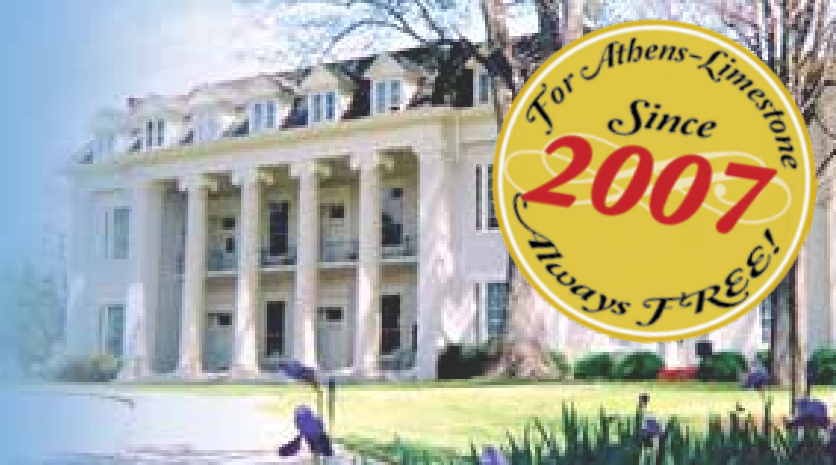


May 15 - June 4, 2026

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**WESTSIDE DRIVE GOLF RANGE**  
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# Send Seth Burton To The U.S. Senate When You Vote On May 19

By Ali Elizabeth Turner

On May 19, Alabamians will be given an opportunity to elect someone to the U.S. Senate who is experienced on multiple unusual fronts -- including commanding not one but two nu-

clear submarines. Seth Burton spent 30 years in the U.S. Navy, has been in the Strait of Hormuz, dealt with the Chinese and Muammar Gaddafi, and has served in Washington, D.C., as an expert in all things submarine.

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**Publisher's Point**

*Blessed Breath*

I think it's safe to say that most of us do not start the day thinking about the fact that they managed to successfully breathe all night somewhere between 5,000 and 8,000 times without any conscious effort on their part. And, way too many of us when we get out of bed feel grumbly about the prospect of continuing that process if it is going to involve having to work at it harder at some point during the day. But, the point of this *Point* is to suggest that training ourselves to breathe can have wonderful effects on every part of our health, and not breathing well can harm us. Indeed, humans can go for weeks without food, days without water, and only a very few minutes without breath. Breath is, forgive me, our very life's breath.

My friend Kathrine Lee once said something that was so simple and yet to me profound: "Breath was God's very first gift to us." He could have just "spoken" us alive, but instead He breathed, and thus, it would seem that we would do well to follow His lead and breathe life into ourselves consciously, consistently, and if need be, courageously.

We hear all kinds of imperatives with regard to breath, and sometimes they can be kind of snarky or patronizing. "Take a breath, would ya?" Or, "Let's just all take a breath, here." Depending on the motivation behind the imperative, being told to breathe can perhaps be annoying, but the good news is that it is nonetheless true because it works. Even with snark,

breathing well always puts you into a better place.

The "need to breathe" shows up in every culture, philosophy, religion, sport, under every stethoscope, every anger management manual, and in one of my favorite worship songs, "This Is The Air I Breathe."

"Aspire" has the idea of "breathing up," as in panting hard to get up a hill. "Spires" are placed on tops of churches to draw our attention up. "Respiration" literally means to "breathe again," "inspire" means to "blow upon another, to give breath" and "expire" to "breathe out, breathe one's last." Breathing and breath are everywhere, and learning to breathe well just makes life better.

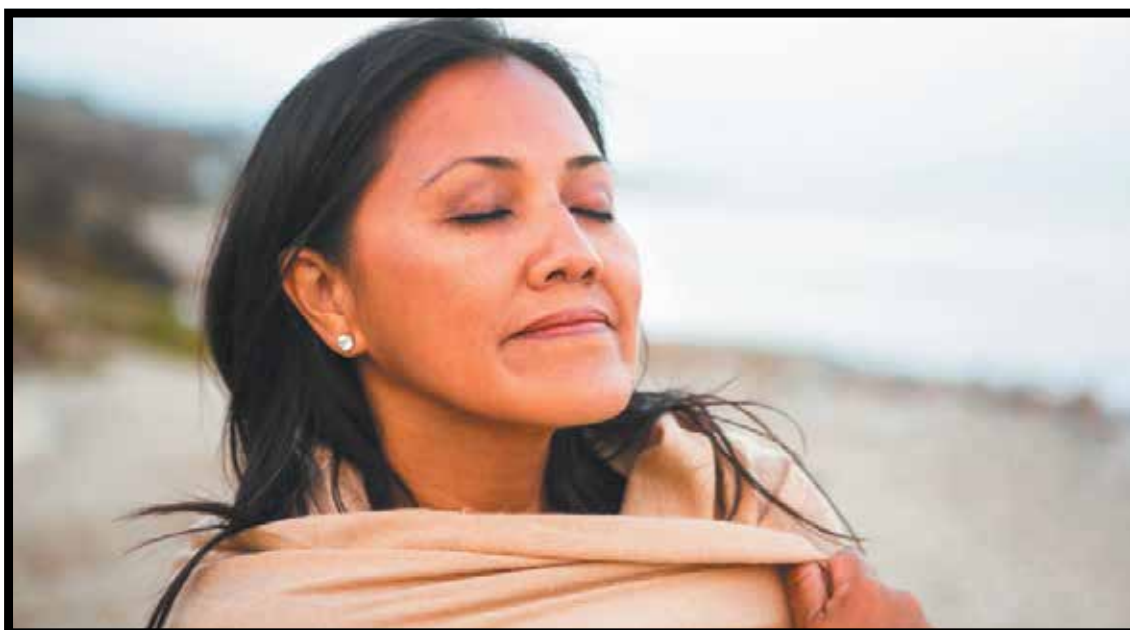
One of my favorite Hebrew words is "Ruach

Hakodesh," which means "breath" or "spirit the holy." Our Savior breathed on His disciples saying, "Receive the Holy Spirit" in anticipation of the fulfillment of the promise that God would pour out His Spirit, literally His breath at Pentecost, which this year is being celebrated on May 24.

There are all kinds of ways to breathe that accomplish all kinds of things within us, and they bear looking into and implementing. There is box breathing, belly breathing, focus breathing, labor breathing, "blow-out-birthday-candles" breathing, pursed-lip breathing, the "psychological sigh," which is where you fill up your lungs as far as you think you can, take one more teeny breath to top it off, and then breathe out. And at the end of the day, they all calm, restore, and help. When you are having a hard time finding things for which to be thankful, thank God for your breath. After all, it was His first gift.

*Ali Elizabeth Turner*

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## News From The Vets' Museum

# Museum News: *Memorial Day Program And New Technology*



by Yvonne Dempsey

May is busy time of year. Mother's Day has passed and we are in the midst of graduations and other springtime events that lead into summer. The one holiday that has marked the beginning of summer for many is Memorial Day. But we all know that, first and foremost, it is a day set aside to remember those brave souls who made the ultimate sacrifice in service to our country. We would like to remind everyone to join us for our annual Memorial Day program at the Alabama Veterans Museum's Event Venue at 11 a.m. The museum is located at 114 W. Pryor St. in Athens.

The featured speaker for this year's program is Major General Douglas Lowrey whose bio states "is the com-

manding general of the U.S. Army Contracting Command (ACC) headquartered at Redstone Arsenal, AL. ACC, a subordinate command to the Army Materiel Command, is comprised of a subordinate one-star command, six major contracting centers and eight contracting support brigades. ACC enables Army readiness through global, expeditionary contracting support to warfighters engaged in military operations, weapon systems acquisition, life cycle management, sustainment and acquisition of goods and services vital to the Soldier's mission and well-being.

"Prior to assuming command of ACC, Maj. Gen. Lowrey served as the commanding general for the U.S. Army Mission and Installa-



**Major General  
Douglas S. Lowrey**



tion Contracting Command (MICC) at Joint Base San Antonio-Fort Sam Houston, Texas.

"His other key assignments include serving as the commanding general of the U.S. Army Security Assistance Command at Redstone Arsenal, Alabama; Director of Army contracting, Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Army for Acquisition, Logistics and Technology, Washington, D.C.; Deputy Director of contracting management, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Washington, D.C.; Commander, 409th Contracting Support Brigade, Sembach Kaserne, Germany; Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations (G3), ACC HQ, Redstone Arsenal, Alabama; and Commander, 901st Contingency Contracting Battalion, Fort Cavazos, Texas. His operational assignments include deployments in support of Operation New Dawn, Operation Iraqi Freedom, Operation Unified Response and Operation Intrinsic Action."

Maj. Gen. Lowrey's military awards and decorations

include the Legion of Merit with an oak leaf cluster, Bronze Star Medal, Defense Meritorious Service Medal, Meritorious Service Medal with three oak leaf clusters, Joint Service Commendation Medal, Army Commendation Medal with two oak leaf clusters, Joint Service Achievement Medal, Army Achievement Medal with two oak leaf clusters, Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal, Iraq Campaign Medal, and Global War on Terrorism Service Medal. Besides being an inductee of the Order of St. Maurice, he is authorized to wear the Combat Action Badge, Expert Infantryman's Badge, and Airborne Wings."

Besides our upcoming program, there has been much going on at the museum. As part of National Travel and Tourism Week, the Alabama Mountain Lakes Tourist Association (AMLA) recently presented us with a pair of Ray-Ban Meta Smart Glasses. These innovative devices are designed to assist visitors with low vision or blindness, providing them an enhanced

museum experience. Our museum strives to make military history and our veterans' stories accessible to everyone. We are handicap-accessible for those with mobility issues, and now we have this new technology that will provide assistance for those who need it. The glasses were purchased through grant funding from the Alabama's Mountains, Rivers and Valleys Resource Conservation & Development Council (AMRV RC&D). We thank them and are honored to be recipients of these valuable smart glasses.

Please remember that the museum still has flags for veterans' graves. Families, church groups, clubs, veterans' organizations, Scout troops, or any individual or group -- you are encouraged to come by and pick up free flags, chose a cemetery or graveyard (we have a list) to place the flags, and help us to honor our deceased veterans for their service.

Plan to join us on Memorial Day for our program which also will include a band playing patriotic music and cake!

**EXPLORE HISTORY WITH SMART GLASSES**

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**What Are Smart Glasses?**  
Smart glasses are a wearable assistive technology designed to support visitors who are blind or have low vision. Using voice-guidance and real-time audio descriptions, the glasses help interpret surroundings, identify objects, and provide helpful information about exhibits allowing guests to explore with greater independence and confidence.

**How to Use Them**

- Put on the glasses comfortably.
- Use simple voice commands such as: "Hey Meta, look and tell me what I'm seeing."

**Innovation & Accessibility**  
This technology is part of Visit North Alabama's ongoing commitment to accessibility. Smart glasses offer a more engaging and meaningful experience for visitors with visual impairments, opening the door to history, culture, and destinations in ways that are easier to navigate and understand.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION ON ACCESSIBILITY IN NORTH ALABAMA**

[www.accessibleNorthAL.com](http://www.accessibleNorthAL.com)

This project was made possible through a Community Grant provided by the Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) Council

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# Calendar of Events

## **44th Annual Limestone County Sheriff's Rodeo May 15**

Come join us for our 44th Annual Limestone Sheriff's Rodeo! You don't want to miss all the family fun of authentic Rodeo action. 8PM- 10PM. Limestone County Sheriff's Rodeo Arena. 18118 SR-99, Athens.

## **Limestone County Master Gardeners Hummingbird Saturday Class May 16**

10 am – 11 am at the Limestone County Extension Office at 1109 W. Market Street (across from the post office), Athens. Learn about these fascinating little creatures, how to attract them, their unique biology, specialized foraging habits, incredible migration flight, and ecological importance as pollinators. Taught by Master Gardener Melissa Kirkindall. Free to the Public.

## **Historic Decatur Association Garden Tour May 17**

1-5pm. The Historic Decatur Association invites the community to its free annual Garden Tour on Sunday, May 17, celebrating the charm, beauty, and character of Decatur's oldest and treasured neighborhoods. The tour is free and open to the public.

## **Washington Update May 26**

Join the Athens-Limestone County Chamber of Commerce for an event featuring Congressman Dale Strong, as he provides a comprehensive Washington Update. Get firsthand insights into the latest developments from Capitol Hill, including key legislation, policy changes, and the pressing issues that are shaping the future of our nation. 8:00 AM- 10:00 AM. Athens State University. 300 N. Beaty St., Athens.

### **Digital Literacy Classes**

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

## **MINDFIT**

### **May 23 and 30, June 6 and 13**

2:45pm. Beginning Saturday, May 23, 2026 and running the next 3 consecutive Saturdays (same time) through June 13th, the award winning 4 part series, MINDFIT, addressing the mental health crisis in America. It will be presented at Lyle Hall, 1207 Pryor Street E., Athens, AL. For info: 256-658-7477.

## **Lions Club Kiddie Carnival June 11**

Opening Day of the Athens Lions Club Kiddie Carnival. 6:30 PM - 9:30 PM. 309 E. Forrest St., Athens, Alabama Athens, AL.

## **Limestone County Master Gardeners present Exploring Beautiful Northern Alabama June 20**

10 AM at the Limestone County Extension Office, 1109 W. Market Street, Athens. Discover the natural wonders that are found in Northern Alabama including beautiful waterfalls, natural springs, and massive rock formations. Instructor for this class is Bob Goodwin, Master Gardener, Tennessee Naturalist and Alabama Master Naturalist. He has explored the area's trails and byways for over 20 years and will share his knowledge and photos with you. No registration necessary. Free and open to the public.

## **3th Annual Downtown Athens Culinary Month Entire month of August**

Athens Main Street is thrilled to host the 3th Annual Downtown Athens, Alabama, Culinary Month. Calling all foodies and local food enthusiasts! It's that time when Downtown Athens comes alive with flavors and culinary delights during the highly anticipated week. During August, you'll have the chance to indulge in a delectable array of dishes and explore downtown Athens's diverse culinary offerings. Downtown Athens Culinary Month isn't just about delicious food; it also celebrates the local community and the hardworking chefs, restaurateurs, and staff who make dining in downtown Athens an unforgettable experience. So, please support the local restaurants that bring flavor and creativity to our town's vibrant dining scene. Invite your friends and family to join you on this culinary adventure. It's the perfect opportunity to try out new restaurants or revisit old favorites.

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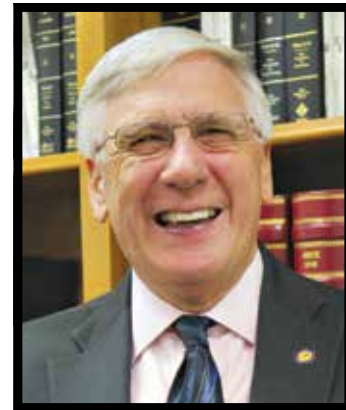
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## What Makes Ronnie Roll

# “Sun, Moon, And Stars Are Miracles, And So Are You!”

by Ali Elizabeth Turner



Rodeo Week was in full swing when we met, and as I walked across the street to head into City Hall on the east side entrance, for a moment I tensed up as I saw the sidewalk. I had been concerned that dreadful stuff had been written in chalk as had recently been the case. Instead, what I was greeted with were upbeat slogans in recognition of Mental Health Awareness Month, including the one serving as the title of this edition of “Ronnie.” May is Mental Health Awareness Month, and

there had been an event at City Hall for people who serve and are served by our local commitment to the topic and the need. It really is a public safety as well as a quality-of-life issue for any thriving community, and Mayor Ronnie simply said, “Mental health is critically important.”

There had been a number of truly positive things that had just occurred in our city and county. “Relay for Life had the biggest crowd we have ever had,” said the mayor, and this year

was also the largest amount of money raised by our community to battle cancer and honor its survivors.

Spark Academy just received a whopping \$200K award from TVA for the youngsters’ work in educating the entire school as to things like turning out the lights, not leaving water running, simple things that were expressed all kinds of ways -- art, essays, and more. The mayor showed me the video clip of the school assembly when they an-

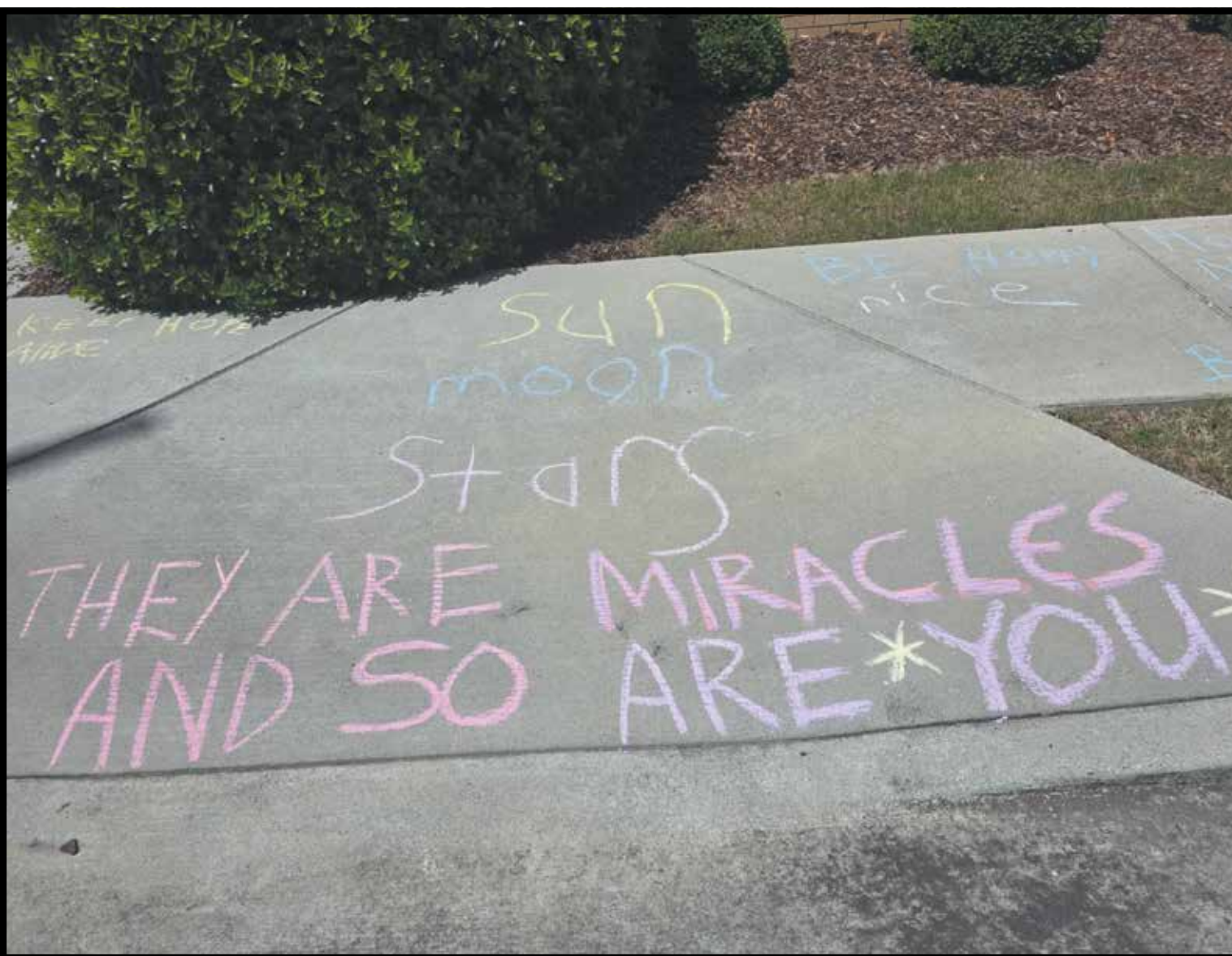
nounced the award. The hilarious part was that the kids didn’t erupt over the monetary size of the award, but rather the fact that Kona Ice was going out to the whole school later in the day. Somehow that spoke to the kids much more loudly...

Tuesday had been the solemn, poignant annual “End of Watch” ceremony, which takes a few minutes to remember law enforcement officers who have made the ultimate sacrifice in the line of duty, and we also re-

cently had the National Day of Prayer ceremony on the courthouse steps. “We had more people for that than we have had in quite a few years,” said the mayor.

Lots of discussion on yet another successful year for the Mayor’s Youth Commission. As has been mentioned before, there are mayors not just from the Southeast, but from all over the country who contact Mayor Ronnie to find out how “li’l ol’ Athens” has done what it has done with and for our youth. Down the hall, Holly Hollman and Justin Travis were preparing for the last MYC meeting of the year. The agenda was a celebratory meal followed by a tour of our water treatment utilities, and we all laughed out loud at the optics. The graduating seniors who have been a part of the program always get emotional when it’s over, and it is a high point of the year.

The annual MTM/Unsung Heroes Awards had been a smashing success, and co-founder Jan Matthews along with Mayor Ronnie had the pleasure of presenting. There were 13 scholarships awarded, and several community members were honored. “We’ve got to keep this level of energy going,” said the mayor. And there was just one thing left to do, and that was to pray. So we did, and once again it was time for Ronnie to roll.



# Cooking with Anna



## Things That Only The Holy Spirit Can Remove From Your Life

by Anna Hamilton

*There are battles in life that cannot be won through human strength alone. We try self-help methods, positive thinking, distractions, and even sheer determination, yet some burdens continue to cling tightly to our hearts. Scripture reminds us that true transformation comes through the power and work of the Holy Spirit. He is the One who comforts, convicts, heals, renews, and restores the soul.*

*The Holy Spirit does more than improve behavior, He changes hearts. There are certain struggles that only God can fully remove and heal from the inside out.*

*The Holy Spirit removes destructive thoughts.*

*Negative and sinful thoughts can become overwhelming. Fear, temptation, jealousy, bitterness, and hopelessness often try to dominate the mind and control our lives. Jesus taught in the Gospel of Mark 7:21-23 that evil thoughts come from within the heart. Left unchecked, these thoughts can shape our attitudes and actions. "For it is from within, out of a person's heart, that evil thoughts come—sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, greed, malice, deceit, lewdness, envy, slander, arrogance, and folly. All these evils come from inside and defile a person" (Mark 7:21-23).*

*continued on page 22*

## Zucchini Pizza Casserole

### Ingredients:

- 4 cups shredded zucchini
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 2 large eggs
- 1/2 cup grated Parmesan cheese

### For the Filling:

- 1 pound ground beef
- 1/2 cup chopped onion
- 2 cups pizza sauce
- 1 green bell pepper, chopped
- 1/2 cup sliced mushrooms
- 1/2 teaspoon dried oregano
- 1/2 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1/4 teaspoon black pepper

### For the Topping:

- 2 cups shredded mozzarella cheese
- 1 cup shredded cheddar cheese

### Directions:

Preheat your oven to 400°F.

Toss the shredded zucchini with salt and let it rest for



about 10 minutes. Drain excess moisture from the zucchini using a clean kitchen towel.

In a mixing bowl, combine the drained zucchini with eggs, Parmesan cheese, and half of the mozzarella cheese.

Grease a 9x13-inch baking dish and press the zucchini mixture evenly into the bottom.

Bake the crust for about 20 minutes until lightly browned.

Cook ground beef and chopped onion in a skillet until browned, about 7-10 minutes.

Mix the pizza sauce, green bell pepper, mushrooms, oregano, garlic powder, and black pepper

into the beef.

Spread the beef mixture over the baked crust evenly.

Sprinkle the remaining mozzarella cheese and cheddar cheese on top.

Bake again for another 20 minutes until cheese is melted and bubbly.

Allow to cool for a few minutes, then slice and serve warm.

# Eyes And Heart

by Stephanie Reynolds, Athens-Limestone Tourism Association



Hello my amazing Limestoneians! As I write this for you, I am also writing a (very small, very brief) speech I need to give in an hour at the presentation of Meta smart glasses for our own Alabama Veterans Museum & Archives!

You might remember last month I talked about getting trapped at the Space and Rocket Center (which was perfectly fine with me, to be honest). I was there for Alabama Mountain Lakes' presentation of wheelchairs and Meta glasses for guests of the Rocket Center.

What I did not know was that we were also get-

ting Meta glasses here in Athens!

If you don't know what Meta smart glasses are, they are Ray-Bans that will (at the museum) "enable the blind and visually impaired the ability to experience the stories of sacrifice and bravery of our nation's military men and women and their families with audible descriptions of the displays in our amazing museum.

"This is another step in the direction of making Limestone County accessible for everyone with challenges. We are proud to partner with Accessible North Alabama to ensure that all visitors

feel welcome and are able to enjoy the beauty and wonder of North Alabama." (That's part of my speech, which ended up getting truncated because I somehow had the wrong time on my calendar and had to race to the event before I could get it all typed out, so I had to wing it.).

This is very dear to my heart. I understand a bit about blindness. As my neighbors and even young adults in my church recover from hip replacements and ACL surgeries and the like, I see how quickly someone can need to use crutches or a walker. As I think about my friends and their families, I

know that wheelchair use is uncommon but not rare.

I love Athens and Limestone County. I want everyone to be able to enjoy it. I want people who are either temporarily or permanently challenged to consider Limestone County their home away from home, so that when someone says, "I have some vacation time, where do you want to go?" they immediately say, "Limestone County! I feel safe and welcome there." I want parents to say, "Let's go to Athens. I know some of their hotels are certified to help kids (and adults) with autism feel comfortable."

And you know what else I know? That though we might get AI glasses and certifications and weighted blankets (and maybe even a couple of those super cool, all-terrain wheelchairs at some point), **you** are the true heart of Limestone County. Travelers come to my office and they feel loved and welcome because of **you**. **YOU**, my amazing friends and neighbors, are easing minds and soothing hearts and bringing smiles to faces. You make my job easy!

And of course it isn't just for guests that these Meta glasses and such are here. These items are for anyone! So, if you have a friend or loved one who struggles to see, please take them to the Veterans Museum and ask to try the glasses. Then talk to me. Did the glasses work well? Did they help open the door to history just a little bit wider? Are there any suggestions? How can we help make Athens-Limestone County more accessible?

Let me close this article by saying what's on my heart...you are a treasure. You are a blessing. You are what make this area a community. You have a heart for others that shines brightly and makes it easy for me to welcome guests with full enthusiasm. The more tools we get in to help with accessibility, the better, but nothing can top you. Meta glasses might help us fill in for eyes, but you are the heart.



# Rise And Stand: *Faith, Freedom, And The Responsibility*

by Jackie Warner

Career Development Facilitator

“Impact, Engage, Grow” Community Matters



There are moments when the weight of our history presses so deeply on the present that it becomes impossible to ignore. I think often about the ones who fought, marched, prayed, and even died so that we could stand where we stand today. Their courage was not abstract — it was lived, felt, and paid for in full.

And even now, the fight continues.

We face new versions of old battles. We see the reshaping of voting districts, the silencing of communities, and

the rise of rhetoric that wounds the souls of Black and Brown people. These struggles may look different from those of the past, but their purpose feels painfully familiar. Yet in the midst of it all, I am reminded of **Ephesians 6:12**: “For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers...”

My grandmother never drove a car, never held a driver’s license, yet she always found her way to the voting polls. She understood the sacrifice. She understood the cost. She understood that her

voice was a gift paid for by generations before her.

For over thirty years, that image has stayed with me: A woman with no transportation, no convenience, and no privilege but with unwavering determination. She walked because others had crawled. She voted because others had died. She stood because others had been knocked down.

Today, as we face gerrymandering, discrimination, and the lingering shadows of injustice, I hear her footsteps. I feel the echo of her resolve. And I know that we must

stand like never before — not only for ourselves, but for the souls who bled for our freedom and for the generations who will come after us.

Our strength does not come from systems or institutions. **Our strength comes from God.** And with God, we are never powerless.

This is our moment to rise. To speak. To act. To honor the legacy we inherited. To protect the future we are shaping.

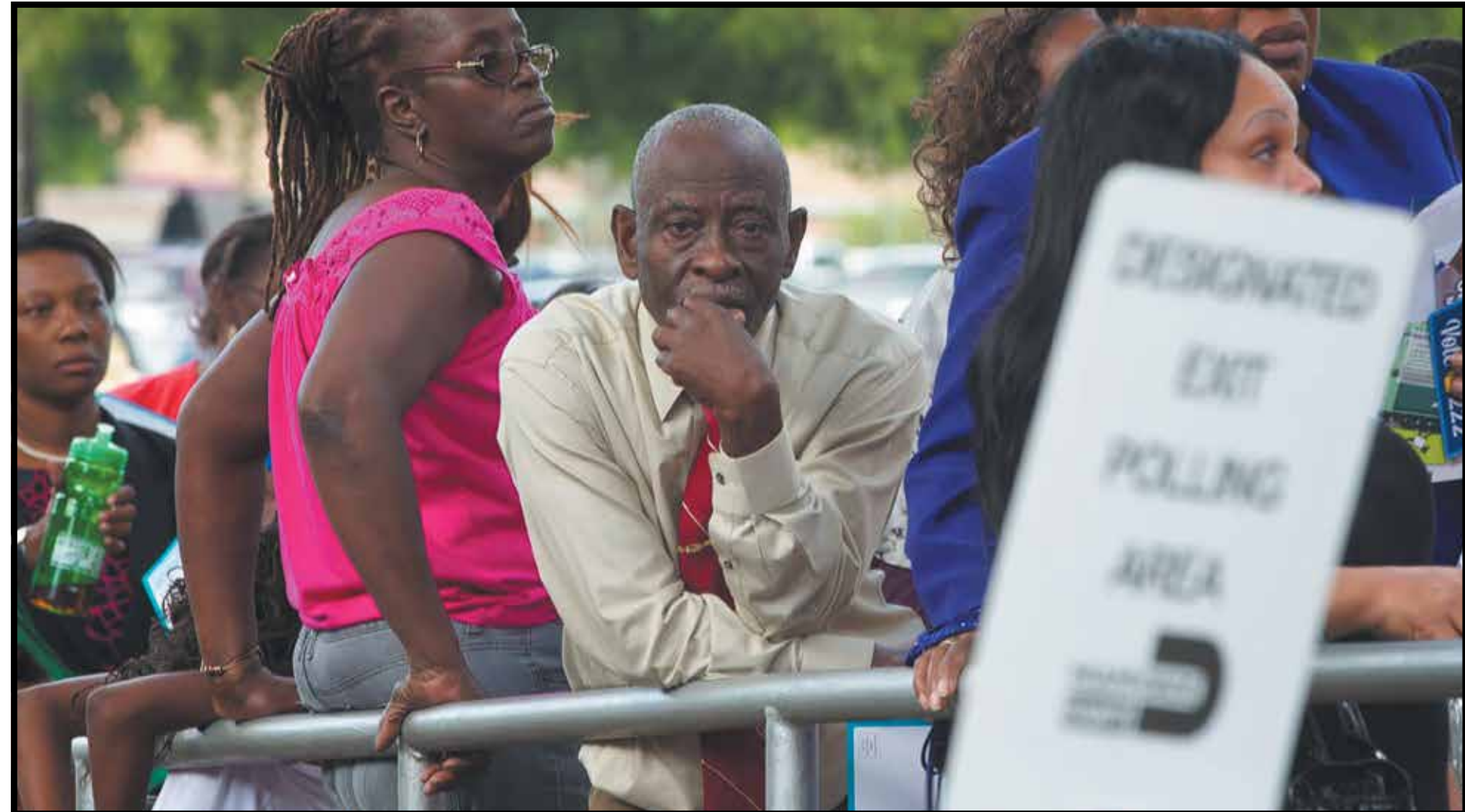
We stand today because giants stood before us. Now it is our turn to stand

strong.

Voting is the echo of our ancestors’ footsteps. It is the way we honor those who marched, fought, and sacrificed so that we could be counted.

No matter where you live, no matter your circumstances, no matter how heavy the world feels — **Show up.** Stand in the legacy of those who came before you. Carry their courage into the polling place. Let your vote be your voice... your strength.

Your vote matters. Your voice matters. You matter. We matter.



# Send Seth Burton To The U.S. Senate When You Vote On May 19

by Ali Elizabeth Turner

*continued from page 1*

He married his wife Danete when they were both just 19 years old, and they have three sons and two grandchildren. When we chatted, the Burtons let me know that at least nine years of Seth's 30-year career were spent with Danete raising the boys while Seth was on mission. This family knows, understands, and has lived a life of sacrifice for us, our values, and our safety, and is ready to serve in a whole new capacity.

Anyone in the military has to take an apolitical posture during the entire time they are serving. They can

freely vote their conscience at the polls, but at the end of the day, they serve at the pleasure of the Commander in Chief. What this does is certainly forge values under pressure, and it simultaneously teaches service members to serve and be a part of something greater than themselves.

In Alabama, whether or not it is a local, state, or federal race, it is entirely common to hear from candidates that they have felt led by God to put their hat in the ring and run for election. Then, the "best do their best to do their best and be their best" irrespective of the outcome. In other words, it is the act



of obedience to spend the time, energy and money to give people a true choice that energizes faith-driven contenders, and Seth Burton is one of them.

Seth Burton brings some interesting perspectives and goals to the race, things I certainly had never considered. He wants to see North Alabama be "home" to a U.S. Senator, which has not happened in decades. I had never really thought about representation for North Alabama being important on a Federal level, nor had I ever encountered anyone who sought to complement the skills and experiences of their fellow US Senator. Seth highlights that his roots, culture and knowledge of North Alabama along with his extensive national security experience perfectly match the background in law and po-

litical experience of his potential fellow Senator. The idea of "serving in silence," with respect to his experience in war and peace, and then parlaying that experience into a robust role in the Senate is described as follows:

*It is about the nation and her citizens...not me! I just exited three decades serving 330 million fellow citizens... knowing almost no one would know my name or the associated sacrifice of my family!*

Seth Burton has a solid handle on the Constitution, framed as intended, as well as U.S. History. He refers to what he calls "Guiding Principles," or "timeless truths for a free and prosperous society," and of them he says:

*Our constitutional republic depends on citizens*

*who understand and defend their God-given rights. The government's role is to protect, not to "grant" those rights. Washington needs leaders who recognize they work for the citizen...the citizen does not work for them! The Constitution was written to restrain government, not the citizen. The citizen is to be restrained by morality and natural law.*

Seth Burton is tired of Alabama being looked upon as backward, and knows that we have an opportunity in this Golden Age to shine, especially with so many developments in North Alabama—Space Command, the FBI, the ongoing role of Alabama in the space program, the responsibility of Redstone Arsenal to be a bastion of security for Alabama and surround-





ing areas, and the judicious development and use of AI. In the course of our conversation, we spent a good chunk of our time discussing two controversial topics: nuclear power and artificial intelligence (AI). We'll go with nuclear power first. I daresay that Seth Burton understands the ins and outs, the pros and cons of nuclear power more than just about anyone, and he explained things to me in such a way that I understood for the first time.

Having grown up in the Cold War as well as the shadow of Three Mile Island and Chernobyl, I frankly didn't have much use for nuclear power. What I learned is that nuclear power when managed well is actually safe, and its ability to produce and provide power is something that is scalable. This is important when we realize that other options can't begin to compete. "It is good energy," said Seth, and also states on his website:

*Alabama's business-friendly culture, environmental stewardship, and technical competence make it ideal to host the booming nuclear energy opportunity! Abundant energy creates the backdrop for innovation and economic development. A booming economy re-*

*quires boundless, reliable energy! Nuclear power is the key to energy independence and economic prosperity.*

With respect to the fact that AI is here and our job is to learn how to utilize it equitably, Seth pointed out that this is an uncommon opportunity for community, business, and citizen involvement in the process every step of the way. "If a community is considering having something like an AI center, on a philosophical note, there has to be complete transparency and open debate. It cannot be decided behind closed doors. Free and open debate must occur that addresses all the

impacts an AI data center can have -- good and bad, economically and environmentally -- in a community. And with regards to AI itself, government's role is to ensure proper boundaries are established to promote safety and freedom. Just like when you go to a public place, you assume a level of safety and protection, the world of AI must have similar standards and guardrails to promote public confidence," he said.

Though he has not yet held public office, he has spent some serious time in Washington, D.C., briefing the powers that be with regard to what he calls "the China Challenge," nuclear and hi-tech needs, budgets, what works, what doesn't, what is strong, what needs shoring up, and when called upon, conceptual solutions that can be applied at any level.

Seth has what he calls a MEGA vision for Alabama. MEGA stands for "Make Everything Great for Alabama." It is a ten-point plan and can be viewed in more

detail at <https://sethburtonforsenate.com/priorities>, and is briefly described below:

- **MEGA Security -- AN UNMATCHED DEFENSE AND SECURE BORDERS**
- **MEGA Sovereignty -- CENTRALIZE POWER & AUTHORITY ONLY WHEN NECESSARY**
- **MEGA Freedom -- INDIVIDUAL FREEDOM & RESPONSIBILITY**
- **MEGA Families & Affordability -- STRONG HEALTHY FAMILIES**
- **MEGA Culture -- FREE & CIVIL SOCIETY**
- **MEGA Education -- EDUCATED CITIZENRY PROMOTING CRITICAL THINKING & INNOVATION**
- **MEGA Accountability -- A GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABLE TO ITS CITIZENS**
- **MEGA Nuclear -- A GOLDEN ERA OF ECONOMIC BOOM THROUGH A NEW & ABUNDANT ENERGY GRID**

• **MEGA Infrastructure -- THE BACKBONE OF A DYNAMIC, VIBRANT SOCIETY**

• **MEGA Manufacturing -- BUILD REAL STUFF!**

If you go on his website, you will encounter fascinating quotes from Washington, Jefferson, Adams Lincoln, and others with which you may not be familiar, and which serve to frame his entire platform. One of my favorites is interestingly from the mid-19th century:

*When it comes to this, I should prefer emigrating to some country where they make no pretense of loving liberty—to Russia, for instance, where despotism can be taken pure, and without the base alloy of hypocrisy. - Abraham Lincoln*

Clearly Seth Burton is an outsider, and if you believe he is an outsider whose time is come for the State of Alabama, then send him to the United States Senate when you vote on May 19.

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# Captain's Log

## *Fake Fart Friday*

by Brenda Wilkers

Ohhhhhh, that is the just best day! Fortunately for me, they all forgot about it -- until about halfway through the afternoon route home.

I could see it on Big Carter's face. His eyes widened, his mouth fell open, his eyes found mine in the huge rear-view mirror and he gasped, "Oh no! We forgot Fake Fart Friday!"

I had a very crucial decision in the moment. I could simply claim that it was just too late, and it would rob the others from this blessed event that we all forgot about, or welcome it with the craziness of the day cause it was all going to pot in a handbasket anyway. Feeling the spirit of Friday, I chose B.

So these little tinker tots licked their lips, shove their mouths into the crease of their elbows and let 'em rip! At one point, I tried to warn above the noise that they might get chapped lips if they didn't come up for air, but my words were drowned out by all of the PFFFFFFHTS!

The explosion of juicy toots bouncing off the metal walls was actually



quite refreshing since the chaos was focused on one thing. It was close to my little Ryan's stop when he challenged everybody for the best worst fake fart among those remaining. There was a countdown. Little Ryan, a first grader who is surprisingly very talented at this sport,

counted down from 5 . . . 4 . . . 3 . . . 2 . . . 1!

He took a deep breath and blew into his elbow so hard that the horrendously fast multiple slap crack pops coming from the spit soaked crook of his elbow hit his ears with such intensity that I thought the top of his eyelids were gonna blow

off over his forehead!

I watched as if in slow motion -- his body jumped and eyes widened in a quick jolt of shock, right slap in the middle of his blubbery delivery with a sharp intensity that spooked us all!

I have never laughed so

hard in all my bus life. I'm talking the head back, mouth open, eyes shut, gut laugh while sitting at the red light. Not your typical elementary bus driver countenance.

When the light turned green, I was still having trouble focusing as tears blurred my vision. Oh, he was so proud of himself! What a perfect ending to a crazy close-to-the-end-of-school Friday afternoon!

Thank you, Lord, for Fake Fart Fridays! We all needed that tearful belly laugh of absolutely chaotic free therapy!

~Brenda

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## McGhee On Management

# How Do You Handle Criticism: *IGNORE IT Or BECOME PARALYZED?*

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

Emotional intelligence (EI) has become a huge buzzword among those seeking to help us all live better, more well-rounded, contented lives. EI is, simply put, the ability to both manage your own emotions for your best life results, and to understand the emotions of people around you, so you and they both attain your highest life-experiences.

If you are not familiar with EI and its application to people of all ages and stations in life, I hope you will take a moment to familiarize yourself with this exciting concept. Just google it and you will find more information you want, but much you will benefit from absorbing. Criticism Management, my area of expertise, is a fundamental component of this skill.

In case you missed the first three articles, we previously walked through some ways “doses” of

criticism are like “doses” of medicine. To re-cap, here are a few:

1. Proper administration is important: Dosage & method. (Remember Phenergan?)
2. Either can be meant to save or take lives; to heal or harm.
3. They can be delivered by friend or foe, or even uninvolved stranger.
4. The wrong dosage can be destructive, no matter how well intended.
5. Just because it worked for others, doesn't mean it is right for you.
6. No matter who prescribes it for you, you are not required to take it.
7. Even if everyone else participates, even raves about it, it is important that you consider how it affects YOU. (I can relate this to statin drugs!)

Hopefully, as we expounded on those analogies in the earlier three articles,

you got the picture on how they reflect each other's characteristics. Each “dose” will be expounded upon in my up-coming book. I am constantly amazed at how other people, as well as I myself, are coming up with more similarities at every workshop. If you want an expanded explanation of any point, please contact me at [detrimghee@gmail.com](mailto:detrimghee@gmail.com) or check out [www.criticismmanagement.com](http://www.criticismmanagement.com). I'll be happy to share.

What I would like to focus on for the remainder of this article are the two basic categories of Criticism Managers: #1 - Those who ignore criticism and #2 - Those who let criticism control them.

**Manager #1: The Ignorer** -- This type of personality simply doesn't SEE well with their emotional eyes. They will not really listen to criticism, no matter who, what, when, how, why, or where it is sourced.

By merely ignoring it, or dismissing it as “not my problem,” they miss the exquisite joy of maturing into a balanced human being who brings blessings to everyone around them. These Ignorers also miss the greatest blessings of all...because they not only have missed their own blessings, but cannot experience the joy of everyone else's blessings. They miss the magnificent blessings of Vicarious Joy! These people are usually also very self-centered, lack a balance of being able to admit a mistake, they blame everything on everyone and everything else (but themselves), and tend to explode and fight back unfairly when confronted with any kind of message even slightly perceived as criticism. They also tend to be very negative, complaining, fault-finding, and surprisingly thin-skinned themselves.

As Grandpappy might have said: “Them what's can dish it out, jus' can't take it!” These folks often are the first and loudest to complain about everyone else when everyone else is simply acting just like THEY act. All the while they excuse themselves as they condemn everyone else.

**Manager #2: The Incapacitated** -- These people are so sensitive to each and every real or perceived criticism that they over-analyze, exaggerate, tend to crawl in a shell and “never try again,” and become consumed with nursing wounds over the “wrong” done to them. These tem-

peraments will let simple negative remarks stop them from following their heart's dreams. The stronger these reactions are, the easier these people are to be manipulated, and controlled by others. They tend to avoid confrontation no matter what, and often realize too late that they didn't stand up for others or themselves as they should have.

The GOOD NEWS? Most of us are a little of both, depending on the person, relationship, and importance of the situation (or criticism). I had a boss once who was a real jerk to most of the people in his office, but he treated his wife like a queen, and was an attentive and kind father. Having different temperaments with different situations is more typical than not. We are many people, not just one. We act and react differently with our parents than with our boss; differently with our spouse than with our doctor; differently with the janitor than with the governor. When you reach a point where you are as kind and gracious to the janitor as you are to the person you are trying to impress, you will realize that you are making great strides toward becoming an Emotional Intelligence GENIUS. Be blessed!!!

**Detri would love to hear from you. Send your comebacks to: Email: [detrimghee@gmail.com](mailto:detrimghee@gmail.com) Facebook: Detri Atkinson McGhee. [www.criticismmanagement.com](http://www.criticismmanagement.com)**





Clean, Green And Beautiful

# For Goodness Sakes, Look At Those Cakes!

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

Do you ever get a sweet tooth, but can't make your mind up? If you do, we have something for you! Keep Athens-Limestone Beautiful is hosting a fundraiser, "Let There Be Cake" at Athens State University LaunchBox on Marion Street during the Fridays After Five on May 29 from 4-7 p.m. For \$5, you get 3 samples of cake, plus we will have 2-layer, silent auction cakes. We'll kick off at 4 p.m. and go until we are out of cake. You don't even have to miss any of the concert, we'll have to-go containers for you!

I never knew how much local decorating talent there was until I started doing a little research. We have combed Limestone County to bring



you some very talented cake makers and decorators! We have 15 different bakers, and they are all bringing their A-game. Seriously, wear your spandex. Our board members have spent some time planning out our own tasting schedules, and each cake we've added to the list makes it even harder. We will have



cookie cakes, chocolate cakes, vanilla petit fours, strawberry cakes (Debbie Hardaway -- if you know, you know!).

There will be so many choices, you may end up with a to-go box. Carrot, Italian cream cake, butter pecan, coconut with mango cream cheese icing, and the list goes on. I mean how do you narrow it down? We've decided that you don't narrow it down, you just come back for more! Each baker will have business cards around their cake, so be sure and grab one for the next time you need (or want) a fantastic cake.

Some people may wonder why we are having a cake sampling as a fundraiser. Well, it's something Athens didn't already have. I think my favorite part of this fundraiser is that we are helping promote small businesses. I'll admit I didn't think about that aspect at first, but when I



did, it made this idea even better.

We are hoping that this fundraiser will help us get started on some new and exciting projects throughout the county. We have a lot of ideas brewing, and we are eager to shake things up a bit. Keep your eye out for our new proj-

ect at Athens-Limestone Tourism. We are beyond excited to get going on it! Be sure and drop in when you are at Friday's After Five to satisfy that sweet tooth and find a great local baker for all of your cake needs.



It turns out you can have your cake and eat it too!

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## Slinkard On Scriptural Success

# Add Value To Each Day

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 moving deeper into the year, and I want to start this article with a question – How is your year going thus far? Hopefully, everyone is generating the success imagined at the beginning of this year. If you are not as successful or have not even begun to concentrate on what you want to accomplish in 2026, it is time to build momentum.

Too many people derail their weeks, their months, their years, and ultimately their lives because they fail to concern themselves with the right mindset. There is still plenty of time left in this year to accomplish great things, but we must also begin preparing ourselves for what is ahead in 2027.

Think about everything you still want to accomplish this year and make a list of those items. List them in the order of importance to you as necessities for making 2026 a success. When you make this list, envision these items as if you will not fail in your endeavors. Too often we limit our thinking and our lives because we approach our goals with the fear of failure instead of the mindset of, “I will not fail.”

It is time we no longer take the haphazard approach of “What if.” How many times have you heard someone empathetically ask, “What else can go wrong?” and before long, something else adds to the negativity. Asking questions with negative

connotations adds no value to our lives or to what we want to accomplish.

Building momentum for the remainder of 2026 and beyond, your focus needs to be on activities that help you reach desired results. As you look at your list and the actions needed to achieve success, if you find an item that moves you further away from your goal or is not producing positive results, then you need to purge that item now. How many times do we quash our own dreams by wasting time and effort on things that bring absolutely no fruit into our lives? We need to add value to every single day we live.

Maybe that should become our goal – not to waste our time or efforts on meaningless things. Seriously, think about how “busy”

we Americans are and how many distractions compete for our attention daily. We wonder why we struggle to find the elusive work-life balance, but is it really any wonder with the continued explosion of technology? I remember the days when the only way to talk to someone on the phone was to call their home number, and if the person was not home, then you simply were not talking to them that moment.

Technology has made us constantly available through our computers, tablets, phones, smart-watches, social media, and nonstop notifications. Although we are more connected than ever before, is this killing our momentum for success? I am going to tell you that it is. How much more successful could we be as a society

if we learned how to “de-technologize” ourselves from our electronic devices, even if only for a little while each day?

As I write this article, my phone keeps dinging, and what do I do? I stop writing to check notifications, and before I realize it, I am lost scrolling through email after email, text message after text message, notification after notification. This is the same old story for countless people, and what little motivation there was has been lost because of distractions we constantly battle against.

With your list in hand, I urge you to make it a priority to “de-technologize” yourself so you can have the success in the months ahead that you desire, and maybe you will be able to cut out some of life’s dis-

tractions along the way. This may be easier said than done, but until you try it, you truly have no idea what will and will not work for you. If you were able to eliminate just a fraction of the distractions in your life, what kind of improvements could this make for you and your family?

How much more productive could you be in your work-life balance if you focused just a little more attention on what is truly going to bring success into your life in 2026 and beyond? This is what our resolve must be moving forward – we must look at life with the mindset of “I will not fail.” The time to build momentum starts now by looking at your list, knowing you can achieve success, and taking action today.



## Learning As A Lifestyle

# The Jazz Of Leadership

by Eric Betts

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



Duke Ellington famously described his orchestra as “beyond category,” but what made his music so enduring wasn’t only the brilliance of the players, but it was the architecture of the music itself. Jazz as a form is built on tension and release, call and response, structure and freedom. It invites musicians into a shared space where no one knows exactly what will happen next, yet everyone trusts the process. Ellington’s world reminds us that jazz is not just a genre; it is a way of organizing people around creativity, responsiveness, and collective purpose.

Leadership scholars have spent years studying jazz not because of the

personalities involved, but because the form itself models how healthy organizations function. Jazz begins with a clear structure — a melody, a chord progression, a rhythmic pattern. It then invites improvisation on top of it.

That balance teaches leaders that clarity and flexibility are not opposites; they are partners. Too much structure kills creativity. Too little structure creates chaos. Jazz shows how to hold both: a steady foundation that makes innovation possible.

Another lesson comes from the way jazz handles uncertainty. In a jazz ensemble, no one knows exactly what the next phrase will be, but

everyone is prepared to respond. The music teaches adaptive leadership -- listening deeply, adjusting quickly, and treating surprises not as threats but as opportunities. When a soloist takes an unexpected turn, the rhythm section doesn’t panic, but they also pivot. They support. They make room. Jazz demonstrates that leadership is not about controlling outcomes but about cultivating responsiveness. Just as God’s creation holds structure and mystery together, jazz reminds us that life’s best work happens when order makes room for surprise.

The rhythm, sound, and pulse of jazz teach leadership all by themselves. Jazz moves with a forward leaning groove which is syncopated, slightly off center, always inviting surprise, thus showing that progress often comes from creative tension rather than perfect order. Its pulse stays steady but never stiff, a living beat that breathes with the group.

The textures and tones bend, stretch, and re-



spond to one another, modeling how teams communicate in real time. Even the unexpected notes — the ones that ache or wobble — remind us that beauty often comes from risk. Jazz’s very pulse says that leadership is responsive, relational, and alive.

Finally, jazz teaches that the whole is always

greater than the sum of its parts. Even the most dazzling solo only works because the ensemble holds the space for it. The music itself insists on interdependence, which is the idea that individual excellence matters most when it serves the collective sound.

In a world that often celebrates the loudest voice in the room, jazz offers a counter vision: leadership that listens, leadership that adapts, leadership that trusts the ensemble. Jazz reminds us that when structure supports freedom and every voice has room to contribute, the result is not just harmony, but also transformation.

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## The Alternative Approach

# Why Are We Sicker Than Ever?

by Roy Williams

Ladies and gentlemen, let me ask you a question. If the current system was truly designed to make people healthy, then why are Americans sicker than ever before? Why are obesity rates exploding? Why is diabetes all but epidemic? Why are young people exhausted? Why are hormone levels collapsing? Why are autoimmune disease, anxiety, inflammation, cancer, and heart disease becoming normal? And why, after spending more money on healthcare than any nation in human history, are we getting weaker instead of stronger?

Could it be, because sickness became a large business, and businesses protect their revenue? The pharmaceutical industry makes hundreds of billions of dollars every single year treating symptoms instead of building health. The FDA itself receives massive funding from pharmaceutical user fees. The revolving door between regulators and drug companies has been documented for decades. Drug companies fund television networks through advertising.

They influence medical schools, research grants, media narratives, and public perception.

That is not conspiracy. That is documented reality. Meanwhile, the natural health industry is attacked, restricted, mocked, buried, or regulated into the ground the second they begin threatening their revenue streams by helping people live healthier and longer lives. In the 1980s, a group of medical professionals began a program to help type II diabetics reverse their diagnoses through proper nutrition and better lifestyles. The program was so successful that in just 3 years it was shut down. Yes, you got it. Because they helped over 95% of their clients come off all medications, which cut into the bottom line for the medical diabetic establishment, they forced them to close their doors.

But people are finally waking up, and that is why NEWtritional Health Care opened its first location in 1999. For more than 25 years, NEWtritional Health Care has been fighting to restore

health naturally through nutrition, pH balance, cellular support, detoxification, and giving the body the raw materials it needs to repair and heal. We currently have developed 44 all-natural products with 38 patented or patent-pending formulations based around pH balancing technology and advanced nutritional science. Almost all NEWtritional Health Care products help your body become and maintain a healthy pH, which is absolutely necessary for life.

These products help rebuild the human body at the cellular level without masking the symptoms. The truth is simple. Your body was designed to heal. But it cannot heal if it is poisoned, inflamed, mineral deficient, hormonally disrupted, nutritionally starved, dehydrated, acidic, sleep deprived, and chemically overloaded every single day. Every single cell in your body is in a state of being created, performing its duties, growing old, repairing, or dying and being replaced with new cells to do the same thing again. Any of those things mentioned above can speed up the dying process causing accelerated aging.

The wellness revolution starts when enough people finally ask: "What if the body actually needs support instead of suppression?" What if inflammation is not a deficiency of pharmaceuticals? What if exhaustion is not a de-



iciency of stimulants? What if the body is crying out for nutrients instead of another chemical?

This is bigger than supplements. This is a return to common sense. A return to personal responsibility. A return to strength. We believe healthy people think more clearly, build healthier families, make better decisions, and live longer without being dependent on the modern-day medical establishment that creates a nation of sick people dependent on man and his concoctions instead of God and His creations. That industry has proven. Weak populations are easier to control.

Who will the future belong to? It will belong to people willing to educate themselves, strengthen themselves, and take responsibility for their own lives. That future starts

now. For you, that future can start here. The revolution in health is already happening. We are the NEW healthcare. You can experience the difference just like millions of other people already have. Real products. Real potency. Real ingredients. Real results.

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*Your friend in health,  
Roy P. Williams*



## “Red” - “White” - “Blue”... Salute

by Deb Kitchenmaster

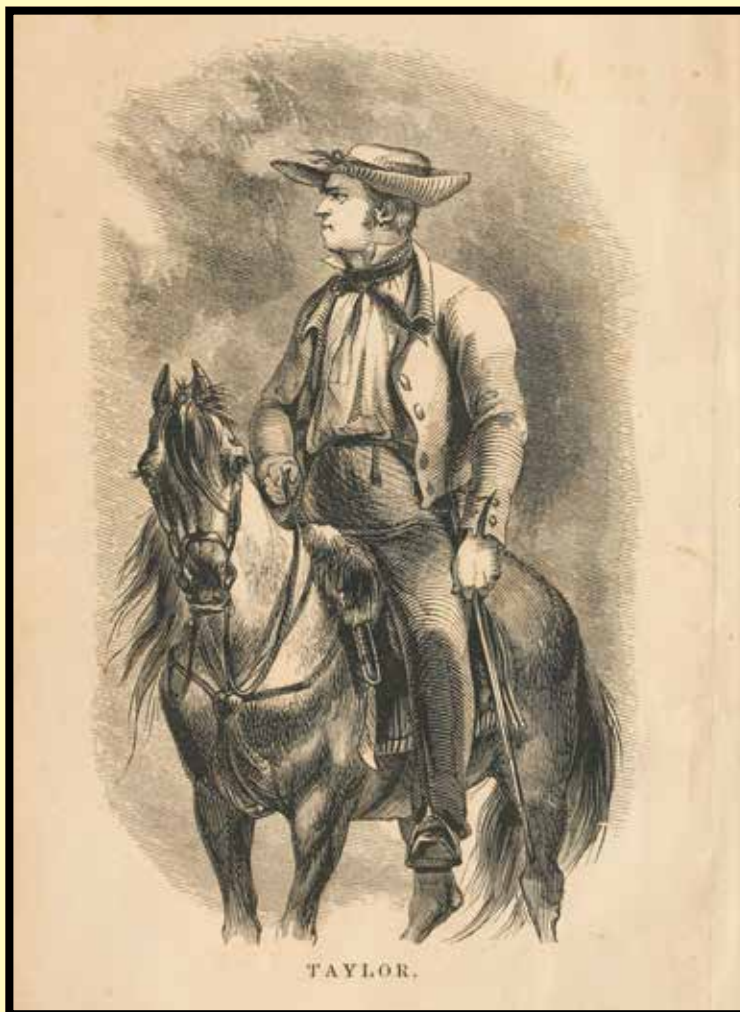
Secretariat, the 1973 Triple Crown winner, is the most famous American horse nicknamed “Big Red.” Known for his striking chestnut coat and record-setting speed, he is considered one of the greatest racehorses in our 250 year celebration as a nation! His record-setting time in the 1973 Belmont Stakes, where he won by 31 lengths, still stands. This red colt was the result of a coin toss.

In a foal sharing agreement in 1965, Christopher Chenery, founder of Meadow Stable, began sending two mares at a time to the stallion Bold Ruler, who was owned by the wealthy Phipps family, and standing at stud in Claiborne Farm. The result of the two foals would be determined in a coin flip arrangement between the parties. Penned by Journalist Bill Nack, “Then events began unfolding in the spring of 1968 that set the stage for the most

monumental coin toss in racing history, a curious flip in which the winner lost and the loser won – but neither one knew it at the time.”

A three stranded cord is not easily broken. As owner (Penny Chenery), trainer (Lucien Laurin) and jockey (Ronnie Turcotte) partnered together, a champion with a big heart, touched ours. We express gratitude as we salute Big Red in calling each of us to “run our race.”

Old Whitey was a horse that belonged to Zachary Taylor, the 12th president of the United States. Old Whitey was Taylor’s war horse during the Mexican-American war. Old Whitey didn’t fit the specs of a war horse due to his light coloration. In fact, while reading about Old Whitey, the horse was referred to as an “antithesis”. I looked up its meaning. Antithesis is when two opposites are introduced together for contrasting effect. Taylor rode him anyway, and he was just as Taylor wanted.



Taylor was known to sit calmly on Old Whitey as bullets went past his head. We salute Old Whitey as the horse who reminds us to “look beyond the color.”

Big Red was a racehorse, Old Whitey was a warhorse, and Blue is a family-owned, good trail-riding sweet horse in Tennessee -- equally valued, yet, with different



purposes. Blue is a registered Quarter Horse. “Quarter” refers to the distance, a quarter of a mile, most commonly run in Colonial racing, often on the main streets of small villages. Blue was foaled in Oklahoma and is now owned by a Tennessee family. His color is “blue roan.” Blue was purchased as a 5-year-old. Point him in the direction you want him to go, and he’ll take you there. It matters not if it’s a creek, hills, a slope, or treed area; he willingly takes you where you want to go. He’s known to enjoy a few marshmallows around the campfire. “He’s a joy to ride, a loyal friend, and always happy to see me. He has a heart as big as he is.” And he stands at 15.3 hands. (One hand equals 4 inches).

The message from a racehorse, “Run YOUR race.”

The message from a warhorse, “You must look past the color and see the good and value -- the worth.”

The message from a domestic horse, “Enjoy a loyal friend and enjoy being a loyal friend.”

If we each activated these three messages, can you imagine what our one nation, under God, would look like? Yes. After hitting the “pause” button for a bit, I can to!

*Your NEIGHbor,  
Deb Kitchenmaster*

*horsinaround188@gmail.com*



# Let Go, Let God

by JP Plott, Co-host of *Rightside Radio*



*God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, courage to change the things I can, and wisdom to know the difference.*

This was my grandmother's favorite prayer. Growing up, I remember it being recited to me repeatedly and seeing it on the walls of her house. My young brain couldn't even really understand what that exactly meant. Sure, I under-

stood the premise...at least I thought. Perhaps I hadn't been mugged by reality enough yet to where this prayer would hit home. Ironically, one of the first events in my life that felt truly out of my control was the death of my angel of a grandmother. Cancer took her in a way that was hard to watch, but even in her dying days, she held onto this prayer. Last December marked 10 years since her passing.

As I grow older, I increasingly hear my grandmother's voice telling me this prayer. It's almost like she knew that I eventually would be smacked in the mouth by life and would need something to fall back on. The day a Christian earns their wings is when they fully acknowledge their lack of control over their life, accept it, and put it in God's hands. You can grow up believing in God, know all the Scriptures by heart, and have full faith

in Jesus Christ, but until you make that jump and truly let go of your life, your faith will never soar as high as possible. Life will beat you to pieces; we were never meant to control everything ourselves. It's a much more enjoyable experience when you truly *let go and let God*.

This is especially true when it comes to politics. The language that our secular world operates under is politics. It's how anything and everything gets done, whether we like it or not. Politics can be used as a weapon by Christians, but it is not our solution. Politicians often feel an overwhelming sense of power with their political savviness, and eventually convince themselves that they are indeed God. We see many examples of this through political leaders in the Bible, but it's no different today. Whether you are an elected official yourself or just simply dedicated to the political process, it's easy to make politics our God. It gives us a sense of control. If I can just get elected, then I'll be okay. Then I can have control. Or, if I can just get this person elected, they'll save me. The democratic process is a beautiful thing and has enabled our country to operate for 250 years. It, however, is not God.

The key to true peace is to aim for becoming a vessel for the Holy Spirit. If you let go and let God achieve his will through you, not only will you have ultimate peace, but God will make you a serious weapon for his kingdom. Philip-

pian 4:7 states, "And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus." You must surrender, first and foremost, for God to be allowed into your heart. God is a gentleman and will not force himself where he is not wanted. Relinquish control over your life, stop white-knuckling your existence. Once you do that, God will use you in ways you cannot even comprehend.

This past Mother's Day weekend, I had to take time and thank my late grandmother for instilling this wisdom in me. She was taken from us far too soon, as the best ones often are. But I'll always lean on "The Serenity Prayer" that she burned into me. Life is brutal and unfair, but God is just and righteous. Lay your life into the hands of the eternal, rather than this world, and you'll be in good hands.

*Justin "JP" Plott is the production manager for Rightside Media, and Producer for Rightside Radio. JP joined the Rightside team in late 2024 after working at WVNN in Huntsville, Alabama. He quickly became a top-notch, multi-media producer and a voice of Gen-Z conservatism.*





Cooking with Anna (continued from page 9)

## *Things That Only The Holy Spirit Can Remove From Your Life*

by Anna Hamilton

*The Holy Spirit renews the mind and helps believers take captive destructive thinking patterns. Through prayer, Scripture, and surrender to God, He replaces darkness with truth, peace, and clarity.*

*The Holy Spirit removes guilt and shame. Many people carry guilt from past mistakes, failures, or sins. Shame has a way of convincing people they are unworthy of forgiveness or unable to move forward. But God never intended for His children to remain trapped in condemnation.*

*In 1 John 1:9, believers are reminded that if we confess our sins, God is faithful to forgive and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. The Holy Spirit gently leads people toward repentance, but He also brings freedom and restoration. What God forgives, He does not hold against us forever. “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9).*

*The Holy Spirit removes anger and rebellion. Unchecked anger can poison relationships, cloud judgment, and lead people away from God’s peace. Rebellion against God’s will often grows from hurt, pride, or unresolved pain. These emotions can quietly take control over actions and attitudes.*

*Psalms 37:8 warns against anger and wrath because they lead to harm. The Holy Spirit softens hardened hearts, teaches humility, and produces self-control. He helps believers respond with wisdom rather than reacting in rage. “Refrain from anger and turn from wrath; do not fret—it leads only to evil” (Psalm 37:8).*

*The Holy Spirit removes anxiety that leads to fear and procrastination. Anxiety can paralyze a person emotionally, mentally, and spiritually. Fear often causes hesitation, doubt, and procrastination. Many people delay stepping into God’s calling because worry convinces them they are not ready, not capable, or not strong enough.*

*In Epistle to the Philippians 4:6–7, believers are encouraged not to be anxious, but to*

*bring everything to God in prayer. The Holy Spirit provides peace that goes beyond human understanding. He calms troubled hearts and gives courage to move forward in faith. “Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 4:6-7).*

*The Holy Spirit removes the desire for revenge. When people are wounded deeply, the temptation to seek revenge can become strong. Hurt naturally wants justice, but bitterness and vengeance slowly contaminate the soul. Holding onto resentment keeps people spiritually bound to the very pain they are trying to escape.*

*Epistle to the Romans 12:19 reminds believers that vengeance belongs to God. The Holy Spirit teaches forgiveness, even when forgiveness feels impossible. He replaces hatred with healing and helps people trust God with justice. “Do not take revenge, my dear friends, but leave room for God’s wrath, for it is written: ‘It is mine to avenge; I will repay,’ says the Lord” (Romans 12:19).*

*Your life will be changed by the Spirit. The work of the Holy Spirit is deeply personal and life-changing. He does not simply cover pain, He heals it. He does not merely suppress struggles, He transforms hearts from within.*

*No matter what burden someone is carrying today, there is hope in God’s presence. The Holy Spirit still restores peace to troubled minds, freedom to burdened hearts, and strength to weary souls.*

*May we open our hearts fully to God and allow His Spirit to remove every weight that keeps us from living in freedom, joy, and purpose.*

*“But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you” (John 14:26).*

# Healthy Eating Is Not Complicated

by Nick Niedzwiecki - Owner, CrossFit Athens



Healthy eating does not have to be complicated. Many people believe they need expensive ingredients, complicated recipes, or hours in the kitchen to improve their health. In reality, some of the healthiest meals are often the simplest.

The Mediterranean style of eating has become popular because it focuses on real, minimally processed foods that support long-term health. Instead of relying on packaged meals or fad diets, Mediterranean meals are built around lean proteins, vegetables, healthy fats, and simple carbohydrates. The goal is not perfection or restriction. The goal is creating meals that fuel your body, improve energy levels, and support overall wellness.

At CrossFit Athens, we encourage people to simplify nutrition and focus on consistency. Healthy eating should fit into your life, not make your life harder. One of the easiest ways to do this is by preparing meals with just a handful of quality ingredients that can be found in any grocery store.

Here is a simple Mediterranean-inspired recipe that uses only five ingredients and can be prepared in almost any kitchen.

### Mediterranean Power Bowl

Ingredients:

- Protein of choice
- Rice or quinoa
- Cherry tomatoes
- Cucumber

- Tzatziki sauce

### Directions:

Cook the rice or quinoa according to package directions. While it cooks, prepare your protein source and chop the cucumber and tomatoes. Add everything into a bowl and top with tzatziki sauce.

This recipe is quick, affordable, and easy to make ahead for lunches or dinners throughout the week.

### Protein Options:

- Chicken breast for a lean and classic option
- Ground turkey for something budget friendly
- Salmon for healthy fats and extra flavor
- Steak for a higher protein choice
- Chickpeas for a plant based option

Meals like this work because they are realistic. You do not need to be a professional chef or spend hours cooking to eat healthier. When meals are simple, people are far more likely to stay consistent with them.

Consistency is what creates results. Eating one healthy meal will not change your life overnight, but building habits around whole foods over time can improve energy, recovery, strength, and overall health. Many people spend too much time looking for the perfect diet when they would benefit more from simply eating real food more often.



Healthy eating should support your life, not add stress to it. Start with simple meals, simple ingredients, and simple habits. Focus on meals that help you feel better, move better, and live healthier for years to come.

If you are looking for help getting started with your health and fitness journey, CrossFit Athens offers

nutrition coaching, CrossFit classes, and our new CrossFit Legends program designed specifically for adults 55 and older. Whether you are completely new to fitness or simply looking for guidance and accountability, our coaches are here to help you learn the basics of movement, nutrition, strength, and long-term

health in a welcoming environment.

Please reach out to get more information at [info@crossfitathens.com](mailto:info@crossfitathens.com) or give us a call at 256-777-8275.

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