth Turner

*continued from page 1*

I think that given the fact that the evening newscast seems to continually take its cues from the Book of Revelation, the timing is impeccable. The titles of the two latest books are *Lessons Learned On Mama's Lap And Daddy's Knee!* along with *It Boils Down To This*.

As of this writing, a terrorist in Boulder, Colorado, sent several people to the hospital by setting them on fire at a peaceful pro-Israel demonstration. One was a Holocaust survivor. Our country is deeply divided politically. Christians in Seattle

who had a park permit to gather, again, peacefully were attacked and blamed for the attack because they disagree with the lifestyle of the attackers. The war between Ukraine and Russia drags on. The economy is fragile and showing unsettling cracks in the bond market. Even local politics has some uncommon nastiness as elections start up. It is indeed a time, as Jesus said, of "nations rising against nations," and the Greek word is *ethnos*, meaning, people groups who appear different from each other are going to be literally at each other's throats. So, how in the world can we be joyful?

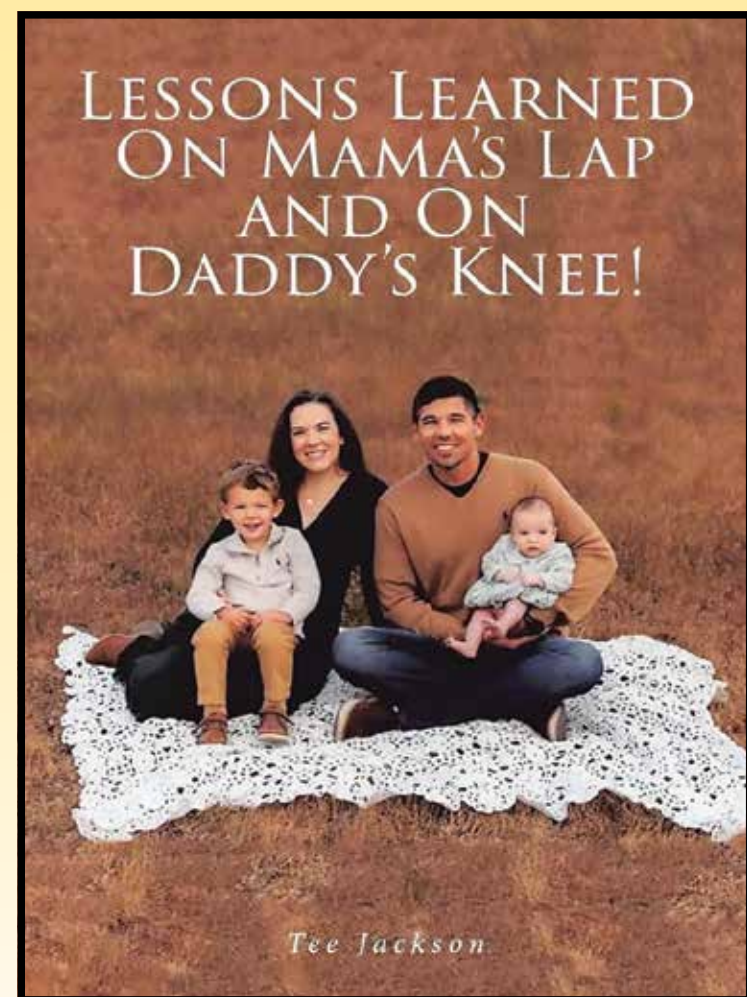
By gaining a "30,000-foot view" through Scripture and stories, which is what Tee has done yet again.

All of Tee's ten books are Christ-centered and designed to make you think, pray, and strengthen your relationship with our Savior, and if you have never walked with Jesus, how to start that walk right away. With regard to all ten, Tee says the following: *I have published ten books. Each has six chapters, and all stories are true. I have attempted to accurately record how the Lord has worked in and influenced my life.*

Tee has designed each book to have a 3-5 minute read time per chapter, and on purpose, each book is short.

As dear as are the stories in *Lessons Learned on Mama's Lap And Daddy's Knee*, Tee understands that not everyone had the kind of parents he did, and the greater story is how to access the love of a Father who has no bad habits or bad days. It is also a reminder to be thankful for people such as teachers, bus drivers, friends, and relatives who helped us along the way. The cover photo for *Lessons Learned On Mama's Lap and Daddy's Knee* is of Tee and Jackie's son, Trent, his wife Anna, and grandsons Reed and baby Cole.

The back story behind *It Boils Down To This* is that Tee realized it's a phrase he has used often for decades. He uses it when he

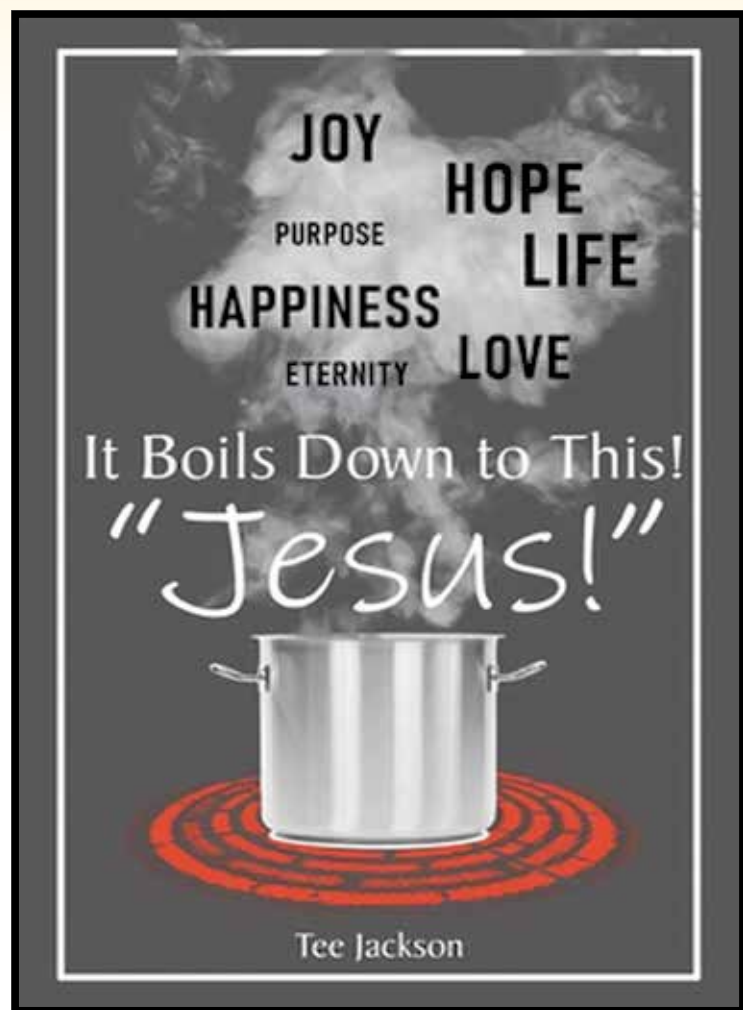


is "encouraging himself in the Lord" as David did because it quickly points him to the truth as it pertains to the facts of the situation, and more importantly the Truth as it pertains to the person of Jesus. It has shown up in sermons, in conversations, when he was coaching, and when he was in the classroom. The Old Testament lesson comes from Zephaniah, which makes it plain that God is not kidding around, and like a good parent, when He warns you He is going to follow through. And one of my favorite parts of the book of Zephaniah has a tender promise, and that is that God actually sings over us! *It Boils Down To This* reminds us that at the end of the day, no matter how rough or easy life is at the present moment, the answer is to apply Jesus to

whatever in the world is going on.

Tee finished our time together by saying: *I hope these books will encourage others to stop and recognize how the Lord uses His Holy Spirit, His Son Jesus and ordinary people to do His Kingdom Work. As followers of Christ we can be vessels, witnesses and proclaimers of His goodness!*

*Lessons Learned On Mama's Lap And Daddy's Knee!* and *It Boils Down To This* are gifts that you can give to yourself or others, and are just in time for Father's Day. Tee's books are published by Christian Faith Publishing, and can be purchased on Amazon. Get yours today, and discover once again or for the first time that joy can be found in uncertain times.







# Captain's Log

## *Never Too Late*

by Brenda Wilkerson

Three days before the end of the school year, Li'l Momma J approached me with this freshly completed application created and printed out by my top Bus Rangers. Li'l Momma J reported, "My friend (a graduating 5th grader with only three days left) would like to be a Bus Ranger. Blue and I have read over her application and would like to add her to our team. We would like you to look this over and approve it so we can get her started today. Thanks." With that, she quickly turned and returned to her seat without waiting for my response. Done and done Li'l Momma J!

Man, I love these kids!

### May 27, 2021

#### Captain's Log ~ First Good-Byes

Bittersweet day. I said goodbye with a final fist bump to some of my precious 5th graders for the very last time. Two 1/2 days wrap up this eventful 2020-21 school year. I have never had to say a goodbye before. Every day, twice a day, we were family. We braved the bitterly cold days and weathered the humid hot ones. We laughed when the water poured into my lap on

very wet days -- #leakybus. We celebrated lost teeth, birthdays, becoming new big sisters, and victorious wins from games the weekend before. Hmmm... Did I do enough? Encourage enough? Make a big enough difference? Did I fuss too much? Give enough chances? Whine about masks to exhaustion? Every chance I had, I preached self-control and made good positive choices. There were consequences to poor choices and seat changes to help curb the crazy along with small candy treats for the consistent well-behaved riders. I can only pray that it was enough. Lord, may my influence on these kids be remembered as positive and encouraging. May they always remember seeing Your light through "Mrs. Winkleson."

### May 28, 2021

#### Captain's Log ~ Can't Mask the Smiles

Within the very heart of the dreaded 'Year of the Mask,' it is so very heartwarming to know they DID 'see' my heart smile when they never actually saw my physical smile.

### May 28, 2021

#### Captain's Log ~ Teary Goosebumps

"That's my dad!!! My DAD, my ACTUAL DAD!!!" Li'l Brother T shrieked as we neared his usual stop. Standing in the front yard with his phone out recording this surprise event, Grandpa was ready to capture the reunion. T's daddy, arms printed full of tattoos, was grinning from ear to ear holding the leash of an excited dog. Li'l T was respectfully begging me to hurry as I had to go through all my safety steps to open the door -- yellow flashers, red flashers, stop, pull the brake, and open the door. "Please, oh please, hurry and get me off this bus!" He bounced in shock and excitement wanting to ask so many questions. I only bothered him with one. "How long has it been?" I asked. "It's been a year, a whole year!" As the doors finally swung open, he surged off the steps, barely touching any of them. I had the precious privilege of witnessing the sweetest father and son reunion. Oh. My. Heart. As I slowly closed the doors, released the brake, and pushed the gas, I was once again grateful for the ol' cloth mask that soaked up the tears as I continued to deliver my bus babies for the very last run of the school year. "Hold it together sister," I encouraged myself. Just a few stops left to go...

Lord, may I never take advantage of those loved ones I hold so dear. Let me feel the brevity of life to live and love with no regrets. ~Amen

### May 29, 2021

#### Captain's Log ~ Last Day

As my tiny blonde princess turned to go down the steep bus steps, she happily

chirped in her natural born accent, "See you tomorrow," just as she had repeated at the end of every single school day before. But this time, I knew that she would not. Her momma came to my door and gifted me a small token of her appreciation -- a small plastic bag of colorful heart candies attached to a miniature pair of porcelain clogs that fit in the palm of my hand. With it was a precious card with the handwritten, beautifully unique names of the three children of this family that took me six weeks to learn and remember. This sweet momma explained with a heavy accent that they would be leaving the country to go back 'home' for a visit and would be leaving school a few days early. My tiny princess and her two big brothers filed down the steps, out of the bus, and around the front to their driveway. One of the two brothers always waved to me all the way across the front until he reached the safety of his driveway. The other brother stood beside his mailbox and waved until I pulled away with a few short goodbye beeps of Ol' Yeller's horn. But this time, in slow motion, I watched his wave slowly bloom into raised heart hands and a somber look of bitter-sweet gratitude that pierced straight into my soul. Oh. My. Heart. As I pulled away, I looked in my rear-view mirror to see the kids running and leaping into their parents' arms. What a beautiful example of living in the moment you are in. Goodbyes happen. Do them well. Lord willing, I will see them again in the fall...but if not... if I never see them again, I know I loved them well!

### The Last Captain's Log ~ That's a Wrap!

And just like that, this crazy school year is officially complete. Because it was my very first last day, I didn't know what to expect. It was weird. We cleaned up, cleaned out, sprayed down, erased all fingerprints from every window, and neutralized any evidence that there was ever a child on the motorized Metal Mother Goose. Driving my bus I now barely recognize, our school drivers convoyed to the transportation department to return our yellow metal friends and clock out for the very last time this year as they were parked within a massive sea of other buses for their long, hot, humid hibernation.

I was reminded of the end of the Indiana Jones movie. If you know, you know! A prime season when red and yellow wasps alike, fight to build mega apartment complexes in every nook and cranny they can find on the ol' idle bus. Until August dear friend...

Lord, I am forevermore grateful and humbled at this amazing journey You nudged me toward right before the pandemic hit. You KNEW these kids and parents needed someone to ease the crazy during one of the most stressful school years in history, and you called me into that position. Oh, but You knew I needed these kids more! Lord, now I can see the peaceful value in obedience to Your nudging, to say yes to You when it doesn't make sense that someone with a master's degree becomes "just a bus driver." You showed me it was not about the money or position. Thank you, Lord.

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# FEAR: *It Does Not Have to Win!*

by Detri McGhee - CLU, ChFC

Perhaps you have heard the definition of FEAR as False Evidence Appearing Real. All too often that is true. Those who describe themselves as “worriers” sometimes see that as a sign that they truly care or have a lot of control over the outcome. For some, it is almost a bragging statement. For others, it is a cry for help, an admission that they wish they could conquer. You can turn from a worrier to a warrior if you want to.

If you are a “worrier,” I would love to hear from you. Why do you practice that lifestyle? I am NOT being facetious or flippant. I am genuinely interested in the reasons that people continue to hold on to that way of handling life. I would like to better understand that life-choice.

Today, I would like to share a few things I recently re-learned from a couple of articles I read. FEAR is often thought of as a sign of weakness or lack of faith. But, King David, “a man after God’s own heart,” spoke of his fear often! What did he mean? How could a man with his power and God-given calling still have fear? Perhaps because this world is full of things that can scare us and scar us.

When just a young boy, my youngest son loved to sneak up behind me and scare me! That brought a feeling of “fear” into my mind, although briefly. Hearing that you or someone you love has been di-

agnosed with a serious illness brings a whole other kind of fear to us. Knowing you are facing serious and painful surgery is yet another emotion. What about being called upon to give a speech in front of a crowd, or facing an appointment at the dentist for a root canal, or considering that one day you will die?

Or like my husband just this morning: Stepping just outside our entryway door and stepping on a 4-foot snake! I heard his “fear” quite well!

How do we deal with fear? Is there a way to be less fearful, less worried, less stressed?

First: Admit your fears in order to properly address them! There is a human propensity toward FEAR. Learning to limit the responses and time that fear affects us is key to EI (Emotional Intelligence).

Next: Recognize fear is a sign. Being afraid is not cowardice: It’s a natural human response to the unknown. New tasks bring new opportunities, but not without some trepidation. The key is to not allow fear to keep us

from moving forward or making changes/trying new things. Facing fear head-on usually causes the fear to flee.

Sometimes fear can be avoided. But at what cost? If you fear public speaking, just be prepared! Know your topic no matter who you are talking to. Get training if this is something you are called to do on a regular basis.

My great uncle was maestro of the Toronto Symphony Orchestra many years ago. When my parents were attending a performance of his in Memphis, Dad expressed some apprehension on going back stage to meet such famous people as the opera cast. My short, round Italian Uncle Ernesto said, “Oh, Jack! They just like you – me...they put their pants on one leg at a time. And all they know is opera! They don’t know nothing about farming, or horses!!!” It put Dad at ease. He was meeting PEOPLE! And, not those “higher” or more important than he was.

What about avoiding fear by refusing to take on new things? Then, it costs

promotions, experiences, and self-confidence. But, if you take them on you risk failure. And you risk success. Deep failure and high success are both met with disdain. Only mediocrity lessens criticism. That might explain a lot.

Consider what you really fear most -- failure or success? If you fail, you can try again or give up. If you succeed, you can do the same. Many people fear success more than failure because they know that with failure, you are more likely to get sympathy. With success, REAL SUCCESS, you gain a whole new set of enemies. I understood that better when I heard someone talking about a super-winning football team: “I hope they LOSE! I’m so sick of them always winning?”

Realize, too, that fear shows you care. Anxiety over asking someone on a date, or going for a job interview, or learning to drive. They CARE about the consequences.

This article doesn’t even touch on all the important aspects of FEAR. Fear itself is neither good

nor bad. It is much more important to learn to harness this naturally human response and learn ways to use it for your benefit. BYW: That is a big part of developing EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE. It isn’t a quick fix, but some of the remedies and coping mechanisms and tools to effectively control fear are not that difficult. Like opening a child-proof medicine bottle, you just need to know how!

Would you like to hear more on this subject? Do you disagree or want to share a different perspective? Message me on Facebook: [Criticism Management by Detri](#).

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







Cooking with Anna (continued from page 9)

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

by Anna Hamilton

*God provides us safety in the storm. Life is full of storms—emotional, financial, physical, and spiritual. Yet even when waves crash around us, God’s word reminds us that His safety is not the absence of storms, but peace within them. In Mark 4:39, Jesus calms the sea with a simple phrase, “Peace! Be still!”*

*Just as He did then, He speaks peace into the storms of our lives today. The disciples feared for their lives, but they were never truly in danger because the One who commands the wind and the waves was in the boat with them. When God says you are safe, it means He is with you even in the darkest hours.*

*We are protected by His promises. God’s promises are more than comforting words—they are spiritual strongholds. Isaiah 41:10 assures us, “Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you; I will help you, I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.”*

*When anxiety and doubt creep in, we can anchor ourselves in the truth that God does not abandon His children. He upholds, He strengthens, and He delivers. Safety in God means that no matter what happens, your soul is secure in His hands.*

*When we have committed our lives to Christ, we are guaranteed eternal security. The ultimate form of safety is not just in the here and now, but in eternity. Jesus said in John 10:28, “I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one will snatch them out of my hand.”*

*This is the very core of our unshakeable confidence in Christ, that our future is sealed by the blood of Christ. God’s promise of safety extends beyond death, ensuring that we will be with Him forever.*

*When we are safe in the hands of Christ, we can live our lives from a place of safety. When*

*we truly believe that God says we are safe, it changes the way we live. We stop operating from fear and begin moving in faith. We become bold in love, generous in service, and steady in trials. The enemy’s lies lose their power when we cling to God’s truth: “You are safe, because you are Mine.”*

*In this temporary world, you may not always feel safe. You may walk through valleys and climb steep mountains. But remember, safety in God is not the absence of struggle; it is the presence of the Savior. His hand is on you, His Spirit is within you, and His promises surround you.*

*God says you are safe—not because of what you’ve done, but because of who He is. Rest in that truth. Walk in that peace. You are safe in His love.*

*This week’s recipe is a delicious and easy side dish that highlights the wonderful fresh produce that is popping up from our gardens here in the South. It will keep in the refrigerator for several days and just keeps getting better. It is perfect for all of those backyard BBQs because it is mayonnaise free. My family loves it, and I hope yours does too.*

*“Answer me when I call to you, my righteous God. Give me relief from my distress; have mercy on me and hear my prayer. How long will you people turn my glory into shame? How long will you love delusions and seek false gods? Know that the Lord has set apart his faithful servant for himself; the Lord hears when I call to him. Tremble and do not sin; when you are on your beds, search your hearts and be silent. Offer the sacrifices of the righteous and trust in the Lord. Many, Lord, are asking, “Who will bring us prosperity?” Let the light of your face shine on us. Fill my heart with joy when their grain and new wine abound. In peace I will lie down and sleep, for you alone, Lord, make me dwell in safety” (Psalm 4).*



# *We're HERE! (Part 1)*

by Stephanie Reynolds, Athens-Limestone Tourism Association



It's summer travel season! The sun is shining, the birds are singing, and the road (and family) is calling our name.

This is prime "travel to visit grandma/auntie/college roommate" time. And of course we are always reasonable, our children are always well behaved... we are the easiest, most amenable guests ever, am I right?

But we want to make sure our visit is a delight for the folk we're staying with, not just for us. We want to hear "Awww! Can't you stay longer?" instead of "Hate-to-see-you-go-here's-your-hat."

Here are a few tips to be such an incredible house guest that they secretly want to add a wing to their house for you to move into. (Ok, they probably won't go that far...but they might).

1. Understand that they LOVE you but that doesn't make having a houseguest any easier. Those are two COMPLETELY SEPARATE things.

Let me say that again: Their love for us and the strain of having guests in the house are two VERY DIFFERENT THINGS. It isn't personal. It is just hard to have a routine changed, to have to budget for extra groceries, to not be able to wake up or go to sleep or do the things you always do out of consideration for your guests.

So if the person you're visiting acts like your visit is difficult for them, it is because it honestly is.

Again, it isn't YOU (unless you're being ugly, but I know you aren't), it is change. Change is often the enemy. So please be patient and don't take it personally.

2. Consider staying only 2-3 days max at one house. This is especially true if the people you are going to visit are older, if they are introverted, if you have very active kids, or if you are visiting your grown children (especially with new daughters-in-law or if there is a new baby). Be mindful that while they love you, almost any guest is stressful. A whole family is even more so.

3. If you have kids or are super active people, remember that the people you are visiting may not be used to the level of noise or activity. Take the kids out to run off steam. Give them ample activities or resort to letting them use electronic devices (desperate times, folks, desperate times). Enforce company manners strictly—it is much better for your host to say to you, "Oh just let them be kids, it's fine!" than for them to mutter behind closed doors, "Those kids are heathens! When are they leaving?"

4. Likewise, if you are an introvert and the people you are visiting are eager to show you all the things all the time, remember that they are pouring out to you what they love. They are treating you how they would like to be treated (and that 3-day visit limit is great). You can be open with, "That drive made me so tired! But I can't wait to



see what we can do tomorrow!" or "You know what I have been longing to do since we planned this trip? Just sit on the porch and hear you talk. I have missed your voice."

5. Establish any dietary needs WAY ahead of time. And it's on YOU. Remember how long it took to learn all the pitfalls of various allergies, etc. and how hard it was to make sure you were doing everything right? So don't expect your hosts with no food allergies to suddenly spool up on the synonyms for "gluten." Firstly, it isn't very wise to trust severe allergies to someone else.

Secondly, if they love you (and they don't want to kill anyone or make them sick) they will be freaking out the whole time, "What if I missed something? We had peanuts at Christmas and I washed the counter at least twice since then but what if there was peanut dust? What if there was flour on the conveyor belt and it got

on the produce bag and then some fell into the stem area of the apples and I washed but not enough and Bobby eats the apple and gets terribly sick?? What if they die because I forgot something?!" It seems extreme, but, again, remember how freaked out you were to do everything right at the diagnosis.

Thirdly, specific eating is expensive eating. They will have to buy a box of x-y-z that they never eat or don't even like and will only use one cup of while you are there. Traveling with dietary restrictions is hard for us but also hard for our hosts.

So try this: In the SAME

conversation where you have talked about coming to their house, say: "You are such an amazing cook, but Bobby has severe allergies and Joe is diabetic. I don't want you wasting time or money with what we can't eat. We will bring our own food and here are a list of places we can eat at if we want to go out. That way no one has to stress. Don't worry, this is what we do everywhere we go." That is the gracious and SAFE thing for everyone. Food is a love language for many, but not the only love language!

So there is our first set of ideas for being a GREAT houseguest. Stay tuned for more!

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Athens Now AL

Protecting Your Story

Telling It Well





## Learning As A Lifestyle

# Courageous Leadership Lessons From Harriet Tubman

by Eric Betts

Assistant Director, Curtis Coleman Center for Religion Leadership and Culture at Athens State University

Leadership expert, author, and trainer John Maxwell, highlighted the life of Harriet Tubman as an example of unmistakably natural and unrivaled dynamic leadership ability in his book *21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership*. Harriet Tubman was born into slavery in Maryland, and escaped in 1849 by using disguises, sailing on different boats, and riding on various trains until arriving in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, where she could live in freedom. She was not content with obtaining her own individual freedom but was burning with the inner desire to set other captives free. Tubman could have remained at peace and simply enjoyed her new life in freedom. But could she? Believing that she had a higher calling to help others also escape to freedom, she resolved to dedicate her life to the cause of abolition.

Between 1850 and 1860, Tubman led hundreds of enslaved persons from captivity in America. Traveling back across the Mason-Dixon Line after escaping slavery might have been thought of as foolhardy by some, but she had faith that her mission would succeed. Such a mission was extremely dangerous and life-threatening. Tubman could have been shot, tortured, or lynched. Bounty hunters and hounds were constantly on her trail, yet she never relented in her quest to free others.

One of the major qualities that great and exceptional leaders possess is that they are widely respected, and Maxwell states that Tubman demanded and received it throughout her life's journey. Maxwell refers to "The Law of Respect" in his volume and utilizes Harriet Tubman's experience as an example of how respect is gained

by great leaders. Natural leaders who are respected by their followers project a strength of character that draws respect through their influence. What is remarkable about Harriet Tubman, as Maxwell sees it, is that her outward appearance did not in any way suggest that she even had the potential command others. She had an unimpressive stature at little over 5 feet tall, couldn't read or write, and wore dusty and worn clothing. Unable to read or write, due to the fact that she was born into slavery, yet she was able to command hundreds. Who would ever imagine that one who suffered from often blanking out, due to an affliction from being stricken in the head as a child, could command the respect of statesmen and politicians? Not only was her race held against her, but the fact that she was a woman made her even more vulnerable.

Harriet Tubman would appear to be an unlikely candidate for leadership because the deck was certainly stacked against her. Despite her circumstances, she became an incredible leader. Her origins, stature, and lack of formal education remind many churchgoers of the ancient words of Scripture which say, "Man looks at the outward appearance, but God looks at the heart." How could a woman of such a humble station command such respect? If Harriet Tubman was in the employment pool for great leaders, it is unlikely that she would have been respected enough to be selected. Maxwell pinpoints six qualities that natural leaders possess which almost always commands respect:

### Five ways leaders gain respect:

1. Natural leadership ability -- Harriet Tubman was one

of those rare gems in history, a person who is born to lead; this is why she was not satisfied with remaining in Philadelphia while so many were left in chains. This also speaks to the many creative and instinctively demanding reactions to those who were afraid and sought to turn back. "You will go on or die" was her motto. She would not endanger the lives of her followers due to the timidity of some. Some people are born with greater skills and ability to lead than others. Because of the natural strength she projected, her followers had the sense that they were in good hands.

2. Respect for others -- Autocratic leaders rely on violence and intimidation to get people to do what they want, but good leaders rely on respect. They understand that all leadership is voluntary. Harriet Tubman was respected because it was understood by her followers that she was sacrificing herself for their freedom. This is usually not the case for autocratic leaders; they usually want others to sacrifice themselves for the leader. However, Tubman was forced to use intimidation in those life-or-death situations, but always in the mode of acting as a protector and with love for others. Her journeys were quite similar to secret military operations, where intimidation was called for. This was only a "military style tactic," and was not the basis for her leadership. They followed her because of her love and strength of character. The difference with Tubman is that it was apparent she was willing lay down her life to rescue those she loved. Under normal circumstances when there are no life-or-death situations, intimidation

as a tactic will only yield the temporary pretense of respect by followers.

3. Courage -- One thing that caused everyone to respect Harriet Tubman so much was her tremendous courage. She was determined that she was going to succeed or die trying. She didn't care about the risk or danger and put her life on the line. Her mission was clear, and she was absolutely fearless. This fearlessness possessed by Harriet had a contagious effect which freed others to become hopeful. Those who followed her saw her courage and were inspired. Her motto was, "If you hear the dogs, keep going. If you see the torches in the woods, keep going. If there's shouting after you, keep going. Don't ever stop. Keep going. If you want a taste of freedom, keep going." It was this attitude of fearlessness that led them so many times across the line and into "freedom land." This was perhaps her strongest of the six leadership traits that demand respect.

4. Success -- It is attractive. Maxwell says, "People are naturally drawn to it. It is important when it applies to the people who lead us. No one can argue with a good track record." Harriet Tubman was not bashful about her track record. She once said, "I am a conductor on the underground railroad. I have never lost a passenger and never ran the train off its tracks." This record of success attracted thousands from different backgrounds and stations in life.

5. Loyalty -- Maxwell says loyalty "is when leaders stick with the team until the job is done, remaining loyal to the organization when the going gets tough." Those who

followed Tubman knew that they could trust her and that she would never abandon them.

6. Value added to others -- Maxwell says, "The greatest source of respect for a leader comes from his or her dedication to adding value to others. Their respect for them carries on long after the relationship has ended." How did Harriet "add value"? What greater value can there be than to go from living in captivity to a position and place of freedom? In Pennsylvania, there was a greater sense of self-determination to become whatever one's inner spirit said they should or could be, and to go wherever that inner spirit drives one to go. Those who followed her imagined what they could become if they only followed her.

The fact that Harriet Tubman was on the Most Wanted List in America showed that even those who saw her as a threat respected her. When people see that you care about their future and are willing to take risks to get them there, the respect they will give will be undeniable. They will charge a hill on your behalf. She was a great leader not only because of the strength she projected but also because she earned it through hard work and a track record of successful missions that was impossible to deny. Abolitionist John Brown referred to her as "General Harriet Tubman," because her successful missions and leadership abilities were on par with military leaders. Harriet Tubman did not have an official position as a leader, which shows us that sometimes leadership isn't about positions but character and qualities that command respect.





## The Alternative Approach

# *Do We Really, Watch And Listen?*

by Roy Williams

Look at who is trying to stop the American way. Look at who is trying to take away our freedoms. Look at who is wanting to raise our taxes, open our borders, protect the criminals, and imprison those willing to stand up for free speech. Remember the J6ers?

Look at who wants to put more and more regulations on us every time there is an emergency. Look at who wants war with other nations. Look at who wants to support both sides of wars between other nations. Look at who wants men in women's sports. Look at who wants to tell us that there are more than two genders. Look at which news organizations only want one side of the story told. Look at the entertainment industry that wishes to ex-

plot and sexualize our children, who demonize Christianity, only tell one side of the story, support child molestation, and child mutilation. Look at the financial industry that continues to push fiat currency, creating more inflation, always wishing to tax us more so they can enslave every person on earth. The medical industrial complex that has determined to never find or release real cures to protect their stockholders and their bottom line.

Look at the number of religious organizations, so called churches that teach the traditions of men without even using the word of God. They have become experts at telling stories that make us feel good but avoid like the plague any of the Scriptures that call out immorality and de-

bauchery. And of course, we should look at the politicians that tell of all the grandiose things they will accomplish to get in office and then never get it done but have become experts at making excuses. How do so many get in office with so little, just to leave a few years later as millionaires while no one asks how they did it or show us the taxes they paid on that wealth. And last but not least, it is the programing of our children, the National Education Association, which has decided to teach our children their propaganda while never teaching what should be taught.

Please remember, we are in spiritual warfare. Their goal is to change our nation from a nation of moral Christian principles to a nation



of demonism, a nation of idolatry (idol worship). Don't even try to convince me that there is no idol worship in this nation. Look at the numbers of people who worship Taylor Swift (especially our children), Lady Gaga, Beyonce, Katie Perry, and even Michael Jackson. Look at the huge number of people who are addicted to porn, gambling, sports, and sports stars. This nation is full of idol worship and nothing hurts our Father's (talking about our Father in heaven who created the heavens and the earth) feelings more than idol worship. After all, the first of the Ten Commandments is "You shall have no other gods before Me." I am also convinced that our heavenly Father has given America one more chance because a large part of our population got on their knees and prayed for the forgiveness of our nation and have decided to turn back to those basic principles taught in the word of God. Our God is faithful and just, and He is willing to forgive us when we sincerely repent and turn back to Him.

The one true and living God is our salvation, and for those who don't believe that America is mentioned in the Holy Bible, just go to Isaiah Chapter 18 and read a description of a special nation that will be a blessing to the world and especially His chosen ones, which are any people who trust in Him and turn to Him. The description given in Isaiah 18:1-7 is like looking at a picture of America. No, America is not mentioned by name but when reading it, you will realize that no other nation or place on Planet Earth will fit all the characteristics mentioned.

It is time to put God and good moral values back in all aspects of our nation. Maybe you have reached the point that, for you, its time to protect your health through proper nutrition, instead of doctors and synthetic drugs. To learn more, go by Herbs & More in Athens, NHC Herb Shop in Killen, go to [www.nhcherbs.com](http://www.nhcherbs.com) or call us at 256-233-0073.

*Your Friend in Health,  
Roy P Williams*





# Service Dogs Need A Break Too!

by Joel Allen



Hello, folks! Years ago, I attended a nice Baptist church on Nick Davis Road. Zues was always with me each time I went. Every member of the church would greet us as we came in, and Zues was the attention getter every time. If no one saw Zues, it was like he wasn't there because he was so quiet. We would sing and clap during worship service, and Zues would still remain quiet. We even went to a big church worship event in Nashville, TN, and Zues received a lot of attention there. I met a man who said he was legally blind

and only saw shadows of light around everyone's silhouettes. He surprised me when he looked at Zues and stated he had an unusual light of beauty around him. So, that's how it was with Zues. Even in public when he was working, he kept it professional.

One day, the pastor of the Nick Davis Church came by to visit me at my house. Zues, being off duty so to speak, went out the front door with me, looking all serious with his shoulders squared, chest pumped out, jaw set, ears forward, and eyes locked. He approached the ve-

hicle and barked at the pastor as he pulled up. Looking surprised, the pastor asked me if that was Zues because he never saw Zues act this way. I laughed and stated that it was and explained that this was Zues's home and he was letting the pastor know this was his place, LOL. The look on his face was priceless, and he never viewed Zues the same after that. It made me feel proud that Zues was regarded for his professionalism when he was in public. If anyone knows what a "military bearing" is, that was Zues.

Every service dog I've

had or trained knows that when we are out in public and they are wearing their vests, they are working. They are not allowed to act like a normal dog. They are not allowed to eat while in their vest (for which I am guilty of allowing only a few times and under certain circumstances). I do not encourage my SDs to use the bathroom while in their vests; I will remove their vest if they have to go. It is required of them to do as they are trained and to always maintain a certain appearance of calm in public.

That being said, a service dog needs to be a dog too. Those of us who use a service dog need to provide our SDs with neutral or safe areas where they can unwind and relax from their duties. It is not good that an SD work 24 hours a day, and yes, sometimes certain dogs will want to always work. So it is up to us to teach them that they can relax at certain times and places.

Some things I would suggest is letting them run loose when taking their service vests off. Use common sense though, and respect any leash laws there may be if in public areas. Take them on a regular walk, give them "lubbins" (rubbings and lovings), play fetch, or let them go on "sniffaris" (sounds like safaris but with the added word "sniff"). Some of us have more than one SD, and that is great because we can give time

off to one while the other works.

All in all, I want everyone to understand that SDs are dogs too. They deserve a break, and we should never keep working them because they can get burned out, in my opinion. Ever met an over-trained dog? The ones I have met refuse to train after that, and keep in mind SDs are always training when they are working.

Today I have Houston, Zoey, and Felix as my SDs. Houston prefers to go all the time, and most of the time I take him. I use Zoey to give Houston a break, and my Felix is still training and learning about proper etiquette in public. That's my setup for myself, and I suggest the same for everyone, if possible, because the ADA Law states that one is allowed to have up to three SDs.

So in saying all this folks, remember to give your SD a break. Let them be a dog, and have fun with them. It will build your relationship into a better bond, and that is needed when they are working. Until next month stay safe.

***"Remember to love your dogs because they love you. Maybe not the way you want them to, like chewing up your favorite shoes or what not, but that is just love chewing. Be thankful for the time you have with them always."***

**Joel Allen**

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## Rightside Way

# Make Your “Here” Great!

by Phil Williams

In the midst of a long-range patrol, my team conducted a “village assessment” in the early days of the war in Afghanistan -- a snapshot of life in remote areas to determine whether Taliban or Al Qaeda holdouts were present. We gathered active and passive intelligence for a clearer picture of the area of operations, and sometimes we gleaned meaningful ways to better the lives of a war-torn people.

On this occasion, I spoke to a village elder somewhere in the middle of the backside of nowhere who spent several minutes telling me how horrible everything was: “The Taliban blew up the school” ... “The mosque has a leaking roof” ... “The crops are dying” ... “The bombs killed many goats” ... “The well has run dry.” I finally held up my hand and asked through my interpreter, “Why do you live here?” He was incredulous that I would ask such a thing! This was their home!

Okay. Fair enough. If you love a place and call it home.....great! I find no fault with choosing to stay where you love even if it’s not the best of the best. But are you going to wallow in your complaints? Are you going to obsessively ruminate on what you don’t have? Or are you going to impact your

culture, build your community, and make your choice of home a better place.

A recent story out of Dearborn, Michigan, told of a large crowd gathered as part of an Islamic religious holiday. As the crowd gathered, a local Islamic activist began to lead them in shouts of “Death to America!” While absorbing all that comes from being a resident of the nation that does more, has more, and means more than any on the face of the planet, they yelled, “Death to America!”

I will repeat my question: Why do they live here?! We can put together a GoFundMe site and buy a set of plane tickets in no time. They can all be on their way to places where they can shout, “Death to America,” while not having to breathe our air. The crowd that day in Dearborn was so busy complaining, so busy hating, that they lost sight of what they have.

The American Dream is still very much alive.

“The American Dream is not that every man must be level with every other man.” Ronald Reagan once said. “The American Dream is that every man must be free to become whatever God intends he should become.” But attaining that American Dream does not come from a life filled with complaints. It

comes from a life filled with appreciation, aspiration, and a willingness to see complaints as nothing but mere obstacles left to be overcome.

Why do we live here? Why do we live right here? Truthfully, my own “right here” is North Alabama and there’s no place else I’d rather be.

There’s a lot to be proud of right now. A great deal of positive attention is being given to the Southeast, particularly Alabama.

President Donald Trump spoke recently at the University of Alabama’s commencement, “... for the past four years, you’ve lived in a state known for its fighters, its champions and its warriors, and you’ve lived in the great state of Alabama, one of the greatest of them all. From Huntsville to Birmingham, from Montgomery to Mobile, and from right here in Tuscaloosa to the gleaming shores of the Gulf of America,” he told the graduates.

FBI Director Kash Patel called Redstone Arsenal one of the FBI’s “crown jewels” with “capabilities that don’t exist anywhere else.” A recent Government Accountability Office report on the location of Space Command confirmed that Alabama outpaced all other competitors for such things as quality of life, cost of living, robust capabilities, and ease of

access. Mercedes Benz announced a major production expansion for its Alabama plant. The new US Steel/Nippon Steel agreement includes massive investment in our state.

This is where generations of my family have lived and worked to make our mark in politics, business, the military, our churches, and communities. I have been in many other places, but I always wanted to come back. I love the way the seasons change in North Alabama and the beaches stay white on our coast. Everywhere you go there’s a church steeple in the distance, and folks still see their neighbors at the grocery store. We still buy wrapping paper from neighbor’s kids for the school fundraiser, and you can order sweet tea at any restaurant in this state. We have the finest research facilities, medical innovations, manufacturing base, and small businesses anywhere. Alabama’s active military and veteran community is stronger than most, and we thank them for their service all year around.

But I’m also not content to just let it be. I live here, and I want my “here” to be great. Is it possible for Alabama to be better? Yes, 100%! I get frustrated with the politics and the politicians (I was one!) but I see a caliber of political leadership here that I would put up

against any other.

Bragging rights all around.

Do people appreciate where they live? Do they try to make it better?

Wherever “here” may be, ask yourself why do I live here? Be mindful of the reasons why you live where you live. Complaining is a fool’s errand. Mere complaints solve nothing. Move past the complaints and make your “here” better.

I know why I live here. I know what we’ve got, and I know what we can be.

So why do you live here? And what are you going to do about it?

*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](http://www.rightsideradio.org).*





# The Assertive You

by Lisa Philippart,  
Licensed Professional Counselor



***“Assertiveness is your ability to act in harmony with your self-esteem without hurting others.”***

- Author Unknown

In my last article, we discussed three forms of communication: passive, aggressive, and passive-aggressive. Hopefully, I convinced you that none of these is truly effective in communicating and interacting with others. Most of us can see ourselves in one or all three of these styles, sometimes depending on the other person, sometimes depending on the situation, and sometimes depending on both. Like you, sometimes I struggle to express myself clearly. Assertive communication is a style of communication in which you can state your opinions and feelings, while firmly

advocating for your rights and needs without violating the rights of others. When you are assertive, you are showing that you value yourself, your time, and your emotional, physical, and spiritual needs. You are an advocate for yourself, while being respectful of the rights of others.

**So, how do you become an assertive communicator?** You state your needs and desires clearly, appropriately, and respectfully. Ditto with your thoughts and feelings. You learn to use “I” statements...I feel, I think, I believe...instead of you are, you always, or you never. Are you someone who is thinking about how to respond or what to say next while the other person is talking? I believe you will communicate esteem for others if you can truly listen without interrupting. Maintain good eye

contact and relax your body posture. When it is your turn to speak, use a calm, clear tone, using the phrase, “To be sure I understood what you said, did you mean....?” This shows you were listening and that you can rephrase what the other person said. Communication is about connection. And the best way to feel connected to others is through expressing yourself with competence and control, while not allowing the other party to abuse or manipulate. Assertive communicators are able to stand up for their rights while respectfully and non-judgmentally relating to others.

**Have you met an assertive communicator, or even better, are you one who can communicate assertively?** Then you know that these folks (or you!) have the ability to connect to others without being controlling. The key, in

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fact, is to be in control of thoughts and emotions. The impact of a pattern of assertive communication is that these individuals are able to move forward because they address issues and problems as they arise. One of the most difficult challenges most of us face is being able to create a respectful environment, whether it be at home, at school, or at work, where others can grow and advance to their fullest potential. I hope you have or have had the wonderful experience of working for an assertive communicator. This person allows you to learn and mature

in a safe, productive environment. (Or if you are the boss, I hope your employees can say this about you.)

**What are some thoughts or phrases you can begin to use assertively moving forward?** Here are some examples:

“We are both entitled to express ourselves respectfully to each other.”

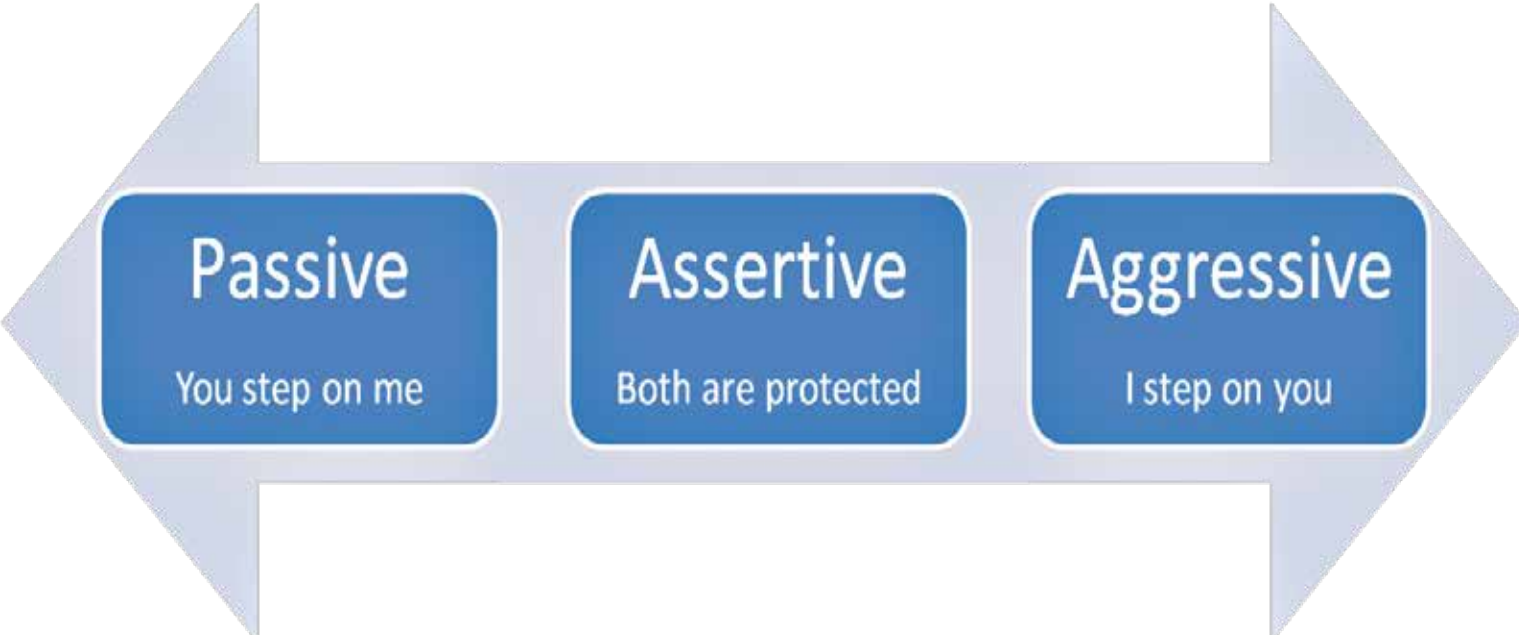
“I can’t control others, but I can control myself.”

“I’m 100% responsible for my own happiness.”

“I respect the rights of others as much as I respect my own rights.”

The bottom line here is that if you can learn to speak clearly, honestly, and effectively, you will convey confidence, self-control, and responsibility. Assertiveness is fundamental for good mental health and healthy relationships.

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





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