

August 15 - September 4, 2025

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Return James Lucas To Athens City Council, District 3

By Ali Elizabeth Turner

For the past three years, James Lucas has served our city as the District 3 councilman, having been appointed by the Athens City Council in July of 2022 after the passing of Councilman Frank Travis. He is desiring to continue a lifetime of serving the city he loves, and is asking for your vote

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From The Tourism Office

Not TSA, TS-YAY!...

"We've won!!! You can wear shoes through TSA!" said the family text from my second-born male heir. Wait, what? He never uses 3 exclamation points...

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Down By The River...

Oh, Dairy Road, you never cease to amaze me. Over the last few weeks, I have had the absolute privilege to work with...

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Captain's Log

I Got It!...

I GOT IT!!! I finally received my "bus babies' class list"! Now, you and I both know we don't experience traditional classroom learning on this moving yellow machine, but, oh, do we ever learn...

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1 A+ Plumbing: Getting It Right The First Time

By Ali Elizabeth Turner

After moving here from Phoenix, NY, and working for a local plumber, Eric Walts knew that he wanted to launch out on the always wild waters of owning one's own business, thus 1 A+ Plumbing was officially born in June of 2024. Eric's wife, Samantha, told me, "Eric is always the happiest when he can be an

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Publisher's Point

Alabamians, Get In The ACT

I am so pleased to announce that Secretary of State Wes Allen has officially placed Alabama into the fray and fight against human trafficking. This week he announced the formation of ACT, which stands for Alabama Combats Trafficking. Because trafficking, whether it is sex trafficking or labor trafficking, is a commercial enterprise, it makes great sense for businesses to be the first ones invited to "get in the ACT" by joining in the movement. Member brick-and-mortar businesses will be given a decal to put in their windows that will essentially inform bad guys that as far as businesses are concerned, "Not in my house, and not on my watch." More about the business aspect of ACT in a moment, but below is from the ACT website to give you some info to get

you started:

What Is ACT?

Alabama Combats Trafficking (ACT) is a state-wide initiative by the Alabama Secretary of State's Office to raise awareness about human trafficking and to empower Alabama businesses in taking Action against trafficking.

Who Can Be a Victim of Human Trafficking?

Human trafficking victims can be of any age, race, ethnicity, sex, nationality, immigration status, cultural background, religion, socio-economic class, and education attainment level.

Indicators of Human Trafficking:

- Individuals living with an employer
- Poor living conditions
- Multiple people in cramped space
- Inability to speak to

individuals alone

- Answers appear to be scripted and rehearsed
- An employer holding identity documents
- Signs of physical abuse
- Submissive or fearful
- Unpaid or paid very little
- Under 18 and in prostitution

If you believe you have seen a trafficking event or are personally in need of assistance, here is what you can do:

- Contact your local law enforcement agency by dialing 911.
- Call the National Human Trafficking Hotline toll-free at 1-888-373-7888.
- Text the National Human Trafficking Hotline at 233733 or chat via Human Trafficking Hotline Web Chat.

• Report criminal activity to the State Bureau of Investigation Crime Hotline by calling 1-800-392-8011 or visiting Alabama Law Enforcement Agency - Fusion Center Suspicious Activity Report.

In our city and Limestone County, along with Tuscaloosa and Huntsville, law enforcement officers and first responders get up-to-the-minute training with regard to trafficking in all its forms, and I am so encouraged to know that this fight is important to their hearts. In addition, we have groups like Fortify Alabama and Covenant Rescue Group here in Alabama and Freedom Aviation Network in Tennessee that are involved in operations that free victims and get them to safety. All of these groups are worthy of your attention and support.

If you are a business and want to be listed as a member of ACT, you can apply free of charge at the ACT website, which is <https://www.sos.alabama.gov/act>. It is high time to obliterate this blight, so let us indeed get in the ACT!

Ali Elizabeth Turner

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“The V-J Pic” 80 Years Later

by Ali Elizabeth Turner

V-J Day, or Victory Over Japan Day, happened officially on August 14, 1945, and the spontaneous celebrations that occurred everywhere ended up being the source of the most iconic photograph of the entire war. I am talking about none other than the “sailor-suddenly-kissing-the-nurse-who-we-later-found-out-was-a-dental-assistant” pic. They say one picture is worth a thousand words, and in this case, there are actually two pictures. In this edition of *Soldier*, we will wisely use the one that is public domain because it turns out that the other, which is known in the biz as *V-J Day In Times Square* by Albert Eisenstaedt, is copyrighted from here to Kalamazoo.

Here is the story. News broke that Japan had surrendered, and President Harry Truman was due to make a radio announcement at 7 p.m. Eastern Time. Nonetheless, while people waited to hear from the president, near euphoria erupted. Albert Eisenstaedt was among the celebrators, and with his Leica camera took only four shots. He, as only a seasoned photographer can, quickly assessed the factors that would make for great composition and snapped what he saw. Mr. Eisenstaedt later said that if the woman had been in a dark dress, and the sailor in dress whites, he wouldn't have taken the shot. He also was careful to make sure that Times Square could be easily identified in the background.

V-J Day In Times Square came out a week later in *Life Magazine*, which featured a 14-page spread that showed similar events which had taken place all over the country. Albert Eisenstaedt only allowed four outlets to publish, and closely guarded every aspect of the photo's reproduction for the rest of his life. Fifty years later, nearly to the day, Albert Eisenstaedt signed a few copies of his photo, and eight hours later passed away from cancer.

Consider Victor Jorgenson, the creator of the photo used here. He was a photojournalist for the U.S. Navy, who was within a few feet of



Eisenstaedt. He did not get the same details of Times Square in the back of the photo, and some say the angle of the pic was less interesting than Eisenstaedt's. However, what he captured, in my view, could have gotten the job done even if Eisenstaedt hadn't been on hand, and it needs to be remembered that Jorgenson never received an extra penny for his work. Why? Because he was serving the Navy, and thus had no right to copyright it as his own work. He entitled his version *Kissing The War Goodbye*, a title I find

more than fitting.

For decades, people came out of the woodwork claiming to be the sailor as well as the “nurse.” *Life* tried to find the real participants, and controversy remains to this day. Some say the “nurse” opened her arms to the sailor, others say the kiss was not consensual. I hope that it was, because of the victory itself. And, at the risk of appropriating the late, great Paul Harvey, that is at least some of “the rest of the story” of one of the most famous photographs ever.



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Carissa's Corner

Making A Way For Others

by Carissa Lovvorn

School, pool parties, movies, and outdoor events are just a small part of everyday life in our community. However, for individuals with special needs and their families, these activities can present challenges that make staying home feel like the only option. A local nonprofit, the Make-A-Way Foundation (MAW), strives to change this dynamic. Its mission is “to provide resources to assist groups of two or more individuals with special needs in a learning or recreational environment.”

Founder Stacey Givens started the organization after her own son was diagnosed with autism at the age of three and a half. She saw how he benefited from sensory therapy and successfully advocated for the first sensory room at his elementary school. Soon, other children began using and benefiting from the room. The word spread, and Mrs. Givens was contacted by another school to build a similar room for their students. She explains, “What started out as a small seed intended to help my son, quickly grew into a beautiful garden.” This garden now includes twenty-one sensory rooms located throughout Athens City and Limestone County schools.

Even with its significant impact on the academic

lives of children, the work of the MAW Foundation doesn’t end when the school day does. The organization hosts periodic community events tailored for special needs adults, teens, children, and their families. These include an annual Easter egg hunt, sensory-friendly haircuts, a night at the Lions Club Kiddie Carnival, movie nights at Cultivate Church, adult hula parties at the Athens Senior Center, and many more opportunities for inclusion. Thanks to generous donations and support from local and out-of-state individuals, businesses, churches, government agencies, and state legislators—as well as grants from organizations such as United Way—the MAW Foundation offers these activities at no cost to families.

To help others learn about the special needs community, the MAW Foundation provides informational books to newly diagnosed families and local libraries. It also partners with law enforcement to offer officer training and host

a meet-and-greet event for special needs individuals to connect with first responders. Excitingly, through its partnership with the Athens City Parks and Recreation Center, adaptive sports will be coming to the area in late winter or early spring.

The Tutus on a Mission group and I have had the honor of volunteering at several MAW Foundation events, and I can say firsthand that this is one of the sweetest organizations around. Everyone is so gracious, the families are deeply appreciative, and the volunteers are proud to be part of something that truly changes the lives of others. The MAW Foundation has big dreams for the future, including a temperature-controlled mobile sensory unit for use at large public community events and an adaptive field for organized recreation—both of which would be a tremendous benefit to our community. I encourage everyone to learn more about their efforts and discover how you can lend a helping hand or



contribute to the cause. email: info@foundationmakeaway.org
Let’s make a way for everyone to enjoy our sweet community.

Please visit: www.foundationmakeaway.org or

*Many blessings,
Carissa*



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Calendar of Events

Limestone County Master Gardeners Workshop - Water you Thinkin'?

August 16

10 AM – 11AM , In the Technology Center at the Athens-Limestone County Public Library, 603 S. Jefferson St., Athens. . This presentation focuses on water quality and quantity when it comes to caring for ourselves and our plants. Creating water features to enhance your landscape is also discussed. So, “Water you Thinkin’?” to keep your plants’ thirst quenched? The instructor for this workshop is Master Gardener Norris Johnston. Free and Open to the Public. For further information call 256-714-0611.

Girl Scouts Green Flag Weekend

August 23

Girls age K-12 and their families interested in more information regarding Girls Scouts can visit various city parks throughout North Alabama. To register, go to girlscoutsna.org.

4th Annual SummerFest on The Square

August 23

Bands will entertain while volunteers accept donations from spectators for local charity. 5:00 PM-10:00 PM. Eastside of the Limestone County Courthouse on Marion Street. 200 W. Washington St., Athens, AL.

2025 State of the State Address

August 27

The Chamber of Commerce is delighted to provide the Governor a forum to present The State of the State Address. Governor Kay Ivey will use this opportunity to highlight the State's progress and challenges from the past year and an outlook for the year ahead. 11:30AM- 1PM. Alabama Vets' Museum. 114 W. Pryor St., Athens.

Swamp John's

August 28

4:00pm – 7:00pm. Sheriff's Rodeo Arena, Athens. The Sons of Confederate Veterans is having a Swamp John's supper to raise funds for local cemetery cleanup and care. Plates are \$15 and include fried fish, shrimp, or chicken, (or any combination) along with slaw, french fries, hush puppies, and tea. Carry out or eat in. Presale tickets are available. Walkups are encouraged and welcome!. Call Daveen Stanford at 256-777-2199 or Email camp768@alscv.org for more information.

2nd Annual Summer Sippin' Festival

August 30

3-7pm. Modeled after Athens Main Street's Sippin' Cider event in December, Summer Sippin', presented by Dream Key Real Estate, will allow merchants to get involved during Culinary Month. Participating merchants will provide patrons with a special summer

drink while they visit their stores to shop for summer deals. Event participants compete for patrons' votes to be the summer sippin' champion. Supporting Sponsor: Listerhill Credit Union. A DJ will provide music on the steps of the Courthouse from 4-7 PM. There will also be live music from 5:30-7 PM at Merchants Alley.

Fiddlers Concert Series

September 4

The Tennessee Valley Old Time Fiddlers Concert Series, presented by Redstone Federal Credit Union, concludes with a special performance from The Seldom Scene. 7:00 PM-9:00 PM. McCandless Hall at Athens State University. 302 Bryan St., Athens. <https://athensfiddlers.org/the-seldom-scene/>

Constitution Day Celebration

September 19

Athens State University and John Wade Keyes Chapter Daughters Of The American Revolution cordially invite you to a celebration of Constitution Day. McCandless Hall, Athens State University. 1pm. With speaker John Guertin, USAF Retired. A hot dog lunch will be served on campus at Cafe 1822 at 12:00.

Fiddler's 5K

September 20

6:00 AM-8:00 AM. The 5K will start going south on Beaty Street, left on South Street, right on Julian Newman Street, cross Forrest Street onto Box Street, take a right on Memorial Drive, right on Maryville Drive, continue into the school parking lot crossing Christine, turn around and head back out of the school parking lot, cross Christine onto Maryville Drive, take a left on Memorial, left on Box Street, cross Forrest onto Julian Newman Drive, left on South Street, right on Beaty Street, right into Athens State entrance on Bryan Street and then finish at Sandridge Hall.

32nd Annual Trail of Tears Commemorative Motorcycle Ride

September 20

12:30 PM- 1:30 PM. Highway 72 westbound through Athens.

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.

Not TSA, TS-YAY!

by Stephanie Reynolds, Athens-Limestone Tourism Association



“We’ve won!!! You can wear shoes through TSA!” said the family text from my second-born male heir. Wait, what? He never uses 3 exclamation points. He never ends two sentences in a row with exclamation points. This was huge.

Had my son been involved in a class action suit against the TSA? Had he been taken aside after a staunch refusal to remove his shoes then begrudgingly let through? Did I miss watching my little Dapper David going up against the Goliath of FAA bureaucracy on C-SPAN?

I’m not exaggerating. If anyone could cajole a government into better behavior, he could. I remember when he was 4 and everything was a pleasant, but extensive negotiation. “It’s time for bed, son” I would say, my voice heavy with young mom exhaustion. He would look me in the eye, take a slow, readying breath, tilt his head slightly and begin his “We all just want what’s best here” opening statements:

“Mom.” He would say soothingly. “Now, I know you want me to go to bed...”, affirming that he understood and was incredibly, deeply sympathetic to the pitifulness of my plight. “But...What if...”

At that point his eyes would shift frantically as he scanned the room to find the best way to make a win-win for both of us “...I stayed up and helped you <insert random chore here> instead? That would be good, wouldn’t it?” He would say the last in a rush

with a beaming smile and shining blue eyes that conveyed his assurance that this was, indeed, the best course of action for all of us and there was no way I could disagree.

And his logic always threw me off balance. “Hmmm. Well, I do need the towels fold....WAIT, wait, wait. No, I appreciate your offer, but it really is time for bed.” He never created a fuss, just looked sadly resigned that the perfect solution to all our woes was discarded, and I was left to soak in my alarm that I was almost outwitted by an emotionally astute preschooler. Again.

So please understand, my fabulous folk, that I was not being hyperbolic earlier. He really could coax the ugly out of a hornet. Our great nation has no idea that THE ambassador of all ambassadors lives in a cute, rented house in suburban Denver and probably needs a haircut. Give him a weekend, and he could have North Korea sending us handwritten Valentines cards with all the i’s dotted with little hearts.

The Wonder Sweetie replied to the group text with “Was it a hard fight?” WHEW! It wasn’t just me who missed the memo about our son’s TSA battle.

After being reassured that I had, in fact, not forgotten any Senate hearings that he was subpoenaed to, I asked for context.

“We went through TSA in Denver and they said there was a new rule where you don’t have to take off your shoes.”

Fabulous! A week too late for me, but fabulous!

I had flown out of Huntsville the day after spending a gorgeous 4th of July with many of y’all at the Red White & Boom to see this very son and his amazing bride. I did, indeed, have to take off my hiking boots.

“Rookie...” you might be muttering at this point about my choice of footwear. However, I have a good reason: I was determined to “travel light”. Somehow the idea of taking only a backpack made me see myself like one of those winsome girls with beachy waves traveling with little more than a toothbrush and a passport—fancy free and 30 years younger.

It certainly didn’t mean me roping The Wonder Sweetie to vacuum seal socks and drawers in the kitchen while I checked and rechecked the airline regs, then squishing and remeasuring the bag while he kept saying “Babe, are



you sure you don’t want to just take a suitcase? Look, I already know where one is...Steph. Just. Take. A. Suitcase.”. What? And destroy my internal image of youth and incredible packing skills?? Never.

But my gigantic hiking boots would never fit in the pack, so on my feet they went.

So yes, I had to take off my shoes. I also had to go through the full body scanner. I pinged the scanner, my overstuffed pack pinged the Xray, and both my bag and I were pulled out of line for a (much) more thorough exam.

I want to say this, though—the TSA agents I dealt with were incredibly professional. The lady TSA agent explained everything before she patted me down

and was neither overly friendly (which might have been creepy considering where she had to pat down) nor cold. She was quick and waved me on.

The gentleman TSA agent who ran my bag through the “Bomb or Hair Barrette” machine had a calm confidence and slightly warmer tone than the lady, which made sense because when she had to do her part of the job, it was a risk-frisk, an unknown. By the time he saw that neither my drawers nor my bag were a threat, he could afford some geniality. Both of them did their very tough jobs well.

Honestly, I am fully expecting another Scan-Frisk-Scan-Clear the next time I fly. But at least I can keep my boots on.

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Getting To The Root Of Motivation

by Ali Elizabeth Turner



The first order of business when Mayor Ronnie came in was to talk about the up-and-coming softball game. On Saturday, August 16, the annual First Responder Softball Game between members of the Athens Police Department and the Athens Fire Department will be held at the Sportsplex at 8 a.m. While events like this often are connected with a fundraiser that has a worthy ending to the phrase “all proceeds go to...,” this game is just a pure slice of

small-town Americana that signals the end of summer, amongst other things. One of the things is that this game is open to church teams, but the majority of the players need to be from either department. Several businesses in the area sponsoring the event are doing so just to bless our first responders.

Another aspect of this game is that it builds community. There is nothing like friendly competition and smack-talking. Baseball, or in



this case softball, is the perfect opportunity for the teams (who are teams


on the job day in and day out) to show their team spirit when the stakes are not nearly as high. Talking about the fun of the game served as a perfect segue to Chapter 4 of *Crucial Accountability*, the book that we as well as many members of the Athens City “team” have been reading.

Chapter 4 is called “Make It Motivating” and it underscores what every leader from Mayor Ronnie on down to someone in the classroom or running a home knows: you have to have the team buy-in, and you have to have things in place that serve to provide consequences. He read to me about the three things that don’t work—leaning on charisma, power, or the wrong kind of fear. In the short term, up front they might seem to solve problems, but not in the long run. And, you will never build a true team that has each other’s backs.

Seeing as public safety is always the number one concern for a mayor, and the thing that makes all the rest of a city flow and go, the analogy of an


inter-department softball game really can translate over to the idea of public safety. What if first responders weren’t aware of the need to be a team, and what if their leaders weren’t committed to leading, or as *Crucial Accountability* asks, How to Help Others Want to Take Action?

It’s not that there is never a place for charisma, power, or fear, it is that most of us are not trained as to when and how to use them equitably. “You have to do your job,” Mayor Ronnie said simply. Back to the softball analogy, he added, “The shortstop has a job to do, and it is no one else’s job.” He told me that the City of Athens has a system of consequences in place when people don’t do their job. He also added that there is a merit system. “Consistency is the key,” he said, and that is certainly something about which we prayed. We also asked God to bless our teachers, students, and first responders so they can do their job. Then, once again, it was time for Ronnie to roll.



LITERARY FESTIVAL

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Schedule of Events

Author Meets - 9 am - 1 pm

Guest Author: Deborah Ford Strain, GRITS

10 am - 11 am: book signing after

Community Reading - 11 am - 12:30 noon

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

by Anna Hamilton

Life has a way of testing our strength. Sometimes it's a sudden storm that shakes our faith, and other times it's the slow, heavy weight of trials that seem to never end. In those moments, it's easy to believe we are weak, incapable, or even defeated. But in Christ, our identity is not defined by our struggles, it's defined by God's truth. And God says, "You are strong."

Life's trials can feel like they are tailor-made to expose our weaknesses. A sudden loss, a season of waiting, a door that closes unexpectedly, or a battle we thought would be over by now—each of these moments has the potential to drain us. If we're not careful, our minds will begin to equate hard times with personal failure.

But God's Word tells a very different story. In Christ, my identity is not "weak, overwhelmed, and barely hanging on." In Christ, God calls me strong, and His voice carries

more authority than my feelings or my circumstances.

Strength is part of my spiritual identity. When we gave our lives to Christ, we didn't just receive forgiveness, we received a new identity. In that identity, strength is not something I have to earn; it's part of my inheritance as a child of God.

The world's definition of strength often comes from self-effort, determination, or resilience born from experience. But the Bible reveals a deeper truth—true strength is not self-generated, it is Spirit-infused.

"Be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might" (Ephesians 6:10). Notice it doesn't say, "Be strong in yourself." My ability to stand, endure, and overcome is not based on how hard I try, but on how deeply I rely on Him.

continued on page 24

Zucchini Pizza Casserole

Ingredients:

*1 tablespoon olive oil
¼ cup onion minced
12 oz ground beef or Italian sausage
2 lbs. zucchini trimmed, unpeeled, sliced
½ teaspoon garlic powder
1 teaspoon Italian seasoning
1 ½ cup pizza sauce
2 cups shredded mozzarella cheese
2 oz pepperoni slices
⅓ cup black olives, sliced
¼ cup green bell pepper, chopped
Salt and pepper to taste*

Directions:

Preheat the oven to 400 °F. Grease a 13 x 9 baking dish with oil spray or butter. Set aside.

Heat oil in a large skillet. Add minced onion and cook until fragrant and translucent.

Add ground beef, garlic powder, and Italian seasoning. Cook beef for 2 minutes until cooked through. Add salt and pepper.



Stir in zucchini slices and pizza sauce. Cover the saucepan and simmer for 3-4 minutes until the sauce forms bubbles on the side of the pan.

Remove from the heat and transfer one layer of zucchini beef mixture into the prepared baking dish. Add shredded mozzarella and continue layers until the pan is full.

Cover the top of the dish with remaining

Health and Fitness

Crossfit Is The Fix For Your Health And Fitness Problems

by Nick Niedzwiecki - Owner, CrossFit Athens

If you've been spinning your wheels trying to get in shape, you're not alone. Most people start a fitness journey with good intentions—signing up for a gym, trying the latest diet, maybe even buying some equipment for the garage—only to find themselves back at square one in a few months. The truth is, there's no magic pill, no quick fix, and no "30-day shred" that will deliver lasting health.

What does work? A proven system that builds strength, endurance, and resilience for the long haul. That's exactly what we do at **CrossFit Athens**.

Why Quick Fixes Fail

Fitness gimmicks and fad diets can deliver temporary results, but they rarely last. Restrictive

eating plans are unsustainable, "miracle" supplements are often just expensive placebos, and generic gym routines leave you guessing about what to do next. The missing piece in all of these? A structured program, expert coaching, and a supportive community to keep you consistent when motivation fades.

At CrossFit Athens, we replace the guesswork with a step-by-step plan that meets you where you are and moves you toward real, measurable progress.

What Makes CrossFit Athens Different

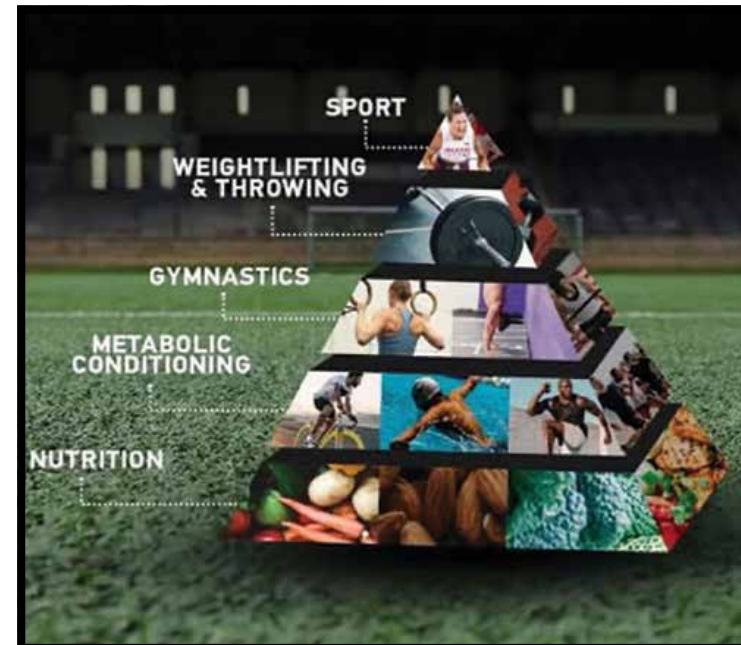
We're not another gym where you check in, wander around, and hope for the best. Every class at CrossFit Athens is led by a qualified coach who

knows your name, your goals, and your current fitness level. Our programming is carefully designed to improve strength, cardiovascular health, mobility, and coordination—skills you need not just in the gym, but in life.

Whether you're an absolute beginner or an experienced athlete, every workout can be scaled to match your abilities. That means you'll get a workout that's challenging, but not overwhelming, with a clear path for improvement over time.

The Community That Keeps You Going

Here's the thing about motivation—it's unreliable. We all have days when we don't feel like showing up. That's where our community comes in. At CrossFit



Athens, you're not just another membership number—you're part of a team. Our members celebrate your victories, encourage you when things get tough, and make the hard work fun.

That connection is what keeps people coming back. And it's why so many of our members have stuck with us for years, achieving results they never thought possible.

The Long Game for Real Results

If you're ready to stop chasing quick fixes and start building a healthier, stronger version of yourself, the answer is simple: commit to the long

game. CrossFit isn't about overnight transformations—it's about consistent effort, expert guidance, and a community that supports you every step of the way.

When you walk through our doors, you're not starting another failed attempt, you're starting a proven path to success.

If you want real, life-changing results for your health and fitness, it's time to join us at CrossFit Athens. Email info@crossfitathens.com to schedule your first class and see why so many people call this the best decision they've ever made for their health.

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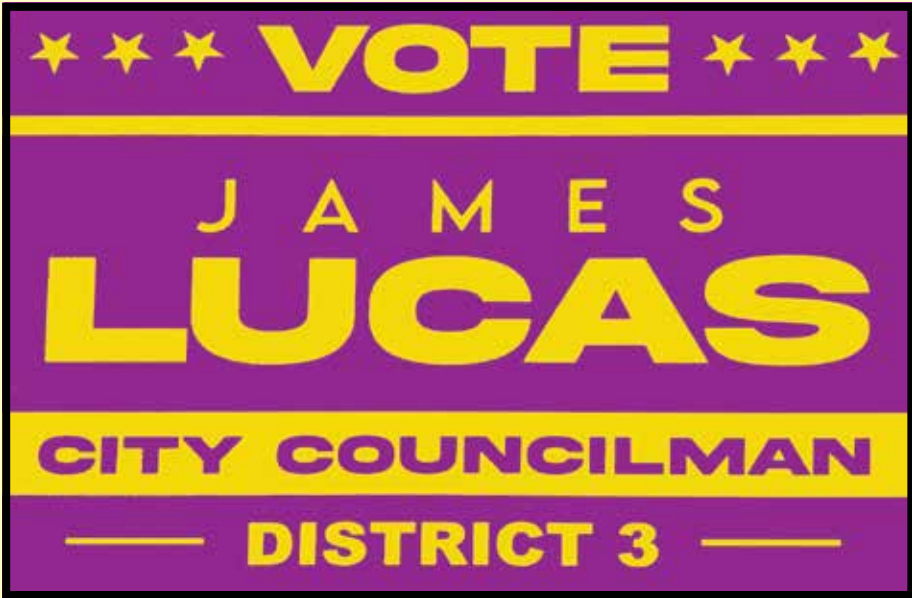
Return James Lucas To Athens City Council, District 3

by Ali Elizabeth Turner

continued from page 1

on August 26.

Mr. Lucas comes from a family of educators, and graduated from Trinity High School. His father was a teacher and a school principal, having graduated from Alabama A & M, and instilled in his children (several of whom went on to become teachers themselves) a deep love and respect for education. When it comes to serving the needs of teachers as well as students, James has his own history as the longest-sitting member of the Athens City School Board. Mr. Lucas served in that position for 27 years. He was elected as president as well as vice-president, and was also designated as a Master School Board member. In addition, in 2015 he was chosen as part of the All-State School Board. James understands the impact teachers can have on students, having been positively impacted by his English teacher, Mr. Johnson. Mr. Lucas was drafted into the U.S. Army, served from 1963-1965, and was stationed in Hanau, Germany. "It was during the Berlin Crisis, and Vietnam was heating up," James told me. He functioned as his artillery unit's crew leader, and had to be "at the ready" due to the increased tensions of the Cold War that were the result of the building of the Berlin Wall. After honorably serving, he earned an A.A. degree from Alverson-Draughon Business College in business administration. James went on to work on Redstone Arsenal for Radio Corporation of America (RCA), and



also worked for 31 years as a maintenance technician for Amoco Chemical. During his time on the Athens City Council, James has worked to remedy the drainage problem that has been a part of East and West Strain Road, and especially wants to see that through to completion. The City has been able to secure a \$4.5 million dollar grant to that end, and work is under way. We talked about other progress that has been made, and James said, "We have been able to make sure that there is entertainment on the Square." We both marveled at how now during Fridays After Five events, as well as others, you can hardly walk down the sidewalk. It's a good problem to have. Since 2022, the City of Athens has been able to make sure that members of the police department, as well as the fire department, get a competitive wage for putting themselves in harm's way to keep us safe. Athens also just had the groundbreaking for Food City, a complex that is going to be even bigger than Buc-ee's, and a Texas Roadhouse along with a new Publix are

on their way. Other projects that are on Councilman Lucas's "radar" are improving traffic flow on Hwy 72 and Hwy 31, the desire to see the Athens Limestone Community Association create a museum that captures and displays the storied history of Trinity School, and to open a swimming pool in the general area of District 3. The closing of the pool at the Wellness Center has made it tougher especially for seniors to access low-impact ways to build and keep their health. It is interesting to note that James's father ran for the same District 3 council position in both 1972 as well as 1974. He didn't win, but James told me that his dad "opened a door" for him to run, and James feels that he owes it to his father and the legacy that Mr. Lucas left to continue to serve in the same capacity his father sought. I asked James what he felt is the most important thing for a public servant to focus on, and with a thoughtful smile he said, "It's not always easy, but I would say 'working on myself.'" He went on to say, "There is nothing

like serving this district and my country. I am willing to help in any way I can." A few days later I asked him, "OK, we have choices, why should I vote for you?" Here was his response: "The reason you should vote for me is that I am the best person

to represent the district, have lived in it all my adult life, and can relate to the needs of the people." If this is the type of leadership and experience you desire for District 3, then vote for James Lucas and return him to Athens City Council.



VOTE

JAMES LUCAS

FOR ATHENS CITY COUNCIL

DIST 3

AUG 26

Athens City Council District (3) Municipal Election, August 26, 2025

My Name is James Lucas. I am seeking the seat of District 3 Athens City Council. I was appointed to fill the remaining term of the late Honorable Frank Travis. I have lived in this district all of my life and can relate to the needs of this district. After serving the last three years, I have seen and been involved in the growth and improvement of Athens. The project that I would like to follow until completion is the West and East Strain road drainage and sewage problem. Since we have a 4.5 Million dollar grant to get started, I would love to see it through!

PAID FOR BY FRIENDS TO ELECT LUCAS CITY COUNCIL DISTRICT 3



Clean, Green And Beautiful

Down By The River

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

Oh, Dairy Road, you never cease to amaze me. Over the last few weeks, I have had the absolute privilege to work with an extremely talented and nice young man, Isaac Britnell. Isaac is a student at Athens Renaissance School, an Eagle Scout, and a member of the Athens Mayor's Youth Commission. He's working on a video project for Eagle Scouts. You may have seen the Facebook post from the City of Athens when he was interviewing Mayor Ronnie Marks about the problems with litter and pollution in Limestone County.

Isaac interviewed me a few weeks ago to learn more about litter and pollution in Limestone County. I gave him all of the numbers, as depressing as they are. Just

to refresh your memory, Keep Athens-Limestone Beautiful is responsible for removing 182,192 pounds (91.1 TONS) over the last 5 years. The Commissioners' litter crews remove 900-1,200 pounds of litter per week and the City of Athens runs a litter crew too. We talked money too; those numbers will make you sick to your stomach.

We talked about the ways that litter can travel -- wind, water, people. After we went over all of this, Isaac wanted to go somewhere where he could shoot a video showing litter. The first place that popped in my head was Dairy Road, part of the Swan Creek Wildlife Management Area. Even though we removed 1,160 pounds of trash from Dairy Road in March, I figured that



there would be more since we're at the end of summer. Dairy Road delivered, maybe even went above and beyond.

I had sent several people out to clean up for some service hours recently, so several fishing holes were actually in pretty good shape. Then we found the motherload. Five tires, 4 bags of calcium chloride pellets, a large trail of oil where someone had emptied their oil pan, the empty containers from their new oil, clothes, trash and innumerable cigarette butts -- all in one fishing hole. With the tires and the calcium chloride bags, I'd guess at least 600 pounds in maybe a 15'x20' spot. It's absolutely insane how anyone could put so much effort into trashing a beautiful place. A place that is open to the public for fishing and camping. We can't have nice things if

they aren't taken care of.

As I sat here writing this article, Derrick Gatlin, District 3 Commissioner called. He was on Cowford Road, just a few miles from Dairy Road, and someone had dumped down both sides of the road. Guess what they dumped -- dirty diapers and used toilet paper. And not just a few, we're talking about a truckload. And of course, none of it was bagged, it was all loose. He and his guys are out there with rakes and a skid steer to get it cleaned

up.

If you see something, say something. You can report litter at 256-233-8000, or through our website. We can't seem to get ahead here lately, but every little bit helps. Maybe one day we can stop spending so much money cleaning up people's trash and do other things. And thank you, Isaac, for doing such an amazing job at shedding light on litter and pollution in our hometown. Until then...

HAZEL GREEN
CHIROPRACTIC
Dr. JOHN BOYLE

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1 A+ Plumbing: Getting It Right The First Time

By Ali Elizabeth Turner

continued from page 1

entrepreneur.” And, I can say from actual experience that he will do anything to get it right, but more about that in a bit.

Eric brings to our area years of experience in property maintenance along with plumbing, and what brought their family here from New York was what he quickly described as “weather and taxes.” They have grown kids and are avid dog lovers. Recently, 1 A+ donated time, supplies, and installation services at the Creating Hope for Paws Animal shelter, and now there is a commercial bathing facility for shelter pets. In addition, they have adopted two dogs from the Athens shelter. One is a golden lab mix by the name of Roo, and the other is a wire terrier/Jack Russell mix by the name of Clara Belle.

It brings me joy to literally be able to describe Eric and Samantha as good neighbors, and to have a personal “raving fan customer” story and perspective. Dear Hubby usually takes care of our household plumbing concerns, having been a plumber in another life more than 50 years ago; however, it happened that he was on the road. Out of no-

where, the toilet in the main bathroom started running a mile a minute, and there was no doubt that the water bill would soon be going through the roof if we didn’t get it fixed soon. We chose 1 A+ literally because they were close, and even though Eric was “covered up” with other clients, he got there in a relative flash, replaced the “innards,” and we were back in business... or so we thought. Everything was fine, and then for some weird reason, a few days later it started running again, and Eric was back “to make it right.” He told me that there has only been one other time in his plumbing career that there has been a faulty part in a replacement package, and we just happened to get that one. It has been doing just fine ever since, and I am personally convinced that things happen for a reason. In this case, it was to be able to tell the readers of *Athens Now* that I highly recommend these guys.

OK, you’ve heard my story, so what do other folks say?

Very honest and quick to respond. Even if he couldn't make it out immediately, he worked with my schedule to get there as quick as possible. He didn't over charge me or try to add in unnecessary work / char-



ges. Talia B.

Eric arrived on time and was very friendly and professional. He answered all my questions and made sure I understood the services that were rendered and the results. Jane T.

He did a great job installing our water heater. Came when he said he would. I would recommend him. Kim C.

One A+ Plumber did a fantastic job! They were quick to respond, and quick to fix our plumbing issue. Eric was knowledgeable and he helped us fix our issue. He even put everything back into our cabinet after the issue was resolved. Much appreciated! Jen S.

Eric's business is fairly new, but he was great! He showed up in a timely manner, his rates were very reasonable, and he got the work done quickly. He made sure everything was working properly before he left and cleaned up after himself as he went. He also went above and beyond to give us recommendations of others that could help with additional work we needed as well as offering to do some for us himself. We've already got him booked again for other jobs. He repaired a leak by

our toilet that involved cutting into drywall and fixed a sink that was leaking. I HIGHLY recommend him if you're needing a good plumber in the area. Betsy P.

Eric showed up on time and was kind courteous and friendly. He made me feel quite at ease and answered all my questions with respect. He was patient to explain what he was doing and why. Would use this company again if needed. Thanks Eric!! Ruth K.

Eric did a five-star job installing my parent's hot water heater. I would highly recom-

mend Eric and 1 A+ Plumber. Great customer service. Bryan S.

I asked Eric my standard question, and that is, “I have choices, why should I choose you?” In addition to 90-day warranties, reasonable prices, and a commitment to excellent customer service, he simply said, “It’s about getting it right the first time.” And I can say, “He’s exactly right.” Call 1 A+ Plumbing today at (256) 998-8760 or go online to info@oneaplusplumber.com to book an appointment and see what many of us are talking about!





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Captain's Log

I Got It!

by Brenda Wilkerson

I GOT IT!!! I finally received my "bus babies" class list"! Now, you and I both know we don't experience traditional classroom learning on this moving yellow machine, but, oh, do we ever learn things during our daily adventures! Who is returning on my bus? Who isn't? Has my route changed? How many upcoming 5th grade Bus Rangers do I need to train? Ackkkk, SO excited!

I have all those answers right here in front of me. So, I'm gonna pour me a tall cup of hot coffee with a splash of cream and a half tablespoon of raw sugar and get to work!

A captain cannot have a captain's log without the log. Today, I prepare one of the most impor-

tant treasures for the next unsure school year... my tiny bus journal companion to capture the countless daily adventures of this moving Yellow Classroom full of rambunctious children and walls of windows to literally watch the world go by. I am giddy and just as nervous as the kids right now. Lord, I come to You with open hands. This school year is Yours. I am just a vessel to be used by You to show all I come in contact with Your love, Your protection, Your provision. Let them all see You through me. I give You this new school year. Show me. Guide me. Shower me with Your wisdom, love, and patience so that I can pass it on.

To my brand spanking



new kindergarten princess who crash-napped wearing a Wonder Woman shirt and a freshly colored crown that read I ROCKED the first day of Kindergarten, "Yes you did my ginger princess, you certainly did!"

To the Pre-K teacher who presented my teensiest rider with a concerned look and declared, "He's only 3!" I will take special care of this baby!

To the teensy, bouncy white-headed 3-year-old who was looking for his car seat with buckles, welcome to your maiden voyage with no car seat! #bucklefreedom

To my maternal instincts that quickly arm-swept said teensy 3-year-old back into the seat behind me as he darted toward the door when he recognized his street before the bus stopped... I still got it! #ninjquick

To my bus photographer Brother R, thank you for capturing the moments that I legally cannot while safely driving this bus.

To my Lord who lovingly gifted me with Your sweet peace in the back-to-school chaos, I am forever grateful for your many, many blessings.

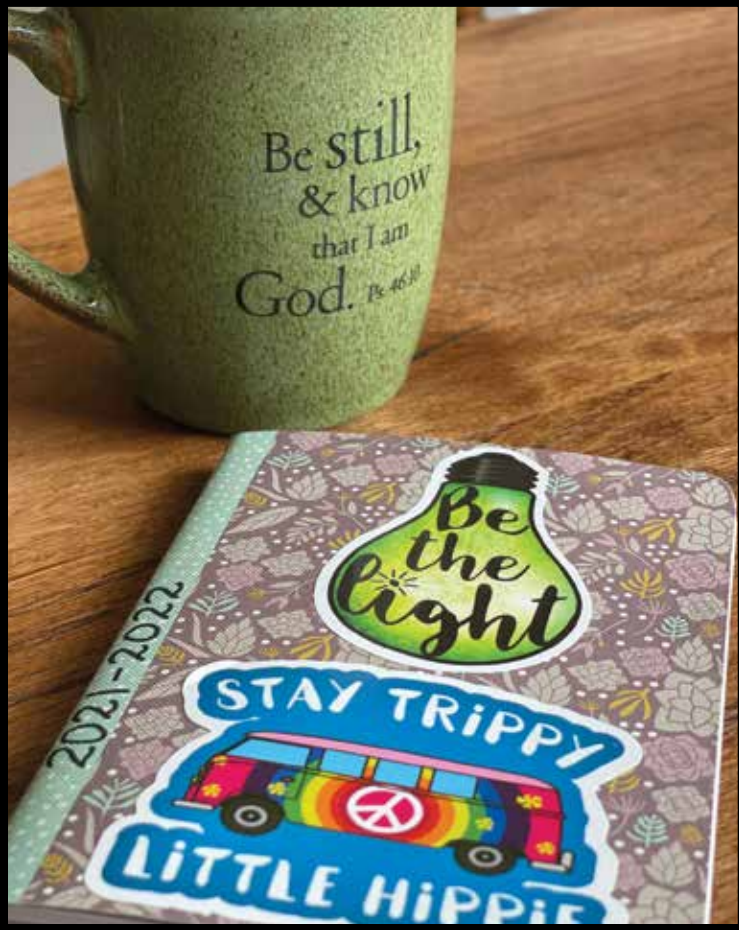
I cannot possibly explain the sweet peace and pure joy of finding myself strategically placed in the middle of one of the very places God designed me to be while on this earth for the very short time I am here. I thank God for Mondays the very same I thank Him for Fridays. I get to truly drink in every second of my Sunday because I do not dread Monday - I actually look forward to 5:15 Monday morning. What if I told God, "No thanks," because I hold a current Master's in Elementary

Education, and I deserve more than a bus driver salary? I obediently said "Yes" to His plan for me as it slowly unfolded piece by piece. I truly believe I already have an expiration date known before I was born. What freedom I experience when I do not live in fear of the unknown or that the world will end soon. Bring it on. I have a peace that passes all understanding. The Lord brought His ministry to me. Seventy little souls I get to pour into each day. Seventy families I get to minister to. Joy, pure joy is waiting when you humble yourself and say Yes to The Father, who always... always knows best for you!

I discovered my ministry in this moment, what's yours?

Trust the Lord, He will take care of you!

~Brenda





Slinkard On Success

“P” Is For Productivity

by D. A. Slinkard

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

Continuing our series of the “ABC’s of Slinkard on Success” – we have come to the letter “P” and our word is Productivity. This is a word that many people struggle with daily and an area I would urge anyone to try to master. I am amazed at what separates those who can be productive versus those people who are the opposite and are unproductive. What habits will it take to fulfill the meaning of the word “productivity”? Obviously, the first thing a person must do is produce because you cannot be productive if you are not producing results.

The modern definition of productivity is: “The effectiveness of productive effort, especially in industry, as measured in terms of the rate of output per unit or input.” The next part is to realize we are all productive in our lives, but it comes down to positive productivity or negative productivity.

Sadly, I believe too many people produce at a negative level, and we fail to realize our lives are all about producing results. Yet, too often people produce negative results, all because they miss the big picture that all of life is about productivity, good and negative.

I must admit that when I think of our word – productivity – I think about someone getting

things done. I know I am effective when I have a list of items that need to be accomplished and I can go through and mark these items off the list. Being able to complete items on a list is a huge motivator for myself, but what about others? How can others become motivated to have positive productivity in their life?

This is the million-dollar question because there have been many authors who have tried to write books upon books about how a person can become more productive in their life. It is my opinion that people must first face the reality that life is all about productivity and some productivity is positive while other productivity is negative. We must realize we all are producing something in our life.

I think that too often we only focus in on the positive production, and we fail to realize that twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week we are producing something. It is up to us, though, whether our productivity is getting us somewhere or bringing us down. We need to be more active in the way we live our life – if we take an active approach to getting positive productivity out of each day – we should see more fruitful lives. When the focus is on being productive as much as possible, our mindset changes and thus our results will be different.



Instead of living a life with no meaning, we should be able to live each day to its fullest by getting the most out of each day. It is like squeezing an orange to get the most juice possible. This should be our approach daily. Yet often, we have a society of people not willing to put forth any effort, and then they wonder why they live the way they do. It is our way of thinking that puts us exactly where we are today. The blame for a person’s life cannot be put on anyone else, but the individual. If I fail in life, it is because I have failed, not the system or anyone else. We must take ownership of what we are producing in life.

Productivity comes down to understanding what results you are wanting to produce. Then it requires understanding what must be achieved to reap what

you want to produce. Next, it comes down to sowing or working your tail off to do exactly what needs to be done to produce the results you are looking for. Finally, it comes down to a rinse-and-repeat cycle in that you must take on the grind of realizing we must be “productivity conscious” every day. We are always producing results – if there is a beat in this heart, I am either producing positively or negatively in my life.

Once we have the understanding that life is what we make it out to be, it is at this time we must focus on producing positive results. The more we produce positive results in our lives, the better society becomes. The better society becomes, the better the world becomes, but it all comes down to a person deciding on their

own productivity level and results, and then continuously going after it. Negative? Positive? What result will you produce?

The Power Of Choice

by Detri McGhee - CLU, ChFC

In our last visit, we pondered the power of ACTION and looked at a brief summary of the C-A-T System used to deal successfully with criticism and all its relatives.

C = Categorize

A = Analyze

T = Take Action

A little reminder from last visit: Gaining EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE (EI) requires choices, diligence, and work. Work is best accomplished with a plan. This plan? A simple 3-step system that, once learned and practiced, becomes second nature. The T (Take Action) has 3 parts. Rather than choosing #1: Ignore the problem or #2 - Get angry, get even, get ulcers, what if we choose #3: Wisely (after dissecting the situation, part of C and A) take Fact by

Fact and... a. Discard it or b. Use for profit?

Once you fully and honestly analyze each part of the criticism, you are now ready for the profitable work. You have determined which parts of this criticism are:

- Correct/Incorrect
- Deserved/Undeserved
- Solicited/Unsolicited
- From a friend or foe

THIS is where the FUN begins! Here you begin to feel the freedom from the control and the power that criticism, or fear of criticism, has held over you in so many ways. So, take a section that you view as Incorrect/Undeserved/Unsolicited (whether from friend or foe or stranger) and recognize it as worthless, or less-than-having worth. It is not only

trash, but also cluttering and even contaminating your mind and your work. It is also worthless stress, robbing you of peace and power. You need to be free from it.

Easier said than done, right! You were wronged. You want vindication. You want justification. Everyone should KNOW that you weren't deserving of that criticism. Well, here is where you choose whether you are willing to relinquish THEIR control over YOU. At no time in your life will all the people in your world understand your true self. Quit wasting your time, emotions, energy, money, and peacefulness on trying to prove to others how right you really are. It will never happen. Learn to "accept the things you cannot change."



Did you ever realize that YOU can remove THEIR power over you? It truly is a choice.

When you play to a smaller audience, and you know them well, you have a better chance of performing your life successfully. When you narrow your audience to ONE, and you know them better each day, and you seek to please that One, (who also loves you unconditionally!) making them your Director of Life, you have a guarantee of acceptance, help, growth, and peace. My One is God. When I remember He has the only critique that really matters, and I keep my focus on His direction, I am assured that through it all, He will guide and sustain me. I know that only He knows all there is about all there is... so He alone sees how each act/action will ripple through all the world around me and beyond.

I have had to learn to give myself some grace in this process. This is a work in progress. I often have to go to Him and admit my focus has strayed. I have - yet again - let other people's opinion cause me stress and doubts that hurt and distract me. I must ask Him to forgive me, to clarify my thoughts, and direct my actions anew. And He delights in my return to His authority.

WHO is your Life Director? Are they perfect? Wise beyond all else? Totally

trustworthy? Always have your eternal best in mind in everything they ask of you? Choices = Yours. Consequences? Not yours to determine/control.

So, how do you turn loose of criticism's harmful powers?

OOPS! Space is up for this week, but next session we will look at one way to powerfully and effectively remove criticism's power to haunt and follow us around. It works for others, so hopefully you will find it effective, too.

Until next time, enjoy the occasional hint of fall and its "cool" beauty. The heat will pass and soon we will be looking for the warming fire.

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. Email: detrimcghee@gmail.com or Facebook: Free outline for Criticism Management available at www.criticismmanagement.com.

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The View From The Bridge

Living Well In The New Economic Normal

by Jackie Warner

Career Development Facilitator

"Impact, Engage, Grow" Community Matters

Introduction: A Shift in the Landscape

The cost of living in the United States has undeniably shifted. From groceries to gas, housing to healthcare, families are feeling the pinch. But while the economic terrain may be unfamiliar, our response doesn't have to be one of fear. With intentional choices, faith-driven discipline, and a renewed mindset, we can thrive—even in this new normal.

"The wise store up choice food and olive oil, but fools gulp theirs down" (Proverbs 21:20). This verse reminds us that wisdom lies in planning, saving, and stewarding resources well—not in impulsive consumption.

Smart Spending: Stretching Every Dollar

1. Embrace the Power of a Budget

- Use digital tools or printable templates to track income and expenses
- Prioritize needs over wants
- Include a "giving" category to honor God with your finances

2. Shop Strategically

- Buy in bulk for non-perishables
- Use cashback apps and coupons
- Choose store brands over name brands

3. Cook at Home

- Meal planning reduces waste and saves money
- Batch cooking helps avoid costly takeout
- Share meals with neighbors or church members to build community

"She watches over the affairs of her household and does not eat the bread of idleness" (Proverbs 31:27). This verse celebrates diligence and stewardship within the home.

Housing and Utilities: Living Within Your Means

1. Downsize or Share Space

- Consider renting out a room or sharing housing with trusted family
- Reevaluate space needs - less square footage often means lower costs

2. Reduce Utility Bills

- Switch to energy-efficient appliances
- Unplug devices when not in use
- Use programmable thermostats

"Better a little with the fear of the Lord than great wealth with turmoil" (Proverbs 15:16). Peace and contentment in modest living are more valuable than luxury with stress.

Career and Income: Diversify and Develop

1. Upskill for the Future

- Take free or low-cost

online courses

- Explore certifications in high-demand fields
- Network through faith-based and professional groups

2. Side Hustles with Purpose

- Choose work that aligns with your values and schedule

"Commit to the Lord whatever you do, and he will establish your plans" (Proverbs 16:3). When our work is rooted in faith, God guides and blesses our efforts.

Wellness and Faith: Nourishing the Soul

1. Practice Gratitude Daily

- Keep a journal of blessings
- Focus on what you have, not what's missing

2. Lean into Community

- Attend church events, Bible studies, and support groups
- Share resources and encouragement with others

3. Trust God's Provision

- Pray over financial decisions
- Remember that God is our ultimate provider

"And my God will meet all your needs according to the riches of his glory in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:19). Even in scarcity, God's provision is abundant and timely.

Faith Over Fear

Living in the new economic normal doesn't mean settling for less—it means living with more

intention, more wisdom, and more faith. By aligning our choices with biblical principles and practical strategies, we can navigate this season with grace and resilience.

Let's choose stewardship over stress, simplicity over excess, and faith over fear. Because even in uncertain times, we serve a God who is certain.

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/>





Learning As A Lifestyle

Trusting The Ethical Process

by Eric Betts

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

In the quiet moments between meetings and deadlines, teams begin to sense when something isn't right. Questionable shortcuts and ethical compromises—whether in decisions, communication, or handling responsibilities—don't stay hidden. They settle like dust on everything a leader touches. While some may rationalize expedience in the name of strategy, the long-term cost is profound: a loss of belief in shared purpose, a fading sense of collective mission. People begin to withdraw, not because they lack ability, but because their moral compass is spinning without a true north to follow.

What a leader models is what a team often mirrors. If compromise be-

comes habit, so too does disengagement. But when integrity is visible—even when it's hard, misunderstood, or unpopular—it plants seeds. A leader who chooses the longer route, honors the inconvenient truth, and embraces accountability, even in solitude, is laying tracks for communal resilience. Those watching begin to internalize that uprightness isn't weakness; it's strength tempered by purpose. The echo of principled leadership can rouse dormant courage in others.

Integrity rarely announces itself with fanfare. It moves quietly, like water through rock—slow, persistent, undeniable. Over time, the outcomes of honest leadership emerge not only in metrics, but



in morale, creativity, and cohesion. Teams who see their leader hold the line begin to understand that success built with character is not only possible, it's more durable. Mis-

understood at first, the ethical path gains clarity and honor when the results prove meaningful and lasting. Vindication comes not only through achievement, but through the legacy of restored trust.

In the end, ethical leadership is about more than correctness; it's about crafting a spirit. The spirit that says our work mat-

ters, our people matter, and how we win is just as important as winning itself. That spirit begins in one individual who chooses not to cut corners—and soon, it finds form in the culture of a whole team. Integrity is not naive; it's revolutionary. And its influence, when nurtured, can shape not only an organization's success, but its soul.

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The Alternative Approach

Feminine Health

by Roy Williams

Ladies... if you've been feeling off, if your moods swing without warning, your energy crashes mid-day, your sleep is restless, and your cycles or menopause symptoms are running your life, this article could be the turning point you've been waiting for.

It's called **Feminine Factors**, and it's not just another "women's multivitamin." This is the **Ultimate Women's Hormone Balance Formula**, designed exclusively by Nutritional Health Care, right here in the USA, to restore the hormonal harmony nature intended. It has proven so effective that many of our clients put their daughters or granddaughters on it as soon as they start menstrual cycles. It allows them to go in and out of the cycles without the pain, or mood swings, with many reporting they are no longer missing any school time.

And listen, this isn't hype. This formula is the result of clinically-proven ingredients, bioavailable nutrient forms, and a triple-action approach that works with your body to balance estrogen, progesterone, and androgens — the three major hormonal systems that dictate how you feel, how you look, and even how you age.

Did you know that over 80% of women experience some form of hormonal imbalance in their lifetime? That means fatigue, mood swings, stubborn weight gain, hair thinning, low libido, irregular cycles, hot flashes, night sweats, or bone loss. And here's the alarming part — left unchecked, hormonal imbalances can increase your risk of osteoporosis,

heart disease, thyroid dysfunction, and even certain cancers.

Modern life isn't helping. Chronic stress, processed food, environmental toxins, and lack of key nutrients are all pushing your hormone systems into overload. Even if you "eat healthy," the soil depletion crisis means your food often has 60 to 70% fewer minerals than it did 50 years ago. You simply cannot get what your body needs, for hormonal balance, from diet alone anymore.

The Solution

That's why Nutritional Health Care created **Feminine Factors**, an all-natural, 2-month supply of the world's most advanced hormonal support system for women ages 13 to 70. Whether you're in your teens struggling with PMS, in your 30s and 40s balancing fertility and stress, or facing menopause and beyond, this formula is for you.

Formula Breakdown

Each serving delivers clinically-dosed nutrients in their most absorbable forms:

Activated B vitamins for mood stability and estrogen metabolism.

Magnesium glycinate for PMS relief, muscle relaxation, and stress reduction.

Zinc picolinate and selenium for fertility, thyroid health, and immune strength.

Vitamin C with acerola cherry to boost progesterone and collagen production.

MSM to reduce inflammation and improve hair, skin, and joint health.

Then, two powerhouse herbal complexes:

1. Enhanced Proprietary Extract Blend (850 mg) — Standardized herbal extracts like saw palmetto, fenugreek, fennel, licorice, Korean ginseng, and evening primrose oil to regulate hormones, fight bloating, reduce acne, and support energy.

2. Herbal & Superfood Hormone Balance Complex (950 mg) — Including wild yam, Shata Vari, dong quai, black cohosh, chaste tree berry, red clover, DHEA, pregnenolone, ginger root extract, and more, time-tested ingredients for cycle regulation, menopause relief, mood enhancement, and vitality.

All ingredients are non-GMO, gluten-free, soy-free, third-party tested for purity, and can be taken with any medication.

Emotional Drive — Benefits You Can Feel

Imagine waking up and feeling good again — steady energy all day, restful sleep at night, and freedom from the roller coaster of cramps, hot flashes, and emotional crashes. Imagine a libido that's alive again, skin that glows, hair that shines, and a metabolism that works with you, not against you.

That's what Feminine Factors is designed to do — not in months or years, but in weeks. In fact, most women report noticeable improvements in mood, energy, and cycle regularity within the first 30 days. And because it's built for long-term hormonal health, those results only get better with consistent use.

Here's why you don't want to wait: hormonal imbalances don't fix themselves — they compound. Every



month you delay balancing your hormones is another month of accelerated aging, bone density loss, and risk to heart, brain, and reproductive health.

And Feminine Factors is not something you'll find at a big box store. This is a professional-grade, patented formula, available directly through Nutritional Health Care, Herbs & More in Athens, and NHC Herb Shop in Killen. It is a product that has been trusted by health care professionals for years.

So, here's the bottom line — if you want to feel like your-

self again, if you want to take control of your cycles, your moods, your sexual energy, and slow your aging process, now is the time to act. Go to one of our locations or call 256-757-0660 and order Feminine Factors today.

Your body is your greatest investment, and every day you delay is a day you can't get back. Let **Feminine Factors** give you the balance, vitality, and confidence you deserve.

Your Friend in Health,
Roy P Williams



The Frog

by Deb Kitchenmaster



My focus shifted from an amphibian to animal in a matter of weeks as calls came in. First take: this is hilarious. Second take: focus shift.

Enjoying a conversation on the phone from a friend who had called, she tells me about a freaky moment she had in her kitchen. She had cut back on her coffee drinking, but this day she decided to enjoy a cup. When she went to fill up her coffee unit with water, a frog jumped out at her, scaring the crap out of her. Now the search was on, looking for the frog! Apparently, from the Oklahoma heavy rains hitting their area, she had brought in some flower pots. Supposedly, the frog came inside with one of those plants. But it doesn't end there.

A week goes by and she calls to tell me the exact same thing happened to one of her sisters who live in Minnesota! Sure enough, Sister Barb pulled out her coffee pot to add water for a cup and wouldn't you know, a frog jumped out from behind the coffee unit sitting on the counter. Days after I had heard these stories, I was in the barn washing out one of our feeders and, brace yourself, a frog jumped at me from the west wall! After I screamed (from being startled), I started laughing. You just can't make this stuff up! There were three women in three different states experiencing three distinct frogs; how funny! After hearing the frog story, another friend tells me about a woman she had met who adored frogs. In fact, this woman had a

frog stamp created with which she stamped all her letters and cards to her family and friends. The acronym for frog on her stamp read "Fully Rely On God."

In studying 'the frog,' I became aware of the process of "transformation" and "metamorphosis." I singularly had associated this process with the four distinct stages of a butterfly: egg, larva (caterpillar), pupa (chrysalis), and adult. The frog also has 4 distinct stages in which it is transformed: egg, tadpole, froglet (pollywog), and adult. I found this transformation process quite interesting. Now let's jump into the animal kingdom; specifically, the horse.

It's called a frog. The frog is a part of a horse hoof. It's located on the underside, its triangular

(V-shaped), and extends midway from the heel to the toe. The frog covers around 25% of the bottom of the hoof. Its rubbery purpose is to help the horse with shock absorption, blood circulation, and traction. The frog acts as a cushion. It absorbs impact when the hoof hits the ground, while protecting the bones and joints. Every time a horse steps down, pressure is dispersed by the frog. The frog also acts as a pump to help with blood flow within the hoof and up the leg. The frog also helps with traction on slippery surfaces.

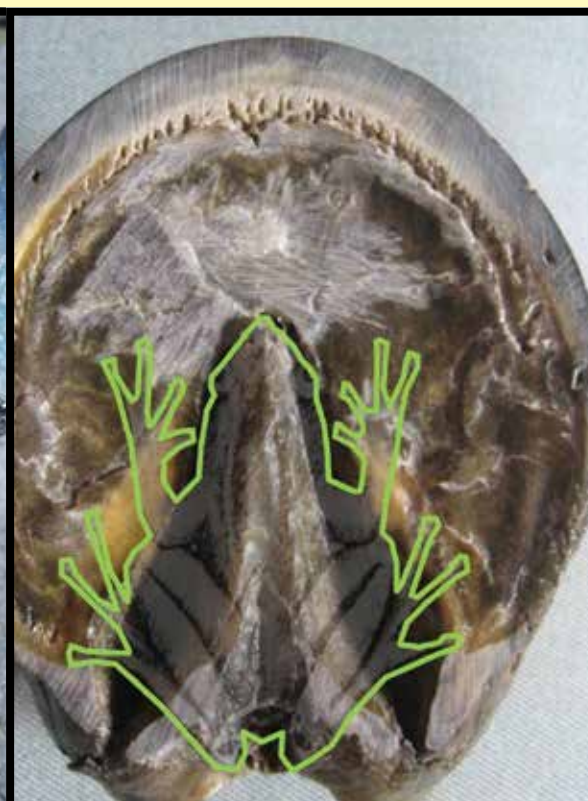
Hooves are made of keratin, like your fingernails. The hoof growth rate is about $\frac{1}{4}$ of an inch per month. An adult horse grows a NEW hoof in about a year. New growth starts at the top where the

hoof meets the hairline, which is called the coronary band. The hoof may seem hard and rigid, but in reality, horses' hooves are flexible. Movement, environmental temperatures, and the weight of the horse on a leg cause hooves to contract or expand. What a combo, a flexible hoof and an amazing shock absorber -- the frog. Note to self: horses shed frogs all the time. It can happen when it's been wet for a long time. No need to worry if it comes off. The new frog may be tender and soft.

The next time you pick up a hoof and see a frog, I hope you remember "Fully Rely On God."

*Your NEIGHbor,
Deb Kitchenmaster*

horsinaround188@gmail.com





Rightside Way

The Gun Control Army

by Phil Williams

Gun control laws continue to fail.

And where gun control laws make the least amount of sense are on US military installations. A policy that must change.

The world turned its attention recently to an active shooter incident in Manhattan. A depraved individual drove to the heart of New York City, walked calmly into a downtown high rise, killed five people and took his own life. No one knows why a bad guy took up arms and committed heinous acts of terror.

Just weeks prior to the New York shooting we saw the heroism of a former Marine named Derrick Perry in Michigan, who pulled his concealed carry firearm and saved innocent bystanders from a knife-wielding madman who had just stabbed multiple people at random. A good guy who took up arms and stopped heinous acts of terror.

In reality, it is not guns that are bad. It is bad people with guns that are bad.

Let's keep in mind that both New York and Michigan have stringent gun control laws. Gun control did not stop the loss of life in Manhattan. Gun control laws did not stop the violence in Michigan.

More recently another episode of gun violence

erupted at the US Army's Fort Stewart, Georgia. Army Sergeant Quornelius Radford, using a personal weapon, opened fire on fellow soldiers, wounding five. He was stopped by other servicemembers who have since been decorated for their bravery. But none of the responding soldiers could be called "good guys with guns". Why? Because the US military has the most draconian gun control laws in the nation.

Let that sink in.

Fort Stewart, home to the legendary 3rd Infantry Division, whose exploits include those of Audie Murphy. The same Fort Stewart with two Armored Brigade Combat Teams, and its nearby sister installation Hunter Army Airfield which houses the 1st Ranger Battalion. Soldiers who are trained as experts in the use of firearms. Yet they cannot have their own firearms on post. Unless of course they are a bad guy who snuck it in with intent to do harm.

What about red state Alabama whose state motto resounds "We Dare Defend Our Rights"? All personal firearms on Alabama's Redstone Arsenal must be registered or be subject to confiscation. Outside the gate Alabama citizens may freely open carry a firearm, and concealed carry no longer requires a permit. But on Redstone Arsenal where soldiers have far more firearms training

than the average citizen that freedom is curtailed. The same is true for Alabama's Fort Rucker.

Consider the disparity in treatment here. Outside the gate civilians freely exercise their 2nd Amendment right to bear arms. They do so with no prerequisite training or conditioning. There are no mandatory gun safety course. There are no annual weapons qualification requirements for civilians. But on an Army installation soldiers have all of the above. Basic training with firearms. Advanced training. Reflexive fire training. Annual qualification. Awards for marksmanship. And yet, the complete curtailing of their 2nd Amendment rights.

In 2016 President Donald Trump called for the military gun control policies to be rescinded. General Mark Milley opposed the idea. Go figure.

Firearms are not scary. People are scary. Period. Aside from noise and a general lack of familiarity most people are more concerned about the manner in which firearms are used, maintained or handled, which are issues of purely HUMAN fault. Issues for which the US military is more than qualified to address.

I have spent hours and hours on many ranges, both civilian and military. I have never minded the strict observance of basic gun safety proce-

dures, and the respect of others while they are on the firing line. But I have also been the victim of those that have a lesser degree of care and concern. I bear the surgical scars from someone being lax with firearm safety. Despite getting shot by one of those evil firearms I was able to separate the causation from the instrument. It was not the shotgun that shot me in and of itself. Rather, it was the knuckleheaded laxity of the guy who shot me and who should have known better.

And soldiers? They know better than most.

Soldiers know how to handle firearms. Breach load, bolt action, magazine fed, and pump. Holographic sights, iron sights, and no sights. Holstered, unholstered, and slung. Long guns, sidearms, and scatter shots. They are trained to carry them in combat. Trusted in every respect. Except when they are in garrison on the Army installations to which they are assigned.

It is a policy that is long overdue for review.

Former military JAG Officer Eric Carpenter was recently interviewed on the topic.

"You don't forfeit all of your rights when you enter the military," Carpenter said. "Outside of a military situation, the service member has just as much Second Amendment right as anyone

else." Referencing the recent shooting at Fort Stewart Carpenter also said, "All those rules aren't going to prevent someone from doing what the guy did today,"

Guns are not scary. People are scary. GOOD people with guns are what often stands between potential victims and bad people with guns. And our US servicemembers are among the best. We trust them with our lives and swear them to an oath before taking up arms. It is time that we looked them in the eye and told them that we trust them with their rights.

Let's restore the 2nd Amendment for our military. They've earned it.

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





Cooking with Anna (continued from page 9)

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

by Anna Hamilton

God's strength works through my weakness. One of the most comforting truths is that my strength in Christ does not require the absence of weakness. In fact, it is often through my weakness that His strength becomes most visible.

Paul experienced this firsthand. In 2 Corinthians 12:9-10, after asking God to remove a persistent struggle, he received this answer: "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness."

This is a radical shift from the way the world thinks. Culture tells me to hide weakness, to push through in my own power, or to pretend I'm fine. But God tells me my weakness is a doorway for His strength to be revealed.

This means, when I feel too tired to keep going, His Spirit energizes me. When my wisdom runs out, His guidance leads me. When fear tries to silence me, His courage rises up in me.

I have strength to stand, even in the storm. The Christian life is not free from storms—Jesus Himself said, "In this world you will have trouble" (John 16:33). But He also followed that statement with hope: "Take heart! I have overcome the world."

Strength in Christ is the ability to stand even when the winds blow and the waves crash. Ephesians 6 describes the armor of God, and the repeated command is to stand. Not to run away, not to collapse in defeat, but to remain firm because my foundation is secure in Him.

Standing strong may look many different ways. It may look like, continuing to pray when the answer hasn't come yet, choosing forgiveness when bitterness would be easier, staying faithful to God's Word when others compromise, and holding onto hope when circumstances say it's impossible.

God gives us strength to overcome, not just survive. God's strength in me is not just for survival, it's for victory. Romans 8:37 declares: "In all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us."

A conqueror wins a battle but being "more than a conqueror" means I don't just win—I gain from the fight. Trials don't just pass me by; they shape me, mature me, and reveal the power of Christ within me.

When David faced Goliath, his confidence didn't come from his size or skill, but from the God who had delivered him before (1 Samuel 17:37). That same God gives me strength to face my "giants" today—whether they are fears,

temptations, or impossible situations.

Strength is sustained by relationships, not willpower. It's important to remember strength in Christ is not a one-time boost, it's a continual supply. Isaiah 40:29-31 says, "He gives strength to the weary and increases the power of the weak... those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary; they will walk and not be faint."

This renewal is daily. Just as our physical bodies need food, water, and rest, our spiritual strength grows when we remain in relationship with God—through prayer, worship, time in the Word, and obedience.

If I truly believe God says I am strong, I will start living like it. This means, speaking truth over myself when lies try to take root. Walking in boldness knowing I am equipped for every good work (2 Timothy 3:17). Encouraging others from the overflow of the strength God has given me. Facing the future with confidence because my strength is anchored in Someone unshakable. Strength in Christ is not about being fearless but about trusting the One who is faithful. It's not about having no battles but about knowing I am never fighting alone.

Because I am in Christ, I can confidently say:

I am strong enough to face today because He is with me (Joshua 1:9).

I am strong enough to resist temptation because His Spirit empowers me (1 Corinthians 10:13).

I am strong enough to endure trials because His grace sustains me (2 Corinthians 12:9).

I am strong enough to walk into my calling because He has equipped me (Hebrews 13:21).

I am strong—not because of who I am, but because of whose I am.

This week's recipe is a pizza! Who doesn't love pizza? This pizza casserole is packed fully of veggies but still gives you all the flavors of a delicious slice of pizza. Kids will love it! And as always, feel free to use whatever meats, cheeses, and veggies that your family will love.

"So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand" (Isaiah 41:10).

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