

September 5 - September 18, 2025

# Athens Now

information & inspiration

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## Save Saturday, September 27, For Shred Day

By Ali Elizabeth Turner

Nearly two decades ago, Family Security Credit Union in Decatur teamed up with the Better Business Bureau of North Alabama to give the community a chance to have a safe way of disposing of their documents. The purpose was

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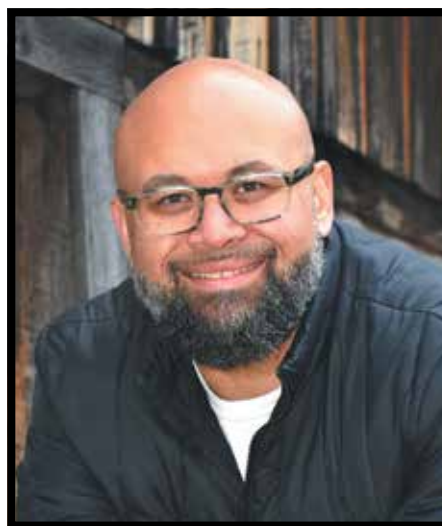


## Athens Community Invited to Celebrate Life at Women's Resource Center Annual Banquet

By Annie King

Since November of 1987, the Women's Resource Center (WRC) of Athens has faithfully served families facing crisis pregnancies, offering life-affirming choices, compassiona-

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## Publisher's Point

# The Taxi Cab Song

Music -- and by that I mean instrumental and vocal -- has always been a part of my life. My parents sacrificed so that I could have an outstanding musical education, and the older I get, the more grateful I am for what they, and many others, gave me as provision for the musical part of my journey in this life.

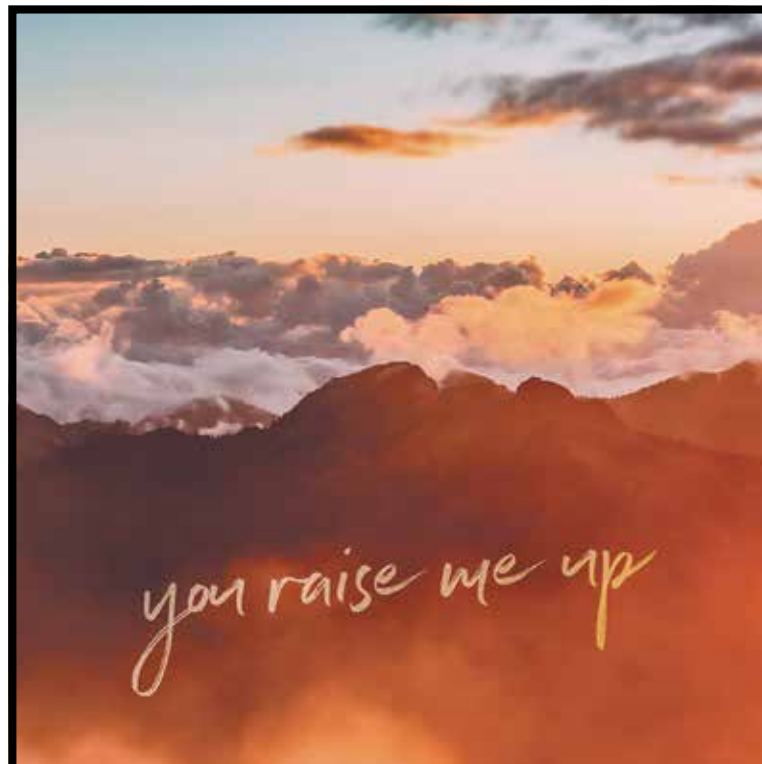
One of the things I love to do is find out, if possible, the story behind a song, especially if it has been one that God has used to help get me through a tough time. One such song is "You Raise Me Up," which was made into a monster hit by Josh Groban. Josh didn't write it; an Irish guy and a Norwegian guy did. It was first recorded in 2004 by a band called Secret Garden, has been covered, recorded, awarded, and rewarded a zillion times. And in the view of musical experts as well as just folks that might say, "I don't know anything about music, but I know what I like," it is considered to be near perfect. Below are the lyrics, and I have always treated this as a worship song, even though the "You" is never specifically identified. Here they are:

*When I am down and,  
oh, my soul, so weary  
When troubles come  
and my heart burdened  
be  
Then I am still and*

*wait here in the silence  
Until You come and sit  
awhile with me*

### Chorus

*You raise me up so I  
can stand on moun-  
tains  
You raise me up to  
walk on stormy seas  
I am strong when I am  
on Your shoulders  
You raise me up to  
more than I can be  
You raise me up so I  
can stand on moun-  
tains  
You raise me up to  
walk on stormy seas  
I am strong when I am  
on Your shoulders  
You raise me up to  
more than I can be  
You raise me up (up) so  
I can stand on moun-  
tains (stand on moun-  
tains)  
You raise me up to  
walk on stormy seas  
(stormy seas)  
I am strong (I am  
strong) when I am on  
Your shoulders (ooh)  
You raise me up to  
more than I can be  
You raise me up (up) so  
I can stand on moun-  
tains (stand on moun-  
tains)  
You raise me up to  
walk on stormy seas  
(stormy seas)  
I am strong when I am  
on Your shoulders  
You raise me up to  
more than I can be*



*You raise me up to  
more than I can be*

Songwriters: Rolf U. Lovland /  
Brendan Graham

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So, how did Josh get in touch with this song, and then go on to make something that edifies, encourages, and bring tears to people who have been so moved by it that they have to pull over on the side of the road because they are crying so hard they can't see? A "serendipitous" encounter in a taxi cab. The song just "happened" to be playing, Josh got in the cab and it grabbed him. He just "happened" to be in London working on his second album, and the producer came in and basically said, "I want you

to hear this." As soon as it started, Josh said, "That's my taxi cab song," and the rest, as they say, is history. They basically stopped what they were doing, recorded it, and it has gone on to move mil-

lions. What's the point of this **Point**? Make it a point to fill your "tool box" with songs, stories, Scriptures, books, movies, interviews, and anything else that is healthy so that you can be strong for your journey, and more importantly, finish well.

*Ali Elizabeth Turner*

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# The 100 Year-Old Sgt

by Ali Elizabeth Turner



When Frank Wright was 16 years old, he was determined to join the Marines and fight for his country. It was WWII, the Greatest Generation was passionate about serving, and history is full of stories of young men who did the same thing. He had been inspired by the words of President Franklin Roosevelt, which said in part, that “Every single man, woman and child is a partner in the most tremendous undertaking of our American history.” He went to the recruiting office on Jan. 21 1942, and expected to breeze right through. He used

his brother’s identity to get in, yet he still had a problem: he didn’t weigh enough. So, what Frank did was stuff bananas in his jacket, his pants, everywhere, and managed to get his weight up to the minimum standard to sign on. At first, Wright served in the 4th Raider Battalion, which was activated on Oct. 23, 1942, and commanded by Maj. James Roosevelt. Because they were Marines, they saw battle quickly, and it was hellacious. The first time Wright nearly died was when he was in Guadalcanal. He was in hand-to-hand



combat in the Battle of Guam and got bayoneted by a Japanese soldier. Wright described the ordeal in his book, *Battles*

*in the Pacific: World War II, My Personal War Causing PTSD.*

“I tripped and a [Japanese soldier] stabbed me in the stomach as I was going down and then fell on top of me.” Wright stated further, “Taking the life of a person with a knife is a lot different than shooting someone with a rifle from fifty yards away.” He also recounted, “When you see him up close, look into his eyes and hear him yell, well, it’s very different.” After having been bayoneted, he was told he had to finish out his patrol assignment because he could still walk. While we as a culture are at least somewhat familiar with Iwo Jima because of the iconic photo of the flag being planted under fire, trying to understand what Marines went through to win that battle is impossible. In one month 7,000 of them died. Wright described it as “HELL on water.” While on Iwo Jima, Wright was shot in the chest. The bullets did great damage, but he miraculously survived.

Frank received a number of medals, including the Purple Heart with two stars, Presidential Unit Citation with two stars, Navy Unit Commendation, American Campaign Medal, Asiatic-Pacific Campaign with three service stars, Fleet Marine Force with four stars, Marine Corps Expeditionary Medal, Combat Action with four stars, Victory Medal, and the Good Conduct Medal. Wright finished his service having attained the rank of corporal, but recently all that changed. Just a few days ago, in a ceremony in Stockton, California, 100-year-old Frank Wright was promoted from corporal to honorary sergeant by the 39th Commandant of the Marine Corps, Gen. Eric M. Smith. It had been nearly 79 years since he had been discharged, and now Frank S. Wright is rightfully Sgt. Wright. I hope he wears that title with a sense that millions of us are more grateful for his service than we’ll ever be able to express.

★★★★ VOTE ★★★★★

JAMES LUCAS


CITY COUNCILMAN

— DISTRICT 3 —



# Restart Your Heart

by Donna Clark



There's a quote from Mark Twain that carries much truth. "If you pick up a starving dog and make him prosperous, he will not bite you. This is the principal difference between a dog and a man." You can care for and love a dog that has been abused and that dog will be loyal to you till its dying day. However, this is not always true of humans. Sometimes, the people we love the most will hurt us the most. It's highly likely that someone will break your heart, lie to you, say hurtful things about you, maybe even reject you. In fact, someone may have already done one of these to you, and the pain inflicted has at times been almost unbearable. You loved hard and were wounded deeply. It's easy to love when all is right with the world. The marriage is in the honeymoon stage, the children are acting right, co-workers are all in agreement with one another. However, none of us live in that state all the time. Even the Bible tells us that "offenses will come." God knew we would get hurt, but He doesn't want us walking around wounded. He wants us to be healed and whole. We must learn to love like we've never been hurt.

James Garfield, our twentieth president, was shot by a would-be assassin only four months into his presidency. He died three months after. It wasn't the bullet that killed him, it actually did not penetrate any organs, not a fatal injury. What did take

his life was the on-going attempts to retrieve the bullet lodged behind his pancreas. Unfortunately, unsterilized instruments and dirty hands were an open invitation for the infection that eventually took his life.

Sadly, when we've been hurt, we continue to replay the bad memories over and over again in our mind. We poke and prod. In some cases, it pushes us to seek revenge, and then bitterness, anger, and a hardened heart develops. And it's not always rage that rears its ugly head; it's can be a deep hurt for which there seems to be no consolation, no healing, no understanding. Whatever the reaction to the pain, the playing of the action or words over and over in our minds will be the death of us. God does not want us to live with the hurt. He wants to heal what has been torn apart.

I think each of us can say we know what it's like to be hurt, especially from someone we love much. Some hurtful actions can change everything about you and your family for the rest of your life. There are powerful disappointments that can affect the dynamics of relationships, but there is hope in know-



ing that God can make all things new. He can take what was meant for harm and bring good from it.

I've given you a condensed version of the introduction to a powerful book, *Love Like You've Never Been Hurt*, written by Jentezen Franklin. The more I listen to the life stories that people tell, the more I see there is tremendous hurt that many are trying to deal with today, maybe from an event that took place many years ago still in need of a healing of the heart. If you find yourself stuck in the pain, poking and prodding, feeling as if all the wind has been knocked out of your sails, not knowing what to do or which way to turn, this

book is for you. I'd like to take the opportunities I have with these articles to pass on to you the direction and wisdom he gives through his writing. I'll give you the highlights of what he shares, but would encourage you to pick up a copy for yourself. As he shares his own personal hurts, he will guide you with truth that can help you to realize that you are loved deeply and healing is possible. Love is a weapon that can shatter division and rebuild what was broken. Love is the only answer to fractured relationships. Jentezen encourages love over hurt, and in this book he will guide you and give you the strength to press

forward. If you are a person of faith, determine today to move your eyes off your situation and open your ears to God's voice. If you listen, you will hear God telling you He is on your side, fighting for you, and with Him you are more than a conqueror over the hurt.

Future articles will be focused on restarting your heart and living again in peace. If you're one who's been hurt and still struggling to survive, stay with me, I want to offer you some hope.

Remember – it is never God's will for the wound to kill us, healing is possible.

- Donna



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# Calendar of Events

## **2025 Literary Festival**

**September 13**

Booksellers, author visits, podcasters, community reading, book swag and much more will be on display and available for you to enjoy at the Athens-Limestone Public Library. 9:00AM - 12:30PM. Athens-Limestone County Public Library. 603 S. Jefferson St., Athens, AL 35611.

## **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.

## **POW/MIA Recognition Day**

**September 19**

AMVETS AL Post 21 will host a Prisoner Of War/Missing In Action Recognition Day event on the east side of the Limestone County Courthouse in honor of the nationally recognized holiday. 5:00 PM - 7:00 PM. East side of the Limestone County Courthouse.

## **Limestone County Master Gardeners Saturday Workshop: Bulbs and Fall Planting**

**September 20**

10AM at the Athens-Limestone Public Library, 603 S. Jefferson St., Athens. Fall is the time to plant bulbs, perennials, and some cool weather vegetables. Instructor, Master Gardener Heronda McWilliams, will tell you which plants are suited for fall planting in this area and how to plant. She will help you plan ahead for spring flowers by planting the right bulbs now. Free and open to the public.

## **32nd Annual Trail of Tears Commemorative Motorcycle Ride**

**September 20**

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

## **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.

## **Little Lambs Consignment Sale**

**September 26-27**

It's almost time for one of the BIGGEST children's clothing consignment sales in Athens, AL. The Little Lambs Consignment Sale is coming up the LAST WEEKEND of SEPTEMBER! Saturday is half-price day and select items will be marked 50% off. Proceeds benefit Moms of Many Strengths, a local 501(c)(3) nonprofit dedicated to helping mothers and families in the community. Friday, 9 AM - 7 PM, and Saturday, 9 AM - 2 PM. Family Life Center behind Lindsay Lane Baptist Church, 1300 Lindsay Lane, Athens, AL. <https://llbconsignment.home.blog/>

## **58th Annual Tennessee Valley Old Time Fiddlers Convention**

**October 1**

This annual event, where the Alabama State Fiddle Champion is crowned (along with the top winner in over a dozen other categories being crowned Alabama State Champions) brings some 200 contestants and an estimated 10,000+ folk music fans to the grounds of historic Athens State University in Athens, Alabama the first full weekend of October each year. We have an incredible line-up for y'all this year. Wednesday, October 1 at 7:30 PM: Joe Mullins & The Radio Ramblers. This is a special Gospel concert - free and open to the public. Thursday, October 2 at 7:00 PM: Pitney Meyer. Friday, October 3 at 6:00 PM: Jimmy Fortune. Saturday, October 4 at 7:30 PM: Rhonda Vincent & The Rage. Also at the convention, area craftsmen display their arts and crafts at the annual arts and crafts fair held in conjunction with the musical competition, offering unique and custom-made souvenirs.

## **Pink Elephant Luncheon**

**October 29**

In honor of October being Breast Cancer Awareness Month, the Athens-Limestone Hospital will host the Pink Elephant Luncheon with Keynote Speaker Pammie Jimmar, CEO & President of the Athens-Limestone County Chamber of Commerce. 11:00 AM - 12:30 PM. Limestone County Event Center, 114 W. Pryor St. Athens. Link: <https://one.bidpal.net/pinkelephant2025/welcome>

## **Digital Literacy Classes**

Athens-Limestone County Public Library will host a series of Digital Literacy Classes in conjunction with Calhoun Community College & Drake State Community & Technical College. Classes will boost your digital confidence & provide you with skills and training needed in today's job market. Courses include: Computer & Internet Basics, Email, Windows OS, & Microsoft Word®. M-W 9:00 - 12:00 or M-W 1:00 - 4:00. Classes start January 24th. Call us at (256) 306-2830 to learn more.



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*Thank You, Athens!*

★ ★ ★

**Amy Golden**

**Athens City Council District 5**

PAID FOR BY THE COMMITTEE TO ELECT AMY GOLDEN



# The Crucial Move To Action

by Ali Elizabeth Turner



The Athens City Hall offices were closed on Labor Day, and so we managed to eke and squeak out what became a two-part meeting on Tuesday, September 2. Turns out, that was a day residents of North Alabama will never forget-- the day it was announced that Space Command had come home...again. More on that later.

Grateful that the elections were behind us and thankful for the results, Mayor Ronnie gave a quick overview of the

things we are going to be facing down as a result of the latest growth spike to which we had just been introduced. The infrastructure needs are substantial, and if ever there was a time for Athens to grow well, it is now.

If you have been following our perusal of the book *Crucial Conversations*, you are aware that it is a work that has been heralded by the likes of Stephen Covey as a true masterpiece when it comes to communication and solving difficult situations.



Department heads of the City of Athens have gone through the training sessions that are

designed for professional groups, and everyone I have talked to has said it is excellent.

The chapter for this session was Chapter 9, "Move to Action, How to Turn Crucial Conversations into Action and Results." One of the takeaways is breaking down how to make decisions, and the section is entitled, "How do we decide to decide?" There are three parts to that—*commanding*, which is what is used when the opinions of others is not necessary; *consult*, which is used in order to get more information to make an excellent decision; and *vote/consensus*, which is the most challenging. All of the components included in this chapter move toward what are called savvy decisions that are then turned into smart decisions.

Another part of the chapter stated something that got my attention, and that was, "Dialogue is not decision making." It's necessary, for sure, but it in and of itself doesn't lead to a decision.

"We've got to plan smart, and we've got to communicate better than ever,"

said the mayor. He spoke with special concern for the schools, as well as our surrounding communities. "We will grow westward, for sure, and it has to be done well," he said. "Conversations have to be turned into actions, and we have to have positive results," he added.

So many things were discussed, such as the need for another swimming pool. We need a new fire station on the west side, and the increase in population is going to significantly impact roads, shopping, jobs, all of life. The mayor mentioned that Senator Tuberville had stated in the announcement that while he was glad the decision to move Space Command to Huntsville had been made, if another place would have proven to be safer and better for the country, he would have chosen that for the location. That was reassuring to the mayor. So many things to talk about and consider, but we were out of time. There was just one thing left for us to do, and that was to pray. So, we did and once again it was time for Ronnie to roll.

## Thank You, Athens!

# Ronnie MARKS

## MAYOR



**POSITIVE LEADERSHIP.  
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## **My Identity In Christ: God Says *I Am Beautiful***

by Anna Hamilton

*In a world that often measures beauty by outward appearance, style, or popularity, it can be easy to feel less than enough. We are constantly surrounded by images and voices telling us what we should look like, how we should act, and what defines our worth. Yet, as children of God, our true identity is not shaped by cultural standards or human opinion—it is found in Christ. And in Him, God declares: “You are beautiful.”*

*Our beauty is rooted in God’s design. From the very beginning, God created us with intention*

*and care. Psalm 139:14 reminds us, “I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well.” This means that every detail of who we are—our features, our personality, our uniqueness—was carefully crafted by the Creator Himself. There is no mistake in God’s design. When He looks at us, He sees beauty, because we reflect His handiwork.*

*True beauty lies beyond the surface. While the world often highlights physical appearance,*

*continued on page 24*

## **Garlic-Butter Turkey and Cauliflower**

### **Ingredients:**

*1 lb. ground turkey  
1 head cauliflower, chopped into small florets  
4 Tbsp butter  
4 cloves garlic, minced  
1 tsp onion powder  
1 tsp smoked paprika  
¼ cup chicken broth  
Salt and pepper to taste  
Grated Parmesan  
Fresh parsley for garnish, optional*

### **Directions:**

*Heat 2 tablespoons of butter in a large skillet over medium heat. Add cauliflower florets and sauté for 5-7 minutes, stirring occasionally, until tender and lightly browned. Remove cauliflower from the skillet and set aside.*

*In the same skillet, melt the remaining 2 tablespoons of butter. Add ground turkey and cook until browned, about 5-6 minutes.*

*Stir in minced garlic, onion powder, smoked paprika, salt, and pepper. Cook for another 2 minutes or until garlic is fragrant.*

*Add the sautéed cauliflower back to the skillet. Stir in the chicken broth and simmer for about 5 minutes. Top with Parmesan cheese and parsley. Enjoy!*







## Carissa's Corner

# From The East To The West

by Carissa Lovvorn

This weekend marks a significant milestone in my life: my twentieth high school class reunion—yes, I am showing my age here. I often look back on those years and laugh at some of my choices, especially my appearance. Baggy cargo pants, black band t-shirts, blue jeans, and vintage-looking heels were my everyday staples. And that hair—super long, straight, and blonde! While my style may have been comical, my emotional state was not. Drawn to a rebellious lifestyle, I became entangled with a group outside of school and eventually found myself in an abusive relationship.

Given my unique situation of splitting each

school year between two different grades after dropping out my freshman year, I never truly found a place among my peers. At my ten-year reunion, embarrassment and regret seemed to lurk around every corner. Although I enjoyed reconnecting with classmates, I felt insecure. I didn't like the 'old' me they remembered, and I wasn't entirely sure about the 'me' standing before them that night.

This weekend feels like it will be different—not just another reunion, but a chance to celebrate how far I've come. My renewed sense of self-worth comes partly with age and experience, but mostly through my relationship with our Heav-

enly Father. On July 26, 2015, I made the choice to rededicate my life to the Lord. That day, a deep sense of urgency came over me when I felt His calling. I practically tripped over my husband in my rush to leave the pew and reach the altar. I could no longer carry the crushing weight of shame and guilt. I needed to surrender it all to receive the Lord's forgiveness and the strength that only He can provide.

It's by the grace of God that my sins have been cast as far as the East is from the West, and He has made me new. Apostle Paul described this undeniable change in his letter to the church members in Corinth: "Therefore, if



anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come" (2 Corinthians 5:17 ESV). Much like the spiritual restoration Ezekiel describes, I've discovered that I am not only renewed, but my spirit now carries a clear sense of purpose: "And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you..." (Ezekiel 36:26). Now, looking ahead to this weekend, I plan to leave the cargo pants and band T-shirt in the closet. To be completely honest, though, I'll

probably wear my hair exactly as it was in high school. In that sense, I haven't changed much. Still, I'm confident I can walk into this reunion with gratitude and peace rather than regret and insecurity. While I'm grateful to have left my teenage rebellion behind, I treasure most that my Heavenly Father writes His ways on my heart and guides every step I take. Trust me—He can and will do the same for anyone who seeks Him.

Many blessings,  
Carissa



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# Save Saturday, September 27, For Shred Day

by Ali Elizabeth Turner

*continued from page 1*

to offer a service to our area that would lessen the possibility of identity theft, which at the time was nowhere near the problem that it is today. I spoke with Karen Reeves with the BBB, and she told me that these days someone is affected by identity theft every 22 seconds, and it's only getting worse. "No one should ever put paper in their trash that has their contact information on it," she said. Simply put, Shred Day is a way to reduce your risk of having your identity stolen.

That first event was held in the parking lot of the Family Security headquarters in Decatur, and a whopping ten people showed up. As the event grew, it was moved to Calhoun Community College to give access to both Morgan and Limestone residents. In 2017, there was enough support to have a separate Shred Day in Athens and Decatur. Once again Athens State University is sponsoring this year's event, which will be held in their parking lot on Saturday, September 27, from 9 a.m. to noon. Karen also mentioned that if the trucks are filled up before noon, they will close then. The trucks that do the shredding are computerized and have cameras inside. The units are able to handle papers that are stapled, so you don't need to pull staples prior to bringing your items to be shredded. That being said,

please make sure there are no other types of waste in your bags. One year a piece of metal got in the truck and caused a great deal of damage.

Sponsoring a Shred Day back then and continuing on with what has become a popular free event annually is completely consistent with BBB's mission: "To be the leader in advancing marketplace trust." And helping businesses, non-profits, and individual households protect themselves from fraud is right in their wheelhouse. Now there are Shred Days held across the USA by all 91 BBB offices. Most are in the spring, and people start calling the BBB in January to find out the day for both events.

Shred Day is about way more than shredding paper. It is also an important opportunity to safely dispose of medicines, and that part is handled by the Athens Police Department. "If you will bring non-liquid medicines, they will take care of getting rid of them in a way that keeps them out of the water supply, and you CANNOT bring needles to this event," Karen said. In addition, no questions will be asked about any prescriptions that are handed over to the police.

One more feature of this event is that there will be an opportunity to safely get rid of electronics. Peggy Cole, also with the BBB said, "We are taking electronics—less than 40 lbs. They can be something with memory, old phones, old laptops, old



computer towers, and flat screen televisions. There is a \$10 fee for each plasma or flat screen, and no TVs with the big backs will be accepted," said Peggy.

The Athens High School JROTC will be on hand to help, and so will ambassadors from Athens State University and Bank Independent, so let's talk a bit about "Shred Day etiquette." "We are asking that people limit themselves to three 13-gallon tall kitchen garbage bags,

or three banker's boxes," said Peggy. They are not interested in bags that are so full that it takes more than one person to field the bags. Also, please stay in your car; this event is meant to be truly drive-thru. That is to ensure the safety of volunteers as well as those bringing their items to be shredded. To access the event on September 30, you will enter the ASU parking lot on Hobbs Street in Athens, have your items processed in a quick and easy

drive-through setup, and then exit out of the parking lot on the Pryor Street side.

This year several other organizations also stepped up as sponsors. They include Cook's Pest Control, the City of Athens, and Quest for Mental Health.

There is also a food drive which is sponsored by Limestone County Churches Involved. Please bring non-perishable items.

See you on the September 30, and let's get rea-



# Athens Shred Day

Saturday,  
September 27, 2025

Athens State University  
Enter Campus from Hobbs Street

9:00 AM -  
12:00 PM

FREE COMMUNITY EVENT	DRIVE-THRU SERVICE
<b>DOCUMENT SHREDDING</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Limit of 3 kitchen size bags or 3 file storage boxes per vehicle</li><li>• Shredding accepted until shred trucks reach capacity</li><li>• Please remove plastic, metal, and binders</li></ul>	<b>ELECTRONIC RECYCLING</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Items must be less than 40 lbs.</li><li>• \$10 fee for each plasma and flat screen TV</li><li>• Large-back TVs, CRT monitors, and appliances NOT accepted</li></ul>
<b>DRUG TAKE BACK</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Prescription, veterinary, and over-the-counter medications</li><li>• Needles and liquids NOT accepted</li></ul>	<b>FOOD DRIVE</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Please donate non-perishable food items</li><li>• All donations will benefit LCCI, Inc (Limestone County Churches Involved, Inc)</li></ul>

THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS



For more information, contact the BBB of North Alabama at 256-533-1640 or visit [BBB.org/northern-alabama](http://BBB.org/northern-alabama)





Clean, Green And Beautiful

# Mercy, Mercy Me

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

It takes two articles back-to-back to describe how awesome of a person Isaac Britnell is. Not only is he working on what I can only imagine is an amazing video project, but he also organized a litter cleanup with his Athens Bible School Eagle Scout Troop. These guys showed up and showed out. And it wasn't just the Eagle Scout Troop; they brought back up!

Initially, Isaac asked if I knew of a spot around a creek that needed some attention. I knew of a few spots that had plenty of paper that had

been chopped by lawn-mower blades a few times, but then I found a small spot that was in desperate need of help. We met in the parking lot of Value-Added Resources on North Marion Street. While Isaac and I were gearing up, everyone started to roll in. His mom, dad, and sister were first. Then some more Eagle Scouts and their leader, and then Mayor Ronnie Marks and Justin Travis from City Hall pulled up. We went over a few things, and I pointed out our main spot to Mayor Marks. Shocked is an understatement.



Hidden in some scrub trees was the mother load. Mayor Marks immediately tackled the crammed full shopping carts and then everyone got busy. Thirteen of us managed to fill up 24 bags in around 30 minutes. And there was anything and everything in the pile. From clothes and shoes to food containers, we managed to get it as clean as we could. For piles like this, an industrial vacuum is needed to come in to get all the broken glass and cigarette butts.

These guys didn't just clean that spot and leave, they wanted to spend the full amount of time they had allotted cleaning up litter. We walked around the corner to the railroad tracks and started there. Now I'm curious about

why railroad tracks make people want to throw their trash out the window. We had full bottles and empty bottles, and plenty of plastic wrappers to go with them. These guys managed to fill three more bags at one train crossing before their time was up.

Isaac may have chosen what seemed like the hottest day of the year to have a cleanup, but it was 1000% worth it. They had a shopping cart full, a crate full, and 27 bags

full at the end of their hour. Their HOUR. We can do better than this. We shouldn't have to spend so much time and resources to clean after other people. Watch the Keep Athens-Limestone Beautiful Facebook page, I'm going to proudly share Isaac's video when he finishes -- it's going to be a real eye-opener! And if you know Isaac, tell him how awesome he is!



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Cover Story

# Athens Community Invited to Celebrate Life at Women's Resource Center Annual Banquet

By Annie King - Advancement Director, Women's Resource Center

*continued from page 1*

te support, and resources for parents in need. Each year, the Center hosts its annual fundraising banquet—an evening that not only celebrates life but also makes possible the ongoing mission of helping women, men, and children in our community.

This year's banquet promises to be especially memorable. The WRC is honored to welcome **Steventhen Holland** as keynote speaker. Known for his powerful story and engaging presence, Holland's testimony has inspired audiences across the country, and the Athens community will not want to miss hearing from him firsthand.

For the first time, the event will include both a **luncheon** and a **dinner** to allow more people the opportunity to attend. On **Tuesday, September 30**, the luncheon will take place from **11:30a.m.–1:00p.m.**, followed by the dinner from **6:30–8:00p.m.** Both gatherings will be held at the **Alabama Veterans Museum**, providing a meaningful and memorable setting for the occasion. This year's theme, "Every Life," reflects the Center's mission of cherishing and



protecting each woman, man, and child.

The Women's Resource Center has set an ambitious fundraising goal of **\$200,000** to support operational expenses, such as hiring a receptionist, extend service hours—including opening one evening each week for working clients—and expand educational programs designed to equip young parents with the skills they need for success, as well as continuing the new Sexual Risk Avoidance Education (SRAE) program taught in local high schools by a highly trained WRC staff member.

Thanks to the generosity of sponsors — **Passionate Penny Pinchers, Kerwin Edelman Electric LLC, Lindsay Lane Baptist Church, Bank Independent, Dr. Sam Trotter, St. John the Baptist Council Knights of Columbus in Madison, Greenbrier Restaurant, Butler Realty of Ardmore TN and Journey Church** — this event is free to attend. Guests will also enjoy a delicious meal catered by **C&A Catering of Athens**.

Reservations are required, and seating is limited. To RSVP and secure your spot, visit [www.wrcathens.org/annual-banquet](http://www.wrcathens.org/annual-banquet).

The Women's Resource Center invites the entire Athens community to join them for a delicious meal, heartfelt fellowship, and an unforgettable message of inspiration and hope. Together, let's celebrate life and ensure that every family in Limestone County knows they are not alone.



Steventhen Holland is an Author, Recording Artist, passionate Worship Leader, motivational Speaker, national Pro-Life speaker and founder of Broken Not Dead Ministries, a Non-Profit 501(c3)! He currently lives in Alabama, with his wife, Rachel and their three beautiful daughters, Isabella, Eliana, and Kadence.

Steventhen obtained a Bachelor of Arts degree, in Student Ministry, from King University in Bristol, TN in 2005, where he also played baseball.

He is a recording artist that has written, recorded, and released over 20 songs, to date.

He is the author of a book entitled, *The Journey: Brokenness to Wholeness*, in which he shares his amazing story! His life is the result of the gang-rape of an eighteen-year-old mentally challenged young woman. Incredibly, despite his mother's lack of intellectual ability, homelessness, and a society that was constantly pressuring her to abort him, he survived. However, his mother couldn't care for him and placed him in foster care, where he was later adopt-



ed. He wouldn't be reunited with his birth mother for over twenty-seven years.

Despite the brokenness he has experienced, he travels the country, sharing his message of HOPE and RESTORATION for the

BROKEN built on the Gospel of Jesus Christ! With courageous inspiration, Steventhen has been transformative as a speaker and worship leader at a variety of events and venues around the country for over 20 years.

WOMEN'S RESOURCE CENTER

# EVERY LIFE

2025 FUNDRAISING BANQUET

September  
**Tuesday 30 2025**

LUNCHEON 11:30 AM - 1:00 PM  
doors open at 11:00  
Business Casual

OR

DINNER 6:30 PM - 8:00 PM  
doors open at 6:00  
Dressy Casual

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Guest Speaker  
**Steventhen Holland**

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Information Contact: [publicrelations@wrcathens.org](mailto:publicrelations@wrcathens.org)





# Captain's Log

## *Sub Chaos*

by Brenda Wilkerson

“Everybody, shush!” Blue announced as the bus radio crackled to life.

“Can you turn it up?” Red begged. Our concerned bus family fell silent, waiting for some more juicy radio action.

Sure enough, the desperate voice of a confused substitute driver from a different school could be heard reaching out to that school’s office to report her rambunctious kids were yelling, throwing things, and not staying seated. Bless her brave heart; the chaos could be heard in the background as she asked for some assistance with

the route because the kids were confusing her with different directions.

You could hear a pin drop on our bus. Like watching an addicting soap opera, my kids were wide-eyed, leaning forward, and hanging on to every word heard over the radio as the conversation between the sub and the school office continued.

In our hearts, we were cheering for the panicked driver. Occasionally, my kids would throw out a suggestion for the unruly bus. “Maybe she could stop the bus and talk to them.” “She should call their parents.” This led

to a valuable discussion of why rules are created and to be followed. We decided common sense rules and reasonable boundaries keep everyone happy, safe, and bus-healthy. What a life lesson!

Thank You, Lord, for loving us enough to give us Your gifts of boundaries, order, and the opportunity to see an example of what happens when we venture outside Your loving boundaries and as a result, lose our peace.

#onceuponaschoolbus

~Brenda







## Slinkard On Success

# “Q” Is For Quality

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)*

We are now to letter “Q” in the “ABCs of Slinkard on Success” and our word is “quality.” It seems too often people want to focus in on quantity and make it all about the numbers while forgetting the importance of what quality can provide. Quality changes results. The higher the quality, the better the results. The higher the quality, the better the life becomes. We can all benefit from this word, and we need to focus on becoming quality focused.

I believe that for us to improve our lives, we need to have a better comprehension of what words mean. The definition of quality is: “The standard of something as measured against other things of a similar kind; the degree of excellence of something.” Ultimately, this word will have different meanings to different people. What I deem to be high-quality might be perceived as low-quality by someone else. Others may be willing to spend more money on a particular product all because they perceive the quality to be better.

The choice is up to everyone to make, but I believe for people to make changes in their life, they must first see the need to change their life. It is a reality that some people feel they are just fine with where they are financially, socially, and economically. They have no desire nor zeal to improve their current situation while others are constantly seeking ways to improve their lives.

I believe those people who have no desire to change their current situation are

the ones who could potentially use the change the most. I think it is important to point out that sometimes it is not that people do not want to change their current situation, but they feel as if they are unable to make changes to their current situation. This is the wrong way of thinking, and we need to realize that life is about the decisions we make.

When we make quality decisions, we are able to get quality results, or we get closer to obtaining the quality results. It will not always be easy to get what we want, but we need to focus on improving the choices we make. I believe anyone can change their life if they can just get the right momentum going in their life. I had a family member who seemingly made bad decision after bad decision, and it seemed as if life was always beating him down. His quality of life was low. Finally, one day he realized his lowliness in life was the direct result of the decisions he had made.

Quality is what we make of it. Life is what we make of it. To have a good quality of life is going to require us to

work at it. We are responsible for what happens in our lives, and we must focus on making better decisions to improve that which is around us. Making quality decisions is about building habits — and the better the habits, the better our lives become. There are characteristics or quality traits that are needed to make a positive impact in your life. What qualities are you needing to improve in your life?

We need to have the ability to place our lives, our actions, our thoughts, our words, under a microscope to be able to see if we are producing high-quality results or low-quality results. All these attributes contribute to what kind of person we will be. Will we be a highly productive member of society, or will we be a low, non-productive member of society? The choice is ours to make.

What will we do?

We have a generation of people being groomed to believe they are the victim of the circumstances around them. We have a generation of people believing they are owed everything and entitled to anything they want. Their quality of life will be low, especially as we see the ideology of socialism creeping into our youth.

Make no mistake about it, we live in the greatest society known to man with boundless opportunities and the quality of life can be there...if we so choose. Your life — good or bad — is up to you to make. What is stopping you right now from living the life you have always dreamed about? We, as individuals, set the standard for what we will accept and reject in life. The higher the quality that we focus on, the better results become, but the decisions are up to us to make.





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**McGhee On Management**

# *The Power Of An Empty Toothpaste Tube*

by Detri L. McGhee - CLU, ChFC, B.Min

In our last session, I promised we would look at one way to powerfully and effectively remove criticism's power to haunt and follow us around. It has worked for me and others, so hopefully you will find it effective.

Throughout the decades of seeking answers for how to effectively, wisely, and profitably handle criticism, there have been many times I failed in my venture. One time, I received hurtful criticism from an unexpected source, and at least half of the problems addressed had nothing to do with me, yet all the fire and daggers were launched only toward me. Realizing I had a real chance to put teeth to my theories of how to successfully survive undeserved, hateful criticism from a supposed friend, I set to work trying to make sense of it all.

First, I scheduled a time to deal with all the facets of this very unpleasant situation. Then I went back to my work, knowing that it **WOULD** be dealt with, but when I had time to focus and think more clearly. I knew that if I made decisions based on my feelings, thoughts, and emotions of the moment, I would surely regret at least some of the reactions I would have. I **CHOSE** to **ACT** – **NOT REACT**.

I set aside two hours the next day. After working through the C-A-T System, finding things

I could use for my improvement, how I could clarify my position and thoughts with those who matter, I came up with a list of things within the criticism that were worthless, hurtful, in error, and made my blood boil as I contemplated how to justify myself and prove to everyone involved that I had been falsely blamed.

Then, it **HIT ME!** One of the key abilities of emotionally intelligent people (and I wanted to become one!) is that they do not feel the need to vindicate, justify, or explain themselves to everyone in the world. I would apologize where appropriate, explain where it mattered, and forgive others and myself. **AND THEN...** I would let the rest go, realizing that by seeking to justify or vindicate myself, even more people would know about the situation. Other people would be hurt. Those who know me well will not believe lies. Those who love me will still love me, and no matter how many "proofs" I lay out, those who want to believe lies do not care what the truth really is. So there was nothing to be gained and much to lose by not letting go of the anger, frustration, and desire to vindicate/justify myself.

Still, whenever I thought of the whole situation, the anger and revenge tried to upset me again. **HOW?** How can I truly rid myself of this response to the situation? Then, I had an idea. Imagination



is such a powerful tool! Just like using our imagination to "see" the best way to respond to potential danger/harm can prepare us for those times when they come, so can the imagination beautifully empower us to rid ourselves of negative emotions and actions.

Now, my sweet, brilliant, lovely mom was a bit of a packrat. She saved empty paper towel cores because the VBS workers might need them for craft time. (They make great binoculars.) But I never saw her save an empty toothpaste tube. Never. Worthless clutter. It just so happened I had a nearly empty tube available.

That's what this worthless criticism was to me. Trash. Clutter. Anger-inducing. Frustrating. So, I should just toss it as trash. Nothing of value to me, except to teach me to Let Go! So, I took my little list of worthless, hurtful, wrong, anger-inducing **TRASH** and rolled it up in my toothpaste tube, and spoke to it as I threw it away. "You are trash. I am rid of you. You are

worthless to me. I never want to think of you again." I did feel relief. Really!

A few hours later, the whole hurtful incident started replaying in my mind as I thought of yet another way I could get even with those responsible, and vindicate myself. My method didn't work. **WAIT!** Yes, I threw those things away. I dealt with them as I should. But they were still near me. So, I bagged up all the trash in the can with the toothpaste tube in it. "YOU are not welcome in my home ever again! Where I was wronged, I forgive them. Where I was wrong, I forgive myself. Where I was misunderstood, I will let my work and character speak for itself. YOU have taken enough of my energy, joy, peace, and thoughts. **NO MORE!**" And I walked the whole bag of trash to the dumpster outside, tossed it in and said, "Goodbye forever, worthless trash!"

When something triggers negative feelings or thoughts surrounding this, I take a deep breath,

sigh a little and think, "Thank goodness **THAT** is gone." Yes, it worked. I hope you find your own particular way to let go of things that you cannot change and actively take away from them the power you had relinquished to them – the power to decide how you will **ACT** to become the person you truly want to be.

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](mailto:detrimcghee@gmail.com) or Facebook: Free outline for Criticism Management available at [www.criticismmanagement.com](http://www.criticismmanagement.com).

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# Always A Plan B

by Stephanie Reynolds, Athens-Limestone Tourism Association

Pause for a moment and think about that phrase. What does it mean to you? Go ahead and answer out loud: "Always a Plan B means..."

It might be a foreign concept to you. You always fly by the seat of your pants. "Plan" is a four-letter word. Your plan can't be ruined because you never made one to begin with. You are as flexible as water and as rooted as the wind. Nothing is a crisis until it is an actual crisis (but, regrettably, those tend to hit you hard).

Or it might terrify you because if you need a Plan B, that means your Plan A failed. It FAILED! And now what to do? Not only did your plan FAIL, but now YOU will FAIL because your plan, well, FAILED! You had one problem, which you solved elegantly with one solution, and now things are escalating quickly. Your high standards mean things are either perfect or terrible, and that is very stressful.

Or maybe you are halfway between the two. You are both a problem solver AND flexible. You might be the person who always has the tissue, the paper map, the extra candy. You love being prepared for every contingency. You make plans but hold them in an open hand. Each break of the plan, each hiccup, is part of the fun as you pivot faster than an Olympic ice skater.

Or, maybe, you are like most of us: Sometimes you can't be bothered to plan, sometimes your plan is the ONLY plan, and sometimes you can handle interruptions with aplomb.

Summer is over and school



(and football season) has started. We are coming into the busy holiday season with guests and traveling and presents and invitations and head colds and away games. If there was ever a time of year when having a Plan B could save your sanity, it is October through December.

But how do we do that (and why is that pertinent to tourism, Steph)?

It's pertinent because I am right there with you. We have no fewer than 4 major events coming up between now and December. It's pertinent because I'm in tourism, and I want to help you with your guests! It's pertinent because y'all are my people and I want you to have a wonderful fall/winter filled with the true meaning of peace and the profoundness of the Christmas season. I want joy and rest for you (and me!).

So, my amazing neighbor, what are we going to do to make this upcoming season less stressful?

Today, this weekend, set aside time for you to sit with a favorite notebook, beverage, and a snack; give yourself an hour, and make a list of all the parties, budgets, guests, and expenses you expect. Write what you can do now for

each. This little investment in time will take so much pressure off you.

For example, have a lasagna in the freezer for unexpected company. Have all the bedding washed now for extra guests later. Start buying presents now. Start exercising and eating well now (because we KNOW how December is a friend to our taste buds but an enemy to our waist-

lines). Start keeping your gas tank at ½ full now. Go now to buy medicine for the bug your household always gets this time of year. Get a calendar now and mark down every game. Contact teachers now and get every project scheduled so you don't have to make cupcakes at 2 a.m. the morning of the class party (but keep a box of mix and a jar of icing in the cupboard just in case).

Then go that next step and come up with a Plan B for each: 2 sets of linens washed. Two boxes of cake mix and icing and disposable trays. Two pans of lasagna. Buy and wrap some extra gifts, label them with sticky notes by age and gender, and have them stashed somewhere for when people drop by with gifts for you (take the labels off before you give them the present though! No one will feel special by receiving a gift that says "Female, 45-60 years old")!

Then come see me, especially if you are going to have out-of-town guests this year. Let's come up with a plan for your guests, an itinerary for things to keep them entertained and the pressure off you.

We can do this, you and me! We can make this an amazing, stress-free season because we will always have a Plan B.

# Tennessee Valley Spotlight

## Mondays at 10am 1080 AM WKAC





# Learning As A Lifestyle

## Leadership Without The Crutch Of “Trust Me”

by Eric Betts

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

In the architecture of leadership, few phrases are more casually deployed—and more quietly corrosive—than “trust me.” It is often uttered by those who believe their past performance, institutional proximity, or presumed goodness should suffice as proof of present integrity. But leadership that leans on “trust me” as a shortcut to scrutiny is not leadership at all. It is performance without proof, charisma without covenant.

The phrase itself is not inherently malicious. It may arise from leaders who genuinely believe their intentions are pure. Yet its invocation can become manipulative when used to bypass questions,

silence critique, or defer transparency. It assumes that reputation is righteousness, that intent is impact, and that charisma is covenant. But history has taught us that presumed goodness is no guarantee of ethical clarity.

Leadership must be more than a résumé of good intentions. It must be a living testimony of ethical presence. The most trustworthy leaders are not those who say, “Trust me,” but those who say, “Watch how I move.” They invite scrutiny, welcome revision, and model accountability not as a reaction to crisis but as a rhythm of principled living.

Accountability, in this



sense, is not a mood—it is a model. It is the daily discipline of radical transparency, ethical consistency, and communal

discernment. It is the refusal to weaponize past deeds as shields against present responsibility. It is the courage to name one’s limitations without spin, and to show up not as a curated persona but as a principled presence.

This is the leadership our communities deserve. Not perfect, but principled. Not performative, but present. Not above

critique, but shaped by it. In a time when trust is often demanded but rarely earned, we need leaders who build trust through rhythm, not rhetoric—through covenant, not charisma.

Let us retire the crutch of trust me and replace it with a model of leadership that is transparent, accountable, and worthy of communal affirmation.

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## The Alternative Approach

# Your Immune System: *The First And Final Line Of Defense*

by Roy Williams

Every single day, your body fights a silent battle. Cancer cells, viruses, bacteria, parasites, and toxins invade your system constantly. In fact, research shows the average person develops cancerous cells up to six times per year—but most never progress because a healthy immune system can destroy them before they can grow. When your immune system is healthy, with a natural defense army—killer T-cells, macrophages, and lymphocytes—that are designed to recognize, attack, and eliminate threats before they overwhelm your health. But here's the danger:

- Over 200 carcinogens (cancer-causing toxins) are found in the average American's environment before leaving home each morning—from toothpaste, shampoos, cleaning sprays, and pesticides to processed food and polluted air.

- Pharmaceuticals weaken immunity—antibiotics, acid blockers, steroids, chemotherapy, and other drugs suppress your body's natural defenses.

- We are attacked every day from toxins from the air we breathe, the water we drink, and the food we eat.

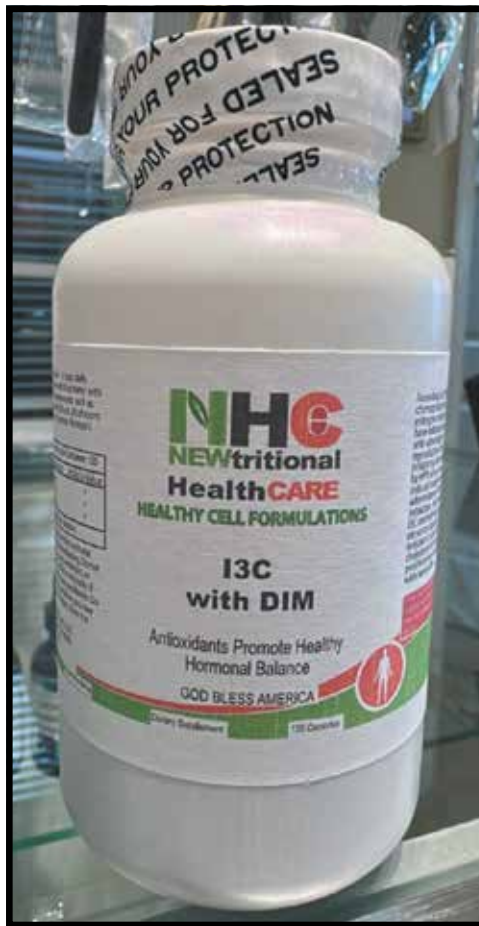
- The result? Today, 1-in-2 Americans will face cancer, and millions more will battle autoimmune conditions, chronic infections, and degenerative disease.

### Problem Solved

The truth is simple: If

your immune system is strong, you can resist almost anything. If it's weak, even the common cold can take hold. Over 20 years ago **NEWtritional Health Care** began developing the absolute highest quality line of all-natural supplements that has ever been formulated. Each supplement is verified by a **Certificate of Authenticity**, which verifies the quality, the milligrams or micrograms and the safety of every single ingredient in each bottle. In other words, when you purchase from us, you can rest assured that you are getting exactly what is listed on the label.

Because of our dedication to quality, we have become one of the fastest growing and most trusted nutritional companies in America. The results are constantly being verified by the most important group of people any company can have, our customers. There's hardly a week goes by that someone who is using one or more of our products brings us their medical reports, including the ones from before starting on the products and the ones six months and a year after starting the supplements, and they are excited. Others are amazed at how much better they feel or how much less pain they have, fewer sinus infections, urinary tract infections, and how their cancer test results are improving from one of our best-selling combo's called **The Healthy Immune Combo**.



At NEWtritional Health Care, we formulated this combo for those who want the ultimate immune defense system. This powerhouse combination doesn't "cure" disease—it gives your body the raw materials it needs to heal itself, just as God designed it.

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- Cordyceps Sinensis – the legendary "anti-aging mushroom" that boosts energy, lung and heart function, and immune response.
- Panax Ginseng – enhances endurance, normalizes body function, and supports DNA/RNA repair.
- Beta Glucan – puts your immune system on "high alert" and improves infection resistance.

tion resistance.

- Milk Thistle – restores liver function and detoxifies dangerous toxins.

- Alpha Lipoic Acid – powerful antioxidant that chelates heavy metals and protects genetic material.

- Green Tea Extract & Citrus Bioflavonoids – potent antioxidants that fight cancer and cardiovascular disease.

- Kelp & Potassium – provide over 50 trace minerals, balance electrolytes, and enhance brain and muscle function.

### The Science Behind IS-3

The core ingredients in **IS-3**, backed by scientific studies, have proven to:

- Boosts Natural Killer Cells – increases your body's ability to destroy cancer and virus-infected cells.

- Anti-Tumor Activity – slows cancer cell growth and promotes normal cell differentiation.

- Heart Protection – reduces cholesterol, triglycerides, and clot formation.

- Kidney & Liver Support – prevents kidney stones

and fatty liver disease.

- If you suffer from autoimmune conditions, allergies, or chronic infections – **IS-3** boosts your immune response.

- If you simply want to stay healthy and age powerfully, **IS-3** builds resilience at the cellular level.

### • SPECIAL OFFER

- **Bring this article in to receive 15% off the Healthy Immune Combo (MSM+C and IS-3).**

**"The path to good health in the future is paved with nutrients to build on today."**

Don't wait for sickness to strike—fortify your immune system now. Are you ready to take your health to the next level? **Meet IS3, MSM Plus C** – the powerful combo designed to support your joints, boost your immune system, and enhance your overall well-being. Super charge your immune system by going to Herbs & More in Athens, NHC Herb Shop in Killen, [www.nhcherbs.com](http://www.nhcherbs.com) or call 256-757-0660 to have your Healthy Immune Combo shipped today.

*Your Friend in Health,*  
*Roy P Williams*





# Somatic Symptom Disorders

by Lisa Philippart,  
Licensed Professional Counselor



***“A symptom may go away temporarily, but will come back in some other way over and over again as long as there is conflict between the conscious and the subconscious mind.”***  
- The Anxiety Guy

Thank you readers for your kind words of support and encouragement regarding my articles. I wanted to be sure to remind you that my articles on various mental disorders and illnesses are for informational purposes. Please do not try to “diagnose” yourself as this can lead to all sorts of stress that you really don’t need! Just as you may look to WebMD for inquiries and research on physical ailments, my hope is to provide you with an opportunity to better understand what may be going on mentally and emotionally for you or for someone you love.

I find somatoform disorders to be difficult to understand, diagnose, and treat. In fact, I have only committed to this diagnosis once in my 13-year career as a Licensed Professional Counselor. The challenge with somatoform disorders is that they are often co-occurring with mental health conditions, such as anxiety and depression. This means that either the somatoform disorder needs to be treated simultaneously with the mental illness or the mental illness is the underlying

cause of the somatoform disorder. Somatoform disorders can also co-occur with substance abuse, as individuals attempt to cope with a lack of explanation for their symptoms.

**What are somatoform disorders?** Somatoform disorders are a set of psychological conditions where a person experiences bodily symptoms that can’t be accounted for by a medical or neurological diagnosis. The symptoms can range from mild to severe and infrequent to chronic, and are out of the person’s conscious control. These types of disorders are characterized by excessive focus on physical ailments, such as pain and fatigue. Oftentimes a person with somatoform disorder will constantly obsess over their symptoms while attempting to discover an explanation for them.

**Types of somatoform disorders:** The various somatoform disorders are differentiated by thoughts, emotions, and actions related to the somatic symptoms. The main types of somatoform disorders are somatization disorder, conversion disorder, pain disorder, and hypochondriasis. **Somatization disorders** occur when someone continually complains of physical symptoms when there is no physical condition present to cause the symptoms. **Conversion disorders** occur when physical symptoms imitate symptoms of a neurological issue even though there is no neurological disorder present. These symptoms



may include paralysis, vision or hearing loss, or seizures. **Pain disorders** are characterized by recurring pain in one or more parts of the body with no known cause. This diagnosis is given when the pain causes considerable distress, with psychological factors playing a significant role in the onset, magnitude, and duration of the pain. **Hypochondriasis** occurs when someone believes that normal bodily signs or minor symptoms are evidence of a severe illness, even when medical tests prove otherwise. Physical symptoms may be either real or imagined. Hypochondriasis was removed from the DSM-5 (Diagnostic Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders) and replaced/renamed as illness anxiety disorder.

**Symptoms and causes of somatoform disorders.** Pain is the most frequent symptom experienced in somatoform disorders, and is usually accompanied by beliefs, feelings, and behaviors related to this pain. These thoughts, emotions, and behaviors may include the following: persistent worry about possible sick-

ness, interpretation of “normal” bodily sensations as an indicator of severe sickness, fear that symptoms are life-threatening in the absence of medical confirmation, mistrust of medical treatments, excessive visits to a doctor or hospital that don’t alleviate concerns, and excessive impairment compared with the commonly expected medical circumstance. While it is not exactly clear what causes somatoform disorders, it is believed that there are several contributing factors. Genetic features, such as hypersensitivity to pain, may be involved. The effect of family dynamics may be another influence. Increased attention to bodily symptoms when someone has difficulty identifying, discussing, or processing

emotions is often involved. And finally, a somatoform disorder may develop in a subconscious effort to attract attention because of the perceived illness.

**Somatoform disorder treatment.** Treatment for somatoform disorder is geared toward enhancing someone’s daily functioning by reducing physical symptoms or improving the ability to cope with them. Psychotherapy is usually an effective treatment because physical symptoms are often related to underlying psychological conditions. CBT or cognitive behavior therapy is commonly used because of its focus on helping people change their thoughts and behaviors as related to the condition or symptoms. The goal is to help you to decrease preoccupation with your illnesses and learn how to cope with the physical symptoms and other emotional and mental difficulties.

*Lisa Philippart is a Licensed Professional Counselor, who divides her time between her own private practice in Huntsville and providing personal counseling services at Athens State University.*

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## Rightside Way

# Back The Blue, Do The Good

by Phil Williams

Well, he went there. “He” being none other than the irritant-in-chief Governor Gavin Newsom -- the smarmy beta-male who presides over the single greatest waste of natural resources and abuse of humanity called the State of California. Newsom posited on his X account that the State of Alabama has a higher crime rate than California.

Using his stern look (you know, the one that says “I’m trying to be a tough guy, but I don’t know how, so I’m over-playing it because I’m a drama queen”) Newsom pretended that California is tough on crime in the same way that Alejandro Mayorkas pretended the border was secure as millions streamed across it.

Katherine Robertson, Deputy AG for Alabama and current candidate for attorney general, responded immediately: “Crime rates in Alabama are high in Democrat-led cities which have a difficult time retaining and recruiting LEOs. Officers don’t want to work in the most dangerous areas of our state when they question whether city leadership will have their backs.”

There you have it. Democrat-run cities. Democrat-run states. Law enforcement outnumbered. Crime through the roof. But hey... Trump bad!

The war of words is the left insisting that Trump is a tyrant for enforcing the laws and making our nation’s capital safer by deploying federal law enforcement and National Guard troops. They conveniently forget that Governor Kathy Hochul (D – NY) deployed the Guard to secure crime ridden New York City subways. Since the surge of federal assistance in Washington, DC, we have seen a dramatic drop in crime. Liberals want the world to believe they are on the winning side of the crime issue. The world knows otherwise.

There was a time when zero tolerance was against the ones committing the crime, not the ones pointing out the crime. But in liberal bastions around this country, we have seen a disturbing shift in the dynamic. A trend in blue cities toward victimizing the victims, polarizing the police, and mollicoddling criminals.

What is it about liberals that makes them averse to law enforcement? I’m sure that it’s not ALL liberals, but I don’t know of any conservatives averse to law enforcement. The liberal cry to “defund the police” is rooted in the outright lie that having fewer police officers on the beat means our society will be more fair, or equitable, or less racist. Common sense tells us that if you don’t have the men and women of the thin blue line who

are called, trained, and equipped to protect and defend, the result is anarchy, grief, and suffering.

The very essence of what it means to be a criminal is that criminals don’t obey laws. The laws require actual enforcement. What stops bad guys from doing bad things is good guys willing to do good things. That’s not hyperbole, that’s just common sense.

One of the core functions of governance is to provide security to citizens. But in blue cities that’s hit or miss. Even in red states, Democrat run cities push policies that create rising crime rates.

Perhaps the prime example of how to screw up a beautiful community is the City of Chicago. The Windy City. City of the Big Shoulders. Despite violent crime statistics that make Baghdad and Mexico City look like Mr. Rogers’ Neighborhood, Chicago leaders are determined to tell Trump to stay out. Mayor Brandon Johnson (who has never led anything in his life) was joined by the preeminent blowhard, Governor JB Pritzker, in saying that Trump’s efforts to stop crime are unwelcome in Chicago.

Yet Chicago, like many bastions of liberal governance, is losing population as its citizens flee high taxes, corruption, poor schools, and unsafe streets. The Chicago police force is severely de-

pleted. You would hope that Pritzker and Johnson would form a plan to bring improvements. Perhaps adding more law enforcement with ability to apprehend, arrest, and detain criminals on the streets of one of America’s great cities. But no, that’s not the liberal way.

Not so long ago, Chicago’s police-skeptical mayor, with the help of the Governor’s office, deployed so-called “peacekeepers” into Chicago’s streets wearing yellow vests. Their function was to provide so-called “essential assistance in de-escalation, conflict resolution, and crisis support.” Vest wearing do-gooders in a crime-ridden city of 2.6 million. That should do it! Said no one. Ever. One of those peacekeepers, while he was wearing his yellow peacekeeper vest, was actually arrested for robbing and beating a man!

Since the inception of this great nation, we have always had the ability to put good law enforcement officers on the streets of our cities and towns. It is an honorable and much-needed profession. People who are inclined to commit crimes are not likely to respond favorably to kind words or sensitivity training. Criminals need to know that the ‘True Blue’ is able to back up their words with actions. The TRUE Blue. Not some fake rendition of community action.

And if the men and wom-

en in law enforcement need backup, we should send it. It should never be about making the streets safer for criminals. The only good answer is to ensure a safe, secure quality of life for law-abiding, hard-working, taxpaying citizens. This is also not a party politics issue. Blue states. Red states. Who cares? Victims of crime don’t want your politics. They want to live free from those who seek to do them harm.

If we are going to be a strong nation, then we cannot punish the good, and vilify the police. It doesn’t work that way. That’s a formula for anarchy.

Back the Blue, and do the good.

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







Cooking with Anna (continued from page 9)

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

by Anna Hamilton

*God sees beauty in a much deeper way. In 1 Samuel 16:7, we are told, “The Lord does not look at the things people look at. People look at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.” This truth is freeing. Our identity is not found in meeting impossible beauty standards, but in having a heart aligned with God’s love, grace, and truth. When our hearts are filled with His Spirit, His beauty radiates through us in kindness, joy, peace, and compassion.*

*Christ restores our true image. Sin and shame often make us feel unworthy or unattractive—not just physically, but spiritually. Yet Jesus restores what sin tries to distort. Through His sacrifice, we are made new and clothed in His righteousness (Isaiah 61:10). In Christ, we carry a beauty that cannot fade with age, trends, or circumstances. This is an eternal beauty, rooted in God’s unchanging love.*

*We should be living as one declared beautiful. When we embrace our identity as God’s beloved and beautiful children, we walk in confidence—not pride, but assurance. We no longer compare ourselves to others or strive to prove our worth. Instead, we shine the beauty of Christ in how we love, forgive, encourage, and serve others. Proverbs 31:30 reminds us, “Charm is deceptive, and beauty is fleeting; but a woman who fears the Lord is to be praised.” True beauty comes from reflecting God’s light in the world.*

*Whenever doubt or insecurity whispers otherwise, we can stand on God’s truth. Look in the mirror and declare: “I am God’s masterpiece. He calls me beautiful, and His Word is greater than any*

*opinion.” Let your heart rest in this promise—your beauty is not up for debate, because your Creator has already spoken it over you.*

*You are beautiful in Christ—fearfully, wonderfully, and purposefully made. Walk boldly in that identity and let God’s beauty shine through you every day.*

*This week’s recipe is savory and healthy. And bonus points, because it is quick to prepare. It is packed with flavorful garlic-butter turkey and the very versatile cauliflower. It will make the perfect addition to your weekly lineup. I hope you enjoy it as much as my family does.*

*“But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light” (1 Peter 2:9).*

*But you are a chosen people, a royal  
priesthood, a holy nation, God’s  
special possession, that you may  
declare the praises of Him who called  
you out of darkness into his  
wonderful light.*

1 PETER 2:9



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Patrick is kennel trained, neutered, up to date on all vaccines, HW negative, and microchipped. If you are interested in Patrick, please give us a call or stop by! We look forward to telling you more about this handsome boy!

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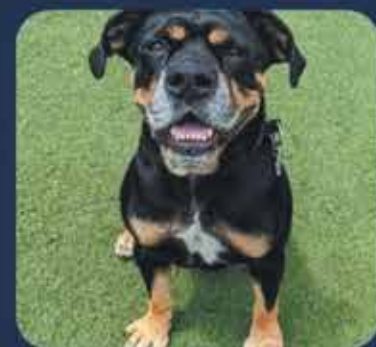
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