

September 19 - October 2, 2025

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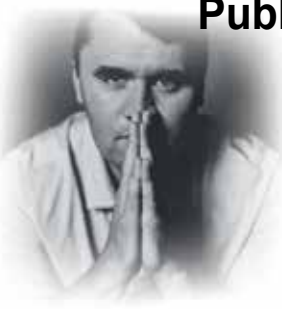


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Guess what time it is....  
SHRED DAY! That's  
right, the annual Better  
Business Bureau of  
North Alabama FREE  
Shred Day is set for  
September 27, from 9  
a.m.-noon...  
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## The 2025 Tennessee Valley Old Time Fiddlers Convention: *One Of The Best Parts Of Autumn In Athens*

By Ali Elizabeth Turner

Over 100 years ago, there was a fiddle contest held here in Athens that was the technical birth of what has become known as the Tennessee Valley Old Time Fiddlers' Convention. Soon, the legendary Delmore Brothers became a

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## The St. Paul Catholic Women's Annual Yard Sale: *Bargains And Blessings*

By Ali Elizabeth Turner

On Friday and Saturday, October 3 and 4, the St. Paul Catholic Women are going to be having their annual yard sale, held at the church. And, what I can say from experience is, if you want bargains, blessings, and desire to be a blessing, this event is well worth your time. Recently, I sat down with Jayne Higginbotham

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## Publisher's Point

# The Turning



It's been a week since Charlie Kirk was murdered. As has been the case for many Americans, my emotions are visceral and my grief is palpable. I have seen tears shed by men, and dreadful hate speech come out of the mouths of women who claim to legislatively represent the people of this great nation. It has been a time of electronic chaos and personal resolve, mourning and triumph. And if I am perceiving things correctly, we are witnessing the birth of what I have decided to call "The Turning."

I suppose, in a way, this is a reference to the name of Charlie's organization and brand, better known as Turning Point USA, but I think it is more. I think a significant shift has begun in our culture that gives me great hope. I had the privilege of hearing Pastor Dutch Sheets speak in Florence on September 13, and he had several things to say about Charlie. Someone texted him within seconds of the shooting, and Dutch had the uncomfortable feeling that Charlie was not going to live, even though he prayed for him fervently. Dutch felt directed by the Lord to the Book of Acts, Chapter 7, which is the description of the stoning of Stephen, who is considered to be the first martyr. Stephen's face shone like an angel in the presence of his accusers, he spoke with great wisdom, the Holy Spirit worked miracles through him, and his enemies could not intimidate him. In fact, as his enemies were killing him, they heard him

pray for their forgiveness and talk about heaven as he was seeing it.

The strangest thing happened after Stephen was stoned. Paul was set up to experience being knocked on his keister on the road to Damascus, and went on to become the one who wrote the lion's share of the New Testament. And, eventually Paul himself was martyred, as were most of the Apostles. The church grew in the midst of persecution, which has happened several times in history, and evil has never been able to silence the voices of hope. Believers sang in the stadiums while facing down lions,

they sang in the prisons and death camps of World War II, and songs are already being written and produced not just about Charlie; they are asking the question: What are we going to do, and who are we going to be?

I would answer that question with, "Ask the kids." By that, I mean the kids—Gen Z, Millennials, and others have lost their hero, and so the kids are going to become their hero. Of course, they can't do that in their own strength, and The Turning will be messy, as revival always is, but you watch. They shall become bolder than we can imagine, and they will certainly make

the powers of evil sorry that they ever thought that by snuffing out the physical light of Charlie Kirk, they would succeed in silencing his unfailingly steadfast message of hope. It will be "the Lord's doing, and it will be marvelous in our sight," if you let it. Pay attention and pray for the kids. They are going to need it.

*Ali Elizabeth Turner*

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## Whether The Weather...

by Ali Elizabeth Turner



Throughout history, weather has at times made all the difference between victory and defeat in war. There are those who feel that at times there has been “an appeal to heaven” that caused a supernatural intervention in the form of weather being altered. It has also been the test of leadership as to how to interpret the weather and “whether the weather” needs to be acknowledged or ignored, and how or if it will change troop movement.

Sometimes the results of the unexplained change have occurred unbeknownst to anyone prior to its arrival, and such was the case in the Gulf War. In 1991, the night before the Allies were due to liberate Kuwait, a windstorm hit, and not just any windstorm. Wind patterns in the desert are fairly predictable, and in this area the wind was known to always blow from the north to the south. A Saudi prince commented that it was highly unusual for it to blow from the south to the north, but it did, all night long. In the morning light, it was revealed that right in their path was an extensive mine field. Had they rolled out as planned, the re-

sults would have been devastating. Having endured more than one sand storm from the comfort of Uday Hussein’s hunting lodge on a base known as Radwaniyah, I can say that sandstorms are not usually greeted with gratitude. But in this case, gratitude was indeed in order.

During the Revolutionary War, two back-to-back situations occurred that were pivotal in America’s ultimate triumph over the British. The first was a storm that allowed Washington to cross the Delaware River undetected. It was a nor’easter, complete with snow, sleet, and fierce wind. That got them across, and then an inexplicable fog rolled in, which allowed them to get into position to attack the British at Trenton.

In the 20th century, one of the most famous “weather miracles” came to be known as the Miracle of Dunkirk. British soldiers were trapped and facing certain slaughter by the Germans. Again, pounding rain and a dense fog rolled in, and citizens in anything that floated went and got the sol-



diers and “rowed” them back to safety. Winston Churchill called it a “miracle of deliverance,” and it made it possible for the British troops to regroup and ultimately defeat the Germans.

The Invasion of Normandy, known as D-Day, was also affected by weather as well as consummate leadership. We celebrate it every year on June 6, but the original date to begin the worst and most important battle in the European theatre was supposed to begin on June 5. There was a storm rolling in with high winds that would have made navigating the choppy seas

risky at best. Radar was brand new, and a British officer consulted with General Eisenhower, indicating that a break in the weather would occur the next day. Ike knew that the Germans were waiting for them, and had to decide weather to risk them finding out any more about the portended invasion, or delay a day and plunge head long into the fray. Ike chose the latter, and while D-Day was indeed the ‘Longest Day,’ we are still free because of what Ike called ... *the most agonizing decision of my life.*

Ike further explained his decision: *I had to decide to postpone by at*

*least twenty-four hours the most formidable array of fighting ships and of fighting men that was ever launched across the sea against a hostile shore. ... If there were nothing else in my life to prove the existence of an almighty and merciful God, the events of the next twenty-four hours did it ... The greatest break in a terrible outlay of weather occurred the next day and allowed that great invasion to proceed, with losses far below those we had anticipated ...*

The shoulder flash on the uniforms of those who landed included a rainbow, and interestingly, on the day of June 6, a rainbow appeared over the beaches of Normandy, apparently bright enough that some pilots reported flying through it before the invasion began. Whether the weather makes a difference in battle, you will have to decide. I certainly am convinced that prayer does.

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# Athens Alehouse Athtoberfest 5.0: “A Ballyhoo Of Next-Level Sorts”

by Ali Elizabeth Turner

In the early 20th century, an American word of ultimately unverified origin made its way into our vocabulary. It is thought to have been perhaps a description of a Spanish boat, a circus sideshow, a town in Ireland, or possibly just gibberish, and that word is “ballyhoo.” It has come to mean “loud and boisterous advertising,” and this article as it pertains to an up-and-coming celebration is guilty as charged. Athens Alehouse & Cellar is “hollerin’” that the fifth iteration of “Athtoberfest” is going to be on Friday, September 26 from 4-9 p.m., and “come one, come all” is indeed an appropriate invitation. That includes your kids, and in addition, your dogs can come and be on the patio. Ken Hill, who along with his wife, Lori, owns Athens Alehouse & Cellar and has promised that the evening will be a “ballyhoo of next-level sorts.” In other words, there is going to be a ton of fun.

Ken and Lori Hill opened the Alehouse originally on Washington Street, and this is the first celebration

in the new location, whose address is 113 S. Marion Street on the east side of the courthouse square. The Alehouse is easy to recognize because it has four swings that were hand-crafted by Ken using wood found during the extensive renovation process of the new digs.

By way of history, Oktoberfest was started in 1810 when Bavaria’s Crown Prince Ludwig married Princess Therese, and Germany celebrated nonstop for two weeks. Since that time, the largest Oktoberfest celebration in the world is held annually in Munich. In America, the very first Oktoberfest was held in La Crosse, Wisconsin, back in 1961, and the one held in Cincinnati draws 500,000 visitors each year. Cincinnati’s, or “Zinzinnati” as it is known in Germany, is second in size only to Oktoberfest Munich. Athtoberfest will only be for the one day, and as far as anyone knows, no weddings will be part of the festivities.

What WILL be happening, however is a classic German contest known as



a “Masskrugstemmen,” or in English, “stein holding,” as described by Wikipedia below:

*Steinholding, also known as Masskrugstemmen, is a traditional Bavarian strength and endurance contest where competitors hold a full one-liter beer stein, weighing five pounds. The goal is to hold the stein out in front of the body with a straight arm for as long as possible without bending the elbow or spilling any beer. The competitor who can hold their stein with proper form for the longest duration is the winner.*

A full one-liter stein weighs about five pounds, and the U.S. records are approximately 21 minutes for men, and six minutes for women. If you spill even a drop before you reach muscle failure, you are disqualified, and there are strict rules of the game with regard to the angle you use to hold your stein, as well as the placement of your thumb while doing so! The winner will be invited to compete in the Masskrugstemmen contest

at Cullman’s Oktoberfest, which will be held on Saturday, October 4. Those winners will hold the title for the state of Alabama. The competition has grown in popularity, and 2025 is the first year that it has gone nation-wide.

Another fun feature for Athtoberfest 5.0 is what Ken has named “Operation Cool Blue.” If you bring your “Blue Cup,” (the ones that are approved for carrying around the square,) he will run it through the commercial dishwasher and sterilize it for free so you can move about to other locations that will be open for the Friday night Merchant’s Alley event. The Alehouse will be serving both German beer as well as American beer, along with bratwurst and authentic pretzels outside. The full Alehouse menu will be available inside, as will the beverage menu.

In addition, there will be bouncy castles for kids of all ages on the square, which will be blocked off



from S. Marion to Market Street. The Alehouse has always featured street chalk, various outdoor games, along with an atmosphere that is truly family friendly, and this year will be no exception.

So, save the date, Friday, September 26 for Athtoberfest 5.0, and welcome autumn to Athens. You will find that fall in this town is indeed one of the best seasons of the year!



## Athens Alehouse & Cellar

113 South Marion Street  
Athens, AL 35611

### Hours:

Tue-Thurs 11 a.m.-9 p.m.,  
Fri-Sat 11 a.m.-10 p.m.  
Closed Sunday and Monday

Athtoberfest hours:  
4-9 p.m.

### Facebook:

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athensalehouse@gmail.com



# Calendar of Events

## **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 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://lbccconsignment.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. October 1 at 7:30 PM: Joe Mullins & The Radio Ramblers. This is a special Gospel concert - free and open to the public. October 2 at 7:00 PM: Pitney Meyer. Friday, October 3 at 6:00 PM: Jimmy Fortune. 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.

## **11th Annual Pink Lady Walk 5K Race October 11**

The race route is as follows: Right on Beaty Street to Pryor Street. Right on Pryor Street to Elkton Street. Left on Elkton Street to Skyview Drive. Right on Skyview Drive/Boardwalk to Pryor Street. Right on Pryor Street to Shaw Street. Left on Shaw Street/Chandler Street to Forrest Street. Right on Forrest Street to Beaty Street. Right on Beaty Street and back to the park. 8AM - 10:30AM. Big Spring Memorial Park, 350 Market Street E, Athens.

## **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.



## Health and Fitness

# Finding Your Fit: *ROAR Fitness And Spin Classes In Athens*

by Nick Niedzwiecki - Owner, CrossFit Athens

At CrossFit Athens, we're best known for barbells, pull-ups, and high-intensity workouts that change lives. But did you know we also offer programs designed specifically for people who prefer less weightlifting and more cardio in a fun, group-based environment? That's where ROAR Fitness and ROAR Spin come in.

These programs were created with a different kind of athlete in mind. Not everyone wants to train with heavy weights or learn advanced barbell movements—but that doesn't mean they can't benefit from professional coaching, accountability, and the energy of a supportive community. If you're someone who thrives on cardio, variety, and motivation from a coached class, these programs might be exactly what you've been looking for.

### **ROAR Fitness: HIIT With a Twist**

ROAR Fitness is a high-intensity interval training (HIIT) program that combines cardio machines like treadmills, SkiErgs, and assault bikes with functional movements using Y-bells and bodyweight exercises. Workouts are fast-paced, constantly changing, and scalable for all fitness levels.

The focus is simple: burn calories, build endurance, and get stronger—without needing a

barbell. Each session is led by an experienced coach who guides you through intervals designed to push your limits while keeping you safe and motivated. You'll work hard, sweat a lot, and leave feeling accomplished, knowing you got an incredible full-body workout in less than an hour.

For those who have tried other group fitness programs but want something fresh and engaging, ROAR Fitness brings a unique mix of energy and intensity that keeps people coming back.

### **ROAR Spin: Cardio on Another Level**

If music, rhythm, and endurance training are more your style, ROAR Spin delivers. These 30-minute classes are designed to be high-energy, heart-pumping sessions that challenge your cardiovascular fitness while keeping things fun. Our instructors use carefully curated playlists to drive the pace, making every class feel more like an experience than just a workout.

Spin is a fantastic option

for anyone who loves cardio but wants to move beyond solo runs or walks. The group atmosphere is electric—you feed off the energy of the class, and the coach keeps you pushing when you'd normally slow down. It's the perfect fit for those who want an efficient calorie-burning workout that goes by fast.

### **Why These Programs Work**

Both ROAR Fitness and Spin give you the best of both worlds: the accountability and structure of a group class plus the expertise of professional coaching. They're built for people who may not feel ready for (or interested in) CrossFit but still want results and a strong

community.

Whether your goal is weight loss, building endurance, or just finding a program that makes you look forward to working out, these classes can help you get there. You don't have to be an athlete to start—you just have to show up.

### **Ready to ROAR?**

If you've been waiting for the right time to start your fitness jour-

ney, this is it. Come try a ROAR Fitness or Spin class and experience a program built for YOU. Less weights, more cardio, and a group that's ready to cheer you on every step of the way.

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athens.com**





# What Makes Ronnie Roll

## Putting It All Together

by Ali Elizabeth Turner

On Wednesday, Mayor Ronnie and I both had the joy of attending the annual breakfast at Birdie Thornton, and then met at City Hall afterwards. For those of you who may be new to the Athens-Limestone area, the Birdie Thornton Center on S. Hine Street was dedicated in 1973 in honor of a woman who set the bar high when it comes to advocating for and ministering to some of our most challenged, as well as most remarkable, citizens.

We talked about the fact that you just can't go to Birdie Thornton in a bad mood and not come out ready to whistle. The exuberance, the affection, the authenticity, the camaraderie, the humor -- all of it is infectious as well as genuine, and Wednesday's breakfast was no exception. "I always get energized there," said the mayor. He added, "They keep us grounded, and if you looked around the room, what you saw was true diversity and inclusion." He was right.

The mayor wanted people to know that the road right near Chick-fil-A that heads north to connect Hwy 72 to Forrest is almost finished, and will be open within days. This will be a much needed first step when it comes to get some traffic relief for Hwy 72. The word of the day then became variations of the theme of "connect." "We have got to increase connectivity, to 'connect the dots,'" (when it comes to improving traffic patterns) said the mayor.



He also mentioned possibilities that are being explored to increase the accessibility and use of Hwy 31 for the same purpose. He looked at me and said, (referring to the speed at which we are growing) "I think the 2040 Plan might end up

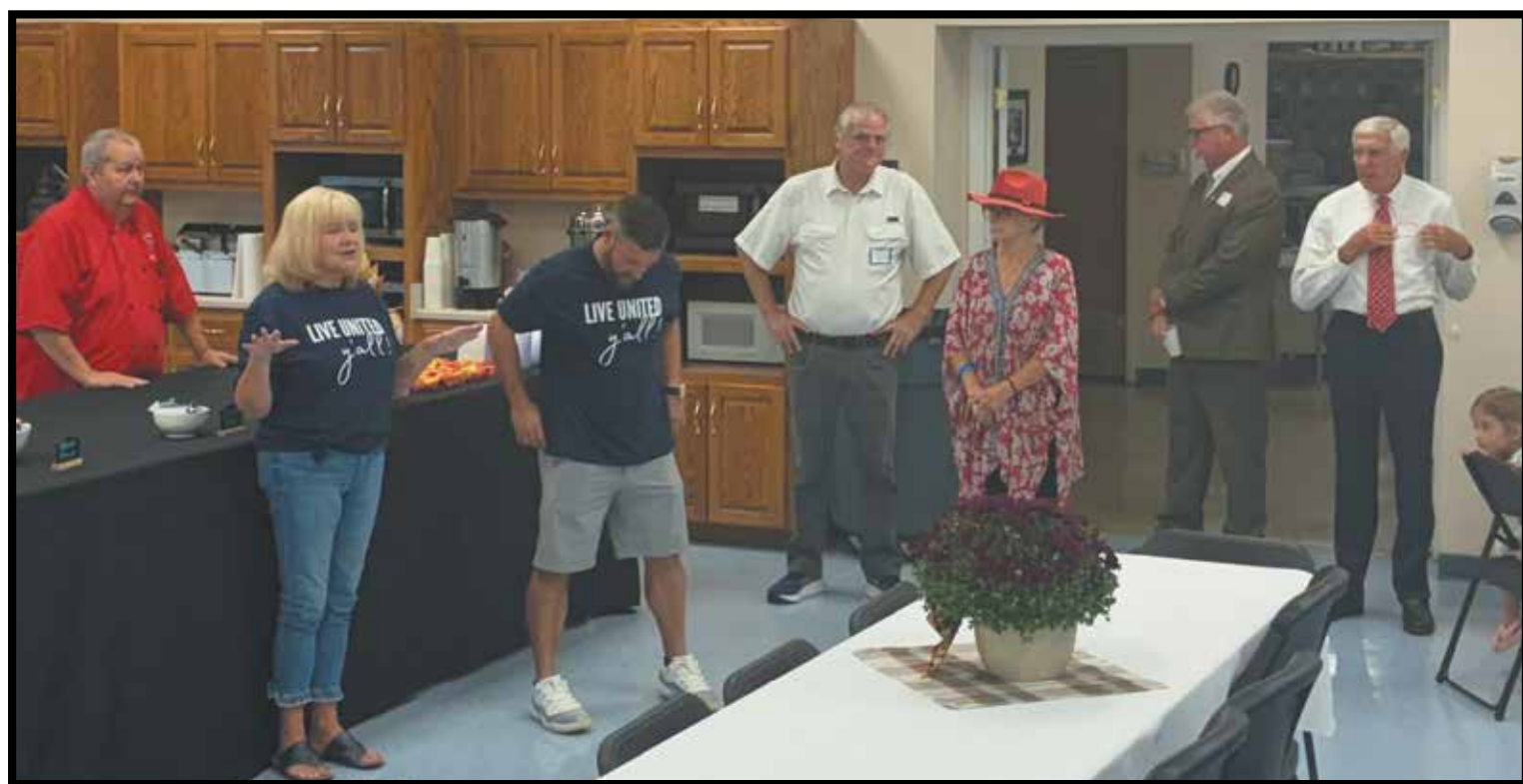
being closer to a 2030 Plan." "I hear ya," I said. He took a minute and got a bit philosophical when he said, "You know, the priority will always be, 'stay safe' because without public safety, nothing else really matters."

We moved on to our book, and we are in Chapter 10 of *Crucial Conversations*. The title of Chapter 10 is "Putting It All Together," and the opening quote is, "Communication works for those who work at it." It is attributed to John

Powell, and there is so much in this chapter that we are going to have to do a part two. One important paragraph reads as follows:

*If we first learn to recognize when safety is at risk and a conversation becomes crucial (Learn to Look) and that we need to take steps to Make It Safe for everyone to contribute his or her meaning, we can begin to see where to apply the skills we've learned.*

We both agreed that if ever there were a time in our town and in our country for us to work on communication skills, whether at home, work, church, or in the community, it is now. People's lives literally depend on it, and so does America's future. So, we prayed to that end, and then it was time for Ronnie to roll.







# My Identity In Christ: *God Says I Am Never Alone*

by Anna Hamilton

*Life has a way of making us feel isolated. In moments of pain, uncertainty, or fear, it's easy to believe we are walking through the valley on our own. Yet the truth of God's Word tells us something far greater: in Christ, we are never alone. God's presence surrounds us, sustains us, and goes before us, even when we cannot see it.*

*God's promise of His presence provides a great deal of comfort. From the beginning,*

*God has reassured His people that He will never leave them. To Joshua, stepping into a new and intimidating leadership role, God said: "Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go" (Joshua 1:9). That same promise extends to us today. No matter where life takes us, God is there.*

*Jesus is with us. When Jesus walked this earth, He carried the name Emmanuel, meaning "God with us." He came to show*

*continued on page 24*

## *Greek Cabbage Roll Bowls*

### *Ingredients:*

2 Tbsp olive oil  
½ yellow onion, diced  
2 garlic cloves, minced  
1 lb. lean ground beef (or ground chicken or turkey)  
2 tsp dried oregano  
½ small cabbage, chopped, about 3 cups  
½ cup fresh dill, chopped  
Juice from ½ lemon  
Salt and pepper to taste

### *Directions:*

*Heat the olive oil in a large skillet over medium heat. Add the onion and cook for 4-6 minutes, until softened. Add the garlic, cook for another 1 minute.*

*Move the onions to one side of the pan and add the ground beef. Season generously with kosher salt and black pepper. Brown for 3-5 minutes, using a spatula to break up the meat as it cooks.*

*Stir in the dried oregano and cabbage. Cover the pot and simmer, stirring occasionally, until the cabbage has cooked down.*

*Turn off the heat and stir in the dill and lemon juice. Serve over rice and enjoy!*





# *I Love My Job*

by Stephanie Reynolds, Athens-Limestone Tourism Association



“Hey!” I whispered urgently to our favorite editor who was sitting in my office, “Do you know French?”

“Yes, I do!” she answered, and I waved to her to quickly follow me to the lobby where this beautiful French woman stood. I stood awkwardly between them as they spoke, wondering if there was any hope of me understanding. Occasionally, I would catch a word or phrase that I understood from my Spanish class years ago. One of the problems with being trilingual is that there tends to be blurring of the vocabulary. One of my best friends in middle school answered her entire Spanish test in French when she was exhausted. (I remember

being outraged that the teacher didn’t give her full credit!) Our guest didn’t understand the Spanish, but I did and I felt less like an eager but wholly uneducated golden retriever.

I have a deep heart for visitors from abroad. Maybe it was because I was raised in the Air Force, or because my mom was so into other cultures, or because we often had visiting distinguished military guests around our table. Or maybe it’s because I have so often been new. I was the new kid, the new girl, the new-to-the-squadron wife. I know that feeling of walking into a completely different culture and hoping to find a friend...but actually it wasn’t a whole different culture, was it?

No, I went from American base to American base, from state to state, town to town. Even if we drove thousands of miles to get there, we were still in America. I was still, essentially, home. But it gave me a slight taste, a mere suggestion, a pale hint of what it would be like to be in a foreign country, eager and unsure, trying to navigate both the new and the strange.

I remember a young, exchange officer’s wife at the second base we lived. I saw the Japanese flag and wondered if she was lonely, so I bought a Japanese-English dictionary and tried my best to make friends. The look on her face when I showed her my dictionary was priceless. At the time, I wasn’t



trying to be noble or anything, I just wanted to make a friend, but her reaction made me realize how truly lonely someone can be in another country, and it made me want to reach out more.

I remember working at a strawberry stand in Madison and seeing how many Asian wives came by to buy fruit for their children. I was deeply embedded in anime at the time, so, again, I bought a language book and left it casually out on the counter so they could see it. I just wanted them to know they were welcome, that I was glad they were in America.

And today, I was eager to show this amazing young woman (who doesn’t know a lot of English words, but pronounces them perfectly) the

warmth and friendliness that you, my fellow Limestoneians, are known for. I was so thankful that Ali (who was here by coincidence, except we don’t believe in coincidences) was here to help plant the seeds of friendship in trilingual soil and water it with French. I was thankful for Google translate (though the whole time I was hoping that I wasn’t going to start an international incident from bad AI).

Y’all, this is what tourism is all about—introducing others to our culture and exploring theirs as well. Building bonds and mutual regard. Welcoming national and international guests and showing them our warm hospitality. Making friends.

I love my job.

## Little Lamb's CONSIGNMENT SALE

“CHILDREN ARE A GIFT FROM THE LORD” PSALM 127:3

# September 26 & 27

Children’s Clothing ~ Toys ~ Baby Equipment ~ Children’s Furniture

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**When:** Sept. 26 - 9 am - 7 pm  
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Select items half-price on Saturday

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# The 2025 Tennessee Valley Old Time Fiddlers Convention: *One Of The Best Parts Of Autumn In Athens*

by Ali Elizabeth Turner

*continued from page 1*

part of it, and a marvelous tradition was born. Then came a time when Fiddlers “lay fallow” for a few decades. In 1967, Fiddlers was revived and has been going strong ever since.

I met with Brandy Conway, who is the Executive Director of the Athens State University Foundation and Corporate Relations, and her excitement about what I think is one of the best things that happens in Athens each year was palpable. “People who come to Fiddlers bring about \$100K of support for students, kids get introduced to music, and it keeps the style of music alive,” she said. Almost every year people come from other countries, and literally thousands happily invade our fair berg for the festivities. In addition, there will be over \$47,000 in prizes awarded to winners from a number of musical categories as well as buck dancing.

Several local businesses and organizations have stepped up to sponsor Fiddlers. The stage sponsors are Bank of America, Goodwin Mills Cawood, Pettus Plumbing & Piping, and TriGreen Equipment. Renewal by Andersen is the Delmore Brothers Stage Sponsor. Wristbands are being taken care of by Redstone Federal Credit Union. Other sponsors include Martin & Cobey, Fly HSV, Fink’s Music, Bath & Kitchen Idea

Center, TOC, and CB&S Bank. Bank Independent is once again sponsoring a cash giveaway. There will be \$500 given away on Thursday, and \$1,000 on Friday and Saturday. The total amount is \$2500, and there will be five winners, guaranteed. Airstreamers will be back to set up camp at the softball field, and the food trucks will be great. The lineup includes Chick-fil-A, Pepsi, Bojangles, Happi Pappi, New South Hot Dog and Sushi, Dip-pin’ Dots, Suzanne’s, Rocket City Popperz, Augusta’s, Briks & Embers Mobile Pizzeria, Touchdown BBQ, Ramona J’s, Southern Wagyu, Sassy Dogs, and Alabama Cattlemen’s Association. There is space for 160 crafts vendors, and only a few spaces are left. Brandy also mentioned that due to the renovation of Carter Gym, “Parking will be adjusted,” and they are working hard to

make every aspect of the Fiddlers experience run smoothly.

I have a particular love for what I have come to call “organic community building.” By that I mean the small musical groups and listeners that spring up all over the Athens State University campus throughout the entirety of the festival. Oldsters and youngsters, beginners and master musicians come together to make music; this is one of the most powerful things that people can do to forge bonds that have an effect that lasts long after the festival is over. It is what makes Fiddlers so special, and keeps people coming back.

Speaking of timeless tunes, below is the lineup of performers and show times for the Fiddlers Convention:

**Wednesday, October 1 - 7:30 PM**  
*Special Gospel Concert, Free & Open to the*

**Public**  
*Joe Mullins and the Radio Ramblers*  
**Thursday, October 2 - 7:00 PM**  
*Pitney Meyer*  
**Friday, October 3 - 6:00 PM**  
*Jimmy Fortune*  
**Saturday, October 4 - 7:30 PM**  
*Rhonda Vincent & The Rage*

There are several things you need to know that will make your time at Fiddlers even better. Bring lawn chairs. No pets are allowed inside the gates. Free camping is available, but no hookups are available. Athens State University is a smoke and vape-free campus.

Musical competitions begin on Friday at 7:30 PM and will continue Saturday morning. Competitions conclude with the announcement of the Fiddle Champion on Saturday afternoon.



Sandridge Ballroom will once again be the location of the Jerry McGlockin Music Store. There will be traditional instruments available for purchase from several vendors. There will also be string workshops held in Kares Library on Thursday and Friday. Thursday’s workshop will be for banjo, mandolin, and a JAM workshop. JAM is a patented approach to playing improv music with musicians you have never met. Friday’s workshop will be for guitar, fiddle as well as a JAM workshop. The Delmore Brothers, who were so instrumental in establishing the Grand Ole Opry a century ago have a museum located on the ground floor of McCandless Hall. The museum also contains an exhibit that tells the history of the Fiddlers Convention.

**Ticket Prices:**  
Wednesday is free  
Thursday- \$20.00  
Friday-\$20.00  
Saturday- \$20.00  
3-Day Pass- \$30.00

For more information and ticket purchase, go to [AthensFiddlers.org](http://AthensFiddlers.org), and see you soon!



JOIN US FOR THE 58<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL  
TENNESSEE VALLEY OLD TIME FIDDLERS CONVENTION!  
Athens State University | Athens, Alabama

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Wednesday, October 1	Thursday, October 2	Friday, October 3	Saturday, October 4
 <div>Joe Mullins &amp; The Radio Ramblers</div>	 <div>Pitney Meyer</div>	 <div>Jimmy Fortune</div>	 <div>Rhonda Vincent &amp; The Rage</div>

 \$47,350 in CASH PRIZES for the top eight contestants in each category

 ALABAMA STATE FIDDLE CHAMPION crowned; top competition winners in 14 categories named ALABAMA STATE CHAMPIONS

 Dozens of FOOD VENDORS and 150+ local ARTS & CRAFTS VENDORS

MORE INFO & TICKETS:

[athensfiddlers.org](http://athensfiddlers.org)





Clean, Green And Beautiful

# Shred Day

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

Guess what time it is.... SHRED DAY! That's right, the annual Better Business Bureau of North Alabama FREE Shred Day is set for September 27, from 9 a.m.-noon. It's at Athens State University again, and as always, you enter the back parking lot on Hobbs Street, drive through and exit onto Pryor Street. We're making it super easy (and hopefully fast) again. We'll have plenty of volunteers to unload your car, so there is no need to get out!

Like always, 3 kitchen garbage bags or 3 document boxes of paper per vehicle will be accepted. We will go until the shred trucks fill up. We do ask that you remove any metal, binding, and plastic. These things will jam up the shredders, and since

we shred on site, this can stop the flow completely. We'll even have Limestone County Recycling on site to collect the boxes to be recycled.

We are accepting electronics again this year, but as always, NO TUBE TV'S OR MONITORS! We can take plasma and flat screen TV's and monitors, but there is a \$10 charger per TV. Everything else must be under 40 pounds. And there are no worries, all hard drives are destroyed. The company that takes the electronics is very reputable, and they are certified to destroy the hard drives. It's a good time to clean out closets and recycle those outdated electronics.

The drug take back is the same as always. There will be an officer set up in the parking lot to accept





medications. No liquids, creams, or needles will be accepted. You can even leave the medication in the bottles they came in, it will all be destroyed. Just a side note, the Athens Police Department and the Limestone County Sheriff's Of-

fice accept medication to be destroyed year-round. If you have questions, feel free to give them a call, they can give you all the details.

There will also be a table setup to accept food donations. We are asking for non-perishable items to be donated to Limestone County Churches Involved (LCCI). We all know that times are hard on many people, and every little bit helps. It's a good time to clean your pantry out, and as long as the food is in date, it will be graciously accepted.

There is one major thing that will be different this year. Athens State Univer-

sity has begun construction on the gym. There are a few trailers in the parking lot when you first enter. It's very important to pay attention to the signage and the volunteers directing the traffic flow. We'll even have a specific line for people with electronics. This will keep accidents and tempers down, and help things flow faster. Remember, a lot of our volunteers will be teenagers, and for many this will be the first event that they are volunteering at, so be patient and know that we have tried to make it as efficient as possible.



# 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**



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# The St. Paul Catholic Women's Annual Yard Sale: *Bargains And Blessings*

By Ali Elizabeth Turner

*continued from page 1*

and Chris Webb, and in addition to hearing all about the sale, they took me on a tour of the facility as well as gave me an interesting bit of history of the church.

Early in the 20th century, there were about 18 Catholic families in Athens, and they worshipped in a small chapel that was located on the corner of Coleman and Brown's Ferry. Eventually the chapel closed, and the congregation traveled by ferry to St. Ann's in Decatur. In the 1940s, Mr. and Mrs. Carl Hatchett opened up their home on S. Clinton Street to the families, and on Saturdays, they would gather there for Mass. After the service, the Hatchetts would serve breakfast.

In 1959, the small brick building on Hwy 72 was built on land that had been sold to the St. Paul's congregation by the Spencer family, and in 1970, Pastor Timothy Hill became their shepherd. In 1992, the new large church that we see today was built, followed by the Parish Hall, Rectory, and Religious Education Building. The St. Paul Catholic Women have raised money to support the parish activities, church environment, artwork, and other needs. All of it has been carefully designed to make a beautiful place of worship.

Recently, the church lending library was renovated, redecorated, and



updated. In addition, St. Paul's donates food to Limestone County Churches Involved (LCCI), and at Christmas time adopts families in need. They provide food and gifts so that families can have a lovely holiday. Another ministry and organization that is near and dear to the women of St Paul's is the Women's Resource Center which is our local crisis pregnancy center. This congregation has been generous supporters of our community on a number of fronts, and all of this is made possible by the gigantic yard sale that is coming soon. Below is a description of the event that Ms. Jayne put together for *Athens Now* readers.

However, before you read what Jayne has to say about possible bargains that you may find at the sale, let me tell you about one that I scooped up at the sale a few years back. There is a well-known and beautiful brand of pottery that originated in Poland. The name of the brand is Boleslawiec. The pieces are hand painted, and are considered to be collector's items. I got a set



of 12, and let's just say, I have rarely gotten such a good deal anywhere!

This year there will a variety of items from which to choose. They include gently used quality furniture, gorgeous china, accessories and home décor of all kinds, clothing, toys, electronics, books and magazines, housewares, photo frames, and much more.

*Everyone loves a bargain! Bargains await this fall at the annual yard sale at St. Paul Catholic Church on Hwy 72. The yard sale is always Fiddler's weekend. This year, the sale will be Friday and Saturday, Oct 3-4. Expect a large selection of merchandise, low prices, and cheerful volunteers.*

*The yard sale is a popular event for the church, the community, and visitors to the Tennessee Valley Old Time Fiddler's Convention. It is hosted*



*that are not sold during the yard sale are donated to other charities that help those in need.*

*The yard sale is the only fundraiser for St. Paul Catholic Women. The funds support good works throughout the year. Last year the Christmas Giving program*

*by St. Paul Catholic Women, with help from the Knights of Columbus. The underlying spirit of the yard sale is helping others. Church members generously donate merchandise. Women and men of St. Paul volunteer countless hours to sort, clean, and organize material. All customers get great products at low prices. The items*

*touched 18 families that needed a boost at Christmas. Other projects include gifts to those who are sick or homebound and support to youth programs. St. Paul Catholic Women meet monthly and welcome all for fellowship and faith enrichment. Look soon for a new Bible study using material from Ascension Press.*

*See you at the yard sale!*







# Captain's Log

## Doggone It

by Brenda Wilkerson

Coming to a regular stop, there was the gaping absence of all four children from two families. Very rarely is this stop without at least one kid. I pulled the brake and waited my usual amount of time before moving on. As I glimpsed up on the porch, I saw it. A dog. A German shorthair sat happily on the porch looking around for friends. As I looked closer, I saw the backpacks lined on the porch beside the dog. As I started putting the pieces together, I finally realized the kids were afraid and waiting inside until the dog went away. As a driver, there wasn't much I could do. Suddenly a door cracked open and very slowly a crutch poked out toward the dog trying to scare it

away. I giggled as I witnessed a comedy show in real time. A big sister braved coming out to coax the dog away from the porch so the kids could get on the bus. The tiny sister made a run for the bus door her eyes wide open in terror with the dog happily bounding behind her. As she screeched up the steps, I had to lean down and put my hand in the dog's face to keep the happy pup from climbing aboard. Confused, the pup soon realized this wasn't a place for him. Strategically, big brother snuck around in the confusion to get in the bus doors before I had to quickly close the doors before happy pup tried entering again. As far as the other two held



doggy-hostage inside, I decided to continue on my route, which would eventually loop back

around and pass that way again. Sure enough, looping back around, the other two children were happy but cautiously looking around, waiting for the big yellow bus. With the pup nowhere in sight, they ran to join the rest of us safely tucked inside our big yellow friend. As we all continue on this life's journey, may we all learn from this heartwarming story by using whatever means,

even a crutch and some additional time, to reach your goals and fulfilling the purpose of your life. Heavenly Father, may we learn from these little ones who show us how to persevere, wait patiently, do hard things and do them scared, and never giving up. We know you love us and we deeply desire your grace and direction. Amen. ~Brenda

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## Slinkard On Success

# “R” Is For Results

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)*

For this article, we are to letter “R” and our word is “Results,” and we must understand that life is all about getting results. As I have written before, we get results every day, and sometimes it is what we want while other times we get what we do not desire. However, we must realize that every day we are either moving closer to who we want to be and what we want to accomplish, or we are moving farther away. What about you? What direction are you heading in with your life? Are you even keeping track?

I have found that too many people are not keeping track of what results they are getting and too many people are drifting in life. The wind will blow them in one direction for a while and then the winds shift, and they are blown in a completely different direction. Where are you headed? Are you just drifting? Far too many people in society are drifting out of control because they sometimes focus too little on obtaining results.

Everyone knows what they would deem to be their ideal life, and some people are able to achieve what they want their life to be. Others are not able to, and I believe it is because sometimes life takes work. We have some people in our society who are lazy but

who have an idea what they want to be; however, when it comes time to put forth effort, this is where they shy away from the work. Why? They feel overwhelmed. We have an entire generation growing up that when life gets tough they just give up.

Life is not about giving up but getting up. Look at the life of Abraham Lincoln and this concept proves to be true. Too often we only look at a person’s successes and do not take the time to think about their failures. Abraham Lincoln was more than just our 16th president of the United States of America. We could learn a lot by the perseverance he showed in his life. In case you are unaware, he was defeated for the state legislature in 1832; failed in business in 1833; had his sweetheart die in 1835; had a nervous breakdown in 1836; was defeated for the House Speaker in 1838; was defeated for nomination for Congress in 1843; he lost renomination in 1848; he was defeated for U.S. Senate in 1854; he was defeated for nomination for vice president in 1856; and again defeated for U.S. Senate in 1858.

In case you did not count, these were 10 failures that Abraham Lincoln personally dealt with. He was not getting good results, but instead of giving up, he kept getting up. The Bible says in Proverbs 24:16,



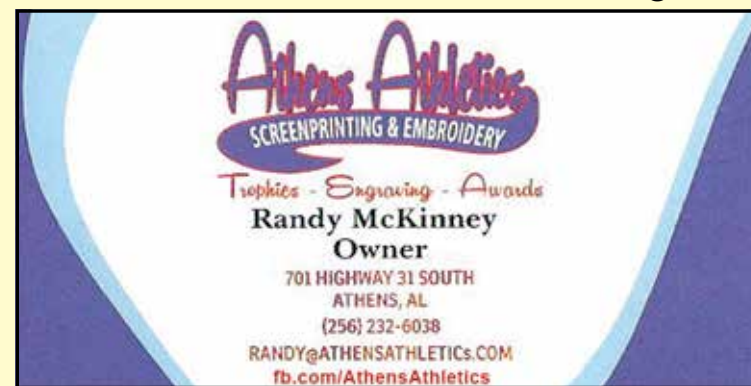
“For a just man falleth seven times, and riseth up again: but the wicked shall fall into mischief.” There is a lot we can learn from God’s word, and this is a great lesson. When you obtain the results you are not looking for, you must keep getting back up.

Persistence beats resistance, and we see with Abraham Lincoln that his persistence enabled him to win the presidency in 1860. Lincoln’s life is an example for everyone to see and understand that we are always getting results, sometimes positive and sometimes negative, but it is all about how we respond to these results. Lincoln had every reason imaginable to get mad, to get upset, to want to give up and give in. Did he? No, not at all.

He kept on working to get the results he wanted even when others would have given up.

Where are you at in your life? Have you had some failures and some setbacks? Have you started feeling sorry for yourself? If this sounds like you, I want to encourage you to change your way of thinking. If you have not gotten the results you are looking for, what things do you need to do differently?

It is imperative to keep track of the results we are getting on a regular basis to improve who we are as individuals. This is called growth, and if you are not growing, then you are dying because dead things do not grow. What are the results you want to achieve versus what you are achieving? When we identify where we are versus where we want to be, this is how we are moved to make a difference and get the





# “WISE” Sayings That Miss The Mark

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



Lunch was her treat, she insisted. Knowing we both love Chinese food, she said I had to choose, so off we went to a great buffet place, and ate a week's worth of lunches in one sitting. I had put my fortune cookie in a pocket and found it this morning. As I read the “fortune” inside, the events of the last weeks affected the meaning of the saying.

It said, “Life is a succession of lessons which must be lived to be understood.” At first, I wholeheartedly agreed. Then, not so much. I thought of you folks, whoever has been kind enough to read these posts every so often. Perhaps THIS is what we should consider today.

One of the important tenants of Successful Criticism Management is understanding how we learn the lessons of life. It is an uninformed and sometimes rebellious person who refuses to learn wisely. I thank God often for the people who taught me that there are multiple ways to learn the lessons of life. Sure, going through an event, circumstance, life crisis can truly teach us many lessons. We can achieve empathy instead of mere sympathy. Certainly, I believe we should pay very close attention to what is going on around us, and especially within us, seeking to learn all the lessons of life we can from every event. But the easiest, quickest, safest, most profitable way to learn is to study the lives, situations, successes, and defeats of others: To seek out people

who reflect the kind of person we most want to be and learn from their lives. To surround ourselves with others who are learning, growing, loving, serving, living like we want to. Then, pay attention to the “failures”- the unhappy, the struggling who are always nearby - even within our own families and friends. They can teach us great truths, too.

How do we do that? We decide that learning is worth the effort. We pay attention to others. We seek to surround ourselves with people who carry, seek, and discipline themselves the way we want to show in our life. Read good books. Go to worthwhile conferences. Ask questions. Seek answers. Listen when you, or others, get criticism! Learn from it all. Then, always, always ... THINK FOR YOURSELF.

If you want to be a critical, grumpy, tired, angry old person that no one wants to be around, then let it be because you CHOSE to be that, SOUGHT to attain that personality and attitude. Let it NEVER be because you just wouldn't pay the price to become a better person, but rather just coasted into a pitiful shadow of the person you could have been. As long as you have breath, you can become a better person.

Learn from life's daily, yearly happenings. Learn from those in authority over you. Learn from history, starting with the most complete history lessons ever, The Bible. Learn



from your friends. Learn from your enemies! Care more about learning valuable things than you do about promoting yourself, impressing others, personal vindication, winning petty battles.

Do you have a problem? Seek out those who have dealt with a similar situation, and watch, think, and even ask for advice.

Treasure “little lessons” as well as the profound. For instance, I cannot explain it, but I used to vehemently dislike having to clean my glasses. Silly, I know, but we all have pet peeves, and that was one of mine. I was about to interview the CEO of a large bank, and in preparation, I asked God to help me see signs of what made this man such a great success, not only as a businessman, but more so as an inspirational and successful human being. After greeting me, offering me a seat, he sat down at his desk, and without seeming to even think about it, he opened the drawer, sprayed his glasses and cleaned them. BIG LESSON for this small-town girl!!! Did you catch it? Right there, I sensed more than one key to his success.

- He did the little, almost unnoticed, but necessary tasks the moment he sensed they needed to be

done. He didn't let it affect one second of his productive time negatively. No huff and puff. No sign of even minute frustration. He probably didn't even realize what he had done.

- He taught me that he valued keeping his vision clean and clear. Expanding on that truth, I sensed he would be one who kept his conscience and his actions clean and clear, too.
- He focused on people, because I still felt I always had his full attention.

Now, almost every time I clean my glasses, I think about him, his wisdom, his habits, insight and I am grateful for each lesson he unknowingly taught me.

From our interview, I learned so much more, too. As we talked about criticism, both what he gave and what he received through the years, we discussed things he did as a younger man that he would now do differently, especially with criticism that he received (aka: feedback, ideas, and suggestions!) from his employees and family. He had read a few chapters of my manuscript on Criticism Management, and especially appreciated the chapter on welcoming advice, ideas, complaints, and even the competition's opinions.

There is a lot of mate-

rial out there about how to GIVE constructive criticism. However, I have found relatively little help in learning to evaluate and profit from any and all criticism received. Always profit? Yes, there is a way to always gain some profit from every criticism. It isn't necessarily easy, but it is wise. And it is available to anyone who will pay the price to learn it and live it. After all, little distractions/irritations can grow if not dealt with properly.

That's why I hope to get my book published in early 2026. If the ideas and truths many wise people have shared with me through the years can help others have a fuller, more pleasant, peaceful, profitable, and full life, then I can think of no better feeling for me!

Have a wonderful fall, full of life's best efforts and blessings.

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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# Men, Your Health Matters

by Jackie Warner

Career Development Facilitator

"Impact, Engage, Grow" Community Matters

Yes, your health matters. Your life matters. And you are not alone.

A few years ago, my brother's life changed with a diagnosis that would begin a long, painful journey. At first, he met it with resolve—attending appointments, taking his medications, and trying to maintain the rhythm of his life. He loved life. He loved his people. And even as his body began to betray him, he held onto the moments that made him feel alive.

But illness is relentless. It doesn't ask permission. It doesn't wait for the right time. As complications mounted, his strength waned. Hospital stays grew longer. Daily tasks became harder. And I watched—sadly, painfully—as the brother I loved began to fade.

Many families live with watching someone they love wrestle with the weight of illness, the burden of decisions, and the quiet surrender that sometimes follows.

My brother passed away recently. And while my heart aches with the loss, I also carry a message that I believe he would want me to share.

**To every man reading this: Your health matters. Your life matters.**

Do not wait until the diagnosis comes. Do not ignore the warning signs. Do not push away the people who want to help you. Build a care team—family, friends, professionals—who can walk with you, advocate for you, and hold you up when you feel like falling.



But also, be vigilant. Understand your choices. Ask questions. Know the impact of your decisions—not just for yourself, but for those who love you. Because when you suffer, they suffer too. And when you fight, they fight with you.

This is not just a tribute to my brother. It's a charge to every man to take ownership of his health, to lean into support, and to honor the life he's been given.

## Key Steps for Men's Health

- **Schedule Regular Check-ups:** Don't wait for symptoms. Annual physicals, blood pressure checks, and screenings for cholesterol, diabetes, and cancer are essential.
- **Know Your Family History:** Understanding your genetic risks helps you and your doctor make informed decisions about prevention and treatment.

- **Prioritize Mental Health:** Depression, anxiety, and stress are real—and treatable.

Talk to someone. Therapy, support groups, and open conversations save lives.

- **Stay Active:** Aim for at least 30 minutes of physical activity most days. Walking, biking, or even dancing counts.

- **Eat for Longevity:** Choose whole foods, lean proteins, fruits, and vegetables. Reduce processed foods, sugar, and excessive alcohol.

- **Build a Care Team:** Let family and friends support you. Share your health journey. You don't have to do it alone.

- **Understand Your Medications:** Know what you're taking, why, and how it affects your body. Ask questions and stay informed.

- **Be Proactive, Not Reactive:** Don't wait for a crisis. Prevention is power.

# Tennessee Valley Spotlight

## Mondays at 10am 1080 AM WKAC





## Learning As A Lifestyle

# Leadership And The Uncomfortable Work Of Confrontation: *Lessons From The Titanic*

by Eric Betts

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

Leadership is rarely about making easy choices. More often, it requires the courage to do what is right even when it is uncomfortable, particularly in moments of confrontation. Leaders who avoid difficult conversations—especially with people they like or admire—risk far more than hurt feelings. They risk integrity, trust, and ultimately, the health of the community or organization they serve.

The sinking of the Titanic in 1912 offers a vivid metaphor for this tension. Captain Edward Smith, deeply respected and beloved by his crew and passengers, was faced with an impossible choice as the ship approached the iceberg. In that moment, he tried to steer away from the danger rather

than confronting it head-on. The maneuver was too late, and the glancing blow tore open the vessel's side. History records the catastrophic result. Had Smith ordered a direct head-on collision, the damage might have been less severe and the ship might have stayed afloat. Avoidance, in this case, proved more destructive than confrontation.

This picture mirrors the reality of leadership in organizations, churches, and communities today. When leaders try to "steer around" hard conversations—whether about unethical behavior, unhealthy dynamics, or broken systems—they may temporarily spare someone's feelings or maintain surface harmony. Yet the underlying



problem continues tearing at the fabric of the group, often with irreversible consequences.

True leadership requires the resolve to face the iceberg. It means calling out miscon-

duct even when the person involved is a friend. It means naming toxic habits even when they are deeply embedded in tradition. It means confronting unhealthy behavior in those we admire because protecting the mission and the people entrusted to us must outweigh the comfort of keeping the peace.

Leaders are called not to pop-

ularity but to responsibility. Confrontation, handled with honesty and respect, is not an act of aggression but an act of stewardship. It protects the mission from being torn apart by forces that could have been addressed earlier. It upholds integrity, even when silence feels easier. And it reminds us that doing the right thing is rarely painless, but it is always necessary.

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## The Alternative Approach

# The Truth About Cholesterol

by Roy Williams

We've been told for decades that cholesterol is the villain—that lowering it at all costs is the ticket to good health. But what if I told you that story is incomplete, maybe even upside down? What if lowering cholesterol too far can actually harm you? What if higher cholesterol provides benefits you've never been told? And what if the drugs designed to lower it—statins—carry a list of side effects that the pharmaceutical industry doesn't want you to focus on?

### Part One: The Hidden Dangers of Low Cholesterol

"First, let's talk about what happens when cholesterol drops too low. Cholesterol isn't a toxin, it's an essential molecule. It forms the walls of every single cell in your body. It insulates your nerves, keeping your brain firing smoothly. It's the raw material your body uses to produce hormones like testosterone, estrogen, cortisol, and even vitamin D.

But here's the kicker: When cholesterol gets too low, bad things happen.

Studies show that people with low cholesterol face increased risks of **hemorrhagic stroke, depression, aggression, certain cancers, and overall higher mortality** [MedRite Urgent Care; Mayo Clinic].

And let's not forget cognitive health. One long-term study found that **dropping cholesterol levels between checkups was linked to higher demen-**

**tia risk**, even when Alzheimer's wasn't present. Other studies show that both very low and very high HDL—the so-called "good cholesterol"—correlate with dementia risk [Neurology.org, BU.edu].

In other words: **Cholesterol isn't the enemy**. Too little cholesterol can mean your brain doesn't function right, your hormones don't regulate, and your health declines."

### Part Two: The Benefits of Higher Cholesterol

"Now let's flip the script. What about the **benefits of higher cholesterol**?

Cholesterol stabilizes cell membranes; without it, cells fall apart. In the nervous system, cholesterol-rich myelin sheaths are what allow your nerves to send signals efficiently. Without cholesterol, the nervous system literally shorts out.

Cholesterol is also the backbone of hormone production. Without it, you can't make testosterone, estrogen, progesterone, cortisol, or vitamin D. In short—your energy, reproduction ability, bone strength, stress response, and even immune system all rely on adequate cholesterol.

And here's where it gets really interesting. A groundbreaking **2025 study** of lean, metabolically healthy individuals on ketogenic diets found that even with **very high LDL cholesterol**, these people didn't show increased arterial plaque or heart disease progression



[SciTechDaily]. That challenges the entire cholesterol—heart disease narrative.

Some research even hints that higher cholesterol may protect against certain cancers. In a cohort of over 16,000 women, those with higher cholesterol had a **33% lower risk of breast cancer and a 40% lower risk of death from it**.

So instead of demonizing cholesterol, we should see it for what it is: **a foundational molecule of life**. Maybe too much is harmful. But it turns out that too little is even more harmful.

### Bringing It All Together

"So here's the bottom line, friends:

- **Lowering cholesterol is rarely healthy**. It can raise risks for stroke, depression, dementia, and even cancer. Every cell in your body needs it and your body knows how much it needs.

- **Higher cholesterol, in the right context, can be protective** - for your

brain, your hormones, your muscles, and your immune response that protects against certain diseases.

- **Statins come with a laundry list of side effects** - diabetes, muscle disease, cognitive decline, liver and kidney risks—that the industry would rather you ignore.

Cholesterol is not the villain. It's a vital part of life. The real villains are imbalance, ignorance, and the blind pursuit of money over safety, which is the problem with the pharmaceutical industry.

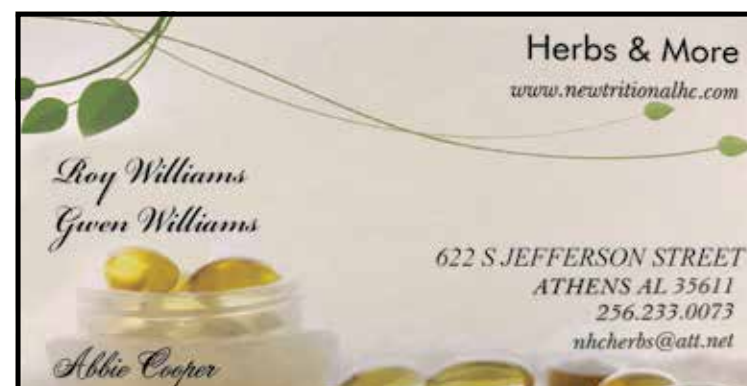
So, support your health with high-quality foods, exercise, supplements, and

lifestyle that respect the role of cholesterol, not demonize it.

Now that you know the facts, we at **NEWtritional Health Care** and our two local stores **Herbs & More in Athens** and **NHC Herb Shop in Killen** can help you reach the perfect balance without being dependent on pharmaceutical drugs that may or may not move your cholesterol levels into the healing range. Before going on one of the statins that have so many side effects, why not use some very powerful supplements that are not only safe but also side effect free.

Thousands have reached healthier cholesterol levels using the **Healthy Cholesterol Combo**, which is a combination of **MSM+C and Ultimate EFA'S**. Both of these products are totally safe and effective as verified by our customers own medical records. Go to **Herbs & More in Athens**, **NHC Herb Shop in Killen** or visit [www.nhc-herbs.com](http://www.nhc-herbs.com) or call 256-757-5660 and order the **Healthy Cholesterol Combo** today. You will be glad you did.

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





## *I'm Not Your Enemy!*

by Deb Kitchenmaster

Walking into the barn, the early morning sunrise was shooting light beams through the alleyway, twenty stalls on the south, and an indoor arena on the north. The brilliance of the light beams permitted me to see silhouettes of the stalled horses but not definition. As I continued walking, midway (next to my grooming station), a stalled horse showed ears barred back to the alignment of its neck. "Wow," I thought to myself, "if that horse could talk, does it ever have a story to tell!"

Horses don't manifest this attitude because they woke up on the wrong side of the stall, if you know what I mean, Vern. (I realize not everyone is going to get this). I was greeted by the barn manager explaining how an out-of-state horse had arrived late last night and no one but she was to handle this horse because this horse had 'issues.'

I went about my day, working with the horse trainer and the barn manager. I had a horse in crossties when BAM! The bay Morgan gelding, with barred ears and

jaw set like stone, hit the bars of its stall with 'attack-human' energy all around him. Instinctively, I stepped back. Returning to grooming and tacking up the horse I was with, I turned my back on BB (initials for his name). I wanted to have a meaningful connection with this beautiful creature but I knew in my 'knower' it would be a narrow margin in which to work. I had no intention (horses are extremely aware of INTENTION) to tease or taunt this horse, but to connect. A strategy came to mind.

I continued my day grooming and tacking up horses as was stated on the white board. From time to time, I would turn and stand in front of BB's stall and say, "I'm not your enemy." Then I turn back around and continue with the horse in front of me in crossties. The very next day the barn manager states, "Someone is happy to see you this morning!" Sure enough, BB's ears were forward and his countenance transformed from the previous day. My life lesson in this moment came to me about the POWER of our tongues and the words that we speak. Talk about an "Aha" moment, I had one.

Within forty-eight hours I was asked if I would groom him. "Sure." He enjoyed my touch so much it brought laughter to the barn manager. Time and money are two

factors that don't work in favor of recovering a horse's soul. Sadly, thirty days was the allotted time to have this horse in the barn under our care. It simply was not enough. When being with a horse you are called into 'the moment.' It is when time and money are controlling the connecting process, there's great demand on the human and the horse rather than supply -- two extremely different energy fields! I understand these two factors; I'm simply focusing on the well-being of the horse.

Thursday, July 29, after reading July's article, I was invited to a book signing event for author Nell Parsons. What a lovely time, woman, and story! She wrote her first book, *THE BIG BAY HORSE DOESN'T LIVE HERE ANYMORE* (it's on Amazon) at eighty-five. She signs my book at eighty-seven. Nell got her first horse in her late fifties. Marlon was the name of her horse. A woman from Marlon's barn was watching ringside as

Nell was contemplating buying and taking this one home with her. She tried to warn Nell that Marlon had severe problems and was angry at the world. "I never knew he had ears; he kept them flat back all the time," Nell shared in her book. "Looking back, I see this wasn't a good sign, but I was so thrilled to be taking this gorgeous horse home with me, I didn't care."

What a journey Nell and Marlon took together! The timeless healing of Marlon's soul and the life lessons Nell encountered, transforming her from the inside out. All in all Marlon became Nell's buddy, her baby, and her friend.

Looking for a good book? Try *THE BIG BAY HORSE DOESN'T LIVE HERE ANYMORE* by Nell Parsons.

*Your NEIGHbor,  
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NELL PARSONS

### THE BIG BAY HORSE DOESN'T LIVE HERE ANYMORE

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# A Generational Moment In Time

by Phil Williams

Our nation just experienced one of those singularly significant events that a whole generation of people identify with, rally around, and grieve over corporately. One likely to become a catalyst for many in the next steps of personal growth, service, or calling. The murder of Charlie Kirk is a generational moment in time.

There are days in which a thing occurs, an incident happens, an emotion is triggered, with such import that we can distinctly remember where we were when it happened. And to be clear, I'm referring to events that are NOT planned. We will certainly always remember our wedding day or the birth of our children. Such things we could foresee and plan for in advance. I'm talking about those generational moments in time that rise up unexpectedly and plant themselves in our memo-

ries, our emotions, in such a way that they shocked the conscience, and embed themselves in our psyche.

I've heard it said that people can still remember where they were when they heard about the attack on Pearl Harbor or the assassination of John F. Kennedy. I distinctly remember where I was on 9/11. As I watched the towers come down, I thought, "Everything is going to be different now." I was right. Within a short time, my life changed dramatically as I said goodbye to my family, the comforts of home, and spent a year living in the badlands of northern Afghanistan. All because someone somewhere hated America enough to fly planes into our buildings and kill our citizens. A generational moment in time.

The real crux of the matter is to decide what we DO with these generational moments. What do we do with those unexpected events that try

our souls? It becomes a fight or flight moment. Some will retreat, others will rise up, others will lash out. Still others will stand in confusion looking for direction. I find myself wanting to do something meaningful.

Days after 9/11, I was at church. A time was opened for those who wanted prayer, and I walked up to the altar where an old Vietnam veteran stood waiting. My friend was a highly decorated Force Recon Marine, and he gave me a knowing look as I shook his hand. "I don't know what God's doing but I want to be in it." I said. "I don't want to miss it." That grizzled old Marine prayed a warrior's prayer over me, and the next thing I knew I was riding horses in Afghanistan. My personal response to that generational moment in time was to get meaningfully active.

There is a scene from the epic movie *Saving Private Ryan* that comes to mind. A group of World War II Rangers were sent to find one man whose brothers had all been killed in battle, and to bring him home. One scene near the end made the whole movie so much more than a war story. Following a pitched battle, young Private Ryan sat staring at the man who had just given his own life to save his. As he died, Ryan heard his rescuer's last words when he said, "Earn this!" In the final scenes, Ryan was an old man who looked at his wife and said, "Tell me I led a good life...tell me I'm a good man." A generational moment in time had occurred

for Ryan's character. He had been given an opportunity to go and do something meaningful. Something to "earn this."

Charlie Kirk's passing is on that level. I did not know him personally, but for some reason I feel like I did. Perhaps because he was such an effective and gifted orator on topics I care deeply about. But he was also somebody who stood in the face of every opposer and kept a smile on his face, telling people that Jesus was Lord and that conservative values were meaningful and worth aspiring to. My wife refers to him as a joyful warrior. And because of the application of his gifts, he inspired an entire generation. What an epitaph, what a eulogy! I would hope one day people could say even half about me as what is being said about him.

In the message translation of Ephesians 2:10 we are told, "He creates each of us by Christ Jesus to join him in the work he does, the good work he has gotten ready for us to do, work we had better be doing." Work that we had better be doing... It speaks of a mission...a calling...a meaningful thing that you better not avoid.

And now there's THIS moment in time. Will you get meaningfully active? My hope is that you will "earn this." That you will be galvanized, girded up, pushed and pulled in your very core. Make this a moment in time that galvanizes you to an action that you might not otherwise have committed to. Grab hold of the notion that there is something you

should be a part of. It would be a shame to let this moment pass without taking the gifts and talents you've been given and driving them forward.

That's the thing. There is a time for grieving, processing, and inquiring. But then there is the afterward. We could spend all our time talking ABOUT the generational moment, but it is not the event itself that changes the world. It is what we do with it.

If you were moved by the death of Charlie Kirk, if it got to you, if you can remember where you were when you first heard about it, then you have likely just encountered one of those very select, very precious, generational moments in time. Now go and "earn this."

*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 Never Alone*

by Anna Hamilton

*us the closeness of God, not a distant deity but a loving Father who desires to dwell with His children. Before returning to heaven, Jesus comforted His disciples with this promise: “And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age” (Matthew 28:20).*

*This isn’t just a poetic phrase -- it is a reality. Through the Holy Spirit, Jesus remains present in the heart of every believer -- guiding, comforting, and strengthening us.*

*The Holy Spirit is alive and guiding us as Christians. God’s presence is not only beside us, but within us. Paul reminds us: “Do you not know that you are God’s temple and that God’s Spirit dwells in you?” (1 Corinthians 3:16). When we feel abandoned, we can hold fast to this truth: God has made His home in us. We are never outside His care or beyond His reach.*

*We are never alone in our struggles. Loneliness often creeps in during hardship -- illness, loss, rejection, or change. But Scripture assures us that God draws especially close in those seasons: “The Lord is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit” (Psalm 34:18). Even when human companionship fails, God’s love does not.*

*We can live with confidence. Knowing that we are never alone changes the way we live. We can face challenges with courage, because God walks beside us. We can endure heartache with hope because His comfort is near. We can step into the unknown with*

*faith because His Spirit leads the way.*

*Your identity in Christ includes this unshakable reality: you are never alone. God is with you in the quiet, in the storm, in the waiting, and in the rejoicing. His presence is your constant companion, your greatest comfort, and your strongest assurance.*

*So the next time loneliness whispers in your ear, remember what God says about you: You are Mine, and you are never alone.*

*This week’s recipe is a Greek inspired cabbage roll in a bowl. It is filled with ground beef, delicious, caramelized cabbage, and flavored with lots of fresh dill and bright lemon. Served over rice, it creates a healthy meal in just about 30 minutes. It is perfect for those busy weeknight meals. I hope you love it as much as my family does.*

*“Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? As it is written, ‘For your sake we are being killed all the day long; we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered.’ No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Romans 8:35-39).*



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